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## BANISHIEBLAND

Add colour, texture and freestanding furniture to freshen up the bathroom, says Katrina Burroughs

here's often a decorative disconnect between a bathroom and the rest of a home. Your sitting room, kitchen and bedroom may be full of character, incorporating a joyful miscellany of furniture and accessories, some handed down the generations, others from the high street, mixing textures and colours in your own personal edit. In the bathroom, you've got a matching suite of fitted furniture, in shiny operatingtheatre white, bought from a single supplier. It is the one room where even the most

style-savvy homeowner tends to play it safe, purchasing an entire interior box-fresh from a specialist showroom.

However, while there's a need for expert help with the layout of this tricky room, there's no need to settle for suboptimal style. It's time to join the backlash against the boring bathroom.

Emma Sims Hilditch, the interior designer and creative director of Neptune, says: "The bathroom is one of the most difficult spaces to design. It's small, you need a lot of good storage and it's a wet space. The easiest option is t buy one off the shelf." Her bathroom bugbear is the

clinical look: fully tiled white spaces with glossy white fitted units. She is a fan of the unfitted bathroom, with a freestanding tub, washstand and storage.

"We encourage our clients to think of the bathroom as a space that can feel more integrated into the rest of the home, where each piece of furniture going into the room brings character and interest Above all, it's about choosing your palette of finishes."

Neptune's Edinburgh washstand, in a warm combination of natural oak and marble (from £1,060), has been a hit since it launched last year - clients are buying it to

install in kitchens, mud rooms and utility rooms, too. As well as Neptune's range, there are great washstands at Balineum, Catchpole & Rye and The Water Monopoly.

The brand to look at, however, is Porter, founded by Lisa and Roy Persse five years ago. Interior designers are already more than familiar with Porter, an independent label whose handmade washstands, in joinery and natural stone, are simple, considered and opulent.

"We maintain that good design needn't stop at the bathroom door, so we strive to create spaces of calm quietude that live up to the rest of your home," Lisa says. The brand is about to expand its range to include lighting, brassware, baths and mirrors, and will launch a new website, porterbathroom.com, later this month.

Persse credits hotels such as Soho House and the Pig for inspiring the trend for mixand-match unfitted bathrooms that combine vintage tubs and antique armoires with spectacular contemporary brassware and luxury linens.

The founder and creative director of Godrich Interiors, Ed Godrich, would add to the list the Lakes by Yoo, a collection of luxury holiday homes in Gloucestershire, where one of his projects features a pink-tiled room (pictured opposite) that is a textbook example of an individual bathroom.

"People often don't put as much effort into the bathroom as they do the other principal rooms in the house. They see it as a unit on its own, and that's how bathrooms end up looking a bit sterile. We aim for character. We don't want any one house to be the same as another, so we try to be a bit more original.

For the pink bathroom, Godrich found a midcentury cabinet on eBay and customised it to create a washstand. "It's not a cheap way of doing things," he says. "It can be a bit complicated. If something has drawers, you need to be able to accommodate the sink, so you have to fix the top drawers."

While Godrich uses vintage furniture to splendid effect, a characterful bathroom does not have to feature retro roll tops and Victorian-inspired brassware. Contemporary Italian brands such as Ex.t and Cielo stand out for their imaginative freestanding bathroom furniture designs, inspired by modern industrial style. Whether you are going classic or contemporary, just remember: bland is banned.

This bath and basin are handcrafted by William Holland. The copper Bateau bath (£4,600) and copper Gyrus basin with artisan tin interior (£430) are shown at Voyager, an 18thcentury coastal house in Mousehole, Cornwall (unique homestays.com). williamholland.com

Duravit's new Luv range, by the Danish designer Cecilie Mainz,

mirrors the curved shape of the washbasin (£542). The Taupe

vanity unit, with pull-out drawer (also available in white, Nordic

brings the informal character of freestanding furniture to a contemporary bathroom collection. The bathtub (£3,790)

white, stone grey, light blue and night blue, £2,041), has an

touch panel and demister, costs £1,703. duravit.co.uk

American walnut top (£1,088). The mirror, with LED lighting.

Godrich Interiors has added a unique touch to a midcentury cabinet found on eBay by converting it into a washstand and using pink Covent Garden tiles on the wall (£20 a sq metre; wallsandfloors.co.uk). The Frome lamps cost £46 (tinsmiths.co.uk). Claremont basin taps (£129) and Berkeley radiator (£339; both burlingtonbathrooms. com)

Stamp your individuality on your bathroom with the unusual Huxley light from Balineum, The design comes in a choice of 15 metal finishes, including brass (£449), matt gold (£679) and shiny black, as shown (£619). balineum.co.uk



traditional, pear drop.

(15cm-18cm, £485).

Fancy freestanding

bathroom furniture,

chic? Then look no

knees at making

contemporary feel.

The Gus washstand,

designed by Michael

Hilgers, features a

handmade ceramic

basin on a chrome-

plated metal base.

£1,247; cphart.co.uk

fixtures with a

but not a fan of roll-top

further than Italian brand

Ex.t, which is the bee's

freestanding bathroom

diameter, £445); medium



1111

Victoria + Albert, a British brand South Africa, designs its products with the modular bathroom in mind. Customers pick and mix pieces from the wide range of

freestanding baths, basins, vanity units and brassware. Picture shows £2,400) with a Lavello 114 vanity unit, in gloss white (£2,460). vandabaths.com



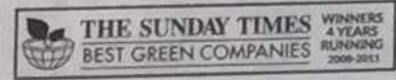
The American architect David Rockwell's new Inciso collection for the Italian brassware brand Gessi is inspired by US plumbing. The solid brass taps, available from January, come in finishes including black, nickel and bronze.

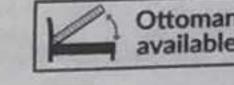
From £970; gessl.com

Balineum's overscale medicine cabinet, which can be ordered with a left- or right-hand-opening door, features three adjustable glass shelves. It comes in eight metal finishes, including matt gold, as shown, and measures W61cm x H84cm x D13cm. £5,900-£6,800; balineum.co.uk









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\*Subject to status, see website for T's & C's. \*\* At extra cost. APP = After Promotion Price.







mix-and-match brassware from the

Watermark Collection. Pictured is

the wall-mounted, two-hole basin

mixer, with handle in lumber teak,

and spout and base in aged brass.

thewatermarkcollection.eu

What a white bathroom needs, to avoid a stark, clinical look, is an injection of natura texture. Try this Calidris woven magazine rack (W30cm x H44cm), with oak accessories shelf (W40cm). £166: ripplesbathrooms.com