



Cabinet Maker's Picture Lights from The Montauk Lighting Co, seen here in the home of Kate Walker of KWD, are both sleek and functional.

*Kitchen lighting*

# THE BRIGHT SIDE

MORE THAN ANY OTHER ROOM IN YOUR HOME, THE KITCHEN REQUIRES A BALANCED BLEND OF LIGHTING OPTIONS TO HELP BRING IT INTO FOCUS

Words STEPHANIE HOPE

Today's kitchens certainly earn their keep, in many cases serving as a communal hub to prepare and eat meals as a family, an area to entertain guests and a place to study and work. And, as interior designer Brett Mickan points out, choosing the right lighting can prove challenging due to this multipurpose nature. "You want well-lit areas when preparing food, but when entertaining, you don't want the room to be lit up like a stadium," he says. In a space that plays such a pivotal role in our homes and lives, it's crucial to invest in flexible lighting options that will rise to any occasion — here's everything you need to know.

### *Multitasking pendants*

As far as feature lighting goes, there are plenty of options. Pendants remain a popular choice for kitchens, directing light onto food prep surfaces and demarcating separate zones. They certainly command a presence, whether you opt for a statement oversized pendant, three identical shades in a row or a cluster of different shapes or heights as an attractive feature. "Consider hanging pendants a little lower than usual over the island bench. It grounds the space and adds interest at eye level," says Marie Botsis-Premici, co-founder of The Montauk Lighting Co.

### *Wall flowers*

Wall lights or sconces are a more subtle option, bringing both style and practicality. Try them in small, narrow kitchens, or use them to light a washing-up area or illuminate artworks or display shelving. "They're ideal for adding task lighting without flooding the entire area with light," explains Brett.

Be sure to work wall lights into your kitchen design from the beginning, as retrofitting down the track can be costly. "Given that the kitchen will generate steam, oil splatter and the like, choose finishes that are easily wiped over," Marie adds.

Wall lights add a lovely subtle, soft light, accentuating details like the arch and shelf in this kitchen by british interior designer Laura Butler-Madden. >



PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE) PATRICK BUTLER-MADDEN (OPPOSITE) ARMELLE HABIB DESIGN (THIS PAGE) LAURA BUTLER-MADDEN (OPPOSITE) KATE WALKER DESIGN ARTWORK (THIS PAGE) PINK AND WHITE ROSES BY JEMMA POWELL CERAMICS (THIS PAGE) BOWLAND WHALE JUG BY JOHAN ADLER

A statement pendant in an organic shape helps soften sharp lines and creates a look-at-me moment in this space by Three Birds Renovations.



A 'Darlana' linear pendant from The Montauk Lighting Co makes a bold statement in this kitchen by KWD. "Adding decorative lighting can strengthen the visual impact," says Marie. >



**"PENDANTS ARE often REFERRED TO AS THE jewellery OF THE KITCHEN"**

MARIE BOTSIS-PREMICI, THE MONTAUK LIGHTING CO

**The soft sell**

Given so many kitchens these days are part of an open-plan living area, lighting has taken a more decorative turn, using materials and textures that feature elsewhere in the home. "During the COVID-19 lockdowns, we saw a push for more natural materials like alabaster, wicker and rattan, soft linen and even soft brass finishes, with people looking to create a cosy, comfy and secure sanctuary at home," says Scott Robinson, product and lighting designer at Beacon Lighting. "It's important to fill your home with elements you love, however, there is a trick to making this work," says Brett. "If a home has a strong architectural style, minimise the architectural detail to its original state to create a clean palette for your style. For example, a Federation home with patterned ceilings and ornate moulding with a crisp coat of paint can be the perfect backdrop for a contemporary light fixture."

Slimline pendants in a single row work well in a bold kitchen design like this one by Brett Mickan.



PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE) ARMELLE HABIB (OPPOSITE TOP) CHRIS WARNES (OPPOSITE BOTTOM RIGHT) PABLO VIEGA DESIGN (THIS PAGE) KATE WALKER DESIGN (OPPOSITE TOP) THREE BIRDS RENOVATIONS (OPPOSITE BOTTOM RIGHT) BRETT MICKAN ARTWORK (OPPOSITE TOP) COCONUTS BY YVONKA HALLAM

## Beautiful DESIGN

### *The layered effect*

Every kitchen is different, and there's no one-size-fits-all solution to lighting this zone. "It's important to look at the space holistically, thinking about each area of the kitchen, how it's going to be used and how best to light it," says Marie.

To achieve a flexible, layered lighting scheme that addresses the myriad needs of the room, aim for a mixture of ambient, task and accent lighting. Ambient light illuminates the room and adds to its overall atmosphere, be it bright and welcoming or warm and intimate. Task lighting brings work areas like benchtops, stovetops or sinks into focus, while accent lighting can be used as a decorative element or to highlight specific areas like splashbacks, cabinetry or pantries.

"As a general rule, invest in feature lighting to suit the space, then keep all other lighting functional yet discreet," says Brett.

**"THE KITCHEN  
SHOULD BE *considered*  
AS PART OF THE  
OVERALL *design scheme*"**

BRETT MICKAN, INTERIOR DESIGNER



*When adding lighting to your kitchen, select items that tie in with the colours and styling.*

PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE) ABBIE NELLE (OPPOSITE) LISA COHEN STYLING (OPPOSITE) TESS NEWMAN-MORRIS DESIGN (OPPOSITE) AMY SPARGO AT MAINE HOUSE INTERIORS ARTWORKS (OPPOSITE) ARTISTS UNKNOWN



*Adding a lamp to your kitchen - like this beautiful blue and white design by Maine House Interiors - can help visually connect it to other living areas.*

### *The downfall on downlights*

The experts are divided when it comes to downlights. Scott believes they have a place when incorporated as part of a considered lighting plan. "They provide a great concentration of light and are an inconspicuous option," he says. However, both Marie and Brett feel less is more. "Recessed downlights need to be used sparingly," says Brett. "The kitchen needs to be functional, but a large bank of downlights will date the space dramatically." They can work well in areas where you need a lot of light - ideally on a dimmer switch so you can turn them up when you need to prep food or when the kids are doing their homework at the kitchen table, and down low (or completely off) when you need to switch the mood.

### *Elegant lamps*

Once the preserve of bedrooms, studies and living rooms, table lamps provide a soft glow and direct light source to any kitchen surface they adorn and can be tied in with the rest of the home's decor. Less intense than overhead lighting, "they're perfect for an evening ambience," Brett says.

Use lamps to fill a corner, flank a benchtop or match to your cabinets for a streamlined, polished look. They can be hardwired into your kitchen island or simply plugged into an electrical outlet; look for cordless, rechargeable options for further flexibility. They're especially great if you're a renter as they're a less expensive, impermanent solution that you can take with you when you leave. ●