



# Leave the Lights On to Welcome Yourself Home

**A**uthor and radio host Tom Bodett is perhaps the most recognized voice in hospitality. As the spokesperson for the Motel 6 hotel chain, since the mid-1980s he has promised, “We’ll leave the light on for you.”

It’s a universal sign of welcome, leaving a light on, so visitors can find their way after dark or when treading unfamiliar territory. But which light? Surely, not some jelly-jar porch light or faux candlestick plopped on a window sill. In today’s home interiors, lighting designs are so innovative and striking, you’ll keep them all turned on just to admire the artistry.

Think of it as hospitality for yourself.

## BY PAMELA DITTMER MCKUEN

Lighting is not only an essential element of every decor, it also can be transformative, says interior designer Jen Talbot of Chicago.

“You can change the direction of a space immediately in a really dramatic way, and you don’t have to spend a lot of money,” she says.

“It’s almost like jewelry you add to an outfit. It’s a fun way to express someone’s personality.”

Let’s explore some of the ways to light up your lifestyle:

### Go for the wow factor.

In recent years, fixture designers have re-imagined their works into new shapes and eye-catching structures. Lines are cleaner and less fussy. Instead of the traditional wedding-cake chandelier with ornate crystals, think about a rectangular grid with sleek glass shards, perhaps hung at an angle. Or pendants with multiple orbs—either clear or white—positioned asymmetrically as if a Calder mobile. Others resemble sea urchins or Sputniks. Over-scaled pendants, some resembling vintage street lamps, have replaced the delicate pin-dots over kitchen islands and peninsulas.

“When lighting has a greater presence in the room, it is a much more vocal participant in the design conversation,” according to architect and interior designer Elissa Morgante of Morgante-Wilson Architects in Evanston.

*Photos courtesy of Morgante Wilson Architects, Werner Straube Photography*