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Is there anything more unabashedly feminine than a woman's dressing table? Eight (very feminine) designers show us where they put on their makeup...

Interviews by
SHAX RIEGLER



"I use one of my favorite pieces—my Lady's Desk for Henredon—as a vanity. I love that it's clean and fresh and feels like a blank canvas each time I sit at it. On ivory lacquer with nickel silver, everything looks beautiful—a strand of pearls, the color of makeup, a magazine, and my 'stuff.' It all adds up to an elegant mess."

BARBARA BARRY



"I love this valet that I picked up at the Paris flea market. It was probably made for a man's room around 1900, and now it's in my sitting room, just outside my bedroom. I'm not somebody who fusses much—just a little bit of lipstick and blush and I'm ready to go—so it easily adapted to my needs. The shelf is a great detail but it's tiny, so a mirrored tray on the window seat holds some extra things."

BARBARA SALLICK, COFOUNDER,
WATERWORKS



"I converted a small desk into a makeup station. The writing surface lifts to display my makeup, which I keep to a minimum. As with everything else in life, less is best. There's also a small writing pad and pencil in a beautiful shell to jot down random thoughts, and hand towels to remove any stray makeup. This desk fits the adage that the best things come in small packages."

SUSAN ZISES GREEN



"My favorite place to 'buff and puff' is at my desk, overlooking the headwaters of a small river in Old Lyme, Connecticut. The light is brilliant, and it's a terrific place to start the day—I can check my e-mail and my eyeliner from the same spot! The mirror is framed at the bottom by a kitty checking herself out, which still gives me a giggle. I always have binoculars at hand to check on the diving ducks and a pair of bald eagles who nest in a tall pine across the way." >>

CONNIE BEALE

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"I start every morning here with my dog Lou Lou on my lap. My vanity is my own little treasure chest of things that have personal meaning to me, like old family photos and the fabric rose on the mirror that my grandmother taught me to make when I was five. It inspired a detail in the first wedding dress I ever designed. My collection of perfume bottles brings a little glamour to the table."

REEM ACRA, FASHION DESIGNER

"My house was built in the 1920s and this vanity is completely original. The tabletop is marble with a bronze doré edge. The sides and back wall are lined with mirrors inset with lighted frosted-glass panels. I leaned the elaborate 19th-century mirror there because it's easier to see my face when the mirror is a bit angled, and it dressed up the space even more. A tiny antique upholstered stool slips right under it and out of the way when I'm done."

MARY McDONALD



"My vanity is in my bedroom, in a niche between two closets. It's an antique I bought on eBay. I stripped it to give it that pickled look and to match the taupe and creams of the room. The bamboo mirror and chair are vintage. Peonies and hydrangeas from my garden are in my favorite vase, by Josef Hoffmann. What you don't see are the small trays and containers filled with makeup, jewelry, hair accessories. They're in the three drawers. I hate cluttered surfaces!"

SUSAN BEDNAR LONG



"My bathroom and dressing room are surrounded by mirrors and light. Everything on my vanity is organized to do a quick makeover—sometimes I have no more than twenty minutes to do my makeup. As a visual person, I need everything in front of me—brushes, eyeliners, perfume tray." *

CHARLOTTE MOSS