

## **Illuminating Ideas: Designing with Light in Atlanta**

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Light, without it we would live in a colorless world. Yet, with it, we enjoy rooms that invite, allure, and welcome us. We are privileged to a full rainbow of hues, a host of visual delights. Interior lighting today offers an exciting array of choices, whether in metals, woods, ceramics, glass, paper, plastic, or even textiles the options are virtually limitless. The only boundaries are one's imagination (and budget!) Lighting is no longer merely functional, but is an artistic feature and core element in every well designed room. Every space, either in a home or office, requires lighting to bring it to life and make it a success. You'll find valuable decorating tips on lighting here, along with a complete resource list by style, and the latest in lighting trends from those in the know.

Atlanta has a wealth of lighting sources, both for the ordinary and traditional, and the extraordinary and eclectic. Before exploring these resources, it is important to determine the type of light needed. There are three basic types, general or ambient lighting which is typically overhead fixtures, recessed ceiling lights, or torchieres (upside down floor lamps, that shed light upwards), task lighting which is typically lamps both floor and table, and accent lighting such as under cabinet lighting, picture lights and the like. Many residential spaces don't need a lot of overhead (general) lighting, but benefit from well placed lamps to add welcome and warmth. Accent lighting can also be used to advantage, highlighting artwork, adding a glow to kitchen cabinets, giving drama to plants.

A special tip -- in the case of dining room chandeliers, with the light directed upward, it is often wise to add a couple of recessed spots, one on either side to actually light the table and chandelier. Or, if the style is suitable, adding shades to the fixture will redirect the light downward to the table surface. Regarding other types of ceiling lights wherever possible avoid light kits on fans, this attracts attention to a functional element that is best left unnoticed.

Once you have determined the types of lighting you need, evaluate the style desired and proportion required. A good rule of thumb is that for a lamp to be the proper height, (when next to a sofa, or chair) the shade should be within 2" of your eyelevel when you are seated. This ensures that the light will be at a comfortable height for reading and conversation, you won't be in the dark or blinded by a bulb too exposed. The shade should also not be bigger across than the surface the lamp is on. Three-way bulbs are always provide the greatest flexibility, 30-70-100 is usually sufficient. One of the best design secrets is the use of pink bulbs (also available in three-way), giving everyone a rosy glow!

Now that you have decided on the type of lighting, style and size, you'll want some tips on where to shop. For the more traditional types, certainly many are available through the furniture department stores, such as Rich's at Perimeter Mall, Ethan Allen and Haverty's, both with locations throughout Atlanta, Beverly Hall located in Roswell and Buckhead, and Georgia Lighting, now a division of Home Expo. Casual, simple even rustic lamps are popular by store and catalogue at Pier 1 Imports, Pottery Barn, Crate and Barrel, and Restoration Hardware. The more contemporary, colorful, fun, sleek lines can be found on the floor at By Design, Innovations, Stylus, and Bova. For the real leading edge, state of the art European designs, you'll want to check out C Lighting in Buckhead and Highlighters in Miami Circle. Both emphasize overhead and

wall lighting, with a smaller number of lamps. The artistic, one of a kind pieces, crafted by a range of artists are available at Eclectic Electric in Virginia Highlands, Signature Shop and Gallery in Buckhead, Vermilion on West Paces Ferry, Raiford Gallery in Roswell.

When asked what style a person likes today, the most frequent answer is "eclectic." This translates to anything goes! It is now expected and successful to mix traditional and contemporary, to use light as art. The most interesting rooms provide a balance of materials in the light sources. Metals, including copper, brass, gold, silver, pewter, and nickel, are readily transformed with either polished or brushed appearances. Paper is plain or embedded with seeds, textile fibers, leaves, and even glitter. Fabric is draped and folded to mask a bulb. Ceramics made to look like stones or real rocks picked up on a recent walk all have made it into lamps. Woods are carved to resemble a tribal motif from another continent, or simply elegant in block architectural form. Plastics and glass are molded and melted to add wit and whimsy, even beach glass, with a patina from tumbling in the waves, has made it to chandeliers. Glass is also often blown into fantastic shapes in endless colors to add sparkle and gleam to any interior. Lamp shades suit the lamp not necessarily matching others in the room. (It is okay to have one black paper shade, one ivory silk, one creamy linen shade all in the same space.) Once you know the rules you can have fun bending them!

Showcasing just a few of the more unique resources, Melissa Herrington of Vermilion considers light as "illuminated sculpture." Adding that "hand-crafted lighting adds drama and atmosphere." Melissa states that "individuals are departing from the attraction of mass-produced items." This is one of the driving forces behind artistic lighting today. With the increasingly impersonal nature of technology, people are looking to make more personal statements, surrounding themselves with objects that inspire and delight. According to Kathryn Hadyn of the Raiford Gallery, there is a dichotomy evident between the move toward cleaner lines with a heavier industrial feeling (such as artist J.P. Roberts who favors recycling machine parts), and those lamps offering a more delicate, light hearted mood, (like Roberta Elliot of Velvet Hammer incorporating the fineness of glass with the grace of wrought iron.) Kathryn sees a trend toward recycling everyday elements, as Twisted Sisters Fun Factory does in their sconces, and a shift to a more organic sensibility, such as Katy Dement's designs of handmade paper, beeswax, and found objects. Raiford Gallery is known for their collection of art with a sense of humor and message.

Beyond lighting fixtures, Kim Smith of Eclectic Electric, and Yaacov Golan of C Lighting, both offer a full range of lighting design, in layout and custom fixtures. Eclectic Electric represents over 150 artists from around the world and provides an ever-changing "radiant" environment for shoppers. In addition, Kim hosts a lighting gallery with shows changing every 6 weeks to present emerging and established lighting artists. Responsible for some of the most exciting lighting in Atlanta's restaurant scene, Kim also sees a split in the taste and style of today. She sites a move toward textured elements, softer edges and color and warmth. This belies the popularity of the hand-crafted pieces and profusion of glassworks. On the other hand, Kim also notes the taste for the European slick look, the cable lighting systems, track lighting options, and 2001 look.

C Lighting (the C does stand appropriately for contemporary), is the new kid on the Buckhead block. Yaacov Golan and his wife, Maidie, recently moved from Southern California, having sold a similar gallery there. Yaacov is known internationally for his lighting designs. They specialize in European imported lighting, with a handful of domestic sources as well. Many of their fixtures hail

from Italy, Germany, Spain, and Austria. The European's are years ahead of the States in contemporary lighting design.

C Lighting has been turning heads since their arrival some three months ago, adding shine and design to the surrounding Buckhead night scene. Yaacov and Maidie both concur that Atlanta is ready for the clean lines, simple elegance, and symbolism of the designs they showcase.

Options abound in that search for the perfect lamp, torchiere, wall sconce, and ceiling pendant. Atlanta has many great places and the experts to help you put it all together. Light is fashion for the home, and can therefore be collected, cherished, and changed at will. Enjoy the adventure of exploring sources here and giving your home the magic only light can give.

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