

‘Spotlights can be a faux pas’

LUXURY

Victoria Brzezinski asks the experts how to make your home feel warm and cosy by using clever lighting

What is a sure way to ruin a beautifully designed space? Bad lighting.

When we ask interior designers in our weekly Tastemaker column “What would you splurge on?”, more often than not they say “lighting”.

The luxe look is all about creating ambience. Charu Gandhi, the founder of the design studio Elicyon, encourages her clients to employ a lighting consultant, but if you can’t afford one, there’s nothing stopping you from stealing some of their tricks.

The interior designer Shalini Misra puts lighting at different levels. “Alongside ceiling lighting add elements at a lower level, such as a chandelier over

the dining table, pendant lights over your kitchen island and wall lighting either side of the wash basin.”

Replicate the look in your living room with a floor lamp such as Habitat’s Marbelle with an orange silk drum shade (£152) and put Ikea’s Fado frosted orb lamp (£15) on a shelf or sideboard. For a quick refresh, update boring lampshades with ones that have more colour or use a textured fabric. Made.com has a range from £19. Don’t be afraid to mix cool and warm metallic finishes together.

When it comes to decorative lighting, curves are in, especially brass with round shades and arcs. Laura Marino, the founder of Studio L, an interior design studio, says: “It’s a delicate, stylised look that is a meld of Italian mid-century modernist and contemporary art deco references.”

She recommends West Elm, especially for the brass globe style or Japanese-inspired paper lanterns, which she used in the design of the Westminster Fire



Clever lighting in One Park Drive, Canary Wharf, designed by Goddard Littlefair. Prices start from £850,000 for a one-bedroom apartment

Station development in central London (apartment prices start from £850,000). They emit a beautiful, soft light and work well in bedrooms and living spaces. Create this look at home with the Rubin pendant range from Heal’s; they’re a modern take on the traditional Japanese lantern, made with authentic strips of mino washi paper (from £299, released in March).

It’s important to highlight original architectural features, such as cornicing and ceiling roses, and artworks. Goddard

Littlefair designed most of the interiors in One Park Drive, a 58-storey residential tower in Canary Wharf, east London (prices from £825,000 for a one-bedroom apartment). In the living areas, black track lighting on the ceiling, with directional lights, gives a high-end loft look, combined with concealed LEDs at the perimeter of the room. Key elements can be spotlighted while the perimeter lighting illuminates textures that have been designed into joinery doors, concrete walls and

High-tech luxe

In the most luxurious homes, clients are looking to personalise occasions with different lighting, forgoing hard-wired systems and light switches in favour of high-tech wireless systems. Marino says

this sort of system gives users the flexibility to change the colour of their bulbs, the ability to dim and set the ambience without getting up to turn on a light. An example is the Philips Hue Bridge system, which can

programme your lighting to complement your sleep patterns. Instead of waking to an alarm, over 30 minutes the bulbs will gently fade on to bring you to a gentle state of awareness, then change to an

energising cool white light, and to a softer, warmer shade in the evening. A starter kit costs £119.99.

window reveals. Jo Littlefair, a co-founder of Goddard Littlefair, says: "Spotlighting ceilings to death is definitely considered a faux pas when there are so many more intelligent ways to use lighting."

In the bathrooms of One Canary Wharf Goddard Littlefair created the perfect light by which to shave or apply make-up. Littlefair says: "Halo-lighting around the bathroom mirror casts light evenly on a viewer's face, and a concealed, diffused LED trim that runs around the back of the mirror lights the marble wall behind to create a softer, ambient glow."

The furniture designer Timothy Oulton suggests adding extra drama and decadence with lighted furniture, such as his Inception mirror and coffee table, which are inspired by 1970s infinity



One Park Drive, Canary Wharf

mirrors. "When you turn the light on, the whole piece transforms. It's as though a portal has been opened into another world," he says (from

£1,350 and £3,580, from Heal's). Get the look for less with the Myriad full-length LED infinity mirror (£245 from Habitat).

Luxury is all about attention

to detail and finishing, so consider your placement of pieces to minimise ugly cables and ensure that your light fittings are cleanly installed. Gandhi recommends having an electrician changing the cord to a more attractive one, and if you place a light over a sidetable, tape the wire to the leg so it doesn't hang in an unsightly manner. In master bedrooms, wall lamps either side of the bed look sleek, but nothing says luxury more than a pendant over each bedside table. Use materials that add texture or colour, such as pierced metals and dark emerald glass. Littlefair notes that some private clients request reactive lighting tucked underneath each side of the bed, which turns on in the night as you get out of bed, allowing you to see without waking your bedfellow. ■