



SOKOS WIKLUND



TURKU, FINLAND
EMEA

Sokos Wiklund, located in the city of Turku alongside the serene banks of the Aura river, has recently been kitted out with a unique sound system, supplied by Aura Audio. Getting its name from the iconic stream that cuts through this cultural city that was once at the heart of the Swedish kingdom, Aura Audio is positioning itself at the heart of many Finnish sound system installations and Sokos Wiklund was one of its biggest projects to date. The brand-new hotel complex, which houses a coffee shop, auditorium and a shopping mall, as well as a roof top bar with spectacular views of the historical city, opened earlier this year and has already established itself as Turku's newest cultural hub. The eleven-floor building

• Above
The
Wauditorio
in Sokos
Wiklund
that is used
for business
meetings
and
conferences

hosts the highest restaurant/bar in Turku, and has a distinctive aesthetic with a chic, millennial Instagram friendly feel. Each floor has a different vibe, so it was important for the team at Aura Audio to match the sound system with each particular area. "We found out that the managers wanted Sokos Wiklund to have something distinctive. They didn't just want a basic sound system, they really wanted something more, more bass mainly. The basic idea was to make our sound system better than any of the other offers on the table. We put a lot of thought into the whole process as we wanted to fulfil the brief perfectly for our customers," explained Mika Isotalo, Managing Director at Aura Audio. Sokos Wiklund needed a sound system that could adapt to the differentiating environments across the complex. Housing meeting rooms, as well as an established bar used for DJ nights, the diversity of this project had to be tackled head on and Aura Audio needed to design a system that was suitable for a wide range of rooms. "We

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started with the ground floor coffee house and then the specifications for the other areas were introduced, from then on, it mainly involved focussing on a high level of sound quality. The management team wanted fatter sound and bass. If you listen closely to the background music, even in the coffee house, you can really hear the low-end of the bass, which is something that isn't necessarily at the front of people's minds when designing a café or hotel suite," furthered Mika. With this particular installation being located in Mika and Aura Audio's hometown, the project was an exciting venture for the company. "The sound system we have installed is pretty unique as it makes the place that little bit fancier and more relaxed. You don't usually pay attention to the smaller details but here, the audio creates the same effect as the furniture, it's the smaller things that create the bigger, overall effect," said Mika. Sokos Wiklund is a diverse complex and the third level of the building is where the meeting rooms are housed. Each room has its own theme, one with sprouting plants and trees with retro, snack-concealing school desks and another with a more nautical interior, including rowing boats used as chairs and sails covering ceiling lights creating a serene 'floating down stream' atmosphere. Each room is configured individually, mainly due to the fact that during the design process, the ideas for these rooms changed and they became smaller, individual projects that Aura Audio had to rework. Each of the six meeting rooms feature multiple i3 loudspeakers complemented by an eight-inch band-pass subwoofer, i8Sub. The auditorium in Sokos Wiklund is housed on the same level and is an escapist, Great Gatsby

dream. Filled with golden lampshades and deep blues, it's like stepping into a 1970's cocktail lounge except this time, Martinis aren't on the menu. The cleverly named Wauditorio includes six Aura Audio A6 line arrays, two Aura Audio i5 centre loudspeakers, one custom three-inch by 10-inch infra subwoofer and 12 Aura Audio i3 surround loudspeakers, positioned perfectly to allow even audio coverage across the room. This setup required a system that was ideal for presentations and meetings, where the audio could adapt to spoken word and quieter sound environments, as well as play out high quality video sound that was incorporated into the meetings. "It is a fine line between volume and balance, we did a lot of tuning at first, and then when we got the concept together, it became easier for me to get my head around what it was they wanted. This concept has then gone on to be duplicated across many other projects we have done, so even now, after 20 years in the industry, we are still learning and incorporating new elements into our installations," explained Mika. Another area of the complex that had a different, enhanced sound system was the stage next to the mall that is used for catwalk shows and private events. The large space can be easily adapted to cater for crowds and exhibits, everything from art to music. Here, Aura Audio installed its own A1 point source loudspeakers, C10 stage monitors, Aura Audio i3 loudspeakers and Aura Audio A22Ci cardioid subwoofers. A22Ci is a passive cardioid subwoofer that reduces a lot of noise behind the stage, and that was a crucial design point as the hotel rooms are located right behind and above the stage. The purpose of this

sound system was to enhance the sound system to enhance live shows and portray the creative quirks through fashion and discussion in Turku. "The main focus with Aura Audio has been to create something a little different because that then creates a market of its own. With Sokos Wiklund, we were always given the chance to further our knowledge and create something unique and new for the city," furthered Mika. Across the other floors of Sokos Wiklund including the first-floor coffee house, the multiple restaurants, bars and the hotel, Aura Audio have installed around 200 Aura Audio i3 point source loudspeakers and 40 Aura Audio i8Sub subwoofers to create the dynamic sound. "We wanted the audio to be able to withstand big DJ nights, whilst also sounding very clear and relaxed during the day. These were the different requirements that had to be met, and on the bigger DJ systems we needed to see what would work best," said Mika. Across each floor Aura Audio has also installed amplifier racks so the music can be spread evenly across the building and emergency calls can be heard clearly. Controlling the entire system is a Symetrix processing system with an audiovisual matrix and remote control capabilities. All floors and amplifier racks are tied together, control and signal routing-wise, using Symetrix Prism processors and ARC3 remote controllers, all in one 64-channel in and out network, including video and lighting control, as well. Mika decided to go with Symetrix software because it was simple enough to use, even without technical knowledge or training. "The Symetrix system has good features, we can use it to control a




range of components including lighting, video and emergency calls. We have a user interface that is freely configurable and people who are working here don't have to be experts. We don't have any mixing consoles in Sokos Wiklund just touchscreen, small control systems that are easy to use, simplicity was also high on the list for our clients. All of the beyerdynamic microphones are wireless too and they are controlled in one control panel. They wanted all the audiovisual technology to be simple enough for anyone to be able to use it with ease," said Mika.

Aura Audio was also responsible for the lighting installation in Sokos Wiklund. Controlled again by Symetrix and ChamSys, the main thing the clients wanted from the lighting was the ability to do vibrant colour washes and spotlight individual

loudspeakers in the auditorium. "In regard to the lighting, we had sub-contractors who we consulted with and in this case, we have sold and supplied all of the audiovisual gear in Sokos Wiklund. This time we have been responsible for the whole thing, but this is not always the case with Aura Audio," explained Mika. "They wanted to be able to do colour washes in areas including the stage, and also have a few spots moving in-line with the person speaking. The lighting is based on LED bars that colour the ceiling, and a couple of moving heads. There is also a projection screen in the auditorium which is 11-metres wide and there are three Panasonic projectors," said Mika.

Sokos Wiklund was a new challenge for Aura Audio. The large-scale project that craved a

diversely unique sound system has created a hotel complex like no other. It's rare to notice the low bass of a Jessie-J track whilst enjoying an afternoon coffee, but it is this attention to detail that has transformed the typical, passive hotel experience into a totally immersive environment, incorporating audiovisual technology with an impressive interior design, catapulting this small Finnish town into a newer age.

Mika concluded: "This project was pretty versatile and for us at Aura Audio, it was different to what we are used to working on. We needed to be more at the forefront and in charge of the whole thing. We have had similar situations, but this project is unique for us. We were very pleased with the end result and the customers were also extremely happy with what we had supplied them with." 

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

SOUND

BARS/RESTAURANTS/HOTEL: 200 x Aura Audio i3 loudspeaker; 40 x Aura Audio i8Sub subwoofer; 16 x Aura Audio XD10 subwoofer; 20 x Aura Audio D2Q amplifier; Symetrix processing, audiovisual matrix and remote control

WAUDITORIO: 6 x Aura Audio A6 line array cabinet; 2 x Aura Audio i5 loudspeaker; 12 x Aura Audio i3 loudspeaker; 1 x Aura Audio D8oDSP amplifier; 1 x Aura Audio D2Q amplifier

STAGE: 6 x Aura Audio A1 loudspeaker; 5 x Aura Audio C10 loudspeaker; 8 x Aura Audio i3 loudspeaker; 2 x Aura Audio A22Ci subwoofer; 1 x Aura Audio D8oDSP amplifier; 4 x Aura Audio D2Q amplifier

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