

The Sound Also Rises

Sloppy Joe's Bar Updates Audio System

Sloppy Joe's Bar in Key West, FL opened more than 70 years ago at the end of prohibition and quickly became a locally, nationally and

then an internationally known bar. Originally called the Blind Pig, Sloppy Joe's was the favorite hangout of local resident, Ernest Hemingway, for many years.

Unfortunately, the club's audio system was outdated and had been pieced together over the course of several years. "The last system install happened about 12 years ago," said Kevin "Spyder" Wright, entertainment manager for the club. "When we decided to update the audio system, we asked the local musicians who play here everyday what they needed and also contacted other clubs to see what they have installed."

The club operates 19 hours a day with three live music sets. "The club also has a computer-based, background music system that underlies all of the sets, as well as DJs/emcees who keep the atmosphere lively between band breaks at night," explained Paul van Puffelen of Southern Technical Support in Miami Beach, FL. Van Puffelen acted as system co-designer and installer for the recent upgrade. "After we met with Spyder Wright, we found that the club needed quite a bit of flexibility in its new audio system. This led to our decision to center the system design on the Martin Audio Wavefront system and the BSS Soundweb."

Van Puffelen worked with longtime collaborator Mike Harris of Harris Audio Systems in Miami. Harris Audio supplied the audio equipment, with Harris serving as system co-designer. They got started on the project when the duo received a call from Pete Jarvis, a regular performer at Sloppy Joe's. "Pete had heard one of our live systems at another venue we had built in Miami, Billboard Live, where we installed a very similar Martin Audio system," Van Puffelen recalled.

For Sloppy Joe's main room, main room perimeter, the Backroom saloon located behind the stage and the upstairs Speak Easy bar, van Puffelen and Harris chose Martin Audio Wavefront series loudspeakers as the main PA for their system design. "We have used different-sized configurations in small and large-scale nightclubs, live halls and boutique sound rental company rigs," said Van Puffelen. "The Wavefront system's sound is very smooth and clear. In an application like Sloppy Joe's, the people can be right up next to the speakers and still enjoy the sound at high SPL levels."



In Sloppy Joe's main room, there are two Martin Audio W8C compact, 3-way, mid-high cabinets per side of the stage flown with a Blackline S218 dual-driver vented sub-bass cabinet under the stage on each side.

cused," van Puffelen observed. "It was easy to contain the sound in certain areas and also within the open building, as there are strict sound ordinances in Key West."

On stage, four Martin LE12JB floor monitors have been highly complimented by the bar's musicians for their smooth response and clarity, as well as their power handling and output. A Martin LE400C monitor gives the drum wedge a little more kick with a 15-inch woofer. Daytime performers mix themselves through a Yamaha MG 16/6 mixer and Klark Teknik DN-360 monitor EQ located on stage. They also have two dedicated monitors for ease of setup and use. The main room's DJ uses a similar setup with the addition of one Martin Audio F8 used as down-fill to cover the front of the stage, an area usually covered by stage monitors during live performances.

A 48-input Midas Verona V40081p console and a TC Electronic M-1 reverb complete the upgrade. For cost savings, the bar's house Klark Teknik DN-360 EQs and a new snake were used.

The Backroom Saloon and the Speak Easy bar were also each outfitted with two Martin Audio F8s, a BSS Soundweb 9012 wall remote and an LG 42-inch plasma display.

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One of the main issues at Sloppy Joe's was intelligibility. The club needed to have crystal-clear sound without adding volume to the room, and to have even coverage around the room without taking the focus from the stage or losing the direction of the sound. Wright noted, "Our servers and bartenders need to be able to communicate with our customers at a comfortable level, and our customers are there to enjoy listening to the music and indulging in the atmosphere."

In the main room, there are two Martin Audio W8C compact, 3-way, mid-high cabinets per side of the stage flown with a Blackline S218 dual-driver vented sub-bass cabinet under the stage on each side. Since the bar is in the middle of the room, the main stage speakers are rigged at an angle that focuses the sound between the stage and bar in the seating areas. As a result, the levels at the bar area are kept lower, and people can order their drinks and converse easily. Two additional Martin Audio Blackline F8 ultra-compact, 2-way, passive loudspeakers are used as stage side-fill with another two Martin Audio Blackline F8s used as delayed fill by the front-door entrance.

The front-door fills on the other side of the bar give the impression that it is lively at the entrance and draw people in towards the stage. "The speaker outputs are quite fo-

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