

Making best use of space

Whether it's a cute window seat in a child's bedroom, wall-to-wall bookcases in a home office or a sleek integrated TV unit in the family room, built-in furniture can be a practical and stylish addition to any area of the home.

Your individually designed piece can be as detailed or as minimalist as you like. It can be any shape, size and colour. And it can be styled to suit, with materials to complement or contrast as needed.

"That's the beauty of built-in furniture," Oswald Homes Interior Designer Daniella Ellery said.

"It can be whatever you want it to be because it's been purpose-designed to suit both your decor and the space available.

"Built-in, or integrated furniture can help ensure consistency of style, tying in with other cabinetry or furniture in your home.

"It's a great way to use space that might be tricky to find furniture for, especially if you're after a piece that really looks as if it belongs. You're not at the mercy of what you can find in the furniture stores.

"By asking your cabinetmaker to create an



integrated piece for you, you can be sure you're not only making the best use of space, but you're balancing the practical aspects, such as storage, with the design aesthetic. It's a great opportunity to think about what you want the furniture to do, as well as how you want it to look.

"Another big benefit of built-in furniture is that it looks seamless; with no awkward corners and nothing to intrude into the room. It fits where you need it to fit."

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Here are four ideas from Oswald Homes for integrating furniture into a new home design:

Window seats: A classic way to build in extra seating and extra storage, a window seat is something of a must-have in a Hamptons-style home. You'll find window seats with comfy cushions in breakfast nooks, on landings and in bedrooms, often beneath a window dressed with plantation-style shutters.

A window seat is also a wonderful

inclusion in a child's bedroom, as it can encourage reading, and it's the perfect place for story-time and cuddles. Add in lift-up panels or drawers with a Shaker-style profile to the design and you've got somewhere to stash toys, games and extra blankets.

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Bookcases: Built-in bookcases look great in all styles of home, whether they're filling a wall or filling a recess. Mouldings can really set off a traditional bookcase, while cube-like designs with mitred edges are a perfect fit for contemporary homes. Incorporating cupboards will give you handy extra storage for items you don't want on show. A built-in bookcase design will also create useful storage in a bathroom and can be a fabulous addition at the end of the bath in a children's bathroom.

TV cabinets: Okay, let's face it – a TV is not typically a decorator item. But the magic black panel can be cleverly concealed behind the sliding doors of a built-in cabinet; a case of 'now you see it, now you don't'. There when you need it,



gone when you don't. An integrated TV unit is a particularly fabulous feature in a mid-century modern home, echoing the retro built-in furniture of the 1950s and 1960s when cocktail bars, TV cabinets and shelving units added tailor-made 'wow' factor.

To complete the integrated look, it's a good idea to set the TV into a veneer rear panel so that everything looks totally seamless even when the TV is on show. If you need to place a TV above a fireplace, you have the opportunity to create a stunning design that integrates both elements so the TV does not detract from the fireplace.

Tech zones: Perfect for charging phones and laptops or tablets, a tech zone can easily be integrated into your kitchen design, or accommodated within a scullery or boot room. You'll need some concealed power points, which can be positioned behind a false panel with doors for access. The whole look becomes neat and streamlined, without any of the obvious cable spaghetti we so often have to contend with.

Choosing materials to match the kitchen cabinetry or to complement furniture in the family room will help keep the look consistent. Pop a stool underneath the countertop. Add a cupboard or two, shelves or a pin board on the wall, and a slim drawer or two underneath, and you have a custom-made 'mini office' that scores 10 out of 10 for both form and function.

