

Restaurant and Bar Lighting

Compiled by Warren Julian

The lighting of bars and restaurants varies from the pragmatic to that that is an essential part of the interior design. The pragmatic can be seen in many pubs and cafeterias where the lighting simply provides light, often inadequate, often glaring and with poor colour rendering. There is nothing positive that can be said about this except that it is not an ideal way to attract customers.

In the middle range, an effort is made to provide good quality lighting within the limits of budgets and design expertise. Where there is more design skill better results can occur and these are not necessarily expensive in terms of

equipment. The better examples result from close cooperation between the interior designer/architect and the lighting designer.

Lighting Standards have little to say about the lighting quantities recommended in the front-of-house areas, although they advise on kitchens, etc. Building Codes state requirements for emergency evacuation lighting and exit signs. However, whilst these spaces are often considered as "lighting for effect and atmosphere" rather than as "task oriented lighting", both staff and patrons need to be able to see. It is especially important that food is seen as attractively as possible. Dim lighting can become gloomy



*Aqualuna Restaurant – Sydney
See pages 34 and 35.*

lighting in unskilled hands and sparkle can become glare. For intimate dining, the distribution of light can assist in creating a sense of privacy, even in small, crowded restaurants. Today's fashion seems to be for stark finishes, hard surfaces (and noise) with more light evenly distributed than would be expected. Some people seem to enjoy eating in those conditions.

Bars can be problematic since low light levels are common in the areas away from the bar itself. The bar is lit to highlight the bottles and glassware. It is common to light the area adjacent to the bar from a cove under the bar counter. Often blue light is used, sometimes with added longwave ultraviolet

to make whites to appear brighter and the cause fabric fluorescence. This can make the bar appear more exciting, since there will be brightness, from patrons, in an otherwise dimly lit interior. Whilst this might be exciting design, it may also lead to litigation from accidents occurring to (drunkened) patrons in semi-darkness. Bars often have entertainment and space for dancing. These needs require some form of stage lighting and moving lighting for the dance floor/area.

The following are brief descriptions of a number of successful designs submitted by Bo Steiber Lighting Design, Singapore, Vision Design Studio, Melbourne and Lightmatters Lighting Designers, Sydney and London.

Ichiban Boshi Restaurant, Singapore

This is a contemporary Japanese restaurant designed by PTID, Singapore and lit by Bo Steiber. It has a conveyor sushi train cum bar lit by low voltage down lights. The interior is "modern zen", making use of glass blocks, metal and timber, to create a sense of warmth and serenity. The design simplicity is enhanced by the low key lighting.

General lighting is provided by the cove containing low voltage strip for the inner part and fluorescent for the outer. The booths have downlights which not only illuminate the food but produce sparkle from the china and glassware. There is also an exhibition kitchen where the chefs perform for the patrons. This is lit by fluorescent downlights.



*Ichiban Boshi
Restaurant*



Patrons Lounge Victorian Arts Centre, Melbourne

The Patrons Lounge is nestled behind the black shiny layers on Level 5 of the Victorian Arts Centre. The interior design was by Woods Bagot and the lighting design by Vision Design Studio. Upon entry, a stark contrast of pastel shimmering walls greets the eye.

A glowing glass element divides the space into two. Neon concealed high in the layered glass artwork makes it appear to hover freely. The translucent inlay in the floor has slivers of light crossing to

each side, not dissimilar that in to a water feature: people try not to step on it.

The walls are clad in a material that when viewed from different angles offers a pastel palette. As the room works in symmetry, the lighting counterbalances this theme, with one wall lit more intensely than the other. Artwork mounted on these walls is highlighted by independent spotlights, in harmony with the other lighting in the space.



Patrons Lounge



Biscotti Restaurant, Mumbai, India

This is a fine dining Italian restaurant and bar designed by Kapadia and Associates and lit by Bo Steiber. The philosophy here was to have a brightly lit, friendly area for lunch and a more formal appearance for dinner. Decorative pendants and wall lights are used, with pendants in each window to emphasise their length.

Facial masks are placed in square and rectangular niches in some walls and the masks are lit using downlights. Cove lighting is used in the bar seating area and the raised dining area.



Biscotti Restaurant fine dining area.



Facial masks in niches in the bar area of the Biscotti Restaurant.

Ole' Sports Bar, Mumbai, India

This is an entertainment bar and restaurant designed by Pinakin Patel Design and lit by Bo Steiber. The bar is modern with a sports motif and decorated, in selected locations, with trophies, awards and photographs of sportsmen. The bar is designed to attract patrons with a similar interest. Hence the lighting is lively. The focal point is the bar which

uses colour changing fibre optic within the translucent bar-top. Blue neon is used under the bar-top and footrest. The ceiling cut-out has blue fluorescent lighting of the false stainless steel truss. The sporting items and niches are lit using recessed downlights. In the evening the bar becomes a disco with Martin Professional moving lights.





The moving lighting equipment can be seen on the ceiling.



The bar lighting uses a lot of blue.