



Decorating

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Guest Bedroom Makeovers You Can Do in Time for the Holidays

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This is the season when you expect overnight guests, so it's time to open the door of that guest bedroom and assess the situation. If you're like most people, you're going to find a room that's become a storage space filled with all of the things you don't know what to do with.

That's why S.A. "Sam" Jernigan, Interior Designer, IFDA, owner of Renaissance Design Consultations, says the first step in your guest room makeover should be to "declutter":



"Guest rooms are often catch-all spaces that accumulate excess furniture and, believe me, nothing's worse than getting up in the dark in a strange home and bumping into stuff on your way to the bathroom! Decluttering will also enlarge the visual space of a room, which is liable to be on the small side.

When decluttering, think about the nightstand — add one if there isn't one currently. Make sure it's cleared of accumulated stuff, and put out a couple of current magazines. A lamp is nice to have on hand for reading in bed. Don't put out an ashtray, though, that's just asking for trouble!

Think of your guest's comfort and practical needs — clean out a space in the closet and provide empty hangers. Excess furniture, like a seldom-used filing cabinet, often can fit in the other side of the closet. Also have extra blankets readily available."

When you've removed all of the debris, and you can finally find the bed, then it's time to add those touches that tell your guests they're welcome in your home. Interior Designer Jeff Andrews, head of the firm Jeff Andrews Design, suggests you not only make them feel a part of things, but that you also go that extra step:

"The perfect guest room should be like a home away from home. Better than that, it should be on par with any luxury resort or hotel where you have all the comfort and amenities at your fingertips. A guest should feel pampered and special as well as get the real experience of the style and sense of home you as a host can offer. The design of a guest room or suite should be an extension of your home. Use this extra room to exercise your design muscle. Make it a place where you would like to stay. Take some risks. Choose a color pallet you might not choose in the rooms you use daily. Neutral rooms can be stale and boring — mix it up and let the guest really feel like they have stepped into your world.

Stock your guest room with extras, which will make any guest feel welcome, like an alarm clock with iPod dock, a great robe, quality linens, an extra blanket or throw, nice hangers in the closet, as well as a place to store suitcases or extra bags. Bottled water is also a nice touch.

For the bathroom, a great smelling candle, plush towels, a blow dryer, and extra toothbrushes are necessities. Stocking the bathroom with travel size products always shows your guest that you went the extra mile to make their stay as comfortable as possible.

Keep in mind the demographic that will be in the room. Grandparents are probably more sensitive, and might appreciate extra pillows or a variety in pillow firmness as well as additional bedding or fans. Young children always enjoy fun toothbrushes or a coloring book for their downtime. And with teenagers Internet access and privacy seem to be the best 'accents' to any design."

Lorrie Browne, licensed designer and founder of My Design Secrets.com, had some other ideas about adding some creature comforts to your guest room:

"Wake them (your guests) up gently. Put an alarm clock with a CD player in the room and leave them a variety of CDs: soothing tunes to fall asleep [to] and something upbeat for during the day. Why not burn a CD with a mix of songs you know they will like and let them take it home as a gift?"

Whether you like having a TV in your bedroom or not, most guests appreciate one. They may use it to go to sleep or just to take a break on their own.

Make sure the room is well lit for safety and comfort. Do they have a good light for reading? How about a night light to the restroom? It's best if you have a light that can be switched from the doorway and the bedside."

You know they're coming, so why not get ready? Make your guests' stay in your home a memorable event they'll still talk about long after the holidays are over.

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