


NEW HOMES & CONDOS


Advances in cabinet design have elevated the laundry room to a user-friendly, everyday space that feels like the rest of the house.



Under-mounted stainless sinks are a popular choice nowadays and are far easier to clean than the white plastic ones from the past.

Laundry rooms are rising from the heaps



JANE LOCKHART
**DESIGN
CONFIDENTIAL**

It all begins and ends with the laundry room...or does it really ever end? Laundry, that is.

Where once we would own, "one good outfit" and a few select pieces to get through the work-week, Canadians now own and wear loads of clothing throughout the week. That means we're spending more time doing laundry.

From beating our textiles against rocks by the river to modern day laundry facilities, much has changed.

Where once the laundry room was a place the privileged never visited let alone used, to that "ugly duckling" room squirreled away in an unfinished basement, laundry rooms have been elevated to function better for families.

Laundry rooms are appearing on main floors and second floors to get closer to the clothes that need constant upkeep.

Our clothing has a life cycle that includes hand or machine washing, air-dry or machine drying, spot cleaning, ironing and repairing. Lather. Rinse. Repeat.

Higher demand on these facilities mean we are starting to invest the money to improve a space we're in more often.

This can be as simple as adding a countertop surface for folding clothes to sophisticated upgrades now on the market.

If you are looking to upgrade this important room begin with the laundry machines themselves. Companies such as Miele (www.miele.ca) and Whirlpool (www.whirlpool.ca) offer impressive systems that do more than just wash and dry.

With eco-friendly, energy sav-

ing and pre-loading options, these machines do much of the manual labour for you. New closet depth and condo-sized machines make it easier to locate them where you need them.

Under-mounted stainless sinks, much like a large kitchen sink is a popular choice today as they are far easier to clean than the past white plastic ones.

Larger sinks also better accommodate hand washing. Typical kitchen faucets have migrated to the laundry room as well for better efficiency.

We now see raised faucet heights that can accommodate buckets under for easier filling and sprayer attachments that are a good option to rinse larger items or for dog washing.

Other helpful upgrades for the laundry room include in-

drawer, foldout ironing boards, pullout drying racks and pedestals to raise the front-loading machines.

Laundry rooms have also experienced a growth in cabinet design. Elevating the laundry room to a user-friendly, everyday room means we are designing these spaces to feel like the rest of the house.

Style, colour, multiple options in cabinetry are all considered. This includes a mix of closed shelves for better storage and large open ones to hold baskets or hampers of dirty laundry storage within the room.

Optional cabinet pullouts make it easy to store and locate cleaning products and the iron.

Not to be overlooked are the surfaces that have clearly gone highbrow with quartz being a

favorite choice for counter tops.

Quartz is a pure, natural mineral mixed with strong materials that is recast to be impervious to germs, heavy wear, stains and water. Clearly this is a good choice for a laundry room.

Finally, get out of the dark. Even if it's tucked away in the basement, your laundry room can benefit from natural light but if that's not possible, make sure your room is well appointed with task lighting so you can see the results of your work.

Laundry is a task that won't be going away anytime soon so why not do it in a space that works for you and just happens to be an attractive space. After all, you and your clothes are worth it.

— Award-winning designer, TV personality, author and spokesperson Jane Lockhart is one of Canada's leading experts in the world of design and colour. Visit www.janelockhart.com.



Once considered the 'ugly duckling' room squirreled away in an unfinished basement, laundry rooms have been to first and second floors and are much more functional.



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