

POSH POWDER ROOMS

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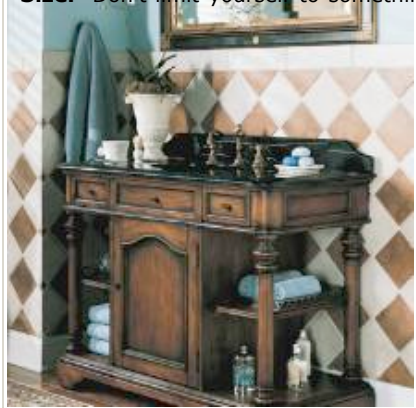
INNOVATIVE DESIGN IDEAS SOAR IN SMALL SPACES

Merriam-Webster’s dictionary defines a powder room as “a lavatory in the main living area of a house.” For many homeowners, though, a powder room is much more. It is a space to let design style soar, where creative ideas can be exhibited for all to see. We talked with Carmen Anderson of Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery; Debra May Himes of Debra May Himes Interior Design & Associates, LLC; and Linda Van Lith of Tierra del Lagarto to find out the newest trends in a powder room’s five main components—the vanity, sink, faucetry, lighting and mirror.

VANITIES

The vanity is the most important element to consider in a powder room’s design, according to Himes. She suggests choosing a vanity first and fashioning the rest of the space around it. Here are some factors to keep in mind:

- **Size.** “Don’t limit yourself to something



Furniture-style piece by Cole & Co. that replicates an antique and offers ample storage.

many of which incorporate shelves or storage areas beneath their sinks. Consider a pedestal design if you are tight on space or desire a sculptural piece. Anderson cautions, however, that pedestals do not offer storage areas; but she says this can be remedied by recessing a shadow box in the wall to serve as a cabinet.



Powder rooms are ideal locations for expressing personal style. Here, Debra May Himes designed a bow-front wall-mounted vanity with straps of iron topped with an under-lit onyx countertop and apron. She further mixed materials by adding an art-glass vessel sink and wall-mounted oil-rubbed bronze faucetry.

that is the perfect size—choose a piece you really like,” advises Van Lith. (See “Vanity Fair” below for Van Lith’s tips on altering the size of a piece to fit a smaller or larger space.) She notes that many homeowners prefer to personalize a powder room by repurposing an antique table, dresser or buffet, rather than using a traditional vanity. The height and size of Indian dowry chests make them ideal choices, too, and many feature raised ledge tops that can be embellished with tile or marble, she adds.

- **Style.** Vanities are available in three main styles: floor-standing, wall-mounted and pedestal. While most will measure approximately 24 inches deep or smaller, each style has its own benefits, says Anderson. A traditional floor-standing design can provide storage in the form of drawers and cabinets, or create the illusion of space if it features an open tablelike design. For a Contemporary look, try wall-mounted vanities,

- **Materials.** Vanities are being fabricated in a range of materials. Anderson likes stone or metal and also notes that, of late, dark mahogany-stained wood has become popular. It complements a Traditional or Contemporary powder room and pairs well with almost any color sink, the designer explains. Van Lith says most woods are suitable for vanities if they are properly sealed and maintained. She adds that teak is “very forgiving” if exposed to water, while raw pine is one of the most difficult woods to maintain in a moist environment.

Vanity Fair

Linda Van Lith offers the following tips for converting an older piece of furniture into a vanity:

- **Adjust the size.** If an antique is too tall or short for your needs, consider a few minor alterations. Tall pieces can be lowered by removing the feet; height can be created by adding a built-to-suit base. Van Lith advises against modifying furnishings with more complicated adjustments.
- **Utilize two pieces.** To fashion a double vanity, top two small side-by-side tables with a common countertop material. If spacing allows for the tables to be set apart from each other, add shelving in between for storing towels.
- **Frame the base.** Frame the base of a footed piece to minimize the amount of dust that collects underneath. Add a decorative element by recessing the front of the frame and tiling it, creating an embellished toe kick.

SINKS & FAUCETRY

“Powder rooms are very intimate, highly decorative and powerful little spaces,” observes Himes. She says that they are places where homeowners can mix and explore styles and establish a more whimsical, traditional or formal approach than what is found in the rest of the house. Sinks and faucetry present a number of visually intriguing ways to lend pizzazz.

- **Variety.** “The options for sinks have blown wide open,” Himes comments. Hand-painted porcelain, art glass, and hammered copper and metal sinks are a few of the choices at the forefront of the trend. Onyx is one of Himes’ favorite materials; she enjoys the look of an under-lit onyx pedestal sink. Sinks also come in numerous shapes, including oval, square or rectangular.



This a lighted pedestal sink by Stone Forest is crafted from a single block of onyx.

- **Color.** Anderson has noticed an increased interest in “flashy” colors, such as greens and oranges. Colorful vessel sinks offer a great way to spice up a subdued color palette, she says. “It gives clients the opportunity to express themselves.”

- **Faucetry finishes and installation.** Variety also is prevalent in faucetry, with finishes ranging from pewter and satin to brushed and oil-rubbed. Himes states that oil-rubbed finishes sometimes are not as durable as other choices; she recommends checking with the manufacturer to determine the quality of a finish. Himes also has noticed trends such as glam handles with crystal knobs, and spaces Contemporized with wall-mounted faucets.



Photo by Luca Trovato

This hand-chiseled pedestal and basin is made of cantera.

LIGHTING

From bejeweled chandeliers and table lamps to sconces and pendants, our experts agree that lighting options for a powder room are seemingly endless. Here are some choices to consider:

- **Mini chandeliers.** Anderson calls miniature



chandeliers the “cherry on top of a powder room’s design.” Their small scale complements the petite size of powder rooms, and they can be used in conjunction with sconces to add flattering, diffused light.



A miniature chandelier by Dorian Webb that measures 16” x 9” is embellished with Venetian glass and freshwater pearls.

- **Lamps and lanterns.** Illuminating a powder room can present a design challenge if space is limited, notes Van Lith. She suggests wiring a pair of candlestick table lamps through the top of the vanity to light an area that doesn’t have room for sconces; or, in the corner of the room, hanging a grouping of lanterns at varying heights to create visual interest and add ambient light.

- **Ambient light.** “Lighting transforms your space,” notes Anderson. She says that oftentimes the illumination from decorative light fixtures lends mood, while recessed can lights in the ceiling establish a brighter setting.

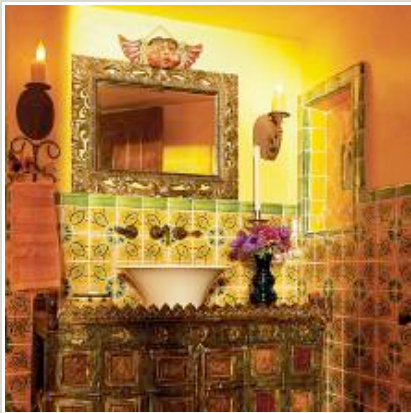


Photo by Werner Segarra

An Indian dowry chest was converted to a vanity in this powder room. Glazed Mexican tiles create colorful wainscoting.

MIRRORS

“We usually go wild in our powder baths,” says Himes of the design possibilities. Long gone are the sterile and plain-looking mirrors of the past; today’s options offer another way to bring decorative oomph to the space.

- **Unique applications.** Anderson observes that manufacturers are getting creative with mirror designs. She cites companies such as Séura Inc., which incorporates TVs into mirrors, and Kohler, which produces a mirror-and-faucet-in-one design.

- **Decorative touches.** Artist-made mirrors are becoming increasingly popular, notes Himes. She describes examples that feature embedded tile or art-glass frames. Or, to lend a decorative touch, Van Lith recommends adding a painted finish to a mirror’s frame that will highlight the room’s wall treatment.



Left: Sculptural form and color define Vitraform’s Black Cubetto sink with mouth-blown glass pedestal base.



Right: This decorative sconce by THG features a black French porcelain frame.