Art Department

Matthew Williams

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STEAL THIS LOOK

The Medicine Cabinet as Vanity

We all long for a bathroom that feels like a spa. Unattainable in a small bath? Not entirely: you can create your own moment of Zen beauty in your medicine cabinet. All you have to do is remove the pileup of unused things and medicine bottles (in fact, it's actually better to store medicine at room temperature and away from moisture). Instead, devote the cabinet to your grooming arsenal: makeup, perfume, even jewelry. And whenever you open the cabinet, it will make you happy. Here's why this one works.

1. **An outlet on the inside of the cabinet** is ideal for electric toothbrushes, razors, and hair dryers.
2. **Shelves organized according to purpose:** beauty products on one shelf, skin care items on another, and dental care items on the easiest-to-access bottom tier.
3. **No excess**—and no searching required; what's here is a distillation of favorites.
4. **A variety of pretty vessels,** such as labware-style glass containers and a vintage silver cup, ensure that nothing is loose or untethered.
5. **A travel clock** keeps you on schedule.
6. **Vetiver root bundles** (from Bell'Occhio) offer a surprise hint of fragrance every time you open the cabinet.
7. **An over-the-door metal rack** (by Yamazaki) puts the inside of the mirror to good use as hanging jewelry storage.

EXTRA WORTH HAVING

Freestanding Storage in the Bathroom

Think beyond traditional bathroom furnishings. You can gain extra storage—and a bit of sculptural interest—by inserting hardworking items with a small footprint.

1. *Short on drawer and cabinet space? Roll in a cart, such as this Raskog model from Ikea. Canvas Dopp kits contain medicine cabinet staples, and larger bottles are neatly gathered in a tool caddy on the top tier.*
2. *Consider placing a wooden coatrack in a corner. In addition to holding bathrobes, it can be draped with baskets and bags (for towels, blow-dryers, and other accessories).*

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PREPAREDNESS KIT

The Herb and Spice Drawer

Create a designated place for herbs and frequently used tools like a garlic press and graters. Dried herbs have a short shelf life, especially if they're exposed to light, so keeping only small quantities makes sense, as does arranging them in a drawer or cupboard. No fitted insert necessary; corral everything on trays. Here's what you need.

The Essentials

- Uniform glass jars—we like small paint jars from the art supply store (see "The Remodelista Storage 75," page 179)
- Metal trays sized to fit your drawer
- Washi tape for labeling the jar tops (this is an idea we like from cookbook author Heidi Swanson)

Also Consider

- Herb scissors
- Spice grinder
- Garlic press
- Ginger grater
- Small bowls for specialty salts

STEAL THIS LOOK

A Disappearing Desk

For tight quarters, consider a ship-style table that lifts up for use. Here's why this one works.

1. **A shelf that becomes a table.** Ikea's drop-leaf Norberg design is hinge-mounted on the wall. When the top is up, it's a desk; when it's lowered, it becomes a shallow shelf.
2. **The surprisingly generous tabletop** is big enough for a laptop; it also works as a dining table for two.
3. **Desk accessories** line up on the shelf, which remains in place when the desk is folded down.
4. **A chair with a slim silhouette,** the industrial French Nicolle, pairs well with the fold-down desk.
5. **An Original BTC Hector clip light** hangs from a Bed Bath & Beyond metal towel ladder, another adaptable design that stands ready to hold magazines and even sweaters and jackets.

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EXPERT ADVICE

Think Like a Stylist

Stand back and assess what you've got on display as if looking through a camera lens. Are too many objects competing for attention? Are your favorites getting lost in the visual cacophony? Every surface doesn't need to be clear, but there ought to be an intentionality to your displays. Discover five tricks of the styling trade—from **Ayesha Patel**, a veteran stylist and *Martha Stewart Living* alum.

1 **Add order through subtraction.** On location, stylists start by removing all the small pieces in a room. With a blank slate, they can then assess the setting and reintroduce objects one by one.

2 **Play with scale.** Pleasing still lifes keep the eyes moving from one object to another. To achieve this dynamism, set up an invisible connect-the-dots structure of triangles and circles linking your arrangements.

3 **When a room looks too bare, add some potted plants or cut flowers.** Nature is transforming: it instantly adds life.

4 **To minimize clutter, consider a monochromatic palette.** White, in particular, has a simplifying and cleansing effect. True, it takes discipline to live with only shades of pale, but your rooms will automatically look less busy, no matter how much is in them.

5 **Use trays as a finishing detail.** Trays imply graciousness and, as we've previously noted, supply that little bit of boundary that adds coherence. Patel keeps her home office on a large tray on the dining table: "It holds receipts (under a pretty rock) and small trays containing scissors, a letter opener, a stapler, and paper clips. It looks good, and when company is coming, I just pick it up and move it."

The Workstation

EXPERT ADVICE

Think Like a Foodie

Good cooks care about the way kitchen staples are stored. How to tame the jungle inside our refrigerators? **Karen Mordechai**, food photographer, founder of Sunday Suppers, and cookbook author, has six smart answers.

1 **Buy in smaller quantities and avoid overcrowding.** "I've learned over the years to purchase food in a more thoughtful manner," says Mordechai. "Sometimes that means shopping more frequently, but I'm okay with that. I love having a refrigerator that feels approachable and inspiring."

2 **Establish distinct storage zones.** To avoid a free-for-all, store like with like to introduce predictability and order. In most fridges, the bottom shelf is the coldest zone, making it ideal for meat; beverages do well on the top shelf; vinegar-based condiments (such as ketchup and mustard) belong in the door compartments, which are less chilly. Leftovers, meanwhile, should be clustered at eye level where they're sure to be noticed.

3 **Practice first in, first out.** Adopted from grocers and other retailers, the FIFO approach ensures that what needs to be used first, such as milk that will soon expire, is stocked up front.

4 **Commit to a once-a-week fridge cleanup and clear-out.** "I find this very therapeutic," says Mordechai. "It always inspires a kitchen-sink meal or two, such as a frittata, a soup, and a big salad."

5 **Use enamel, ceramic, and glass containers.** Unlike plastic, they can go directly from fridge to oven to table (and your food doesn't have to mingle with things like BPA and phthalates). Label containers with washi tape to keep track of contents and dates.

6 **Store produce in reusable cloth and mesh bags (instead of plastic).** For sources, see page 182. And use your fridge properly: The high-humidity drawer is for things that wilt, such as greens, herbs, and strawberries. Oranges, apples, stone fruits, avocados, and other ethylene producers go in the low-humidity drawer.

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