

GUEST POWER

Less is often
more - as long
as the less is
more-ish and
bright-ish

The poor beleaguered hotelier suffers from a problem that makes his energy supplier rub his hands in glee – the invisible light switch.

Nobody is quite sure why the normally responsible guest turns into an energy guzzling monster the second they get their key in the lock, but it seems they do. So, what's the answer to the wasted energy for lights left on when rooms are unoccupied?

And while we're at it, why do so many hotel rooms have more fittings than a savvy six-year-old can count, but no way to read after dark? What's going on in hotel land?

'Designing good lighting for hotels is about more than creating stylish products that are on trend and look the part,' says Robert Chelsom.

'It's about top quality products that provide efficient lighting and enhance the guest experience, whether through multi-functional guestroom lighting or bold public area statement pieces.'

And he should know. Chelsom has built a reputation over many years for creating stunning fittings for the hospitality sector.

Lighting really does make or break the traveller's hotel experience; something that is illustrated by recent extensive research conducted by Osram, suggesting that of 10,000 recent hotel reviews in London alone, (350,000 globally), most guests complained about the dim, bad and sparse lighting in their rooms.

'Lighting is clearly important to travellers, so much so that they take the time to go online to warn future guests about their bad experience,' commented David Ellis at Osram. 'One recent visitor to London felt that his stay at a fabulous hotel was ruined, solely by inadequate lighting in the rooms. This lasting impression remains with them when they re-book in the future, meaning they'll probably shop around and consider alternative places to stay.'

'Accordingly,' continued Chelsom, 'when we design either our standard

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lighting collection, or bespoke pieces, we do so from multiple perspectives; from that of the hotelier, the interior designer and - above all else - the guest.'

The first thing to consider is the aesthetic of the product; does it look the part and fit in with the overall design concept? Interior designers are pushing the boundaries more than ever before, always looking to create interior schemes that offer something different, and inevitably lighting is an essential part of that.

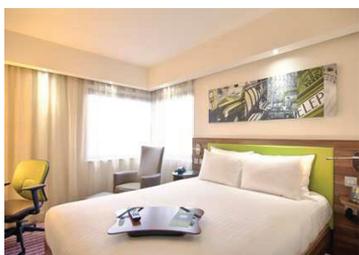
'It's often asked whether table or floor lamps can make a difference in a guestroom, or are they surplus to requirement,' added Chelsom. 'Well, they most certainly can, by adding ambient lighting and creating atmosphere in what has become an increasingly multifunctional space.'

IN THE DARK

As highlighted by the Osram research, lighting is more than just about creating the wow factor and needs to rank higher up the designer's list of priorities.

'One of the biggest complaints to concierges is that guestrooms are insufficiently lit to work, put make up on, or to simply see, so it's our job as lighting specialists to work with the designers and hoteliers to light guestrooms and public areas successfully,' said Chelsom. 'We have helped several hotel chains to create their brand standard light levels, following guestroom lux level surveys carried out by our technicians.'

'A hotel room is no longer just a room to sleep in, it has become multifunctional, a place to eat, sleep,



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work and relax and the lighting scheme needs to reflect the variety of uses and generate the correct light levels to meet all those functions.'

As hoteliers expect stylish design and quality whilst working to a tighter budget, it should be a given that both are essential for contract use. Products need to be designed to withstand frequent and often forceful handling because those of domestic quality aren't going to last two minutes in the hotel environment.

'We need to provide clients with products that reflect the highest standards of engineering and finish, at the right blend of price and quality,' agreed Chelsom. 'Guests want hotels to feel like a luxurious home away from home and they want their hotel lighting in particular to reflect this, to be stylish yet functional. For example, most guests have dimming functionality at home and expect it in hotels, but they want it to be clearly visible on the product and, most of all, usable. I have lost count of the number of times I have heard stories of the concierge being called up to the room to explain how to dim the lights, illustrating there needs to be a distinct balance between design and functionality.'

'Blending cutting edge style with the latest technological developments is becoming more important than ever but we constantly need to ask ourselves whether we can make the lighting experience better for the hotelier by saving money on running and maintenance costs. LEDs are now an essential light source in many hospitality spaces, as sustainability moves to the forefront of the minds of developers and designers. Whilst they don't answer every possible lighting requirement, the option of LEDs has offered increased design possibilities when integrating this technology into our fittings for future energy saving.'

'Whilst I still believe sustainability is at the top of most people's list versus design and price, it is important to recognise the need to go green as the wave of the future. It's imperative that lighting companies are moving with the times and demonstrating commitment to taking sustainability seriously.'

Bearing in mind that the Osram research threw up a comment from one traveller who compared the lighting in a Copenhagen hotel to that of a waiting room in a railway station, it really is time to get it right.



Sound advice

Osram has created this five-point guide for hoteliers:

- Make sure lighting isn't an afterthought. Urge your design consultant to look at lighting considerations early in any design project.
- Consider cost-effective ways of making a difference with your lighting. For instance, don't feel you can afford changing all your halogen to LED lighting? Then perhaps invest a small portion of your budget into new fittings, so you can dim your current lights to create different atmospheres in your establishment.
- Don't blind your guests with new technology they don't understand how to use when making a change to your lighting. For instance, if you're going to introduce new lighting control in the rooms, make sure they're simple for your guests to use.
- Consider simple decorative lighting solutions. These can make a huge difference, and make an impact on your guests as they enter your establishment.
- Don't forget the small lights. Guests can become frustrated if mirror lights provide poor light when getting ready or bedside lamps are not bright enough for them to read.

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