



Tips to Build By

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Let's Talk Closets

Two things we have all heard and can pretty much agree on the following:

The kitchen and the master bath are what sell a home.

The wife/female is the one who will decide if the home is purchased or not, based upon the above concept.

While that supposition still rings true, large, functional and well-designed closets have started to take their place as one of the primary rooms that homeowners are requesting/expecting/wanting when purchasing a new home.

Whether it be new construction or remodeling, great functional closets are high on the list of not just a 'want' but a 'need.' Some homeowners have repurposed unused rooms to make way for larger master closets when remodeling. But other homeowners have built entire wings added onto existing homes to make way for a fabulous master closet!

Let's face it, the basic Plain Jane closet that we see in most homes is painted white with shelves that don't adjust, a built-in chest of drawers and a shelf above a pole for the hanging area. It only functions one way and just isn't



acceptable any more. Homeowners now have seen more and want more!

Who doesn't feel great walking into and/or out of a fabulous closet? Small or large, it can be functional, beautiful and unforgettable.



The closet pictured at left in a master has a pull-down bar at the top for seasonal storage. However, this bar doesn't really function very well for heavy clothes and the box containing it isn't tall enough for that kind of storage. In addition, none of the shelves are adjustable.

While full customized closets can be very expensive for a spec builder, I do believe that a better designed closet will not only increase the value of the home but also will increase the interest in the purchase of the home, and thereby decrease the length of time that the home sits on the market.

Floor plans can deceive homeowners. When looking at a floor plan of a closet, homeowners may feel that their closet is large enough by just looking at the space on the plan. However, because the plans only show where the rod is placed and doesn't show the amount of space that is actually used by hanging clothes hanging, they are surprised the closet is actually much smaller.

They usually think they have room for an island because of all of the open space in the middle of the closet's floor plan. But they may not realize that a minimum of 30 inches is needed for a walking space around the island, especially if the island has drawers in it.

So what once seemed to be a very large and spacious closet, now doesn't even begin to give the homeowners what they were wanting.

(If I could have one wish, it would be for the architects/designers to draw the minimum of 22 inches off the wall

for the clothes to hang, rather than the 12-inch standard they use now, so a truer sense of space is realized.)

In new construction homeowners have a blank slate for designing closets. If they are lucky enough to address square footage for the closet space while the house is in the planning stage, they can really hit a home run. If not and they are left to deal with what they are given, they should try to maximize the space as much as possible.

In remodeling projects, the homeowners should go to the bare walls and rethink the entire layout. If they can grab some space from another area, great! If not, they should plan for the most function for the space that is given. That being said, the homeowners may not get everything they need in a closet and may have to prioritize the available space.

For much smaller homes that can't be made any bigger, an interior designer can create a more functional closet. Some bedroom furniture will accommodate clothes and shoes within a beautiful built-in that also serves as an entertainment center with drawers.

Builders and remodelers can set themselves apart from the pack and increase the value and function of this very important space if they consider the following:

Go to the ceiling! Going to the ceiling will give you more storage, and more storage is always what a homeowner wants. But do not go to the ceiling with clothes bars unless the homeowner actually has enough for clothes to demand it. And forget about the pull-down bar; it will be more headache than it is worth.

Eliminate cabinets that meet in the corner if possible. Homeowners lose so much valuable space in a corner because cabinets just doesn't function as well there. Instead, builders should propose a shoe carousel that is perfect for any corner. Within that 3-foot-square space, a carousel can hold shoes, purses, hats, or whatever. It maximizes the function of a normally bad corner.

Make everything adjustable whenever possible. Most closets are designed within 4-foot boxes. At a nominal cost builders can drill holes in the front and back so the homeowner can decide how they want to lay out their closets. Some may want long hang, double hang or more folding space. These holes but makes the closet so much more functional. These adjustable holes are a great selling point if they are presented to the homeowner/buyer.

Add a couple of extras such as valet poles. They don't cost very much, but they can be that one little detail sets one builder apart from others. Valet poles show that the builder pays attention to the the small details.

Paint the walls differently from the shelving. The variation will give the closet a more boutique feel. The more it looks

like a dress/menswear shop, the better.

Make sure lighting is sufficient. Obviously recessed cans are more cost effective, but making a space for a striking light fixture gives the closet a more custom/boutique feel.

My design firm is doing more LED lighting in closets within the cabinetry itself nowadays. Builders can run tape light up the back of the front of the boxes to light the areas evenly and beautifully. Or builders can use rods with lights in them if they are using frameless construction. Check out Sempria LED-lighted closet rods at www.tasklighting.com.

If space allows, builders can add a full length mirror and a place to sit to put on or take off shoes.

If two people are using the same space, a builder should try to divide the space to create obvious boundaries. My company's clients say they don't want to share a closet space unless they have to.

As a designer, I prefer frameless construction in a closet. It is cleaner and less bulky and allows for ease of transitioning within the space. This construction also increases useable space. Full overlay construction looks nice as well.

When creating closed areas, a builder should keep the door/cabinet fronts simple, either slab or simple Shaker

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doors. Since the space is usually not that big and there is a lot to be stored, less is more. Women love doors covered with mirrors for its practical and dynamic effect.

When building drawers, builders should note that 9 inches tends to be the best for depth for clothes storage. Any deeper than that, things tend to get lost. Most people don't go past that third layer of clothes anyway.

Have a 'put down' area where homeowners can charge phones and empty pockets.

Closets have become the new 'enviable' space. They're almost like the kitchen. They are now the space that will drive the sale of the home and the design of the remodel. A fully functional closet that is attractive will greatly increase the value of the home and the happiness of the homeowner.

Be THAT remodeler or builder – the one they remember!

The floor plan below eliminates corners and allows for ease of access for all areas. The vanity sits at the far left in its own area and allows the homeowner to walk out of the closet completely dressed. The custom shoe carousel is located in the bottom right corner. All aspects of getting dressed are done in this closet.

The vanity is lit with an electric mirror. Each upper side panel houses makeup and more behind mirrored doors.

LED lit, glass topped jewelry display cases sets this master closet apart from most. This beautiful master closet uses a custom-designed and custom-built shoe carousel to get maximum benefit out of a corner. With three tiers of independently rotating shelves, this piece d' resistance holds 196 pairs of shoes!

From boring white to warm, fabulous woods, this man's closet is both functional and beautiful. This closet is a game changer!



Kathy Anderson, principal designer and owner of Eklektik Interiors, brings a broad perspective and exclusiveness to her interior designs. Inspired by her world travels, Kathy focuses on creating a personal design that is timeless. With extensive residential as well as commercial experience, Kathy has found that a vital key to truly successful interior design projects is communication. She believes the design process should be an enjoyable one. By helping her clients better understand the process, the experience becomes less intimidating for them. Her ability to read her clients is a strength that helps her to create that "signature" environment for each space. Kathy received a degree in interior design from Brigham Young University and is a licensed and registered interior designer.