

MANSION GLOBAL

DESIGNER'S CORNER

Tips for Going Gold or Silver in Kitchens and Baths

Designers elaborate on selecting metal finishes for timeless, eclectic and glamorous rooms

BY TRACY KALER | ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON JULY 26, 2023 | [MANSION GLOBAL](#)



Each week, Mansion Global tackles a topic with an elite group of designers from around the world who work on luxury properties. This week, we explored how to choose the right color metal for kitchen and bathroom fixtures.

Specifying silver faucets in an all-white marble bathroom sounds straightforward, but selecting complementary metallic finishes requires skill and vision. Metal choices may often be based on preference, but designers have good reasons for finishing a room in gleaming polished brass or lustrous satin nickel.

“We like to think of metal hardware as the ‘jewelry’ of a space,” said Ximena Rodriguez, principal and director of interior design at CetraRuddy in New York. “It’s a critical part of the overall ensemble, but it can also be an eye-catching focal point in its own right and add a little sparkle to a room that will stand out from the millwork or stone.”

Mansion Global asked four designers to elaborate on metal finishes in kitchens and baths, and they shared their thoughts.

To Match Stainless Appliances, Stick With Nickel or Chrome

“Silver is considered more of a traditional finish. Silver finishes are the answer if you are trying to make your space more serene and traditional. If you want more of a modern or transitional vibe, add in gold.



Tracy Morris went with chrome to accent this serene master bath.
Greg Powers

“When selecting your metal finish for either your kitchen or bathroom, there are a few tricks. If you have exposed stainless appliances, stick with either nickel or chrome.

“If you use black or navy cabinets, try brass for your fixtures. The contrast will look great.”

—Designer Tracy Morris in McLean, Virginia

For Earthy Schemes, Pick Brass

“We’re definitely seeing a resurgence of brass currently, as it complements the understated, earthy tones that many homeowners are craving these days. Generally, gold complements warm colors because of the rich tones, so bringing them together is visually satisfying. However, there’s also something special when you create an unexpected moment of pairing gold with a cool palette—those can be some of the most compelling designs.

“Gold and brass work well with earth tones and bohemian styles, but they also provide glamour and shine for people who want a more over-the-top, maximalist scene. I like to pair brass fixtures with quartz or natural marble countertops and backsplashes because they catch the soft glow from the brass.



The interiors at The Parker in Boston are all about warmth and glamour, so brass was the natural fit, Linda Zarifi said.
Courtesy of The Parker

“The interiors at the Parker [a condo in Boston] are all about warmth and glamour, so brass was the natural fit. We wanted something that would catch your eye while playfully complementing the warm tones in the natural marble backsplash and grey-toned matte lacquer cabinetry.”

—Designer Linda Zarifi in Boston

Chrome Goes With Most Any Material or Color

“Chrome is a very adaptable finish, and it can work with nearly any tone because it’s neutral and reflects the room’s colors when polished. Chrome fixtures fit beautifully with a sleek and modern white kitchen, and they’re also appropriate for a more traditional one with richly colored cabinetry. Because it’s so versatile, chrome fixtures work well with many other materials.

“In terms of visual impact, the interplay of natural stone and metal finishes is one of the most important design decisions in any kitchen or bath project. The key is that colors and finishes should complement each other, but they don’t necessarily have to match.



CetraRuddy combined white marble with polished chrome for an elegant pairing in the kitchens at 200 East 59th Street in New York.
200 East 59th

“One of our favorite combinations is polished chrome and white marble—we used these materials together in the kitchens at the 200 East 59th St. condominium building [in Manhattan], and it’s a very complementary and elegant pairing that perfectly suits the property’s modern, bright, and airy sensibility.”

—Ximena Rodriguez, principal and director of interior design, CetraRuddy in New York

Mixing Metal Finishes Is Okay If They Don’t Compete

“Deep cool grays, emerald, black, cobalt, and deep reds all complement and add contrast to a brass or gold finish. For a more timeless and less eclectic look, neutrals such as tans, beige, and white also pair well with brass and allow the finish to be the highlight of the space.

“When combining finishes in a space, it is wise to pair finishes that embody the same warmth or coolness. For example, nickel, bronze and brass finishes all have a warm hue and, if carefully planned, can pair beautifully together. Chrome, black matte and even a recently added gunmetal finish pair well in any space. The metals do not compete and lend themselves to the same style aesthetic.”

“One should determine which finish they favor most and apply that finish to the more permanent items, such as plumbing fixtures and lighting. Consider using the secondary finishes on easier items to replace, such as mirrors, hardware and accessories.”

—Melissa Cooley, senior designer, Case Architects & Remodelers