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Clare Gaskin Interiors

Pro Spotlight: Clever Storage to Solve Your Clutter Woes

If you think you've run out of storage room in your home, then think again...

Who: Clare Gaskin of Clare Gaskin Interiors

Where: London, United Kingdom

In her own words: Bespoke storage, like a tailor-made suit, is designed to suit you perfectly. You could buy one off the shelf and it would fit you well, but it might not fit you perfectly. It all depends on your budget, of course, but don't forget you can do a combination of the two!

When did we get so much stuff? From shoes and coats, to bathroom products and kitchen pans, it's common these days to feel overrun by our things. The first line of defence? "Good storage," says Clare Gaskin of Clare Gaskin Interiors, who constantly has to think outside the box to create customised storage solutions that squeeze even more out of a space, no matter the size. The secret? "Think carefully about what you need to store, now and in the future, and don't be put off by the word 'bespoke' – it doesn't have to be a scary word!"

Read on to discover how, with a little expert know-how, you too can find some bespoke storage solutions that utilise your space effectively and look beautiful to boot.



Stock Take

Irrespective if you're a hoarder or a minimalist, have a large space or a teeny one, or go for a bespoke or off-the-shelf solutions, the first step to utilising your space effectively is paying close attention to what you have to store and the most efficient way to store it.

“What do you use, how much do you use it on a regular basis and what will you be using in a couple of years’ time?” asks Clare. “For each space, start by listing the items that you need to store (we have a checklist to help) and whether these items require hidden, concealed storage or can be displayed on open shelving.”

Clare’s love of interior design began when working on her own renovation – an experience that has helped her truly relate to her clients. “It’s not about budget,” she says, “I work with all budgets. It’s more about putting myself in their shoes and understanding who they are and how they live – no two clients are the same and I love that all of our projects are so different.”

According to Clare, trust and communication are key skills for a designer. “I end up spending a lot of time getting to know my clients, peering into their wardrobes and discussing what is and isn’t achievable,” she says.



To Be-spoke or Not to Be

If you can find an off-the-shelf storage solution that works for your space and your stuff, there’s no reason why you shouldn’t buy it, says Clare. “Make sure you have your list of what you have to store and look at the measurements,” she advises. “The advantage of bespoke is that it does mean it’s tailor-made for how you live and your lifestyle, and can often be a better solution in the long run.

“However, don’t forget you can do a combination,” Clare continues. “Sadly,

most of the time we’re confined by structural features, which means that bespoke is the only way to truly squeeze more out of the space.”

Clutter taking over? These smart storage solutions for different areas of the home should give you plenty of ideas for how to transform your own space...

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1. Clothes: Carve Out a Dressing Room

This is an area of the home where there’s often a huge volume of items to store and not of lot of space to do it, so Clare’s team has to get creative. “Everyone is different,” she says. “I want to know if they have hats and need hat boxes, knee-high boots requiring bigger cubbies, how deep their



suit jackets are and even whether they fold their trousers or not. It's about getting to know how people are living at the moment and each solution really depends on the client."

In this bedroom in London's Bayswater, the clients wanted a master bedroom with an en-suite bathroom and dressing space. To carve a dressing area out of the bedroom, Clare created a wall behind the bed, the depth of which is the hanging area. "We focused on mid-length and short hanging, and then some high level drawers,"

she says.

On the right, very narrow shelving squeezes into the space next to the window, making room for cubby holes for shoes and some shallow laundry baskets. The best bit? You can see the clothing on display when you enter the room, but you're not facing clutter when you're in bed. "I love this solution, it's great if you have a small space but big dreams of having a dressing room," says Clare.

See more photos of this project



2. Hallway: Make the Most of Space Under the Stairs

Of course, it depends on the house, but a lot of properties have narrow hallways that end up becoming dumping rooms. If you have a large entrance, you can have a dedicated storage space, but you have to have a house of a certain size. For most people, it's about being clever with how you store things – concealed storage for shoes, for example.

There are five people living in this compact ex-council flat in Battersea, London.

"They knew that they wanted quality joinery, but we had to balance it with their budget," Clare says. "We added a low-level cupboard under the stairs, which we didn't bring all the way up to leave some space for display, and combined that with affordable internal fittings from Ikea. Further down there are taller, full-height

cupboards for coats, scooters and cleaning equipment. It's about planning the space out and getting a good balance of storage and display space."

See more photos of this project



3. Bathroom: Carve Out a Niche

"When it comes to bathroom storage, think about what items you have to store, and then decide which of those you want to see and what ones you don't," says Clare. "This really varies – some clients don't want to see anything, while others like it to be accessorised a bit," she says.

According to Clare, it's common, in a cloakroom, to have less items than you might have in bathrooms, with more people seeing them. "It's a space that

everyone sees, from family to your plumber," she says.

In this cloakroom in Mayfair, London, Clare had two cabinets installed. The unit above the loo is recessed and filled with toilet rolls and cleaning products, all hidden behind a display panel for collectible books commissioned by a local artist. Next to it is a mirrored cabinet that mimics its shape. "Niches are a great thing to plan into a bathroom," Clare says.

See more photos of this project

More: For more information and examples of Clare's work, visit her Houzz profile.

This story was written by the Houzz Sponsored Content team.

