

Crystal Clear

There is nothing like a chandelier to add opulence, elegance or drama to a setting. And they've come a long way from the stately-home classic designs, as Juliet Davies finds out



Emma Mackintosh, designer and maker for A Flame with Desire, has noted that there continues to be strong demand for individual, bespoke lighting using quality materials, with British lighting design also a strong theme.

“Pendant ceiling lights and chandeliers are popular with customers looking for statement lights that can update and transform a space, while at the same time giving a contemporary twist,” Emma told us. “My newest chandelier shades match modern style with classic design, taking inspiration from the Arts and Crafts movement. The steel frame for my White Chandelier has been laser cut to my own design, lending a clean-cut, up-to-date look to the final piece.”

This is a chandelier that looks great hanging above a table and equally stunning mounted closer to the ceiling in a living room or hallway, so that the light casts patterns across the ceiling.

“The chandelier is hung with hand-blown glass flowers and leaves and each glass drop has a loop finished with its own small leaf,” described Emma. “These chandelier shades work equally well in modern or traditionally styled rooms and in domestic or more formal settings, making them practical and versatile.”

Robert Chelsom, Managing Director at Chelsom, explained the design perspective.

“If we take the principle that a room should largely be divided in to thirds, both vertically and horizontally, and apply that to the height of a tall ceiled room then the top part is an empty void for which the chandelier ▼

Kolarz as seen at the Holiday Inn, Wembley



White Chandelier by A Flame with Desire

▲ is the ideal solution from a decorative and functional perspective, commanding the open space perfectly," he said.

"The chandelier has transcended from its original use of being the sole light source, with downlights and secondary light sources the chandelier has now become the main decorative piece in the room with options ranging from the original and traditionally inspired replicas to the much more contemporary and often sculptural statement pieces."

Following the death of the incandescent lamp, there was a period where it was difficult to select the right light sources for chandeliers.

"Early compact fluorescent lamps were bulky, cold and ugly, halogens often produce too much heat and short lamp life is a problem because of accessibility for lamp changing - one scaffold to change one lamp?" observed Robert.

"Along comes the LED to answer our prayers. Far from LEDs replacing chandeliers

they serve to enhance them and certainly optimise light output and efficiency. Anytime a lampshade is used on a chandelier retrofit, candle or GLS lamp shape can be used. In terms of the more traditional chandelier without shades clear LED candle shape lamps are now available for a more authentic look and if the chandelier is a much more contemporary statement piece then integral LED boards can be used to produce dramatic downlight such as acrylic rods with bubbles."

Following the latest industry trends and ▼

▲ ultimately trying to pre-empt them is a critical part of the design process.

"Nobody wants to specify outdated products so it's important to recognise emerging trends as early as possible and use them to inspire product design," Robert added. "There has been a distinct shift in the style of hotel lighting schemes over the last 12 months, there's definitely a lot more individuality when it comes to design. We are starting to see a much more eclectic mix in terms of both styles and fittings; colours are bold and shades are becoming more vibrant with textured fabrics such as linens, weaves and naturals seeing a surge in popularity heading in to 2015."

The pressure from clients to create unique and memorable interior schemes has never been stronger and lighting plays a huge part in that which in turn means higher levels of design are required across the board, blending cutting edge styling with the latest LED technological developments more than ever before.

"In addition to the rise of the residential look, another current trend this year is the industrial look," Robert said. "There has been a much more functional look and feel to products lately and I predict there is a lot more of this to come; think exposed mechanical joints, over-sized switches, swivel joints and visible engineering. Last year we saw brass make its comeback after threatening to do so for a number of years and this year I think we will see more in the way of alternative finishes such as antique, distressed and satin becoming the most popular choices with mixed finishes on the same product to create feature pieces."

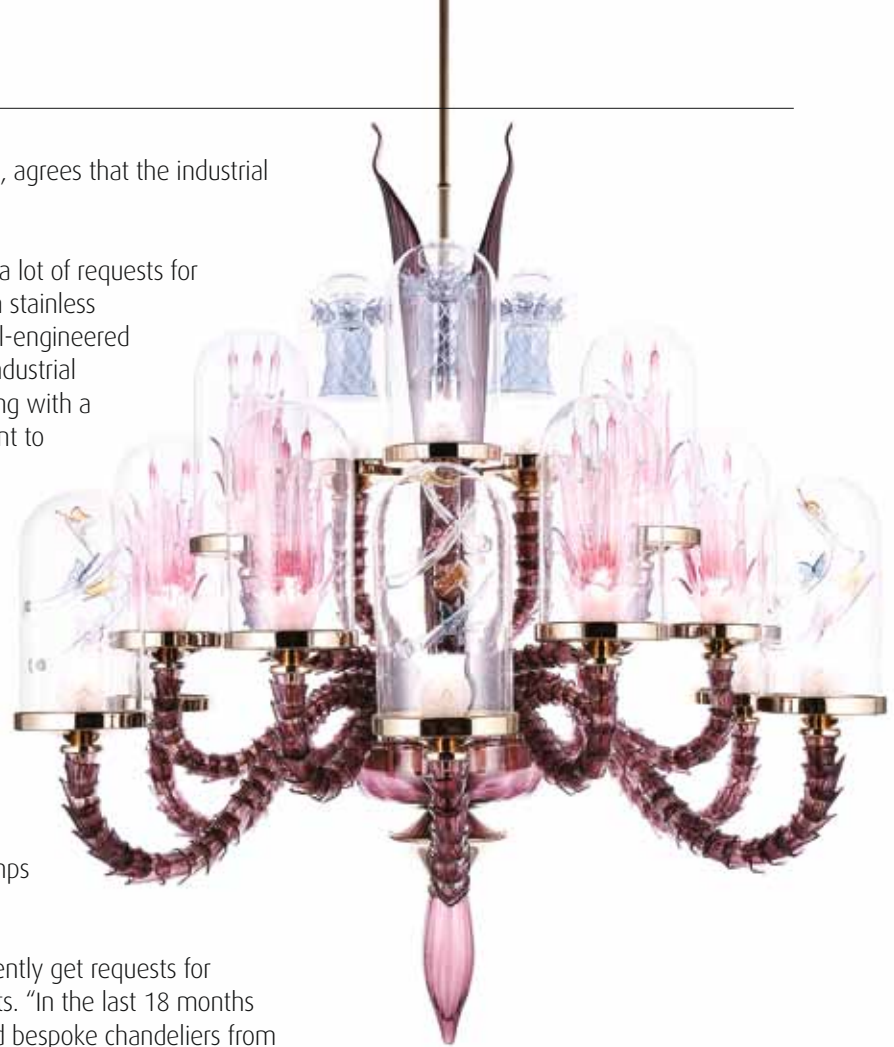
Simon Wallis-Smith, co-owner, Fritz Fryer

Antique Lighting, agrees that the industrial look is trending.

"We are having a lot of requests for bespoke work in stainless steel with a well-engineered industrial feel; industrial lighting or lighting with a salvaged element to it in general is very popular at the moment," he told us. "Copper fittings seem to be in high demand at the moment too, we have sold numerous restored antique copper table lamps of late."

Fritz Fryer frequently get requests for bespoke products. "In the last 18 months we have created bespoke chandeliers from bicycles components, Jaguar car components and a large piece of New Zealand driftwood to name a few!" said Simon. "The driftwood chandelier was a particularly nice project; and technically more challenging that it might seem as we had to get make sure the fittings were perfectly aligned through the contorted driftwood frame. It was part of a larger lighting scheme that also included bathroom and bedroom lighting."

The French Bedroom Company have a wide range of chandeliers. Company founder, Georgia Metcalfe, explained that chandeliers come with a heritage of high octane glamour, traditionally found in stately homes as a long understood sign of sophistication



Jardin de Verre from La Murrina

and elegance.

"As interior trends have developed so has the style of the chandelier," Grace said. "Graceful droplets, beautiful trails of beading and scrolling arms still feature in their designs but they can now also be found combined in bold colour and made from ever increasing modern materials. We think a more contemporary take on an iconic style adds an extra dimension of frivolous fun and flamboyant charm."

The traditional materials from which chandeliers were made can sometimes ▼



Chelsom's design for the cruise liner Europa2

▲ be restricting in the design of the piece as well as requiring very sturdy fittings from which to hang.

"Incorporating lighter and more malleable materials opens the door for creativity and makes them more accessible to homes of all shapes and sizes. Our Pop Yellow Chandelier is a power piece that embodies classic design, daring colour use and easy fitting," said Grace.

Alongside the contemporary coloured chandeliers, classic styles that are slight and dainty are also proving more popular than ever.

"Our Skinny Mimi White Chandelier is made from lightweight acrylic and is finished in versatile white making this visually stunning pendant adaptable to any traditional or contemporary space," Grace added.

Designers and their clients are recognising that the chandelier can evolve as do interior design fashions.

"The most notable trend we have noticed in chandeliers is the desire of designers to use different materials to complement the interiors they are working on," said Jeremy Quantrill, joint managing director, Dernier & Hamlyn. "There is a definite move away from the traditional in terms of both the shape and form of chandeliers and what they are manufactured from. No longer is a chandelier simply a brass or chrome fitting with a very recognisable profile. Designers are stretching the boundaries in terms of materials and finishes."

Whilst a challenge for manufacturers, Jeremy relishes these sort of projects. "We can work with them and their clients to progress from an outline sketch or an idea that only exists in their head to a beautiful chandelier that meets all of their aesthetic requirements while taking account of the budgetary constraints which inevitably exist," he said.

La Murrina's customers love their new L'Amour collection. "Its originality expresses the ductility of the Murano glass," said Alessandra Zanus Fortes on behalf of La Murrina. "Our eclectic capsule collection incorporates a mixture of elements from previous historical styles and creates something that is new."

Describing his views on current chandelier design trend, Michael Jackson, Northern Lights Lighting Design Manager told us ▼



Pop Yellow Chandelier from The French Bedroom Company

▲ “The concept of the chandelier has changed considerably in recent years. The development of new materials and production techniques combined with new lamp technology has enabled designers to explore more elaborate and theatrical design options. As a result bespoke chandeliers have become one of the most popular means of making a statement.”

Michael has seen they are used not only in hotels and restaurants but also increasingly in shopping centres and retail environments.

“As a lighting design and manufacturing company, our role is to understand designers’ and clients’ requirements and then use appropriate material application and manufacturing process to achieve the desired results,” Michael explained. “A good example is the ‘Poppy Chandelier’ Northern Lights developed together with Leach Rhodes Walker Architects for intu Metrocentre in Gateshead. The chandelier was specially commissioned by intu Metrocentre to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War.” ▼

An industrial influence for Fritz Fryer



▲ Featuring 60 huge illuminated poppies hand-made from silk, it pays a moving tribute to the tens of thousands of servicemen and women who gave their lives for our country.

“In order to achieve the dramatic yet delicate look, a combination of technological processes and hand production techniques were used,” Michael added. “At 7m high and 3.5m in diameter, the chandelier is not only a vibrant centrepiece, but also a poignant reminder of our past.”

“Customers like variety and like to have something that is special to them, a unique piece,” said Caroline Ratner for Austrian lighting company Kolarz. “Therefore we are doing more and more special versions but crystal is always popular whether in classic or contemporary designs, such as the crystal lights we recently installed in the Banqueting Suite of the Holiday Inn Wembley. What is also exciting is that crystals are available in different designs and colours including brown and black and three dimensional.”

Chandeliers allow the fantasy element to be given free rein!

“One of our more unusual requests was to create a horse out of crystal balls, illuminated from above,” Caroline told us. “And we are currently working on a residential project, where we are using seventy Murano glass leaves decorated with gold leaf which will be floating from the ceiling; it is quite spectacular and most certainly unique.”

Robert Chelsom sums it up perfectly.

“As long as there are buildings with high ceilings, either historic buildings being converted to modern use or new buildings with atriums, there will always be a need for the chandelier!”



Northern Lights' Poppy Chandelier