

Luxury 5-Star May Fair Hotel Installs GlobalInvacom's FibreIRS

- *Distributes four satellite signals via fibre optic cable*
- *Every guest room has a TV with tuners for terrestrial and satellite signals*
- *GlobalInvacom technology selected for its extremely high reliability*
- *FibreIRS provides great flexibility*
- *All Radisson Group hotels will eventually switch over to the Hybrid system*

■ The May Fair Hotel in London. Stars and other prominent people stay at this hotel which is located near Piccadilly.



More Than 400 FTA TV Channels in Every Room

The May Fair Hotel in London is among one of the very first addresses in London. London's Fashion Weeks take place here and many well known stars stay here as well. One of the suites even has its own elevator that takes you not to the lobby but rather its doors open to one of the side streets. This lets prominent figures make their way to their hotel room without having to pass waiting fans and Paparazzi.

The May Fair Hotel lies north of Green Park not far from Piccadilly. It's a 5-Star hotel and is part of the Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group. This group operates more than 1300 hotels around the world. Radisson is one of the brand names of this hotel group and Radisson Blu represents the 5-Star luxury hotels of this group. In Great Britain the Carlson Rezidor Group operates 14 hotels under the name Radisson Blu; the best of these hotels is the May Fair Hotel. There's no doubt whatsoever: the guests of this hotel only get the best. So, how did the hotel proceed to offer its guests the best TV service?

The answer to this question was provided by Nick Kalsi. Since 2000 he has been the hotel group's IT adviser - he is responsible for anything and everything that has to do with electronics in the hotel. This includes the hotel's own security system as well as the automatic detection of the mini bar contents. As far as rooms go, Nick Kalsi is also responsible for the audio systems in the rooms, that is, the 5.1 sound system that you'd naturally find in a hotel of this class, plus the Internet access and above all the TV service.

"Up until now we've been operating a system based on IPTV but we haven't been satisfied with its performance", reveals Nick Kalsi, "there were simply too many problems." Every time a TV system in a room failed, guests were reluctant to pay for the cost of the room. "The failures were simply too high." There was yet another reason why to





■ In the luxury Suite 901: IT specialist Nick Kalsi shows us how to use the SAMSUNG SmartTV that is connected to the hotel's new Hybrid TV system. It provides guests with access to over 400 TV channels. Underneath the TV is a Soundbar from SONOS that provides the sound from the TV and is part of the room's Surround Sound system.





rethink the TV service in the rooms. „Years ago PayTV or Pay Movies was an interesting side business for hotels but when we took a closer look at the numbers, we found out that only two hotels in our group still record a profit from PayTV in the guest rooms.“ The decision was obvious; whatever new TV system would be installed, it would only be an FTA-based system.

So, what could they do? Nick Kalsi found the right partner in Neil Kumar from the company Hypex. Neil Kumar has been using GlobalInvacom's fibre optic LNBs since 2009: „Since then we've set up more than 20 systems using these fibre optic LNBs.“ Neil Kumar began planning for a new TV system for the May Fair hotel with one specific condition: complete reliability of the TV service in each room. His right hand

man is Steve Cowling; he has been performing installations for 25 years. Together they're creating the plan for a Hybrid system: „We had to consider several important requirements. Since the May Fair Hotel is typically booked 80 to 90% of the time, one requirement was that we used the existing infrastructure in the rooms as much as possible.“ This meant that the existing coax cabling had to be included in the new TV system plan.

„Another requirement was to include as many channels as possible from the Middle East and North Africa.“ This meant satellite reception systems would be needed for NILESAT and BADR. „The third requirement was the integration of the hotel's own information system such as the hotel's own TV channel and billing system.“ This requirement was

achieved using SAMSUNG's SmartTV, however, it first had to be adapted for use in the May Fair Hotel.

Based on all this Neil Kumar decided on a Hybrid system: „For the necessary satellite reception and the transmission of the satellite and terrestrial signals we opted to use the GlobalInvacom fibre optic system. We used the existing coax cabling system to deliver the signals to the rooms and therefore provided signal distribution on each floor through multiswitches.“

The May Fair Hotel has more than 400 rooms including 12 suites. „We couldn't afford to experiment here; we decided therefore to initially test our new Hybrid system.“ A real system equipped with four SAMSUNG TVs was set up at Hypex. The system was monitored over the course of four months to see how it



1. A peek in Suite 901's living room. For about 4000 British Pounds a night you get an enormous living room, two large bedrooms each with its own bathroom, a kitchen as well as a balcony with a fantastic view overlooking London. And let's not forget, there are also three TVs.
2. A look from Suite 901's balcony. In the background can be seen the "London Eye". Stars and the super rich stay in this suite at the May Fair Hotel.

behaved. „We could not detect any system dropouts.“

The first hotel in the Radisson chain to be fitted with the new Hybrid system was the 100-room Edwardian Sussex Hotel. „The system operated 100%, there was no downtime.“

When it became clear that the technology of fibre optic LNBs and fibre optic signal distribution to each floor and the subsequent signal distribution to each room using the existing coax cable all functioned perfectly, the retrofitting of the May Fair Hotel was the next target.

„In January 2013 management decided to convert the May Fair Hotel to the Hybrid system and in April 2013 this conversion was successfully completed.“ Since then the guests in the hotel haven't complained about any more





3. If you don't feel like watching TV, you can choose from a huge variety of music titles and listen to it all over the built-in 5.1 sound system.

4. If you brought your own CDs you can simply insert them in the Bose player. You can even plug in your MP3 player into the Bose player.

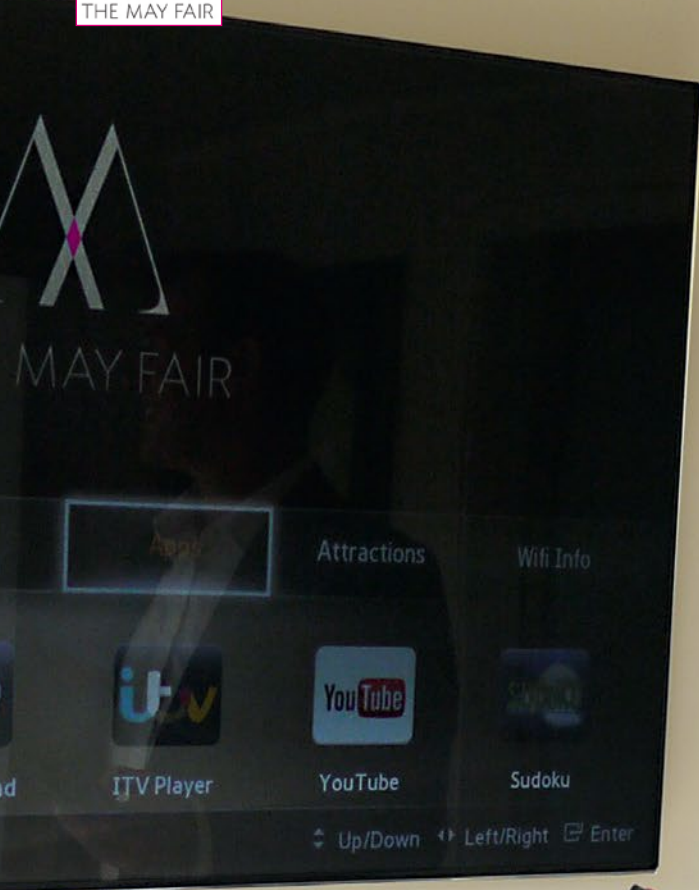


dropouts. „The most important thing is the satisfaction of our customers”, emphasizes Nick Kalsi.

Hypex's Neil Kumar, who created the technical design of the hybrid system, highlights another aspect of the fibre optic system that from the practical side of things is extremely important: „With the FibreIRS system a change in plans is not a problem at all. For example, the installation of the four satellite antennas was originally planned for one of the corners on the roof. With relatively short notice it was decided

that the installation had to take place on the opposite end of the roof. With conventional technology we would have first had to revise the entire plan, but the optical LNBs give us great flexibility allowing us to immediately implement this change.”

Even during the upgrade work there were unforeseen changes to the installation location but since cable lengths are not a factor in fibre optic systems, these changes did not create any problems. “You don't often think about the great flexibility of a fibre optic system,



programming to their guests reliably and without any dropout in service. The implementation of GlobalInvacom's FibreIRS is even more appealing owing to the fact that any future changes to the existing room distribution could be made at any time without any problems. Since fibre optic cables can be split (nearly) as often as necessary, changes would be simple and extremely easy to implement.

Clearly, the May Fair Hotel has found the ideal technical TV service solution for their guests thanks to the Hybrid system.

5. Lee Allen is GlobalInvacom's UK Sales manager. He's happy that the May Fair Hotel installed the FibreIRS. It's a one-of-a-kind reference for GlobalInvacom's system. This TV happens to be in Suite 901's master bedroom.

6. The connection side of one of the 460 SAMSUNG SmartTV's in the May Fair Hotel. The 12 suites each have three TVs while the remaining almost 400 rooms each have one TV.

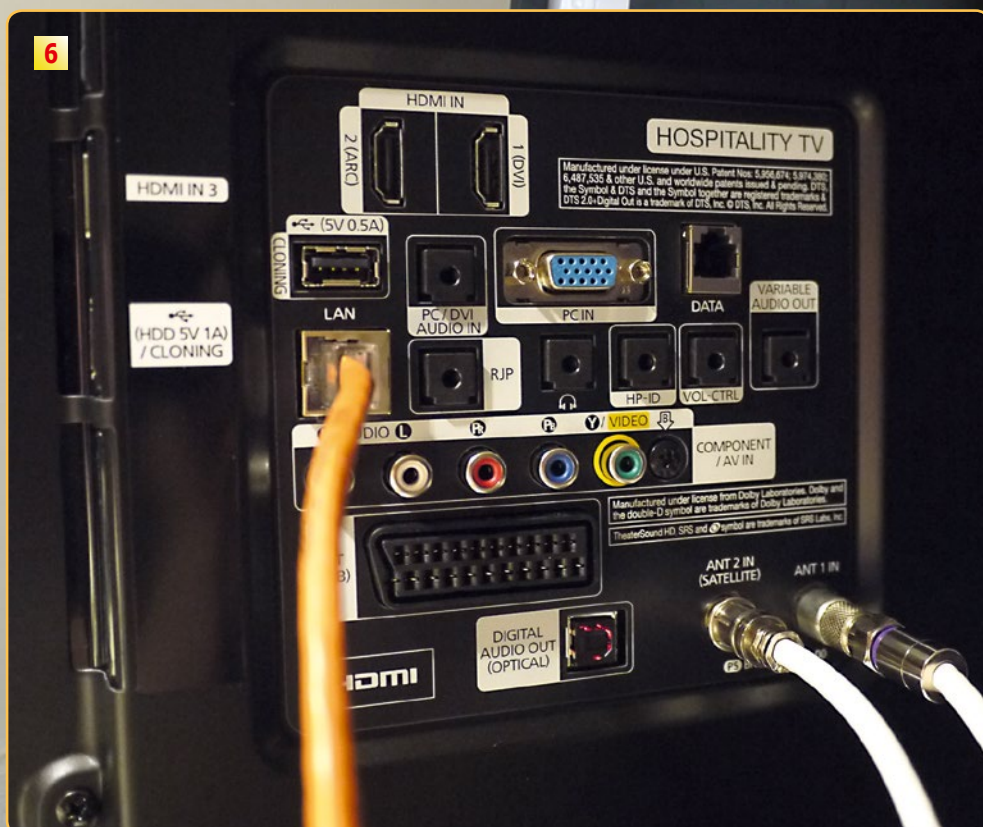
yet in reality it is often the reason for a problem-free installation."

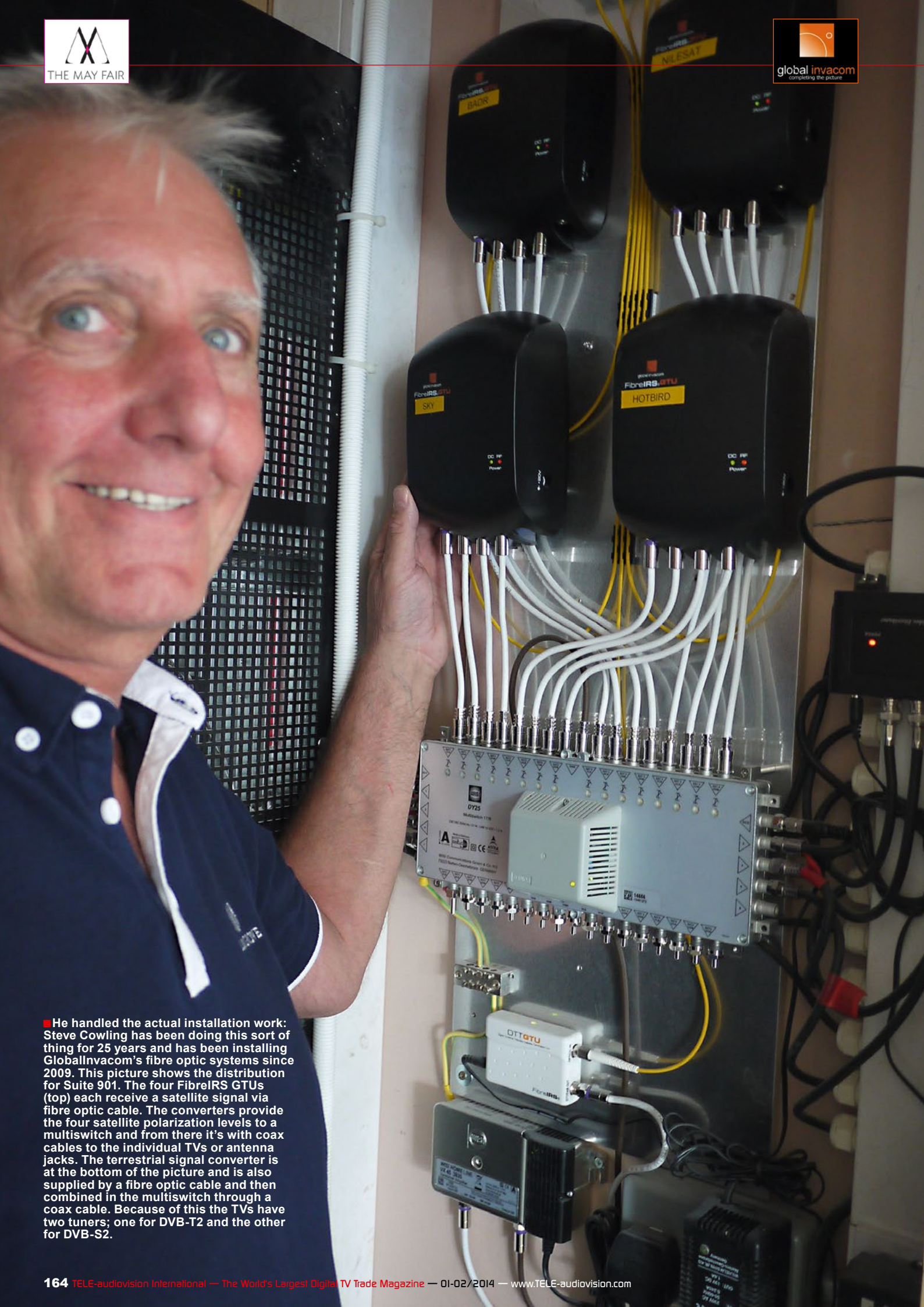
The May Fair Hotel's TV system carries the following TV channels: "We loaded the first 50 channels with terrestrial TV signals. Beyond that there are up to 380 FTA channels from the ASTRA 2, HOTBIRD, NILESAT and BADR satellites as well as roughly 40 radio channels", counts Nick Kalsi, "On top of all that we also carry all the Sky Sports channels."

Programming the SAMSUNG Smart-TV is handled from a central location: "We can add or remove channels at any time. The channel list is automatically transferred to every TV." Each SAMSUNG SmartTV has two tuners, one terrestrial and one satellite tuner, plus there's a connection to the Internet for WebTV.

Nick Kalso highlights yet another special feature of the SAMSUNG TVs: "The TVs are equipped in such a way that the cache is automatically deleted after each use. Guests who had used, for example, Facebook through the TV can be certain that none of their information can be viewed by the next guest." This is a very critical aspect with devices that are consistently used by different guests.

So, this is how a five-star hotel is able to provide a wide variety of TV





■ He handled the actual installation work: Steve Cowling has been doing this sort of thing for 25 years and has been installing GlobalInvacom's fibre optic systems since 2009. This picture shows the distribution for Suite 901. The four FibreRS GTUs (top) each receive a satellite signal via fibre optic cable. The converters provide the four satellite polarization levels to a multiswitch and from there it's with coax cables to the individual TVs or antenna jacks. The terrestrial signal converter is at the bottom of the picture and is also supplied by a fibre optic cable and then combined in the multiswitch through a coax cable. Because of this the TVs have two tuners; one for DVB-T2 and the other for DVB-S2.

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7. Four satellite dishes on the roof receive the satellite signals.

8. The four satellite dishes viewed from the building across the street. They are used to receive ASTRA 2 at 28.2E, HOTBIRD at 13E, NILESAT at 7W and BADR at 26E.

9. The satellite signals are routed to all the floors via fibre optic cable by this distribution box



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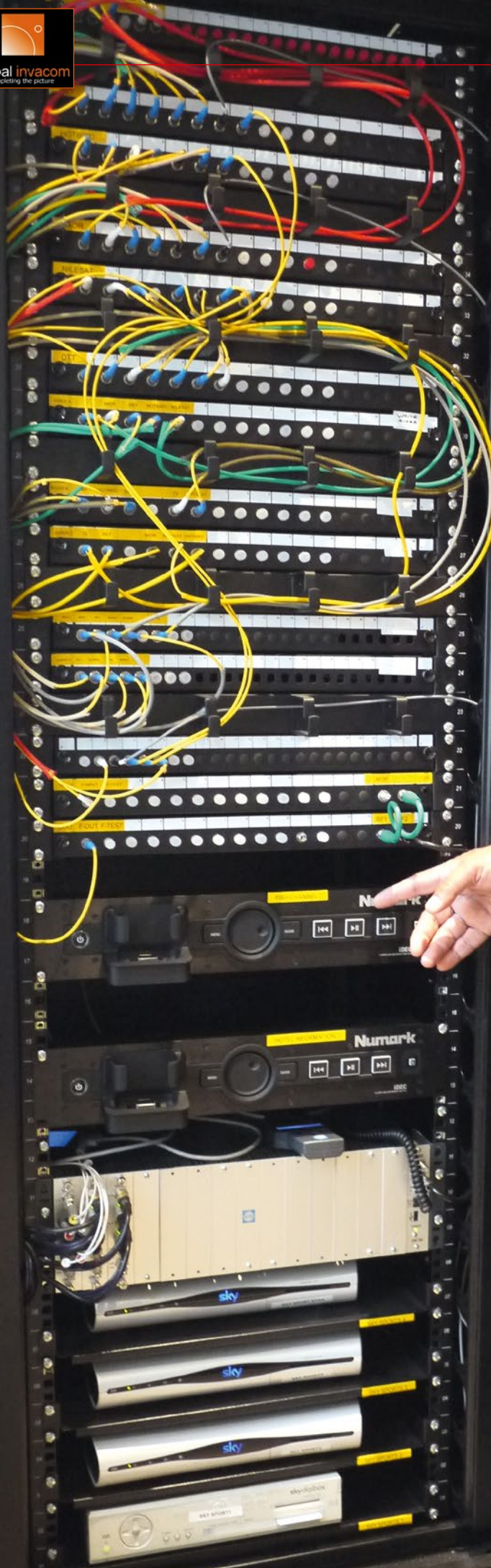




10. The BADR at 26E is being received with a 1.8-meter dish

11. The UHF antenna is aligned with the broadcast tower Crystal Palace

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■ The actual TV control centre in the May Fair Hotel: Neil Kumar from Hypex is responsible for the technical side of the operation. Here we see the fibre optic cable distribution switches. The two components that Neil is pointing to generate the hotel's own TV channel. Sky satellite receivers can be seen at the bottom of the rack. They are used to receive the Sky Sports channels and are fed into the hotel's TV network. Neil Kumar explains, "We installed about 2.5 km (about 1.5 miles) of fibre optic cable in this hotel."