

studio**report**

“We are in a very peculiar financial place. No one knows what exactly is going to happen in Portugal – but the advertising guys will keep working whatever” João Moura, dizplay soundlab

➤ PORTUGAL

Say it, **play** it

EMBARKING ON a search for European success stories from the post-production industry, you'd be wary of heading out on a south-westerly bearing. Lisbon, in these uncertain economic times? Surely nothing to be found there...

Or maybe so. João Moura, one of the partners at Portugal's dizplay soundlab audio post-production house, says the work hasn't stopped – it's just the nature of the projects that has changed.

“I'm not seeing the advertising channels growing,” he says.

“We just have more work from a smaller number of clients, for the same revenue. We have several big customers: supermarkets, banks and telecoms... they are so big that they can come to our studio and say, ‘We'll do everything with you but the rates have to stay the same.’”

Portugal, along with Greece and Spain, was one of the territories highlighted in last year's euro crisis, of course. “We are in a very peculiar financial place. No one knows what exactly is going to happen in Portugal – but the advertising guys will keep working whatever.”

The partners at dizplay (it's a Portuguese pun on ‘say play’) have known each other for over 20 years, but only formed this operation in 2005. Moura worked



(L-R) dizplay's João Moura, Suzanna Roseiro and Pedro Rego

in post-production before this, as well as running a distribution company (Euphonix, Sonic Solutions) and designing studios. When old pals João Rola, Pedro Rego, and Rui Miguel suggested the formation of a new business, they recruited Suzanna Roseiro as head of production, and dizplay was born.

Dizplay is a compact facility in the west of Lisbon. “It's not that much cheaper than in the centre,” says Moura, “it's just that most production companies we work with are just across the hill, and it's very easy for them to come here.”

Dizplay's main control room is based around Steinberg's Nuendo, with a simple Euphonix



controller to pilot it, and ADAM A8X monitors. There's a live room for a small group of voice artists off this; then a second room which can double as a live room if need be, but is currently being used as a pre-production suite. (On the day of *PSN*Europe's visit, Pedro Rego was in the second room, recording a choice of musical idents for McDonald's latest Portuguese ‘I'm Lovin' It' campaign, monitoring on ADAM P-11As.)

The main room (where today it's post work on a Toyota Yaris ad) is Moura's handiwork.

Audio post-house dizplay soundlab in Lisbon is not short of work, though the nature of the business has shifted. **Dave Robinson** finds out if the team are still lovin' it

“We don't have anything out of the ordinary – apart from the Grace Design M906 monitoring controller, which is very good and spectacular sounding.

“We're based around Nuendo, which was kind of funny, because when we began, all the guys wanted Pro Tools. But I wanted to build MADI into the design, and at that time building anything with MADI and Pro Tools was impossible.”

So from the outset Moura chose the Steinberg package on Apple Macs and RME MADI Bridge interfaces. “MADI was easier to connect, just two cables – and it was me that did all the wiring! Cost-wise, the price is not high compared with other solutions, and it's easy to build and maintain.”

But it's the ADAM Audio monitors that he enthuses over. These were purchased through Lisbon's André Toscano of Audio:log, whom Moura has known for 10 years.

“ADAM was a huge surprise for me. In the beginning, I fell for the tweeters on the S3s, the sound was remarkable – it was so different from everything else. I was used to Genelecs and – my favourite at the time – ATC, and PMC as I was doing some mastering. But ADAM was a breath of fresh air.”

At Hansa Studios in Germany, the engineer remarked how ADAM speakers were easier to work with over a sustained period of listening. Moura agrees.

“Oh, it is remarkable, yes. It is the complete opposite to the Yamaha NS10s for instance: easy to listen to all day; we don't even get tired.

“We used to have P-11As rather than the A8Xs – these new ones have much better mid-range and imaging than the P-11s. It seems like the amplifiers are much faster working with the drivers and tweeters in the A8X, because the image is so much better.

Oddly, though, there's only one set of monitors in the control room. Moura finds himself using the output of the TV monitors instead. Is that wise? “I don't trust them... but the clients do,” he smiles.

And despite the earlier talk of the market being “flat”, Moura hints at an expansion for dizplay, with an extension of the facility into a bigger space. But should they buy some more ADAM monitors first – some midfields for the control room, perhaps? Or is there something else on the shopping list first?

Without hesitating, Moura deadpans: “A BMW for everyone.”

Now that's optimism.

www.dizplay.pt