

suburban life

The Life of an Artist

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Design Intervention

CLOSETS BY DESIGN'S SPECIALIZED EXPERTISE ENABLES CLIENTS TO NOT ONLY STREAMLINE THEIR CLOSETS, GARAGES, AND OTHER PERSONAL SPACES, BUT ALSO ENHANCE HOW THEY LIVE THEIR LIVES.



A MERICA HAS A CONSUMER CULTURE, WHICH MEANS MOST AMERICANS TEND TO HAVE A LOT OF STUFF. As a result, certain rooms in the home often become cluttered and chaotic, thereby leading to unwanted stress and frustration.

Ask Charles Waterman and he'll say such anxiety is rather unnecessary. Waterman is the owner of Closets By Design in Malvern, which employs a team of professional designers and installers devoted to helping homeowners effectively and efficiently reorganize their walk-in and reach-in closets, among other spaces.

"It's a problem that everyone deals with, but there's a different way to handle the problem," Waterman says. "You can go to a yellow-and-blue big-box store with a Swedish name or some other big-box store and get a closet organizer that is generic in design, but is your

Photos courtesy of Closets By Design

wardrobe generic? Is your lifestyle generic? Organizing your life requires a solution that suits you and your specific needs.”

With Closets By Design, the path to a cleaner, clutter-free home begins with a complementary assessment. The assessment usually lasts one to two hours, during which a designer will review the space in question and asks precise questions pertaining to the homeowner’s wardrobe and lifestyle—how they currently use the space at each time of the day (morning, evenings, weekends), what kind of “pinch points” they experience on a daily basis, how the space would function in an ideal world, etc.

“It’s all about efficiency,” says Waterman, an industrial engineer by trade who is certified in efficiency engineering. “We can compartmentalize and organize everything based on each lifestyle and situation. It’s not just about having a nice-looking closet. If you’re more efficient in one area of your life, it frees you up to focus on other things that are more important to you—like pursuing hobbies or spending time with family and friends.”

Closets By Design’s adjustable closet organizers are floor based, as compared with wall-mounted organizers that offer less adjustability. The assortment of customization options might include accessories such as jewelry drawers, tilt-out hampers, and hanging rods, among many others. The organizational systems, which are largely constructed of high-quality melamine, can also be easily updated to accommodate seasonal changes or lifestyle adjustments brought about by, say, a new job or hobby.

The organizational systems can also evolve to accommodate the needs of older homeowners who choose to age in place. Lighting is a fine example. Lighting options can include motion or hand controls, as well as lights that change in accordance with certain times of day. Closets By Design uses as its standard setting a “cool white” light, which closely resembles daylight, so homeowners can leave the home confident in how they look.

While the word *closets* may be in the company’s name, Closets By Design’s areas of expertise include several other parts of the home that are prone to clutter or disorganization.

“Our name could just as easily be Offices By Design or Garages By Design or Pantries By Design,” Waterman says. “Those areas of the home deal with different types of usage and storage, so the construction of the cabinets we use is different. For example, our garage cabinets are sturdier and hold more weight, and are more self-contained



Get Organized

As homeowners look around their homes with an eye toward enhancing their lifestyles, they will inevitably find at least a few cluttered or disorganized rooms in need of some TLC. Charles Waterman of Closets By Design offers a helpful seven-point checklist to ensure success in their endeavors.

- **Set your organizing goals.**
- **Organize one room at a time.**
- **Deep clean your space.**
- **Sort your stuff.**
- **Donate what you don’t need.**
- **Cut back on “retail therapy.”**
- **Call Closets By Design.**

than what we use in a closet.”

Waterman strives to make the process as easy as possible for clients. In addition to using durable, high-quality materials that are made to last, Closets By Design employs a team of long-tenured professionals, some of whom have been by his side for 15 years or more; Waterman does not believe in using subcontractors. The company also offers 12- and 18-month financing with 20 percent down, and it stands by its work with a lifetime guarantee.

“In this business, you win with customer service,” Waterman says. “Not everything goes perfectly in a disorganized world. The true measure of a company is how it handles a situation when something doesn’t go according to plan. We don’t go wrong a lot, but when we do we handle it in the most expeditious way and the least inconvenience to the customer. If something’s not working, we’ll take care of it and make it work until the client is satisfied.

“When you read our reviews,” he continues, “it’s interesting that our clients always seem to say the same thing: ‘The designer was a delight, the installer was wonderful and showed up on time, and they walked me through the whole project. The house is even cleaner than when they got here, so you don’t even know someone was here other than what they left behind—a beautiful organizer.’”

Waterman has another metric for success: the company’s growing multitude of repeat customers.

“That’s the biggest form of appreciation,” he adds. “When someone moves to a new home because they’re upsizing or downsizing and wants to continue the relationship with us, that’s how we know we’re doing something right. People invite us into the most personal spaces of their home, and they appreciate the fact that we provide them a way to ‘get their home back’ with no judgment about who they are and how they live their lives.” ■



Closets By Design

For more information on Closets By Design, call (610) 644-4143 or visit philadelphia.closetsbydesign.com.