

How to Design Beautiful Built-Ins

Randall Papineau of Toronto's Woodwork & Co. frequently works with designer Marcus Iafrate of Conik Studios to create built-ins for custom homes and commercial properties. (See their artistry in "Into the Woods," in our September 2022 issue, and at right.) We asked them for tips on how to work with a designer and cabinetmaker to create great built-ins.

"I start by asking my clients, 'What do you hope to achieve in this space?'" says Marcus. "We take their comments and, like a puzzle, start fitting in all the pieces. We also use millwork to hide unsightly bulkheads and bring functionality to those awkward spaces."

Nowadays, the quality of manufactured materials has improved so much that, says Randall, "I can

often give you MDF cabinetry that is as good or even better than real wood at a portion of the cost." This approach increases your options when on a budget and makes it a little less painful to replace them later if you remodel or if your storage or style needs change.

Randall prefers that you consult with a designer as a first step. A good designer knows what can and can't be done, he says, understands pricing, and can produce the detailed technical drawings that the woodworker needs.

How long does it take? "It takes time to build good-quality cabinets," Randall advises, especially if the woodworker is in demand. Expect an average of eight weeks from the first meeting and measurements to final installation.

woodworkandco.com; conikstudios.com



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