

Beauty is Only A Light Switch Away

Anyone wanting to create that ever elusive and yet exquisitely charming atmosphere for their restaurant or home need not look any further. There is a very logical solution and the key is quite simple. Lighting

Lighting not only lets you see where you're going, it can literally make a room and an atmosphere come alive. According to the director of the Starr Restaurant Organization, Michael Palermo, a nice warm and orangey glow not only makes a customer look good, it makes them feel good as well.

However, the proper amount and intensity of light is crucial. A room too harshly lit can be about as eloquent as a good interrogation room, with an almost tangible abrasiveness, while a room with the dimmers on low may leave your guests clamoring for their cell phones just to read the menu.

Any clever restaurateur knows that the trick here is to use multiple layers of light. For example, Stephen Starr's Philadelphia hot spot, the Tangerine, uses seven different layers of light. However, experts say that three layers will do just fine.

Begin your project with some upper-level lighting using ceiling fixtures, which could be anything from a chandelier to a ceiling-recessed bulb, shrouded in colorful fabric. When using hanging fixtures, a good rule of thumb, according to interior designer Marguerite Rodgers, is to keep the bottom of the fixture 30 to 36 inches from the top of the table. This will keep your guests properly lit while not forcing them to peer through a bothersome glare.

You may now move down to your mid-levels with wall fixtures, where wall sconces seem to work great. This mid-level of lighting is where you get your ambient light; be as creative as you like. Stephen Starr's Morimoto uses hidden lights at both the top and bottom of his walls, causing them to glow and appear somewhat translucent.

Finally you create your lower, more personal levels of light. This could be a small lamp with a frosted shade placed near your guests, at the dinner table. However, experts agree that the best form of lower-level lighting is also the simplest, the candle. Palermo agrees that there really is no light source on Earth that can properly imitate the subtle beauty of a candle's flame.

For more information on beauty through the use of light, contact the FoodWise Group at www.foodwisegroup.com.

Sources Include: Orlando Sentinel