



in the wash

Once sidelined as a simple necessity, laundries, with their many other functions, are now purpose-designed, aesthetically pleasing spaces. From the small to the spacious, careful planning will ensure you get maximum use out of this very versatile room.

The laundry, although unglamorous, is an important part of the home; its function often far broader than just cleaning clothes. For many households, the laundry is where we store the gardening gear, the sewing machine, or the recycling bins. It's where we wash the dog, keep the beer fridge and arrange flowers.

For one household in Northland, it's where they fillet the fish, says Sue Gillbanks, director of Kitchens by Design.

"They went for a Corian benchtop because it's seamless and extends up the wall, making cleaning simple," she says.

The key to getting your laundry to work for you is to decide what you'll be using it for before you begin. For many people, space is an issue and the laundry simply consists of a washing machine and dryer tucked away in a cupboard in the kitchen or bathroom. For others, the laundry needs to be that larger multi-purpose utility room.

Begin by writing a list of the uses and appliances you're after: Washing machine and dryer, of course, a tub or two, or maybe a butler's sink. Sue recommends choosing a pull-out tap for your laundry tub – they're especially helpful if you're filling large vases or shampooing pets.

Do you have room for an ironing board or press? An airing rack? How much storage space do you need for clean and dirty washing, and will you store your spare linen in the laundry? Many people have a second fridge or a freezer in their laundry too, and larger spaces may even include a sewing area.

Once you know the full scope of the room, then it's time to look at layout. And while it needs to be practical, you want it to look good too. Laundry baskets can pull out from integrated drawers, or you can choose a nice freestanding hamper. Whichever you select, just be certain you have enough storage space for all your dirty washing.

For long, clean lines, and increased bench space, you could consider choosing a front-loading washing machine. Tucked neatly away under the bench, front-loaders have the reputation of being gentler and taking better care of

your clothes than top-loaders. They also tend to use less water and energy, and can take a dryer stacked on top. However, Sue says, we have a long-running love affair with the top-loader. These tend to wash faster, and it's very easy to quickly lift the lid and add that extra shirt. Most people buy 5.5kg machines, but for mid-size to larger families, you should consider a bigger model.

It is also important to consider ducting when designing the layout of your laundry – the water for the washing machine and the air from the dryer have to go somewhere. If possible, your dryer should be vented outside. If that's not possible, choose a condenser dryer.

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In a regular tumble dryer, air is drawn from the surrounding room, then heated and blown through the clothes as the drum tosses them about. This hot air evaporates some of the water in the damp fabrics, and the resultant moisture-laden air is then exhausted through a vent duct to the outside. If the air isn't vented outside, you'll have to open all your windows while the dryer is working, to prevent steaming up the house and creating mildew problems.

In a condenser dryer, air from within the drum is heated, then blown through the tumbling clothes. The moisture-laden air is then passed through a heat exchanger, where the water recondenses and is drained away. The dry air is reheated, and again blown through the drum and clothes. An air-cooled condenser dryer releases a lot of hot air, but it's dry air and won't fog up the windows.

As a final tip, Sue says if you're mounting your dryer on the wall, make sure it's high enough to be able to open the lid on your top-loading washing machine. Don't set it too high, though, or you won't be able to reach that last sock! **H**

Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen Kitchen & Bathroom with silver protection and MoulDefender is ideal for laundries to protect against bacteria and mould.

 Resene Sweetwaters