



CASE STUDY

Hyatt Regency St. Louis at the Arch

BY DON KRESKI

“When this hotel was first built, it was an oasis downtown, where everyone went to see and be seen,” says Edan Ballantine, director of food and beverage for the new Hyatt Regency St. Louis at the Arch. “Our goal was to re-create that oasis and bring it up to date. We now have a hotel with a very contemporary design, in a location you can’t beat, with service at a very high level of excellence.”

The property—originally built as the Pierce Building in 1907 but redesigned, doubled in size, and reopened as the Adam’s Mark in 1984—has been a St. Louis landmark for more than 100 years. In 2008, the Chartres Lodging Group bought it and began a \$63 million upgrade.

The new owners completely remodeled the hotel—the guest rooms, lobby, meeting space, even the front drive—and they added new spaces, in particular two new restaurants, a fitness center, and a unique 18th-floor meeting center with an outdoor patio overlooking the Gateway Arch and the Mississippi River.

Conference Technologies (CTI) took on the task of

upgrading the AV systems, servicing all of the property’s existing systems and designing and installing new ones for the four new public spaces. CTI completed the project over a span of six months, opening in time for the 2009 Baseball All-Star Game, held in St. Louis on July 14.

AN IMPRESSIVE NEW SPORTS BAR

The Brewhouse, the most elaborate of these spaces, is a sports bar celebrating St. Louis sporting and brewing history.

“This is a great sports bar,” says Brandon Conick, project manager for CTI. Conick and his team installed 18 37in. to 58in. Panasonic TH-PF series plasma TVs, a DirecTV-based satellite distribution system, a sound system based on a Crown CTS8200A amplifier, Biamp Nexia CS digital signal processor (DSP), and 30 SoundTube Entertainment CM82-EZ ceiling loudspeakers. The Owner’s Box—an enclosed area used for private parties—has four of its own 19in. LG 19LG30 LCD TVs, a Nintendo Wii game console, karaoke machine, and a surround sound system featuring five Community Professional Loudspeakers CPL23 wall-mounted loudspeakers and a CPL51 sub. “We couldn’t be any happier,” Ballantine says. “The way CTI designed the systems is really cool.”

Ballantine says managers tailor the video and the sound in the Brewhouse to the particular night and

▲ The Brewhouse, the new sports bar at the Hyatt Regency St. Louis at the Arch, was among the spaces added to the 100-year-old building. Here, AV integrator Conference Technologies installed 18 Panasonic TH-PF series plasma TVs, a sound system based on a Crown CTS8200A amplifier, a Biamp Nexia CS DSP, and 30 SoundTube Entertainment CM82-EZ ceiling loudspeakers.

crowd. "We have all of the DirecTV sports packages: baseball, college football, NFL football, hockey, basketball, plus music." Hyatt Hotels and Resorts use a music service called Music Styling, which downloads a wide range of tracks to a server on the property.

"We tailor the music program to each individual area," Ballantine says. "The music in the Brewhouse is programmed completely differently from what's in the lobby and the Red Kitchen and Bar." In addition, managers can supplement the service with XM Satellite Radio and, when there's a big game, run the TV audio through the sound system. They can also address the crowd with either of two Shure ULXS24/58 handheld wireless microphones. "We have three zones in the bar, so feasibly we could be listening to three different games, but we try not to do that too often."

Conick says CTI put control of the sources going to each TV and each audio zone into a Crestron Rack2 processor and 8.4in. TPMC-8x wireless touchpanel. The bar manager can walk around the Brewhouse and adjust individual TVs or volumes, or he can operate the system from its wall-mounted docking station behind the bar. A Crestron fingerprint scanner, built into the TPMC-8x, provides security, preventing unauthorized users from using or detaching the panel from the wall.

A CENTERPIECE RESTAURANT

The Red Kitchen and Bar is the main restaurant for the hotel and serves as the centerpiece of the main floor lobby. "The AV system is not as complex as the one in the Brewhouse," Ballantine says, "but we have three large flatscreen TVs and a very nice sound system." For the flatscreens, CTI used 42in. Panasonic TH-42PR11UK plasmas that Hyatt supplied. The sound system includes a Crown CTS8200 amplifier, Biamp Nexia CS DSP, 12 Tannoy CMS 401e ceiling loudspeakers, and three Tannoy CMS 801 subs.

Red Kitchen managers can switch the sound between the Music Styling service, a game on TV, XM Satellite Radio, or an iPod dock, so a guest who has booked the space for a private party can play his or her own music. "If we have an event with a DJ coming in, he can plug into an AV jack to tie into our sound system," Ballantine says.

A nice recent addition is a wireless music request system based on a laptop PC that controls a Mac Mini mounted in the equipment rack. "They have someone walking around the restaurant with the laptop, entering requests to be played on the house system from a playlist on the Mac," Conick says. "Should someone request a song not on the hard drive, the system downloads it from iTunes."

Ballantine says he is very pleased with the flexibility CTI was able to build into this system. "When you're in the design phase, you don't necessarily know what the restaurant or its clientele will morph into," he says. "It's a lot easier to build this kind of flexibility into the front end than to come back and try to fix it later."

WHAT WE WERE LOOKING FOR

The 18th-floor meeting center includes two meeting rooms and an outdoor patio. CTI installed a sound system that allows each space to function on its own or be combined in any configuration.

"This is a premier space overlooking the Gateway Arch, the Mississippi River, and downtown," Ballantine says. "It's great for a social event, a wedding, or a company party." Several businesses have used it for meetings and brainstorming sessions. The outdoor area is a great place for participants to break out into informal discussions and deal-making.

CTI designed the sound system for this space around a Crown CTS4200A 4-channel amplifier and three Biamp Nexia CS DSPs controlled by a Crestron QM-RMC media control. It used Tannoy CMS401 ceiling loudspeakers for the inside rooms and two Community W2-2V8 weatherproof surface-mounted loudspeakers outside. CTI used a TPS-4LW wall-mounted touchscreen in one of the two indoor rooms and a TPS-6L for the other indoor room and the outdoor area. To simplify installation, they ran Crestron QuickMedia category cable between the control unit, DSP, and touchpanels.

"From each touchscreen, you can choose sound you input from an AV jack or from Music Styling on the

Top: CTI installed a coaxial distribution system running a satellite signal to each fitness machine in the fitness center. It also installed two 50in. flat-panels and a sound system using a Crown amplifier and two SoundTube loudspeakers. Bottom: The Red Kitchen and Bar features 42in. plasmas and a sound system with a Crown amplifier, Biamp Nexia CS DSP, 12 Tannoy ceiling loudspeakers, and three Tannoy subs.





For the 18th-floor outdoor patio, CTI installed two Community Professional Loudspeakers W2-2V8 weatherproof surface-mounted loudspeakers that are controlled via a Crestron TPS-6L touchpanel, which also controls an indoor space.

house system,” Ballantine says. “You can link Room A, Room B, and the patio to that one source, you can have three different sound zones, or if you have a band on the patio, you can tie that music into either or both of the meeting rooms. It’s a really slick system.”

The new owners also opened a new 3,500 square-foot ground-level fitness center that includes treadmills, stair climbers, and elliptical machines that have their own built-in TVs. CTI installed a coaxial distribution system running a satellite signal to each machine. It also installed two 50in. Vizio flatpanel TVs and a sound system using a Crown 180MA amplifier and two SoundTube CM82-EZ ceiling loudspeakers, which the hotel uses to play programming from Music Styling.

There are a number of other meeting spaces in the hotel, but the audiovisual systems, by and large,

were in good condition. CTI Service checked each system and replaced components as needed. They also serviced the sound systems in the hotel lobby and other public areas.

Conick says that, at times, reworking the older systems was something of a challenge. DirecTV, for example, requires four feeds to supply high-definition programming. The existing facility had four DirecTV feeds, but they were split into two groups—two going to the first-floor restaurants and bars and two going to third-floor facilities. “We had to design a custom video distribution system to bring all four feeds to the first floor, then route them out to various areas in the hotel. Since we had never built a system quite like this before, it was actually our biggest concern in the project, although it worked out just fine,” he says.

Ballantine says the work from Conference Technologies was excellent. “CTI really delivered what we were looking for. They were very professional and knew what they were talking about. And for those of us who are not necessarily as tech savvy as we could be, they made it quite easy to get up to speed,” he says. CTI came in twice to train staff and has been very receptive as questions have come up. “But once we got through the initial learning phase, the systems have been pretty easy to use.”

Chartres Lodging Group was happy enough with CTI to hire the company for another major project, the Sheraton Dallas Hotel.

Ballantine and his staff are very pleased with the outcome of the entire project. “The hotel is becoming, as we had hoped, an oasis of luxury and comfort in downtown St. Louis. We’re pretty excited and proud of it,” he says. **SVC**