

SINGAPORE

KV2s bolster up the acoustic sound at Wala Wala



Sindo Exports Pte Ltd recently outfitted Wala Wala Café Bar with a brand new KV2 Audio sound system and an Allen & Heath GLD80 digital console.

Located down a side street in Holland Village, Wala Wala is an ideal restaurant and bar for the laidback crowd. In this competitive environment it is interesting that Wala Wala has been established for 20 years and still has a strong following. The two-storey bar features an alfresco dining space at its bottom floor, serving an assortment of good beer, wine and Singapore Slings while its second floor houses a mini stage that host live music acts, including acoustic and contemporary rock bands, all through midnight.

The bar gets pretty lively as the night progresses, with the crowd buzzing towards the second floor for an intimate pocket-sized concert during and past Happy Hour. The space is decidedly compact but atmospheric with its dusky green walls and dark wooden furniture. A huge Carlsberg sign, bright with neon, adds to the chic lounge bar atmosphere.

While the stage stretches across a wide audience area, it is shallow in depth. Prior to the revamp, Wala Wala's sound

reinforcement system proved wanting as it suffered from heavy reverberation due to the cramped conditions set by the bar.

"Adding to that, the bands previously handled the mixes themselves, which usually came up inconsistent as the music would be too loud and ear-splitting," shared operations manager Maniam Krishnan.

To rectify this, audio engineer Mark Jason was brought in to manage the 11 weekly acts.

"When I have the acts up here, I tend to add live effects on the fly such as adding chorus to acoustic guitar or delays for vocals. It helps enhance the performance because every song turns out different. The sound we want to achieve is that of holding a mini concert in a bar," shared Mark.

After a speaker shootout from several distributors, Wala Wala opted for a KV2 Audio solution.

Mark enthused, "The KV2s are incredibly powerful, and what set them apart from the rest is its three-way speaker module. A lot of the other speakers are just split two, which did not give us the kind of vocal clarity we wanted. On weekends when it really packs up, that's when I push them a little more and

you can start to appreciate the power and the warmth that the ES1.0 speakers possess."

Supplied by Sindo Exports, two ceiling suspended ES1.0 speakers and two floor mounted ES2.5 subwoofers supplement the stage, driven by two EPAK 2500R amplifiers.

As part of the revamp, Wala Wala also applied acoustic foams on the ceiling and behind the bar sector to significantly dampen reverberation and slapback.

"The regulars, who have been coming in since the bar opened 20 years ago, acknowledge the change. It's a vast improvement in terms of vocals, especially so during weekends where the crowd is. Whether we're hosting a solo acoustic act or a five-piece rock band, the clarity and richness is there. The audience love it!"

A further four KV2 Audio ESM26 dual six-inch monitors allow for easy and clear sound monitoring.

"The monitors are pretty clear and loud, without sounding too sharp. The bands are a lot more controlled now that they can hear what they're playing and the audience sitting right at the front, don't suffer as much anymore," he notes.

Sindo Exports also supplied an Allen & Heath GLD80 digital console to compliment the stage setup.

"Wala Wala previously had a small analogue console, but switching to digital made a lot of sense owing to the many varied genres and performers playing here. It took some getting used to, but the user interface is pretty comprehensive and intuitive. Finding stuff on the go is especially convenient now that I can create presets for each act," adds Mark.

In fact, the bar also does live recording on the GLD80 by keeping the recordings for all the acts in their archives for further references.

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Allen & Heath GLD80 digital console