

**Title: Lighting**

Lead: Sleek or soft? Cutting-edge or classic? In terms of their stylistic references, the new designs for feature lights boast equal elements of both.

It all started with crystal chandeliers. Having witnessed a revival so far-reaching they've become *de rigueur* even in pub fitouts, chandeliers now come in a range of designs far removed from their origins as branched candleholders.

New-generation chandeliers exhibited at the 100% Design fair in London in September 2007 include Cactus by Wangju Kim, resembling a midair scribble in neon, and Scintilla by Simon Bruenna, a bird-cage structure with a rippling border of small glass spheres. Refer + Staer's designs incorporating large glass globes had strong Modernist references.

Ceiling lights shaped as oversized cloth drums are the new chandelier *du jour*, although they have no resemblance to anything branched or candle-holding. Architect Nicholas Tobias suggests placing these drama pieces above void-space entryways, over tables and in covered outdoor areas.

Other feature lights in mode include exuberant, artistic styles – there's much renewed interest in Ingo Maurer's eccentric creations, along with the Hedgehog (a spherical light crafted from twigs) and other work by the late Australian designer Geoffrey Mance. Industrial styles abound, too. Old-fashioned studio lamps, nautical lamps and rescue-squad lights have been released by highbrow designers like Konstantin Grcic, and by mass retailers such as Ikea.

But the experts suggest a sparing use of feature lights. 'Feature lights have a sculptural element that should really suit a space,' notes Andrea D'Cruz of interior design firm RLD.

For areas best suited to subtlety than statements, most designers prefer to focus on the illumination and not the fitting. Nicholas Tobias favours a mix of wall-washers to highlight feature walls or artworks, along with floor, table and up-lights that can all be cabled to a central switch.

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