

# *tiny room* BIG IMPACT

*Sure, it's small and may not get much use, but the powder room shouldn't be overlooked – particularly as you're preparing your home for the holiday season. Here are a few ways to make it a showpiece.*

*By Haskell Matheny, ASID, CAPS*

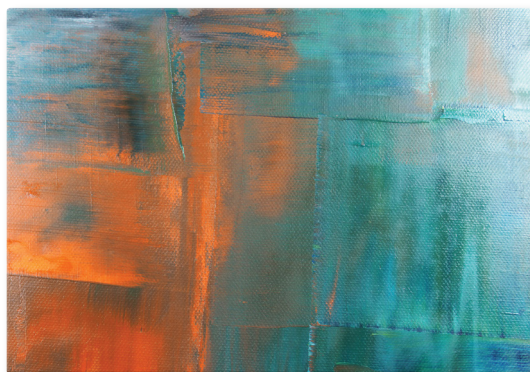
I love a large pattern tile behind the vanity or toilet. It will double as a beautiful backdrop and a practical solution for keeping the area clean.

## The Powder Room, Then And Now:

The powder room originated in the 18th century, an era marked by stringent codes of modesty and propriety. During afternoon tea parties or evening soirees, it offered guests a space to re-powder their wigs, “powder their noses” (i.e., visit the toilet or apply makeup), or excuse themselves to when conversation became too salacious. The modern powder room is simply a ½ bath located on a home's main floor. Often found in homes where all other baths are located upstairs or through a master suite, it remains a convenient space for guests to freshen up.

## Designing A Tiny Room:

The powder room may be the smallest room in your home, but that doesn't mean it can't pack a punch. In fact, my philosophy is that you can go all out in your design *because* it's small. You can use top-of-the-line materials and not break the bank. Think of your powder room like a jewelry box: while it's small, it can contain surprises and charms within. When your guests step into this room and close the door, they'll find a space in which every detail is special.



## The Art:

Incorporating a favorite piece of art into the powder room is a great way to ensure it gets noticed. In fact, I'll often design a whole powder room around enhancing or showcasing a particular piece.



### The Walls:

This is a great space for a bold color or an exciting wall-covering. Don't let the small size fool you: large patterns and prints will look great here and really add drama. And don't forget the ceiling! A great paint color or small pattern wallpaper can add drama there too.

### The Vanity:

The vanity is all about little details. The good news is that there are hundreds of styles, finishes, and materials to choose from. Try a beautiful wood, an exciting paint color, a sleek faucet, or a glamorous mirror. Since it's one of the only pieces in the space, your guests will be sure to notice it.

### The Lighting:

While you want your powder room's lighting to be bold and stylish, make sure it's flattering too. For example, I prefer side sconces to the typical "over the mirror" light bar. These light your face without shadows and make everyone look great.

A furniture vanity is a great way to add counter space and storage. But if the space is tight, you can always go with a pedestal sink.



### The Toilet:

If you're thinking about replacing the toilet, seriously consider a chair height (or "comfort height") toilet. These toilets sit just a few inches taller than most and can be a real blessing for those with bad backs.

### Those Little Extras:

Finally, remember the smallest of details as well: great smelling soap, beautiful towels, and even some luxurious hand lotion will all be appreciated by your guests.

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