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open house

A loft reno gives new meaning to "living large."
By Natalie Bahadur

REAL ESTATE IS A HOT COMMODITY IN TORONTO these days. Case in point: Queen Street West's Candy Factory lofts, which were converted from a century-old candy factory into luxurious living quarters with 12-foot-high ceilings, original Douglas fir post-and-beam construction, and enormous windows.

▶ A runner, side table and artwork define the front hallway. ▼ Hardwood flooring and stained wood cabinets create a warm contrast to the stainless-steel accents in the kitchen. Puck lighting makes the grey polished-glass tile of the backsplash sparkle.



Interior designer Carey Mudford says it was impossible not to get excited about the potential of her client's home. Located in the northeast corner of the building, the loft has a total square footage of 2,200 and a large terrace on the second floor. However, one of the major drawbacks was the poor layout. "Instead of using furniture and lighting to divide the space, walls had been erected, and there was a raised level with a half wall," she says, plus the unworkable kitchen was hidden in a back corner of the main floor.

Carey's client wanted something more inviting: an open-concept kitchen and living area, which could incorporate a plasma TV for a home theatre. "He enjoys entertaining and hosting dinner parties, so a dining area with seating for up to 12 people was required."

To accomplish that, the raised level and many walls

Well-placed area rugs, lighting and large-scale furnishings create distinct living and dining areas that aren't dwarfed by the vastness of the open space or the 12-foot-high ceilings.

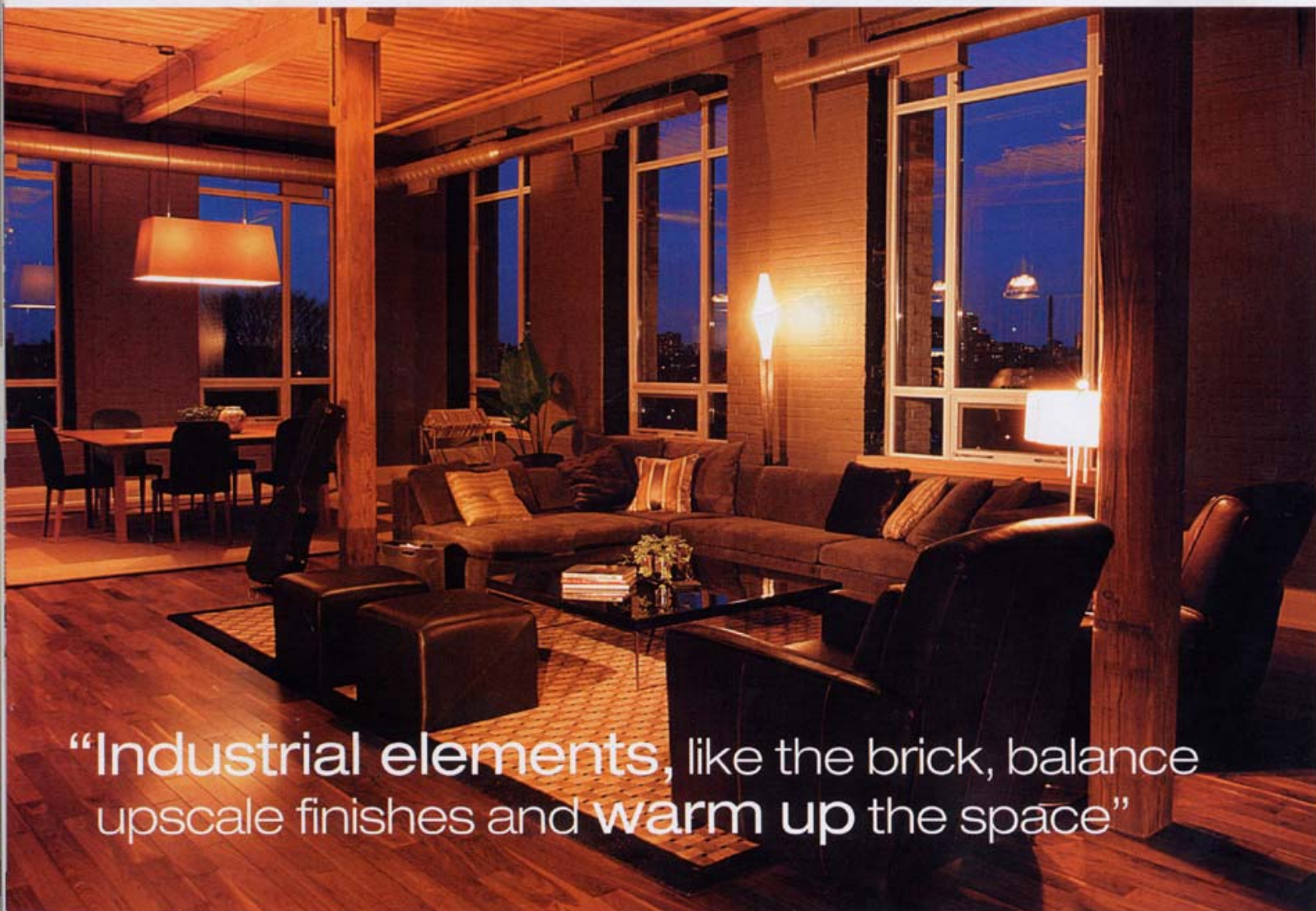
loft living

Toronto-based interior designer Carey Mudford offers some lofty reno advice.

Avoid relocating plumbing fixtures, if possible.

That can add unnecessary expenses. Maintain original architectural elements of the building to create a unique space with character. **Use a few large-scale furnishings** and accessories for a clean look. Repeat an element or colour to create continuity from one area to the next.

Define the function of each space using furniture groupings, different textures and finishes, and lighting with dimmers on all switches to allow for a warmer and more dramatic look. **Use area rugs, upholstered furniture, fabric-covered wall panels and drapery** to help absorb sound in a large, open space.



“Industrial elements, like the brick, balance upscale finishes and **warm up** the space”

BEFORE



were removed and the entire space was reconfigured. "We felt the master bedroom was too small, so the closets were removed and a new wall unit was designed, which minimized the need for furniture," she says. The sitting area was converted into a dressing room with built-in cabinets and a movable island for storage.

The bathrooms were transformed as well. "To create a clean look, we used limestone tiles on the floor, and a smaller version of the same tile on the walls, shower ceiling and tub surround," she says.

The end result? An open-concept home that's stylish and warm. Says Carey, "Lofts are popular because they're the epitome of what's possible. Once gutted, they're empty boxes that can accommodate virtually any lifestyle."

WHERE TO FIND IT, PAGE 224

◀ The ensuite's vanity features a handy towel rod and an interior shelf for storage. In the shower, a recess offers a place for shampoo. ▼ A built-in unit, complete with headboard and lighting, flanks the bed. Ribbed-glass interior windows let in light from the stairwell.

