



The exterior of the Colosseum is lit with Schröder fixtures

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The light

There are mixed views within the industry about future directions for Italian architectural lighting. **Mike Clark** talks to some of the key players about how the country's many beautiful towns and cities should be lit.

Architect Pierluigi Ceregioli, director of iGuzzini's study and research centre, offers a clear overview of the Italian market: "Recently, the highest growth rate has without doubt been outdoor lighting – both architectural and 'lightscaping'."

"Up to the mid-1990s things were rather static, with the accent on practical fixtures, but the importance of lighting is now acknowledged for the tourist trade and improving the lifestyle of towns' inhabitants. In Italy, lightscaping now plays a more important role, thanks also to cities like Rome and Milan adopting a light plan for the Jubilee."

In Rome, iGuzzini fixtures were used to illuminate the bridges over the Tiber and recently Milan's famous Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, with a design by Piero Castiglioni for local utility company AEM, and the Corso Vittorio Emanuele porticos with Bertino fixtures designed by Kenzo Piano.

"Lately there's been an improvement as far as architectural lighting's concerned, but as lighting designers aren't thick on the ground, the authorities are hard put to find this type of specialist, so often contact manufacturers directly," says Ceregioli.

Psychological

Italy's only IALD member, Rome-based Maurizio Rossi, has decided to work exclusively in the private sector, to avoid any conditioning as far as products used or politics involved are concerned.

"Although there are lighting courses in some Italian universities, there aren't architectural lighting

degree courses which would ensure aspiring lighting designers a professionally and legally recognised qualification, so the only option is to work in an architect's studio that designs lighting or with a lighting manufacturer," he says.

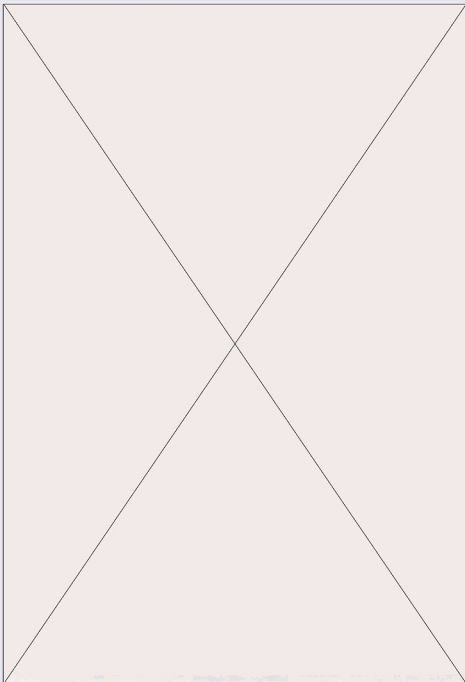
"Technical skills are obviously necessary in lighting design," adds Rossi, "but so are architecture and other aspects which might seem unrelated, such as psychology."

"Lighting plays an important psychological role in our lives, but I feel that dynamic lighting's importance has been exaggerated recently – the same effect can be achieved with means we've had at our disposal for a long time, such as the programmable dimmers, which I used in the Holiday Inn in Naples back in 1995."

A recent project of Rossi's – in what is probably the Eternal City's best-known street, Via Veneto – is the Marriott Grand Hotel's lighting, which highlights the building's features, while managing to keep the actual fixtures virtually invisible.

Explaining why the projects he's involved been in use only conventional lighting, Remo Guertini, of Rome utility firm ACEA's public lighting design business unit says: "As well as the actual hardware being more expensive, running costs are also higher and conventional sources actually do offer quite a variety of results."

"Another key reason however is that the authorities don't like 'coloured' lighting, preferring something that's a bit more neutral and, since it's used 24/7 days a year, also less tiring on the eye – we're introducing innovative elements, but are still a long way from widespread use of computer con-



Piero Castiglioni carried out the lighting design based on iGuzzini's fittings for Milan's Galleria Vittorio Emanuele on behalf of local utility AEM

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plan for Italy

The local economy is expected to grow by 1.5% in 2003, with a 2.5% increase in 2004. The country's GDP is expected to reach 1,100 billion euros in 2004.

	Britain	Italy
Market in 2002	+13%	-7%
Market characteristic	Emphasis on price	Emphasis on design
Market breakdown	One-third domestic	One-half domestic
Manufacturing base	High import level	Net exporter

troled systems."

ACEA has recently worked on joint ventures with Electrelab, the leading electricity producer in Benelux, and has been responsible for lighting some of the country's best-known monuments (St Peter's, the Colosseum, Villa Adriana, Domus Aurea). The overall situation isn't by any means up to this standard, as Gierrini explains: "Unfortunately, professional technical lighting culture is not sufficiently widespread and incredible as it may seem, the bodies responsible for

"Although mistakes were made at the outset, their use is currently more 'mature' and rather than try to show all the functions they're able to offer, now they only use those really appreciated by lighting designers – colour changing facilities, adjustable luminous output, programmability and versatility.

"Our products have been installed with great results on historical Italian buildings, such as the president's official residence, the Quirinale and at the 16th century Castellarano castle, with a subtle



The Marriott Grand Hotel Flora on Rome's Via Veneto had its external lighting designed by Maurizio Rossi, Italy's only IALD member



Architectural lighting makes a spectacular difference to the Rimini Fiera at night compared with its daytime appearance



lighting buildings of historical importance quite often give the job of designing the system to the installer."

Pio Nahum, managing director and CEO of Martin Professional Italy, is an advocate of theatrical lighting. "Since show lighting manufacturers began pitching their products to other markets there's been a great deal of confusion on the exact meaning of the term architectural lighting," he warns. "Dynamic lighting has very limited applications in this field in Italy, whereas the market which continues to grow is for commercial and promotional lighting in retail outlets.

"However the market is also opening up to the use of 'intelligent' lighting to illuminate buildings and in Italy we've already been involved in lighting buildings of historical and monumental value, but that doesn't mean Martin products are suited to public lighting in general."

Nevertheless, Nahum doesn't agree that Italy's architectural lighting is excessively spectacular.

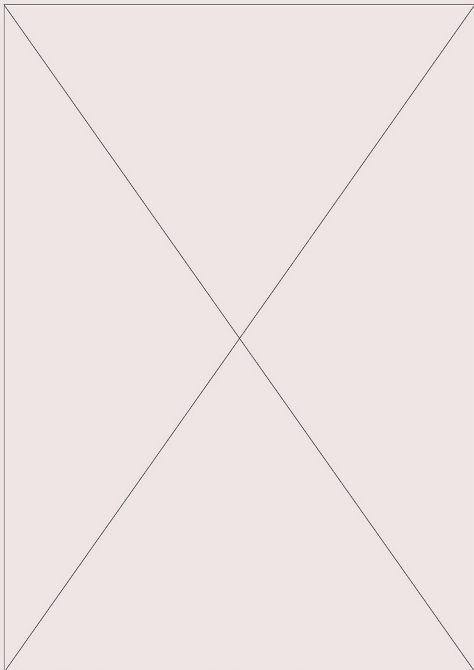
elegant illumination which, on special occasions, can also become really spectacular."

Perfection

A perfect example of a small provincial town's ability to exploit its architectural features with lighting is Faenza's main square, where the loggias and porticos are lit by a series of Vabizirano's medium Cube fixtures which enable soft, intimate or more intense lighting to be achieved.

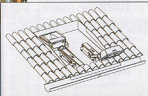
The Bologna firm's designer, Mario Nanni, came up with an original solution for extremely flexible lighting of the square itself: Luna Nascente (Rising Moon).

This motorised retractable unit, mounted on the roof's round the square, is completely out of sight during the day but at night can be used in various programmable posi-





The main square in the town of Faenza, where the lighting features Bologna firm Viabizzuno's Luna Nascente (Rising Moon) fittings. They are folded away by day (as shown below) but can be used in various programmable positions at night.



Martin Pro's lighting of the 16th c. Castellorano Castle provides a subtle and elegant illumination that also can be quite spectacular on special occasions



tions according to the type of illumination required for the square and the events it hosts (markets, sports events, etc.) or according to the season of the year.

The effect obtained by the gradual illumination of the square is subtly fascinating and is part of the firm's "less light" policy, which, "makes use of less in order to better appreciate the architecture and the magic of the night, without polluting it."

Located in La Staccata, a villa once the home of the Vespucci family in the rolling Tuscan countryside, the Lighting Academy is a non-profit association founded in 1998 by local manufacturer Targatti Sankey. The aim is to "study, research and promote the culture of light" through an international meeting centre for the education, development and training of professionals involved in lighting.

Elisabetta Baldanzi, in charge of educational coordination, explains: "Recent courses have included a night landscape workshop held by

lighting designer Louis Clair, who showed participants how to develop a lighting concept for a natural area included in an urban space. The four-day workshop included visits to Florence's famous Cascine Park, followed by work sessions at La Staccata and the final presentation of the project to the local authorities."

The academy aims to be a reference point for all those wanting to increase their lighting knowledge and, as well as its courses, offers the basis for more creative use of indoor and outdoor lighting, focusing technical knowledge and putting participants in touch with successful professionals.

It also hosts conferences, roundtables and workshops for those wanting to specialise in specific applications. Teachers are university professors, researchers from the National Institute of Applied Optics, members of the leading lighting designer associations and international industries.

Exterior and interior views of Italy's Lighting Academy, located in the rolling Tuscan countryside, aims to: 'study, research and promote the culture of light'

