



# housebeautiful

SEPTEMBER 2002

CLIP

(designonline)

Producer Mario López-Cordero

## ask betsy

Betsy Franklin, home services expert and editor of decorating bible *The Franklin Report*, tips off HB readers first



**Q.** *I need to build some closets. How much should I expect to pay?*

INSTALLING A CLOSET YOURSELF CAN REDUCE YOUR BUDGET by about 25 percent—a negligible savings compared with the headaches you will likely face. Closet contractors range from independent carpenters to nationwide firms, and materials always dictate expense. Prices for installing five deep shelves can vary from less than \$200 for vinyl-covered steel wire to \$300 for melamine (a laminate-covered resin) to more than \$600 for primed solid wood. Expect to pay more for built-in hampers, movable baskets, lockable jewelry boxes, pull-down rods for seasonal storage, and shoe ports. National chains may be less expensive but do not provide much customization, whereas independent millworks may be more creative but less familiar with the newest closet innovations. A person who specializes in closets will often require a retainer for consultations and design services, and typically prefers larger jobs.

E-mail your home improvement or renovation questions to [hbquestions@hearst.com](mailto:hbquestions@hearst.com) or mail them to Ask Betsy, *House Beautiful*, 1700 Broadway, 29th floor, New York, NY 10019. Log on to [www.franklinreport.com](http://www.franklinreport.com) for home improvement resources at the click of a button.

**A.**