SIN CITY REVIVAL

DRAI'S

Challenging the idea of a conventional nightclub, Drai's is built on the fundamental principles of sophistication, innovation, and authenticity. The 11th storey capstone of the stylish Las Vegas Cromwell hotel, Drai's provides an unrivalled view encompassing the neon drenched strip and beyond. At every corner meticulous attention to detail, massive LED lighting systems, and modern technology fuse to create a sensual, multi-sensory experience.

Created by nightlife impresario and nightclub 'Hall of Fame' inductee Victor Drai, responsible for nightclubs including XS, Tryst and Drai's After Hours, this 65,000 sq ft venue offers a multi-sensory environment taking entertainment and service to new heights.

With a capacity of 4,500-guests, the main room features 14 dancefloor tables; eight upper dancefloor tables; two VIP balconies; 12 mezzanine level booths; eight elevated tables behind the DJ booth with two VIP restrooms; and 16 elevated VIP booths.

Technology wise, the main room features over 4,000 sq ft of some of the most state-of-the-art high definition LEDs in production, including

a towering 80-sided LED disco ball - the only one of its kind, and the opportunity to detonate custom rooftop firework shows.

Steve Lieberman of SJ Lighting, the name behind countless high profile nightclubs on both the east and west coast of America, was once again called on for this enormous project. Speaking with mondo*dr during the summer, Steve explained the brief: "In Victor's previous big nightclubs, technology was really a second, or third-tier requirement and things were kept pretty minimal. This is the first time he's looked at a club and gone big on the technology and created a really amazing environment. Because he knew I was experienced in this sector he let me get on with what I needed to do right from the

beginning - but the main brief was to 'devastate the club community' - that's a pretty good directive for someone who does what I do. I was able to design a dream system for him - it was fantastic."

Entering Drai's, clubbers are immediately immersed into an over-sensory experience. A custom-made chandelier centrepiece fabricated from LED video, lighting and metal framing is the focal point of the dancefloor and utilises a motorised winch installed overhead to raise and lower the feature. There are 120 Color Kinetics iCove LED strips used along the edges of the chandelier, along with 42 LED pinspots and 80 10mm video tiles.

High resolution video in the form of 328 7mm video tiles covers the ▶

face of the soffit walls around the nightclub and the video treatment is framed by a custom LED lighting detail, which uses 72 LED pinspots and 1,144 Color Kinetics iCoe LED strips. Additionally, four high-powered full colour 12W laser systems are built into the soffit as strobe lights and audience blinders.

The ceiling over the main room also features high resolution video, LED lighting, a full complement of theatrical lighting from Elation and special effects. Commenting on his decision to work predominantly with Elation lighting fixtures for this project, Steve said: "Obviously I have great relationships with a lot of manufacturers but on this occasion the Elation products had the right features for the right price, it just made sense. The warehouse is in southern California as well, so this made life easier when working in Las Vegas."

There are 28 Elation Platinum Spot 5R Pro moving heads; 30 Elation Platinum Beam 5R Extreme moving heads; 24 Elation Rayzor Q12 LED Beam Wash moving heads; as well as 32 Proton LED strobes and 56 Elation CuePix WW LED blinders. Carefully placed LED video, lighting and effects, which come in the form of a Kryogenifex CO_2 system, confetti system from Artistry in Motion and a haze and smoke system, are designed around the centrepiece in a radial pattern, emanating rays of light from the luminous centrepiece. All lighting and video control comes from an MA Lighting grandMA2 console, along with a PC running Madrix software and a custom designed video server and VJ system.

"I always try and gauge the perfect balance between lighting effects, video and all the other elements to the design," Steve told mondo*dr. "The primary design is always going to be dictated by the shape of the room and the architecture - that's the driving force for all the technology. Drai's is an oval, radial-shaped room so we created the centrepiece custom video and lighting motion-controlled chandelier along with the video ceiling, which spokes out in a radial pattern and then a complement of lights that is both radial and linear at the same time. "By doing this we're accentuating the shape of the room, along with the soffit walls that wrap around and feature video."

The video content, all of which is organic, has been designed by V Squared Labs, and Drai's has an in-house VJ with a huge stock of content to play back throughout the night, all formatted to the size of the screen. EG Production Services provided all the video screens and built the centrepiece for the club.

With the use of video growing in the clubbing world, Steve continued: "It's becoming more prominent because it is now more accessible. Whereas before, especially LED video, it was expensive, heavy and you had to have really in-depth knowledge of how to use it. It was difficult for designers, operators, owners, installation companies and so many just didn't bother - now it's everywhere. Prices have come down and the resolution has gone up."

A club of this nature could be considered overwhelming, just in the sheer amount of technological know how needed, as well as that eye for design. For Steve, there was a very cohesive way of approaching the job at hand and there weren't multiple consultants dealing with various elements of the job. "They way it all tied together and the features throughout the club from inside and out were all worked on in the same way. The whole place has a uniform look to it," said Steve. "At the end of the job, when I asked Victor if he was happy and he told me I had exceeded his expectations, this was a really great compliment, especially considering the aggressive timeline and schedule."

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