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DESIGN FEATURE OF THE MOMENT

# dressing areas

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT A WALK-IN CLOSET WAS THE ULTIMATE WARDROBE GOAL, DESIGNERS ARE CRAFTING ALL-OUT DRESSING ROOMS

FEATURE Keith Flanagan



Simply having a closet can feel like a big enough home goal, let alone a coveted walk-in wardrobe. But having a space large enough to qualify as a dressing room? Now that's dreaming big.

Designers and architects with room in their budgets are upping the ante, carving out space worthy of top-notch wardrobes. The differences between dressing rooms and walk-in closets aren't exactly groundbreaking, but they do tend to have a little extra design in their DNA. First and foremost, a dressing room is often a larger space (with enough to walk around), and unlike walk-in closets, storage and cabinetry (think shelves and clothing rods) are often covered up by doors and fronts.

'Whilst comparatively cost effective, the reality of walk-in wardrobes without doors is that they invariably look messy – unless you are one to hang by colour and style,' says Liz Ride, associate director of Studio Tate. 'The advantage of a dressing room style is that everything is neatly contained behind doors.'

Other upgrades include a comfortable place to sit (like a built-in bench for trying on shoes) or designated space to pamper (like a well-lit make-up vanity). And every functional dressing room requires at least one thoughtfully placed full-length mirror (not unlike a dressing room in a clothing store).

At the end of the day, you're creating a space to spend time in, to relax and luxuriate. 'Dressing, undressing [and] choosing an outfit is a daily (boring) task,' says Sander Bullynck, founder of Belgium's Grain Designoffice. 'Being able to have room, to enjoy that dedicated space and take time for a daily ritual adds an extra layer of pleasure to an otherwise mundane act.'

Here are a few kitted-out dressing rooms that bring a higher level of order and glamour to your everyday wardrobe – where dressing up has never looked better. ➤

## 1 RUNWAY WORTHY

**Funnelling sunshine into his Oxfordshire home, interior designer Peter Mikic created nothing short of a runway in his open dressing area, centering a straight path on a large window facing the outdoors. Playful carpet brings the space to life, while reflective wardrobe doors amplify light and pattern. 'I love the feeling of a fitted carpet in dressing rooms and if you have space, add a small ottoman or chair,' recommends Peter, who placed a small armchair at one end of the walkway to punctuate the entrance.**

**PROJECT BY** Peter Mikic Studio

## 2 GOOD REFLECTIONS

**'The mirror is what makes a dressing area,' says Flip Sellin, creative executive director of Berlin's Coordination. Proving his point, Flip's studio made the most of a narrow area thanks to wall-to-wall mirrors that maximise the teal palette, all while making the room feel**

**more spacious. 'Instead of using mirrors at the short or opposite end of the space, we created a monochrome colour box with other surfaces including floor and ceiling,' adds Flip, noting his use of mirrored doors. 'This lets the space feel double the size.'**

**PROJECT BY** Coordination

## 3 CENTRE STAGE

**One popular layout is achieved by placing a floating feature (such as a bench or table) in the middle of the floor, creating a path around the object – and thus a more dynamic space. For Melbourne's Flack Studio, this took shape in its Middle Park Residence project as a central island inspired by the iconic Ettore Sottsass Ultrafragola mirror. 'This curvaceous form was created with our makers, lacquered in a flesh tone and lined with a soft aubergine suede leather,' says founder and principal David Flack.**

**PROJECT BY** Flack Studio





## OPEN SHUT

One visual difference between a dressing room and a walk-in closet is that cabinets and storage often feature closed fronts and doors. And while there are many ways to make open storage look better, adding fronts can refine the overall look by covering up stacks of clothes and racks of shoes. 'Mindful of the space's primary function as the passage to the main bedroom, we avoided open shelving, prioritising a clean, uncluttered atmosphere that maintains visual allure and organisation throughout,' say Jerry Pellerin and Kevin Caprini of Caprini & Pellerin.

PROJECT BY Caprini & Pellerin

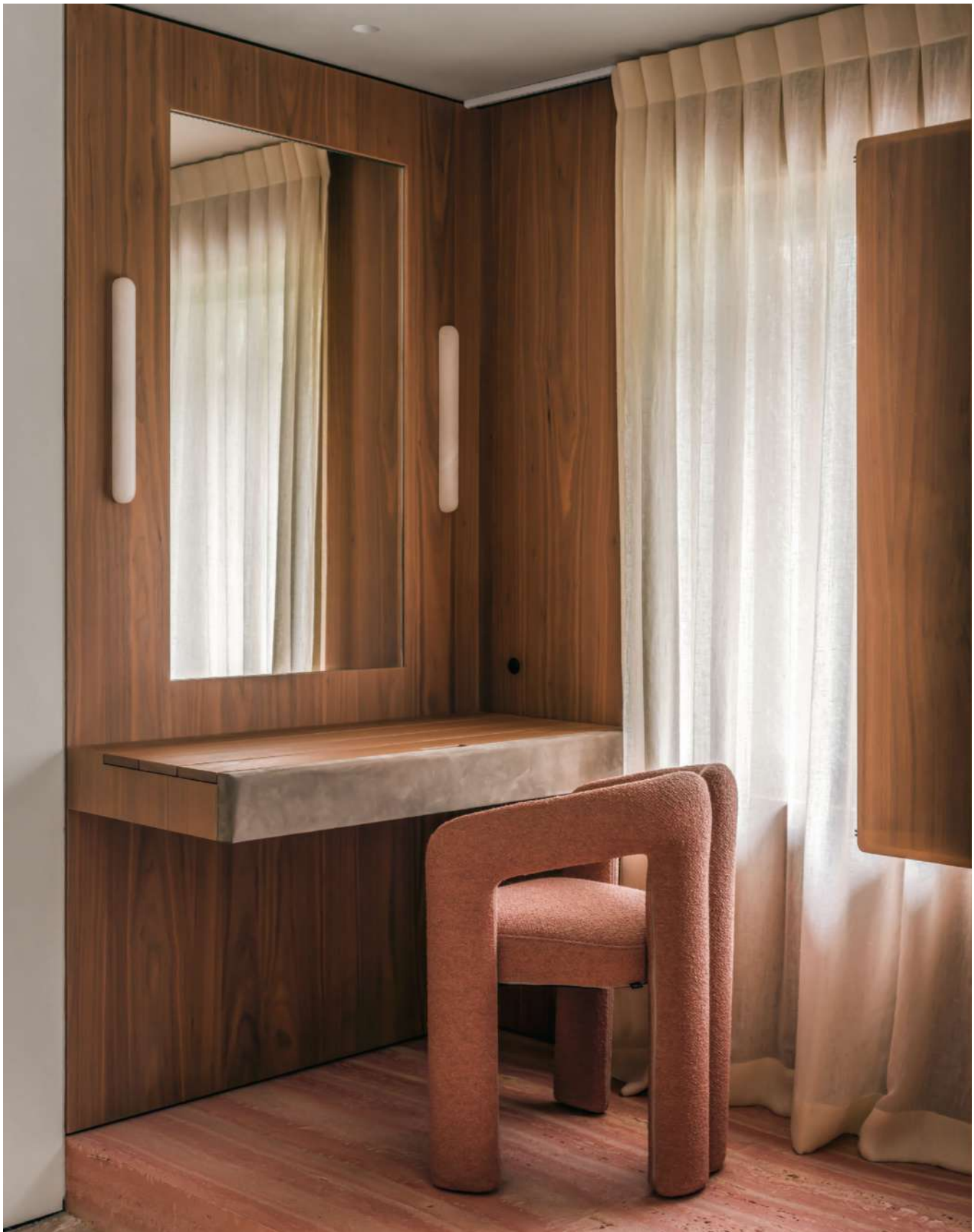
PHOTOGRAPHS (OPEN SHUT) THOMAS DE BRUYNE;  
(MADE UP) ANSON SMART



## MADE UP

When it comes to glamour, a built-in make-up area with expert vanity lighting can take a dressing room up a full notch. Nodding to classic Hollywood style, Studio Tate incorporated a round and suspended mirror above natural stone surfaces complete with custom-designed drawers for jewellery and make-up. 'Ensuring the vanity is at a comfortable height is key, otherwise it will never be used,' notes associate director Liz Ride. 'Both mirrors and lighting are important and faces should be lit from the front, not above.'

PROJECT BY Studio Tate ►



### COMFORT ZONE

If you have the space – not to mention the means – don't just think of a dressing room as a place to store clothing. 'We always try to design rooms to feel like extra living space,' says Sander Bullynck, founder of Grain Designoffice. 'It has to be a pleasure to be there, so the atmosphere is important no matter how small the space.' Grain Designoffice achieved this with an array of amenities, like the sweet vanity area pictured here, but it's hard to miss the most luxurious feature of them all: the dressing room features a large window. How's that for an extra liveable atmosphere?

PROJECT BY Grain Designoffice

PHOTOGRAPH PIET-ALBERT GOETHALS