



The lighter side of life

Local interior designer ANNA GRyce offers some bright ideas

Ask a photographer what turns a good picture into a great one and they will reply with one word: light. Dramatic light creates a dramatic picture. It's the same with a room: the more consideration you give to how to light it, the better it will look. So what lights do you need and where best to place them?

The first thing to think about is natural light. Generally, south-facing rooms will benefit from direct sunlight throughout the day while north-facing windows provide a diffused light, much prized by artists because it casts no shadows. So before you buy any lights study the room in daylight and at different times of the day. Are there any dark corners that require lighting on dull days? And where will you put your favourite armchair to curl up and read?

Next, what will the room be used for? A kitchen needs good lighting over work surfaces as well as general lighting to illuminate the room. A living room can look fantastic with just a couple of freestanding or table lights, but the result might be that you can't see to read. Always remember to balance and layer the light by using a mixture of powerful and weaker light sources. This will create a more attractive overall effect.

A bedroom requires a combination of types of lighting. A light either side of the

bed will provide a cosy and intimate feeling as you climb in and will give you enough light to read by. But at other times you will need brighter general lighting, if only to see the clothes in your wardrobe. And if you are a woman, imagine trying to do your make-up in half-light.

Bathrooms are often overlooked not least because of regulations that dictate what lights may be used and how, the main one being that they need to be enclosed in a waterproof cover. But long gone are the days when this meant the ubiquitous white opaque bowl light. A good retailer will carry a wide range in contemporary and retro styles suitable for bathrooms. These include halogen spotlights, perfect for highlighting that impressive freestanding Victorian bath or ultra-modern shower.

And don't forget the garden. If lit cleverly it can become an extension of the interior and create a sense of spaciousness. And when choosing lights for the garden a few lights will go a long way – less is more!

So – you've decided what lights you need and where to place them. Where do you buy them? Well, you could just head to Ikea or B&Q, both of which sell many good value lighting products. But if possible, try a specialist lighting shop and look out for manufacturers like Artemide and Flos and designers like Philippe Starck. And if your

project is on a grander scale, consider employing a lighting designer such as LightIQ, an independent consultancy based in London that designs, supplies and installs lighting schemes. ●

For further interior design advice or help with your own lighting project contact Anna Gryce at Strictly Design, 020 8299 1117; www.strictlydesign.co.uk

