

Here's to a man who never gives up!

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René Rossol

Covid-19 hasn't been an easy ride for anyone in the live events industry, least of all for René Rossol of BS Sound & Lights (Bombsquad), who has managed to keep one foot in front of the other to soldier through.

"This pandemic has shaken up everything," says René. "But it has also made us change how we value and look at things. There is more time to spend with your kids. It's a matter of giving your very best and believing that one good referral will lead to another."

René, who owns a technical supply company, fell in love with the industry from an early age. "I was in grade 7 when the principal of the school gave me the keys to the control room, and I asked him for some globes for the lighting fixtures. We had a 'Green Mamba' desk, five old Strand lights and a followspot," he explains. "I have always been someone who tinkers, and when I get

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something new, I take it apart and then push it to its limits. Lighting was always just fun, and even today, I don't have a 'real' job because I'm still having fun."



René Rossol is seen here at DWR Distribution's Museum! This 'Green Mamba' is similar to the console he first used when still at school.

In recent times, René started The Event Group which provides a range of solutions from sound, stage, lights, streaming, technical, engineering and props.

For the past five years, he has run old-school drive-ins. During the Covid-19 pandemic, he teamed up with Kyalami Equestrian Estate. "I ran two drive-ins last year, one at Kyalami Equestrian Estate which we called The Roadhouse, and which we also lit up in support of the #LightSared campaign. The other was set up at St Stithians College for a month, but we did not have a great turnout because of all the rain and students writing exams."

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René then put in the long hours to create a health and safety file needed to comply with the lockdown regulations, Covid-19 safety requirements and police clearance to create a rooftop drive-in at Eastgate Shopping Centre, Johannesburg. The official opening took place in the first week of April 2021 and it's still running. "We've used a standard LED screen supplied by Stage Effects," said René. "I remember going to the drive-in when I was young. Our Scout Master loaded a four-ton flatbed with Scouts! It has been great to see people sitting in their cars or on deck chairs, having a good time with their families. It's all about the experience!"

Over the past challenging months, René has worked on various jobs, has upskilled his film and streaming knowledge, and is now part of a collaboration that has formed a platform called 'Soda Stream.'

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Vibrant sets built to broadcast studio work.

In another side hustle with Take Note Technologies, he has been involved in a studio cage fighting production and recently hosted the Gauteng South African Amateur MMA Championships in his own warehouse, supplying the stage and lighting requirements. "In addition, we've also been appointed as the official lighting and streaming supplier for the Extreme Fighting Championships," he adds.

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Life has been a rollercoaster with wins, losses, and weather! René's haunted forest which he set up in October last year, a self-funded project he has run for the past five years, was rained out by a massive thunderstorm soaking everything from crew and props alike! But, his easy-going nature, a love for the theatrical and a need to keep his hands busy, has always allowed him to get back up again... smile intact.

"The aim is to get to a point where some of the ideas and productions start rolling out," says René. "It's a matter of getting out there, putting in the groundwork and building a business that's sustainable. I've done this long enough to know that when you invest time and effort, fun things can happen."

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