

## An Ode to the Skirted Dressing Table

Because everything's better with ruffles.

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BY EMMA BAZILIAN FEB 28, 2020



At age 14, I was given free rein to redecorate my bedroom. Among the things I immediately requested: peachy-pink checked curtains, *lots* of toile, and, most importantly, a kidney-shaped, mirror-topped, silk-skirted dressing table. (Also hand-striped walls, which is where my mother finally put her foot down.)

A few months later, the table arrived, its perimeter wrapped in yards of slubby pink silk, with two arms that swung open to reveal drawers just calling to be filled with a vast collection of lip gloss and headbands. To my teenaged self—and, quite honestly, to my adult self—that table was the epitome of glamour. When seated in front of its tri-fold mirror rather than standing in front of my bathroom medicine cabinet, I wasn't just "getting ready"—I was doing my daily toilette.



A Federal-style dressing table in House Beautiful, 1938.
HOUSE BEAUTIFUL

Don't just take it from an overly dramatic 14year-old, though: The timeless allure of a skirted
dressing table is a well-known fact among
designers. "I adore them because they're just so
old-school and feminine," says Danielle Rollins. "They instantly take you back to a
different era, a time when ladies had their hair done, wore corsets and frilly ball
gowns, slicks of lipstick, and plenty of jewels."

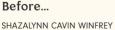


Rollins trimmed a ruffled skirt with even  $\emph{more}$  ruffles for a truly heavenly confection. MELANIE ACEVEDO

Instead of confining them to bedrooms and bathrooms, Rollins suggests placing a skirted dressing table in a downstairs powder room, as she did in <a href="here">here</a> own Atlanta <a href="home">home</a>. "It encourages guests to take a pause and maybe spend a minute alone gathering themselves or gossiping with girlfriends. Some of my favorite party moment memories have been in those rooms!"

So where can you find your own dressing table? Well, here's the tricky part: Despite being ubiquitous through the 1980s, these days, there aren't many manufacturers (in the U.S., at least) who still sell proper swing-arm vanities. (I was recently heartbroken to learn that the company that made my own cherished piece, Minic Custom Woodworking, had long gone out of business). You can certainly hire a carpenter to make a fully bespoke piece, but if that's not in your budget, take a note from Virginia-based designer Shazalynn Cavin Winfrey and think vintage. She recently sourced a kidney-shaped vanity on Etsy and had it recovered in a peppy Thibaut print for a client's young daughter.







...and after.
SHAZALYNN CAVIN WINFREY

Or, if storage isn't a necessity, simply top any old desk or table with a piece of plywood, drape with a tablecloth, and place a piece of glass or mirror on top for an instant skirted vanity.

Looking for more dressing table inspiration? Scroll through the gallery below for a few of our favorites.



Contrasting pleats add extra dimension to this  $\underline{\text{Kelley Proxmire}}$ -designed table in a Thibaut print. ANGIE SECKINGER