



# NEAT-O!

## Volunteer-Driven Rustic Theater Restoration

**THE STARLIGHT THEATER** and Café is a cozy, 90-seat theater located just off the historic main street of Nantucket Island. It has an attached bar and restaurant, and patrons can bring drinks into the show; those who dine there can reserve their theater seats.

When the theater began contemplating an upgrade of its facility, funds were scarce, so they started a Kickstarter campaign. That's when Nantucket Media Systems, a high-end custom integrator on the island, stepped in. The company offered to supply the new digital projection system, 7.1 sound system and to redo the interior with all materials supplied at cost, and free labor.

"We are a small community here and up until recently it was really the only place to watch movies," says Nantucket Media Systems president Michael Alpert "It was an opportunity for me to be able to give back to the community a little bit."

No 'before' images were taken of the job, but Alpert paints a pretty vivid picture with just a few words.

"All I can say is it was a black cave," he says. The building was old, and the theater needed a lot of help. The facility's multi-use functions were working against it; theatergoers could hear conversations and music coming from the restaurant and patio area, while those in other areas could hear the noise from the movie being shown, because there was really no sound isolation to speak of, says Alpert.

Using a volunteer force of restaurant employees and community members, Alpert went to work.

"We went in there and ripped everything down to the drywall," he says.

Then they added several layers of 5/8-



In just four weeks Nantucket Media Systems restored Nantucket Island's Starlight Theater and Café from a worn community venue to this. (Photo by Jeffrey Allen)



(Inset) Nantucket Media Systems president Michael Alpert relied on a team of volunteers from the community and the Starlight Theater and Café restaurant to complete the project, particularly the installation of the new star ceiling, lit by 2,500 fiber stars.

inch sheetrock layered with green glue to help isolate the theater from the restaurant, built soffits and columns to hide the HVAC venting and built their own fabric panels to cover 2-inch rigid fiberglass to treat theater sound. They also rebuilt the proscenium and raised the theater's screen as high as possible to improve sight lines.

The finishing touch was a tip of the hat to the name of the theater — the installation of a new ceiling with over 2,500 individually run fiber stars, complete with a shooting star that travels more than 25 feet.

Nantucket Media Systems has been around for 14 years. They are predominately a residential firm that works in the summer homes of the island's vacationers, and they had never done commercial theater work before, let alone on one like this. And even though budget constraints demanded the

### Equipment Details

**Room:**

- ▶ Dimensions: 35' x 20'
- ▶ Screen size: 163" x 68" (2.40 aspect)
- ▶ Throw Distance: 37'

**Electronics:**

Christie Solaria One Plus, Dolby Digital Cinema Sound Processor CP750, QSC DCM-10D, QSC DCA-1644, QSC DCA 1222, QSC DCA 1622, JBL 3677 (x3), JBL 3635 (x2), JBL 8320 (x8)

**Other:**

- ▶ Fiber Optic star ceiling and shooting star from Fiberoptix
- ▶ Fabric Walls from Guilford of Maine
- ▶ Faux wood beams from Fauxwood-beams.com

original seats and carpet remain, Alpert is excited by the end result.

"The room was small enough... that we could give it that home theater feel," he says.

The entire project was completed in four weeks. —Aaron Stern

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