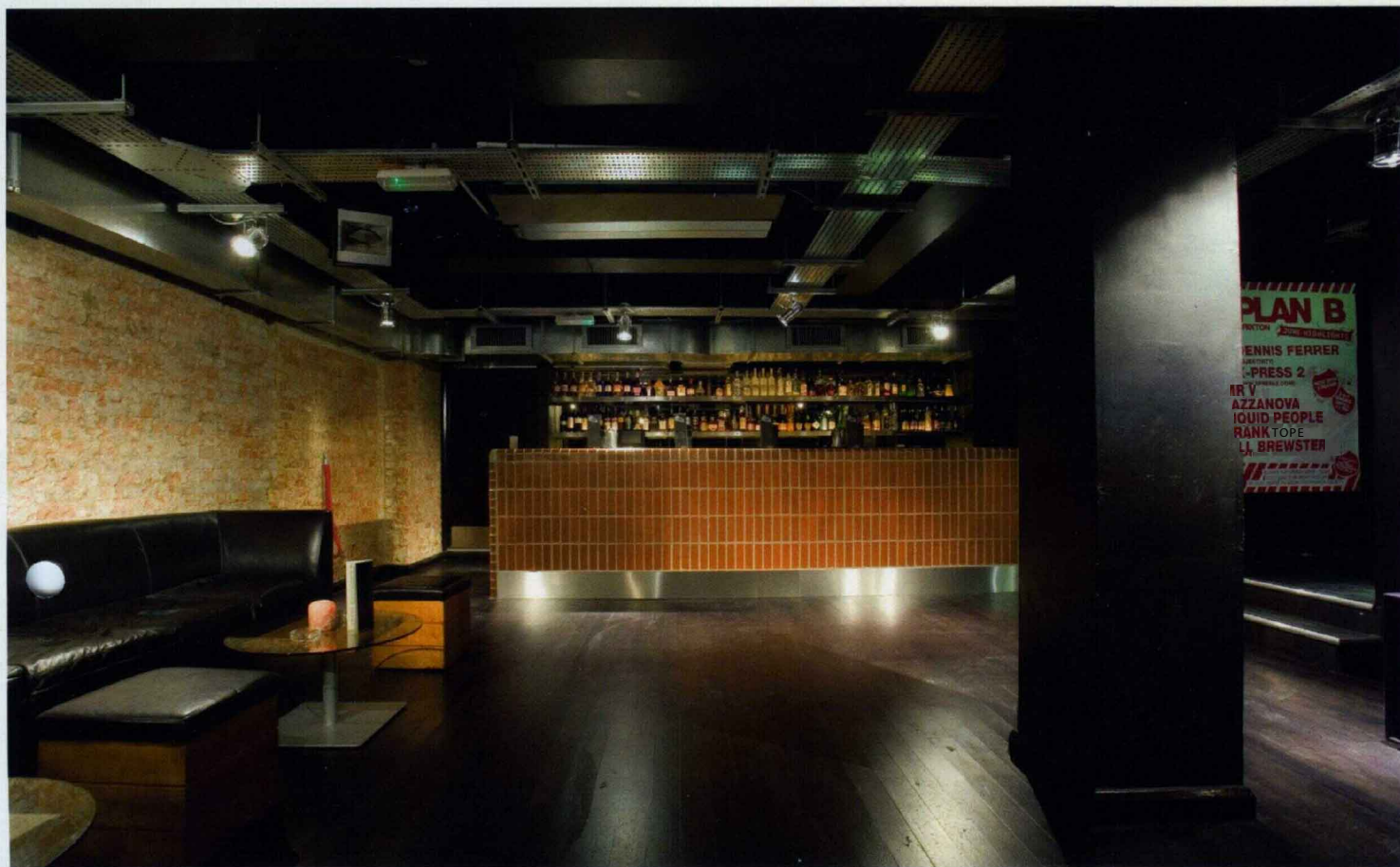


WORDS: LEO BATCHELOR
(l.batchelor@mondiale.co.uk)

PHOTOS: JIM ELLAM
(jimellam@btinternet.com)

VENUE REVIEW



LOCATION: BRIXTON VENUE TYPE: CLUB

B-Low

Second room for Brixton's favourite underground dance venue

Five years have passed since James and Andrew Campana converted an old Wimpy restaurant on Brixton High Street into the underground DJ bar Plan B. The two Manchester brothers wanted an enclave of Mancunian 90s house with a high end Funktion One sound system and an industrial look, giving local music lovers an alternative to Fabric, Neighbourhood, Cargo et al.

They also put a premium on customer service, with simple bar food done well and a West End-style cocktail menu devised by Drinks Director Andrew. On opening the venue attracted many accolades, including Best Bar London at the BEDA Awards 2003, and a great deal of hype from the press. But longer term success has allowed the team to expand their portfolio in 2007: building a new room, B-Low, beneath the original venue and an entirely new club, Plan B Clapham, opening later in the year.

The impetus for developing a second room at 418 Brixton Road, James explains, came from the Friday and Saturday night "road block" queues

and an increasing demand from private events organisers, as well as artists playing at the Academy, to hold their parties there. The company were also keen to expand musically:

"With one room and one sound system you're limited to the number of different nights you can put on," explains James Campana. "London's club scene is getting more and more fragmented. The licensing laws have meant that local clubs can also have late licences, so the crowds aren't all disappearing off to the same place, by which I mean Fabric. But musical genres are also fragmenting, and in some case crossing over, so that you have the option of doing many different kinds of nights. Smaller venues are quicker to adapt to new musical tastes, and with our new room we're going to push the boat out."

The look of the venue has been created by DTwo Designs, who were involved in a great deal of enabling work - upgrading the steel work, installing drainage and new fire exits, pouring a new concrete floor - before the designs could be fleshed out.

The room's aesthetic is a continuation of Plan B

- simple but stylish black leather furniture, polished industrial features overhead and exposed brick work at the bar and walls.

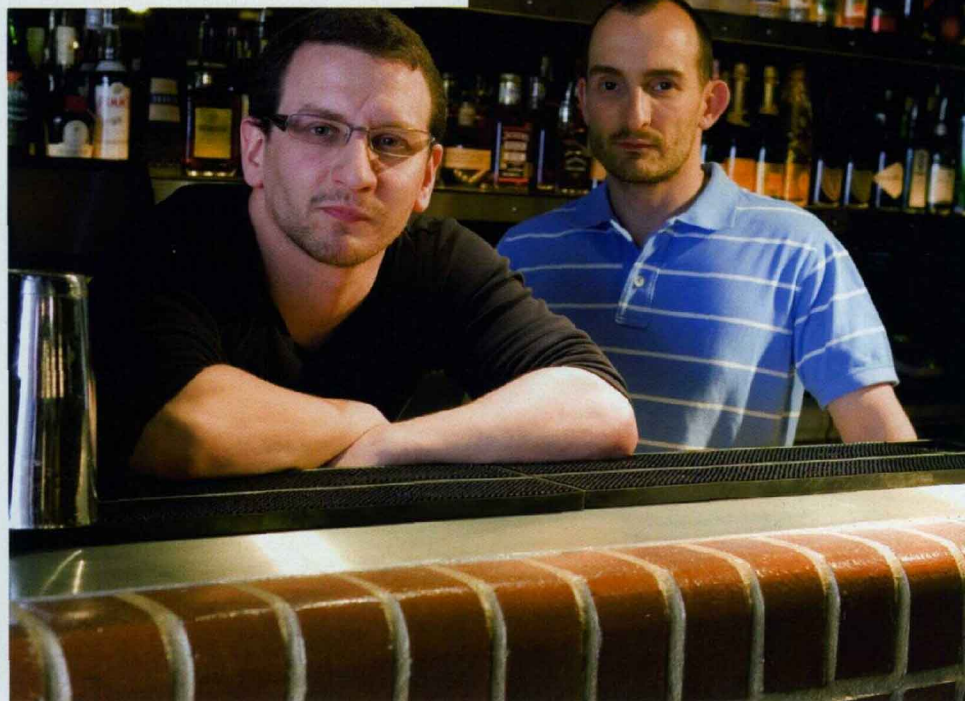
But the heart of the new room is a brand new Funktion One sound system installed by Electracoustic - the firm behind the original sound spec at Plan B.

With Funktion One upstairs, James Campana was keen to maintain the quality of audio for their range of in house nights. These include the immensely popular Friday night Fidget - a weekly hip hop, funky disco and soul event - and Saturday's Compact Disco, renowned for having some of the best line ups South of the Thames (think Norman Jay, Joey Negro, Giles Peterson, Rob Da Bank, Robert Owens and X Press 2).

The sound cover is delivered through four Funktion One Res 1 speakers flown in each corner. Bass frequencies are provided by Funktion One's new F221, and the system is powered by an MC2 E25 and two MC2 T200 amplifiers with control from an XTA DP446. A Bitner 400 amplifier is used to power the DJ monitors, while the final

VENUE REVIEW

BELOW: Plan B's MD James Campana (right) and Drinks Director Andrew Campana. RIGHT: Funktion One Res 1s are at the heart of the new room's sound installation



TAL STATISTICS

B-Low
418 Brixton Road
Brixton
London
SW9 7AY
Tel: 08701 165 421
Owner: Simplestyle Ltd

Hours

Wed-Thur 8pm-3am // Fri-Sat 9pm-5am // Sun 9pm-3am

Key Contractors

Interior Designer: DTwo Designs Ltd // Sound Installation: Electracoustic // **Cloakroom:** Q-Robe

Drinks

Pouring brands: Beafeater gin, Sauzahnitos tequila, Bacardi Oro, Gosling's Black Seal, Courvoisier VS // Premium draught lager: £2.20 (Staropramen; pint) // Standard draught lager: N/Aj // Lead PPL: £3.50 (Stella) // **Cocktail list:** Yes

Technology

Sound system: 4 x Funktion One Res 1s, 1 x Funkt F221 bass bin // Processing and control: 2 x MC2 T200 amp, 1 x E25 MC2 amp, 1 x Bitner 400 amp, 1 x XTA DP 446 controller, 1 x LA Audio BCL20 analogue compressor

► sound is filtered through an LA Audio BCL20 analogue compressor.

The importance of the sound install warranted a meeting with Funktion One to try out various configurations of the kit at their Dorking headquarters.

"We looked at a few different approaches to the downstairs space," says *Electracoustic's* John Trotter. "We talked about an old school 'big stereo' set up along the far wall, using two stacks of Res 4s and two bass units. We tried mock set ups in Funktion One's demo room, and settled in the end for Res 1s flown at each corner - to be consistent with the layout of the upstairs installation - and the new F221, which proved itself to have a good

depth of bass and a great upper bass articulation. It seemed to fit well with the relatively small Res 1s. The final install sounds really live and fresh, and the kit didn't need any tweaking despite the exposed metal structures."

The new system has allowed the Plan B team to successfully diversify their Friday and Saturday nights, and the venue has already hosted a livey range of mid-week after-parties for the Scissor Sisters, Hard-Fi and The Mighty Boosh.

"It's worked out really well," concludes James. "I think the Plan B concept will keep growing so long as we find the right venues and continue to place substance over style." B

e-motion



THE BEAT GOES ON

e-series



Output power per channel
8 ohms 9.1 kHz 750W (900W peak)
4 ohms @ 1 kHz 750W (900W peak)

Weight
10.25 kgs



Output power per channel
4 ohms 6.1 kHz 1250W
2 ohms 9.1 kHz 2200W (2500W peak)

Weight
10.25 kgs



Output power per channel
4 ohms 8.1 kHz 2250W
2 ohms @ 1 kHz 3200W (4500W peak)

Weight
11 kgs



Output power per channel
4 ohms @ 1 kHz 750W
2 ohms @ 1 kHz 1400W (1500W peak)

Weight
9.9 kgs

All MC2 products carry a 5-year warranty

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Tel: +44 (0) 1404 44633
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