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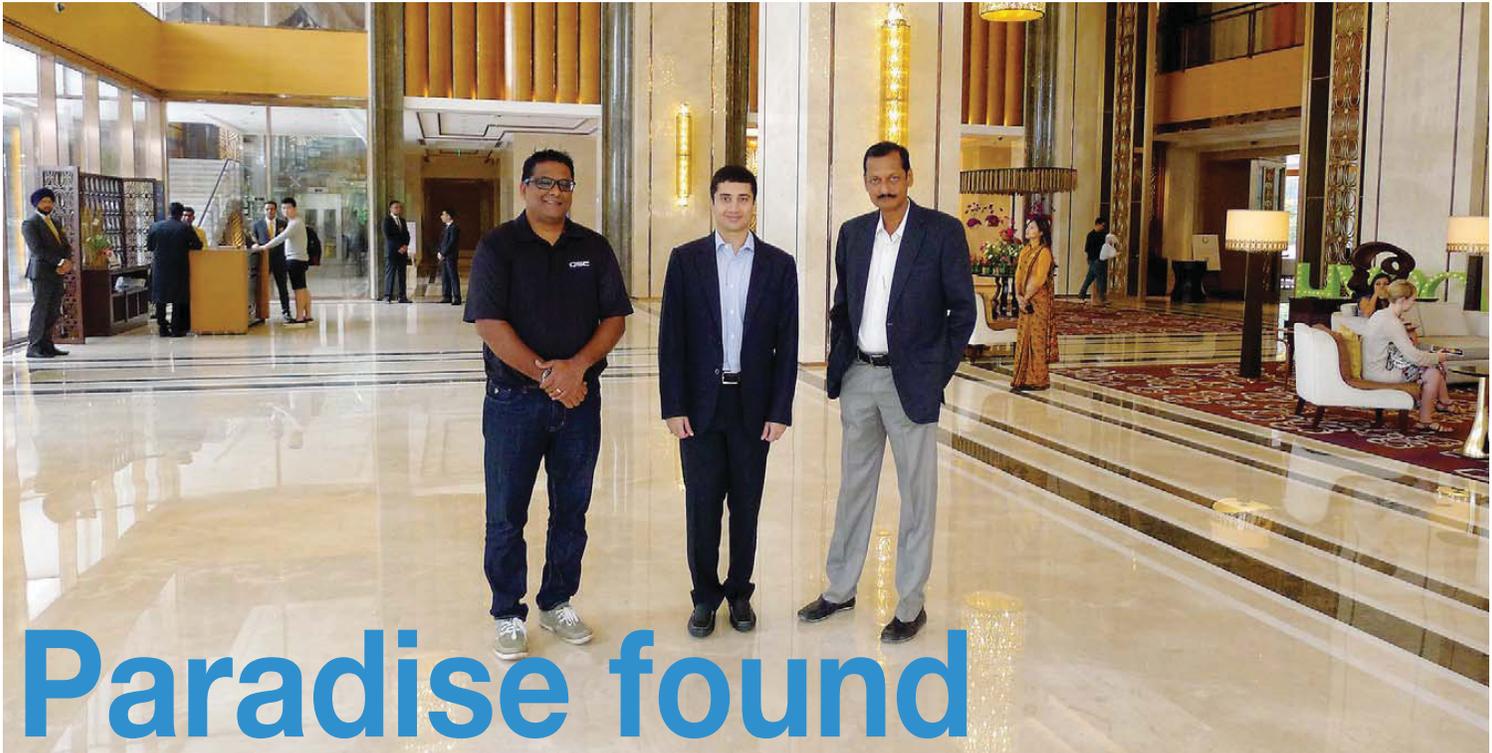
Overlooking the lobby area



The grand ballroom



The Saffron Indian restaurant



Paradise found

India's first Shangri-La hotel has opened in Bangalore, with QSC systems running on Q-Sys throughout. **Caroline Moss** checks in

FOUNDED IN 1971, THE LUXURY HONG Kong-based Shangri-La hotel group now boasts five brands, 111 hotels and resorts and 38,000 rooms worldwide. The first Shangri-La hotel in India has now opened its doors in Bangalore, and is setting new standards in a city not unfamiliar with the concept of five-star hospitality.

The entire A/V installation was overseen by Sudhendra Yelahanka from Tekniks, who worked closely with official Shangri-La consultant, Campbell Shilling Law, based in Hong Kong. 'This company detailed the equipment required for the project, and I was given the specifications,' says Mr Yelahanka.

'The brief was for the usual A/V and BGM requirements, but it was all on an analogue platform. I couldn't understand why they weren't looking at a digital solution, so I consulted Sushil John from QSC about using the Q-Sys platform, which I had worked with in the past on a few auditorium projects. It's cost effective and user-friendly. We won the tender with a system based around two Q-Sys Core 500 processors, and it has worked out so well. The Shangri-La group doesn't believe in compromise; it's first class or nothing. So if you're bringing in a new product or technology, it needs to be able to meet the company's requirements and expectations, and deliver.'



Rajesh Gadipuri and Rajesekal Chandran from the maintenance team

Initial building work at the property site started in 2011, and Mr Yelahanka was brought into the project three years later, when he was asked to give a presentation to the vice president of Shangri-La in Hong Kong. 'When we came onboard, the building was a shell,' he recalls. This gave him the opportunity to work on the A/V systems from the ground up, and

his role as consultant expanded as he found himself becoming a hands-on member of the team, project managing and working alongside the contractors. 'This was my responsibility,' he says. 'For two years I was here every day. I learned a lot and it was interesting. I worked closely with the architects, interior designers and hotel management, who were supervising

the build, so there were lots of people involved. I had very good support from the integrators, not to mention QSC here in India.' The entire A/V system integration was carried out by Bangalore-based PLD.

For Mr Yelahanka, the biggest challenge was integrating the different zones throughout the hotel. 'I have to give Deepak Gracias from QSC in Bangalore the credit for this, because he taught me so much about working with Q-Sys,' he says. 'QSC had promised me back up, and it was delivered. There are a lot of box sellers here in India, but we needed to work with people who could provide the after-sales support.'

The Shangri-La Bangalore was also a major installation for QSC. 'This is the biggest project we've done in the hospitality sector in India to date,' says Mr Gracias, application engineer at QSC's India branch. 'It's a huge hotel, with many different zones to cover, so we divided the entire DSP into two sectors.'

The system is managed by a main control room on the second floor, supported by sub control rooms on the second and 16th floors, all interconnected by a fibre optic QLAN network.

One of the Core 500 processors, providing 128 network I/O channels and accommodating eight I/O cards, dual Ethernet ports, one auxiliary Ethernet port and two GPIO ports, controls the

basement up to the second level. This includes two training rooms in the basement for Shangri-La staff, the lobby, lobby lounge and all-day restaurant on the ground floor, a meeting room, junior and grand ballrooms, three function rooms which can be combined into various configurations, a boardroom and all public spaces in between.

An impressive inventory of QSC AD-C42T 4-inch and AD-C821R 8-inch ceiling speakers have been installed, with a total of 125 throughout the lower levels and a further 41 AD-C42Ts for the swimming pool and spa area, along with four AD-S32T wall-mounted speakers and two AD-C81tw ceiling subwoofers.

‘Once QSC proposed a digital solution the costing actually went down’



QSC AD-S52T wallmount speakers at the outside restaurant terrace

flexible as possible. The consultants in Hong Kong, together with Sudhendra, gave their input as to what they required, which Sushil John and I translated into how the system could be adapted. Everyone’s input was very valuable, and we all worked together on getting the very best system for this property.

‘The combined A/V system is hugely flexible, and it’s all controlled by Crestron. The degree of automation this provides is impressive, such as the ability to lower projectors to the required height, switching on microphones, changes in system operation in the grand ballroom, automatic ambient compensation in the lobby area, auto change of BGM music and volume levels based on time and day.’



A QSC control panel in the grand ballroom



The Horizon club lounge

The grand ballroom, which is used for a large range of events, has a high ceiling with hanging points, and although most of the equipment used here is in-house, PA systems are brought in from third-party rental companies for larger events. ‘Sudhendra was very clear that when a rental company comes in to stage an event in the ballroom, there shouldn’t be lots of wires and cables running around,’ says Mr Gracias. ‘We have provided wall panels with different types of connectors, including Dante, so all mixers, speakers and amps can be plugged in directly.’

Two QSC I/O frames have been provided for the ballroom, routing audio signals through the Core unit for processing. The ballroom is installed with its own Yamaha LS9 digital mixing console. ‘The LS9 can be used if there’s an event with live music, as it has 16 channels plus another 16 on Dante,’ says Mr Gracias. For such events, a portable PA system of QSC K12 lightweight active speakers and KSub subwoofers can be moved into the ballroom. ‘The hotel doesn’t believe in outsourcing, so most of the equipment needed, such as extra sound systems, lights and so on, are kept at the property so the client can choose,’ explains Mr Gracias. This includes some portable Mackie Pro FX16 consoles, Klark Teknik SQ1G equalisers, dbx AFS 224 feedback suppression units and Audio-Technica ATW-3141b radio mics, which

floors where the Horizon club lounge, as well as Japanese, Indian and Mediterranean restaurants are located. Musical content is streamed in from BM Asia in Bangkok and has been tailored to each of the outlets. ‘All the content has been programmed into the core, and the musical programming begins in the restaurants at 11am, playing until they close at night,’ says Mr Yelahanka. ‘Everything has been set: the music, how it changes throughout the day, how it’s tailored to each zone and even the volume.’

Further QSC AD-C42T ceiling speakers have been installed, with 12 in the lounge, 21 in the Japanese restaurant, nine in the Indian restaurant and eight in the Mediterranean restaurant, and QSC AD-S52T wall-mount speakers used for all outdoor terraces. Throughout the property, QSC CX204V and CX1202V power amplifiers drive the loudspeakers.

‘Q-Sys can carry out core-to-core streaming, and we’ve used this feature extensively at the Shangri-La to stream all of the BM Asia tracks from one Core 500i to the other,’ furthers Mr Gracias.

A sub rack room on the 17th floor takes care of the restaurants on that floor, housing two CX204 QSC amplifiers, an Audio-Technica mic rack and the QSC I/O frame. ‘Because we are running QLAN on a network, we didn’t need a centralised control room, so each restaurant has its own QSC I/O-22 unit which provides inputs and outputs, along with the amplifiers for that venue,’ says Mr Gracias. In addition to the I/O-22 and amplifiers, each restaurant has a Hewlett Packard HP 2530 network switch, QSC AD-C42T speakers and a Q-Sys TSC-3 touch panel which allows the local input to be changed.

‘Knowing that the client didn’t want to compromise on technology, we also made sure that the equipment runs on two separate networks, LAN A and LAN B, supporting network redundancy,’ says Mr Gracias. ‘Wherever the A/V network is connected, there are dual LAN points and two HP 2530 network switches. This was a big investment, but it was very important.’

‘From a technical perspective this installation is on a high scale. If you have a client who understands the need for this, and is willing to invest in it, the solution can be as large and as



The ground floor meeting room

can be moved to wherever they are required.

Six Audio-Technica ATW-3141b dynamic wireless microphone systems have also been installed in the grand ballroom. ‘Because it’s a high ceiling we wanted to make sure the SPLs were loud enough,’ says Mr Gracias. ‘We also use the lapel mics and wireless mics as the HF driver relays vocals well. We’re getting more than enough SPL.’

Completing the installations throughout the meeting room, ballroom, junior ballroom, function rooms and boardroom is a range of A/V equipment including Extron transmitters, receivers, matrix switchers and distribution amplifiers, Crestron control systems, Grandview motorised projection screens, Panasonic projectors, Hivision cameras and recorders, Sony Blu-ray players and a portable TOA TS-770 conference system.

The second Core 500 operates on the top

The hotel property was built by Adarsh Realty and Hotels for Shangri-La to run and manage. ‘I worked closely with QSC for about two years and they were very helpful from the get go,’ says Adarsh director, Nischay Jayeshankar. ‘Once QSC proposed a digital solution the costing actually went down, because with an analogue system we were looking at replicating quite a few things throughout the property. It’s the most sophisticated system, both in a Shangri-La to date and also in Bangalore, and we are really happy with it. It’s definitely given us an edge, especially in terms of automation, which no other hotel in the city has. It’s been a huge learning curve for everyone concerned.’

In the first few months of opening, the hotel had already hosted many weddings, conferences and corporate events. ‘On some days, five or six of the meeting rooms are



Three function rooms can be combined into a single space as required

booked out all day,’ says Mr Jayeshankar.

‘We are proud to have provided the client with what they wanted, if not more,’ concludes Mr Yelahanka. ‘Without a doubt, this is the biggest project of my career, in terms of size and prestige. The Q-Sys system provides lots of flexibility and possibilities, and offered more than any other system could.’

There are now plans for several more Shangri-La hotels to open in India. ‘Now that QSC has been introduced into the Shangri-La group, it will automatically be put forward for their next projects, so we are looking forward to a good ongoing relationship with them,’ says Mr Gracias.

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