

PERSONAL PLATFORM

POWDER ROOMS OFFER CHANCE FOR DRAMATIC DESIGN

BY BETH WOOD

Megan Siason thinks of powder rooms in the same way many people think of visiting Disneyland or Universal Studios. For Siason, principal and owner of San Diego's m studio interior design and a certified Associate Kitchen and Bath Designer, a powder room is where her imagination can run wild.

Q: What is it about designing a powder room that you like so much?

A: The possibilities are endless with powder bathrooms. They are the visual spaces in your home. You can dress them up as fun and inviting or courageous and vibrant. You can go a little crazy.

Q: Why is that?

A: It's not a space used on an everyday basis, so your choices are not as limited as in a regular bathroom. Functionality is not a big issue. You're not doing your makeup or brushing your teeth there every day. A powder room is used so much less, you can create drama. So you have a lot more options – freedom, if you will.

I ask my clients what kind of adjectives would describe the powder room they want. What mood do we want to create? I do that for any project, but powder rooms are more fun because they are for the guests. They often tend to go glamorous. Clients want to dress it up and razzle and dazzle the people coming into their home.

Q: Can you give us some examples?

A: I did one that was an itty-bitty space but had a 9-foot-high ceiling. We turned the medicine chest into a mirror and added mirrors above and below the chest, to fill that vertical space.

For another powder room, we wanted it to be tranquil. For the pop-up color, we used a deep blue for an accent wall and installed a floating vanity to make it feel more open. Getting the vanity off the floor makes the room feel spacious.



GAIL OWEN

Because they aren't used every day, powder rooms offer a chance to get dramatic. One option is using bold colors.

Q: Do you like wallpaper for powder rooms?

A: You could use wallpaper, paneling, tile, even brick. Because there's no shower in a powder room, there isn't a problem with moisture. Powder-room finishes are limitless because of the functionality component. Usually with a backsplash, you'd use a smooth solid surface, but you could even use a rough-rock backsplash.

Q: What kind of sinks do you recommend?

A: I like to ask my clients about their style. And I ask how tall most of their guests are. I'm 4-foot-11. With some of those ginormous sinks, I have to wash my

hands on my tippy toes. But clients over six feet tall don't mind it.

With vessel sinks, I recommend wall-mounted fixtures – rather than the faucet being installed on the deck, which means it's a designated height. You've got greater control where you can install that fixture. You'll have more flexibility in terms of the height of the faucet.

Q: What materials will work best?

A: For the sink and countertop, you could use quartz, wood, concrete or ceramic. I hone in on my clients' design preferences, lifestyle and personality. A powder room should reflect their

unique personality. They aren't living in a magazine.

Let's say we have a client named Sally who likes the industrial look. You could use a mixture of concrete and mixed metals, with hints of wood to soften it. You could have intriguing mirrors and expose the plumbing fixtures.

Don't forget to have treatment on the ceiling – dress it up, too.

Q: I've read that statement mirrors are a trend in powder rooms.

A: I agree with that. In a powder room, you're creating an elaborate space to show off to guests. The guests should experience the flavor of the owner. Statement mirrors can do that. They can be a piece of art – sometimes it might be purely decorative.

Q: Besides mirrors, how can you give the illusion of the room being bigger?

A: Select the right finishes so they don't overwhelm the space. Cement tiles are a big thing now – but if you use them on the floor and walls, it will feel cramped and crowded. The way to make it feel spacious is to balance out your finishes.

Finding the right balance means weighing out the heavy textural finishes and pairing them with more minimal finishes. I'd recommend to not pair bold wallpaper with a crazy geometric tile. Choose something simpler with geometric tile.

Q: What do you think of floating ledges in lieu of cabinetry?

A: Floating shelves above the toilet can hold a couple rolls of toilet paper with decorative pieces, like candles or plants.

A floating ledge adds a visual focal point. The majority are wood. Across the board, a wood shelf is a classic, timeless element. It can be live-edge or reclaimed wood or clean veneer, but it gives you display room for your accoutrements. It's a wonderful addition.

Beth Wood is a San Diego freelance writer.