



Jeanne Collins

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The trend:
**GLAMMED UP
LAUNDRY ROOMS
WITH SPECIALTY
DRYING AREAS**

WHY IT'S HOT

"I would say I've seen two main trends lately, and they're both in the laundry room," quips Jeanne Collins. "These rooms are no longer just utilitarian—people really want them to be pretty, and they're willing to spend on everything from tile and flooring to stunning fixtures," she says. Her clients are also demanding more drying and hanging space—specifically more flat areas to dry clothing—and are willing to customize their laundry room to this end.

HOW TO GET IT

When it comes to the backsplash, make it fun. "This is usually not a huge space so be creative, big and bold. Some of my clients opt for a busy pattern over the sink and others choose to tile an entire accent wall—both look great." The designer is also getting requests to install high-end and interesting countertops, the caliber of which you'd normally find in a bar or your kitchen. "Beautiful quartzite and quartz countertops with gray veining have been chosen in some of my recent projects," she recalls.

Hardware and lighting are also getting fancier. "In a recent home, we chose a wall-mounted farmhouse sink by Watermark and solid brass Watermark faucets meant to look like antique fixtures—they're gorgeous," she says. In another laundry room her client opted for a deep stainless steel Nantucket sink, great for soaking, and a faucet with a sprayer for cleaning. When it comes to lighting, Collins says the sky's the limit—noting that she just

installed a crystal Juliska pendant that has also been seen in another client's kitchen. "Just make your lighting and hardware choices interesting," she advises. "They don't have to be expensive, but have fun with them."

For flooring, Collins says people are choosing larger format tiles, around 12 x 24 inches. "You can buy porcelain tile that looks like textured linen or stone that is easy to clean, reasonably priced and looks great," she says. When installing, she recommends laying tile in an offset pattern, which looks interesting and makes a room appear longer. Her favorite tile sources are Ideal Tile in Stamford and Greenwich Tile.

What's the newest trend she's seeing? "I'm doing a ton of custom drying drawers these days. The drawers look like part of a regular cabinet when closed, but when opened they reveal a mesh insert to lay clothing flat to dry—great for T-shirts or lingerie," says Collins. She custom builds these to be three to four feet long and then orders a polyester sailing mesh from Seattle Fabrics that comes in many colors and can be cut to fit a drawer's interior. "These drawers are great because they can be closed while not in use, yet they provide a space for items like sweaters that need to lie flat to dry," she adds. While the request for drawers is new, people are continually asking for a lot of hanging space. She recently installed a rustic industrial hanging bar in a modern farmhouse that's eight feet long and offers lots of space. In a center hall colonial, she went for a more traditional approach with three-tiered hanging bars over the dryer. When sourcing these and other items, "Etsy is a great place to find hanging laundry bars, laundry bags and rolling carts, fun baskets to style a laundry room and creative



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Some of the latest trends for laundry rooms include a bold backsplash, elevated lighting and custom drying drawers.



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artwork, such as framed prints with directions for how to treat stains,” says the designer.

In addition to solving the drying situation, Collins is also being asked to design custom cabinets with roomy pull-out drawers to accommodate everything from replacement light bulbs to storing towels and sheets to cleaning products, much like an overflow linen closet. “When you put things in deep cabinets that sit next to a washer and dryer, items tend to get lost, so I prefer pull-out drawers where you’re able to see everything,” she says.

When asked about her own laundry room, the designer says she refreshed hers by sourcing inexpensive cabinets from Home Depot, then asked her carpenter to place them on a custom-built platform and add custom frames so it looks like a built-in space. “This is a great design hack. I didn’t spend a ton of money on my cabinets, but they look custom,” she says.

For a finishing touch to your laundry room, Collins suggests adding a plant—a succulent is a great choice. “Plants should be in every room. They’re pretty, organic and they soften a space. If you don’t have a window in your laundry area, just add a nice faux plant.”

