Built-in furnishings create a rich, warm welcome in this circular foyer, which was designed by Louis Mackall (view is toward the entry door). For more on this project, see p. 52. Photo by Louis Mackall.
Now that we’ve seen how built-ins are designed, constructed, and installed, it’s time to start our room-by-room tour of the house. Beginning with the foyer and then moving into the living room, we’ll see how built-in furnishings—whether filling entire walls, creating boundaries between rooms, or simply offering display spaces—define both the aesthetics and the function of these rooms.
Three Entryways

Welcome home! An elegant foyer encircled with built-in furnishings (see the photos at left and on p. 50) is the first thing you encounter when you enter this New York City apartment. Unlike stand-alone furniture, the benches, cupboards, and display shelves that surround you are integral to the roomscape. These furnishings inform you that this is a room with a life and function of its own, not just a place on the way to somewhere else. The passage from the foyer into the living room is particularly delightful: The flanking built-in cases encourage you to linger to enjoy the artwork displayed within their softly lighted interiors.

It was the job of architect Louis Mackall, of Guilford, Connecticut, to convert this once dark and forbidding cubicle buried in the center of the apartment to such a welcoming space. Redesigned into a circular shape, the foyer can now welcome light from the rest of the apartment—the curved walls help to reflect the light evenly around the room. As can be seen in the before/after floor plans on the facing page, Mackall carefully oriented the doors to create new sight lines, drawing the eye from the center of the foyer to the outermost periphery of the apartment. Compare the new arrangement to the original floor plan, which had all the charm of a dungeon. The project was built by Breakfast Woodworks, also of Guilford.

Display shelving built into a passageway off the foyer draws you toward the living room. Photo by Louis Mackall.
Sometimes just a small touch is enough to lend elegance to an entry. In Seattle architect Ed Weinstein’s own home, a subtle built-in glass shelf greets visitors with a miniature gallery of art. The glass fills the recess created to the side of the stairs (see the photo at right), underlining the hanging artwork and providing a shelf for flower arrangements. To support the shelf as well as the handrail, builder Bill Walker, of Seattle, Washington, ran bolts through the handrail, through the hollow stainless-steel tubes that cradle the shelf, and into the wall studs.
Built-in shelving with reed baskets as organizers fills one wall of Tom Bosworth’s entry hall. Photo by Craig Wester.

Architect Tom Bosworth, of Seattle, Washington, designed the entryway to his home with practicality and economy of space foremost in mind. He created a recessed area right next to the door and filled it floor to ceiling with shelving (see the photo at left). Baskets organize and help ease access to the gardening implements, hats, gloves, and sporting equipment that are stored there. A small wine rack also finds a home in this relatively cool space. The shelving was built by Ravenhill Construction, of Friday Harbor, Washington.

Great Rooms

Reminiscent of the great rooms of ancient castles, huge living rooms are popular in even the most contemporary residential buildings. The challenge for designers is to create an expansive, elegant room that can still offer its inhabitants a feeling of warmth, cheer, and coziness. One good solution, as exemplified in a 22-ft. by 46-ft. living room created by architect Louis Mackall, of Guilford, Connecticut, relies heavily on extensive built-in furnishings.

In the room, shown in the photo on the facing page, the length of an entire wall is composed of built-in cabinetry: cupboards below, with display shelving behind glass doors above. The opposite wall is filled with windows, French doors, and a magnificent fireplace and mantel. Comfortable couches and a huge coffee table fill the space between. The soft interior lighting of the display cases, the low-voltage lighting strung across the room, and the glow of the fireplace bathe the room in a cozy amber radiance. With the display units filled with art, the wall takes on the appearance of a three-dimensional mural—a wall full of rich visual excitement.
One entire wall of this expansive living room, designed by Louis Mackall, is framed deep enough to house a floor-to-ceiling run of built-in cabinetry made of painted MDF and poplar. The counters and mantel are mahogany. Photo by Louis Mackall.
Maple-veneered built-ins define the opposing walls of a great room in a Seattle lakefront home designed by Weinstein Copeland Architects. (See the facing page for the mantel detail.) Photos by Craig Wester.
A great room designed by Weinstein Copeland Architects with Bill Walker, all of Seattle, Washington, though on the opposite coast of the United States, has a similar layout—and much the same ambience—as Mackall’s great room. The sitting area (see the photos on the facing page) is flanked by built-ins: on one side, a fireplace surround featuring built-in cabinetry running below a full-length, gently curving mantel, and on the other side, a floor-to-ceiling wall unit housing glass display shelving.

Bill Walker, who was also the builder, constructed the 13-ft.-long mantel by applying maple veneer and solid-wood edging to a core built up of plywood sandwiched around a solid-wood framework. As shown in the drawing below, bolts passing through the back rail of the interior framework secure the mantel to the wall framing. After applying the solid-wood facing to the edge and ends of the core assembly, Walker formed its curved and angled profile with power and hand planes, followed by a cabinet scraper.

The unit creates a wall between the living room and kitchen—on the kitchen side the unit provides upper and lower cupboard space. The back of the display-shelf unit protrudes into the kitchen.
providing a surface for a well-used bulletin board (see the photo and drawing below).

To create the large maple surfaces of both the mantel-side cabinetry and the wall unit/display case Walker applied maple veneer over a panel-stock substrate. (One way to apply veneers is described in the sidebar on pp. 60-61.) To create the fine shadow lines around the panels, he ran a flush-trim bit fit with an undersized guide bearing along the edge of the panel to produce a precise, tiny rabbet. A groove—or shadow line—is formed when this rabbeted panel butts against a straight-edged panel.

In the great room of a residence with a vaulted ceiling, architect Peter Bethanis, of Kents Hill, Maine, decided to take maximum advantage of the space created by the overhang of the stairway landing. Using the same wood (pickled oak) for the cabinetry as for the stairway components and entry door, Bethanis filled the space with a mix of open shelving, storage cupboards, drawers, and two desks (see the photo on the facing page). To reduce visual clutter, he had cabinetmaker David Lancaster, of Weeksmill, Maine, install bifold doors to conceal the desk surfaces. Stereo equipment is behind the large double-doors of the center cabinet.

Weinstein Copeland Partition Wall

CROSS SECTION AT CENTER

- Lighting
- Maple plywood
- Bulletin-board surface
- Cable and glass shelves
- Picture ledge
- Cavity with hole in slab for wires
- ¾-in. granite slab
- Living room
- Kitchen

This is the kitchen-side view of the wall shown in the bottom photo on p. 56 (a cross-sectional drawing is shown at right). Photo by Craig Wester.
Filling almost the entire wall of a great room, Peter Bethanis’s full-story-height cabinetwork appears to support an overhanging stair landing. Photo © Brian Vanden Brink.
CREATING VENEERED PANELS

Though maple-faced plywoods are available “off the shelf,” the only way you can ensure good grain matching across a broad surface is to select and apply the veneer yourself. Also, because hand-applied veneer is substantially thicker than most plywood face veneers, the figure (especially the quilted patterns in some maples) looks dramatically deeper and richer. For discriminating woodworkers and their clients, the difference is well worth the additional effort.

Here is one good way to veneer your own panels:

After cutting the panels to size, the first task in the veneering process is to clamp and glue a solid-wood edging to the exposed edges of the substrate (Step 1 in the drawing below). An industrial-grade (HD, or high-density) particleboard makes a good substrate for cabinet doors, and MDF, which is less predictably flat, can be used for supported surfaces. If the panel is structural (i.e., it supports a load), use a void-free hardwood plywood. When the glue is dry, you can use a shop-made fixture to guide the panel past a flush-trim bit installed on a table-mounted router (Step 2).

Next is bookmatching (Step 3) and aligning the veneers on the panel to create an appealing and uniform grain match—both on the panel itself and in relation to the surrounding panels. To ensure a good joint, make the cut along a straightedge, cutting through both veneers at once. If any voids show...
when you hold the veneers together edge to edge, plane both edges at the same time on a shooting board (Step 4). Then tape the veneers together with special veneer tape.

The next step (Step 5) assumes the use of glue film to apply the veneer—the simplest system for a small shop. If you are set up for it, however, you can apply liquid glue and clamp the veneer to the substrate with a veneer press or vacuum-bag system.

Cut the glue film slightly larger than the panel and attach it to the substrate with an iron set on medium heat. When the glue has set, peel off the backing sheet. Now align the bookmatched veneers on the substrate, cover them with the backing sheet and press the veneer into the glue film with the iron (Step 6). Press down firmly behind the iron with a block of wood or veneer hammer. Work out from the middle toward the edges. If you get a bubble, make a small incision along the grain with a razor to let the air escape. Finally, trim off the overhanging veneer with a small router or laminate trimmer fitted with a flush-trim bit.

Caution: if the panel is free-floating, such as a cabinet door, be sure to apply veneer to both sides of the substrate to minimize warp. To save on costs, you can get away with applying a less expensive veneer such as alder or poplar, to the inside.
See more ideas about Built in bookcase, Built in furniture and Home. You'll find how to build a built-in closet, built-ins from existing furniture, DIY Built In Bookcase Ideas, Wall-to-Wall Built-In Desk, Bookcase, and Entertainment Centers, plus more! Follow. Wooden Shelves Cubby Shelves Wood Shelf Shelves Built Into Wall Rustic Shelving Timber Shelves Shelving Ideas Storage Ideas Live Edge Shelves. Built in furniture. Hidden Doors, Hidden Door Bookcase, Bookshelves, Bookcase Bed, Secret Doors, Sliding Wall, Sliding Doors, Ottawa Ontario, Secret Rooms In Houses. Lesa Crown. Built in furniture. These 13 Secret Doors Are Hidden In Plain Sight. Secret Rooms In Houses Secret Doors Creative Bookshelves Bookshelf Design Bookshelf Ideas Vault Doors Door Design House Design Secret Door Bookshelf. Built-in furniture is not for the commitment averse, but if you’re ready for a long-term storage solution that will fit your home and style perfectly, then it could be the right choice. We gathered rooms from the AD archives that showcase smart custom-made furniture and storage ideas. From built-in beds to bookshelves, these designs create unique spaces that are functional and fashionable.