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Artful Open Shelves

Personalize The New Open Kitchen

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Kitchen design trends, as with all trends, tend to evolve more out of necessity than style. Traditionally, kitchens were efficient rooms, with everything needed within arm's length. The need to hide away utilitarian items didn't exist and 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 adjacent to the other common rooms, and then front and center as the preverbal heart of the home.

The first ten-plus years of my career were spent as a designer plotting out ways to tuck, clad and squeeze every conceivable kitchen bit and bob out of sight. 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. Amateur cooks are proudly embarking on the epicurean masterpieces. The fun byproduct of the phenomenon is pride in the chosen tools of the trade. Mixers, knives and steel cut oats are selected with hours of online research. Of course, this means one needs a showcase to show off their foodie prowess to friends. With client's shrinking urban kitchens, which are also short of closed kitchen cabinets, this can mean adding supplemental open shelves as a display and storage alternative.

Open kitchen storage is a terrific way to reinforce the overall home style, whether quiet and subtle, or full of personality.







The following is a list of favourite kitchen storage solutions, from past design projects, addressing each homeowner's specific needs.

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 to be bold. By storing pieces that blend with the wall colour, for example, white and clear glass, a subtle, functional solution is created. This is also a great approach when staging for resale! (Shelves and dishware: IKEA)

3 Curated collections – Grouping similar pieces together is a design trick that can make even the most mundane look artful. Successful selection is as much about the negative space as the selection of pieces themselves. The rustic brick and reclaimed wood benefit from the contrast of metal.

4 Camouflage – Hiding things in plain sight requires a balance between the object and the surrounding. A collection of cookbooks, crockery and linens are layered in front of dense patterned wallpaper from Farrow and Ball. The result: the shelves fade away while the items welcome the eye to take a bit of a journey from grouping to grouping. oob

The design of an artful kitchen shelf allows for a wonderfully personal twist on what has now settled in as a kitchen trend that's here to stay!



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