NEW HOMES & CONDOS

Turn your bookcase into a source of inspiration

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LIVING IN STYLE

There are so many beautiful and well-known libraries in the world; the Library of Congress, the Vatican Library, and one of the most famous, the Ancient Library of Alexandria, which suffered several fires or acts of destruction over many, many years, destroying immeasurable amounts scroll and books.

These libraries are massive and contain millions of invaluable, priceless and precious documents. Without these libraries and documents we would have no history, upon which we could look to back to learn from and to heed our future.

Books have and always will be a treasured commodity. They have provided us with insight of the past, motivate us for the present and inspire us for the future.

One of the fundamental reasons why we read, is that reading develops the mind and is also a method of discovering new things by adding value to our knowledge base.

In our homes, we want to create our very own foundation of knowledge and wisdom in personal libraries. This is where one would place their very own treasured literary works.

And by literary, it can be novels, essays, poetry, and oversized "pretty picture" books. As a firm, we design these libraries, but we also specialize in the finishing details of these spaces. Working in collaboration with our clients, we will create a library that best suites them.

Bookcases come in a variety of sizes and shapes. They can be open like an eteger or closed when they are built in. But most importantly they are meant to house your collection of well-read books. Along with some interesting objects, placed within the bookcase, it will have some flair, interest and make it less formal.

Here are a few tips on styling your bookcase:

1. Remove everything from the bookcase and shelves. Give them a full wipe down to remove any dust on all of the flat surfaces.

2. Organize your books by colour. I like to remove the dust jacket when they are too bright or colourful with too much graphic detail. Use only hard cover books as they stand up better and won't have cracks in the spines of the books.

3. Start with the "big" ideas first. I start by arranging the books in different blocking patterns on the shelves; some standing straight up, the others on their sides to hold the other books up. Sometimes if I don't have enough of the same colour of spines, I will turn the books around to show the pages of the books, which provides a neutral and textural element.

4. Then I like to incorporate artwork and/or picture frames to add some dimension to the shelves. When the shelves are really deep art can help bring the eye closer to the front, rather than to the back of the bookcase. Picture frames should be the same or similar to create continuity.

5. Lastly, one usually has many small objects that have little impact when they are left on their own. When they are included into a bookcase, they become little treasures that one has to walk up to the bookcase to see and appreciate, or become a collection that would have no relevance until they are grouped together.

Once you have mastered these five simple steps, you can easily change the colour of the books and accessories to create a new palette and theme in the very same room.

Books provide a unique and non-verbal form of communication about who we are. Your library and books should be a reflection of you as an individual. They should inspire and move your emotional boundaries, provide enlightenment and information. But one always has to remember that one should "never judge a book by its cover".

— Paul Semkuley is principal of Re:Source Lifestyle, a Toronto-based interior design firm. Visit him at www.resourcelifestyles.com.

Bookcases can come in a variety of sizes and shapes and can be used for more than just housing your collection of well-read books.

Incorporate artwork and/or picture frames to add some dimension to the shelves

Use interesting objects placed within the bookcase to give it some flair and interest and to make it less formal.