

Everybody Needs a Baker's Rack

I guess everyone doesn't need a baker's rack, but if you have a kitchen with a little extra wall space, or a porch, entry or dining room -- heck, even a bedroom -- a baker's rack can be quite handy. Matt loves it when I suggest a baker's rack. Why, you ask? Think about it: A baker's rack is used to store items and unlike many storage pieces, it doesn't weight much. See where I'm going with this? Well, enough about his convenience, let's talk about why a baker's rack is so necessary.



Let's start in the kitchen, which is the more obvious placement. The baker's rack is a great place for functional items as well as accessories. Large but attractive soup pots or roasting pans can look nice on the bottom shelves, along with baskets of placemats and rolled napkins for color.

Some racks come with built-in wine racks so you can add the sculptural beauty of rich wine bottles to your display. This is also a good spot for cookbooks. I like to have mine out on display; at least when they are on display they're being used for something! Of course, a few porcelain plates, a bouquet of flowers, even an apron hanging over the side adds interest and fun to a kitchen.

Now that you can see the possibilities in a kitchen -- storage for functional items as well as a great background for accessories -- lets "rack" our brains for ideas for other rooms in the home.

I'm certain Matt and I have used a baker's rack in a bedroom before. We were working on a tight budget and were able to find an inexpensive one at a garden center that worked well with our theme. We then purchased several rectangular wicker baskets and used them for storing socks, T-shirts and pretty printed scarves.

The upper shelves could hold baskets of unmentionables, since you'd have to be 8 feet tall to see inside them! The lowest shelf is a great place to fold up an additional quilt for when the weather is extra cold. In the end, the piece served as a dresser. The only drawback? You have to keep it neat -- and maybe that's not such a bad idea after all.

How about a baker's rack in a bathroom? If you have an older home -- and even some newer homes are designed with huge bathrooms but little storage -- a baker's rack would look fabulous filled up with a variety of colored bath towels, glass jars full of cotton balls and pretty soaps. Those baskets we spoke of earlier for the bedroom also would work here for bottles of shampoo, medicines and tonics.



This same idea could work well in a sun porch or small den. Place a small TV on the large shelf in the middle of the baker's rack, add some throws, books and accessories and you've created an entertainment center scaled back for a small space.

If you're worried about the electrical cords from all of the TV and stereo equipment, there are all kinds of cord corralling devices that can take care of the problem. Many of them are tubes that hide the wires; you could run the tube along one of the legs of the baker's rack and make it nearly invisible.

I have an older baker's rack that was once in much better shape but was nearly relegated to the trash. The interesting thing about it is that the rustier and more dilapidated it looked for the inside of the house, the better it looked for the outside.

So I got some help carrying it out to the patio, where it has become the focal point of my outdoor decor. It's covered in lovely blooming flowers and intriguing looking pottery. It's the most interesting addition I've ever made to my outdoor spaces, and it came from a very unlikely spot -- the kitchen!

Consider other pieces of furniture in this same way. Things are much more versatile than we first think. Try a dresser or chest in a kitchen to store table linens and placemats. An armoire in a kitchen becomes a pantry; a rolling kitchen island becomes an island for storage in a large walk-in closet. I have an old chair in my bathroom that is perfect for drying my towel, tossing my clothes, sitting to polish my toenails....and the list of versatile furniture goes on! Get those juices flowing and I know you'll think of more ideas yourself.

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