

# MALTA:DELTA:DPA:APA

IS MALTA BECOMING THE IBIZA FOR DANCE CONNOISSEURS?



“The onboard processing saves time and money,  
and was really easy to work with  
and sounds fantastic.  
It's breathed new life into even my older amps.  
My love affair with MC<sup>2</sup> carries on!

It's a well-known fact that to secure the best acts and DJs, you need a stunning venue. If you haven't got a stunning venue, you at least need an amazing location. If you've not got the location, then your bottom line is a happy crowd and a brilliant sound system.

In Malta, it seems like all these things come together. Everywhere. This goes some way to explaining how, on this archipelago nearly half the size of every DJ's favourite “white isle”, it's become a dance destination in its own right. Beautiful beach locations, first class food and drink, and clubbing experiences from the most intimate high design, to full-on parties in the forest with no time being called on the dancing...

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Before this becomes a Maltese tourist board advertorial, let's get back to the story...

So you've got the venue, you've got the location and your loyal crowd know that the one thing that can make or break a night is the sound system. No matter who the DJ, if they've not got the audio smarts then the night's over before the sun's even gone down.

Luckily, Malta has a rich history of high quality audio systems, with local installers recognising the "added value" of not compromising on the speaker systems, or the amplification and processing needed to get the best from these.

With clubs and bars obviously wanting to take advantage of the island's stunning beaches, many of these locations are outside spaces, and as we highlight some of the best, it's clear that they all have one thing in common...

# UNO VILLAGE



"Club Tropicana Drinks Are Free..." so sing Wham!

## Uno Village: Fun in the Forest

The only one of our locations that's not got a sea view, but has a unique setting in the middle of Ta Qali's crafts village. With a capacity of over 4,000 people which it regularly achieves, there is nothing quite like it on the islands.

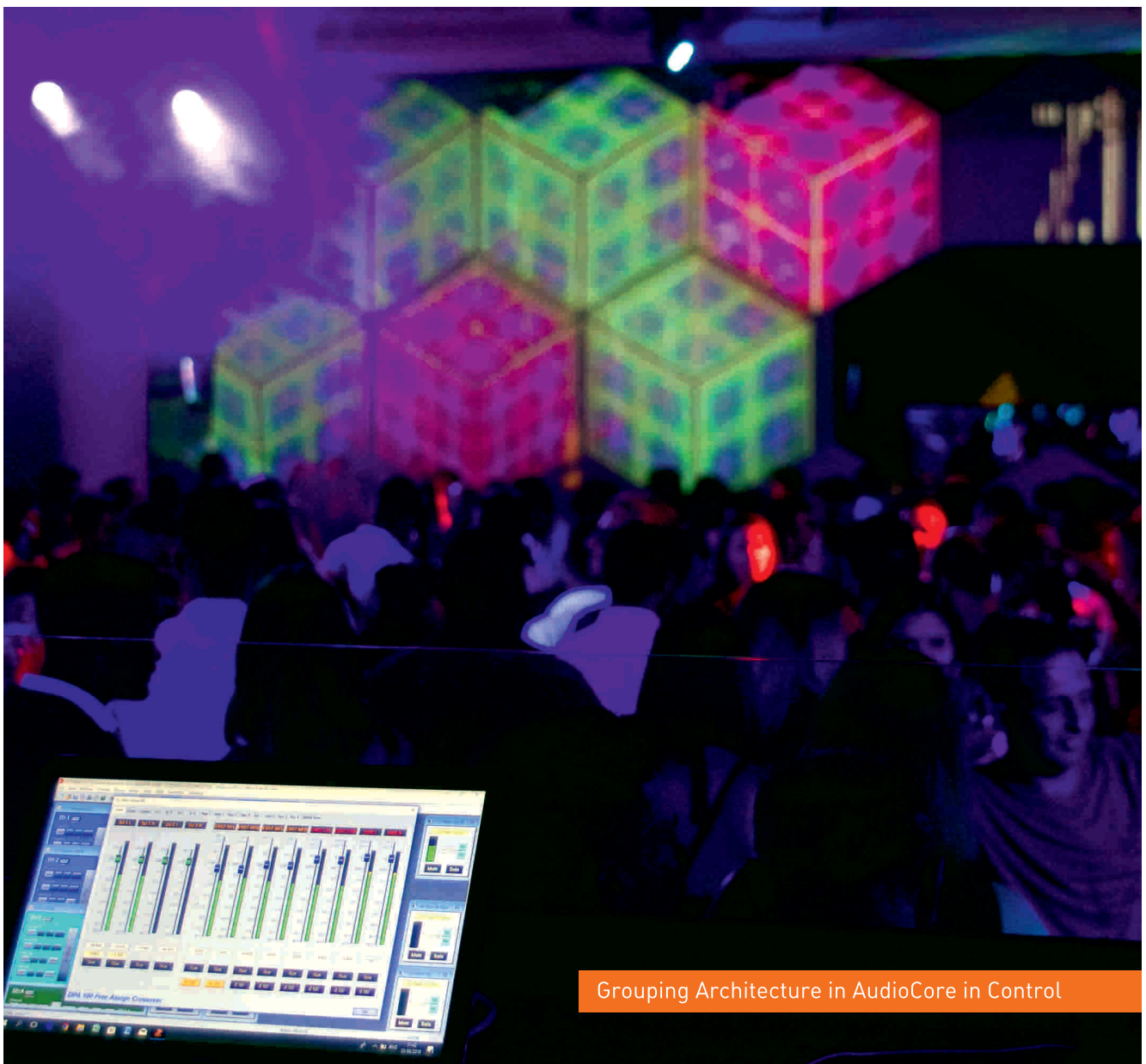
The "Village" moniker is well chosen as this isn't just a single venue in the forest, but actually four individual clubs and spaces, consisting of a main outdoor party area, complete with four bars, a secondary smaller outdoor area, Tropicana, plus stage for more intimate acts to perform, or for private parties, plus two more "Clubs" with their own identities.

Club LAX is an exclusive outdoor venue with its own entrance, four bars and a heavy nod, style-wise, to the hedonism of the Los Angeles club scene from the 90s. Club Miami is the only indoor venue which can be used all year, and features three bars replete with beautiful furniture to complement the stunning patio that overlooks the main club.

The list of visiting superstar DJs and notables just keeps growing - Todd Terry, Joris Voorn, Sven Väth, Agoria, Armin van Buuren, Sander van Doorn, Solomun, with the clubbing festival behemoth Creamfields choosing Uno as its host each year. Even our friends at the BBC have made an appearance, with Annie Mac hosting her "Lost and Found" festival on site in 2017 and again in 2018.

The entire group of venues underwent its first big refurbishment way back in 2002 and reopened to great acclaim, proving popular with locals and discerning visitors alike. The venue has been going strong ever since, and it was decided back in 2015 the time was right for an update to, amongst other things, the audio systems across all four sites. This was to be rolled out over a few years, and FutureTech Professional Audio were chosen to plan and carry out the required updates during the club's "low season" period before the summer.

Starting with the biggest system, FutureTech became one of the early adopters of XTA's APA amplifiers, following on from their success in Ibiza



Grouping Architecture in AudioCore in Control

at a variety of venues, and knowing the lineage of the company's speaker processor quality.

Stefan Farrugia, manager of FutureTech, explained why he had settled on APA for the start of this ongoing project:

"One of the main design changes for this venue's refit was the need to include a method for getting audio from one venue or stage to another and making this as simple as possible. Different rooms and spaces could either work independently or share audio sources to create a club environment that would encourage people to explore the complex further."

"As XTA's APA amplifiers are not only supremely powerful and sound amazing, they are also highly integrated with extensive onboard DSP and Dante audio networking."

This networking aspect is part of what makes the amps so adaptable to many applications. Not only will the amps accept audio from analogue and AES sources, and of course Dante, they can also output Dante back onto the network.

This allows different DJs, for example, to get their audio onto the network via APA for use elsewhere, as well as locally, without the need for any further hardware. The incoming audio can be EQ'ed and sent back out via Dante without even being used by the APA, as the four inputs allow two stereo analogue sources to be connected at the same time.

A total of 4 APAs were driving the "Tropicana" system comprising Funktion One's new Evo designs – four Evo 6 cabinets, augmented with four BR221 subs. Additionally, the DJ monitoring was driven from these amps – a pair of RM18s (custom PSM18 coaxials with a passive crossover) and a pair of BR118s on sub duties. The lounge area of "Tropicana" was further covered by four smaller F1201 fills with a couple of BR218s, all driven from the same four APAs.

APAs are getting the "star billing" here initially, because they were the first part of the system to be completed and have actually been the backbone of the entire complex audio distribution for coming



The DNA120s “just ticking over” on Subs

up to three years.

Jason Kelly, XTA’s Technical Sales Manager for EMEA was on hand to help with the commissioning of the system and configuring the Dante routing to offer the flexibility of using anything that was plugged into the APAs anywhere else throughout the entire club.

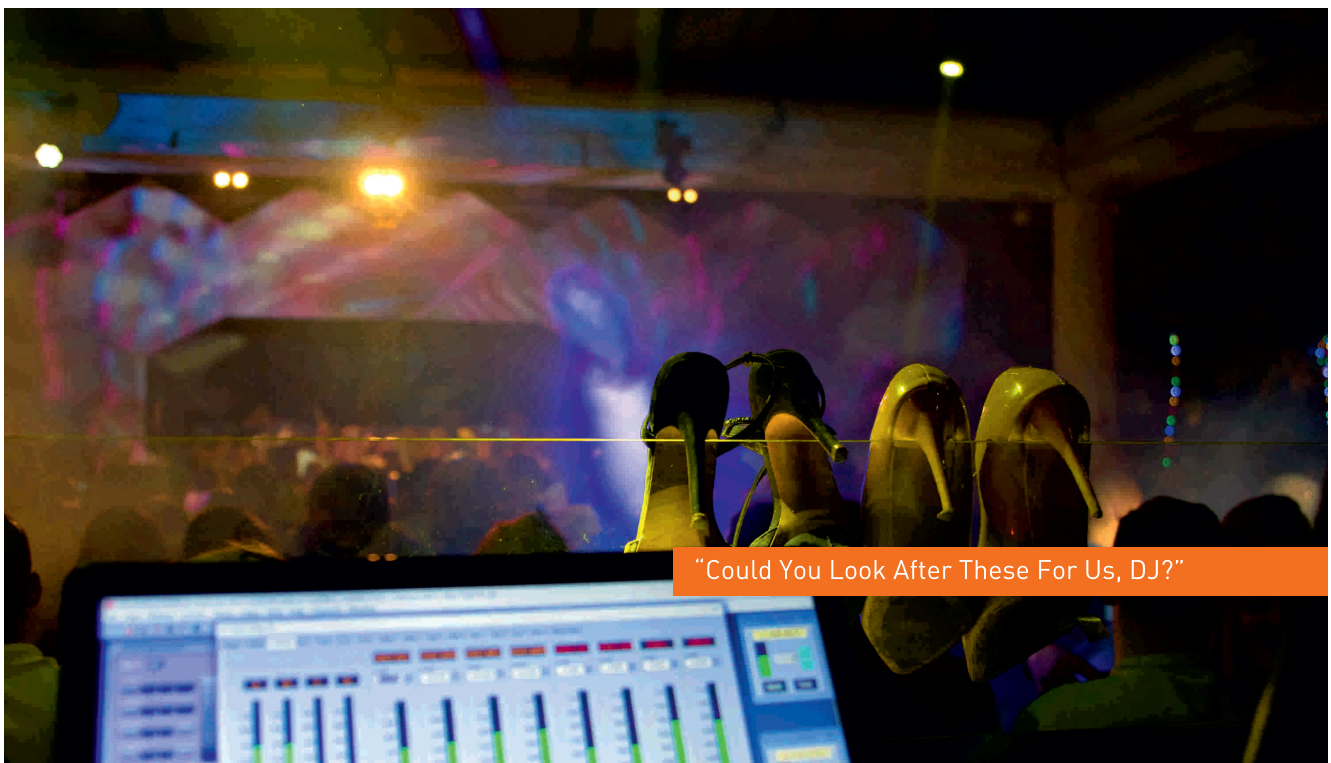
“The use of APA in this incredible location has really opened up the flexibility of the club’s individual spaces, allowing them to work together as complementary extensions of each other to blend the dance floors and lounge areas. When offering the club to promoters as a possible venue, this ability is probably unique in the whole of Malta.”

For example, the “Tropicana” system can either be additional dancefloor and bar facilities for the main stage, or function as a room in its own right, using the local stage for a visiting DJ. However, this audio could be fed to another part of the club – LAX for example. As this is often a VIP area,

they might choose to get their music another area if they wanted to!”

The main stage has been the most recent upgrade, and the mega-system supplied here has been powered by some of the first XTA two channel DNA120 amplifiers in the world. These unique amplifiers have a trick up their sleeve that makes them perfectly adaptable to an environment such as this – their Dante interface without DSP. A single switch can swap them from standard analogue input powerhouses to network enabled devices as they are fitted with 24 bit, 96kHz DACs and can pick up Dante direct from any source.

The DNA amplifiers were designed primarily to work directly with the DPA amplifiers from XTA which feature quad channel power amplifiers with four processing input channels and full output processing including FIR capabilities. Uniquely, the DPA amplifiers also feature an additional four aux outputs which have the same powerful DSP complement as the power amp channels, but are available as local analogue outputs and also can be



“Could You Look After These For Us, DJ?”

fed onto the network.

With the addition of a single network cable, one DPA amplifier can therefore supply processed audio to any number of DNA amplifiers to expand any system, and in turn receive its source audio from any other networked audio component. This working method is what has been the foundation of the main stage install at Uno Village. Jason explains further:

“The main dancefloor area, being outside and in the midst of a lot of forest land, is let us say, ‘less than restricted’ for SPL and time considerations other venues! This also means it has to be capable of playing harder for longer and in some pretty high temperatures. At the heart of the system is a DPA100 – our quad channel DSP amplifier – and this feeds a rack of DNA amplifiers to drive not only the main system and subs, but the Funktion One flagship DJ monitors – each of which has a built in 2 x 18 sub!”

This system uses 2 x DNA120s to drive 8 F121 subs as well as a DNA100 to augment the DPA100 for the three way top boxes on the PSM318 DJ monitors with their dual 18 subs.

Stefan Farrugia has been thrilled by the performance of this system, especially the DNA120s:

“We would expect nothing less than perfect performance from the DPA/DNA amplifiers, following as they do in the footsteps of APA, but the DNA120s have just blown me away! Not only are they barely “breaking a sweat” driving this huge club system, but the audio quality is so good they almost feel wasted on sub duties...they are incredible beasts!”

Opening this summer as part of the Uno Village is the “Backyard” area – a venue designed for the “indie kids” but featuring a system that wouldn’t be out of place in a nightclub in Dubai – a Resolution speaker system from Funktion One, driven by a tried and tested combination of E Series amplifiers from MC<sup>2</sup> Audio, and the industry standard speaker processing of XTA’s DP448. The 4 x Res 4 top cabs are matched to 4 x F218 subs and the system uses a single E90 stereo amplifier on the low end, an E100 quad channel amplifier on mids and an E25 on highs duty.

“Whilst it’s not got the network ability that the other parts of the club now have, it’s a tremendous system in its own right and a welcome addition to the line-up of spaces and places that Uno Village can now offer.” said Stefan.

With more work at Uno yet to come as the other areas get an update, Stefan is looking forward to the inclusion of more DPA and DNA in Uno Village: “This is a flagship install here in Malta, and the XTA and MC<sup>2</sup> Audio amplifier line-up is just going from strength to strength, which is why I keep specifying it all over the island!”

We will continue to explore the best systems on the island in part two of this round-up...