

Dimming is not efficient, switching is.

This year's lighting show was once again a disappointment for anyone expecting a big selection of low energy products. There were a few stands with very pretty LED models which, unfortunately, were mostly unable to provide the lighting levels one would need to light a room and were typically at the very top of everyone's budget (if you could actually get a price).

The only exhibitor entirely focused on low energy lighting was energy efficient specialist tp24 Ltd. With their unique dedicated system and wide variety of products, we have seen this company's steady growth year on year. 2009 represented their fourth year at the show, starting from a small shell scheme in 2006 to the latest impressive freestanding exhibit complete with eco car.

The company was showing many new lines, including new antique brass finishes of many of its best sellers. Apparently this finish was requested by a number of their existing retail customers who are increasing their exposure to the energy efficient market.

The main focus of the stand, however, was tp24's new Grande range targeted at larger properties, small hotels, pubs and nursing homes; a market currently not catered for in domestic style low energy. This new collection has some stunningly beautiful individual pieces and ranges all offering, building regulation compliant, low energy lighting that not only looks great, but actually gives sufficient lighting levels to light even the biggest rooms. It also offers incredible value, with prices much the same as the incandescent equivalents.

The big surprise is how the company is dealing with dimming issues. Shaun Davis, Managing Director, explained that conventional domestic dimming is not energy efficient. "When you use a standard domestic wall dimmer turning the lights down by 50% it will still use about 80% of the power. It also stresses the lamp and uses up valuable lamp life. However, if you turn off half of the lamps you save half the power and save the lamp life".

Davis goes on to say that dimming of compact fluorescent lamps is very difficult and the models currently coming on the market are very expensive and decidedly unreliable, requiring special switches. The new tp24 range incorporates a sensor switch in the body of the fitting, which allows the user to step-down the lights by switching off different sections of the chandelier. The wiring back to the switch is standard so these switchable lights can be fitted anywhere. This built-in switching allows the consumer to change the lighting mood of the room and save more energy, a really great innovation.

Well done tp24, I will be looking out for them again next year.

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Editors' Notes

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Product tp3198 – Renaissance 16 light