

MIDLAND *Room by Room*

FINE CABINETRY & MILLWORK

The Closet

Our Closets Make a Fashion Statement

It may not be as necessary as a kitchen or bath, or as glamorous as a formal living room or master bedroom suite. But there is possibly no space in the home that tickles the fancy of the modern homeowner more than the custom-designed walk-in closet — unless it's the closet's upscale counterpart: a formal dressing room, one for him and one for her.

While the definition of a closet's function is seemingly mundane — storage — there is nothing commonplace about the closets Midland Cabinet Company creates.

From top to bottom, floors to doors, cabinetry to lighting, each element of a closet is of equal and exacting importance. A closet needs to be carefully engineered, because no matter how sumptuous it may be, a closet is only as good as what it offers: organization.

Designing the Closet

The beauty of a custom-designed closet is exactly that: it is custom made to fit the needs of the user.

And that's also the starting point for crafting the perfect closet, understanding how the closet and its contents will be used. What clothes are most commonly worn; how many shoes need to be stored; what about accessories, like jewelry, and necessities, like purses and ties; and what about seasonal clothes and coats? Where will they fit in the scheme of things? Not to mention the items that need to be stored in drawers.

The contents themselves may vary by taste and fashion, but with usage and quantity in mind, the closet can begin to take shape.



Adjoining the bath, a gentleman's dressing room crafted in deep, rich walnut.

The 'Typical' Walk-in Closet

A typical walk-in closet, to function correctly, measures 7 feet wide by 12 feet deep.

The width of the closet allows for a three-foot walkway between two rows of clothes. The closet's depth and width can accommodate extra storage by way of a dresser or built-in unit, which might include shelves or racks for shoes. It's important that the size

and design of this built-in feature be considered in relation to the rest of the closet. There is nothing worse in closet design than wasted space.

As for the height of the closet, the more it soars, the more room for storage. An eight-foot ceiling is the norm for a walk-in closet, and offers space for a shelf above the clothes poles.

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A higher ceiling — nine to ten feet — gives Midland the space to install one of its specialty items: a pull-down clothes pole. The pole takes advantage of the extra space the higher ceiling affords. Its mechanism — a weight-spring balance — allows homeowners to pull down the pole, with clothes hanging intact. You can see an example of the pull-down clothes pole at Midland's extensive room-by-room showroom.

The Formal Dressing Room

As stylish as walk-in closets are, there's nothing as fashion-forward as the full-fledged dressing room. And if there's one, there's normally another, one for her and one for him. There are differences between the two — the clothing itself and also varying tastes in wall color and wood. But dressing rooms, as with walk-in closets, are always true to the underlying purpose, keeping things organized.

A favorite organizing "tool" is an island in the middle of the dressing room, though by no means is it as mundane as the word tool implies. Island closets, like their kitchen counterparts, can be as elegant as furniture itself.

Practically speaking, the surface of the island can be used in numerous ways, from packing suitcases

to holding a glass case for storing and displaying jewelry.

The cabinets and drawers built in to closet islands can also be designed for a variety of uses, including drawers for jewelry that are lined and cushioned, and cabinets that feature pull-out tie and belt racks.

The same variety in storage-space function is true in custom-made closet furniture, like highboy dressers and armoires, both of which find their way naturally into these sophisticated dressing areas.

Walls and Floors Matter

Furniture-quality is also the measure of styling when it comes to a dressing room's walls and floors. Appearance matters, as it would in any other room in the house — with the very-personal closet perhaps offering a bit more freedom of expression.

For example, more exotic elements might be used for framing and paneling. In working on a man's dressing room, Midland used deeply patterned walnut burl for the paneling, complemented by frames that were more refined, flat cut and exposing the natural grain.

Wood is also used for flooring in a closet, though if it is, the floor is heated: warmth and comfort are prerequisites for a quality dressing room. Which is why most are carpeted.

Focus on Doors, Mirrors and Lighting

In short, closets have doors. Doors provide privacy, and they keep the clothes cleaner. The choice is often between a wood or glass door, and that's an individual decision.

Mirrors are must-haves. Where they're placed is dependent on the overall closet design. We've come up with a clever solution — a mirrored door that

when opened becomes a three-way mirror. In the walk-in closet, the mirrored door is against the back wall and opens onto storage for, among other things, shoe racks.

Like doors and mirrors, lighting is a necessity. There are three standard choices. The most common is recessed ceiling cans. Also popular, lighting on the top of the cabinets that washes up and reflects off the ceiling. This type of lighting makes a room appear larger. Depending on the styling of the room, the third choice is a lamp. Lamps can give a room a homey feeling.

A fourth lighting choice is based more on convenience: installing an automatic switch that turns on the lights when a cabinet door opens, highlighting the hanging clothes.

Literally a Hall Closet

Not all closets are rooms. Some closets are situated between bedroom and bath. They're hall closets, literally.

For one of our hallway closet designs, we used every inch of the walkway for storage — which represented a mix of closets, cabinetry and drawers. To take advantage of the hallway's high ceiling, we built a row of cabinets just below it, and solved the access problem with a rolling ladder securely attached to a pole beneath the cabinetry.

To break up and add dimension to the walls, we crafted a built-in and recessed highboy, with mirrors and counter space.

Combined with the styling in general and the lightness of the wood stain, we're confident that we accomplished what we set out to do: to create a uniquely styled, warm and inviting dressing space and passageway.



To break up and add dimension to the walls in this hallway closet, we crafted a built-in and recessed highboy, with mirrors and counter space.



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