

INDIA'S FOREMOST MAGAZINE ON THE LIGHTING INDUSTRY

# Lighting India

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## OVO

**A Sensory Experience!**

Pullman Hotels Sao Paulo  
- Guinter Parschalk

Need for Low Energy Lighting  
- Dr S S Verna



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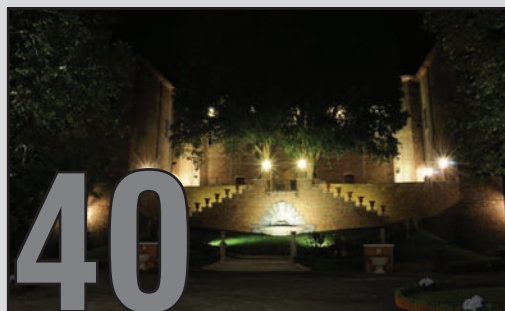
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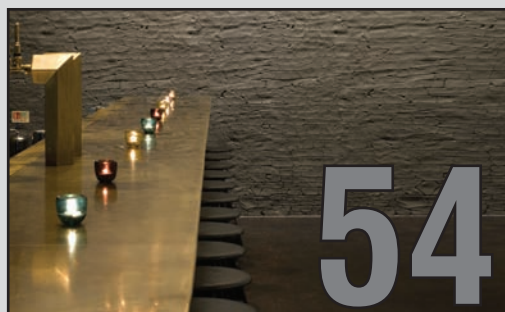
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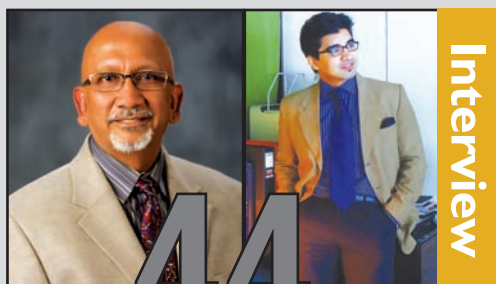
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'With our Technology  
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# Wedding at the Castle!

## Lighting Design for the Castle of Pomaro Monferrato (AL), Italy

Today the castle appears as a noble high class palace, with an U shaped building and 3 polygonal towers ending with swallow-tailed battlements. The main court and the access stairs: the main scenery.



Radio plays a song, whose lyrics I know almost by heart. The sky is quite clear tonight despite the just ended rainy May. It is already dark and I am driving towards the castle to check everything before the wedding in two days. During the short drive from where I live to the castle, I start thinking over the works, problems and stories typical of a construction site. I try to visualize the busy month and a half, the palpable tension at the beginning of the works, the very short period of time to finish them, and the worries for the weather conditions that did not really help!

After a 15 minute drive, from the lonely provincial road "for Valenza", I can see the majestic castle of Pomaro standing at the top of the hill. The history of the small town of

Later on, heavier walls were probably added to the original structure to make it an impregnable fortress. But as weaponry evolved, the tide turned. In 1638, when the French forced the Spanish to withdraw, the

In the 18th-century, the complex was restored and remodeled many times, and this enabled a correct historical and artistical evaluation of the structure. The last works date back to 1929, when the marquise Paola Dalla Valle commissioned a restoration work to the engineer Vittorio Tornielli. After the Dalla Valle dynasty, the counts Calvi di Bergolo became the owners of the castle and lived there until the 70s. Even princess Iolanda di Savoia spent some summers at this place. Among some guests of the castle, we remember Vittorio Emanuele III, King of Italy. He stayed here from 22nd to 30th August 1911 to take some important decisions on the Lebanese War.

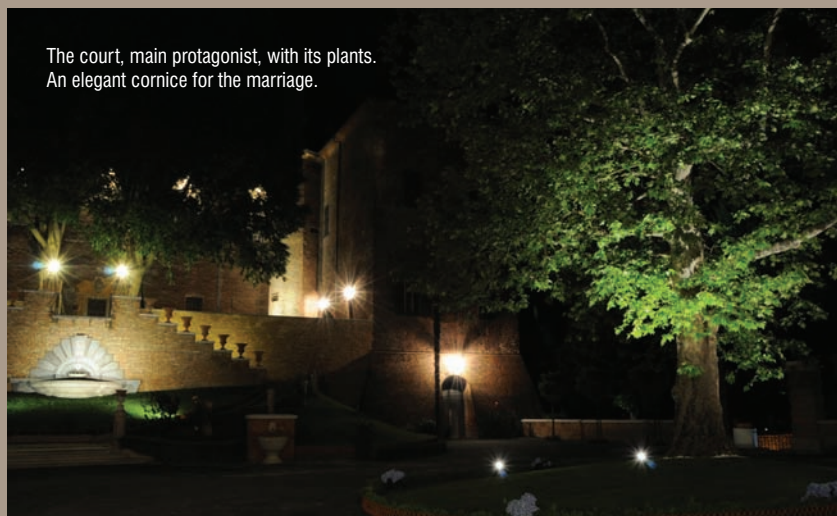
An extensive garden slopes away from the castle.

After a short uphill road in the middle of the town, I am in front of the entrance and the keeper opens promptly the gate. Here it is, the lighting scenery I designed for the wedding that will be held in 48 hours with guests, music and banquets

Once again I have the feeling that I have been catapulted into another era, the same kind of feeling you have while reading history books and novels. On this special occasion, I am the co-actor in the staging of the castle for the wedding celebration.

Usually, a lighting designer is called in to illuminate monuments to make them optimally "usable" in the evening hours. The light, indeed, does not enhance a monument, but simply illuminates it accurately in order to underline its majesty as a work of intellect and as a symbol of an era. On this occasion, my client requested a new external lighting for certain portions of the castle in order to make it the elegant venue for the festivities surrounding the wedding of the owner's daughter.

My job was not just to valorise the castle exteriors, but to use the vertical surfaces and horizontal planes to



The court, main protagonist, with its plants.  
An elegant cornice for the marriage.



The castle ready for the party! The shadow and light games put different accents on the upper façade and on the fountain.

Monferrato is inseparable from the site of the castle.

Today, the building is an impressive, aristocratic palazzo, a red brick block on a U plan with three polygonal towers topped by swallow-tail crenellation. The foundations belie ancient, early 12th-century origins.

retreating troops fell upon Pomaro, destroying the fortifications and seriously damaging the castle. In 1929, the marquise Della Valle commissioned the restoration works that brought back to light the outlines of some medieval windows and a decorative sawtooth pattern.



create an atmosphere worthy of a wedding feast of old.

I decided to design the lighting as a series of "frames," taking into account the various, different perspectives from which guests and the bride and groom might view the castle. I analyzed the surfaces, the revelatory features, the hollows and the projections, the shadows, and of course the objects to be lighted, as groundwork for a lighting scheme that could help us to best perceive objects, without masking or interference.

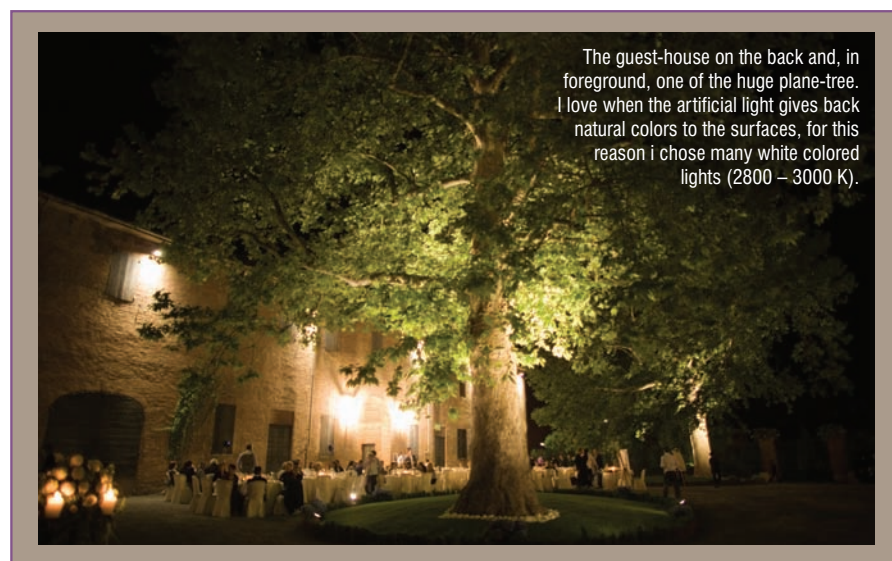
My style in bringing artificial lighting to bear on historic monuments led me to exclude almost entirely any type of spectacular illumination with excessively "stagy" effects: I preferred to use white light sources. I walk through the areas affected by the intervention, the court embraced ideally by the inside of the castle and guesthouse, the terraced gardens that surround the grotto's nymph and the wall that thins out towards the park below. The history of the place reminds all workers who operated there from 1100 to 2011. Skilled craftsmen, masons and labourers have worked to make this place sometimes useful to the defence, other times beautiful to be enjoyed in the 18th century as well as now. I am grateful to the owner who made me part of this present history.

I go up the flights of stairs to reach the first floor of the courtyard and enjoy the main facade divided in two lateral structures, which articulate on two octagonal towers, and introduced by 18th-century symmetries: two giant plane trees placed in elliptical flower beds with hydrangeas on the floor of the first courtyard, the two fountain masks that frame two column planters, the two flights of stairs rejoin on the upper floor of the courtyard, where two ancient Celtis Australis stand so close together to form a single huge canopy of foliage.

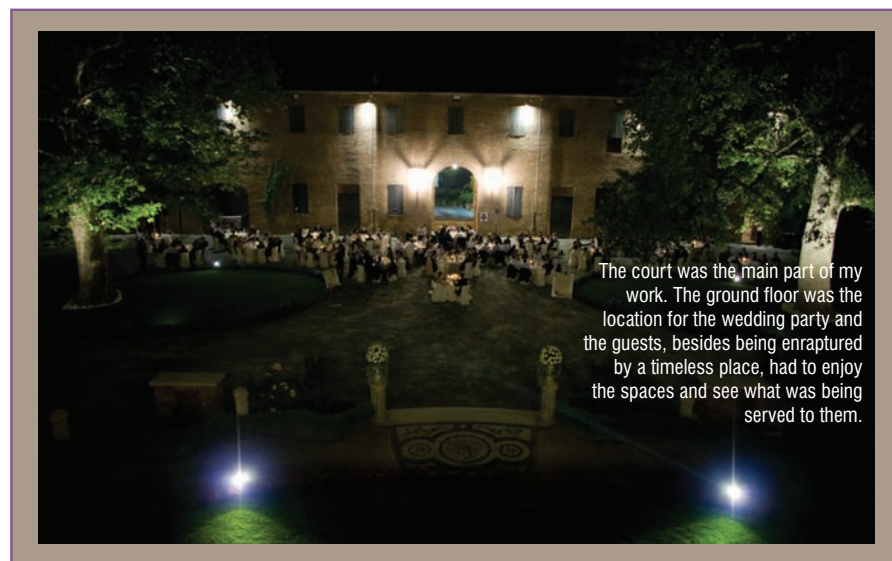
From the upper courtyard I enjoy an overview of my work, at least of the part accessible by the guests; then I move on towards the grotto's nymph from where I can view the centuries-old park below. I trace the different viewpoints pausing

setting, yet be able to move around at their ease and to see what they were being served.

For the functional lighting, I recovered and re-engineered the existing 19th-century lanterns. I must say that without the meticulous



The guest-house on the back and, in foreground, one of the huge plane-tree. I love when the artificial light gives back natural colors to the surfaces, for this reason I chose many white colored lights (2800 – 3000 K).



The court was the main part of my work. The ground floor was the location for the wedding party and the guests, besides being enraptured by a timeless place, had to enjoy the spaces and see what was being served to them.

to consider whether the idea has actually materialized as expected. The courtyard was the most important part of the design work. The ground floor was given over to the reception and the guests had to be fully immersed in the magic of the timeless

recovering work of master Pino Pozzo from Viverone, the lanterns would have been totally unusable. Only his patience and experience permitted us to bring what seemed to be a near-impossible salvaged project to a successful completion.

Since I had to light the passages and the floors, I decided to fit the lanterns with 2800K colour-temperature metal halide lamps with ceramic burners. The brilliant yet pleasing light of these sources was in fact the most congenial for achieving a good chromatic yield while creating a warm and welcoming ambience.

Punctuating the lantern-light was accent lighting for the facade of the castle, the octagonal towers, the guest-quarters, the fountain, and the great plane-trees.

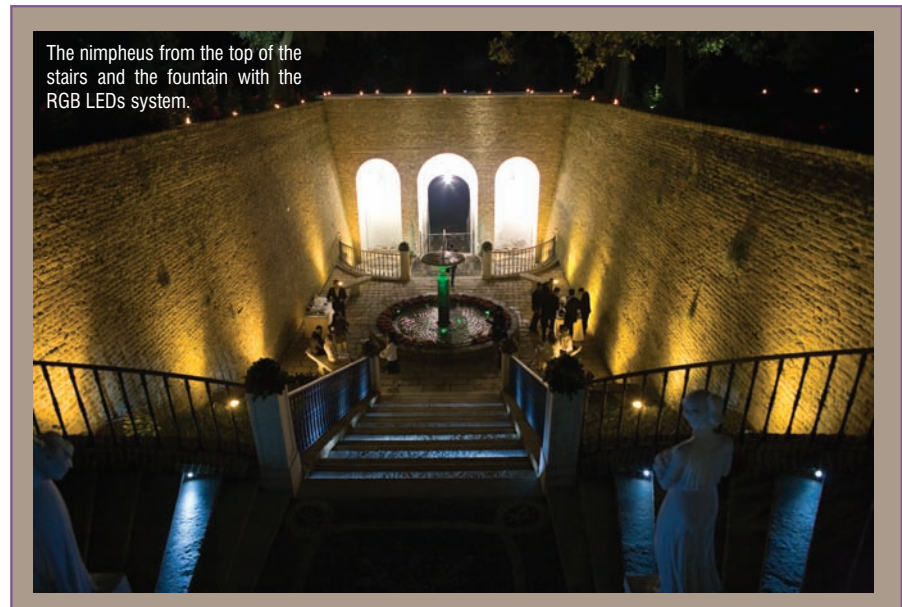
For these purposes, I used the least aesthetically-invasive fixtures that yet offered the possibility of exploiting variable optics and intensities and, if need be, adding diffuser filters. The light sources were 3000K colour-temperature ceramic metal halide lamps, from 20 W to 150 W power.

Artificial light guides guests' way from the courtyard toward the exquisite nymphaeum. Perimetral lighting from fixtures set into the ground highlights the volume of this space, while functional lighting on the curving staircase leads the eye toward the exquisite central fountain.

For this small architectural jewel, I exploited light's unique property to create movement almost playfully.

Illumination for the fountain took the form of small 3 W RGB LEDs and relied on the effects necessarily generated by as moving water met changing-colour light. I used more 3200 K small white LEDs, for "tracing" the steps of the stone staircase, and illuminated the brick walls with recessed fixtures mounting high-pressure sodium lamps. The nymphaeum is surrounded by two elegant hanging gardens with ancient, yet precious trees, the end wall of the ground floor thins out in the park. Designing artificial lighting for parks and gardens does not mean reproducing daylight.

Instead, it means applying carefully pondered design to create new



The nymphaeum from the top of the stairs and the fountain with the RGB LEDs system.

outlooks on an open space, to draw attention to sight-paths and vistas that are difficult to perceive in full daylight. The first important factor to be considered is the delicate balance between vegetation and artificial light. The Agricultural Environmental Quality Institute of Maryland (U.S.) has compiled tables providing data on light sensitivity of various plant varieties. To put it succinctly, in our work we have to consider the side-effects that artificial lighting can have on vegetation, such as: accelerated growth, making it more vulnerable to pollutants, diseases and frost; variation of the normal photoperiod, resulting in the disruption of the flowering time, some wicker flowers can be deeply damaged by this side-effect; and trunk inclination, as plants

tend to follow the light source. For this reason, I chose LEDs sources, both in the ground-level recessed fixtures for the hanging gardens, which were open to guests, and for the spike-mount fixtures for the park lighting. I paid special attention to creating effective luminous contrasts while keeping the general light level rather low, since one of the project's aims was to create intimate, darker corners in the gardens. The park lighting was designed to lend depth to the scene as a whole, making it clearly visible from the gardens that open onto it. I walk away through the park to catch another perspective. The last regulation of the light direction towards the ancient plants and the scenery is ready for the big ceremony!

**Marco Palandella** is an independent lighting designer, APIL, IESNA, PLDA. He started as a lighting designer on several project for the illumination of sites of historic and artistic interest and public venues, which were awarded with important prizes and gained national recognition. He is highly motivated, creative with strong interpersonal and technical communication skills, always worked in a team of architects and electrical engineers ensuring an excellent collaborative and supportive environment.



Marco Palandella