

Shedloads of Style

The modern man cave is stocked with far more than tools and tins of paint. We take a look inside stylist Simon Foxtan's room of his own

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I HATE MUSIC SIGN

'The I Hate Music sign came with some CDs by Trevor Jackson – I'm pretty sure he did the artwork for it too. I like to listen to music in here – electronic and orchestral mostly.'

OBSERVER'S BOOKS

'I have a full collection of hardback *Observer's Books* up there – *Observer's Book of Cricket*, *Observer's Book of Modern Art*, *Observer's Book of London*. I've taken the covers off because I love the colours.'



LETTERS

'This letter A was from a shop that was being refitted on Theobald's Road in London, next to my office. I walked past and all the letters were lying in a skip. I got the G at the same time. There was an & as well, but I can't remember where that's gone. I've got an S in my office too.'



MINIATURE YELLOW STAIRS

'These little stairs are... I've no idea, actually! I'm not sure why or what it is, all I know is it's a really good colour. They're from Mexico. And that's a bat skeleton next to them.'



Much more than a sturdy place to store your tools, shelter from the rain and finish that pesky crossword, the humble garden shed is also thought to prolong a man's life: Leeds Beckett University's Alan White, the first professor of men's health, believes that having a shed could reduce blood pressure and stress. Maybe that's why David Cameron paid £25,000 for his Farrow & Ball 'luxury shed', complete with a double bed and wood-burning stove. Or maybe he just had some money to burn. Either way, it's safe to say that a shed is never really just a shed, is it?

Take fashion stylist Simon Foxtan's 'room of his own' at the bottom of his garden. From the outside, you might be forgiven for thinking it's any other shed. Inside, it's a maximalist's dream – an Aladdin's cave of found and foraged items Foxtan has been collecting and curating since he bought the shed 25 years ago.

'I didn't have a burning desire for a shed, I just needed an extra room. I'd been collecting stuff from car boot sales and it was getting a bit out of hand, to be honest,' he laughs. Describing himself as a 'car boot addict', Foxtan makes a monthly pilgrimage to Chiswick car boot sale and sells there too. 'I'm not a hoarder – it's good to get rid of stuff,' he says. Foxtan loves to collect 'pretty things' – coloured glass, decorative white toast racks (he has 50-60 of those) and Art Deco china are among his favourites.

'I started collecting when I moved into this house. Before that I was on the move a lot so I had less time or inclination to buy. Also, I never had my own bedroom growing up as we had a hotel, so I just stayed in whatever room was free that night. I guess this amassing of stuff might be a reaction to that!' ■