



# Lighting Design

What is lighting design and how can this benefit the project? I think this question has bounded around for years, we have all at some time attempted to answer, I hope this article will give you an insight & help you arrive at your own conclusion. I have been involved in lighting design since 1988, so over the past 24 years I have had the pleasure of working on various types of lighting design, such as retail, commercial, historical, residential, landscape & hospitality, I say hospitality last as it is this area I would like to focus on this time, over the next few paragraphs I will touch on the ideal process and then illustrate what this process creates through a couple of finished projects.

A lighting designer is a problem solver as well as a creative, we are there not only to add our element of layering but also to help realise the aspirations, and if possible the dreams of both client and design team, to do this we use our knowledge & experience. Over the years I have tried to always adopt the same four principles.

- Listen: I think this is true for any design company if you do not know the aspirations of client, operator and design team then you are standing on the edge of a precipice without even a safety net in place (not something most of us would wish to do!).
- Understand: This is a stage that some may not always identify with but I feel it is essential, you have the brief but you have to understand how this is reflected in your design and what impact that will have, at the same time you need to understand the space, and of course the technology you have available, all these pieces are essential elements of the design meaning what you create is fully realisable & desired.
- Create & Co-Ordinate: you begin loose and fluid and as your ideas and those of the team begin to solidify so does the design, its at this point you start to pull the concept together identifying the content and layout ensuring the team can visualize the finished lit effect. Having obtained sign-off, you begin the development phase which helps you to co-ordinate the details and position of fixtures, ensuring the desired lit effects are seamlessly integrated. Finally comes documentation involving full layout, details, specifications and control information.
- Inspect & Commission: there is little point in going through the early steps if the design is not followed through on site, so it is vital to have periodic site checkups making sure the scheme is being installed as designed, the last but still critical step on every project is commissioning where we tweak lamps, beam angles even sometimes colour, the whole space is then scene set to account for different events or times of the day.

I think its time to move on to some completed projects which should help illustrate the above points, I have selected 3 projects 2 of which are hotels with one a restaurant, clearly the lit effects and visual impact could not of been created without us adopting the above process.

### Indigo Hotel, Shanghai China

This was a relative quick project for this scale we commenced in December 2009 soft launch in September 2010 with full completion and handover taking place in December 2010. The team wanted the guest from the moment of arrival to experience a unique offering embodied by an enlivened and dynamic atmosphere, which encapsulates the local vibe of Shanghai.

In the reception area, square ceiling coffers with RGB



LED strip lights were used to create a dynamic and varied experience. Dependent upon the time of day and day of the week, a different colour is washed onto the ceiling of the coffers. Close offset downlights help accentuate the curved timber walls and metal hull wall, both drawing analogies back to Shanghai's historical ship building industrial past. The living 'green' walls are lit with full spectrum lamps for plant health during the day. They switch over to a more controllable LV source at night, thus allowing for greater flexibility in creating the right mood.

This same light layering method has been utilized to expand the evocative environment throughout the hotel. Starting with the integrated lighting system within the swimming pool to the careful positioning and play of light which draws the guests gaze to various focal points effectively guiding them to key destinations. All the while, it was of utmost importance to ensure there was sufficient light with a degree of balanced darkness which helps to create an intimate almost cocooning ambience. The balance of darkness also helped extend the night views to the spectacular Pudong skyscrapers and the Huangpu River, making the most of the hotel's location on the famous Shanghai Bund.

Colour, whilst used, never over powers the space but introduces the dynamic feel required. It was important to always keep a balance between the neutral light and the coloured light ensuring the guest is never oversaturated with colour.

### **Kebab Khan, Chandigarh, India**

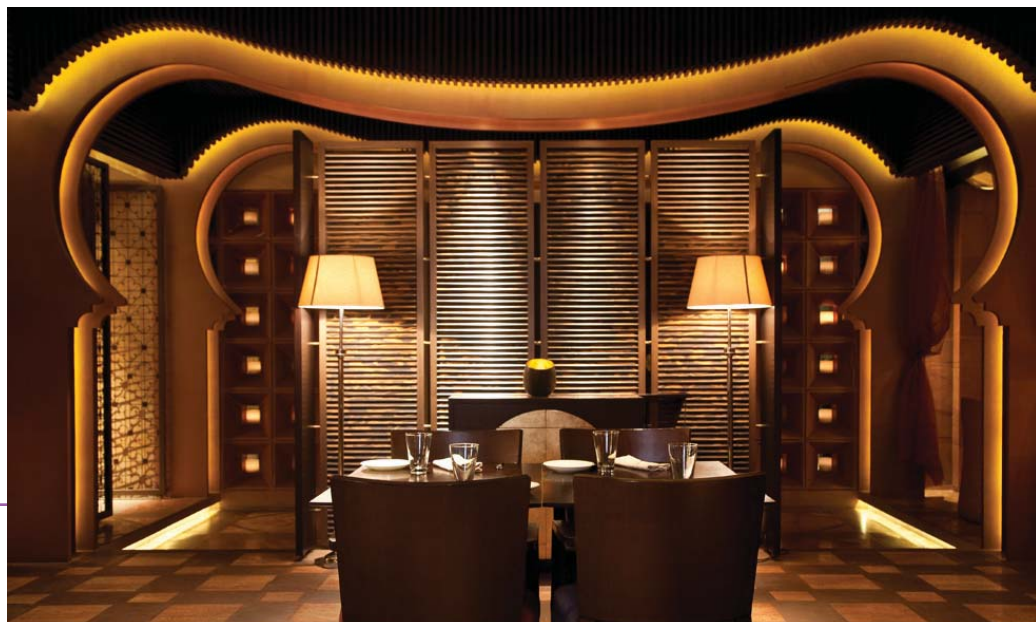
In 2010 we worked on a smaller scale project which although for its size involved a lot of co-ordination and collaboration with the interior designer and client, the whole design needed to capture the drama and visual warmth of

creating the Kebab so we decided to play with warm linear lines of light which frame the space adding a strong visual rhythm also creating a positive negative feel in terms of the lighting to further enhance this it was agreed to mount the punchy downlights within these frame structures this required the seating to be arranged around these elements ensuring we could puddle the light straight down onto the table, the finished result as can be seen in the photo's created a very considered interior that did not feel over contrived but soft, warm and relaxed with accents playing light onto the feature elements within the space.

### **Swisstouches, Xi An, China**

This project has the most recent completion date of December 2011 and on this occasion we wanted the lighting to have a subtle reference, be it by arrangement or colour, back to the interior design philosophy which in essence has a fresh contemporary design whilst always having a reference to Switzerland which is where this brand originated from.

The Lobby is the first chance to impress any potential clientele so we wanted to compliment that visual link early, from the moment you are dropped off you are greeted by a star studded canopy (using fibre optic points of light) then walking into the lobby you see a tight controlled



downlight arrangement of 9 fixtures within each of the raised ceiling pockets, this has a subtle reference to the Swiss flag with each of the 4 corner fixtures having a red shadow gap (the swiss flag) the red is then repeated to the underside of the mezzanine in concealed linear strips, the entire space is then accented with downlights playing light onto features / artwork installations around the lobby.

The Ballroom on the 08 floor had to be versatile and also have an option to tailor the light to client and the particular event, large chandeliers were introduced to give the richness and grandeur this is complimented with adjustable downlights which can be used to highlight table positions and then to enable a more tailored environment the cove lights have the option to colour change effectively giving the occupant the choice of any colour to compliment the event.

The Bar on the 28 floor (the very top of the building) gives a fabulous view of the surrounding city, but before you see the view you are welcomed at a reception lobby where we chose to uplight the strong vertical screening behind the desk and also the 4 framing columns, this gave a very strong dramatic entrance and draws the eye upto the mirror ceiling which conceals integrated LED matrix screens behind the mirror tiles (so when switched off all you appreciate is the mirror) giving the bar a real difference from day / night scenario. Turning right from reception you walk into the double height ceiling of the bar which is flanked by full height windows revealing the breathtaking views, the lighting is very controlled so as to not obscure these views, we puddle light onto tables and seating and we also carry through the backlit mirror panels adding a real wow to the space. ■



**Simon Berry**, Principal at the company: illuminate lighting design started his career designing, tendering and site supervising exterior lighting installations for local government and during this time he gained his qualification of a Higher National Diploma in Electrical Engineering. His engineering background proved his transition into architectural lighting. Since then he has worked for some of London's leading lighting consultancies such as Isometrix, Into, and Light Bureau (formerly Indigo) enabling him to meet designers and artists such as Christian Liaigre, Ian Shrager, Damien Hirst to name but a few. Whilst working in London he identified an opportunity for an independent lighting design practice to service the growing Irish market and created Chimera. This presented its own fresh set of challenges, which resulted in receiving a highly commended honour within the hospitality section of the lighting design awards. He established a working relationship with HBA resulting in his relocation to Singapore and the creation of illuminate. This collaboration achieves an enhanced level of co-ordination between the interior designer, artwork consultant and lighting designer, resulting in a greater level of creativity between the specialist fields.



**Simon Berry**