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THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

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The Industrial Revolution

10 Jan 2012

JANE PRICE-STEPHENS, INTERIOR DESIGNER

One trend that has been around for some time now - and will undoubtedly continue into 2012 - is the industrial look (and I'm not talking about diamond encrusted Stella McCartney boiler suits, Jimmy Choo working boots or Philip Treacy hard hats!)

The UK was the first country to 'industrialise' during the 18th and 19th Centuries and, in doing so, it created a no-nonsense and practical design approach for industrial environments that used simple, cheap and robust materials – an approach that has endured and continues to be applied today. This style, when applied to the home, takes many different forms, including; polished plaster bathrooms (which look absolutely stunning as well as being incredibly resilient), resin floors (which work really well throughout the home and are again incredibly durable), concrete kitchens (don't cringe – they look amazing and concrete's the perfect material to use in a kitchen) or just furniture and lighting with a raw 'industrial' feel (metal, stone, plastics – just straightforward, basic materials put together in a straightforward and basic way). 'Industrial' is definitely a mega trend that will continue to be pervasive in the design world during 2012...

While we aren't all lucky enough to live in an old converted warehouse that's overflowing with authentic industrial features, there are relatively straightforward ways to create a distinctly industrial or urban feel within a space in the home. One of the easiest ways to inject a bit of industrial chic is simply to use industrial materials (and to combine them in the right way within a scheme) – and, as mentioned above, concrete, plaster and resin are fairly obvious choices (it's not a coincidence that in recent months we've witnessed a huge rise in the use of all three in interior design). Many designers, including myself, are now using them in even more unexpected and unusual ways and combining them very effectively with 'industrial feel' furniture and lighting to achieve the overall look.

Resin Floors - Resin floors are becoming extremely popular as part of both new industrial/commercial developments and the refurbishment of existing buildings. However, there is a growing trend for using resin as an attractive, dramatic and durable floor in domestic settings, too. Resin is a supremely functional and hard wearing material for flooring and turns a floor in to a spectacular style statement.

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(Image from Gaile Guevara)

(Image from Gaile Guevara)

Concrete Kitchens – Kitchens have not escaped the industrial revolution – the latest emerging trend is the concrete kitchen. This involves a combination of practical and tactile concrete, from polished concrete flooring to worktops. Concrete is a wonderful solution for kitchens as it withstands heat, resists scratching and is easy to clean, so it's an ideal work surface on which to prepare food.

G44 in Hall 1 – open to both exhibitors and visitors.

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(Image from Steininger)

Polished Plaster – Bathrooms have also embraced the industrial look with polished plaster being used as a great alternative to tiles and stone – it provides a sharp and modern finish that complements modern sanitaryware perfectly. Interestingly, concrete has also found its way into the bathroom in the form of bathtubs (so we can probably add 'non permeable' to the list of characteristics of this material...)

(Image from Modulnova)

(Image from Modulnova)

Furniture & Lighting *– Industrial style products are easy to work with and won't date as quickly as other more quirky trends. Something from an old factory or warehouse that can be reclaimed is in itself a piece of history that looks original and effortlessly stylish in a home. Industrial is not overly fussy - the design is practical, simple and striking. It's their functionality that actually makes them genuinely interesting. To get things started just look for over sized metal lighting or metal tables and chairs.*

(Image from Rom 1-2-3)

(Image from Lotta Agaton by Petra Bindel)

Unfortunately, the UK is not the great industrial and manufacturing nation that it once was, but the trend towards industrial design means that the essence of our manufacturing heritage is being revived within the home. We can take some comfort from the fact that we still own one of the coolest manufacturing brands on the planet - Aston Martin... and if you look at the plans for the redevelopment of their Works facility in Newport Pagnell, there does appear to be plenty of polished plaster, concrete and resin, all blended effortlessly and effectively into a sleek and modern industrial design that complements the brand perfectly...

Jane Price-Stephens runs her own Interior Design business, to find out more visit: www.janepricestephens.com, http://janepricestephens.blogspot.com/, follow Jane on twitter @jpricestephens or call 07970 547433.

Date: 03 Jan 2013 10:05

Name: Gaile Guevara

Comment:
Thank you for the feature, much appreciated.

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