



Bocci pendants

THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

HGTV's Ami McKay shares some bright ideas.

Written by Sarah Rowland

WHEN IT COMES to lighting a room, don't be afraid of mixing vintage with new, or adding an unexpected piece that contrasts with the overall style of the space. However, do be afraid of going overboard with your decorative bling. And stay away from those boring beige fixtures that every DIY home store carries.

If this is starting to sound familiar, it's probably because you've read these same style rules in the latest issue of *Vogue*. "Yeah, interior design does mimic fashion," says Ami McKay, co-host of HGTV's *Makeover Wish*. "For a while, we went through a really minimalist era – everything had a sparse, lean and pared down look. Now we're getting back into the ornamentation phase, so we're bringing in the fabrics, draperies, carpeting, wallpaper and interesting lighting, which to me, is like jewellery for a space – it's all about adding layers." With that in mind, the ceiling and all four corners of an area should be lit with a combination of floor lights, sconces, recess lighting, table lights and pendants. And mix it up a bit. "Say you have a really, really contemporary living room with Minotti sofas and a lot of really clean, boxy shapes that are low to the floor and everything's white, black and grey and

just clean, clean, clean. Then when you add an over-the-top chandelier, it's going to add tension and drama," says the sought-after interior designer and self-proclaimed lover of light.

She applies the same philosophy to traditional spaces. So for example, if you want to light up a Versailles-inspired room, go for something surprisingly modern like a cluster of Bocci pendants (www.bocci.ca). This Vancouver-based lighting line offers a range of chandeliers that create a fun, yet dramatic, effect. And they work pretty much anywhere – an entrance, a dining room, a living room and even the bedroom.

In some rare cases, a lighting fixture will combine both new and old school, like the Dainolite Organza lineal chandelier (www.dainolite.ca, available at The Lighting Warehouse) which is basically two chrome rods suspended from the ceiling with five lights, dangling crystals and one big see-through rectangular shade over top. What makes this dining room showstopper shine is that when you're standing up you can see the crystals sparkle through the gauzy fabric, and when you're sitting at the table you can see the exposed crystals hanging below. For those with more exotic tastes, McKay is a big fan of the hand-painted silk Fortuny lamps, in particular the Scudo Saraceno (available at Bernstein & Gold, www.bernstein-gold.com). "I see it working in a very elegant room with silk drapes, a silk area rug and wood tones that are

really rich – it's definitely for a classic space."

As you've probably guessed by now, chandeliers and other ornate ceiling fixtures are the hottest things in decorative lighting. But there's still the matter of finding the right ambient glow for your space. Here, McKay is a big fan of Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni's iconic Arco floor lamp. There are many copycats out there, but you can get the original 1962 design with the big marble block base at Inform Interiors (www.informinteriors.com). "You see them a lot in old movies hanging over on an orange sofa and green shag rug," she says of Arco's original application. "But now they work in any setting. It's nice in a living room or a rec room, especially behind an L-shaped or U-shaped sectional.

Once you have your ambient and decorative lighting in place, you'll want to accent your room with some wall lights. For McKay's money, the Foscarini Caboche sconce (www.foscarini.com, available at Lightform Canada in Yaletown) is a great way to go. You can flank a pair of these bubbly glass wall lamps over the fireplace for an instant hit of glam. Of course, the Caboche, as well as McKay's other picks, are only suggestions to get you started.

"Lighting to me is like choosing art," she says. "You have to find something that speaks to you personally. That way you're making a statement about your space and who you are." **tb**