

# The light fantastic!

by Emma J. Page

**W**E ALL benefit from clever lighting, and not just to flatter our faces. At home, there's no easier way to change the look of a room, whether you want a statement lamp or some cheering sparkle.

Lighting can be as decorative as it is practical, pulling together a room in the same way that accessories enliven an outfit.

Better still, a swish new light needn't break the bank. Yes, classic designs by the likes of Flos, Fritz Hansen and Kartell are still coveted, but the High Street also has a wide variety of lights from which to choose.

From crystal-laden chandeliers and simple Danish pendants to industrial metallics and cheerful ikat lampshades, eye-catching lighting is making its mark.

'I love the way lighting is becoming more diverse — it's a brilliant way of injecting colour or personality into any room, at minimal cost,' says Elena Paparozzi, a buyer at Heal's.

This year, John Lewis is introducing a range of new products to its lighting department. The Design Project label, which launches in September, has an emphasis on craftsmanship and modernity.

Statement lighting is making its mark and the greater the impact the better. Chandeliers are still popular, while fluid, organic shapes in materials such as copper and burnished brass continue to be fashionable.

If you don't have thousands to spend on an antique, there are plenty of equally desirable alternatives, such as The French Bedroom Company's pretty Sienna Vintage Chandelier (£199, frenchbedroomcompany.co.uk).

Modern shapes created by trailblazers such as Kaia Lighting can be found among a host of own-brands. The Halo Pendant at Heal's (£80, heals.com) elevates the humble bulb into an art form, with a double ring design finished

in black, copper or antique brass. Paired with an LED dimmable filament bulb from the Tala range (from £23), it's a striking look.

But you don't have to follow the 'go big or go home' mantra. Delicate shapes and playful touches are making news, too.

'Metallic and prismatic looks are here to stay, particularly in kitchens and dining areas,' says Sophie Miller, co-founder of salvaged lighting emporium Skinflint (skinflintdesign.co.uk).

'But there's also a steer towards fun fluorescents, which work brilliantly suspended over a kitchen

counter. Opaline lampshades, made from vintage, milky, opaque glass, are increasingly popular as they provide softly diffused light perfect for living spaces and bedrooms.'

**F**UN, stylish and affordable is the mantra of young Danish lighting company Vita Copenhagen. It was set up by Soren Ravn Christensen in 2008 when he spotted a gap in the market for ergonomic pieces without the hefty price tag. The brand offers

design-led lighting with a Scandi sensibility, flat-packed for ease.

Its Ripples pendant range of three (£57 each plus international shipping, vitacopenhagen.com) look great hung as a cluster or in a straight line over a kitchen island. The silicone coated shades can even be popped in the dishwasher.

'Experiment with organic shapes and unusual materials,' says Ravn Christensen.

Classic looks are also being reimagined in unusual materials. Graham & Green's beaded chandeliers (from £195, grahamandgreen.co.uk), are a fun take on the old

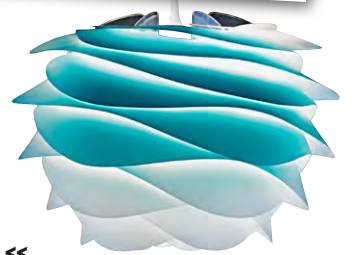
glass versions. Table lamps needn't be staid. Tribal inspired or ikat fabrics can add warmth and pattern.

Oka's range of colourful lampshades, including its Pleated Madura Silk Empire (from £59, oka.com), will transform the most humble base, while Bohzaa's (bohzaa.co.uk) selection of handmade shades add a whimsical note.

'Never light an entire space,' advises interior designer Martin Hulbert (martinhulbertdesign.com).

'Small pockets of light here and there create the best atmosphere. Opt for table lamps and avoid recessed downlights unless there is a specific item that you want to highlight. Uplighters work beautifully in corners; they can be bought for about £50.'

Remember that a statement piece needs to look just as good in daylight as it does lit. And one golden rule: in the bathroom, living room and kitchen only ceiling lights on dimmers will do. There's nothing worse than soaking in the tub at night in an over-lit bathroom.



« Contemporary: A dining room by Amara. Top, lamps from £127, and, above, Carmina pendant by Vita, £55, both Heal's

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## DESIGN NOTES FOR THE HOME

### CARNIVAL FEVER

TROPICAL leaves, birds of paradise and bright colours will continue to adorn our walls and sofas. Nina Campbell's new collection for Osborne & Little features parrots and palms that will make you feel you're in Rio. Available from September, osborneandlittle.com.

### SENSATIONAL CERAMICS

FORGET lugging pottery home in your hand luggage, just pop into Heal's. The furniture store is launching lovely blue and white African ceramics as part of its Design Africa range, heals.com.



### PERKY PENDANT

WANT to continue the Glastonbury vibe at home? Plumen's new rainbow pendant with its multi-coloured cord featuring bunting-like flags will cheer the dull scheme, £89.95, ukshop.plumen.com.

JENNY COAD