

WHAT'S NEW, according to KIM LAYNE

POWDER ROOM

1. Concrete sinks. "They are just so earthy and textural."

2. Smart toilets. "They are surprising when you aren't used to a toilet seat doing things like opening on its own, but once you know what to expect, those warm seats are really nice."



Second Nature

THE HOME: Empty nesters' modern-mountain haven

THE WISH LIST: The Castle Pines transplants were of the same mind as their interior designer, Margarita Bravo: "They wanted the powder room to be something special and creative—a place where we could have a little more fun."

THE PROCESS: On one hand, creating the finished look was a challenge. "The homeowners were still living in Chicago when we designed the house," Bravo says. "They saw things from a distance until they could visit—literally every choice was done by email, phone calls, etc."

On the other hand, Bravo found the fun she mentioned earlier: "This was easy because the homeowners weren't afraid to try new, different elements. I had a wide canvas to work with." A Porcelanosa stone statement wall was the first interesting detail to enter the room. It's the biggest representation of what the homeowners wanted to accomplish in the overall design of the new build. "They really enjoy raw materials with metals and stones, but we wanted to make sure the house didn't feel too heavy," says Bravo. "That's why the finishes are softer materials, but still earthy."

Next came the stone sink and vanity. "We wanted the sink area to mimic wood," Bravo says. "In the vanity stone, which I believe is from Brazil, you can see how generous the veins are, which gives you the illusion of wood. We went with stone for practicality."

The Hubbardton Forge glass sculpture, hung from the ceiling to look like a modish light (but still accompanied by recessed illumination), was the cherry on top.

THE IMPACT: "This room showcases the natural elements present in other parts of the home that guests might not get to see," explains the designer.

THE BOTTOM LINE: Don't second-guess the statement wall. "Every single space in a house needs to have that focal point," Bravo says.

Know your materials. "Sometimes one of the reasons to hire an interior designer is that they know more about these things. I wouldn't recommend a stone wall like this for a kitchen backsplash, for example, because it would come into contact with grease and food."

Be flexible. "With a powder bath, one of the first selections you make will usually be the sink. However, I'm always looking for a starting point of any kind."

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