

LIGHTING

sets a home stage for better living

By Patricia Bathurst

If it were as simple as "let there be light" with a flick of the switch, Edison wouldn't have needed a patent.

Home lighting has moved far from Edison's basic illumination, to a more thoughtful, almost theatrical approach, according to area lighting designers and retailers.

"There's a more theatrical approach, incorporating the effects possible with architectural lighting, as well as consideration of energy conservation and green design," said Paul Salmonson, principal of Aterra Lighting Design and Controls in Scottsdale.

"Lighting is what makes the environment, defining the colors, the sense of the space. It even has a psychological affect," said Arie Louie, president of Louie Lighting in Scottsdale.

Salmonson, whose company works with Toll Brothers in designing residential lighting, said one major trend is toward whole-house control systems for lighting. With prices coming down, it is quickly becoming easier for homeowners to have systems that control exterior and interior lighting on a room-by-room or area-by-area basis, he said.

Wireless systems with hand-held remotes control lighting for the house or individual rooms. Systems can be programmed for various times of day to give a brighter "wake-up" house, a soothing "evening" setting and even "party and entertainment" settings.

"People are considering the overall feel and ambience of a room," said Candace Palumbo, a designer with T.W. Lewis. "They want a little more power and punch to add pizzazz to a room and are adding more lighting to do that.

Louie recommended creating a home atmosphere "with feeling and heart ... It doesn't need to be super expensive."

Begin with your sources of light. Remember, Salmonson said, "Think of fixtures as accents, not light sources."

Instead, look to track, line, cable and spot lighting both indoors and out. Think of the scene you want to create and illuminate. If your ceilings are very high, both Louie and Salmonson noted the importance of creating dimension, washing the ceiling with light to eliminate the feeling of a cavernous space above.

To set a scene, imagine a dining area with a central chandelier lighting the table. Put that chandelier on a dimmer, or you and your guests might feel you're dining at a work table. In addition to the dimmer, think about adding a line or cable in the ceiling to allow highlighting place settings and seating around the table. A well-positioned spot or eyeball light will illuminate art in niches or on walls.

For a bit more elegance and a dressier feel, Palumbo said, homeowners are adding chandeliers along hallways, as accent pieces over end tables or in bedrooms.

Remember, Salmonson said, "A room with a lot of light in one part of the room will have too much contrast. You need balance, creating layers and depth with multiple sources of light."

Scenes can help, too. Palumbo said one trend is to add them along pillars to create a warm glow. "People need to ask about options and think about effects they want to create. Lighting makes a difference."

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TOLL BROTHERS



T.W. LEWIS

Look for versatility in new-home lighting — Whit Gardner of ThingZ Furnishings in Scottsdale said lawmakers are considering requirements in lighting and energy. "Most manufacturers are aware, but you'll want to be certain your system adapts to interchangeable bulbs," Gardner said.