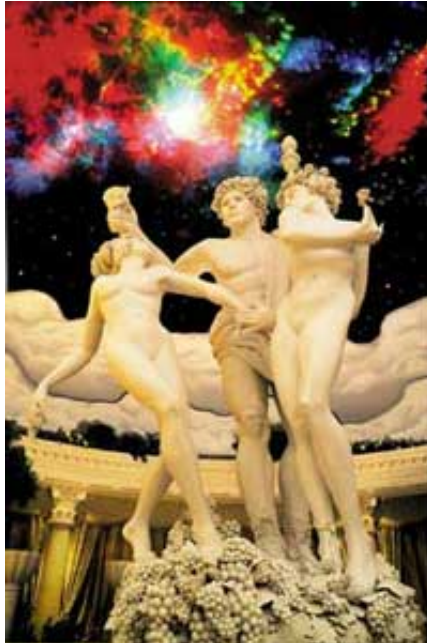

Laser Lumia Set the Mood

Restaurant Seeks Romantic Atmosphere; Lasers Fill the Bill
By David Lytle



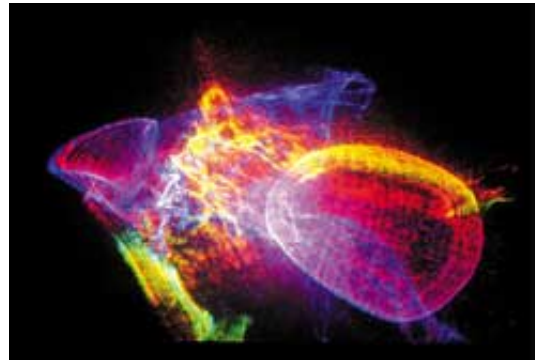
Classical statues and laser lumia combine to set the mood for this Reno casino.

When most audiences think of laser light displays, they think of sizzling shafts of light arcing through the air, or of kinetic laser graphic dancing across a screen. A major Nevada casino, however, recently turned to lasers to create a mood far different from the high-energy look most laser installations are known for. "These clients never wanted to see the typical line art look that most laser animation generates," said Scott Anderson, creative director for Laser Images of Van Nuys, California. "Instead, they were excited by our extensive use of laser optical effects, and imagined a very tasteful multimedia experience ... pure visual music." The resulting installation at the Romanza restaurant in Reno's Pepermill Hotel Casino might be described as Rome meets the planetarium.

An extravagant Roman court-style restaurant, dominated by a 60-foot dome-like ceiling, is the setting for a multimedia show designed to harmonize with the romantic musical recordings of Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli. The laser imagery, which is projected onto the ceiling by a full-color 3-watt Coherent laser, consists almost entirely of lumia effects. Unlike vector-based line-art graphics, lumia are soft, gauze-like abstracts that can be made to move in almost hypnotic patterns.

While Laser Image's Laserium planetarium shows make extensive use of lumia, the effect is not widely seen outside of the planetarium market. "We are always amazed at how well lumia are received when we do demonstrations for clients," said Laser Images President Ivan Dryer. "The ethereal beauty of the effect blows people away."

For the Romanza installation, the company used a RGB laser projector equipped with a single scan head and multiple optical “stations” where lumia pattern generators can be inserted in the beam path. Although the scanners occasionally project a moving starfield pattern and a stray meteor or two, Dryer said the vast majority of images are lumia patterns.



Shimmering lumia move slowly across the screen, entrancing audiences .

The projector can generate 18 different abstract lumia, and can project multiple lumia effects simultaneously with the moving starfield. Lumia are created by focusing the laser through a “scan glass,” which is an acrylic resin cast created by the company to reproduce a particular lumia effect originally made with other materials.

The laser, lighting sound, show control and other specialists involved in the project were first brought together by architect Peter Wilday. Laser Images worked closely with show planner Gil Levine to create eight different multimedia shows, each carefully choreographed to Bocelli’s popular contemporary music. In addition to lasers, the shows include moving statuetes, intelligent theatrical lighting, fog effects and pyrotechnics (flaming torches) .

Each four-to-five minute module can be repeated in a loop, or restaurant operators can use a DMX interface to playback a particular show in response to audience requests (particularly those from high-rolling gamblers who patronize the hotel’s casino).

To add audience involvement, speakers play music directly to individual booths, and guests can control the sound levels for louder or quieter performances. Guests also find souvenir 3D glasses on their tables, which take advantage of ChromaDepth 3D technology that seems to separate laser colors in midair.

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