



Suite storage

ELABORATE
CLOSETS TAKE
MASTER
BEDROOMS BACK
TO AN ERA OF
LUXURY.



Master bedrooms are becoming master suites, left, with space for dressing and elaborate closets that have dedicated, specialized storage, top.

Look at the latest in closets and master bedrooms and you're likely to see that what's old is new.

Today's trend steps back 300 years to a time when dressing rooms were the rule and people used master bedrooms for sleeping and other leisurely pursuits.

"Luxury and pleasure, rather than efficiency, are at the heart of today's private spaces like dressing areas and master suites," said Rancho Santa Margarita interior designer Beth Whitlinger, ASID, CID.

"Years ago no dressing was done in the bedroom. Instead clothes were housed in a dressing room. Today's large, elaborate closets look like dressing rooms, and they're an enjoyable, luxurious place to be. They often have seating, a refreshment area and even chandeliers."

Gone are the utilitarian clothing rods that came with the closet organizing craze.

"Today's closets are dressed up themselves," said Julie Lloyd, senior design director for Clive Christian in Beverly Hills, which specializes in traditional architectural furniture design throughout the home.

"While practical, organizational issues are still important in closets, aesthetics are paramount," she said. "People want to showcase their garments and accessories, rather than just house them."

Designers have created high-end furniture pieces for closets.

"Today's closet furniture resembles china cabinets for displaying precious



The elaborate closet in this Pelican Crest home has rich woods and custom features, such as specialized storage for watches and jewelry.

clothing items," said Lloyd. "They're illuminated and made from beautiful, detailed beveled glass, which makes a perfect place to display a treasured formal gown. There are separate areas for housing ties, scarves and jewelry."

Such closet furniture is also well crafted.

"The finest wood in the world is being used, including Brazilian mahogany, French oak and English yew," said Lloyd. "The pieces have crystal handles, brass hardware, gold leaf detailing, and leather lining in the interior."

Mirrors are another common addition to today's closets.

"Mirrors on all of the walls create a constant reflection of light on the fabulous clothing collection and the person who owns it," said Lloyd. "This is a personal celebration, and it's very much about enjoying the whole process of dressing oneself," she said. "It becomes a true event."

While large closets are the norm in newer homes, they're not so common in older houses. In order to reclaim space for closets, many homeowners are choosing to remodel and use existing, underused rooms.

"Many people like their home and don't



Specialized space isn't just for Mom and Dad, as shown in the children's closet at this year's House of Design.

want to leave, so they're often willing to sacrifice an existing room and add it to the master suite and closet area," said Whitlinger.

With the closet a room unto itself, master bedrooms have also changed, and lux-

ury is the operative word.

"Master suites are really hot right now," said Whitlinger. "People are looking for them as a retreat. Such private spaces have all the amenities of a four-star hotel, including coffee bars, sitting areas,



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Photo courtesy Martin King

Designer Beth Whitlinger had "luxury and pleasure" in mind in designing the sumptuous bath and a large adjacent closet in the master suite at this year's Philharmonic House of Design.

round-sound music systems, saunas and even aromatherapy in the shower."

Most of today's master suites are designed as mini-apartments, said Whitlinger.

"The areas are generally separated into various zones, depending on the activity," she said. "There's the sleeping area and a sitting section where you can either read or watch television. There is often a third zone for activities like writing, crafts or sewing."

Sometimes the various zones are allowed to flow into one another, or they might be divided by a wall, screen or plants so that activities can more easily occur simultaneously.

"The rest of the house has been designed," said Whitlinger. "Now people feel it's time to concentrate on their private spaces - and they're doing so in a big way."

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RESOURCES

- **Clive Christian**, Laguna Design Center, 23811 Aliso Creek Road, Suite 170, Laguna Niguel, (949) 831-3571; 8687 Melrose Ave., Suite G295, West Hollywood, (310) 854-3862
- **Beth Whitlinger Interior Design**, 23246 Arroyo Vista, Rancho Santa Margarita, (949) 766-1093