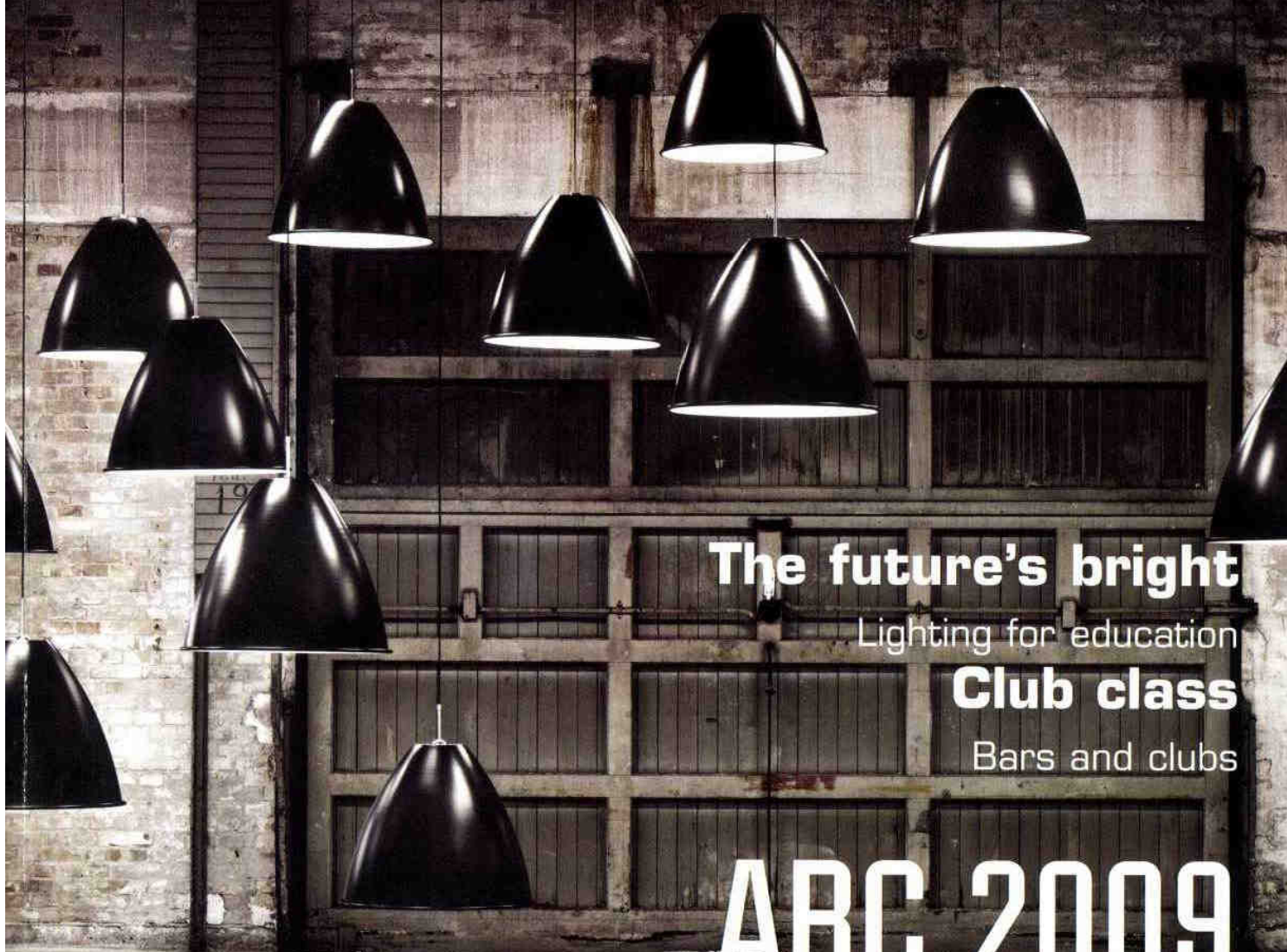


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Club class

Creating the right lighting scheme for pub, club and bar environments is crucial. Get it wrong and it could have ruinous consequences for the venue. Text: Gemma Emslie

The Christmas parties may be well and truly over by now but pubs, clubs and bars up and down the country will – in all likelihood – continue to enjoy a steady flow of customers as people look to let their hair down and forget their troubles. These are the perfect venues for people to unwind, socialise and generally have fun.

Creating the right atmosphere for the venue – whether it be a pub, club or bar – and the target audience is vital, and much of this comes down to the lighting scheme. Bad lighting, according to Russell Ford, director of Into Lighting, can ruin a venue and its takings. 'Listening to the client and his vision for his customer base is critical,' says Ford. 'It is no use designing a bright and airy scheme with brilliantly glowing features if they really have in mind a very dark and moody late night venue.' Ford also insists that the specification of all fittings must be appropriate to cope with sound system vibration and drink spillage, as well as knocks and tampering with by customers.

Into, a professional lighting design consultancy, works across the retail, leisure, commercial and architectural sectors and has been involved in a number of bar and nightclub projects, including the Cuckoo Club and 24 nightclub in London. Generally, according to Ford, the more "clubby" a venue, the more dramatic and high tech the

lighting tends to be. 'We would always specify a dimming system to achieve just the right mood from day to early to late evening,' says Ford. 'In more club-type venues the controls may incorporate DMX controls for moving head fittings or colour change LEDs.'

'LEDs and energy saving halogen lamps are something we use a lot,' continues Ford. 'Clients are concerned about maintenance and energy bills and therefore longer-life IRC halogen lamps together with dimming controls will save money. LEDs have a very long lamp life and are virtually fit and forget.'

The intimate RS Lounge in South Woodford, Essex, which opened last year, has been fitted with 500 panels of LEDs that collectively offer 26,000 lighting combinations. The panels, which have been installed in the walls, floors and ceiling of the club by Poland-based Promo Music Design, along with the lasers over the dance floor, are used to stunning effect.

'As light fittings will consume a large part of energy in pubs, bars and clubs, the energy efficiency has to be taken into consideration,' says Judy Zhou, marketing manager at Northern Lights. 'The wonderful thing about LEDs and fibre optics is that they provide good special effects to enhance the personality of the setting.'



Facing page: Into Lighting's work at Grazia in Shrewsbury. This page (clockwise from bottom left): Into used LEDs extensively throughout Diva Beach in Chelsea; Modular Lighting Instruments supplied The Bar Ateneau in Banyoles, Spain with the SL100 Profile; The Kumo Bar in Knightsbridge was brought to life by Besselink & Jones; Modular's IZAR, a rounded, three-pointed star-shaped light, has been used in the Zuri nightclub on the Belgian coast; Into created the lighting scheme for The Vincent Hotel in Southport, including the bar area.

Northern Lights has recently completed a project for Sunderland Tenpin Bowling. Working with interior designer Bignell Shacklady Ewing, the company sourced and developed a series of contemporary fittings that define the different entertainment areas of the venue, including the bowling lanes, pool tables and bar area. 'Decorative lighting is used more and more as a focal point in leisure venues to make a statement or set the main tone of the location,' says Zhou. To define the bar area, the company used red frosted-glass pendants, which deliver a soft diffusion of light and add a striking element to the area.

Lighting, according to Tom Samyn, marketing manager at Modular Lighting Instruments, plays a pivotal role in the overall perception of a space and is crucial for the hospitality sector, which relies on creating a style and atmosphere that will keep clients coming back. 'A successful lighting scheme will enhance the interior décor, reflecting the standards and design ethos of the bar, pub or club in question,' says Samyn.

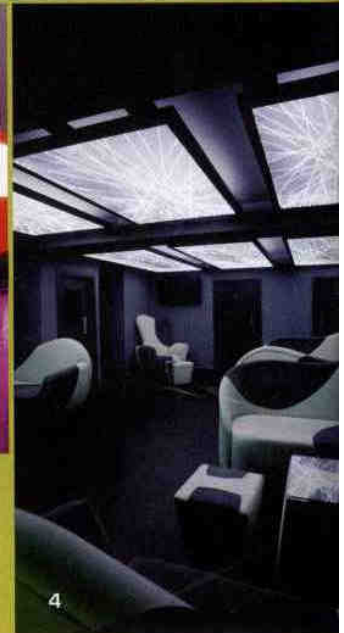
'A club's style is often defined by the choice of lighting, and many favour the latest modern, multi-functional LED light fittings that can cast vibrant colours and a variety of colour sequences and effects,' he says. 'The latest trends in decorative lighting offer designers enormous freedom to create stylish spaces – from the chic to the flamboyant.'

Kumo Bar, Knightsbridge, London.

Besselink & Jones has been working with designer Theo Theodorou to create bespoke light fittings for the new Kumo Bar in Beauchamp Place, Knightsbridge. The lighting specialist manufactured a fibreglass, upside-down pyramid ceiling, which gives the bar its glamorous mood.

'This has been a very exciting project for us,' says Ben Simpson of Besselink & Jones. 'We have collaborated with Theo Theodorou before and his designs are always exceptional, but this design project was also technically very challenging.' 'We do not consider lighting in a project as an afterthought but as an integral component of the scheme,' adds Theo Theodorou and Valerie von Bechtolsheim. 'This is especially so with the Kumo Bar. Backlighting the fibreglass pyramids accentuates the fibres and gives the impression of traditional paper lanterns. The 104 pyramids work in conjunction with the red glass mirrored wall, both to give height and depth to a very challenging basement space.'

According to Theodorou, there is no intended single theme to the bar: 'The aim was to create a dramatic setting that is a momentary escape into something that is out of the ordinary for the visitor,' he says. 'Tricks with the rows of gilded disk lights in the ceilings and walls give a sense of perspective and elongate the lounge area. The disks are of course dimmable, as is every light fixture in the place, to control the mood.'



1 & 2) GIA Equation created the lighting scheme for Paramount Bar at the top of London's Centre Point building. 3 & 4) Promo Music Design fitted out the RS Lounge in South Woodford with 500 panels of LEDs that collectively offer 26,000 lighting combinations. 5) Northern Lights provided decorative lighting at Sunderland Tenpin Bowling for the different entertainment areas of the venue, including the bar.

Paramount Bar. Centre Point, New Oxford Street, London.

GIA Equation – the lighting design wing of surveying practice GIA – has completed the lighting scheme for the new swanky Paramount bar, which is located at the top of London's iconic Centre Point building on New Oxford Street. The interior design of the bar, which opened in November 2008, is the work of renowned British interior designer Tom Dixon.

Commenting on the original brief, Mark Hensman, managing director of GIA Equation, says: 'The Paramount project was about breathing new life into Centre Point. The brief was to create an exclusive penthouse bar/restaurant with a timeless classic feel, offering some of the best views over the London skyline throughout the day and evening.

'These spaces invite some of the most theatrical applications of light and are exciting spaces to design,' he continues. 'Careful lighting can create ambience and an inviting atmosphere. With Paramount, we wanted to achieve a timeless, classic lighting scheme that would alter the environment in response to time, use and occasion.

Accuracy and precision were key in developing the scheme, with light performance being tightly manipulated and controlled. This not only provided a beautiful series of spaces, it also helped to minimise window reflections as well as provide stunning and unobstructed night time views of the city.'

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