

LOCATION: LIMERICK, IRELAND VENUE TYPE: CLUB

Club Icon

The club that never stops when it comes to innovation has just been reinvented

Prominently placed on the corner of Robert Street and Denmark Street, looking down onto Limerick city centre, Icon takes up a commanding position within one of the most vibrant parts of town. "Anybody that comes up from the city, flocking up the street; the first thing they're going to see is this. There's people, and music oozing out, naturally they want to come up and see," explains joint owner Tony Enright. He and Kieran Gleeson have a 1,350-capacity venue that, thanks to an incessant desire to keep their finger on the pulse, is furnished with an abundance of technology, freshly scoped at trade shows throughout the world.

Tony reveals: "The process is totally organic. What we're doing going off to exhibitions all the time is we're looking at ideas, saying: 'that'll work, that won't' because when it comes to putting it onto the ground, we want a big pot of ideas. From that we decide which ideas work."

Audiotek has installed all of the lighting and shares the audio installation credits with

Performance Audio & Light. The venue, that is already a tech head's dream after the recent refit, is soon to be spruced with the latest technologies spied during BAR 08 in June. Several particular pieces of technology, currently being kept under wraps have been earmarked as additions to the extensive Lighting Effects Distribution X-Panel and X-Strip, and the Funktion One and Martin Audio kit already in place.

The venue is split into two tiered levels, appropriately referred to as the 'upper-club' and 'lower-club'. The entrance leads patrons into the centre of the venue, giving the option to head up to the left, or down to the right, which, over time, can be quite a deliberate choice as people find 'their' own place. Kieran explains: "We see that customers seek their own area. They move about the club, but they return to their favourite area as a default."

The upper-club is headed by the DJ booth, backed by a wall of LED X-Panel, providing a spectacular focal point. This focus expands across much of the ceiling as the X-Panel spreads in a

matrix formation, similar to that installed at Area in Vauxhall, recently featured in NIGHT. Tony witnessed Lighting Effects Distribution's X-Panel at Area first-hand with a visit to the club itself. He drew inspiration and pinpointed elements that could work for Icon, as he explains: "We can address each individual pixel rather than boxes which allows us, for arguments sake; if we had a 'fire' running on the DJ video wall, we could run that across the ceiling. The reaction's electric."

This multi-functional space has LED X-Panel colour changing windows all the way down one side, while the opposite side is run with X-Strip along the skirt, and porthole-like lighting features, soon to be superseded with a proposed installation, span the upper-wall.

At the rear of the room, towards the centre of the club, a curved bar turns towards the toilets, cloakroom and a traffic orientated area of the venue.

The toilets themselves on both tiers of the club are an interesting design feature in their own right. Sink units impregnated with LEDs provide a

► contemporary edge, but it is the custom vinyl prints, sourced by Kieran and the venue's designer Paul Haffey, and brought to life by Screen Graphics that stretch uninterrupted across the cubicle façade and doors, giving each of the four toilets their own, unique character.

In keeping with the inherent 'ge: things right and keep things fresh' attitude, the process of image selection for these unusual canvasses, was no hasty process, often spanning over three months from concept to realisation. Such a timeframe can be justified with the right customer feedback, however, as Tony explains: "It's amazing the way it has worked. Because we have a toilet attendant on every night, we know the feedback and customers come in and go 'wow!'"

Commenting on working with Paul Haffey, Tony continues: "We always work with the same designer because we're really integrated with his thought process and he is with ours. He's coming to us with great ideas to work them up and in with new stuff available on the market bringing them all together."

Mirrorballed stairs lead to the lower club, and whilst the X-Panel theme continues, the choice of sound system changes. Audiotek's Frank Murray worked with Lighting Effects Distribution's Ian Kirkby to conjure up the frenetic X-Panel installation as well as fitting the Martin Audio system into the top club. To cater for the higher energy of the lower-club, Performance Audio & Light were asked to install a Funktion One sound

system.

The circular formation of the lower club sees a DJ booth head up the inner-circle dancefloor, which is bordered by a gangway set with LEDs that sweeps around the outside. Three separate X-Panel concaved strip boards flash along the outer walls of the room, interrupted by circular seating booths, that almost represent orbiting moons to the planet (dancefloor) within.

Commenting on the X-Panel in this area, Kieran points out its uses: "With this technology, like everything else, it's used in conjunction; it doesn't overpower the club. If you're here tonight, that's not going to be on all night so that when it is on, it creates more impact. It can be used just to create ambient light, it's so flexible."

Kieran is referring to the X-Panel wall flashing the Icon logo, but his statement is relevant to the entire club. Icon manages to merge a lot of visual technology while maintaining coherence throughout. The venue appeals to a mainstream audience, and the hi-impact aesthetic reflects this; it is a club set out on giving people a big slice of fun.

Tony and Kieran like to keep on the front foot, meaning it won't be long until the next stage of the Icon evolution is upon us, as Tony explains: "We want to refit while we're on top. We don't want to go down, just to try and work our way back up. That's why, like I said, after we finish one fit-out, we'll take a little bit of a breather and we'll be back into planning the next one." ■

VITAL STATISTICS

Club Icon
Denmark Street
Limerick
Ireland
Tel: +353 (0)61 310766
Owner: K&M Partners

Hours
Mon-Sun 11am-2am

Key Contractors
Interior Designer: Paul Haffey Design // **Main Contractor:** Bulfinch Interiors // **Sound:** Performance Audio & Light and Audiotek // **Light and Visual Installation:** Audiotek and Lighting Effects Distribution // **Furniture:** Abbey Owey // **Flooring:** PFL // **Washrooms:** Screen Graphics

Drinks
Pouring brands: Smirnoff Red vodka, Jameson whisky, Jack Daniels bourbon, Gordons gin, Morgans Spiced rum, Bacardi rum // **Premium draught lager:** €4.40 (Heineken; pint) // **Standard draught lager:** €4.40 (Miller; pint) // **Lead PPL:** €4.60 (Budweiser) // **Lead PPS:** €5.20 (WKD) // **Cocktail list:** No

Technology
Sound system (bottom club): 4 x Funktion One Res2 speakers, 4 x Funktion One F121 subs, 2 x MC2 E45 amps, 2 x MC2 E25 amps, 1 x XTA DP6i controller // **Sound system (top club):** Martin Audio // **Lighting:** 960 X-panels, 250 metres X-strip, 90 x Tryka LED downlighters