

## Metropolitan

### Decorators have designs on tin

By Christian Toto  
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Tin ceilings evoke an era gone by, a time when Victorian-inspired designs flourished in homes nationwide.

Turns out homeowners still have an affinity for that period, according to local design experts. Interest in tin and imitation tin ceilings is on the upswing for both aesthetic and practical reasons.

Many homeowners love the vintage look of such ceilings, while others see installing a tin ceiling as a way to cover up any number of cracks, crevices and stains.

Tin ceilings can be wildly ornate or feature simple, repetitive motifs. Even the most basic style is a significant step up, designwise, from a standard drywall ceiling, assuming the upgrade doesn't clash with a room's overall appearance.

Ceiling manufacturers have noticed the trend and are offering a wealth of options -- ceilings forged from tin, copper or even plastic and pre-sealed to prevent corrosion. The latter can be a better choice for rooms exposed to moisture, or if the local contractor isn't adept at cutting metal into shape.

Cheryl Campbell, owner of the District's Urban Revivals ([www.urbanrevivals.com](http://www.urbanrevivals.com)), says tin ceilings are jumping in popularity, particularly during this time of year.

"I see an increase in activity in the spring. [Homeowners] have home improvements on their mind," Ms. Campbell says. "Real metal ceilings stand out immediately for their beauty."

She says her company often works with homeowners in both Georgetown and Northwest but also in Northeast around Fourth and U streets.

"The brownstones rehabbed in Northeast have fixed the water damage, and they're looking for tin to cover up a multitude of sins," she says.

Ms. Campbell says tin first grew in popularity during the last quarter of the 19th century. Homeowners of the day sought tin as a way to mimic decorative plaster ceilings without the expense. The ceilings also proved easier to clean, especially when installed in kitchens, where smoke and dirt could accumulate.

Jennifer Motruk Loy, director of marketing with the District-based Core architecture and design firm, says the number of vendors selling tin ceiling products is growing rapidly, a sign of sizable interest from businesses, homeowners or both.

Often, homeowners will see a design motif in a store or, more commonly, a restaurant and consider something similar for their own houses.