

# How do LEDs measure up?

I'd like you to take yourself off to a really quiet place, like the padded shed that you keep at the bottom of the garden for this kind of thing, and then just push the ordinary silence to one side. If you listen through the gap, you'll just catch the hint of the sound of weeping and moaning. Oh yes, and screaming. Because when Prometheus stole the secret of fire (and light – don't forget that) he was damned by Zeus to have his liver eaten by an eagle forever. And I don't remember reading about any parole or amnesty, so he's still out there.

But the cruel and unusual punishment has changed. Now that the human race has dragged its knuckles from burning sticks to glowing indium gallium nitride, the Classical God-Action Review Panel has decided that the old eagle shtick doesn't cut it anymore and a far worse piece of eternal damnation has been devised. Yes, poor old Prometheus is now condemned to the sorting out of specifications and performance figures for LEDs.

*(Drum roll – cymbal slap – I thank you!)*

Just for the want of something better to do, I've totted up the number of adverts in the copy of *Lighting* that's under a teapot on my desk, and here's how it shapes up:

The number of adverts for LED products makes up 50 per cent of the total number of product adverts (not counting all those little inserts at the back that no one ever reads), and half of that 50 per cent are for luminaires.

Every one of the LED-based product adverts features luminaires with 'embedded light sources' as we have learned to call them. And – as you'd expect – every one of them is the best that you've ever seen. They are all 'the

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right choice', they 'set new benchmarks' and offer 'unparalleled possibilities'.

And do you know something? I have no idea how to compare one with the other. So should I head for the one that "combines high power LEDs with active cooling technology" or the one that can "reduce my lighting costs by up to 70 per cent". By criminy, but it's a tough choice. Maybe if I weighed them I might get some kind of decent comparison.

And that's before we get started on sorting out LED lamps. Winning the retrofit market may be a bit of a grail moment for those involved, but what a nightmare for the rest of us. Apologies for mixing classical references here, but which particular Circle of Hell have we descended to when 'replacement' lamps don't even fit the luminaires they've apparently been designed for? Let's face it, giggling with Dante is nothing compared to trying to sort out a decent GU10 option.

"Well Prommy. You've only got yourself to blame. We could have told you what was bound to happen once you'd handed those hairless apes a burning stick. But would you listen? No sir. You would not. Here's today's mountain of LED catalogues for you. Don't take all eternity; there's a good chap."

**John Bullock**

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