

Sheikh-Zayed-bin-Sultan-Al-Nahyan Mosque

Architect: Yusef Abdelki, Halcrow (Executive Architects), Spatium Architects, Milano (Interior Design)

Lighting designer: Speirs and Major Associates, Edinburgh

Photographer: Charles Crowell, Black Star

Project location: Abu Dhabi

The new mosque in Abu Dhabi is a building of superlatives, combining traditional craftsmanship with cutting-edge technology - as seen, for example, in the lighting.

Rising up in dazzling white, the massive Sheikh Zayed Mosque appears almost like a mirage at the east end of the island in the Persian Gulf which forms the centre of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. This House of God, named after Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nayhan, the late ruler of Abu Dhabi and founder of the United Arab Emirates, is a building of superlatives: it is the largest mosque in the Emirates and the third largest worldwide, featuring the biggest dome of a mosque and the largest hand-woven carpet in the world. Its interior provides room for over 40,000 worshippers. Eleven years after the start of constructions and one year after its inauguration, the grounds of the mosque are now also due to be completed this year.

The requirements of the clients, the concept devised by the lighting designers and the philosophy of ERCO as supplier of the lighting tools went hand in hand in this project: the

light sources needed to be concealed as inconspicuously as possible, while special focus was to be put on vertical illumination.

Thus, hundreds of Lightcast directional luminaires, Stella spotlights and Stella wallwashers are hidden in grooves along the ceiling edge, in wall recesses or behind ornamental grates.

The Qibla, the prayer wall with the golden Mihrab niche, faces toward Mecca. It forms the religious heart of the mosque and bears the 99 names of Allah as marble inlays, backlit by a fibre optics system.

In the marble-clad porticos around the central dome hall, the lighting designers also opted for the visual comfort and magical effect of vertical lighting.

The central hall is vaulted by massive domes. The various lighting components, which include "play of brilliants" in the form of a gigantic chandelier, can be combined to create the right mood for any time of the day and occasion. Energy efficiency now is a key factor even in the Gulf States, which is why ERCO's lighting tools are fitted with economical, long-life metal halide lamps wherever dimming is not required.

The mosque was awarded the "Middle East Lighting Design Award 2008" for the best lighting project in the entire Middle East.

The grounds of the mosque will now also feature products from ERCO: several hundreds of spotlights, recessed floor luminaires and over a thousand stair lights with modern, energy-saving LED technology will soon provide efficient visual comfort.

Visitor information at:

www.visitabudhabi.ae/de/what.to.do/mosques.and.other.places.of.worship/sh.zayed.mosque.aspx

Further information and booking of guided tours via e-mail at:

zayedmosquetour@adta.ae

Parties involved in the construction

Interior design: Spatium Architects, Milan
www.spatium.it

Executive architect: Halcrow
www.halcrow.com

Lighting design: Speirs and Major Associates, Edinburgh
www.lightarch.com



