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PAOLA NAUGES, ANGELA SOUTHERN (LETTERING)

How to Navigate Your Wine Store

BY LETTIE TEAGUE

AN EXCITING place filled with great finds or a labyrinth for non-oenophiles? A wine store can be both. Overwhelmed by options, one can easily get lost in the aisles. What if it turned out there's a method to the merchandising? While the selection of bottles varies from store to store, merchants can be remarkably consistent in the way they arrange them.

After talking to wine shop owners around the country, I've created a map of a typical store. As pandemic precautions continue to make us keenly aware of how much time we spend in a store, shopping strategically can alleviate stress and might even lead to discovering great values.

A little strategy in the aisles yields delicious dividends and plenty of deals, too. Sniff out your bottles with maximum savvy using our wine columnist's handy map

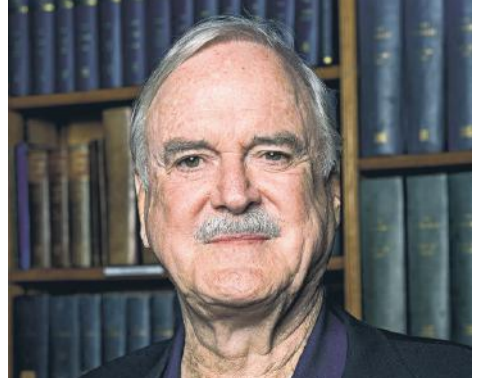
Front Door Favorites
If it's summer, the rosé is reliably positioned right by the door, and if it's fall, there's likely to be a light red wine. In other words, the front of the shop is a seasonal spot. I asked Ali Besharat, associate professor of marketing at the Daniels College of Business at the University of Denver, what he thought of these placements. "Matching

season and customer is very important," he said. "People want to make a minimal cognitive effort." But the front of the store is also where staffers are likely to voice their vinous opinions with featured "staff picks" or "greatest hits." These wines are often "value-priced," noted Steve Flynn, owner of Amsterdam Wine Co. in New York City. Mr. Flynn places four wines in the front, designated as staff picks. Phil Bernstein, general manager of Addy Bassin's MacArthur Beverages in Washington, D.C., features staff picks priced at \$15 a bottle up front, along with several of the store's direct-import wines. At Zachys Wine & Liquor in Scarsdale, N.Y., staff picks are, likewise, positioned next to the door—directly across from the hand sanitizer, another consistent feature in most wine shops today.

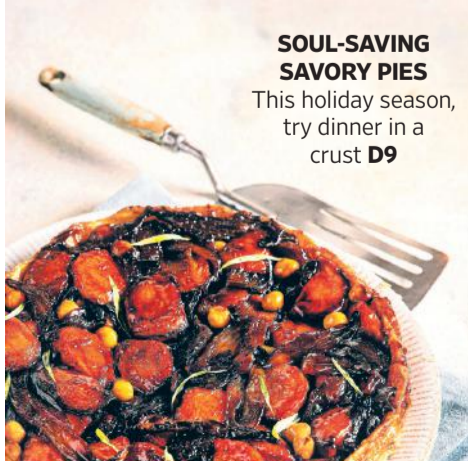
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DESIGN & DECORATING

ERROR, ERROR ON THE WALL

Keep It Clean

How to avoid five bathroom-design mistakes that interiors pros encounter over and over

By RACHEL WOLFE

WHAT DO designers fear in the bathroom more than a monster behind the shower curtain? For Allison Babcock, an interiors professional in Sag Harbor, N.Y., it's seashells that rudely protrude from shower walls. "I cannot stand built-in whimsical accents in bathrooms," she said. If you want a little idiosyncrasy, she advised, focus on easily swapped-out accessories.

Design pros see mistakes repeated in bathroom planning and decorating, and it pains them. Here are the five most common and vexing ones, along with remedies.

Unflattering Fixtures

If you've ever left a strip of beard unshaven or applied so much concealer you emphasized the flaw you were trying to hide, blame bad illumination. Direct lighting above the mirror is the worst, warned Ms. Babcock, "aging you and accentuating under-eye bags." Sarah Kennedy, a designer in Jackson, Wyo., noted that bathroom lighting must serve many masters. "We go there to get ready but also to relax and pamper."

Instead Flank a mirror with wall sconces at a flattering 66 inches from the floor, advised Chicago designer Donna Mondri. As a fresh take on the dressing-room mirror, Elisabeth Post-Marner, an architect with Spacesmith, in New York, takes a page from Hollywood and installs Robern Mirrors with dimmable LED strips. "A well-lit mirror that makes you look great reinforces your self-esteem," she said. Ms. Kennedy likes to combine ambient, task and natural lighting for optimal illumination.

Fetid Carpet

"I wonder what possessed someone to make that decision each time I encounter it, and I'm amazed how often I still see it," said Dallas designer Jean Liu of the unattractive and unsanitary choice of wall-to-wall in a loo. Designer Eilyn Jimenez, in Miami, noted that anyone who has ever cleaned a bathroom knows how disgusting the floor around a toilet gets. Even pristine steam and water ruin rugs. "Carpets soak up moisture and will end up smelling wet and mildewy," said Ms. Jimenez.

Instead Opt for tile or water-resistant engineered wood, Ms. Jimenez recommended. For an alternative landing pad for wet feet, "try

bamboo bath mats or microfibre area rugs," Ms. Jimenez said, and stay away from slow-drying cottons and twills.

No Niche

Mismatched bottles on the tub edge or shower floor clutter your sanctuary, so build in a storage nook. "I want people to see materials, design elements, light fixtures—not a drugstore shelf," said Ms. Mondri. Alcove position is key: "I hate when it's the first thing you notice," said San Francisco designer Marea Clark.

Instead Tuck shower niches out of sight. "If you make them low, it creates a spot to prop your leg to shave," said Ms. Clark. "Our female clients always comment on how much they love this feature."

Elusive Towels

McLean, Va., designer Tracy Morris is surprised how often homeowners fail to install easy-to-reach towel bars. "No matter how beautiful a bathroom is, there is nothing worse than having to walk across the bathroom to get your towel after a shower," Ms. Morris said.

No room for a whole towel bar? Opt for hooks, Ms. Morris suggests.

Instead Hang rods strategically: outside the shower, next to the tub and by the sink. No room for a whole towel bar? Opt for hooks, Ms. Morris suggests.

Chaotic Color

"It's important to think before you order terrazzo tiles and vibrant paint hues and end up with an overwhelming mess," said International Designers chief Rita Chraibi. And leave your love of butter yellows and olive greens off the walls. "The colors tend to make your skin tone look awful," cautioned Raleigh, N.C., designer Liles Dunnigan.

Instead Stick to soothing colors "such as nude, earthy and soft tones that create better backdrops," said Ms. Dunnigan. "You don't want to look like you have a stomach bug while you're getting dressed." Miami architect Kobi Karp advises clients to limit strong color to a framed artwork. Ideally, one depicting something other than butter or olives.



ELIMINATE DIMNESS In a Jackson Hole, Wyo., loo by designer Madeline Stuart, sconces, a pendant and nearby windows offer illumination.

HEAD CASES / PROS RECALL THE WEIRDEST BATHROOM-DESIGN DECISIONS THEY'VE ENCOUNTERED

My mom purchased Barbie dolls with multicolored knitted dresses intended to cover a toilet-paper roll and act as bathroom décor. It freaked me out every time I went to the bathroom." —Shari Francis, designer at Dadapt, Brooklyn, N.Y.

I had a client request two toilets in the same water closet. Like vanities, they wanted designated his and hers toilets." —Courtney Tartt Elias, founder of Creative Tonic Design, Houston

Only today, I set foot in the bathroom of a country house that had a feature wall of black metallic tiles, which looked like something out of a disco." —Greg Natale, designer, Surry Hills, Australia

A full office set up in a client's bathroom, which included a glass desk, a chair, a Mac computer, a printer and a television. Their rationale was that the bathroom was the one place in their home where they wouldn't

be disturbed and so they wanted to maximize their efficiency." —Kobi Karp, architect, Miami

I recently renovated an apartment that had these very detailed gold cherub plumbing fixtures—not only an eye sore but difficult to clean and maintain." —Jennifer Cohler Mason, designer, New York

A large tiled step that made the toilet sit higher than everything else in the bathroom. It was like you had to climb to get up there." —Melissa Warner Rothblum, designer, Los Angeles



THE ELAPHANT IN THE ROOM (ILLUSTRATION): TREVOR ONDRO/OTTO (BATHROOM)

Natural Cures

Science is studying the tonic power of the outside world. Here are some unique ways to bring it into your home.

THE ULTIMATE anxiety-queller is, undoubtedly, restorative hours spent among trees, climbing mountains or pondering quiet ponds. But what of the other hours, when both work and play have sadly sandwiched our lives between digital screens?

Enter biophilic interior design. Centered around a burgeoning field of study called biophilia—which focuses on how humans are drawn to the natural world—it brings nature indoors to therapeutic effect.

"Studies have shown that positive experiences of nature can lower blood pressure, reduce production of stress hormones and improve cognitive performance," said environmental-design researcher and strategist William Browning, whose clients include Google and Bank of America and who, with co-author Catherine Ryan, recently released "Nature Inside: A Biophilic Design Guide."

Among the most basic biophilic décor strategies: displaying freshly cut flowers and cultivating houseplants. Try MoMA Design Store's blobby, clear-glass Avocado Vase (4), which cradles its germinating namesake pit and reveals developing roots.

Design elements that represent nature, either literally or indirectly, soothe us more subtly. Think organic textures and materials. Serena

& Lily's Summerwood Baskets of bent rattan core (1), for example, add earthiness and recall bowing wheat stalks. The Hasani Wood Beaded Cushion (2) sneaks in tiny bits of timber you can fidget with.

Living metals echo nature's mutability. The Floral Society's Copper Vase (6) not only alludes to a scallop shell, its surface will evolve. "Seeing copper patina over time evokes something within" by highlighting nature's endless variations, said Jeanne Luna, co-founder of Luna Botanicals in New Orleans, who creates living plant walls and biophilic art.

Mathematical arrangements, or fractals, are patterns expressed in flora and fauna in which a shape repeats at different scales (think of a tree's branches, subbranches, veiny leaves). Physics professor Dr. Richard Taylor at the University of Oregon found that fractals, easier for the eye to understand than truly chaotic patterns, can calm the human nervous system. Lladro's Mirage Table Lamp (3) reflects light off fractal-like fronds glazed in a golden luster.

The Elan Armoire by Pinch (5) combines sunset colors and shapely forms in birch-veneer marquetry. Biomorphic shapes like, yes, the human body, also restore us.

—Christina Poletto



Clockwise from top left: **1.** Summerwood Basket, from \$198, serenaandlily.com; **2.** Hasani Wood Beaded Cushion, \$85, exitnineteen.com; **3.** Mirage Table Lamp, \$890, lladro.com; **4.** Avocado Vase, \$45, store.moma.org; **5.** Elan Armoire by Pinch, \$15,830, thefutureperfect.com; **6.** Copper Vase, from \$74, thefloralsociety.com