

REAL ESTATE

This Fall's Hot Design Trend: Luxe Laundries

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I think old houses, and the people who love them, are fascinating.

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A laundry room can be as attractive as any room in your home. COURTESY OF MANDICASA

The washer and dryer, once hidden away in the basement, have been moving into bedrooms, kitchens, mudrooms, hallways and other easy-to-get-to places in the home. The laundry is often also the cleaning closet or the storage site; just as the American kitchen is no longer a single-purpose workspace, so is the laundry a multi-purpose room. And, just as we have transformed kitchens, we want to make our laundries beautiful. In 2022, the laundry has become one of the most popular spaces to give makeover love: [Pinterest recently reported “luxe laundry” has emerged as one of its most searched terms](#), and, according to [a recent Houzz survey](#), homeowners are increasing their investments in laundry rooms by 33 percent.

Dina Bandman of San Francisco's Dina Bandman Interiors says, "No longer is the laundry room a forsaken, dreadful space. There is every reason to make a place used for chores enjoyable, cheerful and luxe. My favorite addition to this utility room is the pet shower. In the spirit of this space's elevated design, I selected a Kohler hand shower, which instantly adds an elegant touch and a great deal of functionality to the space. This same spa space for our four-legged friends is also a great watering hole for houseplant



A pet spa is a feature of this luxurious laundry room CHRISTOPHER STARK

“Each room is being prioritized now,” says interior designer Nina Magon of Nina Magon Design Studio. Located in Houston, her firm is responsible for residential, commercial and hospitality design all over the world. “Since we have all been home during the Covid crisis, we totally use and value every room in our home.”

Priscila Forster, architect and showroom manager of MandiCasa Flagship Showroom in New York City, agrees. “When people began to spend so much time at home, first, they found that their kitchens didn't work. Then, that their laundries didn't work. Now, they are investing time and money there. And, it's not just the laundry room any more. It's the pet shower, it's the storage room, and we want it to be nice, as well as functional.”

“Storage has become big,” Nina Magon says. “It's the reason laundries first came out of the basement. Very often, the laundry is also the mudroom. Since it's the first point of contact with the house, making them beautiful has become a priority.”

Designers like Bandman, Magon and Forster see homeowners upgrading their laundries with high-quality cabinets, flooring and counter materials. The washer and dryer are often hidden behind pocket doors or folding doors, and there are personal touches like dry-erase boards for lists and messages. In the interest of beauty, some even hang wallpaper. Wallcoverings, however, should be made from PVC that is impervious to moisture. For the same reason – humidity – rugs and carpets are generally not appropriate here.

“Finishes must be easy to clean and, because laundry rooms are subject to heat and humidity, they must be of high quality,” says Priscilla Forster. “Counters should be porcelain or quartz; natural stone is too porous. You also want to avoid natural wood veneers.”

Stylistically, designers often take cues for the laundry room from the kitchen, especially if the laundry room is also a mudroom and adjoins the kitchen.

“We often try to match the laundry room to the kitchen,” says Nina Magon. “We introduce luxury with nice, yet ultra-durable materials and lots of storage. My go-to for surfacing in hard-working spaces is Dekton because it's impervious to stains, requires zero maintenance, and can be used for countertops, flooring, and backsplashes. For a touch of luxury, I love using the same countertop material as the backsplash and carrying it all the way up the wall.”

In larger homes, she says, there are often two laundries. “One near the primary bedroom, and another near the kitchen.”

In other words, two opportunities for glamour and luxury.