

San Francisco, USA



In February 2019, luxury accommodation brand **Virgin Hotels**[®] opened the doors to its highly-anticipated second location, in San Francisco. As with the existing prestigious hotel in Chicago, expectations for the aesthetics and technological infrastructure were considerable and informed every facet of the development - including the choice of audio DSP.

Chicago-based **Audio Integration Services** (A.I.S.) was brought onto the project to select and install an audio DSP that could successfully oversee a total of five background music systems as well as multiple DJ sources. To allow for maximum flexibility, Virgin Hotels needed the DSP solution to be able to accept DJ sources from event spaces located on three of the hotel's 12 floors.

A.I.S. CEO and President, Matt Edgar, says that the company is a long-time user of Xilica[®] products because of their "great audio quality, ease of configuration and value for money." Having recently been introduced to Xilica's next-generation Solaro FR1 DSP Frame, Edgar quickly realized that this could provide the bedrock of the San Francisco hotel's audio processing capability.

With an innovative design that uses field-swappable cards rather than a conventional fixed I/O DSP chassis in order to afford system designers and integrators maximum flexibility, the Solaro FR1 offers 16 user-configured card slots. I/O options include analogue input/output, AES/EBU, GPIO, Dante[™] and AEC, with a maximum of 32 audio channels and 64 GPIO channels in the 1U chassis.

"We loved the ease of configuration that is possible with the Solaro FR1," confirms Edgar. "As we did not require any analogue inputs on this occasion we were able to make all of the outputs analogue - totaling 26 in the current set-up, and all with just a single one-rack-space device. The fact that we can do so much whilst taking up so little space is a definite advantage."

System configuration was achieved with the Xilica Designer[™] software, which Edgar hails for its "general ease of use", sizable range of modules, and automatic documentation function. And

with the requirement to use the various event spaces flexibly - and therefore the need for quick reconfiguration - it will continue to be "very useful in the future".

Virgin Hotels San Francisco hosts an extensive media network using Dante media networking technology from Audinate[®], and in this regard the Solaro FR1 was an obvious fit for the project. The processor was supplied with a user-installable rear-module that allows the device to provide 64x64 channels of Dante networked audio, giving integrators like AIS exactly the tools they need for the project, without any costly unnecessary extras.

In addition to the Solaro FR1, Edgar's team specified a single Solaro QR1 Micro-Format, 1U PoE DSP to handle additional processing duties. The quarter-rack width DSP offers considerable processing power in a compact form-factor and includes 4x4 Dante networking as standard - meaning that, like the Solaro FR1, it integrates seamlessly into the hotel's media network.

As befits a luxury hotel, the rest of the audio infrastructure is suitably high-end in nature. The main speakers in all the hospitality spaces are by Void Acoustics, while amplifiers are drawn from the current range of Lab.gruppen. A Crestron system has been installed to provide overall control, which communicates seamlessly with the Xilica processing engine.

The Xilica DSPs were specified confidently by long-time users AIS, and there is a general consensus that they have contributed significantly to "bringing the overall system up to the standard" required by the Virgin Hotels brand. "It's exactly where they wanted it to be now. The response from the hotel has been excellent," confirms Edgar.