

Cruise News

Involved : 65" Plasma Display VideoWall
End user : P & O UK
Placement : Ventura Cruise liner
Install Date : April 2008
Partners : Pacific7 & Kezia



When the new P&O cruise liner Ventura embarked on its maiden voyage to the Mediterranean in April its passengers were the first to view the impressive imagery on the ship's 21-screen plasma wall in its jazzy Metropolis Bar.

As part of P&O's aim of creating a fleet of 'super-liners designed for Britain' it has sought to offer passengers a number of unique elements on its ships. These include appointing Marco Pierre White and Gary Rhodes as consultant head chefs and using Tate Modern to recommend the on-board art. The bank of Panasonic plasma screens, which measure a total of 22 metres in length, is part of this arrangement to differentiate the ships from the other cruise operators.

Duncan Swinhoe, managing director of Pacific7 Productions – that has filmed all the footage shown on the screens, says: "P&O wants Ventura to stand out from other cruise liners - its Metropolis Bar is



the premiere venue on the ship and the screens are an important part of this."

Positioned at the rear of the ship on the top deck the bar offers passengers impressive uninterrupted views out to sea during the day but it is at night time that the venue comes into its own. The Panasonic screens show filmed images of the sun going down over major cities around world - comprising Las Vegas, London, Paris, Honk Kong, Shanghai and Sydney.

"If you look out to sea one way you will be able to see the light disappearing at night and if you look the other

way at the screens then you will see the sun going down from eight different viewpoints over a different city each night. If you are on a seven day-cruise then you'll get a different experience each night in the bar," explains Swinhoe

To enhance the realism of the imagery each individual screen represents a window in the bar of the ship. To achieve maximum effect P&O selected 21 Panasonic TH65 plasma screens which at 65 inches provided the right dimensions when mounted portrait. To add to the



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effect the 'mullions' around the screens further helped create the impression of windows.

As well as having the ideal dimensions David Pickett, general manager of newbuild at P&O cruises parent company Carnival UK, says: "Panasonic offered the best combination of quality and price and have proven reliable on other ships in the class."

Swinhoe agrees that they won out on price over the competition: "Plasmas at this scale are much better value for money than LCDs, there is no comparison." In addition, he says durability was an important factor and the Panasonic plasmas were the pick over the LCD alternatives on the basis of their longevity and reliability.

This is especially important with the Ventura implementation as the screens might be switched off for as little as five hours or less in every 24-hour cycle, which Swinhoe describes as "serious usage".

They are not only in use during the evening, showing the seven-hour sunset films, but also during the day when they show specially commissioned 'nature wallpaper', which has also been shot by Pacific7, and includes images of aquariums in Sydney, the Blue Mountains in Australia and dry lake beds with sunsets in Nevada. Further to this, Pacific7 has also created a '15-minute spectacular' titled 'Earth, Wind, Fire and Water'.

For such complex filming the company used an arrangement of three Panasonic HVX200 cameras with a motion control head fitted to shoot the sunset scenes as this enabled a very slow scan (which is not noticeable to the viewer) to ensure that the mullions did not block out any essential buildings such as the Empire State Building in New York or the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

With the imagery such an important aspect of this unusual implementation Swinhoe says the quality of the contrast in colours achievable on the Panasonic plasma screens enhances the experience for passengers.

"Panasonic plasmas score well on contrast in colours. For professionals you see how 'true' the blacks are and you then choose your screens partly on that basis," he explains.

Also vitally important to the implementation has been the quality of the installation, which has been handled

by digital technology specialists Kezia, that handle all the audio visual work on Ventura including fitting out the ship's cinemas.

It was essential that the 21 screens were all aligned and extremely secure on their mountings as the movement of the boat in stormy weather inevitably tests the quality of the workmanship of any heavy wall-mounted items. The installation of the screens took two weeks to complete with the final unit securely mounted on February 26.

"Putting the screens into the bar was relatively straightforward but lifting 90 kilos of plasma screen and mounting it and ensuring all the gaps are aligned still represented a challenge. The cabling and mountings all had to be secure and a safety glass fitted in front for any possible gale force winds as they can seriously knock the equipment around," says Swinhoe.



Key Facts:

- Durability & Lifetime – on for over 20hrs per day
- Colour contrast – Showing detailed images
- Installation quality by Kezia

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