

ELLE DECORATION

DEC 2025/JAN 2026

The world's most
LUXURIOUS shops
& stellar GIFTS

How to LIGHT
your HOME with a
flattering GLOW

feast mode

EVERYTHING YOU
NEED TO IMPRESS
THIS FESTIVE
SEASON



How to nail the lighting this party season

Whether you're planning a cocktail night, hosting a dinner or preparing a soirée to ring in the New Year, these ideas from interior designers renowned for creating the world's sexiest bars, hotels and restaurants will help make your guests feel comfortable and confident...



The Cote Korean Steakhouse, Las Vegas



The Shade Bar at Ham Yard Hotel, London

▲ Kit Kemp, founder and creative director of Firmdale Hotels

'One of the most transformative elements in any interior, lighting can change the mood, sculpt the space and tell a story all at once. In many of our hotels, lighting is not just functional; it becomes the artistic heartbeat of the room. My approach is more than just illumination; it's a way to craft warmth, intimacy and a sense of storytelling. Take the Shade Bar at Ham Yard restaurant, where colourful "PET" lamps by Spanish designer Alvaro Catalán de Ocón hang like floating lanterns. Made from recycled plastic bottles and handwoven by artisans around the globe, from Colombia to Ethiopia, these vibrant designs carry a narrative for our guests to discover, while offering both light and life to the communities who create them.' [kitkemp.com](#)

▲ David Rockwell, founder of Rockwell Group

'We always start with the narrative of the space – the story we are trying to tell through design – and how to craft the emotional arc of the guest's experience. Then we think about transitions: the glow at entry that can be seen from the street, the reveal of the dining room from the welcome desk, the energy or intimacy at the bar. We also consider sight lines, reflections and how light interacts with the various textures we are using for wallcoverings and upholstery, or art. Every fixture, from a pendant to a hidden cove, must serve beauty as well as the behaviour and needs of the occupants. At Cote in Las Vegas, decorative pendants create vertical drama and mark gathering points.' [rockwellgroup.com](#)

► Samuel Hosker, founder of North End Design

'Think concealed linear LED strips under banquettes, behind screens, under the bar or beneath a bottle display. Similarly, the face of each guest must be lit front-on or from below to ensure shadowing doesn't occur. Whether you're sitting at BiBi's counter, where the lights allow your face to glow, or you're tucked away in a corner booth at Gymkhana or Ambassadors Clubhouse in London, where the ambient lighting creates a sexier mood, this approach is the formula for a flattering scheme.' [northend.design](#)



BiBi, London

▼ **Alessio Nardi,**
founder of A-nrd studio

'Daylight should not be an afterthought. Understanding how it behaves throughout the day, how it filters, bounces or fades informs every other element of lighting. Milk Beach in Soho, London, evolves from a bright, sunlit feel to a warm, intimate evening glow at night – a result achieved through a combination of dim-to-warm bulbs and layered sources. Guests experience light before they notice furniture, finishes or form. When it is done well, you don't really notice it, you just feel it. You feel relaxed, comfortable and at ease without quite knowing why.' a-nrd.com



Milk Beach in
Soho, London

The Idler at The July, London



▲ **Andy Goodwin, co-founder of Fettle**

'We focus on ensuring the schemes that we create have layered lighting that is dramatic yet focused. Pendants give overall general lighting with an even spread throughout, wall lights bring the level of lighting down to eye height, which feels much more residential, while table lamps help to create intimacy for diners and allow menus to be read easily without overly illuminating the whole space. Control is also important, with the ability to dim the lighting down and create schemes for various times of the day or experiences.' fettlestudio.co.uk

▼ **Richy Almond, co-founder of Lind + Almond**

'Ceiling downlights need to be used with caution, as harsh overhead lighting flattens a space and people along with it. If they are needed, choose ceiling products that are as small as possible. We prefer to light using decorative light sources, such as wall sconces, table and floor lamps, along with any indirect lights. Wall lights create intimacy and guide movement and flow through spaces, while table lamps add that final layer of comfort that makes you want to linger. In Hotel Sanders in Copenhagen, for example, the table lamps make the lounge feel like someone's living room. At The Newman in London, bespoke wall lights echo the art deco influences of the building and give the rooms a quiet and atmospheric glow. Soft, warm, indirect light is the key.' lindalmond.co.uk



A room at
Hotel Sanders,
Denmark