

# The Seattle Times

## Bathroom storage options that save space, add style



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**Q:** We're renovating our master bath for the first time since we built our home 20 years ago. We love the convenience of our medicine cabinets, but we're ready for an upgrade. What's the latest in bathroom storage, and what should we look for in a vanity?

**A:** Sorting through all the new-and-improved storage options can be daunting. There's a lot to consider. But the myriad choices available on the market make it easy to create a perfectly personalized master-bath retreat where there's a place for everything, and everything has its place.

### Medicine cabinets

First off, you're not alone in your affection for medicine cabinets. They remain one of the most requested items for new bathrooms to this day. Far from outdated, they're one of the easiest ways to store all the little odds and ends you need in the bathroom. You'll find a wider range of options on the market today, from handcrafted solid-wood cabinets to more high-tech-looking aluminum versions.

And speaking of tech, today's medicine cabinets offer more bells and whistles than ever before. Many now come with multiple mirrors and built-in LED lighting on both sides of the cabinet doors — making morning hair, makeup and shaving routines much easier. Need to charge your toothbrush, razor or smartphone? There are medicine cabinets that offer both electrical and USB outlets right in the unit.

"Medicine cabinets really are a fantastic storage solution for everything from medications to moisturizers," says Judy Hedreen, the owner of Strasser, a Woodinville-based maker of bathroom vanities and other accessories. "They keep everything at eye level for easy organization with a clean look."

### Wall-mounted vanities

When it comes to vanities, one of today's top-trending styles is the wall-mounted or "floating" vanity. Whether in a powder room or a large master suite, floating vanities help to create the illusion of more space, lending a modern feel that can be played up with sleek, contemporary door styles and finishes. It can also be tempered into a more transitional style with textured options that have the look of reclaimed wood.



Interior designer Christopher Grubb, president of Beverly Hills, Calif.-based Arch-Interiors Design Group, suggests using wall-mounted bath vanities for children or older adults who are aging in place.

"It doesn't have to be a standard height. You can adjust it to whatever height is needed," he says.

Grubb suggests adding a strip of light underneath. "It's a beautiful design feature that can also act as a night light."

Every bath project is as unique as the homeowner, so the ability to customize what works for a particular home or family is vital. Many cabinet companies offer mix-and-match elements that can be configured in a variety of ways. There are collections that offer drawer banks, cabinets, mirrors, medicine cabinets, linen towers and more in various sizes that you can arrange to suit your personal storage and decor needs.

### Storage drawers

If your bath was built 20 years ago or more, you most likely have a lot of cabinets and perhaps a couple of small drawers. As it turns out, drawers are storage-space game-changers and are often a more efficient and convenient choice in the bathroom.

First off, they're more ergonomic. You pull the drawer out toward you instead of bending down on your knees to access items. Plus, drawers can be pulled all the way out, making it easier for you to see what's inside and preventing things from getting lost in the black abyss of a cabinet.

Drawers also maximize the use of space. You can fit a lot more stuff into multiple drawers than in one or two cabinets — especially if you organize them with dividers. Many designers will tell you that storage drawers offer a sleeker look than cabinet doors.

*Peter Ollestad is vice president of sales for Strasser, a maker of custom, handcrafted luxury bath vanities and cabinets and a member of the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties (MBAKS). If you have a home improvement, remodeling or residential homebuilding question you'd like answered by one of MBAKS's more than 2,600 members, write to [homework@mbaks.com](mailto:homework@mbaks.com).*