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NEW HOMES & CONDOS

The art of artful kitchen shelves



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Titchen design trends, as with all trends, tend to evolve more of necessity than style.

Traditionally kitchens were efficient machine rooms, with everything of need within arm's length. The need to hide away the utility didn't exist, with the kitchen tucked away from the receiving rooms and certainly not a place to receive guests. It was all about function.

As the traditional setup morphed into something resembling today, we moved the kitchen first up adjacent the other common rooms, and then front and center as the preverbal heart of the home.

I spent the first ten plus years of my career as a designer plotting out ways to tuck, clad and squeeze

every conceivable kitchen bit and bob out of sight. We just didn't want to see any of the kitchen business when not in use. This is still very true in a lot of homes I design, however I've seen a trend towards a more casual open approach. Blame the ever-popular cooking show, raising the once monotonous job that is dinner into an almost theatrical display. The home cook proudly embarking on the epicurean masterpiece, Instagram worthy, if not edible.

The fun byproduct of the phenomenon is a pride in the chosen tools of the trade. Mixers, knives and steel cut oats are selected with hours of online research, deserving at least a note of notice. Of course this means one needs a pedestal of sorts to show off their foodie prowess to

friends. Our shrinking urban kitchens, from condo to Victorian are also short of closed kitchen cabinets, which mean adding some supplemental shelves, for the overflow is often just the ticket.

Open kitchen storage is a terrific way to reinforce the overall home style, be it quiet and subtle, to fully of personality.

Here are four of my favourite open kitchen storage solutions, each from one of my past design clients.

1. Pop of colour

Small kitchen appliances, and cookware come in seemingly every colour imaginable. Drawing key colours from adjacent rooms and opting to go bold here is a fun way to tie it all together. Opt for a few key pieces in colour then keep the rest more neutral in metals and whites for a fresh contrast. (Red Mixer: Kitchenaid)

2. The art of subtle

Open shelving doesn't always need be chock full and making a big statement. By storing pieces that blend with the wall colour, in this case whites and clear glass the function is there, with a lovely quiet look.

3. Curated collections

Grouping like pieces together is a design trick that can make even the most mundane, in this case bottles of oils and vinegars look artful. Successful curation is as much about the negative space as the selection of pieces them selves. Here the brick and reclaimed wood, both rustic needed a fresh contrast of metal.

4. Camouflage

Hiding things in plain sight requires a balance between the stuff and what's surrounding it. In this case the homeowner has been lovingly collecting cookbooks, crockery, linens et al for years and both wanted to show them off, and have them blend in the room. By layering in front a dense patterned wallpaper from Farrow and Ball the shelves themselves fade away while the items welcome the eye to take a bit of a journey from grouping to grouping.







