

News Clipping

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Title: More are renting closet space

Running out of space in your closet and you have already converted your mum's storeroom into a walk-in wardrobe?

No sweat. Do what others are doing – rent space to hold all your extra clothes at a storage facility.

Five operators told Urban that demand for storage space is no longer just for bulky items like furniture and appliances. More people are paying up to \$1,000 a month to store clothes and shoes they no longer have room for.

Some use the storage facility like a dressing room away from home, says Ms Helen Ng, chief executive of Lock + Store, which opened in Tanjung Pagar DistriPark in 2005.

"Our units function as a one-stop walk-in wardrobe," she says.

"We have executives who visit our facilities to change into and out of their office wear daily when they find commuting back home for a night out too much of a hassle."

More are renting closet space

Generally, storage suites range from basic units measuring 12 sq ft to air-conditioned rooms the size of a bedroom. Rentals range from about \$70 to about \$1,000 a month, depending on the location and type of storage.

Ms Ng estimates that the market for storage of personal goods is worth about \$60 million a year.

And it is growing.

Although Big Orange Self Storage does not market its outlets in Bukit Batok, Tampines and Woodlands as fashion cubbyholes, up to 10 per cent of its customers store apparel and shoes there.

Says its operations manager, Mr Matthew Chee: "We have had customers constructing or moving wardrobe cabinets into our storage spaces. I guess in a city like Singapore where space is a rare commodity, people are turning to alternative sources for space."

Lock + Store has seen a 5 per cent jump in the number of people using its premises for stashing wardrobe items since last year. Currently, about 10 per cent of all stored items are fashion pieces such as shoes and bags.

Sensing demand in landscape Singapore, SingPost joined the storage enterprise in 2009. The company converted its delivery base in Ayer Rajah to house its Self Storage Solutions business.

A spokesman says clothing, electrical appliances and books are some of the items commonly stored.

A bonus of external storage is climate control, where air-conditioners are set at about 22 to 24 deg C, creating a conducive environment for items

such as fur and leather.

Ms Sharon Ngan, the head of operations of multi-label boutique Enve de Pois at Ion Orchard, says: "Many customers ask about cold storage for their furs."

Mr Daniel Lim, a creative director and self-professed shoe fanatic, is one who appreciates the air-conditioned unit he rents at Extra Space for about \$200 a month.

The 36-year-old owns more than 200 pairs of designer shoes and started storing about 100 pairs at Extra Space's West Coast outlet last year.

Before that, he would arrange the shoe boxes in his living room.

"It looked like an installation art. But when it got too big, it became a shoe avalanche," he says.

"The 24/7 air-conditioning is important. Otherwise my shoes will go mouldy. They cost quite a sum and I need to protect them."

Many also store their winter clothing and skiing gear in these facilities.

The trend is not peculiar to Singapore.

Mr Michael Hagbeck, an Australian who is the chief executive of Extra Space Self Storage, notes that while Sydney's population of about 4.6 million is comparable to Singapore's 5 million, it has 120 self-storage facilities, compared to about 25 here.

"There is definitely room to grow here," he says.

"Consumers are recognising that storage isn't about putting things away and forgetting about them.

"It's about creating additional space in your homes so that you can make room for your family, your lifestyle and your hobbies."

- IMRAN JALAL

TRY THESE FOR SIZE

StorHub Self Storage
Tel: 6337-2000, Monday to Friday, from 9am to 6pm, and Saturday, from 9am to noon

The company introduced the self-storage concept to Singapore in 2003. It has six facilities in Toa Payoh, Changi, Tampines and Kallang.

Rental fee: From \$55 a month for a 7 sq ft unit and from \$155 a month for a 20 sq ft unit with air-conditioning.

Big Orange Self Storage
Tel: 1800-244-6726, Monday to Sunday, from 9am to 6pm

First opened in Woodlands in 2007, it now has three other outlets in Bukit Batok, Hougang and Tampines.

Rental fee: From \$60 a month for 10.8 sq ft unit.

Self Storage Solutions by SingPost
Tel: 1605 during office hours

The company converted its former Ayer Rajah Delivery Base into a consumer storage facility in 2009.

Also known as S3, it offers 24-hour access and services such as local and international delivery.

Rental fee: From \$46 a month for a 9.7 sq ft unit.

Lock + Store Self Storage
Tel: 1800-370-3737 for Tanjung Pagar DistriPark or 6243-0600 for Chai Chee outlet, Monday to Friday, from 8am to 6.30pm, and Saturday, from 8am to 2pm.

It first opened a storage facility in Tanjung Pagar DistriPark in 2005. In

2008, it opened a 52,000 sq ft facility in Chai Chee.

It will add 38,000 sq ft to its Tanjung Pagar outlet in September.

Rental fee: From \$79 a month for a 9.5 sq ft unit and from \$150 a month for a 16 sq ft unit with air-conditioning.

Extra Space Self Storage
Tel: 6304-3200, Monday to Friday, from 9am to 6pm, and on Saturday from 9am to 1pm

The company opened its first facility in 2007 at IMM Building in Jurong East and now has branches in five locations, including Boon Keng Road and Eunoss Link.

There is 24-hour access to the premises and a concierge service that collects your items.

Rental fee: From \$134.90 a month for a 16 sq ft space and from \$176.55 a month for an air-conditioned unit of the same size.

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