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beauty spot

Pamper your visitors with a glamorous powder room

WORDS ANNA KOOREY

AS ENSUITES BECOME more of a personal retreat, a place for guests to freshen up is a necessary addition to Australian homes. The modern powder room – essentially a small guest bathroom complete with toilet, vanity and occasionally, an adjoining cloakroom – provides an opportunity to squeeze some serious style into a small space. Luxe finishes are suddenly more affordable when you only have a metre or two to work with and there's plenty of opportunity to razzle-dazzle 'em with dramatic decorating ideas scaled to fit. >

A statement mirror is a powder room essential – try Domayne's 'Vogue' mirror for a similar look. Creations in Stone make Carrara marble basins, from \$500.

first class finishes



Above: This luxe space features 'Winter Flowers' glass mosaics, \$8670/3.73sqm module, Bisazza. *Left:* This bathroom, by Retail Therapy ID, goes for gold with 'Herrick' wallpaper, \$160/roll (10m), Osborne & Little. *Below:* For a statement glass wall, try the 'Impressions' series by DecoGlaze.



THROW CAUTION to the wind – a powder room is the place to indulge in a dramatic departure from your home's overall style. Flocked wallpaper exudes opulence and will give the space more of a dressing room feel than traditional tiles, while floral wallpaper is feminine and fun.

Turn tiles into a talking point: think subway tiles set on a diagonal, contemporary 3D effects or glitzy metallic mosaics. Maximise the sense of space by keeping walls white and laying fabulous tiles on the floor – even good quality mosaics are suitable underfoot.

If the idea of all-out colour makes your head hurt, consider a feature panel around an element of the room you'd like to highlight, like a beautiful vanity or mirror.

Natural stone makes a striking splashback: Caesarstone has just released a range of quartz-composite surfaces that mimic the look of natural stone for a fraction of the price. Another earthy option is timber panelling, which lends a breezy Hamptons look – and in a powder room with just a sink and loo to worry about, there's less chance of water damage than in a full bathroom with a shower.

"Wallpaper is my go-to finish to create dramatic impact in a bathroom," Carolyn Burns-McGrave, interior designer

THINK BEYOND the standard white basin – a powder room is the ideal place to make a style statement. You can find vessels made of marble, glass, bronze and stone in every shape imaginable. A shapely above-counter basin is the height of hand-washing luxury and is available in compact sizes to fit small powder room vanities. Pedestal or semi-pedestal basins are perfect for powder rooms where little storage space is required, while slimline, wall-hung waterplanes take up virtually no space and reveal the floor underneath to make the room appear larger. Look for models with a built-in towel rail for extra convenience.

If space is tight, choose wall-mounted tapware to free up space around the basin for beautiful soaps and hand lotion. The latest taps are features in themselves; find eye-catching forms and classic shapes in tactile powder-coated colour.

With no shower or bath to make a statement, the toilet becomes the star of the show, so choose a sculptural suite worthy of attention or look for models with in-wall cisterns for an understated finish that allows the other decorative elements to shine. >

Above right: A striking washstand makes for an elegant powder room – for similar, try Omvivo's 'Mono' basin and pedestal.

Below: After timeless tapware? Try Perrin & Rowe's 'Classical' basin set with country spout, The English Tapware Company.



fabulous fixtures



'Tranquility' above-counter basin in Magnolia, \$895, Apaiser.

Gessi 'Transparenze 200' basin wall spout, \$349, Reece.

Nobili 'New Road' basin mixer in Black Chrome, \$249, Reece.

'Waipori' wall-mounted basin mixer with plate, \$450, Methven.

'Kallos' spun glass under-counter basin, \$749, Kohler.

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versatile vanities

CONSOLE-STYLE vanities reminiscent of dressing tables, complete with a stunning mirror above, make a powder room feel more like somewhere the ladies of high society really would powder their noses. If space is at a premium, opt for one that's built into the wall and stands on two legs.

Glossy timber veneer pieces can be designed to suit your space. "Fitted joinery is a great way to hide storage in a powder room and will save you running to another room to find extra toilet rolls and hand towels," says Carolyn Burns-McGrave of Retail Therapy ID. Think outside the box to make the best use of tricky spaces – for instance, the tap works just as well on the side of the basin and allows for a mirror to be installed along the entire wall above. **hb**



Above: Try 'Drift' basin, \$887, with console in Chrome, \$1749, Just Bathroomware.

Below: Convert a vintage cabinet into a vanity by drilling holes in the back for plumbing and adding a waterproof varnish.



A powder room is a decorator's delight – you can add some serious wow factor

Above: In a small space, you may want an in-built towel rail (try the 'Grundtal' rail, \$120, Ikea, for similar) or a luxurious wallpaper used sparingly (try Graham & Brown to get this look).

location, location

Where to put a powder room depends on your home's existing layout: they're ideally positioned near entertaining areas. "A powder room can be added to small spaces such as under the stairs, within the laundry or adjoining an existing bathroom – since plumbing is already close," says designer Victoria Waters. Or consider cutting into a large room parallel to a plumbing source.

Also think about the room's layout. "Simple planning makes a world of difference. For example, consider dividing the powder room in two with a simple blade wall or screen, with the vanity in one area and the toilet hidden in the other," suggests David Sutherland, Practice Director of Tanner Architects.

