

Shelf-life

Open shelving means that your belongings become part of the decor, instantly adding a personal touch to any space – and has anyone ever had enough bookcases?



Occa-Home

There are few items of furniture as personal as a bookcase – as soon as they're 'loaded' your literary life is up there to be seen (and judged) by all visitors! But whether you've a leather-bound collection of classics, some much-loved ornaments, or a thousand well-thumbed paperbacks, there's a shelving system to suit and enhance every room.

As a bespoke design company, Podesta create fitted and freestanding furniture according to a client's requirements.

"Storage and shelving solutions are not

only designed for the requirement at hand but also to combine strong aesthetics with practical living requirements," explained Matt Podesta, Podesta's owner and managing director. "Working with a variety of materials in addition to wood, Podesta look at the surrounding environment when designing to ensure that their furniture fits seamlessly into a scheme. Recent trends are looking more towards the use of natural materials which provide an interesting combination of texture with detail."

Claire Hornby, Creative Stylist at Barker and Stonehouse, considers that the days of

storing items behind closed doors are gone.

"The trend for open shelving is quickly becoming a favourite for the home, making spaces feel more 'lived in' and homely," she said. "Now an integral part of interior design, open shelving is a great option for any room from kitchens to living rooms and can be introduced in both small and large scale. Not only does open shelving work hard as sufficient storage but its exposed display will also serve as a striking focal point, providing a place to highlight cookware and books as well as collectible items that will add a personal touch."

Glass bookcases and shelves are also a popular choice, particularly for modern spaces that demand a sleek, streamlined aesthetic.

“Shelving designs are moving away from conventional straight-lined surfaces and, instead, we’re seeing curved and sinuous forms that sway towards cutting-edge style,” Claire added. “A smart mix of glass and integrated lighting on shelving is also prominent, while other statement materials such as reclaimed woods and metal finishes are still a preferred option. Overall shapes are clean and simple, but don’t let that fool you – these styles still command attention.”

When it comes to the latest interior trends, Bill Garvey, Managing Director of William Garvey, told us that a simple one-off addition can be enough to create a fresh new look without going overboard. “For example,” he said, “create a more delicate aesthetic by considering a collection of Japanese inspired furniture crafted from wood. Not only will the wood fill the room with a natural aroma, but it will also add warmth by moving away from the rather uninviting and somewhat sterile gloss or matt lacquer designs.

“Giving a brand new look to your books and trinkets as well, a bespoke range of wooden furniture is the ideal choice for either a contemporary or traditional scheme. Extremely versatile, wood is becoming seen as the highest quality, most ethical and desired option for today’s homeowner.”

Bill advised that teak is the wood of choice as it is hard wearing, easy to clean and therefore perfect to use in a busy living room. “A natural wood finish in the home

effortlessly creates a sense of calm and serenity, capturing the natural beauty akin to Mother Nature,” he said. “Whether you opt for a single introduction of wood or commit to an all wood scheme with coordinated shelving, fire surround and staple coffee table, this trend will ultimately stand the test of time.”

“Shelving is something our customers consider very carefully, because it’s often the biggest piece of furniture in their main living space,” claimed Samuel Chan, founder of Joined+Jointed. “What we’re finding is customers being drawn to shelving designs that provide visual interest in themselves without compromising on usefulness.”

Simon Pengelly’s ‘Concave’ Bookcase for Joined + Jointed, which won the Design Guild Mark award this year, is a great example.

“It’s a monumental piece, and its concave façade makes a huge visual impact in a room,” Samuel said. “Simon’s design is based on his observation of our contemporary need for bookcases to house many types of items – apart from books – that differ vastly in shape and size. ‘Concave’ meets this requirement by providing shelves of diverse widths and heights within a logical framework. It is also a beautiful piece of contemporary woodcraft; the artisanal quality that comes only with hand-finished pieces is increasingly important to customers. With its slim sections all hand-veneered and lipped, ‘Concave’ is a remarkably detailed and meticulously made piece.

“Lastly, versatility in function is always appreciated. ‘Concave’ is made in two halves which can be put together for the

full concave effect, or used separately for a different visual experience.”

“Open shelving can bring a stylish edge to the bedroom or living room,” said Kate Mooney, Founder and CEO at Occa-Home. “Cleverly displayed books and accessories will bring a boost of your personality into the room and is a wonderful way of creating a focal point out of pieces that you already own. For a fresh, modern style, look out for shelves with a variety of different sized slots or for a more traditional feel, try classic cabinets with elegant glass doors.” ▼



Barker and Stonehouse

▲ And in the kitchen, open shelving means that crockery and food products become a part of your kitchen's interior design rather than being hidden away behind cupboard doors. "Chic glass jars filled with cereals and pulses, cookery books and beautiful glassware and crockery can all be used to enhance the look of your kitchen, add a splash of colour and create a warm, homely feel," Kate advised.

With books and ornaments, your collection can easily expand, and you can easily find that your 'look' is spoiled by needing to extend after the interior scheme has been completed.

"Finding the right storage solution that can grow and adapt over time is pivotal to the success of an interior space and there are many good designs available," ▼



Accouter Design



Aram Store



▲ Ruth Aram, Director of the Aram Store, advised us. “In my view one of the best is USM Haller, a wonderfully flexible and adaptable storage system, designed and made in Switzerland to the highest specifications and built to last. Although the initial investment is quite high, in the longer term, it represents excellent value and will still look fantastic after many years of heavy use. Lacquered steel or glass shelves are available in a wide range of colours and can be changed easily if a different colour or finish is desired to update the look. The hard aesthetic of USM is not to everyone’s taste so for those who prefer a warmer look I would recommend Montana from Denmark or String from Sweden.”

The choice of material acts as a foil for the books or ornaments displayed.

“I think the focus at the moment is on interesting textures and finishes in warmer more natural tones,” said Lydia Sutton, an interior designer at Accouter Design. “Instead of painted gloss finishes, we’re now seeing finishes that reveal the grain lines. Bronze seems to be popular – bronze mirror backs, door pulls and frames. Bookshelves are more informal than they have been in the past. They are modern pieces with retro influences.”

Lydia really likes British furniture maker Kesterport and American designer Holly Hunt.

“Kesterport’s Dresscode TV unit comes in a high gloss Karoo wood veneer and the drawers are upholstered in Italian leather,” she said. “It’s very elegant, but works in both traditional and contemporary settings. We also like their Red Carpet bookcase. It’s finished in a crimped sycamore veneer ▼



William Garvey

▲ with Italian leather inlays. From the Holly Hunt collection, we love the Huron Bookcase. It's retro yet refined, with a walnut veneer finish and bronze handles on the cabinet doors."

And what is considered a work of art is a personal choice too!

"At a private residence in Whitehall Court, St James, we're creating a glass shoe cabinet so our client can show off their collection," Lydia added. "We're making a feature out something that's traditionally kept behind closed doors."



Podesta