

The logo consists of the letters 'T' and 'L' in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'T' is white with a black outline, and the 'L' is black with a white outline. They are set against a white background that is part of a larger graphic element.

TOTAL LIGHTING

The background is a dark, almost black, space filled with vibrant, overlapping, semi-transparent shapes. These shapes are primarily in shades of blue, green, and yellow, with some purple and pink tones. The shapes have a fine, grid-like texture, giving them a digital or woven appearance. The overall effect is dynamic and modern, suggesting light and energy.

# Light refreshments

Almost good enough to eat

## Candlelight is all very well, but can you see to eat, asks Emma Morgan?

**P**ity the chef who has used his artistic skills to garnish a delicious meal that customers are unable to appreciate because the place is simply too dim to see. As the customer, I'd be a tad worried too! Too low levels of illumination can give the impression that the food on the plate isn't good enough and the restaurateur has something to hide.

Lighting sets the mood, and in the case of a restaurant or hotel dining room, the ambient lighting should add warmth and welcome to put diners at ease. For a restaurant to reach out to its customers, the lighting must be just as good as the food offering.

The decisions made when deliberating on the lighting design must take the style of the venue, the food being served and the customer base into consideration. Quality chain and high-end individual restaurants depend on atmosphere, along with their food and service. The best lighting effects can be achieved by combining functional task lighting with attractive decorative fittings to give the restaurant the versatility and adaptability required in these demanding times.

Light level functions are dependent on the environment. Fast casual restaurants and those in retail environments, such as shopping centres where there are high volumes of traffic tend to opt for higher light levels. This can encourage a quicker turnover of customers but restaurants that rely on business in the evening and are occupied for a longer period of time by each diner or party need to employ more discreet levels of illumination.

Jerry Hodkinson, marketing manager at Andy Thornton says: 'Whilst it is important to



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select the right style of fittings to complement the rest of the restaurant decor, it is critical to get the mood right. Lighting needs to be more versatile than ever before, especially when the venue is open throughout the day and night. The lighting needs to be functional, light and airy during the day, yet create an atmosphere and be more discreet at night.

'Dimmers and colour changing LED fittings can create the desired light levels and allow constant changing mood depending on the time of day.'

Ambient lighting provides general illumination to a large area, eliminating shadows and is more effective in a restaurant setting if used together with dimmers to control intensity for mood setting. To create a successful scheme, fixtures and intensity levels mustn't 'fight' the interior theme.

Hodkinson adds: 'Interior designers are

mixing styles, combining traditional with contemporary to give an electric feel. Classical Empire-style crystal chandeliers are being used alongside modern brushed steel pendants, old industrial factory lights with contemporary uplighters.

'One product trend that is popular at the moment is the use of fabric and acrylic shades. These are being used in restaurant and bar areas and provide cost effective solutions for ceiling lights, wall lights, table and floor lamps. These fittings are large, eye-catching and usually in bold primary coloured fabrics, which match the rest of the colour scheme.'

Restaurants need an edge over the competition, and as a result more elusive and decorative lighting designs are appearing. The Itsu restaurant group has created a bespoke lighting scheme for its restaurants. It is designed to capture the elegance and freshness

of the brand while bringing an excitement and visual prominence to the venues. Itsu commissioned the Cinimod Studio, a cross discipline practise specialising in the fusion of architecture and lighting for the design.

The design developed from the Itsu butterfly motif, which was brought to life as an animated visual sculpture. The dynamic form is based on the motion of the butterfly's wings, modelled as a continuous sequence in 3D software integrated at timed intervals to determine the evolving angled shapes that comprise the final artwork. The software allows for control over the colour of the each wing allowing illuminated and highly visual fluttering through the piece.

An RGB colour-changing LED strip was developed for the design, and the designer packed in as many LEDs as possible to ensure that an extremely bright level of lux would

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illuminate each wing in a way that would be very difficult to determine where the light source was coming from. All of the control hardware and LED drivers were remotely housed to provide easy maintenance.

Dominic Harris, director of Cinimod Studio, commented: 'Particular challenges on the project involved the issues of creating a sufficiently bright illumination across the surface of the butterfly's wings, and creating a fabrication and installation method that was at once both accessible yet also devoid of any visible fixing or break lines. Through a series of mock up tests in the Cinimod Studio, it was determined that a combination of Prismex acrylic wing shapes lit from just one edge would provide the most elegant effect as it

would create the beautiful edge glowing lines of the butterfly wing shapes.'

He adds: 'The Butterfly in Flight installation demonstrates the benefit of integrating physical and electrical aspects at the design stage. The result is a surreal and ephemeral sculpture that provides an adventurous and effective addition to the Itsu interior design, and an intriguing and beautiful addition to an otherwise heavy dreary high street.'

Snog restaurants have come under the influence of Cinimod Studio too. Snog is a specialist food outlet that sells pure frozen yogurt within a high-end interior environment. The design revolves around perpetual British summer and uses digitally produced sky ceilings as a lighting feature. The

Covent Garden location boasts an LED canopy ceiling comprised of thousands of individual glass sphere LEDs, each mounted on stainless steel rods descending from the white aluminium ceiling. Inside the spheres is three tri-colour CREE LED chips, each capable of producing literally millions of colours. The outer globe is made from frosted opal glass, finished to achieve a high quality of illumination. Controlling the whole system is a media-based server from lighting control specialist, E:Cue. The system allows real time audio responsive colour mapping across the restaurant. Dichroic halogen fittings were used for balancing colour temperatures due to their warm light output.

Across the city in Soho, the Snog chain sets





the mood of the restaurant with a global bubbling sky. The volume-induced creation is designed using Cinimod Studios' own fixture. Over 700 globes were used, each hanging on individual cables. The outer globe consists of 2.5W red, green and blue LEDs. Installation time and cost was reduced by the use of push fit connectivity and auto addressing. To supplement the LEDs, designers specified Club C fixtures from Deltalight for their visual appearance and technical performance.

The interior lighting design is in keeping with the brand's feature bright pink walls. The specially mixed paint colour includes fluorescent pigmentation, which helps to illuminate the area.

Harris says: 'My preferred palette of architectural materials is generally comprised of materials and finishes that work well with curves and can be formed seamlessly in three dimensions. My main tool, which I use for all projects, is light. It's really important to me that the lighting design is integrated into the design as part of the conceptual design process. It is a pity that the lighting in architecture is often treated as an afterthought.'

The lighting industry is embracing LEDs as a suitable light source within restaurants. The past decade has seen lighting technologies grow significantly, and while LED-based fixtures have been viewed as temperamental in the past and with limited control systems have not been first choice for the restaurant industry, this has dramatically changed in recent years as LED technologies have matured to prove to be reliable and user-friendly.

Harris says: 'With the current generation of fixtures from the big suppliers, one can now be confident that equipment specified and installed will not appear primitive or obsolete. LED technology has reached a great milestone in the last couple years, and now is the time to adopt it with confidence in the main stream.'



## CONTACTS

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