

# This Old House

## Built-in Storage

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## Integral Bar Cabinet

Built-ins concealed behind doors offer the perfect hideaway for food and beverage prep or work areas that might otherwise mar the appearance of stylish living spaces. Case in point is this wet bar designed by architect Stuart Disston for a clubby sitting room. When not in use, the bar's mini fridge, sink, glasses, and half-empty booze bottles are completely hidden behind doors that mimic the surrounding cherry wall paneling. Come cocktail time, the doors open out into the room, slide back into recesses flanking either side of the bar, and then disappear behind hinged trim boards that close snugly over the openings.

**idea**

Use the back walls of built-ins to boost aesthetics and function. The mirrored panel above adds depth to both the bar and the room. A cork back in a built-in desk (see photo at right) is ideal for tacking up notes and pictures.

## Stand-up Desk

The ability to tailor built-ins to suit your particular needs and floor plan gives them a functional advantage over store-bought furniture. Instead of a space-hogging sit-down desk for this kitchen office, designer Scott W. Smith tucked a stand-up command center into a narrow sliver of wall between the hallway into the room and doors leading to a screened-in porch. Eliminating the need for a chair kept the high-traffic area clear of obstacles and also freed up room for three rows of drawers under a 36-inch-high, stained-wood countertop. The top drawers hold office supplies; the middle ones are for hanging files, and the bottom ones stow newspapers and catalogs until they're ready to be dumped into the recycling bin. Cubbies above the desktop are for organizing mail and cookbooks, and the latched doors up top hide phone books. Floor-to-ceiling shelves on the hallway side of the built-in create even more usable space, while a recessed toe-kick on the kitchen-facing side helps give the entire piece an elegant, furniture-like look.

**idea**

The beauty of built-ins is that you can customize them to work best for the people who will use them most. Thirty-six inches is standard counter height for a stand-up desk, but you can vary the height so it's comfortable for you.

