

Insight

WORKING WITH RUSTIC MATERIALS

Be inspired by Lisa James' use of raw finishes and natural elements to create a homely scheme



From rough wooden plank doors to exposed brickwork, Lisa James has successfully incorporated rustic materials into her home. It's a striking look – the key is to tone down harsher notes with softer, tactile elements.

Back to basics

Additions such as limewashed timber, reclaimed or concrete flooring and industrial-style lighting will each bring their own sense of character to an interiors scheme. If this is a style that appeals, start with the bare bones of the building to create an organic, weathered, not-too-new look.

This can be simply achieved by removing coverings to reveal brickwork, timber joists or original floors, then adding reclaimed or untreated fittings. This look works well with many different styles of property, particularly where the original building has unusual features or is constructed from good quality materials. If you think outside the box,

introducing rustic elements can be an affordable way of adding personality. For example, in Lisa's home, limewashed scaffolding boards make striking sliding doors, which are both space-saving and characterful. A rough-textured timber fire surround is also a cost-effective substitute for a traditional design.

Cosy contrast

The rustic look can be carried through in furniture and accessories, too. Choosing materials such as driftwood for lamp bases or cast-iron for table legs will enhance the effect of an exposed brick wall or metal pipework. These elements, however, can feel rather hard, so soften them with clever touches, such as woven rattan shades, chunky knit cushions and tactile throws. Opting for warm lighting rather than stark white will also soften the look.

Deep wool or silk rugs work well on polished concrete or wood floors, while faux fur adds a touch of luxury. A moody colour palette in deep greys or midnight blues will enhance the scheme.

PROFESSIONAL ADVICE



'Rustic materials add visual interest and character to many settings. Try the look in your home by working with existing features or by sourcing salvaged options.'

Install copper, brass or zinc in the form of counters, tables and lighting or introduce natural elements such as weathered wood.

Salvaged materials can be further adapted. For example, I used reclaimed wooden doors in a warehouse loft. These were cut and fitted to specification, and then painted and sanded to give an aged look.

Be creative when considering how to make the most of the unfinished feel. For instance, why not run electric cables through galvanised metal pipes. This works well in a kitchen or an open-plan setting.

If you are planning to introduce rustic or reclaimed elements, make sure they complement the scheme so there is a sense of continuity. Choose fixtures and fittings with an aged effect. Look online at architectural salvage sites and visit auctions and antiques stores for a standout item, then build your design around this.

Warm industrial interiors have a modern but timeless appeal. The look can be more masculine in style, with brick walls and Crittall windows, or softened with cushions, aged wood and wool rugs.'

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Leather stands out in a pared-back rustic scheme



Exposed brick works well with wood and metal



These reclaimed wooden doors have been limewashed



EXPERT EYE *'Think about restoring some of your home's original features to complement rustic elements. Details such as period tiling and decorative panelling usually have a story to tell, adding another patina of detail to a living space'*

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