

SINGING THE BLUES



DESIGNER Clare Gaskin, Clare Gaskin Interiors, 020 8789 9959, claregaskin.com.
BUDGET From £25,000.

A statement botanical wallpaper and a classic blue and white palette give life and soul to this striking bathroom scheme

CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE SPACE? This was the fifth bedroom of what is now a four-bedroom Victorian terraced house in Kensington, west London. The owners happily sacrificed a guest room to create this 2.7x3.3m space, which is part of an interlinked bedroom, dressing room and bathroom suite.

WHAT WAS THE OWNERS' BRIEF? The overall decorative style of the house could be described as classic contemporary, a hybrid of the property's architecture and the owners' modern tastes. They are a busy, professional couple with three young children, so my brief went beyond pure design to the practicalities of a low-maintenance home. The two main requirements were a freestanding bath as a focal point and a spacious shower area.

HOW DID YOU APPROACH THE DESIGN? The bedroom's blue colour scheme led the way, and we considered the décor as a whole. The journey starts in the bedroom, moving to the dressing room, then through to the bathroom. We stole space from the dressing room to create a generous shower, while the bright area by the window was an obvious place for a statement bath. The basins are to the left as you enter, and the WC to the right. A big mirror above the vanity unit helps to direct light around the room.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE WALLPAPER? We were looking for an elegant, interesting design, and it had to be timeless rather than trendy. Eventually we narrowed it down to botanical scenes, and then we hit upon this perfect Bird and Thistle design by Brunschwig & Fils. I often use wallpaper in bathrooms, but it is essential to ensure good ventilation. This bathroom is a relatively big room and has a large window so it's a safe choice.

HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THESE FITTINGS? A bath with ball and claw feet really appealed. We loved the fact that it could be painted in the same blue used in the dressing room and bedroom: Drawing Room Blue by Farrow & Ball. Following the classic theme, the bespoke vanity unit was made to my design and teams perfectly with the traditional bath. It has a mix of open and hidden storage, and raising it off the floor a touch reduces its impact. The brassware is from Lefroy Brooks: solid, dependable and classically styled.

WHAT'S THE SECRET OF THIS ROOM'S SUCCESS? The wallpaper is the most memorable feature of this bathroom. The outsized scale is a bold choice – you would need to be sure you loved it before committing. Here, we balanced it with neutral surfaces, such as the pale painted panelling and the limestone flooring, to ensure it would never feel overpowering.

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FEATURE LINDA CLAYTON PHOTOGRAPH NICK SMITH

SOURCES

Bespoke vanity, £4,000; **mirror**, £700; both Clare Gaskin Interiors, 020 8789 9959, claregaskin.com.
LB8623 roll-top bath, from £2,008; **LB1100 deck mounted bath shower mixer** in silver nickel, £846; **LB1216 three-hole basin mixers** in silver nickel, £451; all Lefroy Brooks, 01992 708316, lestroybrooks.co.uk.
Hamilton Traditional chrome towel rail, £199, Victorian Plumbing, 0800 862 0878, victorianplumbing.co.uk.
Walls in Pointing, Estate Emulsion, £39.50 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball, 01202 876141, farrow-ball.com. **Bird and Thistle wallpaper**, £86 for a 4.5m roll, Brunschwig & Fils at GP&J Baker, 020 7351 7760, gpjbaker.com.
Plantation shutters, from £300sq m, The Shutter Shop, 020 7751 0937, shuttershop.co.uk. **Piedra Plana Extra limestone floor tiles**, £98sq m, Stone Age, 020 7384 9090, stone-age.co.uk. **Norfolk wall light** in nickel, £288; **similar shade**, £111; both Vaughan, 020 7349 4600, vaughandesigns.com.