

COUNTRY *STYLE*

Modern, refined touches elevate these country-inspired bathrooms from traditional to the sublime

BY CATALINA MARGULIS • PHOTOGRAPHY BY KERRI TORREY, LARRY ARNAL



When it comes to design, country can mean different things to different kinds of people. From barnhouse details to all things wicker and antique, country style is as vast as the landscapes it is inspired by.

Here we have two designers, Megan Crosbie and Evelyn Eshun, who have taken two very different approaches to a country esthetic to make their spaces more contemporary and unique. Whether you lean toward a slicker version of country, or you're looking to freshen up a more traditional room, these bathroom updates are sure to give you plenty of inspired ideas.

"Contemporary country" is how designer Megan Crosbie describes this bathroom, which features a combination of updated traditional elements, natural details and modern whimsy.

When the owners of a farmhouse in Erin, Ontario, decided to renovate their master bathroom, they called on Crosbie, who had already designed other areas of the rural home and was familiar with their modern style and their wish to maintain some of the original feel of the traditional home.



CONTEMPORARY
COUNTRY



"The key to contemporary country is keeping things simple," says Crosbie. "Clean lines and not too many things competing, then adding little details that reference back to country."

TRADITIONAL ELEMENTS

One of the traditional features used throughout the farmhouse is bead-board wainscoting. Crosbie carried this into the bathroom redesign by incorporating beadboard into the fronts of the cabinets, by Fox Custom Woodworks. White subway tiles from Saltillo were also used to mimic wainscoting on the bathroom walls, giving the room a traditional feel with a modern twist.

One of the "must-haves" for the client was a clawfoot tub, says Crosbie, who sourced the Victoria + Albert tub from Taps Bath, and paired it with a faucet from Rubinet. "The tub is really traditional, the clawfoot is one of those things that just feels really authentic in a country bathroom," she says.

MODERN FINISHES

Contemporary simplicity was introduced through a black-and-white colour scheme and this gives the space a clean, bright feel. Black, textured metal on mirrors (Restoration Hardware), sconces (Schoolhouse Electric), faucets and towel bars add an industrial feel to the space that's also very of the moment.

The heated slate floors, in a large-scale chevron pattern, also from Saltillo, provide a modern foundation to the room. Tiles on a shower shelf, also in a chevron pattern, tie into the floors for a cohesive, elegant look.

"I like the play between traditional elements and modern ones. It perfectly suits the home, the homeowners and the space," says Crosbie.

NATURAL DETAILS

With lush nature surrounding the farmhouse, Crosbie decided to bring some of the outside in by incorporating the colour green along with the black and white.



“I think green has really turned into a neutral — much to my delight — and in what can be a cold, more sterile space, it gave us the opportunity to warm things up,” says Crosbie. “It also helped to avoid falling into the more contemporary and very popular black-and-white bathroom trend.”

To balance the seriousness of the space, Crosbie chose a whimsical roman blind from Christopher

Farr Cloth, sold at Kravet, featuring vines, much like the ones growing outside the farmhouse and barn.

“It really completed the space for me,” says Crosbie, “as it worked so beautifully with the vanity, and offered that softness we were lacking with all the hard elements in the space. It acts like a piece of art in itself, without being too formal or stuffy.” A match made in contemporary country heaven.

RUSTIC
REFINED

“Rustic refined” is the look designer Evelyn Eshun came up with when she was brought in to design a main floor bathroom in a brick bungalow near Port Perry, Ontario. While the homeowners love the clean and simple lines of contemporary design, they also wanted welcoming country undertones to suit the rural location.

“The goal was to create a space that felt textural and warm while embracing the simplicity of a minimal design aesthetic,” says Eshun. “The clients wanted to embrace the fact that they live next to a forest, yet they wanted to be current in their expression of their lifestyle.”

TOUCHY-FEELY

In the bathroom, a vanity by custom builders Tacoma Woodworks sets the tone for the city-meets-country space. The vanity, which is highly durable, mimics the look and feel of real wood, yet features clean, flat, contemporary lines. For storage, an asymmetrical tower cupboard was added to the design.

The textured feel to the room continues via a solid granite sink from Art Bathe and black hardware from Berenson on the cabinets, which complement the dark grey Caesarstone countertop.

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On the back wall, striped wallpaper, from Crown Wallpaper, is also textured, and, like the vanity, is also very durable — it’s made from vinyl that won’t be damaged by water.

“My client wanted the space to be comfortable and low maintenance but to also have personality and character,” says Eshun.

GOLDEN GLOW

To elevate the rustic feel of the space, Eshun added touches of brass throughout the room. A mirror with an antique brass trim from Renwil was chosen, along with other coordinated accessories — including a brushed brass soap dispenser, tissue box and small decorative dish — giving the room an elegant feel. For the floors, 24" x 24" limestone tiles from Tycos Tile were chosen for easy maintenance and a coordinating gold tone.

“I like the juxtaposition of different materials — the rough wood-looking vanity with the sophisticated warm, brushed metal — it makes the space so much more interesting,” says Eshun.



ALL IN THE DETAILS

Another goal for the space was to include as little white as possible, and that extended into the inside of the drawers, which are covered with gunmetal grey drawer liners from Bloom.

Attention to detail also applied to the lighting: two pendant lights from Union Lighting were hung on either side of the feature wall mirror for a symmetrical look. “It’s sophisticated but also provides a balanced light,” Eshun explains.

With its metallic accessories and rustic, wood-themed cabinetry, the room has a unique style and polish to it that’s not out of place in the country.

Indeed both bathrooms, thanks to their integrated design and thoughtful touches, showcase contemporary stylings and traditional design for truly inviting, statement-making spaces inspired by the homes’ natural surroundings. Country chic indeed. ♦

Catalina Margulis can’t wait to renovate her master bathroom into the ensuite of her dreams. Until then, she satisfies her cravings for marble floors, spa-like showers and photoshoot-worthy tubs with decor articles showcasing the hottest looks and trends. As a magazine editor and writer for The Globe and Mail, Flare and Elle Canada, among others, she has covered everything from fashion, beauty and travel to health, food, decor, business and parenting. When she’s not working on her latest assignment, she’s chasing after her four young children and writing her first novel.

