

Synot corrals the best of best

Czech distributor Synot brings together the best talent in the industry at the Prague show

Czech distributor and operator, Synot, unveiled three new JPM products on its stand at the World of Entertainment exhibition in April. Gold Bar, Extreme and Wings were the star attractions of a stand that also featured the latest games from a cooperation between Synot and German giant, Merkur Gaming. Co-designed by Synot and developed and manufactured by Merkur, Triple Chance and Cash Fruits are two video AWP proto-types heading for a three month Czech market test in July. "Our plans involve a cooperation with Merkur in Czech, Ukraine and Poland," explained Synot Sales Director, Pavel Michalcio. "It's still early in the relationship, but we are progressing very rapidly for two such huge companies." And it's a symbiotic relationship that involves JPM too, with its Linear cabinet games manufactured by Merkur in Germany. "You can immediately recognise that they are manufactured by the Gauselmann Group," said Mr. Michalcio of the latest JPM games. "They are the finest quality in terms of both precision and reliability, which presents the best of both worlds; JPM's game design expertise and Gauselmann production values." Mr. Michalcio also emphasised that Synot's relationship with JPM was as strong as ever, despite new deals with Merkur, Boss Media and a changing Czech marketplace. "Our philosophy is to bring together specialist companies to create the best games for our operations," said Mr. Michalcio. "The situation in the Czech market at present means that we must offer the greatest range of games ever: IVT, auto-roulette, sports-betting, reel-based and video AWP's. Our goal is to make every game experience more entertaining, more comfortable, more attractive in a casino style." Asked about the future development of video product in the Czech market, Mr. Michalcio stated: "We have to develop products in our existing markets, IVTs, multi-players and AWP's. It's still the beginning of video reels in the Czech market and I believe that in the near future this business will still remain a reels market. We don't just offer reels to the Czech market because of the relationship we have with JPM. We do it because we still think there's good business in mechanical reels, and it still has a future. But to cover every sector, we are cooperating with both Merkur and Boss Media in the area of video, and we're working with JPM in this sector too." JPM Group's Managing Director, Charles Walker, confirmed that video



JPM and Synot continue their long-standing relationship with the launch of three new games at the World of Entertainment exhibition in Prague.

Czech's new gaming law should come into force in 2007. But with a summer election, nothing's certain right now. However, the current Czech law does not cover areas such as Internet betting, and so changes are expected before the country moves towards the single currency in 2009.

Synot also stated that the company is making headway in Poland right now, but that progress was slow due to legislation. "Poland has huge potential, but it's not what distributors expected," said Mr. Michalcio.

plans were ongoing, but as yet it was too early to mention specifics. "Video is becoming a more significant factor in the Czech market," commented Mr. Walker. "Not only in Synot's markets, but also in the UK. We have plans to unveil video product, but there's nothing to reveal right now, apart from to say that it's something JPM is responding to." However, Mr. Walker was keen to emphasise that the movement towards video was not as fast-paced as those at the World of Entertainment exhibition would lead you to believe. "Exhibition stands filled with video products don't correlate to what's selling in the market," said Mr. Walker. "There's always space for reels in Czech and in the other markets in which Synot distribute. We've also seen a number of interesting developments of hybrids, especially in Spain, where a combination of traditional reels and video has proved very popular with players. I do think reel-based games are evolving and that JPM is in a position of particular strength to capitalise on future developments." Mr. Walker confirmed that JPM will be launching considerably more product than in 2005, not just with Synot, but also with Comatel in Spain and Gameworks in The Netherlands. JPM also has firm plans for the UK market. "Our strategy for 2006/7 covers a number of obvious opportunities in Europe with existing partners and distributors," said Mr. Walker. "We've already experienced uplifts in terms of sales and have plans to increase our exports in 2007 with existing partners. In the UK, we've also seen a resurgence in the rebuild market, and have both a new machine brand and a rebuild brand - Crystal." In fact, JPM has accelerated product development for its Crystal brand to six game developments in 2006. "We see a trend generated by the uncertainty around the UK's Gaming Act 2005, in which operators are reluctant to pay top dollar for new machines. Combined with a lack of triennial on stakes and prizes, this uncertainty is helping to boost Crystal sales for rebuilds in the UK."



Heber's John Malin and Suzo America's Jens Peiler at the FADJA exhibition Colombia.

Heber Sales Manager, John Malin, has had a busy couple of months visiting trade shows in Spain, Columbia and the Czech Republic, meeting new and existing customers. In March, John took the opportunity to visit the Andalusian Trade Show in Malaga, before heading off to Columbia on the FADJA 2006 show to support Jens Peiler on the Suzo Americas stand. Suzo Americas is Heber's official distributor in South America. Back in Europe, John then visited the Czech Republic for the "Svet Zabavy" World of Entertainment Show. "I've had a busy spring schedule meeting Heber's customers," said John Malin. "It's a great opportunity for me to meet some of our customers face-to-face as well as forming new relationships. The South American and European markets are two of our key markets with many opportunities available to us. It's been great to be able to forge some new relationships at the shows I've visited". Heber was promoting the Pluto 6 Dual Video embedded control system, the Axis multimedia control system and the Firefly X10i USB add-on I/O peripheral board at the Columbian show.

Progressive Gaming International has received approval for its Rapid Bet Live (RBL) product from the Nevada Gaming Control Board. The company successfully completed a 30 day field trial at the Palms Hotel and Casino (the Palms). RBL enables patrons to place live, real time-time wagers on professional and collegiate basketball, hockey, football, baseball and other sporting events. RBL is now commercially available to be distributed at race and sports books throughout Nevada. In addition, the Progressive Gaming expects to submit to the Nevada Gaming Control Board for approval its wireless edition of RBL within the next two months. In March, the Nevada Gaming Commission approved the use of wireless gaming devices in Nevada, the first state in the nation to allow mobile, wireless gaming in public areas in casinos. Executive Vice President and Chief Technology Officer Thomas Galanty stated: "We are very pleased with the success of the recently completed field trial of RBL which we expect will provide us an excellent platform for the submission of the wireless edition. This is in direct parallel with our core technology strategy to deliver wagering applications and game content from a central server using thin-client technology for casino operators world-wide. Due to the success of the field trial with the first edition of RBL, we expect to operate the field trial for the wireless edition also at the Palms, which has one of the leading edge sport book operations in Nevada."