

• THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2009

Buyers' Guide Lighting



Highlight: A kitchen needs plenty of light where you are preparing food. Envirolux Soyama pendant, \$269, from Beacon Lighting.



Let there be light

There are few elements that have the power to change the mood of a room as much as lighting but getting it right can be tricky.

Maya Anderson asks the experts for their tips to create the perfect lighting scheme.

Lighting can have a big impact on the look, feel and function of a room, but it is often seen as a purely functional element and given little consideration.

"Lighting is such a fundamental design consideration in developing a home with beautiful ambience," Beacon Lighting merchandise manager Glen Robinson said.

"If done incorrectly, the area will feel unappealing and uncomfortable."

PLANNING

Careful planning is the key to creating the perfect lighting scheme, according to MondoLuce's Trudi

Despina Design, said. "Single overhead central pendants provide general light, while low voltage halogens need to be placed at strategic intervals to eliminate shadows," she said.

If you are still feeling overwhelmed by all the different products and combinations, Mr Robinson said consulting an expert could help and the cost would usually pay off in the long run by resulting in a better application of the lighting products.

Professional options included lighting designers, who came to your home to assess your space and lighting needs, or in-store advice.

ROOM BY ROOM

Find out what's best for different areas of your house.

BEST FOR BEDROOMS:

Forget that boring light fitting — well-chosen lighting can transform your bedroom into an intimate, relaxing sanctuary.

Ms Flynn said that while a single overhead fitting was a common choice and provided adequate light, it was limiting. "Uplighting creates a softer more diffused effect, while wall lamp strategically positioned around the room generate soft, spreading light," she said.

"Wall washes can offer just the right amount of light for reading, especially if the room is painted in light colours. For a pinch of extra mood, add a dimmer switch."

Ms Anastassiou said uplights could also help create the illusion of more space. "Wall-mounted uplights near corners of the room will make it



atile: Adding lamps makes for multi-functional lighting in living areas. Kulla lamp, \$149, and pendant, \$129, both from Ikea, Innaloo.

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Forget that boring light fitting — well-chosen lighting can transform your bedroom into an intimate, relaxing sanctuary.

PLANNING

Careful planning is the key to creating the perfect lighting scheme, according to Mondoluce's Trudi Flynn. The first step is to consider the three basic types of lighting.

"First, general lighting provides overall brightness in the space," Ms Flynn said. "Secondly, task lighting gives adequate light for specific needs such as reading. Thirdly, accent lighting adds decorative highlights, drawing the eye to special features in the room."

Mr Robinson recommended looking at the function of the room, including what the space was used for, whether task lighting or mood lighting was the most important factor and how much light the fitting would need to provide.

"A kitchen is a task-oriented lighting area and, therefore, needs to have plenty of light in the areas where you are preparing food," he said. "Family rooms are used for many activities from relaxing in front of the TV or reading a book, therefore, the lighting needs to be flexible."

Next you should determine which lights would need to be on at any particular time, which circuit and switch they should be on, and whether you wanted dimmer switches to create ambience.

It might sound obvious but it was also important to think carefully about where the various fittings would be placed, interior designer Debbie Anastassiou, director of

Ms Anastassiou said uplights could also help create the illusion of more space. "Wall-mounted uplights near corners of the room will make it appear larger, especially when one is in bed," she said.

Oversize table lamps were also a good functional choice and could add drama to a room. Lighting Innovations consultant Ricky Fischer said chandeliers were popular for creating atmosphere in the bedroom, particularly modern designs.



Make a statement: A striking feature light adds interest. Morosini Wave pendant light with red shade, about \$1200, from Lighting City, Balcatta.



CONTACTS

- Beacon Lighting: 13 15 95, www.beaconlighting.com.au
- Despina Design: 0432 884 044, www.users.bigpond.net.au/despina/design
- Ikea: 9201 4532, www.ikea.com.au
- Lighting City: 9240 1008, www.lightingcity.com.au
- Lighting Innovations: 9375 7088, 0408 997 073, www.lightinginnovations.com.au
- Mondoluce: 9321 0101, www.mondoluce.com.au

Three of a kind: Hanging a row of pendants creates impact. Tama lights, \$139 each, from Beacon Lighting.



Low hanging: High ceilings are perfect for low hanging lights. Tama lights, \$99.95 (small) and \$139 (large), from Beacon Lighting.

BEST FOR DINING AREAS:
 "There's one area clients want with a wow factor, it's usually the dining area," Mr Fischer said. "Overdays it is becoming versatile,

downlights, wall lights or a combination of fittings could all be used to successfully highlight architectural features. "Silhouetting and shadowing of features utilizing

with lamps that have good colour-rendering properties, such as the standard incandescent lamp or low-voltage halogen lamps. Other options were a simple adjustable low-voltage

more suitable, Mr Hartmann said.

Want to show off an entire wall of art? Mr Fischer suggested a wall wash, casting an equal amount of light over an entire wall, would work on a wall covered in art.

He would highlight statues with a very narrow beam angular globe.

BEST FOR KIDS' ROOMS:

"A child's room needs versatility that can adapt as the child grows," Ms Flynn said. "Bright general lighting plus low-level night-lighting are both important.

"Task lighting can be added along with a study desk as needs change."

BEST FOR HALLWAYS AND ENTRANCEWAYS:

"The key is to make your entrance impressive — it is the first impression and sets the mood for what's to come," Ms Anastassiou said.

She advised taking into account the architectural elements when selecting lighting fixtures.