



What makes this bathroom green? This “jack and jill” bathroom is comprised of vanities, vanity tops, mirrors, pocket doors and faucets that were salvaged from a 1993 remodel. Durable, low-maintenance, resilient flooring is made of sustainably harvested materials and is biodegradable at the end of its useful life. A dual flush toilet and shower heads reduce water usage. The solid surface shower surrounds are durable and low-maintenance, requiring no toxic

cleansers (the trim in the girls bathroom has 13 percent recycled content). The water closet and boys bathroom both have tubular skylights (with compact fluorescent lighting) to provide natural day lighting to landlocked rooms. The exhaust fan system has a sensor that comes on automatically. The trim is resource-efficient, formaldehyde-free MDF and the paint is a low-VOC paint. Design by A Kitchen That Works.

Green... Is It Your Color?

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In this fourth installment, we will look at the many stylish design and build principles and products that can make your next bath or laundry room project environmentally friendly.

Bathrooms have the highest water usage of any room in the house. To help minimize water consumption, choose water-saving faucets such as a sensor-activated faucet and low-flow showerheads (federal mandate is 2.5 gallons of water flow per minute but there are some truly effective units with output of only 1.5 gallons per minute).

Consider installing dual-flush or high-efficiency toilets (HETs). Prior to 1992, toilets used 5 gallons of water per flush. By 1992 the federal mandate was lowered to 3.5 gallons per flush. Then in 2000, it was reduced to 1.6 gallons per flush. Dual-flush units typically use 0.9 gallons of water to flush liquid waste and 1.6 gallons for solid waste. HETs use 1.3 gallons or less per flush. One thing about some HETs is that they can be noisy so make sure you clarify this before you buy. If you have multiple males in your household, consider installing a waterless

urinal — just think, no more arguments about flushing or closing the toilet seat!

Keep bathtub sizing to a minimum. A bathtub for two sounds very romantic but it takes over 70 gallons of hot water to fill, and how often can you and your partner actually bathe together? If your household is anything like mine, the answer is once in a blue moon. But even if you are bathing alone, you will still need at least 60 gallons to fill that tub, hence, your house will need a 100-gallon water heater to fill a tub and so much as allow another household member to wash their hands. It is not very resource-efficient to have a 100-gallon water heater standing by 24/7 to fill the occasional tub. Lastly, consider whether you really need a jet tub or if a simple soaking tub would suit your needs. If jets are a must, consider an air jet rather than a water jet tub; not only is it quieter, it is more energy-efficient and hygienic.

Similar to kitchens, bathroom countertops and floors can be sourced from a variety of beautiful, durable and sustainable (or recycled content) options. Bamboo would be great flooring material

for a powder room but is not as well-suited to a bathing environment. Linoleum and tile are good options for full baths where water is likely to be left standing on the floor after a bath or shower.

Tile, quartz, and compressed phenolic paper all make for excellent low-maintenance countertops. It is also possible to find beautiful pieces of natural stone slabs at resale/salvage yards. (These slabs will require periodic sealing with a somewhat noxious sealer but at least it has been saved from the landfill!)

When it comes to tile, there is a dizzying variety of recycled glass tile and there are also recycled-content grout and low-VOC tile sealants to go with it. Remember to reseal your tile grout every few years to keep your tile surfaces looking clean and new, as well as to protect your home from water damage and mold.

Use low- or no-VOC paints on the walls and ceiling and low-VOC caulks around tubs, showers, sinks and toilets. To further protect your indoor air quality, choose formaldehyde-free cabinets made with Europly or formaldehyde-free medium-



Powder Room



Master Bath



density fiber board (MDF) for the box construction. Specify plantation grown or sustainably harvested wood for the cabinet doors and drawer fronts. Lastly, have the cabinets finished with a low-VOC, water-based finish.

The most important thing to focus on in the bathroom is ventilation. Install an effective fan that will not only preserve your indoor air quality but also your investment in your cabinets and interior finishes. In a child's bathroom, consider installing a combination fan and light unit. This will ensure the fan gets used. Timers are another good way to ensure fan use and minimize the opportunity for lights to be left on. Understand that for fans to work well, they must be turned on before their perceived need, i.e. before you can actually see steam. This allows the fan to start circulating the air and move the steam toward the fan exit more efficiently.

If a bathroom is part of an addition, it is a good idea to consider electric resistant radiant floor heat as well as a tankless water heater. The radiant floor heat will not only add luxury to your bath but energy efficiency too, depending on the layout and/or sizing of the home's existing forced-air system and its proximity to the new addition.

Heated towel bars and wall-mounted radiators are also good chill chasers that add a bit of spa-like ambiance to the bath. For retrofits and remodels, there are floor- or wall-mounted electric plug-in models and for new construction, there are hard-wired and hydronic models. Tankless water heaters are an excellent idea for bathroom additions because you ►

Powder Room

Custom vanity made from Impir Engineered veneer in quartered Macassar Ebony on a formaldehyde free MDF door and Forest Stewardship Council certified maple plywood boxes by Mortise and Tenon, Poulsbo. Paperstone counters made from recycled paper and nut oil resin. Water saving sensor faucet and dual flush toilet from Toto. Mirror was recycled from another remodel project. Walls are breathable American Clay for good indoor air quality. Trim is Ultralite low formaldehyde resource efficient MDF. Design by A Kitchen That Works.

Master Bathroom

Custom cabinetry made from Impir Engineered veneer in Zebrano on a formaldehyde free MDF door and Forest Stewardship Council certified maple plywood boxes by Mortise and Tenon, Poulsbo. Concrete countertops are comprised of recycled glass, fly ash and Portland cement with a no-VOC water based finish by Absolute Concreteworks, Poulsbo. Mirror has fluorescent lamps built in. Floor and shower wall is high durability low maintenance porcelain tile. Wainscoting and backsplash are recycled glass tile. Walls are breathable American Clay for good indoor air quality. Plumbing fixtures are water efficient. Trim is Ultralite low formaldehyde resource efficient MDF. Skylight and windows provide excellent day lighting reducing the reliance on energy consuming artificial lighting. Design by A Kitchen That Works.

are not piping hot water to a far-flung corner of the house, nor are you heating standby water 24/7.

When it comes to bathrooms, you could use halogen and incandescent lighting around the sink and mirror and fluorescent for the water closet, shower or general area lighting. Don't miss an opportunity to daylight a bathroom with double glazed windows and skylights (tubular skylights are great for bathroom remodels). Lastly, consider installing a dimmer switch in your bathroom because dimming the lights will save energy and you really only need full-light capacity when you are shaving or applying make-up. Having a dimmer on the water closet light allows wee morning-hour risers to use the facilities without being jolted awake by bright lights, while simultaneously ensure a hygienic environment for the next user.

Laundry Rooms

In the laundry room, start by selecting energy- and water-efficient laundry machines. Front-loading washers are more efficient than their top-loading brethren (not to mention more ergonomic and better for optimal space utilization, as they are typically stackable). Front-loading machines typically spin the washed clothes "dry" so your clothes spend a lot less time in the dryer. This not only reduces your energy consumption but also renders less wear and tear on your clothes.



Next, look at lighting — attractive ceiling-mounted fluorescent fixtures abound, and under-cabinet lighting in a laundry room is a nice addition too. Use environmentally friendly cabinetry, salvaged cabinetry or think about no-base cabinetry and installing countertops supported on legs with open storage underneath for laundry hampers, kibble bins, dog beds, pet food dishes, etc. Use low- or no-VOC paints and durable, low-maintenance flooring such as linoleum and you will have a comfortable efficient workspace that might even inspire you to do laundry! ♦

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What makes this laundry room green? High-efficiency, front-loading washer and dryer minimize water and power usage. Durable, low-maintenance, resilient flooring is made of sustainably harvested materials and is biodegradable at the end of its useful life. Maple cabinets were salvaged from a 1993 kitchen remodel, stripped with a nontoxic stripper and refinished with a water-based aniline dye and low-VOC finish. The laundry sink and countertops were also salvaged from a 1993 remodel. The built-in ironing board and wall-hung drying rack reduce the need for expensive and potentially toxic dry cleaning services. Lastly, this room is serviced by a whole-house heat recovery ventilation system. The trim is resource-efficient formaldehyde-free MDF and the paint is a low-VOC paint. Design by A Kitchen That Works

