

The design trends shaping the future of hospitality in 2018

DESIGN TRENDS March 7, 2018



Michael Sinclair, design director of Catering Design Group, offers his insight into what further design trends will be shaping the hospitality industry in 2018.

Lighting

It goes without saying, getting the lighting right is crucial to creating the right mood and ambience for customers:

Story continues below ▼

Advertisement

1. Following several years in an industrial heartland, front-of-house is moving out of the warehouse phase. The growing trend for vegan and more healthy eating options has given rise to a tendency to mirror this in the lighting of a space, with the use of fresher and more natural approaches.
2. The somewhat overused look of standalone Edison bulbs and cage shades is giving way to stripped-back lighting amid clean-line interiors to reveal brighter, optimistic spaces.
3. There's going to be a decidedly fresher, more Californian feel to front-of-house spaces, together with a leaning towards Scandinavian boho-chic, where clear glass lights bounce off pale wood furniture.

4. The geometric trend seen in so many front-of-house designs is now being carried through to lighting. Bold shapes will emerge and not only from the fittings themselves, but also through the light they cast. The popularity of gold, brass, silver, bronze and rose-gold fittings continues to grow, working well with the current liking for geometry and clean lines in interiors.
5. Operators have fully embraced the LED bulb, giving not only a superior lifetime but also upping a site's eco credentials. In 2018, LED lighting will get even smarter, with smart bulbs being-controlled by smart phones, changing brightness and colour to reflect the changing day-part.

Tables and chairs

Two distinct themes will be at the forefront of furniture design in 2018:

1. The metallic hues of gold and bronze remain en-vogue and the leaning towards fresh and natural, will takes these choices further, as we see an upsurge in the use of polished nickel and silver in furniture.
2. Interestingly, the second most prevalent theme on the rise is the contrasting 'Bake-Off' home-style, with its muted pastels, pale wood and shabby chic groupings of varying colours within the same cluster. This echoes the ongoing desire among many consumers for a simpler way of life – think pastel seats, accented with elements of burnt brown and oranges, offset by grey or hints of blue.
3. We're also seeing a preference amongst operators for a variety of seating heights and styles to encourage relaxed and informal groups, as more consumers make eating out a regular occurrence.

Materials

The feel of an interior is just as important as the visuals – indeed materials can enhance the look of a dining space and emphasise an operator's brand values:

1. 2018 is shaping up to be the year of the natural mix. Key trends are bringing out combinations of marble, metal, concrete and wood – retaining that link to nature and simplicity. We'll also see some operators adopting a touch of luxury with a return to glamorous gold against black, with hints of burnished metals and brass, considered to be one of the most sophisticated and organic colours of the metallic palette.
2. The prevailing trends in floor coverings will be distinctly organic, reflecting food preferences for many consumers. As a result, Cork is seeing something of a resurgence, as an alternative to marble. The versatile and hard-wearing terrazzo is also making headways across the industry. Concrete is also making a comeback, while reliable vinyl is regaining popularity, as manufacturers create more modern designs, including eye-catching herringbone and chevron.
3. Walls won't be paling into insignificance either and will be used to showcase decorations, messaging and signage – all critical to an operator's brand personality.
4. The previously widely adopted upholstered look will be giving way to exposed structures and cleaner coatings, with some detailed geometric, vintage or random pattern styles. Wood still holds its own but again, the large plank coverings are falling out of favour as smaller wood tiles move in to create more intricate configurations.
5. Easily applied and easily changed, paint will be used to add the luxe-factor through rich jewel tones, deep greens and ruby reds. We'll see elements of leafy green being used to create a sense of calm, whilst being complemented by the natural materials and fabrics making such an impression on the sector at the moment.
6. Fabrics are also getting in on the clean-space vibe. Blue has been a key colour for some time and, used in rich, plush textiles, is proving a worthy luxury partner to sleek woods and warm metals. Raw and organic linens will be another material we'll be seeing more of in 2018.