



The industry is trying to develop a perfect replacement for the classic E14 incandescent candle bulb, but are we really waiting for such a product?

The classic E14 candle bulb was developed in the beginning of the 20th century as one of the light bulbs based on Edison's incandescent light source. The candle bulb became widely used as a replacement for real candles that were used until then. Obviously the shape of the candle bulb was inspired by the shape of a candle flame. The final, more or less standardised candle bulb is the result of the looks of a candle flame combined with the at that time technical possibilities.

We have been using the candle bulb for about hundred years now, and one was in general quite satisfied with it. It was easy to switch on and off, not smelly, easy to maintain and the bulb lasted for quite a long time. The quality of the light was perfect although the level of light was much higher than the light from a candle flame, in case that was a problem, one could use the less blinding frosted version. Later the light became dimmable. When you dimmed the light, as a bonus, the colour of the light became warmer, just like we want. Altogether, the candle bulb was a very useful and therefore widely used light source.

But when you take a closer look at the bulb and compare it with a real candle, you'll see these two product are far from the same. First of all, there is the size. The candle bulb together with the E14 lamp base is much bigger than the candle. Both the shaft where the E14 lamp base is hidden, and the size of the flame are much bigger. That can be a problem in historical sophisticated chandeliers, the candle bulb with its E14 lamp base can look coarse in such elegant luminaires. Also the high light output can be a problem. Too much light will blind you and will make it impossible to see the shape of your beautiful chandelier.

These years we are forced to do something with our candle bulbs, we have to change them because they are being phased out. The traditional versions are already forbidden and it is the halogen versions turn within a couple of years. Maybe this is the right moment to take a closer look at our existing lighting fixtures, is the way they look, the way we want them to look? Is there a balance between the luminaire itself and its light sources? Is the quality and the amount of light ok?

The industry is trying to develop new, mostly LED based, versions of the incandescent candle bulb. They are trying to give us something that, at its best, visually and light technically is comparable with the old candle bulb. You could ask yourself the question; is that what we are waiting for? As mentioned before, the candle bulb was based on the in those days available techniques. The E14 lamp base looks quite clumsy, and the size of the glass bulb is far too big. When you take a single LED and put it beside a E14 lamp base, you'll see product from completely different centuries. I would say to the industry, don't try to combine those two. Don't let the relatively short time we had the incandescent candle bulb be leading for the looks of our lighting product over the next centuries. As a matter of fact, we are not waiting for a replica of a product we were not completely satisfied with, please give us something better!

I realise that we maybe have to convert our historic luminaires to make them suitable for a completely new light source, but is that a problem? We did the same in the beginning of last century and this was unfortunately not always done in a respectful way. This could be an opportunity to fix the damage to our historic lighting fixtures caused that time.