

London TV

launches with £500k of technology

London TV, a 24 hour TV channel dedicated to what to do and where to go in the world's most exciting city, will broadcast 24 hours on Sky Digital from mid September with £500,000 worth of equipment financed by Fineline.

Previewing at the moment on Sky Channel 166, London TV was launched in July this year. It is the first channel of its type anywhere in the world and will provide bite-sized entertainment

to inspire Londoners to explore their own city and help visitors make the most of their stay.

London TV Chief Executive David Campbell said "If you live in the capital, you often feel guilty that you're not making the most of everything the city has to offer. Now you don't even have to get off the sofa for inspirational ideas delivered straight to your living room. And you'll almost certainly learn something new about the city at the same time."

The brainchild of David Campbell, former Chief Executive at Virgin Radio and co founder of Ginger Productions, London TV will broadcast round the clock from studios overlooking the River Thames, and will feature the latest on the capital's culture, shopping, eating and trips out, with news on the hottest events and special offers, saving viewers both time and money.

London TV is created by Visit

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Visit London presenter, **Georgie Palmer**, in the new studio



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BPS wins prestigious golf deal

Fineline has financed an Aston Blue Dual Plane Character Generator suite for Broadcast & Production Services UK Ltd (BPS) as part of a package that BPS is supplying to its client European Tour Promotions – a division of TWI.



The high profile deal includes two graphic stations installed by BPS along with Sony PVM20F1E monitors and a Sony DVW-A500P VTR. European Tour Promotions will use the suites for all major

PGA tournaments as well as the Ryder Cup when it is held in Ireland in 2006.

Managing Director John O'Reilly said "Fineline's knowledge of the equipment is very valuable. I have worked with Fineline for many years and value their professionalism."

BPS Finance Director, Helen Wise added "Fineline is well established and highly regarded in the industry. I like their flexible approach."

Based in London, BPS is a systems integrator that specialises in supplying equipment to the broadcast industry. Clients include the Creation Company, Heavy Pencil and Highwire.

About Aston Blue Dual Plane Character Generator

The ultimate studio production tool, Blue combines the focused power of dedicated cg and graphics technology with the freedom to interface to third party files and systems. It exploits Aston's ViVid multi-processor architecture, so users can be confident that graphics are delivered fast and reliably, every time. For more info visit: <http://www.aston.tv/>

View from the top



Gareth Wilding, Director

"The person who is waiting for something to turn up might start with their shirt-sleeves."

Garth Henrichs

In our May issue of the Preview I highlighted the recent changes occurring across the media sector and suggested that more would follow. Since then there has been news in abundance: the sale of BBC Technology to Siemens; changes in senior management at Frontier Post, Editworks, Riverside TV, Evolutions, and Blue; the demise of Alphamagic, Telstar, Barracuda and Head First – with Resolution quickly expanding into the vacated premises of the latter two; redundancies at Dubbs; the buyout from administrators of PSL; the takeover of P3 by the TV Set; and of 3 Mills Studios by the LDA; the announcement of a CVA by Fusion; while a 'For-Sale' sign has gone up outside MPC!

Going by recent press stories, it has also been the busiest talent transfer season for some time.

Changes indeed, and it is not over yet.

It was recently reported that subscriptions had finally overtaken advertising as the main source of broadcast revenue. With the phenomenal growth in the DVD market and consumer take-up of PVRs (not to mention decreasing audience figures!) it is clear that viewing habits have changed. Therefore if you have not yet woken up to the changing landscape of production budgets, then it might be time to smell the coffee.

The food chain of the broadcast market is already unrecognisable from only a few years ago, but the biggest changes are still to come – and probably sooner than most people expect.

However, this is not intended as a portent of doom, rather as recognition of the exciting evolution sweeping through our industry. All previews for IBC suggest that if it is not HD, HD capable, or HD compatible then it won't be there.

New investment in HD, 2K and even 4K technology is gathering a strong momentum throughout the market, and the indications are that if you are not already considering HD in a serious capacity then you should be.

We all enjoyed the good times a few years ago, and some in the industry are confidently waiting for them to return. Those people may be well advised to stop waiting and turn up their shirt-sleeves!

I look forward to seeing you at IBC.

Best Wishes.

continued from page 1

London, formerly the London Tourist Board and Convention Bureau and is charged with promoting London as the world's most exciting city, targeting domestic and overseas leisure and business visitors as well as Londoners.

The studio, based at City Hall, has incorporated top of the range technology including Sony and Panasonic camera kits and VTRs, Thomson Grass Valley vision mixer and Avid Adrenaline edit suite.

He added "London TV provides one of the best ways to deliver up-to-the-minute information in a fast moving city like ours. Television brings the capital to life in a way that a guide book could never do and with digital uptake increasing all the time, there has never been a better time to launch a channel dedicated to the greatest city in the world."

Inspiration will also be provided by locals and celebrities who will paint their own personal portraits of the capital by sharing insider tips, secret haunts and their most memorable London experiences. Viewers will also get a chance to see behind the scenes and meet some of the unsung heroes working in London's attractions, restaurants, theatres, bars and pubs.

Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, said "London is the cultural capital of Europe, a city of more than 7m people, and destination of choice for visitors from the UK and worldwide. With a long and dynamic history and diverse, trend-setting contemporary culture, there is lots going on in the capital, every day of the week. London TV, as well as being a source of ideas, will be a real help to Londoners – and I hope visitors to the capital – getting out and experiencing even more of what London has to offer."

Although one of the biggest, busiest and most diverse cities in the world, over half of Londoners (53%) admit they rarely go beyond the few streets around where they live and work with a further third of Londoners (31%) putting this down to being overloaded with information and overwhelmed by the vast possibilities on their doorstep. One in three Londoners (33%) worry constantly they are not making the most of their spare time in the city.



Alias Smith and Singh

expand hire portfolio

Alias Smith and Singh, a growing broadcast hire company based in Newman Street, W1, has added two Sony DSR-PD170 camera kits, four Sony DSR45P, three Sony J30 SDIs & two Sony DSR2000 VTRs to its hire portfolio, with finance from Finline.

Founded in 1999 by Mike Smith & Bal Singh Sanghera, the team provide broadcast equipment to a wide customer base of broadcasters, production companies and freelancers.

Customer demand prompted the team to increase its portfolio. Company Founder Mike Smith explained "Clients were always asking if we had cameras, so we decided it was time to expand. Through our relationship with Finline we have managed our cash flow more effectively. We don't want kit on the shelves, but we need to be able to respond quickly to requests from customers.

"Gavin Scott at Finline understands our business and knows how important it is to respond quickly when we need to buy new kit."

Over the last five years Alias Smith and Singh has used over £250,000 worth of funding from Finline to grow the business. Mike explained that he had been approached by other finance companies but they could not come to such a quick arrangement as Finline.

"I like the efficient service that we get from Gavin; buying kit for a long term hire opportunity needs a fast turnaround. Finline is very supportive, often dealing with an enquiry with one telephone call."

Together Mike Smith and Bal Singh Sanghera have over forty years of TV industry experience from all sectors. "It all started through friends we have made over the years enquiring about the hiring of VTRs. We bought a Betacam SP VTR to start with and quickly needed a lot more. As business grew we had requests for all sorts of things such as SPGs, legalisers, monitors etc so we took on the challenge of hire. Our business aim is to supply equipment at realistic prices to help accommodate the ever demanding budgets of productions," said Mike.

Gavin Scott added "We are seeing an increase in requests for funding DVCam technology due to a demand for low cost, good quality production work from TV channels operating on the Sky platform."



Gavin Scott
Finline
Account Manager

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Axis camera equipment on location with the BBC's *Last of the Summer Wine*



Axis Films celebrates 15 years with new office in Leeds

It is 15 years since Axis Films opened for business and, with established bases at Shepperton Studios and Glasgow, the company will shortly open a new base in Leeds. For the last 11 years the company has been a regular customer of Fineline.

"When we launched Axis we funded it from our own resources using our LWT redundancy packages to acquire an inventory," Paul Carter, Axis MD said. "We first called Fineline when we began upgrading the equipment." Since then Fineline has funded over £1m of the company's film and broadcast camera equipment.

Initially Axis was renting exclusively to the 16mm television drama market, now the company has evolved with a much broader range of clients, many shooting on digital formats.

"Digital makes up over half our turnover but film is still very important to us and we still see potential in this area. We are currently supplying *Taggart* and *Last of the Summer Wine*, both shooting on 16mm as is *Walking with Monsters*. With digital we have just finished *U Get Me*, and we recently started *Crust* following extensive tests on both HD and DigiBeta. In the end the production is being shot on DigiBeta using two of our new HD lenses the HJ21 and the HJ11".

Paul also recognises demand in the DV sector of the market. "We have learned to be open minded about formats. Last year the demand was for DVcam and we supplied DSR570 cameras for the BBC series *Industrial Wonders*. This year the demand has grown for the progressive scan Panasonic DVX100A as used by the model unit on *The Intimidation Game*.

In 1998 Axis moved into Scotland,

acquiring GHS Motion Picture Services (now Axis Glasgow) and the company is about to expand further, this time into Leeds. "We will be open for business in Leeds by the end of September," said Paul. "Work is increasingly arriving at the last minute and the right location is as important as the right equipment. While well maintained modern equipment is very reliable we know our clients appreciate on hand back up."

What sets the Axis team apart from many competitors are their roots in hands on production as all the directors are themselves experienced cameramen. "We have a reputation for being able to offer workable, budget conscious solutions to clients' challenges, but I believe we are also very quick to react to any problems that may arise on a client's production. Unforeseen scenarios and last minute changes are not infrequent, and our ability to respond quickly wins us friends. It is only when something goes wrong that a client can fully appreciate the level of service we offer."

Paul is enthusiastic about Fineline's support of Axis over the years, "We know that Fineline understand our business. They know who we are and keep abreast of our financial data, which allows them to respond rapidly. We get an answer from Fineline within hours rather than days and this speed of response allows us to maintain the level of service that our own clients demand".

"Fineline recognise that we, as a facility company, do not have the luxury of time on our side. In a market of ever decreasing margins, with production companies' equipment lists getting longer and more complex, we have to remain very fleet of foot to respond effectively when required."



Fineline Introduces Private Medical Insurance Products



A range of private medical insurance products, offering a competitively priced, flexible approach to health insurance cover for individuals and companies, have just been launched by Fineline.

Gareth Wilding, Director, Fineline Media Finance, said "Our clients can apply online, via the Fineline website, for a private medical insurance plan which they can build themselves to meet their own personal needs."

The plans offered are based on a supermarket style approach, whereby clients take out essential in-patient cover and then top up with any of seven additional options. The menu-based product allows clients to select the benefits they want at a price they can afford.

Clients apply via the Fineline website, proceed through to a simple quotation and fulfilment process. At the end of the procedure the client will be covered to the level of insurance as chosen and will receive paperwork and direct debit confirmation through the post within a few days. The plan is a highly competitive options based policy which covers the cost of specialist treatment of acute conditions on a short-term basis that are medically necessary. Under the Essential Inpatient cover, the plan covers all in-patient and day-care charges such as accommodation,

theatre and nursing fees subject to policy terms. The optional benefits include two Outpatient options (Standard and Comprehensive), Therapies and Psychiatric treatment. The Ancillary benefit option goes further to provide cover for Oral surgery, abnormal pregnancy and provides an NHS Cash benefit. In addition you can also choose to upgrade your standard hospital list to include all London hospitals for an additional premium.

Private medical insurance is complementary to NHS services and provides cover for unexpected or unforeseen medical conditions arising after the start of the policy. It is designed to avoid the stress of long hospital waiting lists and inconvenient appointment times.

Independent industry evidence shows that the Health On Line products compare extremely favourably both in price and cover to other Medical Insurance plans offered by BUPA, PPP, Norwich Union and Standard Life etc.

"As the leading provider of finance to the industry we have been able to work with a number of leading insurance providers and can offer private medical insurance cover at very competitive premiums," added Gareth.

For more information visit: www.fineline.co.uk



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Picture It Facilities, the one stop shop for the production industry, has expanded its audio visual capabilities with the introduction of widescreen technology to its portfolio.

With the help of Fineline, Picture It has invested £100,000 in new wide screen technology specifically designed to enhance presentations and dramatise conference sets.

The company also offers broadcast equipment and crew hire, as well as studio facilities at its North London headquarters.

Managing Director, Trevor Hunt said "We wanted to be able to offer our clients the latest technology at a sensible price and we are one of only a few companies in the UK that offer such technology today."

Since the company bought the new projectors and screens, Picture It has run a series of live demos to show clients how, with soft edge blending technology, the system enables seamless projection of panoramic images onto screens and surfaces of any width.

"Response has been very positive," said Trevor. "Clients were impressed that we can project as many as three or four additional images over a background image and create dynamic combinations of live and pre-recorded video, Powerpoint presentations and graphics."

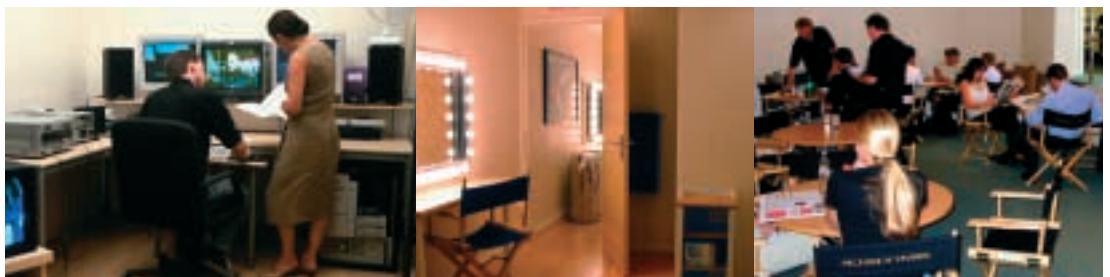
This expansion is just one of many that Fineline has been involved with – over the last eight years Fineline has funded an Avid installation, Sony Digital Betacam VTRs and various camera kits.

"We have a good working relationship with Gavin Scott at Fineline, we consider it a partnership. He is exceptionally helpful and gives us the service we require."

"In the ever changing audio visual market we need to be competitive and keep abreast of the new technology and equipment and Fineline helps us do just that," added Trevor.

Contact Trevor Hunt on 020 8961 6644 or via email: Trevor@picit.net

Looking after
their customers



Infinite Vision

doubles in size

Wandsworth based Infinite Vision, one of the fastest growing crewing companies in the UK, has just invested £90,000 in new camera equipment.



Chris Biggs
Fineline
Account Manager



Founded in 2000 by Chris & Vanessa Keenan, Infinite Vision provides professional camera crews and kit to some of the biggest broadcasters and production houses in the UK. Recent commissions include a 30-part series for BBC1 Daytime TV, three one-hour documentaries for the Discovery channel, as well as a new series of Channel 4 hit, *Property Ladder*.

Managing Director, Chris Keenan explained "Since we started, we have seen demand for our services grow at such a rate that we have implemented an expansion plan to meet our client's needs."

"Adding another Sony DVW-790 and a number of new Canon wide angle lenses from Visual Impact was vital to keep us ahead of the competition."

"All production companies know that crew, no matter how professional, are only as good as the equipment they use. We only provide

the best equipment and this strategy is well received by our clients" explained Chris.

"This was the first time we have worked with Fineline, who were recommended to us by industry contacts. Chris Biggs, our contact there, understands that we are a young but growing organisation that needs efficient service. Fineline showed a comprehensive understanding of the industry and equipment, and responded in a short timeframe to meet our needs."

"Our 12-strong in-house camera and sound team give us a great competitive advantage and ensures consistency in our highly skilled and professional approach to broadcast crewing," explained Chris. "This is what our clients have come to expect from IV."

For more information about Infinite Vision email: info@infinitevision.tv or visit the website www.infinitevision.tv.

About the Sony DVW-790

One-piece Switchable 4:3/16:9 Digital Betacam Camcorder Package for EFP. The camera uses three 16:9 Hyper HAD 1000 CCD "FIT" imagers to produce more than 700 TVL resolution while maintaining f9.0 @ 2000 Lux sensitivity. 12 Bit A/D utilizing 36 MHz Digital Signal Processing ensures the highest picture quality for SDTV field capture. Package consists of one each of the following: DVW790WS, VCT14, LC790TH

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Frontier Post Completes Major Expansion and Drive into HD

Post Production house, Frontier Post has just completed a £500,000 expansion investing in five new suites.

The company has expanded into two more floors at its' current Wells Street address adding a new Avid DS Nitris High Definition suite and four new offline suites equipped with Avid XpressPro systems connected to the existing Unity LANshare network system. Fineline has provided £270,000 of finance to facilitate this expansion.

Managing Director, Neil Hatton described the move into the HD market as a response to increasing demand from US and now UK broadcasters for HD delivery "UK producers are going to have to start shooting HD in order to gain co-production finance. We want to be true to the company's name and be right at the forefront of this market."

He said of the new DS Nitris system, "We chose Nitris as not only is it excellent for HD, the increased power means it is truly outstanding for standard definition programmes."

Neil Hatton said the move was in response to client requirements for increased capacity, "We've just had our best ever six months and we have been bursting at the seams with increasing demand for broadcast and corporate editing."

Recent DS work carried out at Frontier Post includes *Howard Goodall - 20th Century Greats* by Tiger Aspect for Channel 4 and *Pavarotti - The Last Tenor* for BBC 2's Arena strand.

"We also wanted to move to a central server storage and be ready to move to a tapeless working environment," he added.

Frontier Post has worked with Fineline over the past nine years and some £900,000 worth of finance has helped the company grow significantly; including its move in 1996 from Acton into Soho - a major milestone in Frontier Post's history.

"The Fineline team is so easy to do business with as they know the industry and the technology," said Neil Hatton.

About Frontier Post

Frontier Post is an independent post-production house based in central London. Founded in 1992, it has a strong track record in high quality editing for broadcast and non-broadcast programmes. Clients include BBC, Hart Ryan Productions, Endemol, Talkback Thames, Tiger Aspect, Monkey Kingdom and North One Television. Frontier Post offers a comprehensive service covering off-line editing, on-line finishing in HD and SD, audio dubbing, graphics, compositing and tape transfers.

New home for
Frontier Post's
Symphony

