

DWR hosts first Philips Vari-Lite Technical Training in SA

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courtesy Louise Stickland

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Johannesburg, South Africa based DWR Distribution has hosted the first Philips Vari-Lite technical training sessions in South Africa, a 5 day intensive course led by Vari-Lite's technical trainer Todd Kessler from Dallas, USA.

The course saw 11 people become certified Vari-Lite technicians, including 5 from DWR, whose Duncan Riley organised the workshops following recent significant sales in the region, including to SA's leading rental company, Gearhouse South Africa and the newly kitted out Supersport HD Studio at M-Net, where VLX Wash luminaires were supplied by AV Unlimited.

DWR has built its success and reputation on providing the very best service and technical support, so as soon as the sales were confirmed, it became essential to train up their own team. Says Riley, "We also realised that there was a demand for training from the companies who will be involved with using the kit, so it made complete sense to arrange for Vari-Lite to visit SA, such was the level of interest."

Todd Kessler adds, "It's a requirement for all our distributors to have certified technicians to offer the correct levels of support, and that's the focus of our training".

The course spent one day on each of the Vari-Lite series fixtures - covering the 500, 1000, 2500, 3000 & 3500 and the VLX.

The warranty covers fixtures to their sub assembly, so they learnt about troubleshooting and the electrical and mechanical components and their functionality to these levels.

Apart from the 5 DWR staff, others included representatives from Gearhouse Splitbeam, Marcel Zandberg from Slave Distribution in Cape Town, who has been working with Vari*Lites for some time and freelance programmer Glenn Duncan, who has used Vari*Lites extensively on all the large touring musicals that come to SA, including High School Musical, Beauty & The Beast, etc.



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It was Kessler's first visit to South Africa, and he observed, "While most people on the course were not familiar with Vari-Lite, they were all well experienced in dealing with moving lights, so the skills levels were well on par to anywhere else that I go to do training". He adds that it was really "exciting" to realise that they have a "top notch distributor representing us in South Africa".

Apart from the fact that the training went extremely well, he also really enjoyed his first taste of the country and DWR's traditional hospitality.

All 11 attendees passed the examination with flying colours at the end of the course and are now certified Vari-Lite Technicians for the next 2 years.

For DWR, product training is a major part of any investment and ensures that the company can continually improve service to its clients. "Establishing a face-to-face relationship with Vari-Lite was a vital element of this equation," continues Riley, "The personal touch is absolutely

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fundamental to our business and industry. Vari*Lite is a legendary brand and it was a great honour for us to have Todd here”.

Comments from those on the course included “It was excellent, clear and very precise training” from DWR’s Bruce Riley; “Of all the courses I have been on, it’s by far been the most in-depth and comprehensive” from DWR’s Nic Britz and “Extremely informative and detailed, presented with humour and great communication” from Marcel Zandberg.