

MIDLAND *Room by Room*

FINE CABINETRY & MILLWORK

The Home Office

Business as Usual Has Never Looked So Good

Not so long ago, the home office was an emerging trend, its design pieced together as dictated by the home's floor plan and early, bulky computer equipment. Perhaps it shared space in the family room or spare bedroom; or it was cleverly squeezed into a closet or alcove large enough for a slim desk and chair.

Wherever it found an anchor, this makeshift working space no doubt served its purpose more through the sheer determination of its occupant than what truly drives productivity: organization, comfort and, importantly, a sense of place.

A sense of place — the atmosphere and character that defines a room and inspires its usage — is what Midland Cabinet Company brings to all of its projects. And the attention we pay to ensuring that every room in the home is atmosphere-appropriate has been extended over the past decade to include what is now, after the kitchen, our second-most requested project: crafting the thoroughly modern home office.

The Business of Life

Generally speaking, home offices fall into two categories — one that deals solely with taking care of business and one whose purpose is to take care of the business of daily life.

The latter category is generally associated with a space that serves the needs of the homeowner who handles household accounts and manages the innumerable activities that fill our daytime hours. It is an office designed for multi-tasking; and energy is its persona. Energy gives off light, and here that vitality is enhanced through the use of bright and cheerful elements — lighter-colored woods and veneers or painted wood surfaces.

Also in keeping with the energetic atmosphere of these busy home offices, they are generally located near the most active, and nourishing, room in the home, the kitchen.



This distinctive library is wrapped in the warmth of walnut, from the bookshelves to the window-arched canopy.

The Business of Doing Business

The other home office is the more formal one, representing the maturation of the home office in both styling and purpose. Here, the atmosphere tends to be refined, its mood more soothing. But the goal is singular: to create a room that attracts attention but doesn't distract from the task at hand — getting the job done.

For the most part, this is the “dedicated” home office, and its styling is as diverse as the tastes and requirements of its occupant, but with the caveat that all home office designs must focus, first and foremost, on what drives productivity: ease of use.

For example, the desk should be situated — perhaps sitting at an angle — to allow for easy access to equipment, file cabinets and needed work surfaces.

A window near the desk is a bonus, in terms of providing a soothing view, but careful attention needs to be paid to how that natural light — as well as installed interior lighting — affects computer-screen viewing.

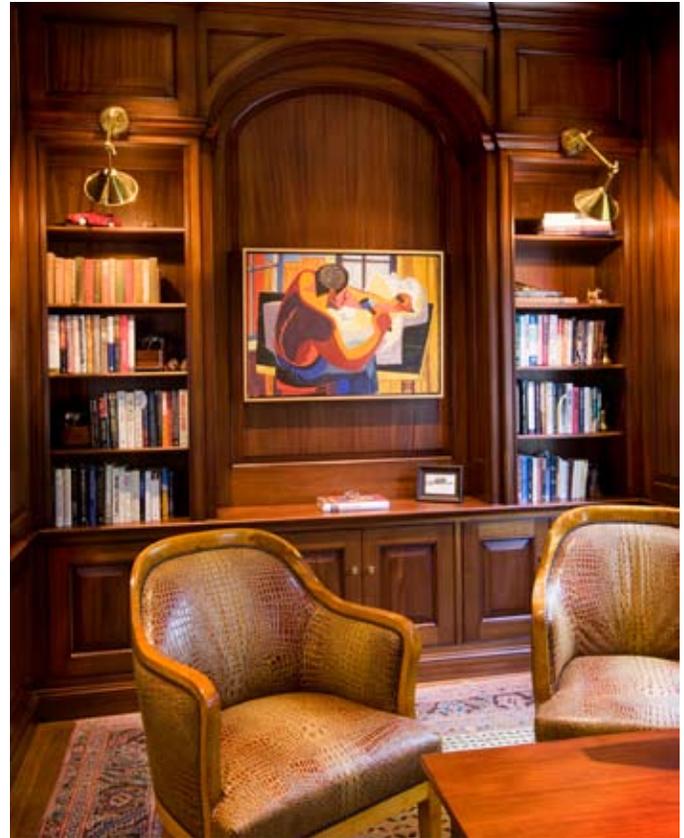
And there is nothing more distracting, and unattractive, than the mess of wires and cables that still haunt the home office, wireless-ready or not. Midland takes care of that unsightly problem by bundling the wires into our covered troughs that carry the wiring unseen from source to outlet.

Another trick: When the desk is flush against the wall, we often include our “hidden” knee-level cabinets, with doors, for storing, and hiding, things like computer hard drives and wiring.

The Coveted Office Library

At Midland, we don't just excel in providing fine cabinetry; we are a one-stop resource for hand-hewn architectural millwork and custom casework, all manufactured to our clients' specifications at our on-site facility.

Which means that when it comes to the most coveted



The use of rich ribbon-grain African mahogany sets an elegant tone and establishes a strong sense of place in this elegant home library.

home office design — the one that combines an office with a home library — we not only know how to do it from years of experience, we do it without compromising on quality or appearance.

One of our favorite combination office-library projects, pictured here, illustrates how we approach the bookcase as a work of functional art. The use of rich ribbon-grain African mahogany sets an elegant tone and establishes a strong sense of place that is carried throughout, from the inset-raised cabinet doors and panels to the sleek crown molding where bookcase and ceiling meet.

Adding character to the room: the classic arched and recessed back panel, the outline of which seamlessly follows the curve of the rolled fascia.

Note that while in this example a painting graces the back panel, it could also be outfitted with the most common office accessory, the flat-screen TV.

Contemporary

The above home office is an example of traditional library-office styling. In a more contemporary home office, we might choose clean-lined, square-edged floating shelves, rather than the more formal rolled or molded styling. And in place of lighting fixtures, we might outfit the shelving with modern LED down lighting for function and mood.

The contemporary office also lends itself to the addition of our work space-worthy countertops that follow the perimeter of the bookcase and separate the shelving above from the cabinets below. The countertop might be crafted from the same wood used for the bookcase, or we might choose a complementary high-pressure laminate for durability.

And just as the crown molding at the ceiling of the more formal office offsets the room's overall styling, in a contemporary office — especially those with the work-space countertops — what exists at floor level is apropos to the room's overall look and purpose: We tend to use toe-kick detailing at the bottom of the cabinets, a slight recess that protects the homeowner's toes from being stubbed when using the countertops. The detail also gives the cabinets a standalone furniture look, which can make a room appear more spacious.

A Word About Wood

While there are no hard-and-fast rules about which wood is the most appropriate for a home office, formal offices tend to utilize walnut or teak. Alder and cherry are commonly used in contemporary home offices.

At Midland, we use only premium woods, and of course we rely, too, on our collection of fancy-faced architectural veneers handpicked for evenness of color and grain.

Grain is king, and when using veneers for cabinet doors, we often choose either sequenced or book-match styling. Sequenced, in which the grain continues unbroken between door panels, is often utilized in

the contemporary home office for its clean, even appearance. Horizontal grains are particularly pleasing for the crisp, linear look they provide.

Book matching is the most popular look and does well in the a more formal office. Here, the veneer is cut so that the grain matches exactly from panel to panel, a mirror image — or, in the spirit of the home office library, like two adjacent pages in a book.



A conference room that speaks volumes. On display in our showroom, it is crafted in walnut, with a mahogany table.



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