



THE STORE AGE

C A M O U F L A G E T H E C L U T T E R A N D O R G A N I Z E Y O U R L I F E

Above left: Tuck away items in this stylish, hand-painted demilune chest from Liz Claiborne Home. Photo courtesy Lexington Home Brands

Above right: Perfect at the foot of your bed, the Alden Storage Bench with cushion opens to generous space inside for linens, seasonal clothing and more. Made of solid and engineered wood with a soft white painted finish, the bench is available through Crate & Barrel.

Below: A hinged top on this upholstered tapered ottoman by Palecek lifts to reveal a lined interior for storing your possessions. The ottoman also is great for extra seating.



BY DEBI BRYANT

Where do you keep your junk? Does this question cause a wince of pain as you think about the piles of stuff stashed beneath the bed, the disordered boxes teetering overhead in bedroom closets or the mishmash of who-knows-what crammed in the storage space beneath the stairwell?

From the bathroom to the bedroom, the attic to the garage, unsightly storage areas are a common complaint of both local and national homeowners. Fortunately, regional retailers like David Gold of Design Within Reach in Southlake note that solutions are more plentiful than ever due to a strong market response to consumer demand.

"Five years ago, you couldn't find a piece that worked with flat panel monitors or large-screen televisions," Gold says, adding that furniture constructed to hide those elements abound today. "Now you'll find things that are specific to the item, such as storage for DVDs, storage for CDs, storage for toys, storage for books, or the traditional bookcase."

Additionally, furniture manufacturers have taken a look at how to combine beauty with functionality, and while utilitarian elements such as baskets, plastic tubs or chests are still a source of containment, decorative options entail specialty furnishings designed to camouflage clutter with impressive silhouettes and deceiving designs. An example: Design Within Reach's signature credenza, the Sussex, available in four different colors and sizes, offers "universal storage" for anything from dishes to sweaters. "It's the one item that can migrate to every room of the house and still have a purpose," Gold says.

A customized approach is another avenue frequently explored by consumers considering their storage needs. At Stone Creek Furniture's locations in Farmer's Branch, Frisco and Southlake, customers participate in the design of furnishings specifically geared to their storage needs. With its children's line, for instance, a daybed serves as the anchor piece, a fact that Texas market general manager Jim Chase says adds versatility and makes a bedroom more multifunctional. From there, shoppers can add features such as stackable storage cubbies, hutches, armoires and cabinetry utilizing an on-site computerized room





By Storehouse, the Iris Shoe Chest keeps footwear out of sight but ready to go. Made in Italy, the chest is shown in a rubbed Bruno finish.

RESOURCES

STONE CREEK FURNITURE
817-416-0004

KITCHEN DESIGN CONCEPTS
214-390-8300

CLASSY CLOSETS
972.355.7687

DESIGN WITHIN REACH
214-521-0100

SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE

Clutter control experts specialize in helping homeowners decrease the collections of household goods. The number one suggestion, however, is not to try a drastic, all-at-once transformation. It just won't happen. Here are some tips for making a gradual and sustainable change from messy to marvelous.

- In the bedroom, discard worn or permanently stained items, unfashionable clothing and anything not worn in the past two years.
- For the kitchen, place regularly used appliances within easy reach, storing those used less frequently on higher shelves. Use wall hooks to hang aprons and towels. Wire, plastic or basket containers store and control small items.
- Keep a recycle bin near your mail area and discard junk mail immediately.
- Keep stationery and correspondence in one place.
- Call in the experts when you need them. Usually, an objective eye will work wonders when it comes to trimming down on possessions that are impractical to keep.

planning program that draws room dimensions and displays how different product styles will look in the reorganized room.

"It's a virtual photograph, so there's no guess work," Chase says. "They're very clear as to what they're buying."

Kitchens are another area in which homeowners can use help with storage solutions. From spilling-over silverware trays to cabinets overflowing with Tupperware, contemporary cook zones are full of storage blunders. Jennifer Sherrill, president of Kitchen Design Concepts in Carrollton, explains that many folks mistakenly forget about storage needs when they start the process of designing or redesigning a kitchen. "They're thinking, 'I want a new kitchen because this one's too small. I want more cabinets because I want more storage,'" she says. But they don't consider what they store in cabinets, or what they would like to store. There are all kinds of things you can do within a cabinet to customize cabinets for storage."

To help, companies like hers assist homeowners in evaluating their kitchen usage and storage needs first, then provide solutions with helpers such as pull-out spice cabinets and pull-out pantries, stair-step storage units, drawer dividers, customized silverware trays or cutlery holders and overhead racks for pots and pans.

Functionality should be the primary determining factor in designing kitchen storage, Sherrill notes, and Gold says that carries over into other rooms as well.

"Storage must have function; don't buy it just for design's sake," he advises. Then it ends up not serving the purpose because it's not strong enough to hold a TV or deep enough to hold audio equipment or it's just too big. It's got to have a function."

SMART & STYLISH

Tips from the authors of Smart Storage: Stylish Solutions for Every Room in your House

If you are lucky enough to be designing your home from scratch, be sure to plan for your storage needs. Thinking about your possessions will be a great help in customizing the space for your real need.

Don't be afraid to set things aside for thrift shops, garage sales or even the trash. Sometimes we have psychological attachments to items, while other stuff is long past its usefulness to us. Try to make sure everything you keep is either beautiful or useful. Lose the rest.



This bench by Liz Claiborne Home adds a comfortable welcome — and storeroom on the top shelf and in the drawer below — to any entryway.