



Chelsom | +44 (0)1253 831400 | [chelsom.co.uk](http://chelsom.co.uk)

## LIGHTING & ACCESSORIES >

[hotelspeconline.com](http://hotelspeconline.com) | Hotel Spec 205

# Bespoke hospitality design

The very essence of Bespoke Design conjures up feelings of luxury, exclusivity and comfort. Designing something to perfectly suit its application rather than buying 'off-the-shelf' will always add a sense of quality and value to a project which is especially true with decorative lighting. For decades the design team at Chelsom has worked hard to ensure there is a consistent DNA flowing through all aspects of their products. Regarded as one of the leading global suppliers of decorative lighting to the global Hospitality sector, Chelsom's standard products are selected by interior designers for brands ranging from Mandarin Oriental to Holiday Inn Express and Virgin Voyages to Carnival Cruise Lines.

Alongside the evolution of their standard lighting collection, Chelsom is also a leading bespoke lighting manufacturer. The team at Chelsom work in a truly collaborative manner with designers and end clients to bring often challenging, one-off design concepts to life. Recent bespoke projects range from the design and build of a one-off 5-metre-high statement chandelier for a hotel atrium as well as the manufacturing of 5000+ table lamps to feature in every cabin on a cruise ship. Unique designs require flexible and adaptable manufacturing, something Chelsom prides itself on offering clients at every stage of a bespoke project. The Chelsom bespoke team is made up of specialists in all areas including design, logistics, operations, production and technical, symbiotically working alongside one another in order to achieve the best results. Chelsom has a 100% 'partnership approach' when working with clients where they can add extensive knowledge, expertise and skill whilst the customer creative design intent always remains at the core of the process.

Bespoke design was once considered something for the luxury end of the market. However, the demand for tailored, unique design is something Chelsom works with clients to deliver at all budget levels. The industry has been hit incredibly hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and many believe that there will be a need to future-proof the industry by factoring in special qualities to product and interior design. As we all move forward from the pandemic, there will undoubtedly be more of a need to customise products and to specify lighting with added functionality. Over the last year, the Chelsom design team have been exploring a number of different aspects of lighting design which could serve to reduce the spread of viruses within the hospitality environment. As bespoke features,



Chelsom has developed decorative 'touchless-switching' solutions which will reduce the points of contact in a hotel guestroom; They also offer fabrics with antimicrobial qualities, as well as metal finishing options which will significantly reduce the spread of germs and bacteria; The Chelsom team are even exploring the use of UV light within a decorative application in a further attempt to wage war on viruses within the hospitality setting. None of these solutions will suit every project but the technologies are there to be experimented with and by having the capabilities available. Chelsom are able to constantly offer smarter solutions and add even more weight to their bespoke services and products for the future.

Chelsom's goal moving forward is to ensure that the bespoke lighting process can be both affordable and sustainable. With so many supply chain options available, the Chelsom team hopes that their quality levels, experience and market knowledge makes them the go-to lighting experts for projects at all levels. However, price-point and quality can only play part of the role in the world today and Chelsom are constantly looking to streamline processes and be more sustainable in everything they do as the environmental agenda becomes ever more important. Chelsom's drive to 'make more in UK' significantly reduces the carbon impact seen by using overseas manufacturing and global logistics and they are delighted to have

completed so many projects using home-grown manufacturing in North West of England.

One recent example saw Chelsom create a huge chandelier for Le Meridien Dania Beach Hotel in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Chelsom worked with Dash Design in New York to create a lobby chandelier centre-piece designed to look like a constellation of stars and planets, suspended to create the illusion it was floating on air. A series of 'planets' attached to steel arms of varying lengths contain a small LED at the end to represent stars in the sky. Designed to be compatible with the hotel's existing dimming system, real wow factor is achieved as the chandelier light effect adapts and transitions from a day through to night sequence. The project was challenging and took 2 years to complete but Chelsom were able to interpret the original design through months of intense planning and development. A huge level of CAD expertise went into evolving the design and miniature model versions of the chandelier were created long the way so that Chelsom could perfect the overall engineering of the product and master the perfect manufacturing technique. One of the biggest challenges was how to make a huge statement chandelier, the size of a London Bus, appear weightless and fit perfectly into the 6 metre domed ceiling of the hotel lobby. The light effect was also key, requiring a huge amount of technical Chelsom knowledge to create the desired 'twinkle' effect so that the chandelier correctly represented the constellation look that the client was after. Every single aspect of this project was carried out in the Chelsom UK headquarters, including all project management meetings, the overall design and engineering, sampling and prototyping and then the overall manufacture. The huge structure was broken down into many sections at the Chelsom HQ and then delivered and installed by the Chelsom in Florida. The final results speak for themselves and this is one of the most impressive light fittings that Chelsom has ever created. It was a technical and engineering marvel in its creation but also an aesthetic achievement to have remained so sympathetic to the original Dash Design brief.

Will Chelsom, Managing Director commented on this project by saying, "I am immensely proud that our teams have designed, engineered and manufactured such a unique bespoke piece for this project. I am delighted we have been able to carry off such a huge project, all whilst utilising home grown talent as manufactured at our base in the Northwest of England. Our bespoke capabilities continue to evolve and we look forward to many more challenges like this in the future".

[chelsom.co.uk](http://chelsom.co.uk)



DAYTONA by CHELSOM  
EDITION 27  
NOW AVAILABLE

— CHELSOM —  
chelsom.co.uk

# DIGITAL ROUNDTABLE: LIGHTING DESIGN

During lockdown, Editor Sophie Harper held a series of digital roundtables to discuss some hot topics with some of the industry's favourite designers and product manufacturers. Here's what happened when we hosted a session on lighting design in association with Chelsom.



The panel, comprising of: Alan Mcvitty, Founder & CEO, M Studio; James Dilley, Director, Jestico + Whiles; Elizabeth Lane, Former Partner at RPW Design; and Tom Thorogood, Associate, Dexter Moren Associates, gathered online to be quizzed on their thoughts and opinions on specific lighting design topics with Will Chelsom, Managing Director at Chelsom, putting the questions to the designers...

**WILL:** "How important is lighting in the interior design of hospitality spaces?"

**ELIZABETH:** "I think it's absolutely crucial – it's critical. You can do a fantastic design but if it's not lit well then it doesn't look great, so there can be no argument in my mind that it is really, really important."

**JAMES:** "Well it's very simple, you can't see without light. Flipping it the other way we need to use sight as much as we can to enhance what we're doing, and it comes down to informing the choice of everything – the colour and the texture in particular – you have to understand how light works. One of my favourite lighting designers said 'light sticks to rough surfaces but it bounces off shiny surfaces' it's not a technical description but it means you can manipulate things from an early stage in very basic terms."

**TOM:** "It is definitely because you're taking into

account the space; whether there's natural light coming in or high ceilings, it is massively important as it can be such a feature of the design."

**ALAN:** "As everybody's said, it's extremely important, it's vital to every scheme because it's about creating an emotion within the interiors we create, and lighting very much accentuates the moods that we want to create in those spaces. Quite often in larger spaces, it's vital that we use not only natural light but architectural lighting to add to that atmosphere."

**WILL:** "What are the main factors that influence your decision making when you're specifying lighting products or designing custom lighting?"

**ALAN:** "I think things that are key for us is actually working with partners that really understand the studio's aesthetic. We're very fortunate, we work very much in the luxury sector and so it has to be about the quality, but as we also know there are demands within public spaces that have to endure the use from guests so there's a balance between the beauty and aesthetics of a product and the durability."

**ELIZABETH:** "Obviously you've got this whole image in your mind of what you want the space to look like, so as we've said the lighting is so important and I completely agree with Alan, it's the light output obviously that's key: how does that fit in, what does it look like, and what does

it feel like. It has to have that tactile element as well if that's appropriate, so all of those things are absolutely key. As a practice we always want to see everything we're specifying, where possible, so we can really judge what the quality is like."

**TOM:** "The design, the finishes, the cost. The finishes are always difficult, especially with metals, if it's off the shelf or even vintage, trying to make sure the metals you've chosen are matching. Even with custom sometimes, in order to keep within budget you try to use standard finishes from the manufacturer and you sometimes have to accept that it's not always going to be an exact match."

**WILL:** "It's something we find. Brass is brass, many would say, but there are ten million different types of brass if you really know your stuff, it's very difficult to always get a specific type of brass to match another."

**WILL:** "In what respect do you consider environment or sustainability when you're considering the specification of lighting products?"

**ELIZABETH:** "If you're doing something for a newbuild then you've got more scope to build in all the things that you need and so then it's about where are your lights coming from. Certainly more recently we've noticed a trend for having things that are more local and we do think, when we first start

a project, about where it's going to be and look at where we're sourcing from generally – not just for lighting. Sometimes during the value engineering process that can all go out the window, but we are thinking about it and trying to bring in as much as we can but every project's different."

**TOM:** "More and more clients are doing accredited sustainable projects – I was working on a Six Senses ski resort in Austria last year and for that they were doing a lead accreditation and aiming for platinum so we had to be on top of it. We were speaking to suppliers to find out what the route of their products were and there was one that was manufacturing in Germany but then shipping it to America only to come back to Austria, so we obviously couldn't specify them."

**JAMES:** "One of the most significant things at the moment is where your power comes from. If it's cleaner power, then you're immediately saving more than you can make by some of the other gestures. The other thing I think it would be nice culturally to get people to accept is motion detectors. What's the point in lighting a hotel corridor between the hours of two and six in the morning – there's no point at all, it's not justifiable, but there's a standard culturally the operators are concerned that that half a second when somebody comes out of the door or the elevator where the lights come on that it feels strange, so

if we can get over those slightly bizarre hang-ups then I think we can start doing some small things which will mean a lot."

**ALAN:** "I think as a whole, it's something that everyone needs to be aware of and make a conscious effort to be mindful of when we're putting schemes together and specifying suppliers for a project. For us, if you're looking at a product and you've got two manufacturers and one is accredited, it's more likely you will go with the accredited similar product. Because we work with a lot of operators their policies also influence how we work or how we specify products so it's a great move and it's the right direction and I think more suppliers will embrace greener technology."

**WILL:** "How big a role does technology play in lighting for your projects?"

**JAMES:** "Too much technology is just a negative, people get confused, they get frustrated, things should be intuitive. We know that we can do many things with colours, we can change temperatures, we can change intensity but there's a limit to how much variation people will need from playing with it in the first 30 seconds of being in a room and I think just the same as all technology, it should be something that happens to you without realising and it should work nicely and intuitively."

**TOM:** "The same as James said, it's about making

sure that it is really intuitive for both guests and the staff who are going to be using it in terms of changing the lighting schemes. The other thing is getting away from there being loads of buttons back down to trying to get as few as possible and also making sure any icons are universal."

**ELIZABETH:** "It depends on the project, obviously. You have to start with each one and look at what it needs. I think a good lighting designer just brings another layer and we're really used to working with them, we see them as part of our team, so it's a great synergy. We did a project a few years ago now where we had to fill this huge atrium and that's where a lighting designer brought a whole new layer to that and it was really successful. In that installation technology was really important but also at the lower level with the decorative lighting, it was really simple because they were doing two different things."

**ALAN:** "Technology is changing so rapidly that we can future-proof things as we go along, and that's why it is important to partner with specialist lighting designers because they're at the front of the curve in terms of knowing what the latest projects are. Ultimately, as designers, we know what we want it to look and feel like but it's a lot more technical, therefore you need to work with a specialist who will embrace and look after that element of the project."



**WILL:** "How important is it that your lighting suppliers, so people like us, play a role in project management?"

**JAMES:** "We'll always speak to contract suppliers, and it's in everybody's interest to limit the number of suppliers for a particular typology so having 20 different light suppliers is not as good as having two or three. What we want is really full engagement in the project with the lighting designer who can talk to us about how things perform, the effects we're going to get, not just what they look like, somebody who knows really exactly what they're talking about, somebody who can get inside the project and contribute more than just being responsive. We're looking for a collaborative experience."

**ELIZABETH:** "In terms of project management what we're looking for is a company that has an understanding of what we're trying to achieve. We're probably not really designing for a bedroom rollout, we're not necessarily designing bespoke, it's what I might call 'off the shelf plus' because quite often you might have a fitting that we like but there might be X, Y, Z things about that fitting that won't be quite right for this project. It might require us to have somebody we can talk to to say we love that fitting, it's really perfect for the scheme but can we customise it in the following way."

**ALAN:** "It's important for us to have one point of contact in terms of working with a supplier on a project that we don't have a myriad of different departments to deal with and that's why with Chelsom it's great because if we're working on a marine project, we'll work alongside John or if it's land-based then we'll work alongside Will and that makes it easier. Also, technical aspects of a project that we can put you in direct contact with the contractor and you can iron out any of the problems. I'm not an electrician, but you can speak their language and really understand so it is a really helpful partnership. I think that is really, really important."

To sum up, the panel had a number of ideas on the relevance of lighting within their hospitality projects, and all agreed how crucial lighting was to the success of a finished interior scheme. Most interesting was the unanimous feeling of choosing the right lighting partner to collaborate with on such projects, and that having an expert lighting designer to advise on all aspects of the lighting design was integral to the ease of and smooth delivery of the finished project.

Will rounded off the conversation by telling us a bit more about how Chelsom works with design studios to achieve this: "People know us

as a lighting company, but I actually see us as a projects company because we are so focused on hospitality projects – we are not, by any means, a retail outfit."

A lot of what we do is taking a design concept from its very early stages, taking it through the prototype process, taking it through the costing and quote stages, then into manufacture and then through to delivery. We manage the warranty process as well, so the after sales service is a massive part of what we do. It's not just transactional sale – thanks very much, here's your lighting, off you go – it's a massive, long process.

I've just delivered a project that I started 12 years ago. It's changed so many different times, the ownership has changed, the design has changed, and we're just getting to delivery stage now and that's the essence of a project, isn't it – the twists and turns. We totally understand the essence of a hospitality project and everything that goes with it so it's that idea that it's not just a sell, it's managing customer expectation, designer expectation, budget expectation, understanding the brand standards for the hotel group and managing the different facets of it all."

[chelsom.co.uk](http://chelsom.co.uk)

