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MERIDIAN – THE FUTURE OF SOUND IS NOW

In 1983, Meridian Audio was the first British company to manufacture a CD player and in 1990, the first to introduce active loudspeakers (loudspeakers with power amplifiers inside the cabinet) designed for the domestic market. Meridian also created the first digital surround-sound processor and the first loudspeaker using Digital Signal Processing. All of these have been acclaimed for their performances and have won awards around the world. The technology Meridian has developed is now being used by other companies globally and has defined how we experience home entertainment today.

The number of unique technologies that have been developed by Meridian over the course of the company's history is impressive in itself. That these technologies have set standards for the rest of the industry goes even further to prove a reputation for innovation and the pursuit of perfection. The most notable of these technologies is the Meridian Lossless Packing standard that is used in DVD-Audio as well as the sound on High-Definition formats, including HD DVD and Blu-Ray.

Through constant development, evolution and refinement, Meridian has worked to create compact hardware and speakers, while simultaneously advancing the capabilities of its processing technology to increase the quality of audio output. Now, in its 40th year, Meridian remains at the forefront of innovation, with no signs of slowing down.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Meridian was founded in July 1977 by Bob Stuart and Allen Boothroyd. Allen and Bob had worked together as consultants since the early 1970s; their early projects included the famous Lecson Audio product line, which remains on permanent display in the New York Museum of Modern Art and for which they won their first British Design Council Award in 1974.

Over the next few years, the Meridian product line grew steadily into the 100 Series, for which the company received a second British Design Council Award in 1982.

Bob was involved in the very early stages of the development of Compact Disc through his connections with Philips in Holland. In 1983, Meridian launched the first CD player to be made in Britain. This product – the MCD – was acclaimed for its performance, winning awards for the best-sounding CD player in seven major countries, including Japan and the USA.

THE 200 SERIES

In 1986, the first products of a new 200 Series were launched. This series was to last until 1993 and, through continuing development, grew to include the whole range of domestic hi-fi plus digital-to-analogue converters and a range of multi-room components. In addition, a series of active loudspeakers was developed and brought to market.

During the 1980s, the company continued to develop its skills in audio-related digital signal processing, and in 1989, introduced the world's first digitally-driven loudspeaker: the D600.

DIGITAL INNOVATION

Meridian has continued to develop active and digital loudspeakers throughout the years. In 1990, the world's first speaker using Digital Signal Processing (DSP) – the DSP6000 – was launched.

In 1993, the 500 Series was launched. This represented a major step forward, and was a key product line for the ten years up to and including 2003.

In 1994, the company entered the emerging home theatre market with another first, the Meridian Digital Theatre. This concept was based on the company's range of digital loudspeakers and the 565 Surround Sound Decoder. The Digital Theatre and the 565 won more than ten awards in the first twelve months of production. In 1996, the company launched its flagship DSP Loudspeaker, the DSP8000.

The company's 800 Reference Series was introduced in 1997. This was a major development, introducing a new concept for hi-fi products. The 800 Series was designed to address the problem of rapid format development and the constant need for product replacement. The 800 Series is card-based and modular, reducing the chance of the product becoming obsolete.

In 2003, the G Series was launched – the seventh series of products in the history of the company. The objective with this line was to increase the number of combination products, this being made possible by the larger enclosure size.

Following the success of the G Series products, Meridian moved both its UK headquarters in Huntingdon, near Cambridge, and its US subsidiary, Meridian America, Inc, into new, larger premises in August 2004. The company still remains in the 56,000 square-foot, state-of-the-art, purpose-built UK facility today, complete with manufacturing, warehousing, development and office space set in 5 acres of land.

During 2006, following a licensing agreement with Genesis Microchip Inc. to develop the Faroudja brand, Meridian released two new full-specification High Definition 1080p video projectors and an accompanying multifunction video processor. The company also launched a new line of in/on-wall loudspeakers, the 300 Series, and components - the C Series - aimed at the lucrative custom installation market, all of which have already received favourable reports in the press.

In 2007, Meridian started the year with the release of a stunning new product, the F80 – a complete, compact entertainment system developed in co-operation with Ferrari S.p.A. The F80 was widely and continually acclaimed in the British and international press. In 2008, an additional compact system was introduced in the form of the Alfred Dunhill AD88, also to widespread praise. The F80 was later superseded by the M80.

In December 2008, following a short period of collaborative development, Meridian successfully acquired Sooloos LLC, a manufacturer of server-based home entertainment systems widely acknowledged as the most innovative and sophisticated available – as well as the most intuitive and easiest to use. By January 2009, a new 17-inch touch screen controller – Control 10 – was introduced at the International CES, Las Vegas. This was the first of a growing range of products that perfectly integrate the powerful features of the Meridian Digital Media System with Meridian’s class leading audio systems.

THE SOUND OF CELEBRATION: MERIDIAN IS FORTY!

The future is bright for Meridian Audio as it celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. As part of this momentous occasion, the company has announced exciting plans for the year ahead, with upcoming product launches, comprehensive partnerships and a number of prestigious events in its drive to provide the very best in hi-res audio solutions.

Throughout 2017, Meridian is introducing new, innovative products to help home technology integrators put their clients at the centre of the listening experience. Meridian has recently launched the 218 zone controller and 258 power amplifier. Both products help to deliver a comprehensive home theatre solution, regardless of existing audio and multi-zone media systems. Adding power, simplicity of integration and performance, the 218 and 258 products use Meridian's unique up-sampling technology to significantly improve audio quality with ease. Equally exciting new products are set to be unveiled during the company's 40th year.

Meanwhile, Meridian is developing partnerships that give dealers access to a comprehensive range of premium home cinema solutions. Barco projectors deliver phenomenally high quality video resolution. Distributed by Meridian, the Loki Dual Laser Projector, available in two resolutions - either 3840 x 2160 or 5120 x 2160 and with a native 2.37:1 aspect ratio, prevents no loss of light or black bars when enjoying home theatre, ensuring a premium movie-watching experience. Meridian's partnership with DT Screens and Cinema-ATS, complete the range with first class screen and acoustic products for home cinemas.

Meridian's complimentary Design and Specification Service integrates all of its partners' technology to make it quicker and easier for integrators to specify the right products for installation projects. Incorporation technology from Barco projectors, DT Screens and Cinema-ATS panels, the Design and Specification Service minimises the challenge faced by integrators working on multiple projects.

Meridian has also recently launched its "Dealer School" training initiative. Hosted in its spectacular demo home theatre at Meridian HQ in Huntingdon, the programme focuses on giving dealers the full range of skills they need to design and create unbeatable home theatres. Integrators can now participate in new dedicated training sessions on four key areas, as well as two existing courses.

To complete the celebrations, Meridian is organising a 40th anniversary event at CEDIA San Diego on the evening of Friday 8th September, where a number of new products will be introduced to the market. This will be followed in London with a product launch event later in October, outlining plans for the coming year, and at ISE 2018 where additional new products will be unveiled to the European market as a continuation of the 40th anniversary celebrations.

For more information, visit www.meridian.co.uk.

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Meridian Audio Contacts:

For further information, please contact: Rayner Sheridan at rayner.sheridan@meridian.co.uk or Katy Bradshaw at katy.bradshaw@meridian.co.uk

PR Contacts for Custom Installation:

Please contact: Shereen Russell or Melissa Baker at Wildwood Public Relations

shereen.russell@wildwoodpr.com or melissa.baker@wildwoodpr.com

ABOUT MERIDIAN AUDIO

Since 1977, Meridian Audio has been crafting innovative, elegant, high performance audio solutions. From its compact DSP loudspeakers with integrated amplification, to its user-friendly music management platform, Sooloos, Meridian delivers easy to install, high resolution audio systems for home cinemas and whole home solutions. Meridian Audio are also official distributors of Display Technologies, Barco Residential and Cinema Acoustic Treatment System Products. Together we are able to offer the ultimate home cinema experience. The Meridian Audio experience is now also available in the latest models from Jaguar Land Rover, thanks to a collaborative partnership between these two leaders of British innovation and engineering. Learn more at www.meridian-audio.com.

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