

LIVING LARGE

The open-plan living room has increasingly become a hallmark of the modern home. Here's how to seamlessly integrate it with your kitchen and dining areas

Removing walls and partitions between your living, dining and kitchen areas helps maximise floor space—this open-plan layout can also foster a stronger sense of togetherness in the communal areas of your home. When deciding on the layout for such an open-plan space, William Chan, founder of Spacedge Designs, says it's important that the floor plan is human-centric and promotes ease of movement. "First, study the structural restrictions of the interior architecture, then come up with solutions that will enhance the connected spaces both visually and functionally," he says.

To unify the living, kitchen and dining areas, Kate Deng, co-founder of interior

design firm Mr. Shopper Studio prefers to use the same flooring material and complementary colours throughout. "You can use different materials and textures for the furniture and decor in the different areas, but it's important to create some visual homogeneity so the space is aesthetically coherent," she says. Clifton Leung, founder of Hong Kong-based practice Clifton Leung Design Workshop suggests choosing loose furniture and lighting from the same collection and sticking with one design or material for the built-in cabinetry for all three areas. "You can vary the sizes, finishings, textures or colours of soft furnishings to add interest and complexity," he says. Here are some ideas to help you design a beautiful and efficient open-plan space.



BY MICHELE KOH MOROLLO MAIN IMAGE 123RF IMAGES COURTESY OF RESPECTIVE BRANDS



THE LIVING AREA

According to Kate Deng, a square layout visually opens up the living area. "If there are corner walls, we like to clad these in full-length mirrors to make the recessed area disappear, so the space looks wider." Another way to make walls less conspicuous is with wallpaper, which acts as a visual cue indicating a shift in the interior scheme. A versatile and elegant choice is Palawan, an art deco-inspired wall covering from Zimmer+Rohde. Palawan is made with different types of partially pleated papers that are hand-dyed with natural colouring and then combined to create a wallpaper that mimics the texture of banana leaves.

For living room furniture, Deng suggests lower-backed sofas and round coffee tables to soften sharp corners. A good low-back model is the Dante sofa by Italian brand Black Tie, which combines a classical silhouette with soft, contemporary lines. For a coffee table, Iliade from French brand Liaigre is an unobtrusive and elegant piece. Designed by creative director Frauke Meyer, this chic table has a low profile, and consists of a sturdy cedar wood top and base held together by bronze insets.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

1. Cassina Dress Up! sofa and Boboli tables by Rodolfo Dordoni, from Space Furniture
2. Saba Italia Voyage sofa by Sergio Bicego, from P5 Studio
3. Zimmer+Rohde Palawan wallpaper, from Cetec
- 4, 5. Porada Hilton room divider and Drift sideboard, from Marquis QSquare
6. Iliade coffee table, from Liaigre
7. Bangkok outdoor ottoman, from Flexform
8. Black Tie Dante sofa, from Sphere Living
9. Cesar coffee tables by Rodolfo Dordoni, from Minotti
10. Poltrona Frau Xi floor lamp by Neri&Hu, from Proof Living





PENDANT LAMPS CREATE COSINESS WHILE DISTINGUISHING THE DINING ZONE FROM THE LIVING AND KITCHEN AREAS

THE DINING ZONE

Feature walls or ceilings can be used to mark a change in design scheme, as well as add depth and warmth. "A wood-clad ceiling with pendant lamps creates cosiness within this space, while distinguishing it from the living and kitchen areas," says Deng. Another way to demarcate the dining area is with a rug, such as the reversible San Francisco collection from Woodnotes.

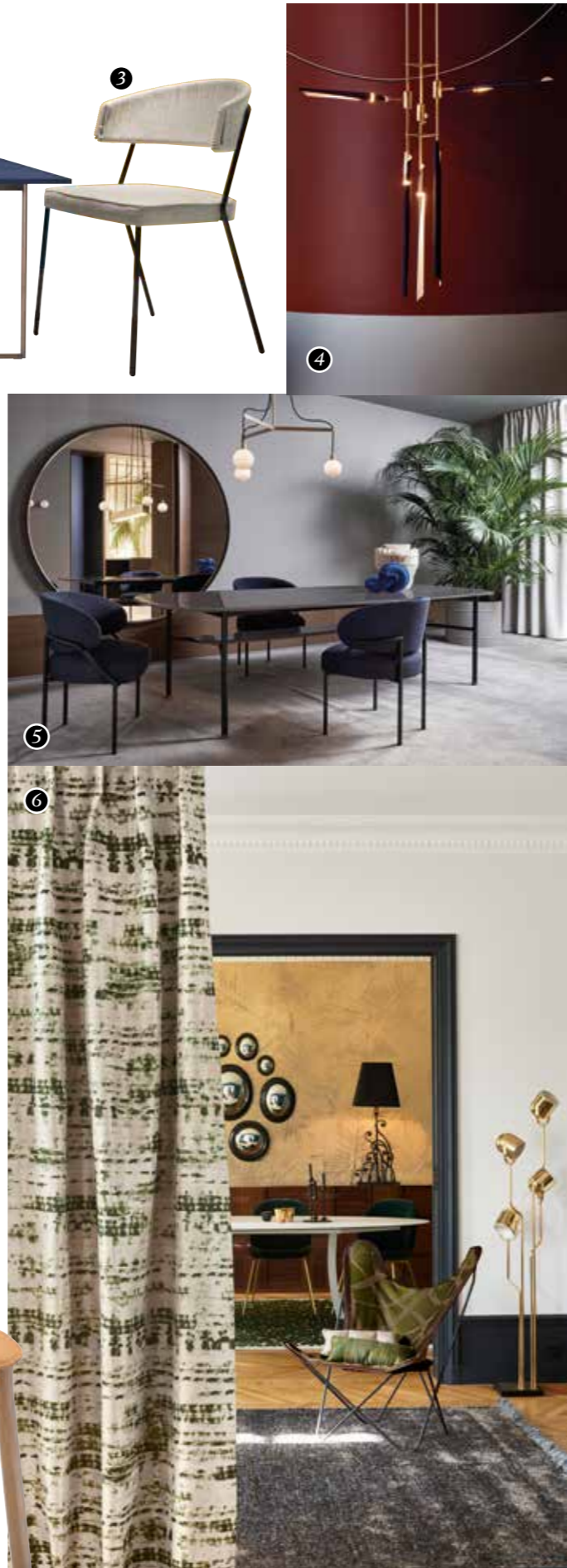
Deng also suggests placing the dining table in the middle of the space rather than against the wall for better circulation. A sleek option is the Alamo dining table from Lema. This table has a reconstructed marble top composed of resin, pigmented marble powder and metal shavings, which rests atop a bronze-coated metal frame.

When it comes to dining chairs, Deng often opts for those with lower backrests so the view of the top of the table isn't blocked. "Cushioned or rounded-edged chairs are good as they soften the space," she says. A good example of such a chair is the Spring stackable dining chair from Tonon, which can also be used outdoors and stored out of sight when not in use. "If the client wants some level of stylistic separation between the dining and living areas, we sometimes use simple tube-shaped or round pendant lights, and hang them at approximately 75cm above the dining table so that the overall height stays at 1.5m above the floor, without obstructing the eye-level view of the space," says Deng.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

- 1. Lema Alamo table by David Lopez Quincoces, from W. Atelier
- 2. Woodnotes San Francisco rug by Ritva Puotila, from P5 Studio
- 3. Tonon Spring dining chairs, from Sphere Living
- 4. Roll & Hill Boden pendant lamp by David Weeks, from Space Furniture
- 5. Meridiani Hubert dining table and Isetta chairs, from Marquis QSquare
- 6. Ardecora Lipari upholstery textile by Zimmer+Rohde, from Cetec
- 7. Andreu World Nuez chair by Patricia Urquiola, from Xtra



THE KITCHEN

"An open-plan kitchen needs to be in sync with the other two areas, so invest in high-quality appliances and fittings that will work well with the overall interior theme," says William Chan. Clifton Leung agrees; he believes it's hard to go wrong with a kitchen island that doubles as a bar to bring people together. "People can move from the dining area to the island for cocktails, snacks and conversation. Islands are also great impromptu workstations, so you should choose comfortable seating," he says.

To make the most of your kitchen island, consider the Lio-Leo stools from Zanotta. These aluminium-framed stools have footrests in satin-finished stainless steel and cushy seats with polyurethane upholstery. Removable covers mean you won't have to worry about stains, and can always update the upholstery for a new look.

Some kitchen systems work better for open-concept kitchens. These include Dada's INDada, which allows for infinite configurations, materials, and colours to match the aesthetic of your interior scheme. Another chic option is the Boffi K kitchen systems, which feature ingenious sliding tops that can conceal work areas when they're not in use. This means a utilitarian kitchen can transform into a streamlined snack bar, dining area or even office area when the chef isn't cooking.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT

- 1. Zanotta Lio-Leo stools by Roberto Barbieri, from W. Atelier
- 2. Mood party tableware, from Christofle
- 3. K14 kitchen system by Norbert Wangen, from Boffi
- 4. Visionnaire Serendipity bar cabinet, from Marquis QSquare
- 5. Dada INDada kitchen system by Nicola Gallizia, from P5
- 6. KS194TL/TR wine chiller, from Kadeka



WHERE TO GO

- ANDREU WORLD**
Xtra
xtra.com.sg
- BLACK TIE, TONON**
Sphere Living
sphereliving.sg
- BOFFI**
boffi.com
- CASSINA, ROLL & HILL**
Space Furniture
spacefurniture.com.sg
- CHRISTOFLE**
christofle.com
- DADA**
P5
p5.com.sg
- FLEXFORM**
flexform.sg
- KADEKA**
kadeka.sg
- LEMA, ZANOTTA**
W. Atelier
watelier.com
- LIAIGRE**
liaigre.com
- MERIDIANI, PORADA, VISIONNAIRE**
Marquis QSquare
marquis.com.sg
- MINOTTI**
minotti.com
- POLTRONA FRAU**
Proof Living
proof.com.sg
- SABA ITALIA, WOODNOTES**
P5 Studio
p5studio.com.sg
- ZIMMER+ROHDE**
Cetec
cetec.com.hk