

Inglewood  
loft goes  
from stodgy  
to stunning  
when  
designer  
moves in

# LOFT gets a LIFT

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**L**oft living is at its best when the rough and ready elements aren't just steps away, but completely out of reach. If you can add a private rooftop patio with city and mountains views, all the better.

Now Kelsey's 200-square-foot loft, located right on 9th Avenue in Inglewood, has the best of both worlds. Located at the back of the building, it's shielded from the noise of the street and features a 600-square-foot rooftop patio, now kiosk with plants and covered up with table and chairs, that effectively expands the living space.

"It was never so set up here every night," Kelsey says. "It's quiet, and it's so nice to have mountains and city skyline views, especially in Calgary."

But all was not always paradise in this key slice of home. When Kelsey and partner Chris Lu first looked at the property early last year, they had to make a small bag of tricks. It was in a six-year-old building designed to reflect the style of Inglewood's heritage downtown. The look was authentic (exposed pipes, 10-foot ceilings and hardwood floors), but the building was in new condition. An excellent condition, except for one thing — whoever decorated had gone for a suburban apartment look featuring white, paneled cupboards, oak trim, cheap linoleum and speckled carpeting.

"I hated what was here," Kelsey says. "But I see the potential of it. And Inglewood is a great neighborhood."

Many others agree. In March of this year, *Ar Canada's* magazine, *Enfocore*, named Inglewood one of Canada's coolest neighborhoods.

Kelsey and Lu snapped up the property which included ground-floor commercial space, for \$195,000, and set to work.



Photos: Colleen Field, Calgary Herald

knows the rooftop patio, and says he spends most of the summer evenings up there.

I love the downtown, that whole concept of being where everything's going on

RON KELLSEY



The bright upstairs bedroom overlooks the living room.

LOFT, FROM E1

## Creating an eyrie in Inglewood

The transformation took four months and about \$40,000 worth of mostly cosmetic changes. They ripped out the cheap cabinets and linoleum, took out a couple of the upstairs walls, pulled up outdated carpets and re-arranged some inefficient spaces (such as moving the laundry area and enlarging both bathrooms). Kellsey, who has decorated new show homes as well as private homes, put his design expertise to the test. Between his and Lu's industry connections (Lu works as the marketing manager for Sabal Crafted Homes), they had the advantage of getting materials and professional services at cost.

The result, a chic, industrial-themed living space above the trendy shops of Inglewood's 9th Avenue that was featured on the Home and Garden Television's program *Loft Living* last year. Kellsey estimates the property, with its main floor retail space renting out at about \$700 a month, is now worth \$225,000. He's got it on the market, saying if it does well, his next project will be an loft in Inglewood.

Two sets of glass doors and a skylight flood the place with light. Kellsey says he tried to work with the classic bones of the space, adding the finishing touches with a custom kitchen, bold paint colours in grout and steel accents.

"We wanted to have an industrial feel, but we wanted to have a lot of mood in it," Kellsey says. "I like deep, bold colours. Everyone thinks blue and grey are cold colours, but when you put the two together with the right lighting, it creates a really warm feel, especially at night when all the lights are on."

The galvanized steel is a money-saving design trick that mimics the ultra-expensive look of stainless

steel that's become trendy in modern kitchens.

"We just went to Home Depot and got this galvanized steel sheeting," Kellsey says. "We did the whole kitchen and the bathroom for about \$70."

Kellsey found the perfect style of kitchen cupboards at IKEA, bought two and used them as a model for the rest of the custom cabinetry. In the end, floor-to-ceiling cabinets full of pull-out drawers mean more storage space than it looks like, and the light birch wood is a nice contrast to the slate-grey countertops and stainless-steel appliances.

The kitchen has a sleek, efficient look with its open shelving, stone floors and rounded edges. In place of a dining room table — or a dining room — is a large, elongated island that doubles as workspace, table and storage area. Built-in drawers, as well as roll-away aluminum bins (easily rolled out of the way to seat people for a dinner party of eight or more) hold extra supplies.

The upstairs bathroom has a particularly "bright" outlook, thanks to a portion of glass ceiling that lets in extra light from the skylight high in the roof above. Beveled corners on all countertops — kitchen and bath — ensure no sharp edges and good "chick" Kellsey says.

It's very trendy, it's a great location.

But — it's only 950 square feet. Kellsey says that doesn't matter, once you're experienced loft living. "After being in a place with 14-foot ceilings, which is what my last place had, I can't imagine going back to an eight-foot ceiling," Kellsey says. "Even though you're only living in 900 square feet, it makes it seem huge. And I love the downtown, that whole concept of being where everything's going on."