

SPOTLIGHTS

In the spotlight

The traditional method of lighting a room — a single central pendant light hanging from the ceiling — leaves a lot to be desired. True, the light levels in the room may be enough for most purposes, but a single bulb makes for a very stark lighting scheme with little atmosphere.

“There are many ways of creating atmosphere using carefully planned lighting systems, but one of the most cost effective and efficient ways is to plan your lighting around the use of spotlights,” explains Melissa Davidson from The Lighting Warehouse.

Functions of spotlights

“Although spotlights are great for highlighting various features in a home, they are also great for providing ample and attractive illumination for an entire room,” explains Davidson.

She says that spotlights can be used for various purposes: task lighting, where they serve to illuminate a desk or working surface; mood lighting, where they serve to highlight certain focal features in a room, such as artwork, plants or other architectural features; and of course, general lighting, where they can be used to provide overall lighting to any space.

“The main purpose of spotlights includes illumination and highlighting, and so homeowners can use them to add to their home’s current lighting scheme. For example, the multi-directional globes can be angled to reduce unwanted shadows or to highlight a particularly dark part of a room that receives little or no light,” she says.

Style and design

It is essential to coordinate your choice of spotlights to suit your home’s particular style and décor. Spotlights are available in a multitude of various styles to suit almost any décor style, says Davidson: “Classical styles would be best complemented by spotlights in a brushed chrome finish, while spotlights with wooden, brushed copper or brass detailing would suit more traditional and cottage styles. Contemporary décor would be best accented with spotlights in sleek metallic or a modern enamel finish.”



The CFL GU10 is an energy-saving globe and is available in 7W (featured here — R49,95), 9W and 11W. They provide an energy saving of up to 80%, and the lifespan of these GU10s is 8 000 hours. These globes are a lot cooler than their halogen counterparts and there are dimmable versions available, which retail for R129,95.



The LED GU10 globes are the globes of the future. They are available in both 3w and 5w (3w globe pictured here — R149,95). These LED gu10's will provide an energy saving of up to 90% and they have a lifespan of 50 000 hours! Dimmable versions are also available, but they are comparatively expensive, retailing for R499,95 per globe. LED globes are the coolest of all the globes and all parts are recyclable.

NOTE: Prices are at 20 May 2011 - while stocks last. Globes are sold separately unless otherwise stated. E and OE.

Choosing the right globes

Says Davidson: “Whereas in the past, we used 12V halogen dichroic globes that needed a transformer, which made these globes relatively expensive, nowadays it is much more affordable to use GU10 globes, as they are 240V and therefore, do not require the purchase of a separate transformer.”

She says that there are four types of GU10 globes — they include:

1. The 50W halogen GU10 is a non-energy saving, dimmable incandescent globe that generates a fair amount of heat. It will therefore not be the best option if the fitting will be operating for long hours.
2. The 28W (with an output of 35W) and 40W (with an output of 50W) halogen GU10 energy-saver globe will save up to 20% electricity. These are dimmable, reasonably priced, and they boast a lifetime of up to 2 000 hours.
3. The CFL GU10 is an energy-saving globe is available in 7W, 9W and 11W. It provides an energy saving of up to 80%, and the lifespan of these GU10s is 8 000 hours. These globes are a lot cooler than their halogen counterparts and there are dimmable versions available.
4. The LED GU10 3W (output of 35W) and 5W (output of 40W) globe are the globes of the future — they will save you 90% electricity and they have a lifespan of 50 000 hours! Dimmable versions are also available, but they are comparatively expensive. LED globes are the coolest of all the globes and all parts are recyclable, making them an especially environmentally friendly choice.

The benefits of spotlights

Says Davidson: "The main benefit of using spotlights is the fact that they are incredibly versatile light fittings — the light fittings themselves can be readily and seamlessly moved about. You can point them in diverse directions; angling them in virtually any direction to highlight features of your choice. All these characteristics make spotlights especially suitable to activity-intense areas, such as the kitchen for example." Other uses include:

Eliminate glare: Glare can be eliminated using spots by indirectly illuminating specific objects. "Light reflects off an object at the same angle the rays of light strike it, so you can eliminate glare by ensuring that the reflected light does not shine upward at eye level," explains Davidson.

Make a space seem bigger: Increasing a room's illumination by washing the walls with light is a sure way to make it appear larger than it actually is, which is easily achieved by cleverly placed spotlights.

Create the illusion of a wider room: Davidson notes that by running spotlight tracks across the shorter sides of a room, you will make the room seem wider. If, on the other hand, you want the room to appear narrower, then place the spotlight tracks on the longer walls of the room.

Focus on the good and not the bad: Spotlighting is the ideal way of focusing attention on the attractive elements in any room, and hiding the not so pretty aspects. For example, Davidson says that if you have unattractive ceilings, you can focus attention away from it by aiming the spotlights downwards, towards the walls. Alternatively, if you want to show off your stunning pressed ceilings for example, you can attach the spotlights on the adjacent walls and direct some of them to shine directly on the ceilings. This will highlight the ceilings beautifully, and the reflected light will add great ambient lighting to the entire room. ■



The Curve two-light spotlight fittings is available for R259,95. This style is available in a three- and four-light fitting.



The three-light Slit spotlight retails for R449,95. This style is also available in a one-, two- and four-light option.



Retailing for R679,95 the five-light Layla spotlight is also available in one-, two-, three- and four-light formats.



The three-light circle Kamil spotlight retails for R379,95. The Kamil spotlight is also available in a straight bar style with two- and three-light formats.



The contemporary Nero spotlight range is available in one-, two-, three- and four-light formats. The Nero featured here is a four-light square plate fitting that retails for R549,95.

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