

INDUSTRIAL CHIC

Ed Ong, creative director of Dwell Interior Design, offers his insights on the things homeowners should consider if they are after an industrial look for their home

The industrial interior style seems to be a look that's trending at the moment. Are there things homeowners should bear in mind if they'd like to achieve the look?

When homeowners ask for the industrial look, they need to realise that they have to be willing to employ the use of materials that are commonly used in industrial spaces, such as factories, lofts and warehouses. These include exposed brick walls, screed concrete, untreated wood and metal beams. So when a client asks for an industrial look, I start by asking if they have seen an actual industrial setting because it means they want the look of living spaces created within disused factories and warehouses.

INTERVIEW BY YOUNG LIM | PORTRAIT BY BOONWEI | PHOTOS COURTESY OF DWELL INTERIOR DESIGN

What are the origins of the industrial style?

The style began in the industrial zones of Brooklyn in New York, when the government converted former industrial premises into residential areas. People began moving into disused factory spaces, warehouses and barns. I remember seeing a home located in an old firehouse, too. As people started doing up these spaces on a limited budget, there was a tendency to leave the beams and unfinished walls untouched. This allowed the natural roughness of the textures to stand out, creating a look that caught on rapidly.

Can the industrial style look too cold for a home?

It can if you don't strike the right balance in the use of materials. You can't focus on the use of a single element on its own, such as purely metallic finishes or a room entirely decked out in concrete. A well-designed industrial look should combine the use of the various elements as well as accents to make the space unique and special to the owner. There is always the danger of overusing a particular material and turning the home into a showroom.

"A WELL-DESIGNED INDUSTRIAL LOOK SHOULD COMBINE THE USE OF VARIOUS ELEMENTS."



What's a good tip for anyone wanting to achieve an industrial look?

The look is all about adding character to a space, and that means allowing the metal to achieve a patina, leaving scratches in the wood and exposing the brickwork on the walls. Over time, the space will grow even more alluring.

Are there different types of looks within the industrial style?

Yes, there are. They range from the sleek and contemporary look filled with plenty of stainless steel finishes to the more rustic industrial style composed of exposed brick, distressed leather and recycled or untreated wood.

What about the use of colours in the space?

If you want to keep to the style, it means retaining the natural look of the materials. Naturally, when we think of an industrial space, shades

BELOW Black beams and kitchen piping add a modern touch to this industrial kitchen style; This living room fuses the industrial look with minimalist accents; The colours in this dining area have been pared back, allowing the details of the materials to stand out

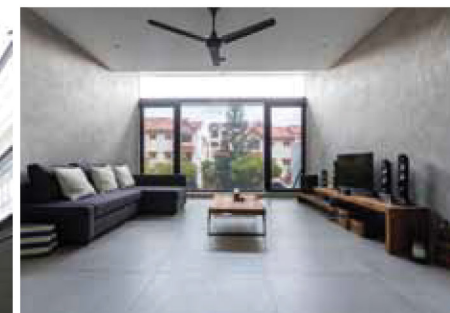
of grey and black come to mind because of the metallic elements, combined with the light to dark grey hues of the concrete and warm reds of the brickwork. Those would form the basic scheme for the home. However you should also incorporate some colourful elements, such as a pipe painted a bright red, to add personality to the space. Ultimately, the colours should come from the original look of the materials.

What do you look for when you are designing a home to the industrial style?

Most of the time, I'm looking for the level of excitement and enthusiasm from the client. Sometimes a lot of what an interior designer can achieve depends on the threshold and the distance the client is prepared to go in terms of the final look. There is never the same space and client, so every project is unique and exciting. That's important to me when I take on a project.

There seems to be an evolution of the industrial style, with designers fusing it with Scandinavian designs to turn it into a Scandiustrial style. What are your thoughts on that?

I would say that the Scandiustrial style combines the use of Scandinavian furniture design with industrial-style interiors. It's an ideal combination because Scandinavian furniture designs are simple yet functional and they fit harmoniously with the pared-back approach of the industrial scheme. 



For more information on getting an industrial look for your home, contact Ed Ong or Dwell Interior Design at 6883 1005 or visit dwell.com.sg