

HOUSE & GARDEN

domestic bliss

DRESSINGTABLES

You'll feel like a movie star at any one of these tables

be both a stage setting for intrigue and a safe haven from it. Consider Clark Gable bursting into Vivien Leigh's boudoir in *Gone with the Wind* the night he knocks her up. Scandalous. As if he's invading her most sacred inner sanctum. Consider Greta Garbo's dressing room in *Mata Hari*, all those men she has wound around her finger, all that espionage and drama, all that power. The vanity table is the equivalent of a boardroom for a femme fatale. But enough of the 1930s.

Let's face it, today you'd need money to support having a boudoir. Not only would you have to have the space, but you'd have to have the need for one. I realize "natural beauty" needs attention, but not to the extent that siren-thin eyebrows or marcelled hair does. I think age is a factor. Just recently I've become frustrated with my apartment for its lack of a dressing room. All these years I've looked at it as

a sort of discipline for me, not having a huge, walk-in closet adjoining my bedroom. I've been forced to minimize my wardrobe, consider what I value most, get rid of the detritus. (Storage space has been an important factor in all this.) It has been a good lesson, but now I'm ready for an extravagant dressing room. I feel after all these years I deserve it. Which means I'm going to have to move to a bigger place. I

suppose there are hundreds of young women out there who tell themselves that by a certain age they're going to treat themselves to an extravagant boudoir. Most young women today make up in the bathroom or on the subway; they don't have the time to sit in a bugle-beaded kimono and apply a face mask. (Alas.) It's tricky. These same women are probably dying for the indulgences that the boudoir affords. That kind of glamour is passé, but I'll bet anything a new kind of glamour is coming. How long can we remain in this kind of denial? Stick around.



In *Dinner at Eight*, Jean Harlow's dressing table is a Hollywood confection.



"A dressing table provides a place for your favorite keepsakes," say Christina Sullivan and Susan Bednar of New York design firm Tocar. The steel and glass Diamond vanity, \$1,400, by Portico, has a great display shelf. 212-941-7800.



Dallas decorator Jan Showers loves mirrored pieces from the '20s, '30s, and '40s. "On a dressing table," she says, "the mirrored top helps reflect light." Hinson & Co.'s Le Dorat dressing table has plain and etched mirror panels. Through Mrs. MacDougall.



"The best dressing tables have lots of storage, so that makeup, brushes, and other items can be organized," says Palm Beach interior designer Tui Pranich. La Barge's vanity table, \$2,226, has a capiz shell veneer. 800-253-3870.



"Often a client will see a dressing table, and that inspires the need to have one," New York decorator Sara Bengur says. Andrée Putman's oak and glass DoublePlay vanity comes in five colors. Through Ralph Pucci International.