

Design ideas for reaching lofty heights

Decor can show some personality

Furniture should keep a low profile

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SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Think your new loft needs to be modern and neutral? Think again. Three Toronto designers were asked for advice on decorating lofts and came up with six exciting and surprising tips.

► Use colour to punch up small spaces within the loft.

Eric McClelland, a principal of Fleur-de-lis Interior Design Inc., prefers neutral tones on the main loft walls. But for the kitchen and bathrooms, which tend to have lower ceilings, he suggests using colour to highlight these smaller spaces.

"In the Garment Factory model loft, the column in the bathroom was painted a bright orange to give it punch," he comments.

"The shell of the Garment Factory Loft is neutral but the built-ins are dark wood for contrast."

► Reveal your personality with a large piece of art.

"Because lofts have a lot of vertical volume, something small in scale may be dwarfed by this volume," explains Catherine Fantauzzi, of First Impressions Décor. "A large piece of art will bring in your personality and fill in the wall space."

With ceiling heights ranging from 11 to 16 feet, hanging art presents a unique challenge for loft owners. McClelland advises loft owners to hang pictures and art low.

"The rule of thumb is two-thirds of the painting should be at eye level," he says. "We go below that."

► Show off your style with large, eclectic furniture.

"Move into the loft and get a sense of the space and surroundings before making a purchase," advises Dan Menchions, of II By IV Design Associates.

"You probably want to have a mixture of everything to pick up on your own personality. You don't have to think modern; very old antiques look great."

McClelland says you should buy fewer pieces of large furniture because of the open concept and large scale.

"Buy furniture that hugs the ground to expand the space," he says. "Get low-backed couches, low tables and low chairs. Higher furniture will cut the space in half."

Since loft space is often multi-functional, Fantauzzi believes furniture should be multi-functional as well. "You could go with a sofa that's a pullout if you expect lots of company, and an ottoman that turns into a table or storage unit," she suggests.

► Curtains are not forbidden!

In the Garment Factory model, McClelland hung 13-foot tall curtains on a hospital track, which allows them to be opened and closed easily. "This is a beautiful, simple treatment," he says. "They are two-tone linen and sheers, which gives a long, sleek look."

If curtains aren't for you, McClelland strongly recommends plantation shutters, solar shades and vinyl roll-down shades.

► Track lighting is essential.

"Track lighting is the most effective because you can aim it at features," McClelland explains. "Many loft ceilings are concrete so you can't do pot lights. Do a network of tracks so you can add more lights later."

► Celebrate the unusual and unique elements of lofts.

"The bones of the building have been great to work with," says Menchions, who designed the model at the Toy Factory Lofts. "There are beautiful wood ceilings, hardwood and concrete and pretty well all the suites will have a brick wall. Each space has its own personality."

Fantauzzi suggests highlighting concrete columns and large windows, which can be architectural elements if left wide open.

McClelland says facing, rather than hiding these architectural elements. "You can place pedestal sculptures around columns so they don't look like they were just plunked down," he says.



COMING SOON, GARMENT FACTORY AUTHENTIC LIVE/WORK LOFTS

Next month Atria Developments will introduce Garment Factory Lofts, a new live/work industrial conversion that will revitalize a former garment factory. Garment Factory Lofts is located in the Queen Street East neighborhood, one that is undergoing an exciting resurgence between Logan Avenue and Leslie Street to form a hip Downtown Toronto East.

This neighbourhood is fast on its way to becoming an urban success story. Garment Factory Lofts is just down the street from the Distillery District, and steps from Leslieville. In the vicinity are eateries such as Verveine and Gio Rana's Really, Really Nice Restaurant. Popular nightspots include Barrio, where regulars sip martinis and enjoy tapas-style treats while a DJ spins music on Saturday night. When the proposed changes to the Toronto Film Studio surroundings become reality, that entire area will be home to new retail, residential and live/work housing, adding to the urban tapestry.

Designed by award-winning Core Architects Inc., the eight-storey Garment Factory Lofts meld the original brick façade of the warehouse with modern steel and glass to create a striking whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. The building terraces back begin at the third floor, and are distinguished by an acid green canopy that will grace the entry on Carlaw and extend back into the lobby. Every loft will offer a glazed balcony or spacious terrace with amazing views.

The Garment Factory will feature 150 lofts comprised of studios, one-bedroom, one-bedroom plus den/workspace, two-bedroom, and two-bedroom plus den/workspace, and penthouses with views of the lake. Priced from just \$139,900, these lofts, will range in size from 525 to 1,303 square foot and offer the lowest price per square foot of any authentic loft in the city.

The spectacular model loft by Fleur-de-lis Interior Design Inc. contains examples of the building's interesting architectural details such as the original fluted columns, ceilings that soar up to almost 12 feet, and large windows. The

model kitchen will feature modern Wenge-stained cabinetry, a stone backsplash and island with a stone top. This one-bedroom plus den/workspace also showcases a gas stove, gas BBQ tee, and an optional gas fireplace.

Atria Developments is known as the creator of i-Zone live/work lofts, located across the street from Garment Factory Lofts. i-Zone was a major catalyst for change in the surrounding neighbourhood, and is now home to artists, filmmakers, photographers, and other creative spirits. The development of the Garment Factory will bring a further greening to this former industrial neighbourhood with the inclusion of a parkette that backs onto Boston Avenue.

Atria Developments is a family-owned and operated company specializing in the revitalization of former industrial urban areas by renewing existing sites.

For the best selection, hurry to register. The sales office will open on October 16th on the ground floor of 233 Carlaw Avenue, just north of Queen Street. Hours will be Monday to Wednesday from noon to 6 p.m.; Thursday from 3 to 8 p.m.; weekends from noon to 5 p.m.; closed Friday. For priority preview registration, visit www.garmentfactorylofts.com or call 416-469-8001.

