

trend report: lighting

LUXE LUMINARIES

BY DENNIS NESSLER

In recent years much of the focus of hospitality lighting has been on added efficiency and functionality due to limited budgets and sustainability being top of mind for owners. However, suppliers still tout the product's design as a critical element in the overall look and feel of a property.

According to Jeff Wierzba, vp, contract hospitality sales and marketing, City of Industry, CA-based Troy CSL Lighting, it is one area where hotels can't afford to skimp. "With any good design, lighting becomes the jewelry that enhances the space. Even though budgets are sometimes limited, designers are looking for more creative ways to achieve a look and keep lighting since it is always a focal point. Lighting is difficult to economize on because it is a prominent element in any design," he said.

Shelley Wang, president of Garden City, NY-based WAC Lighting, reinforced the point. "Design inspiration comes from a wealth of resources, but hospitality lighting still demands creative options in decorative and accent lighting for an upscale and sophisticated look," she said. WAC offers a variety of art glass pendants and wall sconces as well as miniature fixtures such as linear track and recessed downlights.

In terms of the types of lighting that is in demand today, suppliers noted that many designers are trying to walk a fine line between contemporary and traditional designs. Malaina M. Matheus, sales coordinator for Newburgh, NY-based Hudson Valley Lighting, underscored the point and offered some specifics. "In terms of the modern aesthetic, fixtures with square or angular features are popular. Designers of contemporary hotel settings who want clean, minimal lines are also using a lot of polished and satin nickels as opposed to the darker finishes. For traditional settings, we are still seeing a lot of dark finishes," she said.

Howard Baldinger, president, Bronx, NY-based HB Architectural Lighting, which specializes in custom fixtures, had these observations. "We've been seeing a lot more use of color, along with asymmetrical and overlapping shapes for shades. There is a balance between maintaining a brand's image and in some cases, updating it to make it more modern looking. We have, on occasion, heard the shade fixture is 'out' but shades and crystals still remain popular looks and we receive a lot of requests for them on cost-conscious projects," he said.

Meanwhile, Judy Rubino, internal sales support manager, Goose Creek, SC-based Quoizel, Inc., noted the company's hospitality clients are primarily interested in "clean, simple, contemporary lines."

According to Wang, there is no one size fits all when it comes to lighting solutions but the right product can play a vital role in helping highlight other design elements within the property. "The lighting depends on the hotel type and its guests' demographics. High-end boutique hotels need distinctive and dramatic luminaries in the lobby to make a great first impression, but they also need high performance track and spot luminaires to showcase fine paintings and artwork," she said.

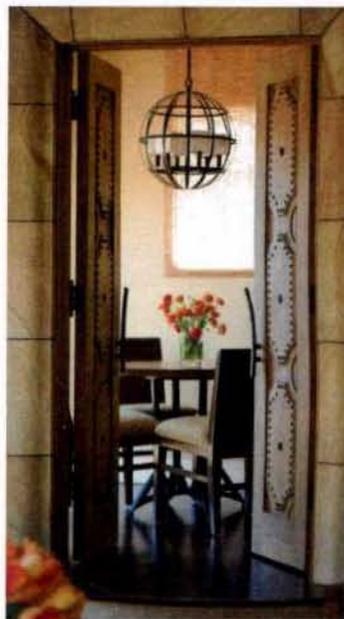
"There is still high demand for barrel or drum shaped lighting but I've found that more hoteliers are moving away from standard fabric finishes to more glass and faux finishes. In addition, there is also a trend to add crystal elements that give the fixture a more contemporary look," Wierzba added.

A number of manufacturers also noted that despite the emphasis on selecting lighting that fits within a project's budget, there is also an increased emphasis on product quality. "While fixtures such as wall sconces and chandeliers for guestrooms and public spaces remain in demand, we are seeing a shift away from price-driven decisions to longer term considerations such as higher levels of aesthetics, quality, value and durability," said Baldinger.

New lighting solutions accentuate and illuminate hotel spaces



Top: Hudson Valley Lighting's Ventura Collection



Left: The Phoenician in Scottsdale, AZ, features custom pendants by Troy CSL Lighting.

Below: A custom pendant for the Peabody Orlando by HB Architectural Lighting.

