

MASTER CLOSETS DRESSING ROOMS

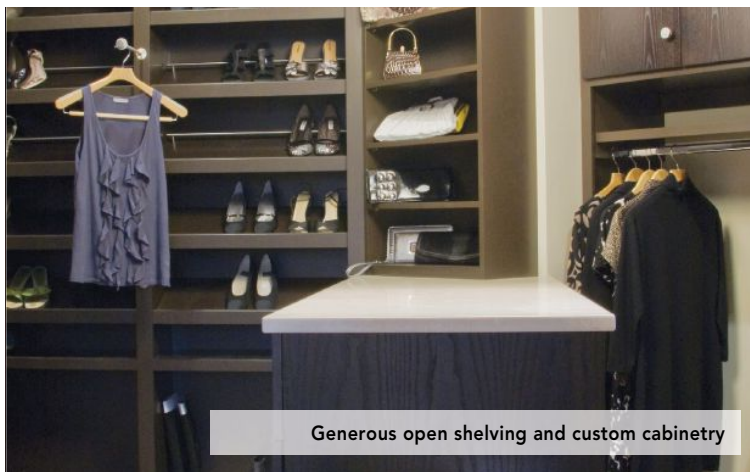
IT'S IN THE DETAILS. By Kirsetin Morello

Beautiful master closets are the product of careful planning and inspired design. But the first step to an attractive closet is culling your belongings.

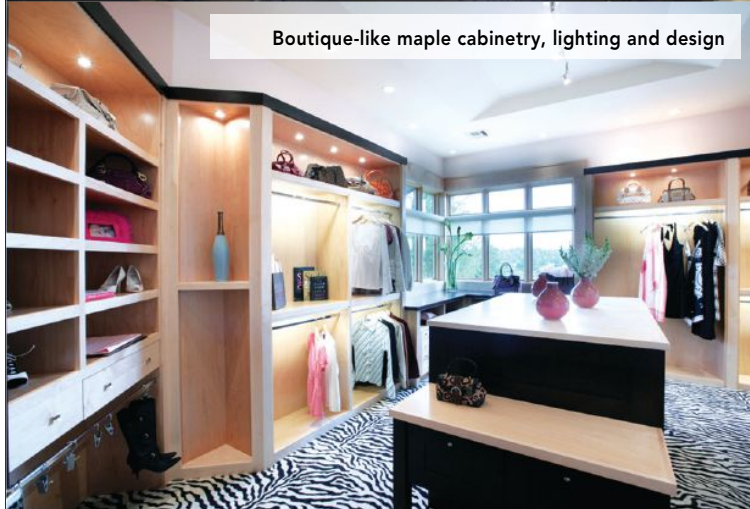
"If you haven't worn it in over a year, give it away and let someone else have the benefit," suggests Wayne Visbeen, architect, interior designer and founder of Visbeen Architects, who designed all of the featured closets. "It makes your closet more spacious. An organized closet will feel better, and it will be easier to know what you're going to wear the next day."

Beyond getting organized, Visbeen notes, every client has different needs. "What I do as an architect and interior designer is a little psychology first. I'm thinking about every aspect of how you live." He wants to know everything—from whether one person gets up earlier than the other, to how often you travel, to whether you prefer to hang or fold your jeans, along with myriad other nuances. "I draw exactly what's appropriate for that person, the way they like to live, and they way they like to dress."

Oversized full-length mirror



Generous open shelving and custom cabinetry



Boutique-like maple cabinetry, lighting and design



Floor-to-ceiling shoe racks, granite island countertop



Gorgeous lighting

CUSTOM DETAIL

Dalene Abbott, manager of Evereve in East Grand Rapids, worked with Visbeen Architects to design her former home and master closet, built by Scott Christopher Homes in 2008. The custom closet has a contemporary edge, with beautiful maple, a black-trimmed zebra carpet and lots of attention to detail.

"I think you have to decide what you have the most of and what your priorities are," Abbott said about the master closet design process. "I wanted it to feel like a boutique when you walk into my closet." And it does. From the wall that displays her shoe collection to the top row of the closet—built with deep, lighted shelves to hold her designer handbags—it's a fashionista's dream.

Visbeen also designed several features, such as the open shelving and island, to fit Abbott's personal style. "I like to display my things," she explained. "I don't like them tucked in drawers."

Abbott's favorite feature is rod that runs along the bottom row of her closet, designed to hang all of her tall boots. "They're sort of like clothes pins on a C hook. They hang from the bar and they're fantastic!"

PRACTICAL ELEGANCE

Practical by nature, Elizabeth Arthur (not her real name) has a stunning closet that's a Type-A's dream. "Part of designing for Elizabeth was thinking about her sense of organization," said Visbeen. "Her closet is really beautiful, but also very functional. The simple cabinetry is very well-executed and the granite countertop adds a splash of elegance."

One feature Arthur wasn't initially sure about including was a stackable washer and dryer. Now, she loves it. "I don't have to lug laundry up and down the stairs," she explained. "It's the most awesome thing I did!"

Arthur had the linen closet built into her dressing room. "I hung a full-length mirror on the outside of the linen closet door, so I don't have to open it every time I want to look in the mirror." Also in her closet is a small bench, where she can sit to put on her shoes and socks.

Arthur appreciates having an electrical outlet in the closet's island. She frequently uses it to plug in her clothing steamer and sonic jewelry cleaner, and as a great place to recharge electronics at night.

Possibly the smallest detail Arthur finds incredibly useful is a valet pull, an extendable rod on which you can temporarily hang clothes—perhaps something you're planning to wear for the evening or clothes you just got back from the dry cleaner. "I wasn't sure I wanted it, but then I went back and got another one," she said. "I ended up putting one in my son's closet, too." **WMW**