

On Sunday, June 26, 2016, the monthly meeting of the Audio-Video Club of Atlanta was held at the showroom ("Experience Center") of Atlanta Audio and Automation (AA&A) that specializes in "Luxury Home Entertainment and Home Automation Systems". Our hosts were Cheryl and Phillip Ampel along with Brett Cochran. There were more than 30 members and guests present. Before continuing, the May meeting was the Canlanta 2016 "show" which was well attended, had many vendors, and was a complete success after many hours of work by the Canlanta team and volunteers.

Up first was John, president, who welcomed and thanked all the members for coming to the meeting. As always, he reminded folks to keep an eye on the website for upcoming meetings and events. The next event is the annual picnic which will be held on July 17 in the afternoon at the Horner's. The August "meeting" will be member "in-home" listening sessions and also three Meridian MQA Digital Encoding demonstration sessions on August 20. In October we plan to hold the postponed builder program. John then introduced our host, Phillip Ampel.

Phillip began his presentation with a history of AA&A. He was an installer for Best Buy for over 20 years and also set up concerts for folks like the Temptations, and was a show manager for 14 years. He started AA&A in 1998 and has been in business since then. Phillip then spoke about the showroom and what each room or "section" represented. I wrote notes on each room, but I am sure they do not cover all the equipment mentioned.

The first room was the patio in which we were seated that had an outdoor-ready TV and Sonoc outdoor speakers. Your secretary thought a leak from an overhead flower pot was hurting the TV below it, which I pointed out to Phillip before the meeting. It turns out this was demonstrating that the TV was waterproof! The second room was the "man cave" with 5 TV's and a 106 inch screen that lowered down when you wanted to watch it instead. The projector was a 1080P Epson model. Third was the "bar" with Sonoc speakers with 3 inch drivers and a ten inch passive subwoofer, and a small TV behind the bar.

The next "room" (hallway actually) was a mirror that doubled as a TV. The next room was the 2 channel room with a Thorens turntable and Bryson electronics. What was interesting about this room is that a previous client had donated his collection of Frank Sinatra original albums to Phillip which are stored in this room. Room six was the biggest by far, and was the home theater demonstration room. It featured a true 4K Sony front projector, a 136 inch screen (Stewart I believe), and true Dolby Atmos sound with Paradigm speakers all around you and in the ceiling. It turns out members spent the majority of their time in this room watching and listening to multiple demonstrations on what Dolby Atmos can do.

The front room had Sonoc "invisible" speakers that are literally part of the wall. They are not meant for critical listening, just background music, but they sounded pretty good! Another mirror TV was in this room (bigger than the other one). Finally, the "family" room had a new pair of ESL Reference speakers by Martin Logan on display, along with a TV that doubled as a piece of art when not on.

Let us not forget the "automation" in the company's name. All of this equipment was run from a single control device, and uses the Control 4 system to do that. To demonstrate this, Phillip pushed one button on his control device, and the entire showroom went dark (as if it was closed), including all the TV's, lights, etc. Another button push and the equipment all came up.

After his presentation, the members roamed around and looked at all the equipment in the various rooms, and especially (as mentioned above) in the home theater demonstration room.

Again, the club thanks Chuck for setting this up and our MANY thanks to Phillip for having us over to experience (literally) all this equipment.

Thomas Horner
Secretary, A-V Club of Atlanta