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OBSESSIONS

Seeking the Sublime

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HERE'S MUD IN YOUR EYE

Form and function coexist in these well-appointed – and supremely useful – mudrooms

DEBORAH L. MARTIN



DESIGNER: Philip Mitchell, Philip Mitchell Design, Inc. **PROJECT LOCATION:** Chester, Nova Scotia, Canada **DESIGN DETAILS:** For this mudroom in a historic house on the ocean, I used color, pattern and texture to create a welcoming feel. There are four closets for coats, shoes and boots, and a large antique pine chest stores hats, mitts and scarves. A pullout cabinet to the right of the dog wash keeps a range of dog paraphernalia. Wall-mounted hooks keep towels and leashes accessible. The hand-painted cabinets and beadboard walls are paired with black slate tiles and unlacquered brass plumbing fixtures and hardware. An eye-catching wall covering on the ceiling creates drama and adds an extra decorative layer. **THE ESSENTIALS:** Storage for coats, boots, shoes, hats, gloves, scarves; storage for pet leashes, coats, boots; hooks for hanging coats; perforated cabinet doors to allow damp things to dry; conveniently located next to the most used entrance; and practical and durable finishes.



DESIGNER: Christopher Peacock **PROJECT LOCATION:** New York City **DESIGN DETAILS:** This was once a kitchen area, but with an addition to the back of the house, the client gained space for a mudroom. The area was quite large, and we needed counter space for incoming shopping and packages, so we added an island. The cabinetry was hand painted in green, inspired by a classic Barbour jacket, and we offset that with wood and marble countertops and metal mesh doors. The floor is reclaimed French oak, and we lined the inside of the drawers with stainless steel so they can take the abuse of dirty boots and shoes. **THE ESSENTIALS:** Enough cubbies for the family and guests, and lots of storage for sports equipment, boots and gloves. And plenty of pet storage. It should be well heated and ventilated so clothes dry out. Also, it's good to have a junk and key drawer, which is a necessity.



DESIGNER: Marika Meyer, Marika Meyer Interiors **PROJECT LOCATION:** McLean, VA **DESIGN DETAILS:** This mudroom was formerly the dining room. The clients rarely used the space and needed functional solutions for storage, laundry and the family dogs. They wanted an area for gardening and potting, as well as a family office. We were lucky to have so much beautiful natural light and tall ceilings, which helps keep the space from feeling crowded. We wanted it to be light and bright, and to be a continuation of the materials on the exterior. **THE ESSENTIALS:** Storage, both concealed and open; laundry is a must; a family mail/package hub (we call it shipping/receiving in our house); and everything should be made of a durable material that can take a beating.



DESIGNER: Phillip Thomas, Phillip Thomas Inc. **PROJECT LOCATION:** Bellport, NY **DESIGN DETAILS:** This mudroom was all about maximizing multipurpose space in a three-generation family summer home. The space also serves as a pool towel room and snack area. Every detail was considered down to the traditional light switches. The color scheme was inspired by the wonderful bottles we dug up while laying the foundation for the expanded kitchen. We wanted a space that was warm but bright, a little rustic and most importantly, felt like home. Vintage tractor seats sourced from a local farm museum were mounted to a raw steel beam to create seating. Patinated zinc-clad sliding doors lead to the laundry and pantry areas. The handles are made from old wrenches, also sourced from the local farm museum. **THE ESSENTIALS:** A mudroom is all about functionality, but that doesn't mean you have to skip on style. My dream mudroom would include endless storage space for boots, towels, coats, backpacks, sports equipment, linens and all the other odds and ends that are needed in an organized home. It is always important to make a mudroom able to handle a mess.



DESIGNER: Lucy Penfield, Lucy Interior Design **PROJECT LOCATION:** Edina, Minnesota **DESIGN DETAILS:** Designed for a bustling family of five with three active boys, there is nothing serious about this mudroom—we wanted to set a fun stage. Sports lockers keep this room tidy but accessible. To minimize the long hallway, we chose Clarence House Tibet Wallpaper in pale blue, paired with slate tiles and Benjamin Moore White Dove. The energy and scale set the scene every day. **THE ESSENTIALS:** A mix of fun and function with a little dazzle; closed cabinets for a tidy look, and open underneath to kick off shoes; easy-to-clean tile floor and a wool runner for a soft landing and a dash of pretty, because we deserve it! Bright light, a mirror for the last view out the door, and a matching custom-framed bulletin board. A bench to put your shoes on or to toss your jacket on, and then yes, WALLPAPER! My favorite part of the room!



DESIGNER: Lisa Davenport, LDD Interiors **PROJECT LOCATION:** Durham, CT **DESIGN DETAILS:** What started out as a place for the homeowner's potting table turned into a garden shed oasis. This carriage house/garden shed/mudroom needed to be as maintenance free as possible. The clients wanted the ability to literally hose the room down. Azek and vinyl windows were the main finishes for the walls, large exterior-grade blue stone with a long linear drain finished the flooring. The cabinet is custom designed using stainless steel and azek, with a soapstone sink. Finishing touches include antique cabinetry, lights and a scale that were added for function and character. **THE ESSENTIALS:** Plentiful storage: a place for everything and everything in its place. Ease of maintenance: no one wants to be a slave to a shed! And most of all, good light. Flood the space with natural light, and bring the outside in.



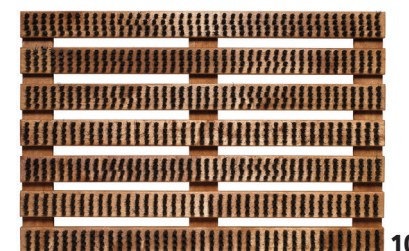
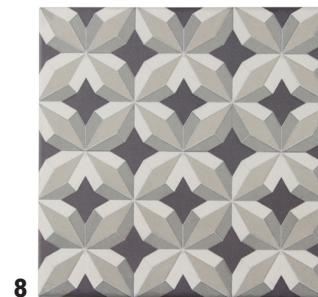
DESIGNER: Lang Architecture **PROJECT LOCATION:** Kerhonkson, NY **DESIGN DETAILS:** The mudroom was built as part of an original house design in Hudson Woods, a collection of 26 dwellings on 131 forested acres in the Catskills. The space is situated in a hallway near the entrance of the house. We used white oak T&G sourced from Hickman Woods, finished with natural oil from WOCA. We thought it important to use wood throughout to blend seamlessly with the style of the house, which embraces wood on all surfaces. **THE ESSENTIALS:** A long bench, lots of hooks and shoe storage are all must-haves.

MUDROOM ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

PRODUCED BY
SAMANTHA EMMERLING



1. PIGEON AND POODLE Kendari Seagrass Nesting Basket pigeonandpoodle.com **2.** PIGEON AND POODLE Kazan Rattan Nesting Basket **3.** ferm LIVING Ando Terracotta Pot fermliving.us **4.** MAINLY BASKETS Braided Square Pedestal and Urn mainlybaskets.com **5.** OKA Gullion Resin-Sealed Wood Bench oka.us **6.** SANAYI313 I0313 Box Stool is designed and crafted using burl ash veneer sanayi313.com **7.** LOSTINE Piper Leather and Oak Mail Holder lostine.com **8.** WALKER ZANGER Encaustic Echoes Porcelain Tile walkerzanger.com **9.** WALKER ZANGER Spanish Cotto Terracotta Tile walkerzanger.com **10.** DESIGN WITHIN REACH Doormat with Bristles by Iris Hantverk dwr.com **11.** &TRADITION Capture Hook by Space Copenhagen andtradition.com



BOHO: THE NEW GARDEN CREDO

Among the trends in landscape design is embracing bolder, happier colors and never feeling boxed in again.

Landscape designers say the tightly boxed in boxwood, so endearing for that upper-crust English garden look, has been replaced by a freer, lush romantic garden without borders to define it.

"As people have spent more time outside in gardens because of the pandemic, they've become more sophisticated", says landscape designer Jan Johnsen, author of *Gardentopia: Design Basics for Creating Beautiful Outdoor Spaces*. "They have an enhanced appreciation of texture in landscape design – they want brighter colors and more variation in height, and they are open to trying new plants."

So yes, boxwoods are now not as popular. What has been the substitute?

Using more airy arches, building overhanging porches, repurposing old couches and tables and adding colorful sculptures in the garden to define it in new ways, says Iftikhar Ahmed of TREELINE DESIGNZ, a coveted, international designer based in Oregon. "We see more outdoor living rooms mixing nature with furniture." Places, he adds, that have zen qualities along with boho chic.

For an installation that won gold at the most recent Philadelphia Flower Show, Ahmed took bamboo poles and painted them in a kaleidoscope of colors, and built a gazebo (*shown above*) that matched the bright bold hydrangeas floating around it. He also used leafy tropical grasses and hosta plants, which are not only low maintenance but also help the existing flowers pop more.

"Every single plant on earth blooms with purpose, and it's always a discovery to find ways to combine them," says Ahmed, noting that the different textures, colors and shapes of grasses, and plants and ferns, are now playing a more prominent role in gardens.

The green trend – having far more interesting plants along with flowers – is rooted in the sustainability conversation that continues to grow and change design thinking. Clients want pollinator-friendly gardens with milkweed, snapdragon and echinacea to attract butterflies and bees. Earthy eucalyptus and birch trees are finding popularity as well for their interesting textures that compliment a garden.

And more significantly, instead of one focal garden, why not a few strategic gardens to create cozy enclaves and sanctuaries in new patterns? – JILL BROOKE