

## JUKEBOX SPECIAL

# PROVING A POINT

Late arrival TAB-Austria finds its niche

**THE jukebox has been on world markets almost as long as any other coin-operated product, but in recent years its appeal has become more concentrated into a more limited number of locations - and even then, their successful operation is dependent upon an understanding that only the best of technology will do.**

That might be a deterrent from existing suppliers to the more general industry to become involved. Indeed, it takes a certain degree of courage and a lot of confidence in the product which is being launched in what is recognised as one of the more challenging sectors.

TAB-Austria took the plunge

into the jukebox market six years ago - and has proved that if the product is right and the technology will support it, then producing and operating jukeboxes DOES work.

Coming from an operational background, the Linz-based company knows all of the angles when it comes to choosing the right products for the right locations. By the time it launched the Max Fire, TAB-Austria was already one of the world leaders in online touchscreen games. The move across to the music industry, in that case, was only natural.

Its Silverball terminal was first used as a natural vehicle for downloading and playing music,



Siegfried Dattl, Jr



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but its use in this dual format was short-lived, because TAB-Austria realised that the technology which the company had at its fingertips added up to a potential stand-alone product of considerable proportions. Silverball can still be used as a remote control for Max Fire - and vice versa.

The constant evolution in technological terms of TAB-Austria meant that the Max Fire as a stand-alone jukebox offering only music was also short-lived. The company soon added internet functions and an ability for players to download emails from it. Already since 2003 music video download is possible as well.

Today, the wall-mounted Max Fire is a digitally downloadable full-function jukebox with a variety of sources for the music content. "We work with the music industry directly," said managing director Siegfried 'Sigi' Dattl. "It means that we can personalise music to the locations. A Greek location, for example, might want ethnic Greek music; they send us compact discs of their choices, we download it into our database and it is then instantly available to players in Greek locations and all others."

# MAKING AN IMPACT

Almotech gaining international ground

**A JUKEBOX coming out of Ireland is beginning to make an impact beyond its own shores. Almotech Ireland, founded in 1996 by long-standing operators, is based at Tuam, County Galway.**

The company was originally involved in operating, with some business in the second-hand trade of its own ex-site equipment. It began to deal with distributors and then became a distributor itself. Recently it was appointed to handle Ireland on behalf of Games Warehouse and

Merit Industries and already distributes equipment on behalf of TAB-Austria.

Its own jukebox, the digital Mystro, was developed by the company four years ago. The unit is wall-mounted and is equipped for audio/video and karaoke. Slimline in design, the Mystro first went into the Irish domestic market where it gained a significant market share, but then began to penetrate the UK market. Now the company is seeking to distribute it even further afield.



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The Mystro is updated by using a simple CD.exe file which is issued monthly and which contains the latest chart material. It will come initially with 7,000 audio, 1,000 video and over 700 karaoke tracks. At the London show in January, the company launched the Eclipse digital online jukebox which has a multi-language facility. This new project comes as a direct result of Almotech's new business relationship with AMI Entertainment in the US. Eclipse is AMI-powered and contains AMI software and music management network services and draws its content from an Almotech server. It is again, a slimline wall-mounted cabinet and comes initially with 4,500 tracks which can be customised to fit the location. The package includes a further download allowance all within the flat fee to cover PPI and PPL licences.

Both Mystro and Eclipse have the facility to run on-screen advertising or through the ability to customise the glass.