

Now Playing at The Lot Cinema

Opening its doors in November 2018, City Center Bishop Ranch is a 300,000-square-foot shopping, dining, and entertainment destination located in San Ramon, CA. The mall features a one-acre open air plaza framed by two levels of floor-to-ceiling glass storefronts. The exterior sides offer glassed-in storefronts on the first floor, below a windowless wall of corrugated stainless steel decorated with reproductions of works by renowned artists.

Beyond City Center's unique design, a wide selection of shops offers everything from home goods to fashion, while dining options range from gelato to Vietnamese cuisine. Of course, no mall would be complete without a movie theater, but City Center doesn't stop there. It again defies the norm with The Lot—a 10-auditorium cinema, dynamic upscale restaurant, cafe, and cocktail bar ... all conveniently located under one roof.

As expected from a modern theater, The Lot is packed with screens, though not just for movies. Installed by San Diego-based Fluid Sound, these include digital signage displays in the corridor, concession stand, and box office, as well as the establishment's crown jewel, a 3x3 video wall consisting of nine 55-inch NEC Ultra-Narrow Bezel Video Wall Displays (UN551VS) in the bar. The video wall displays are held up by Peerless-AV's Supreme Full Service Video Wall Mount with Quick Release (DS-VW775-QR).

The Plot Thickens

In addition to installing The Lot's displays and projectors, Fluid Sound was tasked with designing a system to distribute video sources reliably and cost-effectively across the facility, including 13 DirecTV receivers, a Sky satellite receiver, a Fathom Events receiver, and an Apple TV ... and that's just what's in the rack.

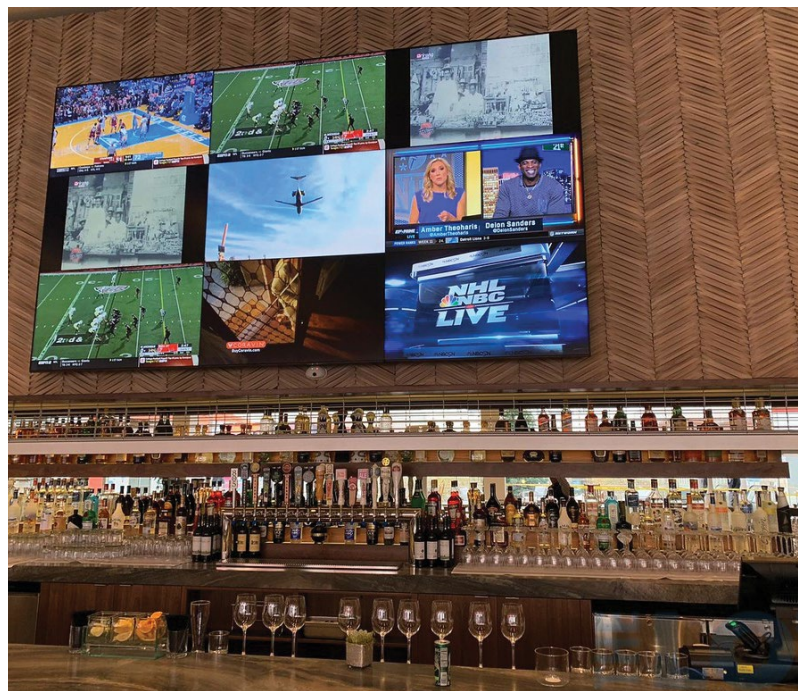
As The Lot's auditoriums and bar can be booked for private events, presentation capabilities were required for guests in these areas. This meant multiple inputs for laptops and mobile devices. Each of these inputs, along with all rack sources, needed to be available in every auditorium and on all nine displays in the video wall. Furthermore, The Lot wanted the ability to easily add sources or displays to the system as required, as well as the ability to scale to future video formats.

A Hero Emerges

Instead of relying on a traditional video matrix at The Lot, the team at Fluid Sound knew they could reduce costs and deliver increased flexibility and scalability by taking advantage of the inherent strengths of TCP/IP networking. For the AV distribution system, the company relied on Just Add Power's (J+P) 3G Ultra HD Over IP platform, supported by three Cisco SG350C-48MP 48-port Gigabit PoE stackable managed switches.

"Having utilized Just Add Power in other challenging installations, we knew from experience that its solution offered the flexibility and product mix required for this project," said Dennis Pappenfus, partner at Fluid Sound. "Instead of the fixed structure of a physical matrix—8x8, 16x16, 32x32, etc.—the platform allowed us to lower costs by creating a large virtual matrix with the exact combination of inputs and outputs needed. Expanding the system with a new display or video source is as simple as adding another receiver or transmitter to the network."

To create The Lot's virtual matrix, Fluid Sound connected the 16 rack sources to four J+P 3G VBS-HDIP-747POE rackmount transmitters that each distribute up to four 4K video signals and lossless audio signals, including Dolby Atmos. For presentations, guests can connect laptop



A 3x3 video wall comprising NEC displays and Peerless-AV mounts is the centerpiece of The Lot's bar area. Content can be displayed in multiple configurations thanks to Just Add Power receivers.

computers and mobile devices to J+P 717WP2 3G+ two-gang wall plate transmitters—one in each auditorium and another one in the bar—which offer VGA, HDMI, and line audio inputs. The wall plates provide a clean, finished look to complement The Lot's modern aesthetic, while simplifying the installation for Fluid Sound by eliminating the need to hide separate transmitter boxes.

The cinema's NEC projectors and video wall displays are equipped with J+P VBS-HDIP-518AVP and VBS-HDIP-508POE receivers, respectively. The units feature a built-in scaler so any source can be viewed at any resolution up to 4K, in addition to image push, pull, and pop, and video rotate and flip for video walls. Using the receivers' built-in video wall features provides The Lot with several options for displaying content in the bar, including one large image across all nine displays, nine independent images, and one large image in a 2x2 configuration with five independent images on the other displays.

Control over the system, in addition to The Lot's lighting and HVAC systems, is powered by Crestron's CP3 processor. Employees interact with the system via two hard-wired touchpanels, one at the rack and one at the bar, and two iPads. Two Crestron CEN-NVS200-PWE network video streamers provide video preview functionality on the touchpanels, with content delivered to the main touchpanel in the rack by an additional J+P VBS-HDIP-508POE receiver.

Case Closed

"The Just Add Power system has helped us exceed our client's expectations on this project in terms of both performance and cost," added Pappenfus. "Day in and day out, it has flawlessly handled the distribution of a whopping 27 video sources across the facility, relying on nothing more than Cat 5e cable. Employees are blown away by the video wall processing capabilities of the receivers and how easy it is to display content in a variety of configurations with the touch of a button on a touchpanel or an iPad."