



Kate Ferguson

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The trend:
**POWDER ROOMS
WITH VINTAGE
ACCENTS AND WILD
WALLPAPER**



Clients are requesting unique wallpaper and colors that pop.

WHY IT'S HOT

"Powder rooms are normally on the smaller side and just scream for something unusual and fun to happen in them," explains designer Kate Ferguson. While many people choose bold paint or wallpaper and leave it at that, Ferguson has seen an uptick in many clients opting for unusual wall color or papers while also choosing to add vintage details that elevate this gem box of a space.

HOW TO GET IT

"My favorite idea is to ditch the idea of a factory vanity and instead convert a vintage cabinet or chest of drawers into a sink base," she says. Ferguson recently sourced a vintage dry sink cabinet for a project and had a carpenter retro fit it so she could install contemporary plumbing fixtures with a new marble sink top, which added instant history and interest. "I used a remnant of my favorite arabescato marble to add some beauty and shine," she says.

Ferguson notes that even little details like a toilet handle can be ordered in unlacquered brass to amp up the glam factor in a bathroom. "Accents like this really elevate the level of sophistication and make a space feel custom, not just an afterthought," she notes. Her other favorite tip to make a powder room stand out is to add vintage lighting. "There are thousands of beautiful vintage Italian midcentury sconces and pendants that are affordable and make a statement, and they make a space feel really high-end," she explains. Ferguson recommends

sourcing vintage lighting from Chairish, First Dibs and in-person auctions, and she also loves the idea of adding in a vintage accessory or two. "I recently found an old soap dish that looks like a brass dolphin at The Collective in Stamford, which is fabulous, and I've also used an oversized abalone shell from a family trip in a powder room. It's nice to incorporate items that are personal and have character." Ferguson also adds that if your powder room is all vintage, you can flip this idea by adding in a modern element like a lacquered neon chartreuse tray on the back of the commode to break up the mood.

Wooden toilet seats are also enjoying a resurgence, notes the designer. "In one of my recent projects that's a 1908 center hall colonial, they have a wooden toilet seat that evokes a classic old-school feel," she says. Ferguson tells us these wooden seats are inspired by the original Victorian models by Thomas Crapper, the go-to English fabricator of the pull-chain tank toilets. "If you're in the market, I've ordered great dupes at a reasonable price from Signature Hardware," she says.

Another trick of the trade she recommends for a powder room includes using a crown molding that's different from the rest of the house. "There are tons of profiles to choose from and you're not limited based on what's in the rest of your home, so pick a molding that's substantial and interesting—the powder room is its own distinct space, and this unexpected detail can really pop." In another home, Ferguson and her team transformed a powder room with an inexpensive mirror hack. "We used two half circle \$20 mirrors from Bed, Bath & Beyond, turned them on their sides and bookmatched them



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so it looks like one large custom half-mirror! We had virtually no room for a sink, so we opened up the wall and installed a wall-mount faucet, then used a pretty concrete surface-mount basin from Concretti Designs and had a remnant of dark black marble cut to fit the tiny corner. To finish this room, we splurged on a Kelly Wearstler grasscloth wallpaper, which adds so much dimension to this little space,” she says.

When it comes to wallpapers, Ferguson advises choosing one that tells a story. “Some of my favorite lines are from Cole & Son, Iksel, and Flat Vernacular, an amazing company based in Norwalk. Their Too Much Stuff line is so much fun and great for kids,” she adds.

HER FINAL TIP

If you find a wallpaper you love, focus on one color from the paper and paint the trim and ceiling in that same hue. It unifies the whole space and packs a powerful punch.



Ferguson often uses a vintage chest of drawers for a sink base and chooses wallpaper that tells a story.

ERIN KESTENBAUM



Jeanne Collins

Principal and
Founder of
JERMAR
DESIGNS

The trend:
**GLAMMED UP
LAUNDRY ROOMS
WITH SPECIALTY
DRYING AREAS**

WHY IT'S HOT

"I would say I've seen two main trends lately, and they're both in the laundry room," quips Jeane Collins. "These rooms are no longer just utilitarian—people really want them to be pretty, and they're willing to spend on everything from tile and flooring to stunning fixtures," she says. Her clients are also demanding more drying and hanging space—specifically more flat areas to dry clothing—and are willing to customize their laundry room to this end.

HOW TO GET IT

When it comes to the backsplash, make it fun. "This is usually not a huge space so be creative, big and bold. Some of my clients opt for a busy pattern over the sink and others choose to tile an entire accent wall—both look great." The designer is also getting requests to install high-end and interesting countertops, the caliber of which you'd normally find in a bar or your kitchen. "Beautiful quartzite and quartz countertops with gray veining have been chosen in some of my recent projects," she recalls.

Hardware and lighting are also getting fancier. "In a recent home, we chose a wall-mounted farmhouse sink by Watermark and solid brass Watermark faucets meant to look like antique fixtures—they're gorgeous," she says. In another laundry room her client opted for a deep stainless steel Nantucket sink, great for soaking, and a faucet with a sprayer for cleaning. When it comes to lighting, Collins says the sky's the limit—noting that she just

installed a crystal Juliska pendant that has also been seen in another client's kitchen. "Just make your lighting and hardware choices interesting," she advises. "They don't have to be expensive, but have fun with them."

For flooring, Collins says people are choosing larger format tiles, around 12 x 24 inches. "You can buy porcelain tile that looks like textured linen or stone that is easy to clean, reasonably priced and looks great," she says. When installing, she recommends laying tile in an offset pattern, which looks interesting and makes a room appear longer. Her favorite tile sources are Ideal Tile in Stamford and Greenwich Tile.

What's the newest trend she's seeing? "I'm doing a ton of custom drying drawers these days. The drawers look like part of a regular cabinet when closed, but when opened they reveal a mesh insert to lay clothing flat to dry—great for T-shirts or lingerie," says Collins. She custom builds these to be three to four feet long and then orders a polyester sailing mesh from Seattle Fabrics that comes in many colors and can be cut to fit a drawer's interior. "These drawers are great because they can be closed while not in use, yet they provide a space for items like sweaters that need to lie flat to dry," she adds. While the request for drawers is new, people are continually asking for a lot of hanging space. She recently installed a rustic industrial hanging bar in a modern farmhouse that's eight feet long and offers lots of space. In a center hall colonial, she went for a more traditional approach with three-tiered hanging bars over the dryer. When sourcing these and other items, "Etsy is a great place to find hanging laundry bars, laundry bags and rolling carts, fun baskets to style a laundry room and creative



Collins likes to use porcelain tile that looks like textured linen or stone.

Some of the latest trends for laundry rooms include a bold backsplash, elevated lighting and custom drying drawers.



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artwork, such as framed prints with directions for how to treat stains,” says the designer.

In addition to solving the drying situation, Collins is also being asked to design custom cabinets with roomy pull-out drawers to accommodate everything from replacement light bulbs to storing towels and sheets to cleaning products, much like an overflow linen closet. “When you put things in deep cabinets that sit next to a washer and dryer, items tend to get lost, so I prefer pull-out drawers where you’re able to see everything,” she says.

When asked about her own laundry room, the designer says she refreshed hers by sourcing inexpensive cabinets from Home Depot, then asked her carpenter to place them on a custom-built platform and add custom frames so it looks like a built-in space. “This is a great design hack. I didn’t spend a ton of money on my cabinets, but they look custom,” she says.

For a finishing touch to your laundry room, Collins suggests adding a plant—a succulent is a great choice. “Plants should be in every room. They’re pretty, organic and they soften a space. If you don’t have a window in your laundry area, just add a nice faux plant.”

