



MEREDITH HEUER

FOR AN INVESTMENT

If custom built-ins aren't in the cards, try a modular, expandable system such as Atlas Industries' AS4. "It's custom in that you buy the units [to] fit your house, but they're all premade," Hanway says. "I think it's very handsome." A 32-inch-wide single column of shelving starts at \$2,700 for white oak or maple and \$2,900 for walnut or a painted finish, though the price varies depending on components selected — you can add drawers or file hangers to suit your storage needs. The price is comparable to built-ins, but at least you know that if you move, you can take it with you (cost varies, www.atlaseast.com).

SHOPPER

Bookcases that combine top-shelf design and utility

BY LINDSEY M. ROBERTS

Take four piles of treasured books, add one bookcase, and you have the formula for turning a mess of a personal library into an artful display. It sounds easy. Yet there are an overwhelming number of bookcase designs out there to choose from, and the variables for choosing are many: height, depth, length, material, shape, cost, color, style. If only finding the right shelving system were as easy and enjoyable as sitting down with a good read.

For help, we turned to Christine Chang Hanway of Remodelista.com and Maryland

interior designer Melissa McLay, a participant in the 2014 D.C. Design House.

Hanway admits that when feasible, installing built-in bookcases is the best way to go. (A custom bookcase can cost \$1,200-\$2,500 per column of shelves, depending on the material and total size of the project, says Nolan Brook, owner of Brook Custom Remodeling in Oakton.) But for those on a limited budget, or with plans for a future move, Hanway advises book lovers to find the best modular, expandable shelving systems they can afford.

Just like us, Hanway and McLay have the books, nostalgic objects and collections that fill rows and rows of shelves. But that's okay. It's the beloved personal items that make a house a home, anyway.



IKEA

FOR A BOOK LOVER ON A BUDGET

Ikea's Viitsjö is a hit among decorating bloggers, and for a good reason. The low-cost, glass-and-metal shelving unit comes in black but can be spray-painted any bright, fun color to match your color palette — even gold, if you have champagne taste (starting at \$40, www.ikea.com).



BENSEN

FOR A LARGE COLLECTION

The Format open bookcase, designed by Vancouver, B.C., firm Bensen, is modular within its frame, with removable divider panels and optional drawer cassettes (\$1,800-\$4,871, www.hivemodern.com). "The adjustable dividers in this system allow for flexibility where you can arrange them in a uniform grid," Hanway says, "but you can also change them into a more random grid if you get bored." It comes in multiple sizes and finishes.