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New York City's Intimate Arka Room Dazzles with Elation Lighting

Tirso Lighting oversees rebrand design of popular upper Manhattan nightspot

Arka Lounge operated for 16 years as one of the more successful nightspots in the Washington Heights area of upper Manhattan. Rebranded last December as Arka Room, owners of this sophisticated, intimate place to party are hoping for the same run of success they enjoyed for nearly two decades.

As the area has changed, the venue has changed with it. Now Arka owners seek to engage old and new patrons alike with an updated design that features a dynamic Elation Professional lighting system. "We wanted to create an atmosphere that is unique to this space," stated Tirso Pelaez, owner of Tirso Lighting, the design and integration company responsible for the design makeover. Pelaez served as lighting designer on the project and says his responsibility was to create the best lighting solution that he could for the space. "Though it was somewhat confined, we felt that it was important to make the space seem bigger while not losing the intimacy of the original Arka Lounge," he said, adding that Arka Room wanted to retain its new, unique identity while still forming connections for people who have been coming to Arka Lounge for years.



Modern day speakeasy

Already a known name in NYC, Arka Room, capacity about 200, differs from the original Arka Lounge in that the current space is a bit smaller and was designed as a modern day "speakeasy" type of club. "It's in the mold of an old speakeasy where in order to get to Arka Room you have to go through the restaurant (Wahi Oyster) to get to the exclusive club space," Pelaez says. "It gives an exclusive feel to it."

Besides hosting live events weekly, the space can be hired for private parties, weddings, and other special events. "In the area where Arka Room is in NYC, there are few live production venues so it's an advantage that they can have live artists. It's a venue that pays special attention to lighting with



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a high level of production. When you open the door, you are struck by a dazzling light show that works with the music to create a truly immersive experience," Pelaez explains.

Small room, big effects

Tirso Lighting, based in NYC, has been around since 2009 and has been using Elation lighting since its inception. Arka Room's small size required a compact moving light effect and Pelaez found it in the Elation E Spot III™ LED moving head, twelve of which are in the venue, primarily over the dance floor. "Its brightness is a good match for the size of the room," he says of the 90W fixture which houses a cool white LED engine plus dichroic colors and rotating-interchangeable gobos. "I consider it a hybrid because not only can we get gobos and a nice sharp spot, but it also has an iris and I can also frost it. It lets me go from a nice broad wide wash to a very narrow pinpoint. I think it is extremely versatile for the type of environment it is in."

Pelaez also says he likes the fixture's LED lamp source, which means he didn't have to hit the owner with a \$165 dollar per lamp bill for each bulb replacement. "Plus it runs cooler and doesn't have a lot of issues that older fixtures have," he said. "It's a fixture that we use often because of its versatility and we have very few problems with it. You could say it is a workhorse fixture for us." That versatility means they can also be used to pinspot tables for private events.

Lining the entire perimeter of the venue are Sniper 2R multi-effect lights used to immerse partygoers in a quick moving barrage of light. "When Elation came out with this hybrid scanner I was very excited because of its versatility and speed," Pelaez says of the hybrid beam, scanner and laser simulator. "It was a missing tool in our arsenal. It has punch and a good beam and can move really fast. It also does very well during live performances to add to the visual effects. We've also been very happy with that fixture and have had very few problems with it."

Located at the back of the stage are compact ACL 360i™ LED lights with a 4° beam and continuous 360-degree rotation that are capable of creating a surprisingly full effect. Pelaez says the fixtures are used primarily to highlight the performers on stage and are extremely fast. Used as a static stage wash are SixPar 200™ LED Par lights, which Pelaez says gives the right amount of output for the space and are used to light the stage from both an upstage and downstage position.

Creating a larger feel

In order to deal with the issue of a relatively small space, Pelaez used a combination of black reflective panels to create a larger feel. "It's a small ceiling height, about 12 ft high, so we felt adding a reflective surface would be a tremendous help, not only to amplify the space but to amplify the lighting. From any given point it doubles the height and the amount of lighting." The room also houses high resolution LED video panels and other lighting.

Pelaez worked with Chris Tesoro of Elation rep firm Healy Sales on the project and says they have yet to have their first issue with the gear. "Chris has been our contact person since we started and we have a great relationship with him. He's always been very helpful."



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Roland Lantigua of Arka Room expresses his satisfaction with the newly designed venue, which is reportedly selling out on a consistent basis. "Reinventing yourself is a key to sustained success; we knew that we had to step up our lighting to keep the experience fresh for our customers and to have them keep coming back, and that's why we hired Tirso Lighting," he comments. "We couldn't be happier with the results." With reports of increased customer satisfaction along with longer stay times and higher revenues, the data backs why Lantigua is so bullish on the future of Arka Room.

Elation equipment:

12 x E Spot III™

14 x Sniper 2R™

3 x ACL 360i™

6 x SixPar 200™

About Elation Professional

Elation Professional is one of the world's leading lighting and visual solutions providers and is the global brand of Elation Lighting. Founded in 1992 and headquartered in Los Angeles, with European sales, distribution and support based in The Netherlands, Elation designs and manufactures a comprehensive range of innovative yet affordable lighting and video products that are distributed through a global network of dealers and distributors. Made up of a spirited team of dedicated personnel, Elation is setting new efficiency and performance standards in Platinum lamp and LED technology and is acknowledged for a comprehensive commitment to Total Support. As a company in expansion with a presence in a growing variety of market segments, chances are you've experienced Elation lighting at a concert, special event, TV, theater, late night venue, House of Worship, theme park, cruise ship, exhibition, architectural space or elsewhere. For more information, please visit www.elationlighting.com

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