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Robe Walks on the Moon with ESPRITES

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The Moon Palace is the biggest and busiest hotel and conference centre complex on Mexico's sought-after eastern coast Riviera Maya region, just south of Cancun.

Owned by Palace Resorts, the property offers three large indoor conference and event centres plus three substantial outdoor terraces and a beach venue, the latter of which can accommodate up to 10,000 people for concerts. All these spaces are operated via umbrella company Palace Productions which is also responsible for production and delivery of the constant and diverse stream of business and private events.

Armando Manjarrez is the technical director of Quantum, Palace Productions' technical services enterprise that supplies and co-ordinates all technical requirements – lighting, audio, and video – across the Moon Palace complex. Quantum owns substantial amounts of lighting, audio and video kit, and has several types of Robe moving lights in the inventory, the most recent purchase being 24 x ESPRITES, with two RoboSpot systems and FORTE Follow Spots on their way.

Armando had been watching Robe since 2016, when he first encountered the brand at the LDI expo in Las Vegas, and their first purchases were made in 2019 with 18 x Pointes and 10 Spiider LED wash beams.

Coming out of the pandemic with business re-booting quickly and once again booming, Quantum needed more lights last year!

"We wanted an LED product and a profile / theatrical type luminaire with stuttering, barn doors, great colour mixing and of course a good output as well as a fixture that was camera-friendly," explained Armando. Most events now involve some sort of camera elements so features like flicker-free operation, +/- green correction, etc. are all important.

Armando keeps his finger on the pulse regarding any new and emerging technologies and trends, something that is essential with so many different venues and events to manage week-to-week.

Before he committed to the ESPRITES, Armando consulted top level Mexican lighting designers with whom he is regularly in touch, including Pablo Gutierrez, well known for his work with both domestic and international music artists and touring shows, and also Eduardo “Toto” Lopez.

Both influencers reinforced his thinking that Robe would be a choice.

Even with good recommendations, Armando and his team still rigorously examined all their options with Robe and other brands before committing to the investment. “We wanted to be certain it was the right decision and invited all the leading brands to let us use the fixtures here in situ for a week,” he explained.

That gave them the time and latitude to thoroughly evaluate all the products in front of them with the ESPRITE performing “exceptionally well – all its integrated theatrical tools were very much appreciated.”

So, the decision was made.

The ESPRITES were delivered by Robe’s Mexican distributor Showco and are now in use across all the Moon Palace’s different venues.

For larger shows, the lighting designs will often be created and delivered in house as well as the kit.

Manuel Bautista heads the lighting department and will typically light 80% of them with Armando imagineering the other 20%. This is a scenario that enables Moon Palace clients to benefit from the very highest production values as Armando’s team is both talented and very well acquainted with the equipment and the venue spaces.

Manuel and his colleague Salvador Cutiz work alongside 12 dedicated technicians who also program and run lights, and mostly things are so busy that all of them will be simultaneously in action on different shows and events.

Primarily they utilise MA consoles for site wide lighting control together with MA visualisation, however there is also a Road Hog Full Boar in residence for those preferring an alternative.

Equipment faces specific climatic challenges in addition to the punishing work schedule! The region’s high humidity is one, and the intense heat in another, so support from the local distributor is essential. Armando and the resort’s history with Robe distributor Showco goes back at least 15 years, another plus for purchasing more Robe.

The nearest service hub for most brands they carry is Mexico City which is a 2-day drive, meaning it is imperative that kit is robust and reliable, so logistics stay manageable and efficient.

As a brand, Armando thinks that Robe offers “good quality and solid engineering. You can tell that considerable thought goes into the design and what’s going – and going on – inside the

luminaires.”

Armando and Quantum are in frequent contact with an array of international lighting designers due to the calibre of artists often appearing at the different venues and resorts. “We are constantly talking to lighting, audio and video professionals about their production requirements, and our goal is to deliver to the highest standards of excellence,” he stated, adding that they need to have recognised brands like Robe, L-Acoustics, etc. which they are all happy to work with.”

Also in the same complex is the Hotel Sun which has three separate event properties of its own including the Beach Palace and the Sun Palace. Just down the road in bustling tourist hotspot Playa del Carmen, Palace Resorts has the exclusive Le Blanc Spa, and a short hop across the sea on the island of Cozumel is the Cozumel Palace hotel.

Photo Credit: Louise Stickland





