

The
ENGLISH HOME



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COUNTRY STYLE

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DESIGN GUIDES

- Boot, flower & utility rooms
- Sitting room solutions
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UTILITARIAN BEAUTY

These useful spaces can be tailored to the exact needs of every member of the house and help make daily life run more smoothly

From dealing with laundry to storing muddy boots and snipping flowers from the garden, 'behind-the-scenes' rooms are the secret workhorses of the home, offering practical solutions that make life easier and helping keep other spaces clear of dirt and clutter. Thoughtful design is key, so that every element works hard and makes the most of available space, as our experts explain. ▶





LEFT Space permitting, a built-in seating area provides comfort and keeps muddy outerwear contained in one area. Interior design by Sims Hilditch.

BOTTOM LEFT Each family member has their own area in this combined laundry and boot room by Hetherington Newman, painted in Farrow & Ball's Bancha.

BELOW This hard-working boot room by Christopher Peters features an abundance of hanging space, shoe storage, and personalised family cupboards.



OPPOSITE TOP LEFT Built-in bench seating, a wall-to-wall hat shelf and convenient boot drawers make this boot room by Barnes of Ashburton a highly efficient space.

OPPOSITE TOP RIGHT Rich paint colours not only add a decorative backdrop to a boot room, they can also be practical in terms of not showing up dirt easily and being easy to touch up every so often. *Boot and utility rooms from £5,000, Olive and Barr*

OPPOSITE RIGHT In especially small boot rooms, the addition of a single wardrobe creates a helpful amount of hanging storage. *Chester single wardrobe in Dove Grey, £699, The Cotswold Company*



BUYER'S GUIDE

BOOT ROOMS

Many of the principles that guide the design of a utility or laundry room apply equally to boot rooms, where mud is likely to be tracked in from outside and suitable storage for everyone's outdoor wear must be arranged for ease of use. A robust, easy-to-clean floor and worktop, good lighting and some form of heating are all necessities. "We normally put in a small radiator or a plug-in greenhouse heater under the welly rack," says Kingham. "They're low-consumption but help to dry boots out and make them slightly warm when you put them on." Rench advises a built-in mat well to trap dirt inside the external door, recessed to be level with the hard flooring and as wide as possible. And Fetherston likes to add a hand-held vacuum cleaner, perhaps one that charges while mounted on the wall. "It can easily deal with any mud or muck straight away," he says. Panelling the lower walls provides protection and gives the opportunity for subtle decorative refinement, Fetherston adds. "Wallpaper above can be fun,

provided it is not in a humid area." He also advises simple window treatments, such as shutters or roller blinds, which can add colour without being overly obtrusive and are easier to keep clean than curtains.

In terms of overall design, where space allows, it is ideal to provide separate storage for each individual member of the household – perhaps labelled with an initial letter. A bench seat could have a leather, wipe-clean or washable-fabric seat pad, space below for shoes and boots (with or without baskets), hooks above for coats and a high shelf for hats or anything else.

While Fetherston advises that stained wood can be more durable than paint, choosing a good quality, highly pigmented paint in a wipeable finish, such as eggshell, will stand the test of time and offers the opportunity to introduce interesting colour to this contained space. "Bold colour choices are perfect for boot rooms, especially darker colours, which add style to the decor while staying practical and durable," says Kingham. ▶

