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September 2014

TRADITIONAL HOME



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PATTERNS**

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PETER VOUMHARDT

Vanity Flair

Stylish and versatile, the dressing table has never looked so good

The vanity is as ancient as our desire to primp and preen, but we have the French to thank for the dressing table of today. Madame de Pompadour, mistress of Louis XV and trendsetter of the 18th century, turned the private ritual of "toilette" into a public performance, spending hours at her vanity while receiving visitors. The aristocracy followed suit, commissioning the most skilled cabinetmakers to construct specialized tables with elaborate veneers and wood inlays. Featuring folding mirrors and adjustable flaps, these multifunctional pieces were as clever as they were extravagant, designed to convey social status. "The dressing table was the central station of ladies' social lives in the daytime," says Helen Fioratti, owner of L'Antiquaire & The Connoisseur in New York. "They were considered something that a great woman had to have." ▶

"Sedgwick" mirrored vanity and "Rittstone Mirror," available in October (aerin.com). "Mallory" wallpaper (osborneandlittle.com). "Dumping" lamp (porlaromana.co.uk). "Evening Rose" and "Amber Musk" perfumes (aerin.com). Flowers are by Natural Decorations Inc. (ndi.com); the swivel stool is by Ballard (ballarddesigns.com).



"Kelly Desk"
highlandhousefurniture.com

I love this desk because it's like a piece of fine jewelry for the home. It's as functional as it is glamorous, with the soft-close drawer and tapered legs. The gold-leaf detail adds a glamorous touch.

—Barclay Butera, West Hollywood



"Stephanie Vanity Desk"
hickorychair.com

I love Stephanie because she's equal parts vanity, desk, and console table. She can be painted to seem more feminine, or stained to have a more masculine appeal. And with a flip top, you can dump a whole lot of mess out of sight with the sweep of a hand. Presto!

—Alexa Hampton, New York



"Lady's Desk"
barbarabarrycompany.com

The "Lady's Desk" came out of a personal need: the desire to sit at a thing of beauty and write. I use it at home in my bathroom as a vanity where I start each morning. I keep family photos under the glass top. Its simple lines and classic ivory color allow it to work in many applications, which is one way to define a classic.

—Barbara Barry, Los Angeles



"One Forty Five Desk"
henredon.com

This desk is a medley of contrasts—cream leather and ebonized mahogany. It is a delicate desk or vanity with real purpose—two pullout shelves and drawers for keyboards or personal items. It's pretty from the front or back—clean of garnish but with lots of curve and grace.

—Celeste Kemble, New York



"Marlenaz Desk"
amywomerville.com

My favorite use of a vanity is to assemble it as a display table of your collections. The finishes and materials of this vanity are right in my sweet spot: traditional materials with a twist in their use and application. The dark limed oak is both modern and rich.

—Heather Garrett, Durham, North Carolina



"Versailles Desk"
nancycorzine.com

I love for a room to be just as useful as it is beautiful, and a vanity is one piece that really adds function. This design is as glamorous and beautiful as the room it inhabits, and the best part is that you can pull out the side drawers to reveal extra surface space.

—Tobi Fairley, Little Rock, Arkansas



"Semplice Desk"
robicara.com

This shagreen desk is classic and modern with its clean lines and subtle detailing, making for a perfect vanity.

Mary Allison Allen,
Raleigh, North Carolina



"One Fifth Paris" Desk
relphilaurenhome.com

I used this desk in a recent project because I love the Art Deco details. By virtue of its generous size, it can function as either a desk or a vanity.

—Eddie Lee, New York