



**OUT OF THE SHADOWS:** Clockwise from top, good lighting design, like these schemes by Brilliant Lighting can add feelgood and "wow" factor to a home. Wilkinson's has a good selection of lighting; The Bocci lamp is available from [heals.co.uk](http://heals.co.uk) from £570

# LET THERE BE LIGHT

## Interiors

The clocks have gone back and the nights are longer, so it's a good time to look for lighting solutions. **Sharon Dale** reports.

IGNORED and taken for granted, lighting was the Cinderella of interiors but the nation is now switching on to the benefits of sophisticated illumination.

We are keen to banish the "big light" and a token lamp or two for a well-designed system that combines wow factor, atmosphere and low energy use.

Self-builders, renovators and developers are in prime position to design the perfect lighting scheme, as retro fitting can be costly and messy. For those who can't face a re-wire, changing light fittings and shades and adding spotlights and more lamps is an inexpensive way of adding sparkle.

Retailers like B&Q, BHS and Wilkinsons have good, reasonably-priced lighting departments and don't forget Ikea. Check out the room sets in the big blue and yellow store for inspiration.

Department stores are also a good hunting ground, and Heal's has an adventurous collection this season.

If you want something special and a bit different then visit Radiance Lighting in Hebden Bridge, [www.radiancelighting.co.uk](http://www.radiancelighting.co.uk).

Owner Hannah Nunn is a lighting designer and she stocks the work of other designer makers, such as Lush, Colin Chetwood and Helen Minns.

Converting switches to

dimmers and using the right kind of bulb can also make a big difference to a room, according to Melanie Shaw, residential lighting consultant and owner of Thirsk-based Brilliant Lighting, who has these tips:

■ The colour of light is really important to how you feel. You can't beat daylight, which gives you the full spectrum of light that our bodies need. When people think about lighting a home, they picture a warm glow. That's great but at 4pm on a November afternoon you also need it to feel like daytime and to achieve that you need a much whiter colour of light.

You'd expect to have more blue light during the morning and more golden light during the evening so you need the right sources and you need to understand the range of light bulbs that are available.

■ Low voltage halogen lamps give you a range of light colour



**WILD IDEAS:** A stag lamp, £85, at House of Fraser.

and at 100 per cent output they should be a crisp white, while they go more golden when dimmed. The quality of light is also good.

Energy efficient LED lamps don't change colour and can vary hugely. Good quality fittings can be very close to halogen, but poor quality fittings and retro fit lamps can be dingy.

■ A multi-functional approach. A golden glow might sound attractive, but sometimes we need cooler colours, such as in a kitchen, study or bathroom where you need functional lighting when reading or completing another task.

Open-plan living trends mean that most modern homes need rooms to be multi-functional, which is where we might fit two circuits of lighting, out of sight on top of a wardrobe, kitchen cabinet or bookshelf, one white and one golden, so the room user can create two different atmospheres.

## WHY IT PAYS TO INVEST IN DIMMERS

THE intensity of light can affect your alertness, says Melanie Shaw, of Brilliant Lighting

"You want bright lighting in the morning when you need to feel awake and alert. Your body will respond to dim lights by preparing to sleep. For this reason we should all try to dim the lights around our homes for at least 30 minutes before going to bed.

"When we get older, it takes our eyes longer to adjust to changes in brightness as our pupils dilate more slowly, so avoid glare and dim lights where possible."

■ [www.brilliantlighting.co.uk](http://www.brilliantlighting.co.uk)