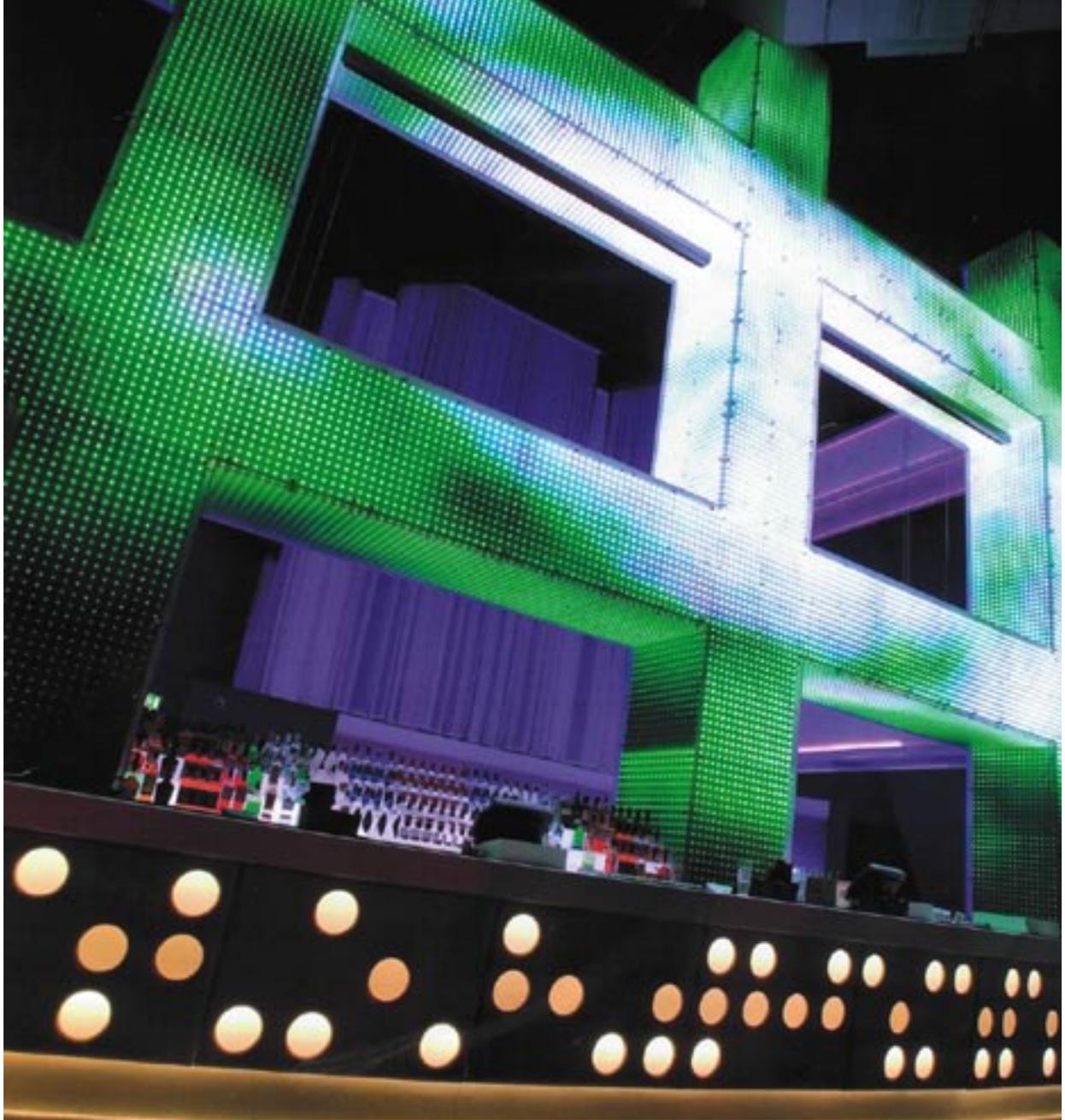


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VIDEO + VISUALS
THE VJ'S POINT OF VIEW

GATECRASHER BIRMINGHAM • EUPHORIA BY MINISTRY OF SOUND



The Gatecrasher lion, so symbolic of the brand's glory days, may have hung up its glow sticks and laid down in the ashes of the Sheffield club, but Gatecrasher has reared its head once again - now a very different beast - and come back bigger and bolder than ever before.

Following the closure of Bed nightclub and the fire of Gatecrasher Sheffield, only Gatecrasher Loves Nottingham and Gatecrasher Seven in Leeds remained, and the dance brand's fans waited with baited breath to see if a new clubbing phenomenon would rise.

And rise it did, a whole 65 feet into the air, in the form of a £5 million, 2,400-capacity nightclub in central Birmingham, following the acquisition of The Works. The Miami-influenced venue spreads across a staggering 35,000 sq ft, comprising four levels, four individual rooms, six feature areas and nine bars. Says Gatecrasher founder and MD Simon Raine: "We had no intention of taking an old Works nightclub, but when we visited and I stood on that balcony and looked down I just thought 'wow what a fantastic space'."

The superclub has surpassed all expectations and – along with matter at the 02 – was probably one of the most impressive large-scale UK clubs to open in 2008. This is evidence of Raine's ambition to revolutionise Upper Broad Street, create an impact on customers and shake up the UK's clubbing scene. Uninspired by the UK's club design, Raine looked abroad and instantly became excited by the work of renowned US designer Cal Fortis, of Big Time Design.

Fortis is responsible for the award-winning designs

- best interior design, best renovation - of the world's most famous clubs, including Crobar New York, Crobar Chicago, and the Cameo Theater in Miami (mondo*dr 17.4). Says Raine: "He understands nightclubs better than any designer; he sees a nightclub from many different perspectives, as an operator, a creative designer and from the point of view of the clubber. We are taking some big risks in the UK with some of his designs, but these are risks that he has already taken and which work exceptionally well in the US market. Our matrix wall is like the one in Cameo, but he's re-designed it, so it's the future of where Cameo Miami was. He's made it bigger, better, brighter and with more features."

The matrix wall Raine talks of is the most iconic of many spectacular, bespoke architectural features that transform the venue into a stage for spatial drama. The first thing that strikes people as they enter the cavernous main room is this 11 metre structure, which looms overhead, stretching from floor to ceiling, built from square LED panels, and displaying light, graphics and video. It has a three dimensional design, with three vertical columns intersected by two horizontal sections, and has been covered on all sides by LED panels brought over from China by Lighting Effects Distribution.

Damian Gale of Willow Sound & Vision, which installed the lighting, video and LED video at the club, says: "The Video LED columns were a unique challenge due to the sheer scale of installation, this work along with the back colour change took approximately 1,000 working hours to install, [along with Cannonock Electrical and Mechanical Installation]

To sync up the lighting and visuals, including the main room's matrix wall, the GB team called in Stuart Wilson (a.k.a. VJ Definitive) of Definitive Media. We asked him about the process:

Believe it or not, GC brought me in on the last week. This was due to the installation being finalised and tweaked right up to the end. No one really knew what would work on the LED screen due to its bizarre shape, so we really needed to see the installation completed before we created the visual. So we did two things: firstly, to allow the DJ (controlling the LED wall) to sync as best as possible, we created all visuals to run in a four-beats design, meaning all the movement, colour changes, animations moved, transformed or changed on a beat. This allows the DJ to tap the beat into the control software and the software then speeds up or slows down the visuals to beat-match the tapping. This sounds awkward but it is very user friendly. Basically, if the DJ can tap to the beat of the music, the visuals will follow. The control software is ArkAot DMX. Second, we created a number of loops that had audio recognition capability. This is done via Adobe Flash. The beats are picked up via the PC's small microphone and these then trigger effects in the Flash animation. Very powerful when done correctly. Making shapes work great.





We have performed many video LED installations but never 11 metres high and 20 metres wide! We feel that Gatecrasher has performed an amazing task changing the existing venue without major structural building changes; what they have created gives the customer a unique experience wherever they stand, this is a hard act to follow.”

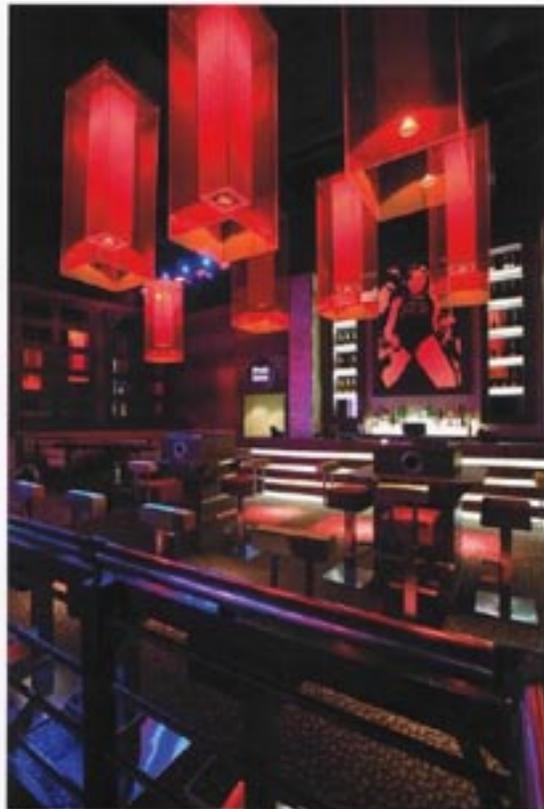
Definitive Media’s Stuart Wilson made the content for the matrix by producing over 250 bespoke video LED loops, specially designed to work with the 3D effect of the display. With the 3D construction of the LED display, the team had to design the visuals with pixel perfect mapping, which allowed the visuals to wrap around the structure seamlessly. Each video sequence was split into layers and assigned to each face of the wall, which gave the ability of full control over the 3D display. The playback system is ArKaos DMX with LED mapper to match the screen resolution to the LED display. Around the rest of the room, Pioneer DVJs combine with Resolume graphics computers to give a fresh twist to visuals, mixed by the new Edirol V8 vision mixer and Projected by five BenQ projectors.

Elsewhere, Gatecrasher Birmingham (GB) is coloured by vibrant images, open floors, catwalks, sin bins, dancefloors, kissing booths, and a 14ft mirror ball DJ booth. Fortis describes the design of the club as a high-concept homage to New York’s Palladium and the era of disco. His influences stem from the mid-’80s when Ian Schrager and Steve Rubell’s post Studio 54 New York sin bin, The Palladium, was in full swing.

Fortis explains: “There was a freer sensibility to nightlife then – everyone mixed on the dancefloor, clubland was full of sex appeal and sizzle. I want to bring back that kind of danger and rawness to clubland; Scarface meets the dark side of Saturday Night Fever, meets a Brazilian hooker in an analogue, not digital world.” Raine adds: “Gatecrasher Birmingham is a film set, a huge expansive studio space with oversized architectural pieces inserted to create a

ABOVE: the main room of Gatecrasher closely follows Fortis’s previous work on Caxxo in Miami, but uses the latest technology

BELOW: the Mansion room caters to a more mainstream crowd



juxtaposition between Fear & Loathing In Las Vegas meets the visual aspects of Blade Runner. It's more than the music, glamour and flashing lights of previous Gatecrasher venues."

To create and implement such an eclectic and complex design scheme, Raine hand-picked "the best design team in the world", drawing on the expertise of Fortis and Matt Rawlinson Design Ltd for conceptual design, who worked in collaboration with overall design project managers Design at Source, led by Stuart Trett, and main contractor Phelan Construction. Trett explains the design process: "Big Time Design did the conceptual design and big set pieces for the main room and Matt did conceptual design for Bed, whilst we pulled all of those areas together, made them happen and in addition to that did the entire design for Mansion, Orange Pop and all the intermediate areas."

He continues: "Raine wanted to absolutely get away from what's become a relatively stagnant and jaded UK club blueprint for nightclub layouts, which is what Big Time brought to it by getting the seating out and onto the dancefloor and breaking down that very large space." Rows of long arching blood red leather 'sin bins', balconies and a section of elongated steps that are meant to represent large museum steps for lounging on, mean that the surrounding areas of the dancefloor are all part of the action. To the left of the dancefloor is a ceiling-high feature wall, which towers over the entire room. Huge lexicon panels are adorned with translucent iconic prints, alternately portraying a queen and a monkey. In front is a platform for GB's theatrical entertainers, who can also perform on the trapezes set high above the heads of the crowd.

Although the main room is the key discussion point of the venue, the entrance to it was pivotal to the design because the journey to the main room was meant to be instrumental to its impact. Once past the initial turnstiles and up the stairs, clubbers are met with a preliminary 'departure lounge', meant to echo the experience one has at an airport before they embark upon a trip. The room hints on the glamour within, with pendant chandeliers, ripple fold drapes and reflective ceilings. A 180 degree turn takes guests down a long futuristic tunnel, with colour-changing lights and a glass wall to one side. Around the corner is a corridor covered in old 'crasher' posters – a brief encounter with the brand's heritage - before being suddenly swept into its astonishing new world, the main room of GB. Trett says: "The idea of the turnstiles on the way in and the tunnel makes it a bit like standing in a Disney queue line and wondering when you are going to get in." At the back of the main room lies Orange Pop, a separate room with its own DJ, sound system and lighting effects. Dramatically different in design and vibe to the main room, Orange Pop blends a kaleidoscope of coloured lights and furnishing with pop art Lichtenstein wallpaper, rubber floors and playful LED displays on the backbar depicting different lettering. Another play on words – a common theme throughout GB – is featured on the bar top; a yellow LG Hi-Mac bar is etched with writing, which was fabricated by Multi Surface Fabrications Ltd, along with the white rectangular bar in the Posh room. Says Trett: "The writing is by Roy Lichtenstein. It's about the meaning of fame and success – you might be rich and famous, but everybody drinks the same Coca Cola, goes to the same places and wears the same shoes. So it's tongue in cheek, poking irony at the fact that everybody is at Gatecrasher thinking they're cooler than cool."

Designers Republic has implemented a series of overt signage around GB, identifying different zones such as 'Powder Room' and 'Smoking Kills. This Way'. In Orange Pop, small 'kissing booths' look through to the main room, ensuring people aren't detached from the action. Above Orange Pop on the open mezzanine level is Posh, a private bar with



TECHNICAL INFORMATION

LIGHTING

MAIN 10 x Robe 1200XT scanner; 8 x Robe x 1200AT moving head; 8 x Robe 575AT moving head; 2 x Robe 575AT moving head wash; 4 x Robe 575XT scanner; 18 x Martin Woods Extreme; 4 x Martin Atomic strobo; 4 x Martin Cobalts; 98 x Leds Tubes; 11 x Leds 4 Oak Blinder; 5 x LED Flood; 1 x ShowCAD Artist console; 5 x BenQ SP 870's; 5000 Lux projectors; 2 x Resolume video server; 1 x Edrol V8 vision mixer
MATRIX WALL 2.054 x X Puzzle Panel; 4 x X Image Pro Driver; 78 x Xtemp LED strip; 1 x Arkade media server; 42 x X-Bar high power RGB wash lights

SOUND

MAIN ROOM: 4 x Opus CS850N active mid/high cabinet head with proprietary HF unit; 8 x Opus SB315 2000w custom sub bass cabinet; 1 x Opus SB115 2000w custom sub bass cabinet; 4 x Opus SB218 1400w custom sub bass cabinet; 11 x Opus MP400N 400w multi purpose cabinet; DJM-1000 mixer; DVD-1000 DVD player; CD3-1000 H&S CD player; EFX-1000 effects unit
POSH BAR VIP: 2 x Opus SB415 2000w custom vertical line source sub bass cabinet; 2 x Opus MP400N 400w multipurpose cabinet; DVD x1 DVD player; DJM-800 mixer
ORANGE POP: 2 x Opus SB215 1400w sub bass cabinet; 2 x Opus SB115 700w sub bass cabinet; 2 x Opus PSD900N point source 500w active mid/high cabinet; 1 x Opus PGO400 400w DJ monitor; DJM-800; CD3-1000 H&S
DEPARTURE LOUNGE: 4 x Opus DCR03 600w active ceiling speaker
BED: 4 x Opus CS750 active mid/high cabinet; 8 x Opus HB115 500w sub bass cabinet; 2 x Opus SB218 1000w sub bass cabinet; 1 x Opus SB212 1000w sub bass cabinet; 2 x Opus MP550 350w multipurpose cabinet; 2 x Opus DJ600 600w DJ monitor; CD3-600 CD player; DJM-500

www.gatecrasherbirmingham.co.uk

mood lit seating and off from the main room is Mansion, catering for the mainstream crowd with R&B and pop.

On the third floor above Posh is Bed, which can function as a separate club. Matt Rawlinson (who designed Gatecrasher Loves Nottingham and Gatecrasher Seven) created the concept for Bed in the initial stages of planning, as a space for the older, more sophisticated crowd. A central dancefloor, circular lighting rig and ten mirror balls give the room a disco feel, whilst the elegant bar area is flatteringly covered with leather panels that form a curve over people's heads and reflect the ambient lighting.

Each of the four music zones – main room, Bed, Mansion and Orange Pop – will play different musical genres each night. Going against the grain of its past, GB will host indie nights on a Friday and launched with DJ sets from The Editors and Babyshambles' Adam Ficek. Says Raine: "Deep down we still love dance music and house music, but most people in the UK don't want dance music. Gatecrasher has always been about music, it's about delivering an experience with music."

Raine states that the drama and impact of the main room demands a big sound. GB shouldn't have a problem packing the punch due to its custom made sound system by Opus Audio, which is in excess of £150,000. Each speaker cabinet has been built for a specific area in the club. Opus Audio also provided the



custom audio control and amplifiers for the venue. All speakers are driven with 30 Opus HD series High Definition power amps and 10 Opus XS series Loudspeaker management systems. XTA and BSS processors were used for overall system delay.

You've got to give it to Gatecrasher for having the balls to develop such a bold new beast. Raine is well aware of today's tough trading conditions. He says: "We chose Birmingham as it's the second largest city in the UK with an immediate audience of three million people on the doorstep and historically Birmingham has been a great clubbing city."

Gatecrasher is currently in negotiations with international territory licence partners to develop Gatecrasher branded venues, and are actively seeking new partners across the globe. Meanwhile the international events and touring side of the business will continue to operate across the globe in over 20 countries worldwide, seeing Gatecrasher parties in Russia, the Ukraine, Hong Kong, the Phillipines, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Australia, New Zealand, Bali and Brazil to name a few. But of Gatecrasher's immediate focus, Raine states: "Our most important focus at the moment is GB, this will set one of the boldest statements. Then our next stop is THE return to Sheffield." Across the road from the old lion's resting bed in Sheffield, the earth is preparing for a new beast to take form.

