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LOFTY GOALS LEAD TO USE OF MULTI-COLORED PANELS

IN HOUSTON, TX, COLORFUL METAL-CLAD TOWN HOMES HAVE BEEN CREATING A BUZZ IN THE REAL ESTATE WORLD. NOT ONLY ARE THESE HOMES, DESIGNED BY LARRY S. DAVIS, DIFFERENT IN THEIR EXTERIORS, THE INTERIORS OF THE HOMES ARE LOFT STYLE. VOLUMES HAVE BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT THE TOWN HOMES IN THE HOUSTON AND DALLAS AREA, BUT THE CONTINUED SUCCESS OF THE URBAN LOFTS TOWNHOMES HAS THE COMPANY EXPANDING TO NEW AREAS SUCH AS ATLANTA, LAS VEGAS AND AUSTIN.

By RACHEAL TAFELSKI
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Over the past 25 years, Larry S. Davis has been a visionary in architecture and urban design as well as one of Houston's most respected designers. Davis' initial projects were the construction and renovation of custom multi-million-dollar homes for clients in some of Houston's most exclusive neighborhoods. Davis has received acclaim for his work, including honors from the

AIA for his interior remodeling. The University of Houston School of Architecture celebrated its 50th anniversary by honoring 50 of its 2,300 graduates, including Davis. He has been published in more than 40 local, national and international publications. When Davis saw mill finish galvanized metal in used on an artist's studio in Santa Fe, NM, he decided to combine the style into his loft-style housing development in the West End of Houston. Along with longtime



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While achieving the desired look is relatively easy when working with single panel colors, the multi-colored ones are a little trickier. Davis stated, "The Jackson project was the first striped project that we undertook. Aligning the windows to fall in the stripes where we wanted took a lot of redesign and field adjustments. Choosing the exact locations for the transition of colors took trial and error to find just the right line to accentuate the elements. Thankfully, Urban Sheet Metal Inc. made the adjustments quickly and accurately to provide an exceptional finish. It is their expertise that allows the metal to have the desired architectural effect because the attention to detail and the craftsmanship separate the warehouse builders from the contemporary urban designers."

Davis' advice to others contemplating similar projects is, "Make sure you use high quality material and a

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skilled sheet metal installation company. The quality of material and installation will mean the difference between a cutting edge architectural design and a mini-warehouse."

Urban-style lofts may have originated in industrial buildings in Paris and Manhattan, but are now becoming popular in cities like Atlanta, Dallas, Denver and Seattle. Like them, Davis' metal-skinned lofts were conceived with artists in mind and as such are flooded with light and have high ceilings and flexible floor plans, all in a convenient live/work situation. But more than just artists are buying Davis' town homes. "Our typical buyer is between 22 and 45 and wants to live in the downtown area to be close to nightlife, museums etc. They might be considered the creative class. They like the large, open space of a loft rather than the traditionally separate living room, dining room, and kitchen. Our buyers consist of 25% single women, 25% single men and 50% couples. The racial mix is simply that, a mix of all cultural backgrounds. Being in the \$160,000 to the

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\$200,000 price range, we normally get young professionals in many different fields." Davis also notes that a good number of his buyers are themselves architects.

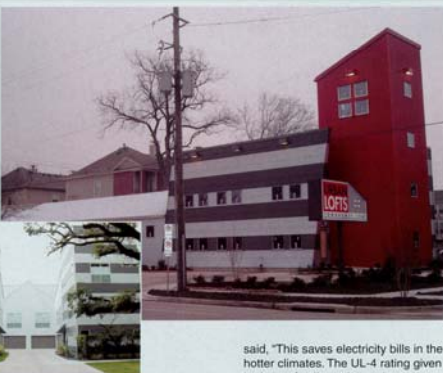
"At this point, we're selling dirt," he says with amazement. "People see the models, get out their checkbooks, and ask how soon they can move in."

Urban Lofts now licenses projects

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associate Architect Alberto Gardino of Milan, Italy, Davis has since expanded the palette of the townhomes' Galvalume skins, which were formerly only silver, by adding the option of red, blue, gold, gray and even striped exteriors. In addition to being visually exciting, Davis' projects are known for their livable open floor plans with 17' ceilings, sculptured interior spaces, secured-access entries, skylights, and large closets.

Urban Loft Townhomes began 10 years ago when Davis designed the first group of town homes. During this design process, he considered a variety of materials. He did not want materials that absorb heat or showed susceptibility to mildew and rot. For a solution, he turned to Galvalume-coated steel. He



uses the material in 100% of his projects.

Davis also likes metal because it is virtually maintenance free and comes with a warranty. "Galvalume causes the interior to stay 5-8 degrees cooler than the outside temperature," he

said, "This saves electricity bills in the hotter climates. The UL-4 rating given to the roofs allows the customer to receive anywhere from 25%-40% savings off of homeowner insurance, particularly in hail prone areas of the country. The Galvalume also gives the industrial look of contemporary, cutting edge design that blends in harmony with industrial urban settings."



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