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Storage Bins: To Have and to Hold

By TIM McKEOUGH AUG. 20, 2014

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Without storage bins, no home is complete. That's what the partners of Tilton Fenwick will tell you if you ask.

The reason is simple: "It's the most instantaneous, perfect way to clean up at the end of the day," said Anne Maxwell Foster, 32, who runs the Manhattan interior design firm with Suisel dePedro Cunningham. "You literally just throw everything in the bins and the mess is gone."

"At the end of every installation, we always make a basket run," Ms. dePedro Cunningham, 38, added. "We're obsessive about bins."

For families with young children, they're essential, she said, "but it's not just about the kids, even though we like to blame it on them."

Storage bins can hold socks and sweaters in the closet, jewelry in the dresser and extra rolls of toilet paper in the bathroom, to name just a few uses. In short, they help organize lives.

But not all bins are created equal, and the good ones offer more than functionality. "We treat them as an accessory to add another layer to the room," Ms. dePedro Cunningham said, explaining that they always look for bins with interesting materials, textures and shapes.

At West Elm in Chelsea, they found a number of examples. A collection of wire-mesh bins with handles "would be good for a bathroom in the country," Ms. Maxwell Foster said, "or for water bottles in a kitchen."

And the smaller ones, Ms. dePedro Cunningham added, "would be great for folded-up face cloths."

For a home office, they thought the store's woven felt baskets might be nice, although the baskets made from woven water hyacinths held more appeal; both designers have them in their homes. Ms. Maxwell Foster uses hers to hold chunky bracelets, while Ms. dePedro Cunningham has one filled with hand towels next to her sink.

Across the street, at the Container Store, they liked the Feathergrain storage bins. "We have 15 to 20 of these in our office," Ms. Maxwell Foster said, admiring the dark wood grain.

The bright-yellow lattice bins they found online at the children's furniture store Land of Nod weren't nearly as office appropriate. Still, "These are just so much fun," Ms. Maxwell Foster said. "Even though they're designed for kids, we'd totally use them in an adult project."



Jake Naughton for The New York Times



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Storage Bins: Clearing the Clutter

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