

Anolis Shines in the Sun

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The Suncoast Casino in Durban KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa has a brand new Anolis lighting scheme which was designed and specified by Joao Viegas and Paul Pamboukian of architectural lighting design practice.

While Paul and Joao presented and drove the project, it was a collaborative effort involving the entire PPALD design team working in conjunction with DWR Distribution, who supplied the Anolis fixtures, and commissioned the system.





The ambitious project was overseen for DWR by Johnny Scholtz. They were subcontracted to Edison Power, working for leading South African hotel, gaming and entertainment group, Tsogo Sun, the end client.

The brief was to replace the building's tired old coloured metal halide [sodium] lighting installation which was outlined with coloured neon... with something vibrant, colourful and contemporary to match the cosmopolitan vibes and energy of Durban.

PPALD proposed the colour changing lighting scheme, complete with new white neon outliners, to cover the casino's four main facades.





Having used Anolis on previous successful installations, PPALD was keen to specify the brand again.

The casino used to be lit in multiple pastel colours in typical 'Miami Deco' style, so architect Brent Buchanan from NSIKA decided to refresh the entire building by painting it white to tie it into a new, more contemporary retail and theatre complex, complete with an enlarged casino development.

At this stage PPALD thought it would be amazing and highly flexible to introduce colours via lighting, so the old coloured neon was removed and changed for neon with medium warm base

tone giving the façades a slightly relaxed accent against the crisp white.





The Durban area has a very corrosive environment with high humidity, salt in the air and spectacular coastal thunder storms, which is why they reverted to using neon instead of LED strip lights as the outliners. “We are quite certain that plastics may corrode and become brittle due to the amount of atmospheric UV” says Joao.

The front façade alone is a striking 250-metre-long stretch, and there are two imposing entrances, one on the main ocean facing boulevard and one the opposite side of the building.

It was essential that both ends of the Anolis colour spectrum worked with the soft white neon strips that now outline the shape and details of the facades.

This Anolis installation enables the whole building to be dramatically transformed with colour – anything from a range of rich primaries to the softest, subtlest and most tasteful of pastels... thanks to the superior colour mixing engine used in all Anolis products.

As forum for entertainment, Joao and Paul thought the contrast between the white 'day' look with soft colour washes, layered with warm accents, maintained its architectural integrity, while the Anolis scheme would provide something totally different at night.

"This idea wouldn't have been a success without the sophistication of the Anolis lightsources or the time that DWR spent on pre-programming and balancing these with the neon" explained Joao.

An amount of customisation was required by Anolis explained Johnny, commenting that they "asked a lot" and were impressed with the way the team in the Czech Republic based manufacturer came to the party and were able to be so flexible.





The most used lighting unit is a special 60-degree version of the Anolis Divine 160. This was a crucially important adjustment that enabled a better blend between luminaires.

DWR had originally installed a small quantity of these in a shopping mall which worked brilliantly, and this time around asked the factory if they could produce larger quantities, with a total of 64 Divine 160s.

Other lights on the spec included 16 x Robe iParFect 150s, 22 x Anolis ArcLine Outdoor 40 MCs, 10 x ArcSource 24 MCs, 13 x ArcPad 48s and 12 x ArcSource 96s.

“With these Anolis products, we also know that the metal is properly treated and that the fixtures are super robust” confirms Joao, referring back to the ‘elemental’ issues.

These are rigged in a variety of positions on the ground, concealed in the landscaping, on special bracketry attached to the building and on a first level roof section relevant to some portions of the building. They are fitted with a variety of barn doors and framing accessories to ensure the light is neatly fitted around windows, apex’s, etc., accenting and shadowing the deco styling of the building.

The treatment works very effectively.

Lighting the main entrance - complete with an ornamental fountain in one corner and large columns - on the boulevard was crucial as it needed to have a massive impact, while the second entrance needed to look equally as attractive and to stand out.



The biggest overall challenges of the physical installation on site were dealing with the elements – heat, sun, humidity, wind and rain – and the tight 5-month deadline between getting the green light and delivering the completed process.

Edison Power undertook all the cabling and reticulation, while DWR terminated the fixtures, commissioned the system and programmed the entire scheme.

DWR control specialist Bruce Riley designed a system which is run by two Visual Productions Quad Core controllers (live and backup) and their brand-new Kiosk Touch software interface. A full fibre network was installed so they tapped out of this and installed 15 smaller Kiosks around the perimeter with Visual Predictions RDM splitters, using a DMX King to convert DMX to Ethernet at each point.

DWR's system design via the DMX splitters to the fittings means that if lighting strikes, the overall system impact will be minimised. The fibre network is also much less exposed from a lightning/storm point of view.



DWR's Jannie de Jager programmed everything with Bruce - leaving the client with a series of pre-programmed looks and sequences that they can easily recall at any time. Their crew chief/site manager for the installation period was Nick Barnes, who worked with two freelance LED techs.