

# In two places at once



Imagine seeing the sun setting over New York through one window and turning your head to see dusk in Sydney. Dedicated cruising folk will have that option next year, thanks to a-v technology, says **Geny Caloisi**

**P&O CRUISES IS** to launch a £300m super liner next year which will have a 22m videowall in its bar, as well as a 3d cinema.

The videowall on the Ventura (which will be as long as three football pitches put together) will be set up as a huge 'window' on one side of the ship's Metropolis jazz bar and will run footage of world capitals. So not only will you be able to go around the world in the cruise liner, but you will also feel that you are in two places at once.

The life size images have been filmed and produced by creative company Pacific7 and the plan is to synchronise them with the time of day when they are being shown. For instance, if the sun is setting over the ocean near Africa you can have an image of the sun setting over New York or Sydney on the videowall.

'Initially we thought there was no problem,' comments Pacific7 director Duncan Swinhoe, 'but it wasn't until we got into the project itself that we started wondering how we were going to make it physically fit. The aspect ratio was incredible. We are talking about a 22m wide and 1.6m high videowall.'

Visiting capitals around the world, Pacific7 shot six hours worth of footage from each city that had the required characteristics for a full impact.

The shows will last around six hours every evening starting from 6pm. But not all the material will be images of cities, there will also be animations and other effects. When there is not a city on the videowall, it can become a giant fish tank or a piano keyboard to match the jazz music.

The cities featured on the videowall can also match the theme of the night at the bar. If the star metropolis of the night is New York, Manhattan cocktails will be the thing to have; if it is Singapore, then Singapore flings will be the drink of choice.

## PRODUCTION ISSUES

One of the difficulties for Pacific7 was to find a way of recording the images that would give the correct aspect ratio for the huge screen without losing quality. It tried filming with two and four cameras, but the solution was to

use three Panasonic HVX HD 1080p tapeless cameras to produce a near-180deg image of the chosen landscape, that slowly pans from left to right.

'We need to pan the images to be able to avoid the mullions going through an iconic building', said Duncan. 'You need to have the image slowly panning out to avoid obscuring a land mark building.'

Pacific 7 has a three man crew travelling around the world capturing the footage, a location manager, the director and the cameraman.

The three cameras are mounted on a motorised panning head using a specially-made aluminium plate, and a full pan takes over 40 minutes.

When the actual installation is operational, each of the 22 screens will have a PC behind it connected to a main server where Dataton's Watchout software will play out the required show. The 65in Panasonic HD screens are mounted in portrait mode and the Watchout 3.4 software puts the images into the right format, takes care of the edge blending and runs the show.

The initial idea was to automate the whole show, but the fact that the cruise ship will be crossing different time zones made that difficult to do. Human input is going to be needed to maintain exact sync between the sunsets that the customers see 'live' through the window and the ones on the videowall — so the control system for the videowall has been ported onto a simple LCD screen.

'You can't go wrong. You just press NY and off it goes', says Swinhoe.

All the images displayed on the screens will be pre-recorded for a spectacular finale and the Ventura is expected to be seaborne next year, with the Metropolis Bar one of its customers' first ports of call. □

**The Metropolis jazz bar on The Ventura (top left); the three camera rig used to shoot ultimate widescreen footage; and some of the material acquired in London**

## CONTACTS

[www.pacific7.co.uk](http://www.pacific7.co.uk)

