

## case study

# Sound solutions that delight employees and guests

**Nordic coziness meets Mexican cuisine at the Bergen restaurant, Ostra. “We wanted a well-balanced sound system that creates a pleasant atmosphere and blends into the design. That’s what we’ve got”, says restaurant owner Alonso Coronel Crespo.**

With an open kitchen and a well-stocked bar, Ostra has been serving Mexican-inspired food and tasty drinks since the summer of 2022. The bright premises with high ceilings provide the perfect setting for good conversations and parties, especially when their resident DJs are in full swing on weekends.

The founders behind the concept are Alonso Coronel Crespo, a Mexico-native with international experience in the restaurant industry, and Alexander Arnø, a well-known figure in Bergen’s nightlife circles.

## Sound creates ambience

“We believe atmosphere is the most important thing in a restaurant, and here, good sound is crucial,” says Crespo. Kinly was hired as the supplier of choice to deliver customised sound systems, in collaboration with manufacturer partner BOSE Professional.



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“Quality was fundamental to the entire concept, and sound was no exception. The customer was determined to have a better sound environment than the half-hearted background music they had experienced before – and were willing to invest in it,” explains Trond Lilletvedt, the Senior Sales Engineer at Kinly responsible for both the sales and technical aspects of the project.

## Space at the drawing board

The collaboration between Ostra and Kinly began in 2021 when the restaurant was a simple shell. From the outset, longevity, comprehensiveness and user experience were high on the priority list.

“This gave us the opportunity to provide good advice in close collaboration with BOSE Professional. They have extensive experience with large, advanced projects in the restaurant industry and stood out as a natural. As well as that, it’s always a pleasure to work with them!” says Lilletvedt.

The Ostra founders gave both thumbs up to the design developed in collaboration by the two partners. Ronny Nielsen, Nordic Sales Manager for BOSE Professional, has nearly 30-years of experience in the sound industry.

“The fact that we were involved so early was particularly exciting and indicated that the customers wanted to prioritise high-quality sound. Since we were included right from the drawing board, we had greater influence on where the sound systems should be located and could plan comprehensive solutions,” says Nielsen.

## Sound for a full evening

The restaurant is part of the Viken Vibes concept and located in a cove just outside Bergen city centre. The large windows transport the beautiful view directly into the restaurant however the location means it takes a little more effort to move around as the evening progresses. Creating solutions that can divide the space into different sound zones and for different uses has been a critical factor in the success of this project.

“We wanted to contribute to creating an environment where people want to spend the whole evening, from dinner to drinks. Both so that guests can have

a conversation without echoes from the rest of the room and so that it doesn’t become tiring for the staff to work there, even as the volume rises and the music gets louder. When DJs come to perform, they must be able to connect without extra equipment and have the opportunity to pump up the bass that you can feel in your body,” says Nielsen.

## Good sound at low volume

“One of the major challenges of the project was to create expensive sound, meaning systems sound just as good at low volume as they do at high volume,” says Lilletvedt.

As food is prepared in a visible and open kitchen, it was also important that guests won’t be bothered or distracted by noises that come from a cooking environment. They should be able to see their food, without hearing it. As a result, the direction of the sound became particularly important.

“We have received good feedback from both guests and staff, who have found the sound environment comfortable to work in,” says Crespo.





The choice was made to deploy speakers above the bar that play sound towards the guests along with white pendant speakers in the restaurant space. Instead of hiding these solutions, the restaurant owners were open to making the speakers visible, as long as they integrate well with the rest of the design.

“It’s high-ceilinged, so if the pendant speakers had been attached at the very top, it would have required higher volume. By lowering them, we can keep the volume level to a reduced level when needed,” says Lilletvedt.

## An enhanced aesthetic expression

Lilletvedt explains that design choices were made that elevated both the sound quality and the aesthetics. In fact, many guests believe the speakers are lamps as the sound system doesn’t look like a typical solution mounted to a wall.

Nielsen adds: “Because we hung the pendant speakers at the same height as the lamps and ventilation, they complemented the rest of the design, including the white ceiling. At the same time, we were able to place the sound exactly where we wanted it.”

There are many components that affect reverberation and sound quality in a room, including furniture and surfaces. This wasn’t a problem at Ostra.

“Our surfaces are not padded, but because the domes largely isolate the sound, we could have hard surfaces without echoes in the restaurant. Guests can also have a conversation without being distracted by the other tables,” says Crespo.

## Creating a backup solution

Nielsen explains that just before the opening day, an important component in the sound system was missing.

“We waited a long time for a panel where you can control the volume, but together with Kinly, we designed a separate solution where they could control the sound via iPads and phones while we waited for the regular control system to arrive. It’s never fun to deliver bad news, but Kinly is a very open and solution-oriented partner. That’s what they’re good at,” he says.

Although they eventually secured the missing component, Crespo emphasises that the backup solution worked beyond expectations in the interim.

“It worked much better than a typical backup solution! It was also a tangible proof of how creative and solution-oriented the suppliers are. Overall, our collaboration has been very good. Communication has always been direct, professional and proactive,” he says.

## A solid business investment

Nielsen also talks about a positive collaboration experience with Kinly.

“They are a very strong player in the market and are not afraid to take on big projects. They raise the level and make customers see the value of investing,” he says.

The right sound system is an important investment in the restaurant business. With the right atmosphere, guests stay longer into the evening, resultantly purchasing more food and drinks.

“We have several long tables and have experienced that many guests sit for five- to six-hours because they are not disturbed by their surroundings and enjoying themselves. A good sound environment is often something you don’t notice, but when you even get comments on how great it is, you know you’ve achieved something extra,” Crespo concludes.



## Why Kinly?

Bringing people & technology together for better productivity wherever the work happens — because great things happen when people work together.