



marketmethod



In Edison's Footsteps

Since Thomas Edison's invention of the carbon filament bulb in 1879, artificial lighting has been as instrumental to interior designers as pigment to a painter. **Urban Electric Co.** not only produces standard fixtures but has also honed its expertise in made-to-measure craftsmanship. In a process that can last months, projects begin with a collaboration between creatives, engineers, and account managers, who together come up with the concept for a particular design. It inevitably goes through several modifications on the way to customer approval. Shop drawings are then prepared, and production starts. 843-723-8140; urbanelectricco.com. **circle 414**

Clockwise from left: Copper bars are applied by hand to a Fenwick lamp. The Lynton desk lamp has an antiqued-brass base and a powder-coated and bronze-plated shade. Nickel and pewter plating and a bare incandescent bulb define the Sivoly sconce.

1. The collaboration begins in the glassed-in conference room near the workshop.
2. CAD drawings arrive.
3. Following the drawings, a craftswoman shapes a copper frame with a torch and solder.
4. Decorative copper bars and cutout copper trim are soldered together to form the top of an outdoor electric lantern, Society.
5. A master craftsman solders copper on the interior of a Society lantern.
6. A copper Fenwick lamp undergoes inspection for flaws.
7. Lamps are carried to the finishing area.
8. A sandblasting cabinet prepares lamps' metal surfaces to accept oxidized, painted, or powder-coated finishes.
9. A buffing wheel, fitted with plastic fibers, polishes the metal before plating.
10. Chemicals in the oxidation bath give copper or brass lamp components a blackened finish.
11. Once a finish is approved, an industrial heat gun dries the lamps, and hand-buffing enhances the sheen.
12. Lacquering ensures that oxidized finishes set correctly.
13. Lamps are wired to meet local code and Underwriters Laboratories standards.
14. Craftsmen conduct a final inspection of a Dorothy pendant fixture, modeled after Dorothy Draper's design for the former café at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. ➤





INTERIOR DESIGN
AUGUST 2008 / FEATURE

THE URBAN ELECTRIC CO.

