

Awards for Excellence 2006

Five systems integration companies were presented with Installation Europe Awards for Excellence at last month's Integrated Systems Europe show in Brussels. *Dan Goldstein* details them and outlines why they each was chosen by the judges to win its particular category

With the help of Brett Downing of our official Awards sponsor, TOA Corporation, and independent AV consultant Chris Runciman, I was privileged enough to be part of the selection process for this year's Installation Europe Awards for Excellence (IEAE), as a member of the judging panel. We had over 100 entries

this year – more than twice as many as in 2005 – and they came from a broad geographical spread of countries.

The standard was extremely high, and whittling down the entries to a shortlist of three for each of our four market categories – leisure, entertainment, congress and residential – was difficult enough. No wonder,

then, that we eventually decided to make a further award for a project which breaks new ground and genuinely breaks down barriers.

We intend to repeat the formula next year, and hope that your company will participate. The more entries we have, the more thoroughly we will be able to celebrate best practice among our audience. ■

Leisure category: VSI for Liberty Stadium, Swansea



Just one of a large number of banqueting and meeting areas fitted with flexible AV systems

Project background:

Vaughan Sound Installations (VSI) was chosen as sound and AV designer and supplier for Swansea's new 20,000-seater Liberty Stadium.

The new building, designed by TTH of Newcastle, is now home to Swansea City FC and the Ospreys, the new regional

rugby team for Swansea and Neath. VSI was asked to tender for the project by Swansea City Council on behalf of Stadco, the stadium management company with the brief of providing a complete AV solution for specific areas within the stadium. The client was particularly keen on having one company for the project – a genuine integrator with the ability to supply and streamline all the various technical needs into an easy-to-set-up and operate system. VSI, led by Richard Vaughan, came up with the answers.

The main conference areas that needed equipping were the Swansea Suite on the second floor, the impressive third-floor Platinum Suite overlooking the pitch, the Morfa Suite and the first-floor Riverside Lounge in the north of the building.

The Swansea Suite is actually divided up into three distinct areas seating up to 600 people – two separate conference suites at each end, and a multi-purpose central reception area separated by acoustic dividing panels. The system in had to take into account the room's multi-

functionality, which will see it being utilised for anything from wedding receptions to pre-match dining. The room is zoned so that each area can be used separately or in any combination, with the audio being controlled by digital processing to allow easy selection of the various room settings.

Into the two main areas, VSI supplied a 42in plasma and four 26in LCD screens, a Mitsubishi XD480 data projector and electric screen. A TOA D901 digital mixer allows easy selection of the various room settings, and makes full use of the inbuilt automatic mixing facility catering for a simple single microphone to a large conference using a portable flightcase. The video source is automatically linked through the D901 mixer and routed accordingly.

The Riverside Lounge, which is primarily a supporter's bar features a simple PA system which, like the Swansea Suite, again uses TOA ceiling loudspeakers. VSI also supplied a further two 42in plasma screens, a Denon DCM multiplay CD player and an Audio-Technica radio mic for speeches.

The Platinum Suite has two 42in Philips plasmas for hospitality, and a Mitsubishi XD450 projector and ceiling-mounted electric screen for conferences. The system can be divided up into two different zones when required, controlled via a Cloud zone mixer. This allows separate events to run simultaneously but its main function is the popular Platinum Club which provides pre-match hospitality to its members.

The Morfa Suite has been equipped with four LCD screens, a Mitsubishi XD450

data projector and a PA system and is used primarily for meetings and matchday hospitality.

VSI also supplied four Philips LCD monitors and a sound system to the Club Shop, and fitted 23in LCD screens into all of the Stadium's 28 hospitality boxes. The firm supplied additional plasmas for the boardroom, Vetch, Gnonl and St Helens Suites plus LCD screens for the rugby and football club chairmen's offices. The main concourse areas have widescreen televisions installed in the food and beverage areas.

VSI also supplied all the TV screens for the concourse bar areas – a combination of Philips plasmas and widescreen televisions. The total screen count is over 90.

The stadium's installed RF distribution system was utilised to supply video sources throughout all areas. These include an information and advertising content delivery system, DVD and video images plus inputs from the TV gantry and Swansea Suite for relaying large conference proceedings throughout the stadium.

Judges' verdict: "There have been many large new stadium installations performed in Europe in recent years and some are still ongoing. But this more modest project, with limited public-sector funding, was impressive for the scope of works carried out, and for the range of skills needed to make it all work

"VSI has combined video distribution and display expertise with the ability to design and implement a high-quality, stadium-wide sound-reinforcement system that has to handle a number of different spaces, each with its own challenge." ■



The stadium's RF distribution system is used to supply AV content throughout the venue