

# case study | Mandarin Oriental, New York

New York, New York, U.S.A.



**The Challenge:** Create the lighting environment to complement the breathtaking views and tasteful décor in one of the most striking and sophisticated New York City hotels.

**Mandarin Oriental, New York is designed to be an incomparable hotel experience. The project used a variety of Lutron solutions to complement the views of the Manhattan skyline, and to take advantage of an abundance of natural light. The hotel chose a centralized dimming system for the public spaces, which include the two restaurants Asiate and MObar. For the luxurious Taipan Suite, Mandarin Oriental, New York selected the Lutron HomeWorks™ system and Sivoia QED™ shading systems to provide a guest experience that is second to none.**

Mandarin Oriental, New York occupies nearly twenty floors atop the Time Warner Center in midtown Manhattan. With panoramic views of Central Park, the Hudson river and the surrounding city skyline, the hotel was already in possession of an incomparable visual milieu. The goal for the lighting designer was to create interior environments that would complement the cityscape, and to use the hotel's exposure to abundant natural light to its best effect. This design approach was not only conceived for the hotel's public spaces, but also the private rooms and suites.

To take advantage of all these possibilities, the hotel chose a centralized Lutron lighting control system for all the public areas, including the Lobby Lounge, The Spa, the fitness center, and the hotel's pair of world-class restaurants, Asiate and MObar.





Within each of these spaces, Lutron daylight sensors adjust the interior lighting levels in response to the intensity of the available natural light. This technique, called daylight harvesting, keeps guests comfortable, the light levels consistent, and energy usage in check. The system manages all these variables through a single central processor, accompanied by multiple dimming and switching panels for manual override.

“Any three- to five-star hotel should have a centralized dimming system in the public spaces,” says Hilary Wainer, the project’s lighting designer,

“The hotel is diverse, so the lighting also has to be diverse.”

**James Rodgers**

Assistant Chief Engineer,  
Mandarin Oriental, New York

then working with Paul Helms Associates. “It is imperative to the success of the space to be able to shift the ambience of the interior spaces.”

While the design of most of the hotel’s public spaces is fixed, the main ballroom is configurable for a wide variety of public events, including weddings, fashion shows, baptisms and corporate parties. According to the hotel’s Assistant Chief Engineer James Rodgers, lighting plays a major role in the ballroom’s ability to provide a memorable experience for each different application. “The hotel

is diverse,” says Rodgers, “so the lighting also has to be diverse.” The ballroom in Mandarin Oriental, New York can change its size and shape using moveable partition walls and in-ceiling drop-down equipment for audio-visual presentations. The lighting system contains presets appropriate for the most common room configurations. Manual adjustments are possible from control points throughout the ballroom.

“I chose Lutron because we needed a variety of dimming components that could work together on one system,” says Wainer. “I used [GRAFIK Eye® control units] in the meeting rooms that were hooked into the [GRAFIK 6000™] system, but centralized programmable preset stations almost everywhere else.”

While the public spaces in Mandarin Oriental, New York are inspired, it may be in guestrooms where the hotel produces its most elegant effects. In particular, the hotel’s newest luxury suite, the Taipan Suite, has been fitted with state-of-the-art technologies that are perfectly integrated into what the hotel describes as a luxury home-away-from-home. Indeed no detail has been overlooked in creating the ultimate hotel stay.

According to Rodgers, the Lutron lighting system plays a major role in the guest experience in the Taipan Suite, “Guests can get control over scenes that are customized to their schedule,” he says. “The lights can be scheduled for wake-up times, meal times or bed time, and with separate lighting for different areas of the suite.” In addition to preset

## Total light control for public spaces, private rooms and suites



lighting scenes that highlight the floor-to-ceiling city views and interior artwork, guests can also program new customized scenes through a PC interface in the room. When the guest checks out, the lighting preferences are stored as part of a profile that the hotel saves for each of the suite's guests.

The lighting system in the Taipan Suite is comprised of designer dimmers and keypads from the Lutron HomeWorks® control system, which not only control the room illumination, but also Roman shades and drapery track systems from the Lutron Sivoia QED™ line. The dimmers and keypads are radio frequency-based, and so did not require any special wiring or installation. The colors and finishes of the aesthetically-minded system complement the suite's stunning blend of modern design and Asian accents, and are easy to find in the dark with LED status lights and engraved, back-lit buttons.

While interior lighting is obviously important to create a luxury atmosphere, it is the floor-to-ceiling city views that make the Taipan Suite so special. Sheer Sivoia QED Roman shades provide the suite with precise daylight control without sacrificing any of the outside view. At the same time, the shades minimize harsh glare and protect the suite's delicate and rare furnishings from harmful ultraviolet light damage. With all this thought put into the aesthetic appeal of the lighting scheme, it's no wonder that Mandarin Oriental, New York was judged to have the best lighting design by the most recent Virtuoso LuxeReport, an annual poll of more than 6,000 Virtuoso luxury travel specialists in the Americas, the Caribbean, and Australia.

Advanced lighting controls offer many aesthetic benefits to any public and private space, but for a singular property like Mandarin Oriental, New York, with its constant influx of new guests

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**Hilary Wainer**  
Lighting Designer

expecting a world-class experience, practicality and reliability are just as important. According to Rodgers, in over a year of operation, the lighting system has been maintenance-free. As an example of the Lutron system's reliability, he cites a recent power shutdown that the hotel performed in order to install a generator switch for future hotel use. Says Rodgers, “We practically shut down the entire hotel for twelve hours, and when we went back up, almost all the lights went back exactly to where they had been set. For the remaining few, it took us about 10 minutes to re-load the settings and get the entire hotel back to its normal operation. From an engineering standpoint that's important, especially for the revenue-generating spaces,





**Winner:**

Five Diamond Award – AAA, 2006  
Gold List – Top Hotel in New York City –  
Conde Nast Traveler, January 2006  
Top 500 Hotels – Travel + Leisure, January 2006  
Top Hotels in New York – Michelin Guide, 2006  
Top 100 US & Canada –  
Travel + Leisure, July 2005

Visit [www.mandarinoriental.com](http://www.mandarinoriental.com)  
for a complete listing of hotel awards.

**Client:**

Mandarin Oriental, New York  
New York, New York, U.S.A.

**Equipment provider:**

Lutron Electronics Co., Inc.  
Coopersburg, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

**Lighting design:**

Paul Helms Associates  
Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A.

Tonychi and Associates  
New York, New York, U.S.A.



like the restaurants and the bars.” The simplicity of the Lutron system also impressed Rodgers, who says he can train new staff members on the entire hotel lighting system in about ninety minutes. Few hotel properties anywhere have even dreamed of offering the guest experiences provided daily at Mandarin Oriental, New York. In an environment designed as the best-of-the-best, compromise is not a consideration, and while every guest is different, their expectations of the hotel remain the same. Lutron is pleased to be an integral part of this showcase for what is possible in the world of customized interior environments.



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**Products used in this project**

GRAFIK 6000™ lighting control system  
GRAFIK 4000™ lighting control systems  
HomeWorks® Radio Frequency  
lighting control system  
Sivoia QED™ Roman shade  
and drapery track systems