



A sound decision; music vs silence

Music is everywhere; in shops, lifts, even while being placed 'on hold' in between being told that our call is important to the company in question. With the dawn of mobile digital music, we can listen to our own choice of tracks wherever we are; exercising, sitting on the train or just walking down the street. Music is very much part of everyone's lives every day. So do we really want to listen to music when we go for that important business lunch or a special meal with friends or would silence be a welcome relief?

Without background music intimate restaurants can make guests feel uncomfortable as they are concerned that they will be overheard by others on adjacent tables, whereas larger open plan venues run the risk of background noise becoming too overpowering and creating the feeling of a workplace canteen.

The answer seems to lie with the quality and appropriateness of a venue's audio. Get it wrong and people will always complain, get it right and it enhances the ambience and experience of the venue and customers will rarely remark.

Walking across a gravel path, breaking a pane of glass, puffing up a feather pillow, sound is so evocative and can conjuring up such vivid imagery. Blended correctly with creative interior design, superior customer service and exceptional cuisine it plays a critical part in delivering a memorable dining experience, for all the right reasons.

There is so much we can do with sound. By investing in carefully placed speakers, a good quality music source and good quality audio content, the whole dining experience can be greatly enhanced. Venues need to ensure that sound is properly budgeted for when designing or refurbishing. Digital music formats such as MP3 files or ipods are badly compressed forms of recording and storing music. As such, although fine for personal use, these will never sound very good if used to play throughout a large space such as a restaurant. Venues need music servers which can store CD content in an uncompressed format (the same quality as the original CD). These servers allow the delivery of music in a far superior depth and clarity which in turn delivers an overall better experience for their guests.

Specialist sound, light & video systems integrators

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Sound is no longer a visual 'blot on the landscape' either. Speakers available today do not have to impact on the visual look of their surroundings, tiny speakers can be finished to any RAL colour to enable them to blend in or plastered in speakers which are completely invisible can be used. These can be placed in ceilings, behind wooden panelling or even behind glass or mirrors to enable quality sound in all environments. In fact technology can now allow each diner or table of diners in a restaurant to hear different music or sound effects to complement their menu choice and totally enhance the ambience of their dining experience through invisible speakers, directional speakers and sound cannons. The opportunities are endless.

So don't eat in silence, but don't tolerate a barrage of bad noise either. Make a sound decision and invest in a well designed quality audio system and hear the difference from your satisfied guests.

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