

WALK-IN CLOSETS GO MAINSTREAM

MEGAN MARTIN

Ample storage has always been an important part of any residential property. But today, with the popularity of home renovation shows and an unlimited range of ideas available online, people are spending more time organizing their closets, cupboards, and storage spaces than ever before. In fact, custom walk-in closets are now becoming common in new residential constructions, and the owners of existing properties are often retrofitting their closets with custom systems designed for their needs.

“Having built-in storage allows homeowners to maximize their space, and proper layouts help to keep the house in order because everything has its place,” said Armand Gagnon, owner of Garde Robes Gagnon, a company specializing in closet design. “The organization it provides is more and more necessary in our lives; it creates happiness in everyday life and adds value for resale.”

Walk-in closets today can be created to accommodate the exact needs of each homeowner. Whether you’re looking to store suits, sweaters, shoes and purses, or ballgowns, there’s a custom solution for every person.

“Walk-in closets are very popular and in demand — in fact, many of my clients would prefer to opt for a smaller bedroom with a walk-in than a large bedroom with a standard-size closet if they had to choose,” said interior designer Carmen Roy. “Who doesn’t dream about having a large space to store all our clothes, shoes and accessories? I know most people do.”

One of the growing trends in custom designs these days is ample space for accessories, such as drawers for ties, jewelry, watches, and more. By having space for accessories in the walk-ins, many

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homeowners are opting to forgo having a dresser.

“Removing bulky dressers really streamlines the look of bedrooms,” Gagnon said. “Keeping accessory items in a designated space in the walk-in is much more efficient.”

In terms of design, white shelving is the leading favourite among homeowners, but faux wood grain panels are often used to create a two-tone look as well.

“Walk-ins have evolved and changed over the years,” Roy said. “Today, closets are not only about extra storage functionality and space, they’re also about beauty, and style. Chandeliers, mood lighting, islands and dressing benches are a few of the luxuries that help make your closet chic and luxurious.”

If you’re thinking of investing in a walk-in closet, consulting with design experts is a great first step. It’s also advisable to do a thorough



This walk-in closet in a Montreal condo is not only functional, but visually attractive as well. Dark wood cabinetry, recessed pot lights in the ceiling, plus an eye-catching fixture serve to illuminate as well as create a mood, while the upholstered seat in the foreground serves as a dressing bench. *VINCENZO D’ALTO, GAZETTE FILES*

cleanup of your existing closet and take a proper inventory of what you want to keep. Doing so can clear out some clutter, and helps a closet designer develop a realistic idea of the amount and type of storage space each client needs.

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Interestingly, creating a custom walk-in closet system can be comparable in price to purchasing storage furniture, such as a dresser.

“The price, of course, varies depending on the amount of space to be designed and the number of drawers to integrate,” Gagnon said. “But it’s often a better investment as the custom system provides storage solutions tailored to the needs of each client.”

It also adds value to a home.

“As a former real estate agent, I can say that walk-in closets have always added some value to homes,” Roy said. “It’s a feature that many buyers request and consider when purchasing a home.”

At the end of the day, being organized contributes to quality of life, Gagnon said.

“Storage systems are for better living, every day.”



A pull-out tie rack is just one of the ways accessories can be stored in a walk-in closet. *JOHN MAHONEY, GAZETTE FILES*



A walk-in closet with drawers, cupboards, open shelving and rods for hanging clothes — not to mention a full-length mirror and comfortable bench — helps keep clothes, shoes and accessories organized. *PHOTO COURTESY OF GARDE ROBES GAGNON*



A walk-in closet or designated dressing nook like this one may seem like a luxury, but it goes a long way toward keeping a bedroom neat and uncluttered. *CALIFORNIA CLOSETS PHOTO, GAZETTE FILES*



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