

The Future Is Bright

Lighting trends to watch for in 2020

by STACEY MCLACHLAN

Any designer worth their salt knows the power of thoughtfully placed, smartly designed lighting. It's a critical element of making a house a home, affecting our well-being, safety and security, and mood. The impact of lighting is exactly why the industry is constantly evolving and shifting to adapt to our changing needs and wants, and why we're thrilled to see the bevy of advanced applications, high-tech materials, and LEDs galore that are coming into the market now.

FRESH FINISHES

At the Dallas International Lighting Show this past June, Jim Ormshaw, lighting product specialist for B.A. Robinson, spotted some intriguing new trends, including pieces with multiple finishes – for example, black paired with brass or nickel. It's a trend that echoes an increasingly popular style for faucets, knobs, and handles in kitchens and bathrooms. "Lots of fixtures are now being offered in black to match bathroom faucet finishes," Ormshaw explains.

That being said, plain gold, brass, and bronze looks are still hot for 2020, adding a touch of glamour that functions well with a variety of home styles. "Gold has made a huge comeback in recent months, as well as two-tone fixtures that add interest to a space," agrees Emma Dodimead, marketing and personnel manager for Nemetz (S/A) & Associates.

"For styles, the biggest trends we have noticed this year are mid-century modern, as well as art-deco, with hints of modern twists," says Julia Dhaene of Ocean Pacific Lighting (OPL). That being said, straight-up modernism isn't going anywhere: "Homeowners, as well as architects, are looking for fixtures with clean lines, and simplistic yet elegant designs."

LED LOVE

Whatever the esthetics, owners are on the hunt for power-smart functionality. "They are looking for the most efficient type of lighting using the least amount of power," says Ormshaw. And as the quality of LED products continue to improve, the options continue to expand. "LEDs are becoming more efficient with more lumen output and less wattage," he says. "Customers are starting to accept that LEDs are here to stay, and they're becoming more educated on the topic

before even coming into one of our showrooms." This demand pushes companies like Robinson to continue the search at home and abroad for new products and vendors, and this competition continues to propel the industry forward into exciting new developments.

As lighting consultants, Nemetz (S/A) & Associates has plenty of experience meeting the lighting needs of both client and code. "The adoption of the new code requirements has led to the introduction of more advanced lighting controls and higher performance in terms of lumen and packages available," says Dodimead. Meanwhile, consumers are on the hunt for energy-efficient designs that are also clean and minimal, in terms of depth and aperture.

New, flexible options include tunable white LED lights that can address both design interests and efficiency concerns. These are fixtures that enable the ability to tweak and customize colour intensity and temperature, offering a world of options both to set the mood in a space, and to alter energy consumption. "It's an opportunity to add enhancement to architecture with lighting," says Dodimead.

◀ Chandelier in black and nickel finish from Robinson Lighting & Bath;
▼ Art Deco inspired multi-pendant from Ocean Pacific Lighting.



NEXT-LEVEL TECH

LED isn't the only high-tech option available with today's lighting. "WiFi-ready services are compatible with the majority of fixtures," says OPL's Dhaene. This year OPL has brought in new vendors like Regina Andrews and Alora Lighting. They have also curated full displays devoted to the up-and-coming WiFi-ready systems from many vendors, including Modern Forms fan line, as well as Adorne's light switches and plates. This means these pieces can be connected to smart devices or controllers for precise programming and operations.

These customizable functions aren't just for early adopters or techies anymore either. "It has become apparent that even for cost-efficient fixtures, manufacturers are building them with options to change the colour temperature of the fixture with the flip of a switch or similarly change the light level output," says Ben Rajewski, team lead of electrical for Williams Engineering. "What this is telling the industry is that occupants want control of their fixtures, even when the budget isn't huge. I think integrated control and colour changing will trend towards becoming the standard on the majority of fixtures moving forward."

It's part of a larger trend towards controllability ... a trend that Rajewski believes isn't going away any time soon. "Organizations like the WELL Standard are further promoting this as is the The National Energy Code of Canada," he notes.

The Energy Code has a huge trickle-down effect, impacting the demands of architects and the manufacturing side of the lighting industry. "Architects often put a premium on esthetics, but with the Energy Code being law they are also becoming

acutely aware of the energy efficiency and performance requirements of fixtures,” says Rajewski. “Similarly, homeowner’s are acutely aware of climate change and energy usage, and want to make a positive environmental impact, while still having fixtures that perform well and look good.”

THIN IS IN

Thanks to improvements in heat dissipating technology, fixture manufacturers can provide wafer-thin LED panels that provide plentiful usable light at a low price point. It’s a big deal for renovation projects, says Rajewski. “We often encounter existing ceiling spaces with little to no room for fixtures to be recessed, but these wafer surface mounted fixtures can replace the standard recessed fixtures, while giving almost the same look.”

This shrinking profile is true for linear LED lights as well, as the BL Lighting BL flexFORM N1 Series demonstrates. A super-slim design (just 4.5-millimetres in profile) allows for connections to be built seamlessly into the structure and delivers up to 183 lumens per foot of high CRI LED lighting. These packages are UL listed to ensure component liability isn’t an issue, and are fully customizable – just one of many incredible achievements in the world of lighting today.

OFFICE SPACE

Even traditional office lighting has received an upgrade in recent years, thanks to smart, sleek, modern designs by companies like Peerless Electric. Its Arclux series takes inspiration from architectural



Arclux series from Peerless Electric.

design but offers efficient, high-tech products that can still suit a commercial workspace. The LED luminaires are suspended by aircraft cables and finished with powder-coat enamel, and project both up and down light for a pleasant, soft lighting. Peerless’ Peerlux collection, meanwhile, is an extensive line of attractive styles available in a variety of specification grades for custom options in any environment.

A great workspace fixture in today’s world not only provides comfortable lighting, but helps control acoustics. “The one trend that I have been seeing this year is the move toward acoustical light fixtures,” says Rajewski. “This allows for a more open ceiling space and frees up the budget dedicated to

sound baffles, and hopefully makes open offices more comfortable for occupants.” As many commercial office spaces have trended towards open offices with exposed ceilings, architects are looking for ways to dampen the sound. Previously this had to be done via a combination of sound baffles and sound masking systems, but crafty lighting fixture manufacturers have started building in sound absorbing material onto the body of the fixture itself.

From custom designs to smart workplace solutions, there’s a lot to love about the lighting options on offer right now. And with an industry of professionals so dedicated and in tune and on the case every day, who knows where we can go from here? **A**

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