

## DESIGN IDEAS

# Be my guest

These bedrooms are dressed to impress  
and designed to make visitors  
feel instantly at home



FEATURE ARABELLA YOUNES PHOTOGRAPH PAUL MASSEY

### LOOKING UP

Painting the ceiling in a small bedroom can have a dramatic effect. In this guest bedroom, which has no real view and limited natural light, interior designer Nicola Harding wanted to do something impactful to compensate. Although a common fear is that painting the ceiling in a deeply saturated colour will close in the room, it can actually make the space feel larger by blurring the lines and edges. Then it's a question of adding the decorative details. 'The blue and green ceramic lamp, set against the crimson wallpaper and paint, adds the perfect contrasting pop of colour that also ties back to the antique bedside table,' explains Nicola. The wallpaper is a Tile design by Galbraith & Paul. →





## HOTEL CHIC

For larger guest rooms, take a cue from hotel design and include a small sitting area. It will give visitors somewhere to retreat to in comfort without feeling they are imposing on their hosts every minute of their stay. This design by Kitesgrove capitalises on the room's generous proportions. 'The joinery niche created for the sofa bed was an effective way of using the space, while providing a cosy library and seating area,' explains head of design Clara Ewart. The walls are painted in Farrow & Ball's Cromarty, a light green-grey that brings an atmospheric tone and softness to the room, while the joinery, in M&L's Fence Green, adds a contrast and draws the eye. The sofa is from Kingcome and the curtain fabric is Wild Thing linen by Lewis & Wood.

## CARVE A NICHE

Consideration should always be given to creating a bedside surface. However small your guest room may be, you will want to be able to place a book, glass of water or phone by the bed. Here, niches have been recessed within the adjacent wardrobes. They needn't be huge: about the depth of a paperback will do. 'I wanted this room to be a classic cocoon with a contemporary approach, which we achieved by using bright, modern colours and unusual fabrics alongside joinery,' says Kate Aslangul, founder of Oakley Moore. 'Space was tight, so I designed cupboards with built-in niches either side of the bed. I love working on small spaces; they take lots of thought then they're so rewarding.'

PHOTOGRAPHS (HOTEL CHIC) MARK BOLTON; (CARVE A NICHE) ASTRID TEMPLER



PHOTOGRAPH (CURTAIN CALL) BOZ GAGOVSKI

### CURTAIN CALL

Others have copied this solution for a cosy single bed in a guest room but this is a signature design by Veere Grenney Associates. Cashmere walls and smart box pelmets with curtains (something of a nod to David Hicks) create a tented bed below bookshelves. The idea is perfectly suited to a room that is used for work by day and occasionally hosts an overnight guest, or a dressing room that doubles as a bedroom. Colour plays an important role in these mini schemes. 'I encourage people to be brave with colour,' explains Veere, referring to the burnt orange used here. 'It's an incredibly chic shade with a great association with creativity – we have been drawn to it in our studio many, many times.' →





### LEAF THROUGH

Interior designer David Hicks warned against using pattern on pattern unless the ability comes naturally but today others are adopting a more relaxed approach. 'I love mixing patterns – I call it happy clashing,' says interior designer Sophie Ashby. It's well accepted that guest bedrooms can cope with strong pattern, as they are used for a short time, but if you are tentative about embracing pattern on pattern full-on, this toned-down version by Colefax and Fowler may be a good place to start. It features just one of the company's designs, Greenacre, over the wallpaper, eiderdown, valance and chair. The headboard and woodwork are in plain white to provide some necessary breathing space. →





### BUNK UP

If you're planning a room that might host multiple guests or a family, look up – and think about building a bunk to make the most of your space. The key to this guest room, designed by Pringle & Pringle for a treehouse project, lies in its flexibility, explains co-founder Sophie Pringle. 'Initially, the clients had two double guest rooms, but as we got to know them we realised they would sometimes need more versatile accommodation. This space works as a double room for adults, a children's room, or both, depending on who is staying.' The ladder to the bunk mirrors the design of the clothes storage shelving, which is built in around the bed to further maximise the space.

### SECRET DOOR

A jib door is one that is flush-mounted into the wall, meaning it has no obvious hardware so is almost invisible when closed. Here, interior designer Sean Symington was presented with the challenge of moving between eaves and pitches in this top-floor bedroom. 'We opted to build a partition to obtain storage as well as a tall, clear wall that would be the perfect place to centrally position the bed,' he says. 'To keep the symmetry of the room, the jib door means that storage isn't on show. Hanging art on this secret door boosts the camouflage effect.' The fact that the skirting continues along the bottom of the door adds to the trick of the eye. Sean used Edward Bulmer's Granite Green on the walls for a calming ambience and paired it with watermelon pink on the headboard. →



PHOTOGRAPHS (BUNK UP) JOAKIM BOREN; (SECRET DOOR) CHRIS WAKEFIELD



### NEAT NOOK

A built-in cabin-style bed is both cosy and clever. 'This space-saving design can include room for storage baskets and books in the space above and at the end, a trundle bed or drawers on castors underneath, and integrated lighting for reading,' says interior designer Henry Prideaux. In a small room like this with fitted joinery along one wall, there is often an allowance for a narrow wardrobe so you can maximise every available inch.

### HIDDEN AWAY

It's hard to prevent a guest room from becoming a repository for seasonal clothes and household clutter. The solution is to invest in built-in joinery – and to reserve enough for visitors to use. In this scheme by Studio Peake, one wall has been given over to ceiling-height wardrobes painted in Camo 7 by Papers and Paints. A clever trick is the external rail along the top. It acts as a temporary hanging spot for clothes – ideal for guests who aren't staying long enough to warrant unpacking a whole suitcase.

### TIGHT FIT

Squeezing a double bed into a small guest room is always a challenge. If it means there's no space for bedside tables, you have to think creatively. Here, Katharine Paravicini built a bookcase with scalloped detailing behind the bedhead, with a surface for a lamp, a book and a glass of water. 'The bookshelves have a false back so they aren't too deep, otherwise books would disappear within,' she says. A divan bed with drawers provides useful storage for extra bedding, blankets and towels. →



PHOTOGRAPHS (NEAT NOOK) ROOZ AHMADIAN; (TIGHT FIT) ANNA STATTHAKI





## SLIDE ASIDE

'Small rooms can offer limitless opportunities for creativity, with every design decision making a positive impact by enhancing the sense of space,' say Lucy Derbyshire and Jena Quinn of Studio QD. Here, they've used a pocket door, which slides into the wall so doesn't encroach in any direction, to join two rooms. 'All the furniture was custom-made to maximise its purpose while adding to the illusion of expansiveness within a modest space.'

## GARDEN ACCESS

Many country house owners are opting to convert outbuildings into private spaces for their guests. This room designed by Susie Atkinson is in a London home. As the garden wraps around it, the key was to bring the outside in with vast sliding glass doors that can be open in the summer. The textured sofa at the end of the bed offers a space to sit and enjoy the view when the weather isn't warm. To draw the eye outside, the scheme has been kept on the neutral side with pops of colour in cushions and the headboard fabric by Penny Morrison.

## DOUBLE TAKE

For optimum flexibility, especially if family members often stay, twin beds are immensely practical. Think about the space between the beds to ensure guests can walk around them comfortably. 'We generally say 80cm is the minimum gap,' explains Charu Gandhi, founder of Elicyon, who decorated this scheme. 'We also try to include multifunctional furniture, such as a daybed with hidden storage that can accommodate an extra guest.'

PHOTOGRAPHS (SLIDE ASIDE) NICHOLAS WORLEY; (DOUBLE TAKE) PATRICK WILLIAMSON



### COUNTRY CLASSIC

Four-poster beds are a staple of formal country house interiors and create a dramatic focal point. In this guest room, antique dealer and decorator Max Rollitt set the bespoke four-poster alongside a Regency bench (perfect for putting clothes on at the end of the day) and an Aubusson rug. Antiques bring stories with them, he muses – an appreciation of the life they’ve led. Many people say how well they sleep in a four-poster, which is a great compliment for a host to hear. Decorator Henriette von Stockhausen of VSP Interiors often incorporates this style of bed: ‘Whether detailed or simple and more contemporary, four-posters create extra comfort and a sanctuary, a room within a room,’ she says. →

PHOTOGRAPH SIMON UPTON



## DESIGN & DECORATING



### READ THE ROOM

Timber beams and wonky walls are among the many features of country houses that create instant character as well as the occasional headache for designers and decorators. A bed with a headboard will help to subtly limit the potential for bumping into a sloping wall. Emma Burns, joint managing director of Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler, artfully carved out this guest cottage in the barn of her Oxfordshire home. She always ensures visitors have plenty to read. 'Including space to store, display and read books is a must,' she says. 'We want guest rooms to be warm and enveloping, encouraging peace and relaxation.'

### MAKING WAVES

A headboard should have a height of at least 60cm above the mattress – enough for anyone to rest their back against it without touching the wall. If you go bigger, an oversized design will make a luxurious statement and ensure the bed is the main focal point. In this space by Own London, the headboard, with its playful wavy shape, stretches all the way across the room, enveloping the bed and nightstands like upholstered half-height panelling. The rest of the details pivot on earthy tones and warm textures. 'Don't go overboard with pattern to create a calming bedroom,' says Alicia Meireles, associate director of interior design. 'Pick one type of pattern, abstract or nature inspired, and use it in moderation with other surfaces in the same tonal palette.' Find the perfect balance between fabrics, soft rugs and hard finishes such as wood, she adds. 'I'd suggest using natural fabrics, such as mohair, linen and wool.' →

PHOTOGRAPHS (READ THE ROOM) DEAN HEARNE; (MAKING WAVES) MARTIN MORRELL





## SHAPE SHIFTER

When dealing with awkwardly shaped rooms, one technique is to draw the eye away from problem areas, such as a sloped ceiling. By contrast, interior designer Rachel Chudley has opted to emphasise this angular ceiling by covering it in striped wallpaper and adding a bespoke headboard. Commissioning a headboard allows total creative freedom; it offers scope to introduce a bolt of pattern or bold colour, which won't be overstimulating as it won't be seen while lying in bed. Whatever the design, try to link it to other elements for a cohesive finish. 'I call this room my purple boudoir,' says Rachel. 'The walls are painted in an imperial purple and the cashmere bedcover is from Jaipur.'



# Insider insight

## Expert advice on designing the perfect space for guests

**BATHROOMS** According to interior decorator Bee Osborn, all guest bedrooms should have a private bathroom. 'I feel guests can only be truly comfortable if they have their own spaces and aren't plodding up and down corridors.' These needn't be large, she adds. 'With clever planning, you can create a shower in one wardrobe and a loo in another. I will eke out every square inch of available space to make this happen.' Don't forget to provide lovely soaps and shampoos for guests, too.

**SINGLES OR DOUBLES** When it comes to beds, Mary Graham and Nicole Salvesen of Salvesen Graham are unequivocal. 'We love a twin guest room, especially during Christmas and for family gatherings when you're trying to fit as many people into the house as possible,' they say. 'Not only are twin rooms perfect for multigenerational guests, such as mothers and daughters, but they are suitable for siblings, too.'

**BED LINEN** Not everyone likes sleeping under the same weight, which can be challenging when deciding how to dress guest beds. A good idea is to create layers that can be removed; mix traditional eiderdowns with sheets and blankets, for example. 'We like to invest in great bed linen – over 1,000 thread count is a true treat but also a duvet with a little weight to feel snug,' says Taline Findlater of Olivine Design. 'And opt for pretty finishes, like Sophie Conran's Scalloped collection, which also brings touches of colour to a scheme.'

**FURNITURE** A classic problem with bedrooms is clutter: discarded clothes, books and other detritus can amass quickly. Storage is the secret, says Fred Horlock,

design director at Neptune. 'When designing a guest bedroom, focus on both comfort and style to make visitors feel welcome and at ease. Dedicate plenty of storage for them to keep their belongings in. If space is limited, use attractive storage boxes or under-bed drawers.' A suitcase rack is a great idea for guests' bags and a radio in the room is always lovely, adds Sarah Peake of Studio Peake. 'We like to place a small armchair in the bedroom or an ottoman at the end of the bed – this is useful for folding clothes, storing bedding or putting your feet up after a long walk.'

**LIGHTING** It's almost impossible to overstate the importance of lighting in a bedroom: the ideal is to strike the perfect balance between creating the right atmosphere and ensuring guests can comfortably read a book. 'Natural bone china is a great choice for lights in bedrooms, thanks to its delicate opacity and inherent warmth,' says Charlie Bowles, director of Original BTC. 'It creates a soft intimate glow, which will make your guests feel comfortable and relaxed. In smaller rooms, try using wall rather than table lights, or hang pendants, to avoid cluttered surfaces.' 📖

### "TWIN ROOMS ARE IDEAL FOR MULTIGENERATIONAL GUESTS AND SIBLINGS, TOO"

**MARY GRAHAM AND NICOLE SALVESEN**,  
co-founders, Salvesen Graham

## THE SOURCEBOOK: BEDS & BEDDING

### NATURALMAT

This Devon-based firm specialises in designing mattresses made entirely of natural fibres, which is said to improve sleep.

### TOAST

Find traditional woven pillowcases, sheets and duvet covers in plains and stripes from a team that often collaborates with artists.

### SOAK & SLEEP

What started in a spare room in 2008 is now a company offering a wide range of duvets (including wool ones) and other bedding.

### LOVE YOUR HOME

Originally set up in Hackney in 2008, this now Surrey-based business has a large collection of beds in all shapes and sizes.