

Hints For Homeowners

Loft Living In The Suburbs

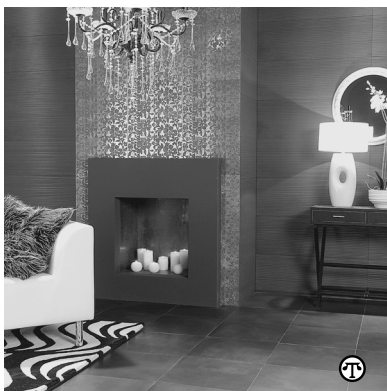
(NAPSA)—Things are looking up for the “urban loft,” a popular contemporary style that isn’t only for city dwellers anymore. New urbanism is a trend that continues to grow in popularity even in the middle of the suburbs and in retirement communities often found in rural areas such as Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

New approaches to residential development are emphasizing mixed-use properties, incorporating a downtown feeling into planned communities. Storefronts, community centers, multilevel condos and freestanding residences are being integrated into “miniurban” centers.

Multilevel Condos

The multilevel condos are often taking on the look and feel of traditional warehouse lofts more often found in large city centers. Key to achieving the urban loft style is the ability to use finishes and furnishings that look like they were original to a 100-year-old building. Today, many of those finishes are actually brand new. One excellent example is the “Corten steel” look accomplished in ceramic tile from Spain.

Corten steel has long been a popular finish for industrial flooring and exterior cladding. It is actually made of 60 percent steel and 40 percent iron, which changes color over time and takes on an oxidized hue. The oxidation process, or rusting, is actually very harmful to the environment, so true Corten steel is often not the best solution. However, the ability to re-create the look in ceramic tile, along with the benefits of a hygienic surface, extreme durability and easy-to-care-for surfaces, makes for an excellent alternative.



Miniurban centers are often found in rural areas and in retirement communities.

Spanish ceramic tile manufacturers are offering this ceramic “Corten steel” look in superlarge formats as well. These configurations allow for use on interior walls and floors as well as exterior cladding for a true modern industrial look. Even high-end restaurants and boutiques such as Armani Exchange are incorporating this new urban sensibility.

The Ultimate Sleek Space

Homeowners wanting to create the ultimate sleek space will find that ceramic tile from Spain leads the way in offering a range of contemporary design solutions. A client of interior designer Francine Gardner recently expressed that “while he wanted his home to be one of a kind, its personality should come from form and texture, not color and clutter.” Whether a pure white glazed, large-format ceramic or a “Corten” ceramic, tile offers the perfect “form and texture” design solution for the “new urban” style.

For more information, visit www.spaintiles.info.