

How to create a bestseller

Lighting can make the difference between boom and bust for a store but some retailers clearly know exactly how to dress to impress. **Lighting** reveals ten of the best retail lighting schemes in the country



NIKE SUPERSTORE, MANCHESTER UNITED FC PAUL NULTY LIGHTING DESIGN

Sports outlets are a byword for some of the most uninspiring, dispiriting lighting on the planet. Hello, you're trying to sell stuff! The average sports shop is too bright, bland and indiscriminate. Paul Nulty persuaded Manchester United FC to make a 75 per cent cut in general illuminance levels. The levels on the merchandise, the important bit, stayed the same – lit by more than 1,000 very tight, narrow-beam spots – but instead of a homogeneous wash according the same importance to the floor as the displays, contrast levels were increased to around 10:1, making the product the star. It also creates a moody, dramatic ambience that is much more visually interesting. Using 35W fittings, rather the 70W Nike usually favours, also helped reduce energy consumption by 60 per cent. The lighting is a major factor in the final refurbishment and must take a fair bit of credit for the subsequent 12 per cent increase in sales. Win win.

CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN, HARRODS PJC LIGHTING STUDIO

What are the most common characteristics of retail lighting? Gimbals and spots, pointing from the ceiling. Not here. In this Grade II-listed Harrods, the ceilings are sacrosanct so lighting is concealed within furniture details to illuminate the merchandise, while linear LEDs concealed on top of partition walls uplight the treasured ceiling, providing a soft ambient light. Close collaboration between the lighting and interior designers was needed to achieve an integrated result. It meant having nothing disproportionate to throw out the scale of the delicate furniture; it meant avoiding reflections and glare from the many polished surfaces and mirrors; it meant achieving balanced light levels while accenting products to provide contrast with surrounding areas. Energy efficiency, good colour rendering and colour consistency were crucial. The result? A seamless setting for any *Sex and the City* girl to browse. Thinking outside the shoe box.



Photo: Marcus Peel



FENWICKS, BOND STREET, LONDON OFFICE OF LIGHT

These are actually different schemes – over four floors and tailored to the demographic and merchandise – but they present a clean, coherent, contemporary whole. While LEDs are featured (appropriately, in circular coffers, perimeter coves and curtains), it's a great example of sources for courses. Solid state mixes with compact fluorescent and low voltage, which has been used in ambient downlights with gold reflectors for warmth and luxury in the lingerie room. Wallwashing and cove lighting is used extensively and to great effect to soften boundaries and create cool, uplifting spaces, while serious brownie points are awarded for the proper sidelighting of mirrors in the changing rooms.

Feature chandeliers are used judiciously for a change of rhythm: antique ones on the ground and first floors, then Ingo Maurer and inflatable numbers by Puff-Buff for the edgier young fashion on the third floor, dominated by three 2m-diameter mirrorballs. A tonic after the lumpy, cluttered arrangements typical of the old-style department store.



BANANA REPUBLIC, REGENT STREET, LONDON LIGHT + DESIGN ASSOCIATES

Banana Republic's flagship Regent Street store, opened in 2008 – the first outside the US. The job of the lighting (apart from the obvious) was to subtly differentiate between the various departments while retaining a coherent, overall brand feel. The solution is based on a series of planar rafts that house adjustable flood and spotlights. These are complemented by vitrine accenting and bespoke chandeliers. Designed to work for three different ceiling heights, using the same language and the same family of lamps (including what was then pioneering use of GE's energy efficient 35W CMH), there's nothing of the bolted-on approach here. This is lighting completely in harmony with the geometry of the interior.

SNOG PURE FROZEN YOGURT, VARIOUS CINIMOD STUDIO

Snog confounded the notion that creating brand synergy means taking a cookie-cutter approach. Its schtick was to do something different each time. And the reason we love it – it does that through the lighting, specifically using the ceiling.

The King's Road store featured a digital sky with 3,000 controllable LEDs behind a Barrisol panel. Based on a never-ending summer theme, the mood varies throughout the day with effects like scudding clouds. Another has an undulating, rainbow LED canopy, formed using parametric software and CNC-cut mirrored panels with a stretch diffuser at the bottom. Within the ribbons are 400 LED strips, each controlled by a system that allows instant, ever-changing, never-repeated lighting effects to be created in real time through an audio feed without lengthy programming. That's how to freeze out the competition.



LAPICIDA, CHELSEA, LONDON LIGHTING DESIGN INTERNATIONAL

There has been a lemming rush to retrofit LEDs as a quick-fix energy panacea but colour rendering, stability and glare control can all go out the shop window if LEDs are not housed and controlled correctly. Stone specialist Lapidica's flagship is a lesson in using them right and to dramatic effect. The secret? Paying attention to the merchandise. Schemes were created for 15 different room sets to show how materials would look in situ, with technology varied according to a stone's properties. This is about drama. A PIR detector brings up the light from a low level as the client enters; a further frisson comes from a 'dark zone' walk-through to a display of textured, backlit stone. It's giving the customer an experience. That's what the internet can't do.

HARRY WINSTON, NEW BOND STREET, LONDON DPA LIGHTING CONSULTANTS

When you're mentioned in a song made famous by Marilyn Monroe – *Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend*, no less – it goes without saying you are a high-end jewellery brand with quite a reputation. Expect serious opulence. The fully controllable lighting here discreetly heightens that sense of luxury. The secret of all good lighting schemes is layering – and this has it in spades. The main stepped ceiling conceals linear lighting in warm white cold cathode, as well as accents for other interior features and details. The key elements are the custom-designed display cases. These were developed with prototyping to use fibre optics with 250W metal halide light sources. The end fittings were positioned both in the top section and vertically down the frameworks for optimum effect and flexibility. This is about precision and fine attention to detail. A gem.



→ **BIG SAVINGS** Five of the best energy-efficient lighting schemes p33

HEDONISM WINES, MAYFAIR, LONDON SPEIRS+MAJOR

The antithesis of point and squirt, track and spot. Every aspect of the interior has been carefully considered and treated accordingly. This is about enhancing the merchandise and cleverly catching and directing the customer's eye. The internal glow and updatable video projection have been calculated to attract back customers who pass after hours.

Accent lighting and perimeter shelf lighting are imperceptibly integrated. Glass pendants, like champagne bubbles, draw the eye from accent fixtures aimed at key displays, while low-hung copper pendants concentrate focus on the red wines on the lower ground floor, enhancing the cellar vibe. A bespoke lighting installation draws attention to the central staircase where an organic form, created from upended wine glasses at varying heights, has individual LEDs in each glass to give a sparkling 3D effect.

Concealed fibre optics light through the distinctive honey-coloured Chateau d'Yquem

collection, so the bottles glow from within.

Homogeneous LED backlighting within the cabinet supplements the effect, activating when a customer approaches.

An all-LED concept (ambient temperature had to be precise to keep the wine at optimum condition); a vintage scheme.



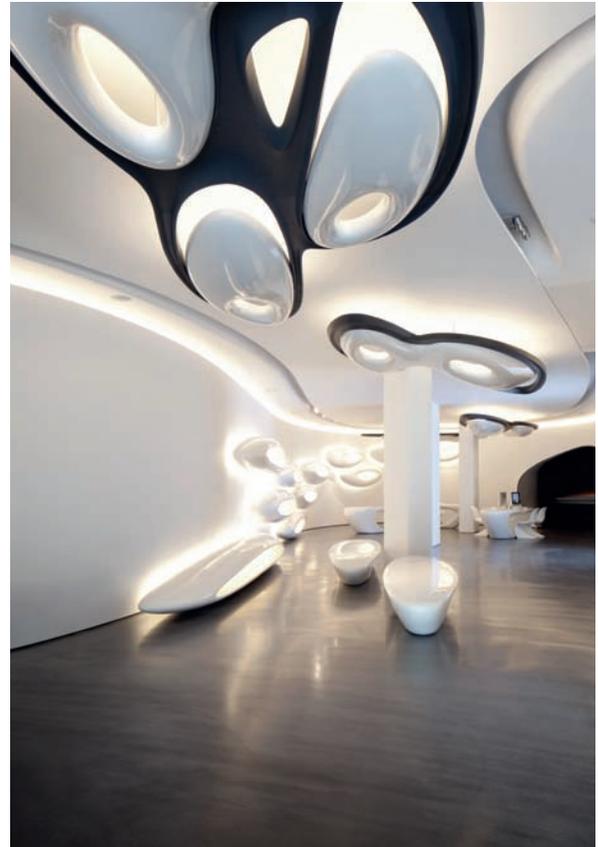
Photo: James Newton

MEN'S SHOE GALLERIES, SELFRIDGES, LONDON PJC LIGHTING STUDIO

The on-trend darkly dramatic look tends to be the province of the high-street fashion outlet rather than the department store. The aim of this scheme was to keep light levels and balance tightly controlled for a relaxed shopping ambience more reminiscent of a museum. It isn't as contrasty and edgy as, say, Superdry, but this simple, effective concept is moodier than most 'light and bright' large retail outlets.

While downlights were not verboten, as in the Louboutin scheme, designer Vincent Van Duysen wanted any ceiling intrusion kept to an absolute minimum – fittings had to be discreet, trimless, with a low brightness and high-quality detailing. The solution is a specially developed perimeter slot supplemented with flush low-brightness downlights in the centre of the ceilings to light the furniture displays the slot spots can't reach. The approach allows very specific focusing to contrast with the circulation areas and create a visual change of pace.

Once more, it may be luxe but it's low energy: the maximum load of 30W/m² was comfortably met by combining metal halide and LED light sources with high colour rendering and a consistent 3,000K colour temperature. A shoo-in.



ROCA LONDON GALLERY, IMPERIAL WHARF, LONDON ISOMETRIX

With Zaha Hadid you glow with the flow. The lighting for the Spanish bathroom company's gallery perfectly exemplifies why employing a lighting designer is a very good idea. There is only one straight line, so the space couldn't be modelled using any calculation programmes. Lighting was calculated by hand and intuition.

Specially developed covers form large overlapping seams between complex curves and incorporate spotlights customised to cope with any angle of the curved recesses (no shadows or shallow angles). Backlit Barrisol ceilings – with uplighting and specific spotlighting – act as artificial skylights. A series of ceiling-suspended 'bubbles' wrap around the deep-recessed, non-daylit spaces and appear to descend down the rear wall. Backlit, they act as an arching 'sky', creating a bright ambience for the daytime visitor.

This superbly integrated scheme is about detail. Every finish and tonal balance was taken into account, every lamp (cold cathode, LEDs and limited infrared reflective coating low voltage) was tested to ensure no colour shift, every colour temperature is consistent. Bathrooms as art. Nothing bog standard here.