

IAG



PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Attention

IAG Appoints Andy Giles Associates to Handle UK Public Relations

Andy Giles Associates (AGA) is delighted to announce the arrival of IAG, the global audio giant, to its premium client portfolio.

With its headquarters in Asia and offices in the UK and America, IAG – the International Audio Group – is an operation on a truly global scale. The company’s activities include the manufacturing and distribution of hi-fi and home cinema equipment for domestic use, professional audio equipment and lighting for studios and live venues, and even a new venture in the field of luxury yachts.

Andy Giles Associates involvement is with IAG’s domestic audio brands, for which AGA is now handling UK public relations. These brands include: Audiolab, Castle Acoustics, Mission, Quad and Wharfedale.

All five of these brands carry a prestigious heritage that stretches back decades, with the UK as their birthplace. Wharfedale and Mission are among the best-known loudspeaker brands in the world, while Audiolab is famed for its hi-fi and AV separates – CD players, amps and the like. Quad is a deeply distinguished hi-fi marque, with a rich history of audio innovation across multiple product types, and Castle Acoustics – the most recent addition to IAG’s portfolio – makes speakers renowned for the craftsmanship of their real-wood cabinets, as well as their sound. Together, these five brands comprise a portfolio of exceptional quality.

Each of these brands joined the IAG Group at a time when a new direction was desperately required. Manufacturing competitively priced audio equipment in the UK became virtually impossible during the 1990s, and IAG’s investment has enabled them to not only survive,

IAG Appoints Andy Giles Associates (page 2)

but also have a brilliant future. For IAG, brand heritage is paramount; the company's philosophy is to protect the principles that made each brand famous, and build upon them in a way that befits the demands of the modern audio consumer.

An intrinsic part of IAG's strategy is to combine the cost benefits of Chinese manufacturing with British audio design; after all, British ingenuity made these brands famous in the first place, and is still held in the highest regard around the world. IAG's design team includes a number of British, European and North American engineers of exceptional calibre, some of whom are based in the UK, and some in China.

IAG's UK facility is based in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire – the traditional home of British hi-fi – and is central to IAG's global operations, particularly in the design and maintenance of products from each of the five domestic audio brands. Skilled engineers who have worked with these brands for decades carry out research, development and servicing work in the UK; this is a critical part of IAG's investment in brand heritage and continuity.

Most hi-fi equipment – particularly at competitive price levels – is now manufactured in the Far East, even if the brand's management is based elsewhere, yet IAG has a significant advantage over many of its rivals. Many manufacturers simply buy-in parts from third parties and 'hire' production time in Chinese factories, which makes it difficult for them to control product quality. However, because IAG's headquarters is in China and it has built its own vertically integrated factories, the company is able to control every last detail of the production process, whilst utilising the talents of greatly respected designers and engineers from around the world.

IAG's factory complex in Shenzhen, China, covers some 1.5 million square feet, making it one of the largest custom-designed electronics manufacturing facilities in the world, and around 90 per cent of IAG's 2,000-strong workforce is based here. The company's attention to detail extends to the tooling that fashions the component parts of each product; IAG makes much of this itself, with a department dedicated to 'Tooling R&D'. With firm control over every aspect of production, and all component parts made in-house, IAG is able to ensure a level of quality and consistency that other manufacturers struggle to match.

The combination of rich brand heritage, exceptional production facilities in China and highly experienced audio engineers from around the world makes IAG a unique proposition in the world of consumer electronics.

IAG Appoints Andy Giles Associates (page 3)

Primary press contacts for IAG's domestic audio brands are Tim Bower and Murdo Mathewson, two of AGA's four principle partners.

"Andy Giles Associates is delighted to be working with the IAG Group, a global company with a truly international outlook," said Tim. "IAG is unique in the world of high-quality audio, with an exceptional portfolio of products and outstanding facilities for research, manufacturing and distribution. The audio brands that the Group oversees are renowned throughout the world for the quality of their products, both past and present; in building upon their traditional strengths, IAG is ensuring that these brands have a terrifically bright future."

Andy Giles Associates is conducting UK media representation for all five domestic audio brands under the IAG umbrella with immediate effect. To find out more, please contact Tim Bower (T: 020 8654 8945; E: tim@andygilesassociates.co.uk) or Murdo Mathewson (T: 020 8886 8391; E: murdo@andygilesassociates.co.uk)

A summary of each of IAG's domestic audio brands follows:

audiolab

Formed in the early 1980s by Philip Swift and Derek Scotland, Audiolab earned worldwide acclaim with the 8000A – an integrated stereo amplifier that became a classic 'step-up' from the budget models of the time. During the ensuing years, the 8000A established itself as one of the most successful British amps ever produced, and was joined by a range of electronics including CD players, pre/power amps and an FM tuner. The brand switched hands in 1997, changing its name to TAG McLaren Audio; and so it was known until 2004, when Audiolab became part of the International Audio Group and returned to its original name.

In 2009, Audiolab offers a tightly focused range of hi-fi and home cinema components, all drawing upon the brand's original concept of simple, well-constructed ergonomics and crisp, neutral sound. Among the jewels in the crown are the 8000S, an integrated amp that takes the classic 8000A template and updates it for the modern era, and the 8000AP, an AV preamp/processor with genuine audiophile credentials – a perfect solution for those who demand top-quality stereo music *and* surround sound movie performance from one system.

Website: www.audiolab.co.uk

IAG Appoints Andy Giles Associates (page 4)



Established in the early 1970s, Castle Acoustics has always been renowned for the quality of its craftsmanship, from the drive units it manufactures to the real-wood cabinets in which they are installed. Two years ago, Castle became the latest marque to join the IAG family of audio brands, and its traditional craftsmanship continues to set it apart from the loudspeaker crowd; genuine audiophile sound from speakers with the visual appeal of high-quality furniture.

Castle has always prided itself upon making the component parts of its speakers in-house, rather than buying 'off the shelf' parts (drive units and so on) from third parties. The same philosophy is true for all the brands within the IAG Group, and Castle will continue to benefit from IAG's exceptional resources in this regard. Castle 'classics' like the Richmond 3i, Conway 3 and Howard S3 remain in production, and new models are in the pipeline for discerning music lovers. Watch this space...

Website: www.castle.uk.com



Mission built its world-class reputation for hi-tech, high-value hi-fi from the 1970s onwards, making some of the most popular and iconic speakers ever devised. Three things characterise Mission speakers: first, the cabinets and drive units use innovative materials and sport a distinctive, modern appearance; second, the sound they produce is fast, detailed and engaging; third, they deliver excellent sonic and material value for money.

The Mission of today continues to stretch the boundaries of what can be achieved at specific price points, introducing innovative techniques to create fresh, new designs. The latest range to be introduced is the 79 Series, which builds upon the heritage of the famous 78 speakers with unique, non-resonant, multi-layered cabinets and a hi-tech finish unlike anything else available at the price. The result is a range of ultra-smart compact speakers with a clean, crisp and detailed sound – an award-winning symbiosis of form and function that earned 'Design & Engineering Showcase Honors' at the International CES show (Las Vegas, USA).

Website: www.mission.co.uk

IAG Appoints Andy Giles Associates (page 5)

Q U A D

Of all the British high-end hi-fi brands, Quad boasts the longest and most distinguished history. The company has been at the cutting edge of audio since 1936, continually pushing back the boundaries of performance with technologies both new and established. In 1953, the Quad II valve amplifier was launched, setting new standards for audio amplification, and three years later Quad invented the first full-range electrostatic speaker – later known as the legendary ESL 57.

Throughout the ensuing years, Quad products have continued to win worldwide acclaim, building a reputation for excellence that bears comparison to the most distinguished brands in any field. Now funded by IAG, Quad's current range boasts many award-winning audio components, including the latest generation of ESL electrostatic speakers, class-leading valve amplifiers, dynamic 'box' speakers and the 99 Series – a range of solid-state audio electronics that fuses high-end performance with innovative connectivity. With some exciting new launches planned for 2009, Quad continues to be driven by the philosophy of its founder, Peter Walker, to produce "the closest approach to the original sound" – a true audio legend, no less.

Website: www.quad-hifi.co.uk

Wharfedale

British loudspeakers have always enjoyed an excellent reputation around the world, and Wharfedale is perhaps the most famous brand of all. Stretching back to 1932, when Gilbert Briggs, Wharfedale's founder, built his first speaker in the cellar of his Yorkshire home, Wharfedale has been responsible for some of the most famous speakers ever produced – like the Diamond, for instance. The first Wharfedale Diamond was launched in 1981, and was immediately acclaimed for its ability to deliver high-quality sound from a compact and affordable design; subsequent generations cemented this reputation, making the Diamond the most famous 'budget bookshelf' speaker of all time – the classic entry point to high-fidelity sound.

Wharfedale has been part of the International Audio Group since 1998, following its acquisition from Verity Group (alongside Quad). At the time, Wharfedale's best years

IAG Appoints Andy Giles Associates (page 6)

appeared long gone, yet IAG has worked tirelessly to ensure Wharfedale reclaims its rightful position at the forefront of loudspeaker design. Since the Millennium, the Diamond name has returned with a bang, with successive ranges earning multiple awards for their exceptional 'sound per pound' performance.

In celebration of Wharfedale's 75th anniversary, 2009 will see the release of an all-new Wharfedale Diamond range called Diamond 10. Now just weeks away, Diamond 10 promises to once again set new standards for sound and build at affordable prices.

Website: www.wharfedale.co.uk

###

Press contacts for IAG's domestic audio brands (Audiolab, Castle Acoustics, Mission, Quad and Wharfedale)

Tim Bower @ Andy Giles Associates

T: 020 8654 8945 • M: 07854 966071 • E: tim@andygilesassociates.co.uk

Murdo Mathewson @ Andy Giles Associates

T: 020 8886 8391 • M: 07960 018147 • E: murdo@andygilesassocoaites.co.uk

Media bookings on behalf of IAG's domestic audio brands

Andy Giles @ Andy Giles Associates

T: 01932 841349 • M: 07802 604291 • E: andy@andygilesassocites.co.uk

About Andy Giles Associates

Andy Giles Associates (AGA) is the UK's leading specialist PR agency for consumer technology.

AGA clients include Absolute Sounds, Blue Horizon, Boston Acoustics, Crystal Audio, Denon, GadgetShop, Imerge, KEF, Fatman, IsoTek, Marantz, Meridian Audio, Monster, NAD, Omnimount, PSB Speakers, Roth Audio, Ruark, SIM2, Sound Technology, TEAC, Velodyne, Vita Audio and

The British Federation of Audio.

www.andygilesassociates.co.uk