



# Powder Room Pizzazz

## The Tiny Room That Makes a Big Impression

*By Paige Hachet Jacob*

**I**t's that little box of a room tucked under the staircase or at the end of a hallway we lovingly call the powder room. Many homeowners don't give it much consideration when decorating their homes. After all, what is there to think about when the room consists of just a toilet and sink, right?

According to Angela Bradfield, who is certified by the National Council for Interior Design Qualification and owns Angela Bradfield Interiors, Ltd., in Raleigh, this small space offers more than its intended function—especially if you entertain often. “It also is the bathroom your guests usually see, and I think what people don't consider is if the half bath is nice, then the people using it as guests feel like they are more welcome and that they were taken into consideration.”

With that in mind, some homeowners see this little room as a chance to make a bold statement without spending a great deal of money. Manufacturers like Kohler Co. and



Moen, Inc., have designed products that target this small space. After seeing what these companies have to offer, you may want to think outside of that small box and reconsider the look and function of your half bath.

### Creative Freedom

One Raleigh resident found that redecorating her half bath gave her a chance to put herself into the project. Aimee Anderson, a Triangle Realtor for Coldwell Banker Howard Perry and Walston, blended several unique ideas to create an elegant look in an otherwise typical room. "Since it's a small room, instead of fighting a small space—you know, everyone says to use light colors to make it look larger—we used a terra cotta color," she said. "It's a really rich, dark, red-brown combination. It made the walls almost disappear."

Bradfield said another space-maximizing idea is to paint the ceiling the same color as the walls, which makes the room look larger, whether the paint is a dark or light color. "If a ceiling is the same color as the wall—especially if there is no molding, and especially on an 8-foot ceiling—it will make it look larger because there's no place for your eyes to go, so it doesn't cut your line of sight," she said.

Anderson also wanted to transform the bathroom sink and cabinet into what looked like a built-in piece of furniture. To accomplish this, she installed a cultured marble vanity top, replaced the faucet and added decorative hardware on the cabinets.

Bradfield suggested using cabinetry that looks more like furniture and is made out of natural woods, which speaks volumes in small spaces. "The woods are what make the statement and lighter woods are more popular right now," she said.

Kohler recently released a line of sink designs that bring natural elements to mind and work perfectly in the powder room. "The new Kohler Vapour colors are atmospheric and allow consumers to playfully maximize the emotion of their space," said Mary Reid, director of advance concept development for the company. "Enamel is a glass material that, when handled differently, allows light into the surface."

Turning on the faucet may also turn on the charm in your half bath if you install one of Moen's new bamboo powder room faucets, which provide function and Asian-inspired beauty.

When decorating a room that doesn't offer much space or natural light from a window, creating the appearance of more space or light may be simpler than you think. Anderson, for

example, removed the large mirror over the vanity that took up most of the wall space and replaced it with a gold, oval-framed mirror. To add more elegance, she replaced the original lighting with sconces on each side of the mirror and hung a valance above it. "It kind of brought the line of the wall down, but makes it feel real cozy, comfortable and elegant in there," she said.

Canned lighting can also brighten up this small room. "Sometimes it's nice to put a canned light—a small, 4-inch can light—a foot out from the wall in the ceiling above the mirror and right above the center of the sink, so that it washes light down in front of the mirror."

Tasteful storage options can also save space and add style. "If you use a pedestal sink, make sure you have a place to store the things without a lot of shelving where things are coming at you in your face," Bradfield suggested. She also advised putting a small, decorative cabinet in the corner to store hand towels, soaps and extra toilet paper.

### Finishing Touches

Anderson added pizzazz to her bathroom with unique accessories. For example, she hung artwork not typically found in a bathroom. "I found a really interesting plate with the motif that I was going for in there and hung it behind the toilet. It's an unusual place to hang a plate, but it works really well with the bathroom," she said. She also hung botanical prints on the wall and placed a vase filled with bamboo in the room.



Bradfield said the key is to balance out all of the room's elements. Show lots of wall, and consider placement and size of items when adding little touches to the room. "You just have to be careful to know how to balance it," she said. "Don't try to fill every corner. If you have room for a nice little rug, that's great, or baskets with rolled up towels, or candles. If you don't have room for it, it's better not to do it."

To help focus on the right choices, Bradfield suggested picking out one thing you like, whether it's a painting or a small statue. It should be something that reflects your personality and presents a theme that blends with the rest of the house. "I think it's great when you can walk away and say, 'I've seen a little insight into this person that I did not know,'" Bradfield said.

A powder room is small by design, but with style, balance and a theme, it could become the most talked-about room in your house. "My friends joke with me all of the time," Anderson said. "They say, 'I'm going to go hang out in the bathroom. I love the bathroom.'" WL