



REACH FOR THE STARS

In Södertälje, luxury and functionality intertwine. **Reece Webb** discovers how Fremlab delivered six projects in one at the Ad Astra Hotel by Elite.

With a name translating from Latin as ‘to the stars’, this hotel set out with the bold vision to bring a premium Italian flavour to a city that has had its fair share of struggles. With a name representing hope, this new hotel set out to flip the script on luxury with an AV system that embodies quality, luxury and comfort, shining as a beacon in a growing city.

Enter Fremlab, an integrator with a storied and strong history with the Elite brand, responsible for the franchise’s refurbishments and new builds in Scandinavia over the years.

This project represented something special for Fremlab. As an integrator with extensive experience in large-scale hotel installations, the Ad Astra hotel heralded a scale of integration like no other.

Carl-Fredrik Malmgren, owner, Fremlab, explains: “This is the biggest project for Elite so far. We

worked on the Park Avenue project [another Elite hotel] previously, and this project cost six million Swedish Krona [527,800 Euros]. There are more than 250 loudspeakers in this project, 22 Crestron panels, six Bose processors and 54 channels of sound.

“This is not a new build,” continues, Malmgren. “The building was home to pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca in the 1990s. There is an older part from the 19th century, so when Elite bought the property in the 2010s, the intention was to keep some of the parts of the venue. In the main lobby, there is a big glass cube as a piece of art which is still there, as well as the auditorium [which we overhauled].”

The hotel is home to 161 individual rooms and suites, with a selection of conference rooms, an auditorium, a spa and a piazza that is bursting with restaurants, bars, a cinema and entertainment.

Malmgren continues: “The hotel required installations for six areas,

which felt like six different projects. For each part, I divided the equipment, labour, programming, costs and so on into six individual parts; it’s a big project!”

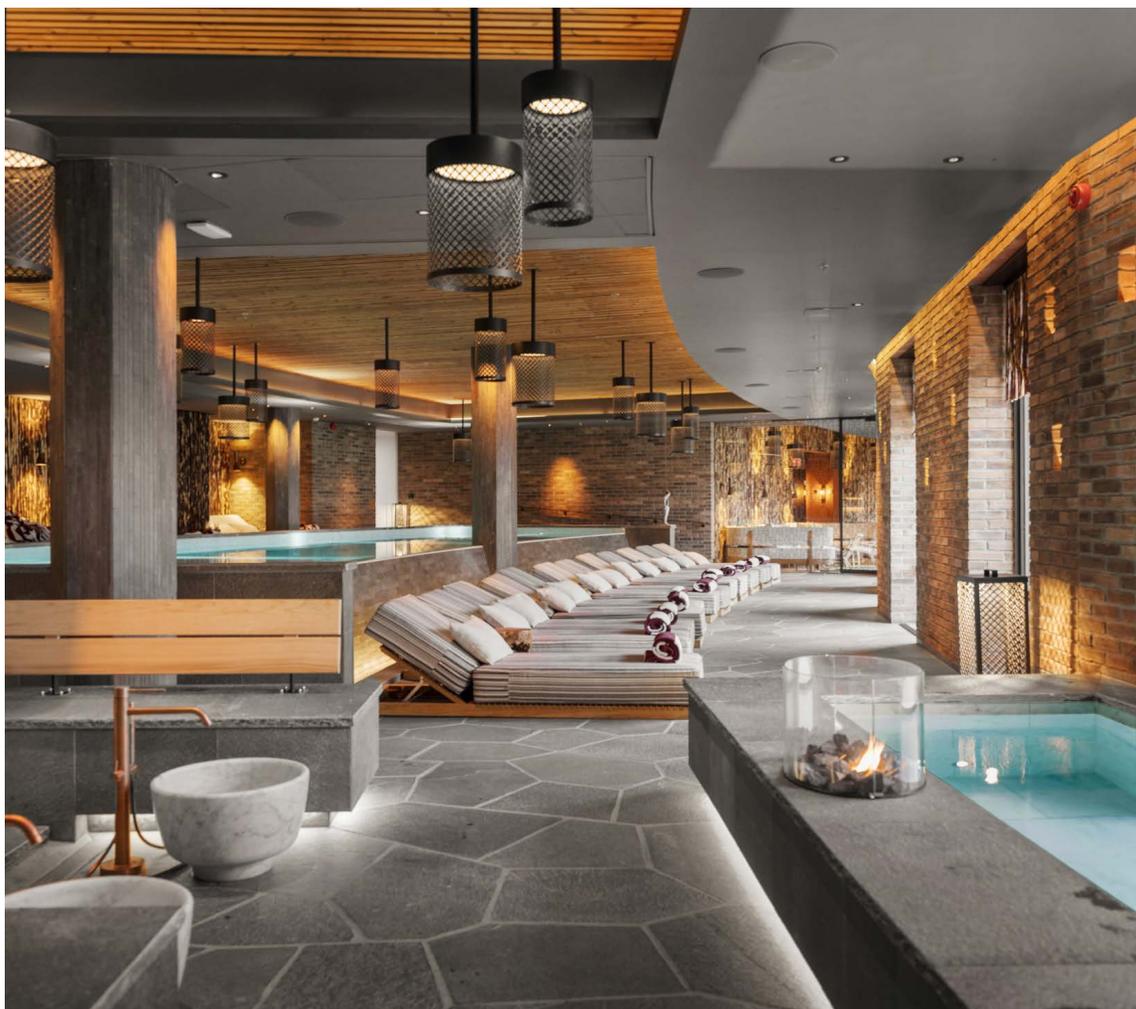
Stepping off the streets of Södertälje and into the lobby, guests are greeted by a reception and lounge area, flanked by two conference rooms and a karaoke space.

In the lobby space itself, Bose DM3C in-ceiling loudspeakers, supported by two DM10Sub subwoofers are used, alongside eight Bose DM3SE loudspeakers in the lounge and reception.

The reception area offers complete control of the space’s vibe through a Crestron 10-in touchpanel.

The lobby is home to two meeting rooms, equipped for a seamless, user-friendly experience.

Both rooms feature a 7-in Crestron touchpanel for control, alongside a Barco Clickshare C10 videoconferencing system. One room, the Lipari room, is equipped



with a Panasonic VMZ61 laser projector. The smaller Capri room, is instead equipped with a 75-in Panasonic display and Crestron UC-SB1 camera/soundbar.

“There’s always two XLRs [in the room],” says Malmgren. “You can always connect something, be it a microphone or other device. You don’t have to push any button, just plug the XLR in and it’ll go straight through on the sound system.

“You have the Fremlab standard of starting a room,” explains Malmgren. “When you get into the room, there is a button on the wall; everybody knows how to press a button, so we always use a button to light up a room and turn on the equipment, if you have a panel, this can be intimidating and difficult to use.

“In a conference room, there can be a new person in there every day who has never been there before. In a hotel, there are always new customers so the system must be simple. The standard we offer is a push button – you turn it on, and you turn it off. To make

adjustments, you can use the touchpanel.”

The hotel is also home to an entire floor of conferencing rooms, with six unique spaces each with their own individual set ups.

Three of the meeting rooms have Panasonic laser projectors, while two of the larger rooms feature Bose DM10SUB subwoofers in addition to the DM3C loudspeakers shared by all of the rooms. These larger rooms also feature XLR connectors for additional functionality.

The smaller rooms feature DM3C loudspeakers in the ceiling, fulfilling the requirements in these spaces.

Sennheiser Speechline microphones, both headset-style and hand-held style, are available for use in these larger spaces. As in the other rooms, Barco Clickshare is available for content sharing.

In the central area, Fremlab provided a Bose 1280 processor, two Bose 8250N amplifiers and a Crestron DALI dimmer controls lighting.

“If you want to, you can direct all of the wireless systems to one room,” explains Malmgren, “it’s just a question of pressing the buttons [on the touchpanel] which is located in the conference floor’s lobby and activated by the staff.

“In the touchpanel, you can activate the projector, Clickshare or HDMI. There are options for volume and for hotel background music [which is present in all conference rooms] as ambience. When you start the conference, you can mute the background music. It’s simple!”

Returning to the lobby, visitors can find a karaoke space which includes two 55-in Panasonic screens for users, with a Madboy karaoke mixer kit and a 5-in Crestron touchpanel for control, with two microphones and an iPad for singers to use.

“I was thinking about service and support,” says Malmgren. “It’s better to have an iPad with an app, feeding the sound into a basic karaoke mixer. If that mixer gets damaged, it can be

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Carl-Fredrik Malmgren, Fremlab



easily be replaced and run. It's as simple as possible."

Leisure and luxury

Moving into the spa, the hotel required loudspeakers and a touchpanel in each treatment room. Lighting is also controlled by the in-room 5-in touchpanels.

Sound in the spa is handled by Bose, relying on Bose's DM5C range in the spa's treatment rooms, supported by a Crestron TSW-570-B-S panel for control.

The extensive use of Bose's DesignMax range continues with an appearance in the yoga space, with 14 DM3Cs located in the lounge/treatment area.

There are five pools on site, three indoor and two outdoor.

The indoor pools are home to 16 Bose DM5C loudspeakers, while the outdoor pools are host to 11 DM5SE loudspeakers and two MB210WR outdoor subwoofers.

"Ambient sound is played in here, and it's difficult to achieve that sound with just ceiling speakers. With the subs, you get that hi-fi sound that you have at home. We only work with Bose, because it offers good sound and they are cost-effective. It's a good

speaker for its price range," says Malmgren.

A Crestron 10-in TS-1070-B-S panel is available in reception for control of music and lighting, relying on a Crestron DALI lighting interface and dimmer.

In the central rack, Bose Powershare amplifiers pump up the volume to bring a high quality of sound throughout the spa areas.

"There are eight amplifiers, three of them are two-channel and the rest are four-channel," says Malmgren, "offering 26 channels of sound in the gym. Lighting control in the centre is all Crestron. Each Dali interface offers 128 channels, meaning there are more than 600 channels for lighting [in the spa]. When you have many lights, you have many channels."

Meeting meticulously

The venue's auditorium, which had been constructed for use by the site's previous owners, also received an overhaul. The main auditorium is well equipped for the fluctuating needs of companies and visitors, providing a Panasonic laser projector, Barco Clickshare for content sharing, Sennheiser Speechline

microphones (three head, one handheld) and Bose loudspeakers, subwoofers and amplifiers to bring comprehensive audio, video-conferencing and presentation capabilities.

Malmgren explains: "In the main auditorium, we have two Bose subs and three Bose AMU208 loudspeakers, one for each section of the auditorium – centre, left and right. The microphones take care of 99% of the requirements that users have, with NVX transmission from the stage to the projector."

The Glasses

Looking for a bite to eat, visitors can find themselves in The Glasses, a restaurant constructed from steel and glass which creates a very distinctive environment for guests to dine in.

Malmgren says: "Here we have [Bose] loudspeakers everywhere and subs, so we can create a nice ambience without playing the music too loudly. We have [Crestron] control panels as well. Outside there is a boule alley; we first planned to have Bose 360 speakers, however we went for six Bose DM5s on one of the long walls so that they can have outdoor sound."

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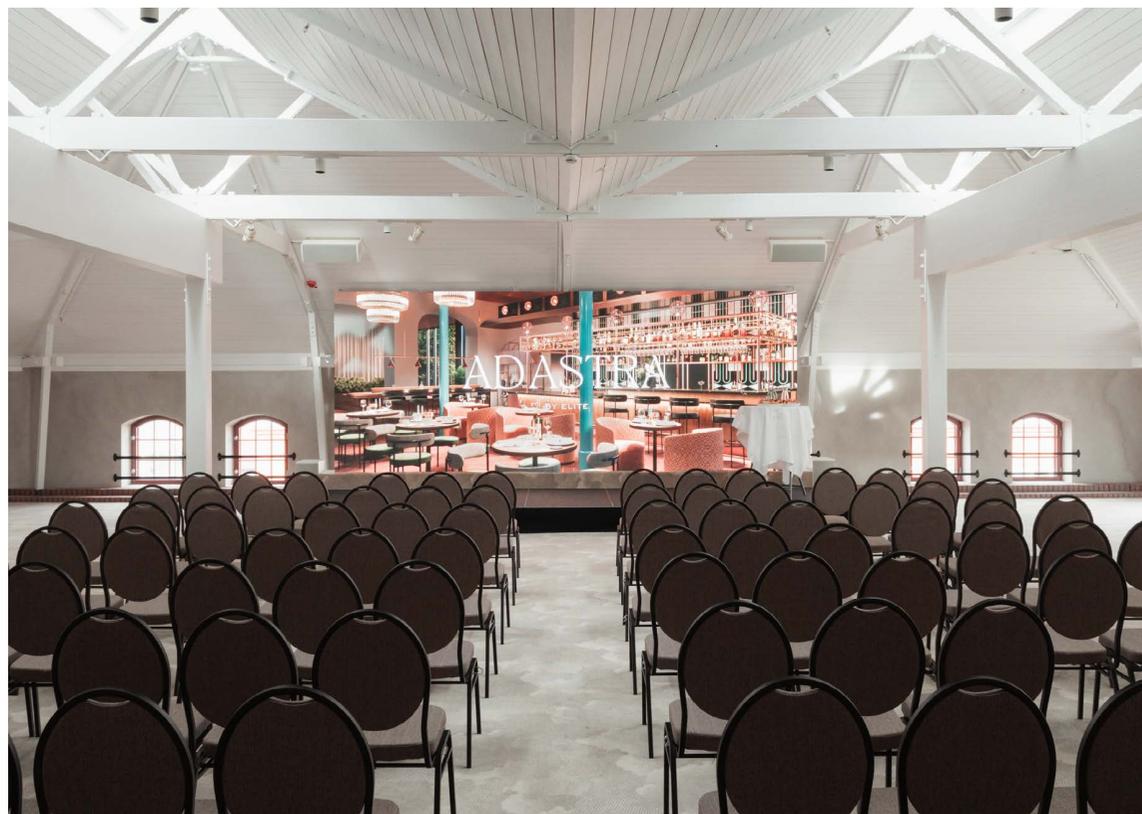
Carl-Fredrik Malmgren, Fremlab

The restaurant has 14 DM3SE loudspeakers for ambience, with the possibility for users to connect to the sound system during special events via a Dante input panel and a Bose CC2D control panel.

Malmgren adds: "There is the central area with amplifiers but no Bose processor, as the processing is handled by one of the other 1280 processors in the venue. It's a question of keeping the budget streamlined."

Perfect presentation

Coming to the top floor, we meet the hotel's pièce de resistance: the ballroom. This space is dominated by a 6.4m x 2.4m Absen A2719 Plus LED screen, offering 3,200 x 1,260 native resolution, supported by an Analog Way 4K video switcher. Fremlab delivered a flexible control system to allow guests to present in ways that best suit them, offering flexible presets on the in-room Crestron touchpanel to maximise the use of the screen during presentations. "If you are connecting a laptop to the screen," explains Malmgren, "then the screen is bigger than the normal resolution for a laptop. There are four stored backgrounds [on the in-room Crestron touchpanel], so



Kit list

Audio

Bose DesignMax series loudspeakers, MB210WR subwoofers, 360P loudspeakers, DM10S subwoofers, 1280 processors, PowerShare Dante amplifiers, AMU105 loudspeakers
Madboy Karaoke machine
Sennheiser Speechline microphones
Yamaha MGO6 channel mixing console

Video

Barco Clickshare C-10 wireless presentation system
Panasonic VMZ61 laser projectors, PAN-PT-MZ10KLBEJ laser projectors, TH-75CQE1W 4K displays, TH-55CQE1W 4K displays

Control

Analog Way QVU-4K video switcher
Crestron TSW-570-B-S touchpanels, TS-1070-B-S touchpanels, TSW-770-B-S touchpanels, DIN-AP4 control systems, DIN-DAL2 DALI-interfaces and dimmers, UC-SB1 camera/soundbar, DM-NVX E20 AVoIP encoders
NovaStar MCTRL 4K controller

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Carl-Fredrik Malmgren, Fremlab

you can select a background for the LED screen. You can choose picture-in-picture to show the laptop screen in the centre of the LED screen with the background around it.

“You can also select the ‘full’ preset, which makes the laptop picture wider with a black border around it. The third mode, ‘custom’, allows you to use the whole screen, so if you are showing a PowerPoint presentation, it has to be configured to 3,200 x 1,260 resolution. It's very flexible.”

Volume control and a screen fader is also handled by the touchpanel, allowing corporate customers to create the right look and feel for their events.

“On the lighting page of the touchpanel, you have one fader for green, one for red and one for blue. You also have options for ceiling up, ceiling down and for the walls,” adds Malmgren.

“The original plan was to have one left, right and centre speaker with one Bose AMU105 delay speaker, however when we saw the room layout, we decided to make a change. There are two sound systems in this room.”

Fremlab removed the centre speaker from the plan and provided four AMU105 delay speakers to create a symmetrical

sound in the room which matches the layout of the room itself.

“If we had three delay speakers instead of four, it became difficult to plan where we would place the third speaker. To make it symmetrical and more aesthetically pleasing, we opted for four. We had the same amount of speakers so no extra cost for the client, but a better solution.”

Additionally, Sennheiser SpeechLine microphones are available for addressing attendees in the space.

This ballroom can also operate as an additional dining room, where 16 Bose DM3SE ceiling speakers provide the right level of ambience for an enjoyable meal. The two subwoofers are also in-use with the ceiling speakers and can be controlled via the in-room touchpanel.

BYOD functionality also plays a key part in this space, allowing guests to harness the in-room AV to meet the requirements of their events. Malmgren continues: “Visitors can connect music from a mobile phone via a 3.5mm input. Also, if you have our own lighting console, you can plug it into the [DMX] connector and override the RGB lights in the room, so you can input the lighting into your own console.”

Despite the immense challenge posed by installing a system of this scale, Fremlab and its installation partner spent a total of ten weeks on site, delivering an all-encompassing system that meets the demands of a hotel that is ready for the future with a system that will fit the needs of clients coming to Södertälje.

All in all, Fremlab delivered not just one, but six projects of immense scale and complexity all under one roof, offering a functional and flexible system for this ambitious hotel.

Malmgren closes: “I'm very happy with how the ballroom turned out. With the screen and the sound, you get lovely visuals and great sound. It's the first time that we installed a LED screen for a hotel, and the client is very happy with that solution and they are now considering installing a similar display in another hotel as they have seen what other hotels can do, and they have invested a lot of money in the future.”

“I'm so proud that we got everything to work despite challenges with other contractors. We completed the project in time for the official opening of the hotel, which was no small feat.”