



Interiors

Luxury Closets For Less

Jeanine Poggi 10.27.08, 8:00 PM ET



Before you fold that cashmere sweater and store it in a drawer, consider what your neighbor may be doing with hers.

If she's like a growing number of consumers, she's likely draping it over a silk padded hanger before placing it on any of a number of [valet rods](#) populating her closet.

These types of accessories are becoming the norm. Other popular items include [lavender sweater folds](#), [custom lighting](#) and

[felt-lined jewelry trays](#). Once private nooks few eyes were privy to, some closets even house flat-screen TVs, chandeliers, wine bars, sofas and fireplaces.

"Closets today are no longer an afterthought," says Melanie Charlton Fascitelli, owner of Clos-ette, a closet design company in [New York City](#), and author of the book, *Shop Your Closet*. "They are rooms unto themselves and as important as any other in the house."

[In Depth: Wallet-Friendly Closet Accessories](#)

Though closet and home organization system providers experienced a slowdown in sales in 2007, dropping 30% after two years of double-digit growth, according to a survey conducted by *Closets* magazine, closet and home organizational providers still saw average gross sales top \$1 million.

It's no wonder. Closets are now a status symbol. Look no further than the pages of magazines like *InStyle* and *Domino* to see the interiors of celebrity homes, many which feature plush, tricked out closets. This coupled with the real estate and spending boom and consumers' desire to

supersize everything, drove the trend in customized closets.

But many no longer have the means to turn their closets into private lairs. As a result, retailers are offering storage systems and accessories that mimic higher-end amenities.

Top Trimmings Quality hangers go far in keeping clothing in good shape. There are different hangers for each type of clothing that ensure they retain their shape and minimize creasing. Wide-shoulder hangers are best for heavy coats and suit jackets, padded hangers are better for delicate blouses or dresses, and notched hangers prevent shoulder straps from slipping.

There are also an array of closet accessories to help keep you organized. The most popular closet upgrades are drawers (61%), valet rods (58%), and tie and belt racks (54%), according to the *Closets* magazine survey.

Valet or pull-down closet rods provide easy access to items you want to store in higher regions of your closet. The rod pulls out and down and stays there while you select or hang your clothes.

A double-rod is essential for tight closets. The rod provides two layers of hanging space--the top for longer items like dresses and the bottom for shorter pieces like skirts and shirts.

When it comes to shoes, get them off the floor by purchasing [chrome stackable racks](#), which can be mounted 7 to 8 feet high and used as wall storage.

Next, invest in Lucite sliding shelf dividers, which create a cubby-like space, Fascitelli says. This allows items like sweaters and T-shirts to be more visible and accessible than if they were shoved in drawers.

Old-school peg boards and hooks can be used on available wall space to hang robes, bags, belts and costume jewelry.

"You are inclined to wear more and get the most out of your wardrobe if you are able to see where everything is," Fascitelli says.

Is a well-outfitted closet a necessity? Weigh in. Post your thoughts in the Reader Comment section below.

While a state-of-the-art closet can cost over \$150,000, the average price being paid for a closet is about \$4,300. But these accessories, which can

be found at big box retailers like the Container Store or **Target** (nyse: [TGT](#) - [news](#) - [people](#)), can help you revamp your closet for even less.

Closets have increasingly become a crucial feature when looking to buy or sell a house.

"Builders know they have to include spacious, well-lit closets in their projects because consumers have come to expect them," says Denise Butchko, design consultant at Butchko and Company, a closet design company in Chicago. While at one time spacious closets may have helped increase the value of the home, in many cases they have now become essential in order to get the property off the market.

"A lot of people spend more time in their closets than in their kitchen," says Cynthia Olive, co-owner of Closet Factory in California. "They want to go in there and be able to find what they are looking for with minimal hassle."