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FUTURE



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the big ticket: fitted wardrobes

WHEN DONE RIGHT, FITTED WARDROBES COMBINE STYLE AND SUBSTANCE SEAMLESSLY - THIS IS HOW YOU DO IT

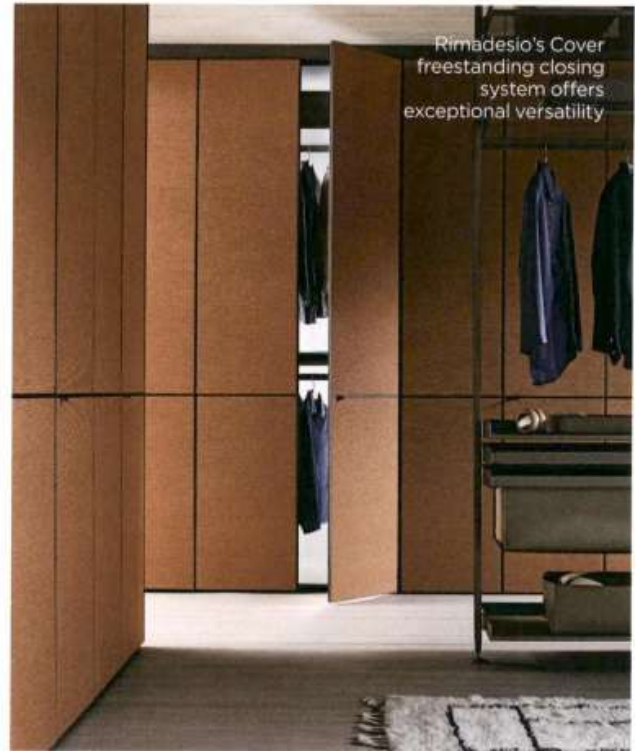
Storage and style don't always go hand in hand, but fitted wardrobes can utilise awkward corners and unused alcoves, all with a seamless and stylish finish. 'A wardrobe isn't only storage; it's a transforming object that evolves and adapts to become an integral part of our life,' says Steve Leung of Steve Leung Design Group, who designed the Eureka wardrobe for LEMA. With so many options, we're here to help you invest in the best.

When it comes to sizing, your fitted wardrobe should measure around 50-67cm deep from the back wall to the front. Any less and you're not getting much in; any more and you're entering Narnia territory. Don't be afraid to go floor-to-ceiling, which is seamless and provides room up top for pigeon hole shelving. A ladder can help you get to difficult-to-reach spaces. 'More than materials and colours, today's general trend is to favour wardrobes that are able to fully maximise the spatial layout of a specific living environ,' says Steve. Utilise architectural details: alcoves either side of a chimney breast, for example, will make the most of the natural depth of the room. Alternatively, make use of a whole wall – so long as it doesn't dominate.

In general, composition of your fitted wardrobe should be made up of 60% hanging, 20% shelves and 20% drawers. However, it's also about establishing what you're using the space for. Do you need more hangers than drawers, or shelves for a shoe collection? 'A sensible place to start is by assessing your storage needs,' says Rachal Hutcheson of Sharps. 'Think about the volume of clothes and shoes you have, whether you might need areas for bedding and how much space you might need in the future.' Once you've considered the capacity, think about the elements of the interior fit-out. Combining hanging rails with pigeon hole shelving, internal drawers and shoe storage will keep you organised. Fitted wardrobes are evolving to conceal other things aside from drawers – like a dressing table, vanity or desk.

The most popular styles of fitted wardrobe door are Shaker, slab and sliding. 'Shaker designs are a perennial favourite for period properties,' says Rachal, 'while more modern homes tend to see sleeker, more minimal design features.' Consider how you want the doors to open: do you have space for a hinged door or would a sliding coplanar door make things more functional? Mixing open and

FITTED WARDROBES ARE EVOLVING TO CONCEAL OTHER THINGS ASIDE FROM DRAWERS - LIKE A DRESSING TABLE, VANITY OR DESK



Rimadesio's Cover freestanding closing system offers exceptional versatility

closed storage gives you the opportunity to turn your wardrobe into decor, too. It's a look that emulates a luxury boutique, as Neatsmiths senior designer Mariana Poletto tells us – driven by the idea that storage 'can be a space in the home to be enjoyed'.

We're seeing reflective transparent glass and ribbed woods preferred,' says Fabrizio Gregori of Rimadesio, the Italian brand who designed Cover freestanding (pictured). Pine is an ever-popular material, as is elegant walnut. Budget-friendly options include plywood or laminate. You can add textured panelling to disguise cheaper materials, or mirrors to bounce light around the room. Giovanni Pedulla of Poliform King's Road finds leather cover wardrobes are proving popular, adding a

softness to a scheme, as are metallic lacquers. 'For leather it's about warm colours; both give off an industrial, urban feel,' he says. Finally, don't underestimate the importance of lighting: interior closet or LED strip lights will help you find that missing sock.