

# TALES FROM THE POWDER ROOM

**TARA BERNERD**, DESIGNER AND FOUNDER OF HER Eponymous INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE PRACTICE, TALKS BATHROOM DESIGN



**Tell us about these two bathroom projects...** The project pictured right is for a new hotel, The Principal, opening any day now in Bloomsbury. It presides over Russell Square, so we have tried to respect that, marrying the old with the demands of the new. The design pays homage to the building's traditional heritage with St James brassware and a freestanding Victoria + Albert bath bringing an understated elegance. We added bespoke elements such as the vanity counters and custom Crittall shower door frames to add a luxurious and modern touch.

For a smaller space such as this guest bathroom (pictured below) in a private house, it's all about being true to the place and keeping a sense of balance. The design was based on the palette in the rest of the property. One of my rules is never to use too many contrasting materials – so in this instance we kept to smoked wood, a contrasting petrol blue leather wall tile from Blackstock Leather and a carved stone feature basin from Kreoo.

**Leather is an unusual material for a bathroom scheme...** It was a natural move here in terms of giving the space another layer and working in communion with the other raw materials.



**What are your main considerations when it comes to bathroom design?** The way we feel about bathrooms is changing: it can no longer be an afterthought. Therefore, space planning is key to optimising your layout and the user experience. A good shower is always of utmost importance, so water pressure and shower heads should always be given due consideration. Hansgrohe has a number of great ranges at the moment.

**Do you have any favourite looks you keep coming back to?** With each of our projects we try to be indigenous to our surroundings and create a distinct design DNA that is true to the place and its culture. So a bathroom in Mexico will inevitably have a very different look and feel to something in Japan. But the overall philosophy is still the same and the bathroom must ultimately always support and underpin the entire scheme for the rest of the building.

**What are your pet hates?** For me, a bathroom should always be a space of indulgence therefore lighting is terribly important to set the mood. Softer lighting is a good way of creating a more intimate vibe, while carefully positioned spotlights keep things feeling fresh and serene.

**What's essential and what constitutes luxury for you?** Something as simple as a great set of crisp white towels, for example, can elevate the whole experience, while art and a chic mirror can add that final layer and attitude.

**Where is your dream bathroom?** We're creating an outdoor shower unit for a home in Ibiza that might actually be pretty high up on my dream list. It's a totally organic space just off the master suite and is sheltered by a wall of local foliage and planters that allows glimpses of the oceanfront beyond.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** The bathrooms for The Principal hotel marry traditional heritage with modern touches

**BELOW:** A guest bathroom features a petrol blue leather wall



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