



Contemporary styling, clean-lined panels and a blue painted finish make this Montage Deer Valley residence bunkroom fresh and inviting. Stairs make accessing the top bunks easy and safe. Design by Adam Hunter and Doug Smart of Smart Millworks.



Stacked in Your Favor

Bye-bye boring bunk beds. Today's versions step it up, pairing practicality with big personality.

BY BRAD MEE

WHEN IT COMES TO STYLE, few furnishings cause more eye-rolling than bunk beds. Army barracks, camp cabins and prison cells don't help their cause. Recently, however, bunks have broken free from their bad rap and are furnishing fashion-forward bedrooms throughout Utah. Make no mistake, creating a bunkroom that's both functional and fetching can be tricky. How do you load a space with stacked beds without emptying it of style? The short answer: Turn to the pros. Frequently hired to deliver high-occupancy to sleeping quarters, designers are crafting bunks in countless ultra-creative ways. For proof, we present a few of Utah's best bunkrooms as well as ideas and inspiration for creating one of your own.

Cramped, juvenile and as wobbly as a backyard swing set describe the bunk beds most of us shared with siblings. But like us, bunks have grown up. Today's custom built-ins are as solid in structure as they are in style. And they're in big demand. "The concept is exploding," says designer Bill Cordray of Teerlink Cabinet in Salt Lake. "Nearly all of our clients consider bunks for their new or remodeled homes." And why not? Built-in bunks not only maximize the space of tight sleeping quarters, but can transform larger bedrooms into dynamic, high-occupancy guest quarters as well. "A well-designed bunkroom can perform as well or better than two conventional guest rooms," Cordray says.



“Bunkrooms are fun spaces and naturally call for something a little over-the-top”

—Beth Hadlock

TYLER RYE PHOTOGRAPHY

Above: Builder Ron Jensen and designer Beth Hadlock created loft-like platforms in a St. George bunkroom. Lower bunks house storage bins and a trundle bed, keeping floor space open for play. Galvanized pipe railings, reclaimed pine bunks and walls, and vintage fixtures shape the room's industrial style. **Right:** Floating treads lead to a platform accessing the upper bunks of this grown-up Deer Valley bunkroom designed by Lynsey Humphrey of Alder & Tweed. The built-in bunks hold four queen-size beds.



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SPACE PLANNING

Bunks are powerful tools for capitalizing on the vertical space of most any room regardless of its shape. End-to-end bunks frequently furnish long, narrow spaces on one or both of the room's longer walls. L-shaped configurations—where the lower bunk extends

perpendicularly from the upper bunk—serve squarer bedrooms well. “There are so many ways to creatively configure bunks, from twin-sized to even queen,” says Cordray, who advises clients to be mindful of a room's windows, ceiling height, light fixtures and vents. “You don't want to block views and need ceilings to be high enough to allow guests to sit upright in both the bottom and top bunks. It's also important that overhead lights, vents, smoke detectors and fans aren't positioned directly above a bed.” Cordray also cautions homeowners to be mindful of a room's traffic flow so new bunks don't constrain movement within the space.

AMENITIES

Unique bunk features provide both function and flair. Among these are bookcases, reading lights, cubbies and even TV screens built into each bunk compartment. Savvy storage is a must, often provided by inconspicuous drawers located beneath bunks surprisingly within the structure of staircases that sometimes replace conventional ladders accessing upper bunks. Designers also incorporate lockers, benches, desks and even trundle beds into their built-ins. Of course, unique de-



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sign elements ranging from chic hardware and stately paneling to industrial-style railings and rustic, raw timber poles boost a room's personality. "Bunk rooms are fun spaces and naturally call for something a little over-the-top," says Beth Hadlock of Hadlock Design in St. George.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Kids-only rules no longer reign in the bunkroom. In the Montage Deer Valley, where stunning bunkrooms occupy many of the high-end residences, design and configuration focus on family and multi-generational use. There, sophisticated styling, spacious compartments and luxurious bedding help make bunks as appealing to grown-ups as to the kids. Pros across Utah employ the same adult-accommodating strategies in their designs, eliminating the need for redundant guest bedrooms. In St. George, where Hadlock chose extra-long twin bunks for a room designed for her client's visiting college-age son and friends, planning is key. "You need to know who you're building the bunkroom for—adults, children, overnight or long-term guests," she says. "The proper type of bunks, furnishings and storage hinges on this information." Not surprisingly, bunkrooms also require a grown-up budget. "While there's a broad price range depending on the style and scope of a project, custom built-in bunks generally run \$14,000 to \$18,000," says Cordray. Given the bunk bed's growing popularity as a space saver, statement maker and crowd pleaser, it's money many of today's homeowners consider well spent. **USD**

Above: By incorporating bunks into these gracious guest quarters, designer Lynsey Humphrey saved space for a built-in entertainment center and comfortable sitting area nearby. Large under-bunk drawers provide storage while refined millwork and elegant finishes give the room a decidedly sophisticated style. **Left:** Bill Cordray designed L-shaped built-in bunks for this Deer Valley guestroom. Removable guardrails ease the chore of making the top bunks' beds. The ladders' flat rungs ease climbing for adults as well as kids.

