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The most extravagant walk-in wardrobes

These ultimate private spaces now come with display cabinets for handbags, beauty fridges — and even a dressing area for the dog



A dressing room by the interior designer Charu Gandhi

[Katrina Burroughs](#) | Saturday March 02 2024, 12.28am, The Times

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There is no space in the house that expresses your personal style more than your dressing room. It's the place where you display your most intimate and carefully chosen possessions; it can be unruly, colourful and accessorised with hundreds of shoes, as in Carrie Bradshaw's in *Sex and the City*, or meticulously organised like David Beckham's, with a rail of perfectly spaced outfits lined up for the week.

Many people want their dressing rooms to fit them like bespoke tailoring, the interior designer Sheila El-Hadery, of TH2 Designs, says. For some, it is their primary private space, the only area in which they can lurk undisturbed. El-Hadery's latest design was for a house in the Alps, "for a couple that had lots of visitors and teenage children", she says.

“So we designed his-and-hers dressing rooms fitted with a coffee machine and a stylish Japanese kettle.” Each space had bespoke storage made for cups, tea bags and coffee pods and, to keep the milk and cream fresh, a hidden fridge drawer.

Better make that two fridge drawers: Emma Sims-Hilditch, interior designer to the Cotswolds set, says that her clients frequently request beauty fridges in which to store skincare products such as de-puffing ice globes and face creams that can deteriorate at room temperature. One of the most popular models is Sub-Zero & Wolf’s “refrigeration drawer” (£8,040, subzero-wolf.co.uk), which can be integrated and has adjustable and removable dividers to separate supplies for morning and evening beauty routines. Similarly, in their quest for eternal youth, clients of Charu Gandhi, the founder of the luxury interior design and architecture studio Elicyon, want all the latest electronic gadgetry incorporated into their wardrobes.

“We are increasingly being asked to equip these spaces with high-performance technology ranging from daily facial oxygenation wands to LED facemasks,” she says. “If clients use them on a daily basis, we tend to put them on the countertop. If they prefer them out of sight, we make drawers with sockets inside so [the devices] can charge while they are stored away.”

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Few clients would consider sharing a dressing room with a spouse, Sims-Hilditch says, but pets are another matter: she has recently designed a walk-in wardrobe to accommodate a dog. “[The client] has a corgi that she likes to dress for the occasion,” Sims-Hilditch says. “It might be a country dog walk, when he would need a little wool jacket, or an evening dinner party, where he had to look smart in some sort of dinner suit. During the project, he needed to be visible when the builders were on site, with his own hi-vis vest.”

The owner sacrificed part of an island in her dressing room to display the canine couture. Sims-Hilditch likens the stained-oak cabinetry and compartments lined with sand-coloured baize to “a Savile Row menswear store, where you’d have your lovely timber display case with a glass top divided into compartments and below, the drawers where you can pull out the different outfits”.

Interior designers appreciate that accessories can be artworks and adapt their plans to display clients’ collections accordingly, from Sims-Hilditch’s Savile Row-inspired cabinets to museum-style storage. When Gandhi was asked to design a space for a collection of 30 designer handbags, for instance, she rang the manager of the Hermès showroom on Bond Street for advice — and the result was a combination of labelled drawers and glazed cupboards with strong seals to control the temperature, humidity and presence of dust.

Traditionally, dressing rooms were relatively simple, to show off the beauty of the wardrobe’s contents. But a scene-stealing ceiling is the

new must-have decorative flourish, according to the interior designer Naomi Astley Clarke. In a Chelsea penthouse project she paired understated cabinetry with spectacular *trompe l'oeil* ceiling art by her go-to muralist, the Somerset-based artist Frederick Wimsett. It featured blue and gold veining and mimicked a giant slice of semi-precious stone.

Rather than risking dripping paint on the designer dresses of clients such as Alice Temperley, Kate Moss and Rita Ora, the muralist can paint his chinoiserie, forest scenes and cloudscapes on to giant canvases (costing from £800 to £1,200 per square metre, frederickwimsett.com) that can be fixed to the ceiling like wallpaper. In the latest luxury walk-in wardrobes, it seems, the sky really is the limit.

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