

LIGHTING

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whelmed.

The selection of fixtures is vast, said Libby Hartman, creative marketing manager for Kalco Lighting, a leading, Las Vegas-based lighting company. To narrow your search, she suggests starting by figuring out the color finish (say, polished nickel, matte black, wood, gold, chrome, etc.) that will work best in your home. That will narrow your options dramatically. Then dial in style and size.

And feel free to break out of your finish rut, adds New York interior designer Gala Magriñá. “Some homeowners feel they need to make all the metals in their home match, the faucets, door handles, cabinet hardware,

and light fixtures,” she said. “I like to think of light fixtures as another layer, a brush stroke that picks up on the surrounding furnishings and doesn’t match all the metal in the house.”

The effort is worth it, they agreed. Updating a home’s light fixtures, and changing out those original builder packages, is one of the best and often overlooked ways to make a standard production house look more custom.

When choosing new light fixtures, here’s what else experts say to consider:

- *Aim for harmony, not unity.* Ideally, the light fixtures in a home shouldn’t all be a matched set. However, Magriñá said, “It is important that they all look like they’re going to the same party.”
- *Scale, scale, scale.* The biggest mistake homeowners make is

they get the scale wrong, said Hartman. You can’t always go by the size of the fixture you’re replacing. One rule of thumb is to add the length and width of the room in feet, then use that number in inches when selecting a fixture. So, for example, a 10-foot-by-12-foot foyer would call for a 22-inch-wide chandelier. When in doubt, scale up.

• *Double check measurements.* Online, size is deceiving. Fixtures of widely different sizes can look the same. Similarly, just because a fixture looks right in the store, doesn’t mean it’s the right size for your space. Measure all three dimensions: height, width, and length, to make sure the fixture has the right proportions.

• *Allow for clearance.* Above a table or kitchen island, a fixture can hang 30 to 36 inches over the

surface, and higher with taller ceilings. Where people will walk beneath a fixture, aim for at least 7 feet of clearance.

• *Get the right bulbs.* A fixture is only as good as the quality of its light, and that depends on the bulbs.

Magriñá cringes when she sees fixtures with mismatched or burned-out bulbs. Light temperatures must match, and the light has to be sufficient enough to light the space. To diffuse and soften light, get fixtures that have domes, globes, shades, or, at the very least, frosted bulbs.

• *Factor in drop.* Hanging fixtures come with a set amount of chain or stem (the down rod). Order more if you need it. If you have a 20-foot drop from the ceiling, for instance, you’ll likely need more.

• *Note the trends.* Though clas-

sic fixtures that go with your home’s architecture have staying power, incorporating current looks can help your home feel updated and will likely help resale. Hartman sees two primary lighting trends today, “an industrial look, with a dark and stormy color story, and, on the other extreme, a throwback to art deco, to warm metals, like champagne gold, and a color I call ‘glover,’ a mix of silver and gold.”

Marni Jameson is the author of six home and lifestyle books, including “Downsizing the Family Home – What to Save, What to Let Go,” “Downsizing the Blended Home – When Two Households Become One, and, coming in June, “What to Do With Everything You Own to Leave the Legacy You Want.” Reach her at www.marnijameson.com.

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\$329,000

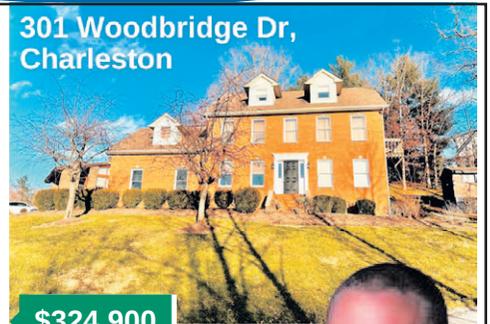
Beautiful one owner home located on a cul-de-sac. This welcoming home offers 3 spacious floors with a master suite, large walk in closet and custom built master bath with the finest tile work. The open kitchen to family room walks out to a beautiful deck overlooking a wooded lot is great for entertaining. Walk down to an open finished basement that offers endless opportunities for custom finish. Bonus 21x21 work room in basement. This home is waiting for its next growing family to enjoy.



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