

Towering ambitions



The pillarless Sheraton Towers Grand Ballroom can be subdivided into four smaller rooms



The A/V technology installed into the Crestron-controlled function rooms enables lectures and video conferences



40 Martin MH1 Profile moving heads have been programmed using Crestron software

Richard Lawn visits the Singapore's Sheraton Towers to check out its recent A/V upgrades



Sound reinforcement can be added courtesy of L-R Norton i1212W 3-way coaxial loudspeakers

AS MUCH AS HOTEL OWNERS MAY DISLIKE PERIODS OF slower economic activity, facility managers look upon them rather more positively, using them to conduct overdue upgrade works. Such renovation work recently took place at the 420-room Sheraton Towers Singapore on Scotts Road.

To merit its distinction as a specialist A/V systems integrator within South East Asian hospitality circles, Concept Systems Technologies maintains a firm discipline on its works schedule. 'It can be crazy,' reflects sales director, Gerald Fong. 'There are times when we have to juggle multiple projects simultaneously and so it's essential to plan meticulously, months in advance.'

With room upgrades at the Sheraton Towers set to compressed time limits, and with conflicting contractors on site, Concept's road to completion meant overcoming multiple obstacles on a daily basis. The company's part in the upgrade extended to the level two Grand Ballroom in addition to three adjacent function rooms – Amber, Pearl and Topaz – and the Pearl meeting room.

Once tenders had been approved, budgets agreed and deposits received, Concept then incorporated end user A/V requests into the final designs, placed its equipment orders to suppliers and created bespoke solutions and customised designs where required. Once called to site, inevitable compromises with interior designers and the main and

electrical contractors had to be made in order to complete the work on time.

The Crestron-controlled function rooms are each equipped with ergonomic chairs and flat screen TVs for video conferencing. For the audio setup, each room has been allocated Shure SLX4 wireless systems, with a Yamaha MG10XU mixer and 12 Electro-Voice C8.2HC ceiling speakers powered by a single PA1250T amplifier for sound reinforcement. Presentations and lectures are enhanced with the use of Eiki EK-401WA 4,600 ANSI-lumens projectors and LAV Hariz BN 3m x 2.4m motorised screens. A Crestron AM-100 wireless HD presentation system allows content for up to 32 users and four presenters to be displayed simultaneously using Quad View.

The SI's primary works were contained in the pillarless Grand Ballroom, who can be subdivided into four smaller rooms. The interior designer – who decorated the ballroom with chandeliers and customised gold leaf motif wallpapers – nevertheless placed fewer restrictions on the Concept team, but other challenges awaited. 'The last upgrade was conducted 15 years ago, so this was overdue,' explains Mr Fong. 'There is a 4m void above the 9m ceiling in the main ballrooms, for which there is no catwalk, and we could only access the space through a manhole. Once up there, we had to be very careful fixing the 25 intelligent lights and

Vital statistics

Ballroom 1: 8.1m x 14.7m
 Ballroom 2: 16.4m x 16.5m
 Ballroom 3: 10.3m x 11.9m
 Ballroom 4: 8.7m x 11.9m
 Total size: 593m²
 Theatre capacity: 600 guests
 Classroom capacity: 320 guests

Ballrooms 1+2 ceiling height: 9m
 Ballrooms 3+4 ceiling height: 3.5m

Equipment

1 x Crestron AV3 wireless media control system
 1 x Crestron Wireless Presentation Gateway
 2 x iOS Apple iPad interfaces

40 x Martin MH1 Profile Plus LED moving heads
 2 x Martin RDM 5.5 1-in/5-out splitters

3 x Panasonic PT-RZ970 8,000 ANSI-lumens laser projectors
 3 x LAV Hariz BN 6m x 6m motorised screens
 1 x LAV Hariz BN 4m x 6m motorised screen
 3 x LAV Hariz BN 3m x 2.4m motorised screens
 7 x Kramer WP-20 4K UHD HDMI/VGA Ethernet/audio wall plates
 7 x Kramer TP-580Txr HDMI extender transmitters
 14 x Kramer TP-580Rrxr HDMI extender receivers
 7 x Kramer FC-46xl HDMI audio de-embedders
 1 x Kramer VS-88HDxl 8-in/8-out matrix switcher
 4 x Kramer VP-729 video scaler switchers
 1 x Datavideo SE-2850 8-channel digital video switcher
 2 x Datavideo RMC-180 4-channel camera control units
 5 x Datavideo PTC-150 4-channel camera controllers
 2 x Datavideo DAC-8P SDI-to-HDMI scalers

1 x Yamaha MG20XU 20-channel analogue console
 3 x Yamaha MG16XU 16-channel analogue consoles
 2 x Norton Audio i1212W 3-way coaxial loudspeakers
 2 x Norton Audio ND2 amplifiers
 39 x EV C8.2HC 8-inch coaxial ceiling speakers (tapping 60W)
 1 x EV PA2400T amplifier
 3 x EV PA2250T amplifiers
 6 x Norton Audio i10 10-inch loudspeakers
 3 x EV Q1212 amplifiers
 AVP ¼-inch analogue patchbays
 Shure SLX4 wireless headworn and clip microphones

Norton Audio i1212W fixtures from above. Although we used the pre-existing ceiling speaker points, some of the brackets had to be modified and all of the cabling had to be replaced.'

As requested, flexibility has been added in the form of seven Kramer wall plates providing VGA, HDMI and audio outputs. The signals from the wall plates are scaled before being processed in the VS-88HDxl 8-in/8-out matrix and mixed on Datavideo SE-2850 switchers. Various room combining and dividing settings have been configured in an 8-in/8-out DSP unit. Ease of use for the facility managers has been provided courtesy of Crestron AV3 wireless media iPad touchscreen control for operating the audio sources and levels, DSP settings, house lighting, Wi-Fi and video projections. In addition, the 40 Martin MH1 Profile moving heads have been programmed with the Crestron software for individual and combined displays.



VGA, HDMI and audio outputs from seven wall plates are scaled before being processed in the Kramer VS-88HDxl matrix



Datavideo PTZ camera signals are mixed on an SE-2850 switcher

A/V engineer, Phyo Han, confirms how the new digital system has transformed his daily workload. 'We previously spent a lot of our time trying to fix the old system, following negative feedback from clients. Now, we simply make preparations well in advance for the varied clientele, whether it's a live band, a corporate event, a wedding or a private party. Settings can be easily stored and used again for many events. With our portable stage, the room is very versatile and easy to set up, allowing many hirers to patch their instruments into our main PA from one of seven different locations.'

The air conditioning vents situated alongside the ceiling perimeter in the Sheraton Towers meant that the projection screens had to be suspended some distance away from the wall rather than being flush with it. The previously existing PTZ camera system and Denon DN-DN4500 source players have been recycled for use in the newly refurbished ballrooms. 'Owing to budgetary constraints, we recycled products that were deemed fit for purpose,' says Mr Fong. 'However, many of our recommendations were approved, such as the addition of two more motorised screen



A main LAV Hariz BN 4m x 6m screen receives its display from a Panasonic PT-RZ970 8,000 ANSI-lumens laser projector

projectors in the two larger ballrooms. Given our experience in these spaces, the hotel realised that they could maximise bookings by providing room flexibility.'

At the Sheraton Towers, the dust has settled and the wraps are off, with only the smell of new paint lingering as a reminder of the refurbishment. Normal service has been resumed and, as expected, year-on-year bookings have increased. The installation of digital, wireless operations has enhanced efficiencies, smoothing day-to-day running of the facilities. Now, the emphasis is on future event preparations rather than troubleshooting.

Having entrusted its upgrades to Concept Systems Technologies, the Sheraton Towers' claim of state-of-the-art A/V systems for weddings, corporate events and private hire functions is no idle boast.

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The EV C8.2HC ceiling speakers are powered by EV PA2250T and PA2400T amplifiers

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