

Sunrise to sunset settings

BY ANDREA LILLO

How can a home help promote the health and wellness of its occupants? One way is with circadian rhythm lighting — the process that regulates one's sleep/wake cycles — which is at the heart of a new architectural lighting system called Daily Light from USAI Lighting.

After purchasing a home in the Hamptons, homeowners turned to interior designer Ken Alpert of KA Design Group to make it their own. That included not only moderate renovations, including swapping out the railings, floors and the kitchen island, but also upgrading the lighting system, becoming more in step with their circadian rhythms. "I knew we were going to have the opportunity to have very avant garde lighting that has the ability to change the color temperature," said Alpert, who has used USAI products in past projects.

This is the first new home project using USAI's new Daily Light system. Controlled by Savant's smart home controls, the home's lighting can go seamlessly from the feel of a warm sunrise to cool, crisp midday clean light, and then sunset and candlelight glow, said Greg Barrett, project manager, USAI. The home has big windows, and the system blends its artificial light with the natural light streaming in from those windows. "Sleep is one of the main factors that impacts people's well-being and their health," Barrett said. "Where it really matters is where you spend the first three hours in the morning and where you spend the last three hours before you go to sleep, that's what helps train your system for that sleep/wake cycle. And the home is where that intervention should be taking place."

The renovation included adding lighting to bedrooms, as well as stairwells. USAI has a sloped ceiling-specific solution so it was able to add recessed lighting to the stairwells' ceilings, as well as the bedrooms that had angled ceilings. Besides USAI's recessed lighting, the home also includes decorative fixtures from Sonneman and Hudson Valley Lighting. Outdoor lighting from another company is tied into the Savant control system.

"Humans desire variety, they desire change," Barrett says. Artificial lighting is completely stagnant, so "if you're in a space that doesn't have windows or has limited natural light, you're getting this very static experience ... Tunable technology is where the future is headed." ■



A colorful look at the home's exterior



The living space showing the changing color temperatures from left: 5000K, 4000K, 3000K, 2700K and 2200K.

Seeing the light

Lighting designer Aaron Humphrey recently told me about a time when a homeowner threw out a lighting plan another lighting designer had created because the homeowner felt it was too expensive. After his home was finished, the homeowner asked the electrician why his house was so dark. The electrician had to remind the homeowner (incredulously, I imagine) that he had thrown out the lighting plan.



ANDREA LILLO
alillo@pbmbrands.com

For some homeowners, it's hard to see the light — or the importance of it. For fixtures in particular, once the lighting is in, it's expensive to move. As lighting designer Debbie Bernstein told me, "We make a lot of money fixing other people's mistakes."

Aaron and Debbie are just two of the lighting designers I spoke recently about their profession and its challenges (see Illuminations on [page 26](#) for the full story).

Educating people — not just homeowners but even architects, interior designers and other professionals — on the what and why of lighting is crucial. Charles Pavarini III, who is debuting a new collection with Alora Lighting (see [page 42](#)), is currently working on a book about residential lighting due out next year that will address just that.

Several of the lighting designers talked about how they demonstrate products for clients to illustrate the different color temperatures and other important aspects of lighting. But not every client is eager to learn. When I asked Aaron if he educates his clients, he joked that he only does that if he wants to bore them.

So how can we make lighting more tangible for people? Several great ideas bubbled up from panelists at my webinar in March, such as showcasing the differences between various lumens and Kelvin temperatures in a separate space in a showroom, similar to how the home theater industry demonstrates their products, or placing two portable lamps with two different LED bulbs in a retailer's front window. I suggest using a photo booth — similar to the ones you might see at malls. Instead of a photo strip of three or four shots of a group of friends under the same photo-booth lighting, it can be the same shot with three or four Kelvin temperatures instead. I have no idea what would it take to develop that but I think it would be a fun takeaway. A lighting retailer could place one at a local fair or other public area and include the showroom's physical or web address somewhere on that photo strip. Or perhaps it could be developed as a photo-booth app instead, to reach an even wider audience.

On the tech side, with the evolution of augmented reality, in addition to seeing how a fixture looks in one's home, perhaps we will also be able to see how different color temperatures or lumen outputs affect the space one day.

There are so many ways to help people see light in a whole new way. ■