



Cupboard love

There's something *fabulously pleasing* about a perfectly *organised wardrobe*. Here's how to get yours in order

WORDS **ROSEMARY BARRACLOUGH**

LIZZIE ORME / GAP INTERIORS



RIGHT If you're short of wardrobe space, a wall of fitted cupboards will often be the best way to add more storage; in this case a custom-built armoire has been painted the same colour as the room to blend in, rather than dominate the space.

THIS PAGE (clockwise from top left) Wardrobe doors in a child's room do double-duty as a blackboard; keep things they use regularly at child-height and stash infrequently used items up high. You might think you'll remember where things are but, in a cabinet like this, with many drawers, labels will save you ferreting around. Wicker baskets present an attractive front while maximising storage and allowing you to see and access everything easily; rolling throws or towels makes it easier to extract one without bringing them all tumbling down. It's surprising how much storage can be squeezed into a small area if you plan carefully and use every smidgen of space.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANISER Natalie Jane has been let into many wardrobe secrets – she recently helped a client cull her 300-pair shoe collection by half and set her up with a storage system of clear boxes. For those of us with more modestly messy wardrobes, Natalie suggests:

- First up, consider all the items in your wardrobe one by one. “Live in the present,” says Natalie. “Keep clothes that fit you, that you love and that people compliment you on.”
- Most people wear 20 per cent of their clothing 80 per cent of the time. It can be eye-opening to try this trick: turn all your coat hangers in the same direction. When you wear something, turn the hanger the other way. After a couple of months you'll see what you do and don't wear.
- When you're looking at one category of clothing, get them all out at once. Do you really need 50 T-shirts? Better to pass them on than have them sit in your wardrobe unworn, says Natalie. For more of Natalie's tips see her blog at beorganised.co.nz.

WARDROBE BASICS

Matthias O'Malley of Studio Italia helps clients design new wardrobes and says a well-organised system can be life-changing: “Getting off to a calm and orderly start in the morning sets you up for the day. If you have a really efficient storage system, it's easy to be tidy. If you open a drawer and that's where your jewellery goes, you're likely to put it there – otherwise you might just plonk it on a shelf and things get messy.”

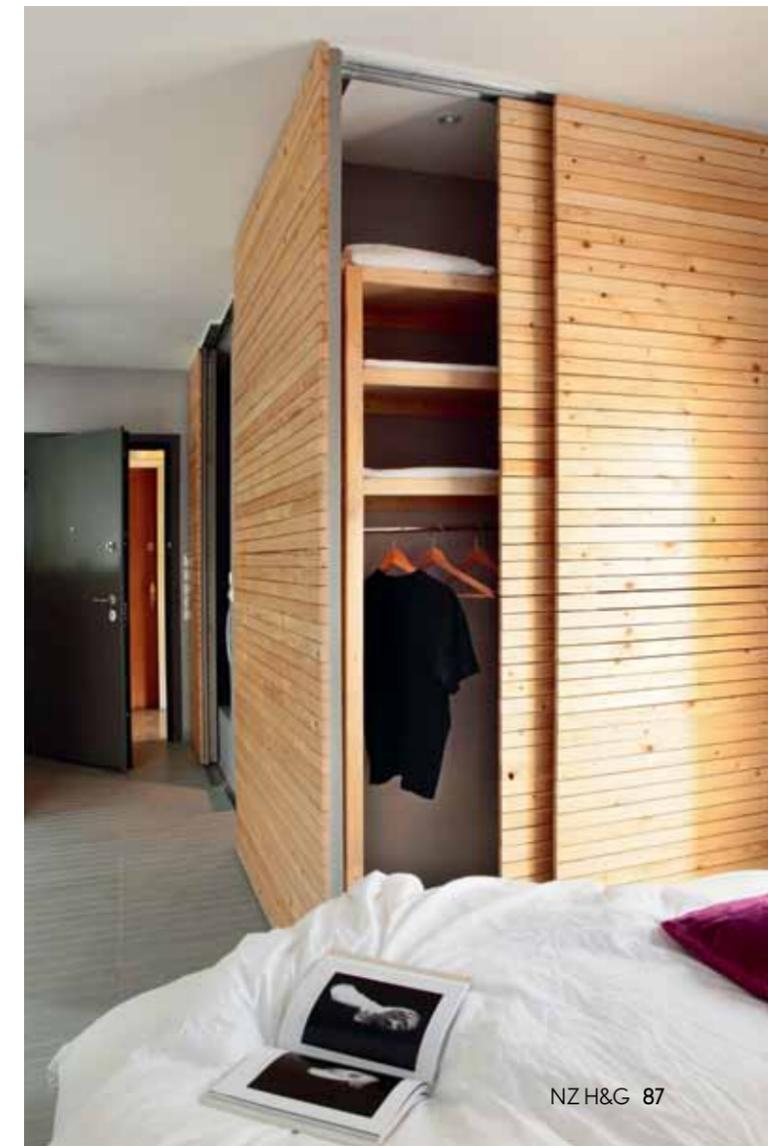
Consider the following when revamping a wardrobe: you tend to wear things you can see, so lighting is important and drawers and pull-out shelves are great. The higher you go the more you maximise your space, but obviously you need to be able to reach everything – Studio Italia has pull-down rails that allow the hanging rail to be higher than normal. Other nifty storage ideas include pull-out trouser hangers and shoe racks, and drawers with fitted trays for watches, rolled belts etc. Many clients putting in new wardrobes also include a safe, says Matthias. >

JANE USSHER; DOUGLAS GIBB; COSTAS PICADAS / GAP INTERIORS; ANDREAS VON EINSIEDEL / LIVING4MEDIA; ARCAID IMAGES/ALAMY



ABOVE Shallow drawers are good for smaller items; storage experts advise keeping deeper drawers only two-thirds full.

RIGHT Some swear by the “one item in, one item out” rule when buying new clothes to prevent your wardrobe becoming overstuffed; packing away out-of-season clothing will also keep your closet clearer.





LEFT Treat beautiful high heels as objets d'art and display them for everyone to admire; plus, if you can see your entire shoe collection at a glance, it's so much easier to choose just the right pair.



ABOVE A pull-out shelving unit provides easy access and compact storage; units like this can be tucked away in the space beneath stairs. **LEFT** Shelves are often the best solution for the busy person, allowing quick access and super-fast tidying up; this glass-fronted unit allows shoes to be seen at a glance while also protecting them from dust.

EMMA BASS; JAKE FITZJONES / GAP INTERIORS; PAUL RYAN-GOFF / LIVING4MEDIA; JULIEN FERNANDEZ / GAP INTERIORS

IF THE SHOE FITS

Shoe storage options abound, but the solution that works best for you will depend on the number and kind of shoes you need to store and your personality.

GLAMOUR PLUS

If you have an overflowing collection of beautiful footwear, why not treat your Louboutins as pieces of art and put them on display. They'll look fabulous arranged by colour on an open shelf or in a glass-fronted cabinet. Some wardrobe systems have shoe storage cubby holes, or you can pack precious shoes in clear shoe boxes (available from Storage Box) for safe storage and quick retrieval. Factor in your personality: if you're a tidy soul you might be happy to pack your shoes back in labelled boxes; if you're less of a neat freak, shelves or shoe racks might be better, so you can stash and go.

EVERYDAY FOOTWEAR

No one wants to see your tired old trainers, so out of sight is best for utilitarian footwear. A built-in shoe cupboard near your entrance is ideal, but a basket that can be tucked away may also work well, particularly for school shoes that are worn daily. If you store trainers in the garage, consider built-in cubby hole systems that fit one pair per square. >

MORE ONLINE See our Pinterest board for more shoe storage ideas; pinterest.com/nzhousegarden

THIS PAGE (clockwise from top left) Shallow drawers with fitted dividers, such as these ones from Blum, make it easy to be orderly. If you're storing shoes in boxes, a photograph of each pair affixed to the outside will make it easier to find the pair you're after. Shut the door on less-than-pristine footwear with a built-in cupboard and custom-fitted angled shelves.





SHEETING IT HOME

It's hard to stop your linen cupboard descending into chaos, especially when it's used (and abused) by many different family members. Sheets are a major issue when your home has several different sizes of bed, says professional organiser Natalie Jane, and labelling will help. She advises using a fabric marker to write the sizes on the sheet labels. Then label the shelves of your linen cupboard, so whoever is putting the linen away will put different-sized sheets in the right pile and will know where bath mats and facecloths go. If you have sheets that are only used in a particular room – special guest room sheets, for example – could you store them in the guest room wardrobe?

Other linen cupboard ideas: some people store sheet sets together, with top and bottom sheets packed into the matching pillowcase. Use shelf dividers to keep things separate (fishpond.co.nz and amazon.com have a good selection). Place things you use most frequently at eye level, less often down low and least often up high. Baskets and bins can also be useful for keeping items corralled. For example, a big bin of rolled beach towels may be more practical than a pile of folded towels on a shelf, suggests Natalie. Kids can grab one without causing an avalanche. ■

THIS PAGE (clockwise from top left) A chest at the end of the bed is the perfect place to store extra quilts, blankets or extra linen; you could also use it to pack away out-of-season clothes; if you're short of storage, also consider packing winter quilts in plastic storage crates and stashing them under the bed. Stack like with like in a system that all the family can follow to keep your linen cupboard tidy. An attractive free-standing cupboard can be used to provide extra linen storage, in a guest bedroom for example.

TESSA CHRISP; FLORENCE NOBLE; JANE USSHER