

Personal Spaces

Design tips to inspire the creation of a beautiful bedroom

BY LOUANNE LITKE

When the kitchen or bathroom needs a new look, the revamp usually begins with a visit to a showroom and a discussion with a designer. But when it comes to the bedroom, few people are inclined to call on a designer for advice. Perhaps it's because the bedroom is such a personal space that many people question whether someone else can actually help them achieve the look and ambience they want.

The truth is that designers are as adept at putting together a bedroom that reflects your tastes as they are at finding canny ways to maximize cupboard space in kitchens. Here are some tips to help you make your bedroom a place of beauty and tranquility.

Identify your inspiration To find your colour palette, begin by identifying one inspirational fabric or accessory – like a cushion or rug – that you love. The entire bedroom can be designed around the colours, tones and ambience of this item. If you're having trouble identifying an item to get those design juices flowing, then try going at the process the opposite way, mentally eliminating items you *don't* find inspiring. You'll likely be left with a few things you truly love and the final choice will be easier.

Rearranging the room A well-designed bedroom is comprised of many elements, including draperies, bedding, floors, walls and upholstery. Your inspirational item will hint at a primary colour choice around which you can build the look of the room. When you're making the big decision on wall colour, take your inspirational item with you to the paint store and ask for advice. With the myriad colours and textures available, there really is a perfect colour for your walls.

When selecting fabrics for your bedroom, consider these insider tips: Group opposing fabric patterns whenever possible – this eliminates fabrics competing for visual attention. Each individual fabric should look more pleasing when placed alongside another item than it does when seen in isolation. For example, use large patterns with small ones,

or a pattern next to a solid colour. Mix stripes with florals, or place small, fine prints next to larger geometric patterns. You will be amazed at how your personal style will naturally emerge as you experiment with colours, designs and shapes.

Also, select contrasting surface finishes to enhance visual interest. For example, pair light-reflecting fabrics, such as silks, with matte-finished cotton blends. Or select heavy textures to accent smooth-surfaced ones (e.g., nubby, cozy chenille is a great visual contrast alongside smooth, soft satins). When choosing fabrics for your bedroom, remember that everything, including the drapes, should be tactile and inviting to touch. Finally, since draperies, bedding and upholstery have practical requirements, make sure your fabric choices are appropriate to the application.

Floors and walls Floors and walls play a significant role in creating a mood for your room. For example, a deep, dark floor anchors a room and evokes a sense of security, while a light floor offers a feeling of relief and space. Similarly, darker walls embrace while lighter shades soothe. Creating mood with your floors and walls is a powerful way to add beauty to your bedroom.

Light options Lighting is a very important component of the bedroom – it has the power to create ambience in the room while also meeting the practical needs of day-to-day life. Relaxing, reading and dressing all have different lighting requirements, so it's important that bedroom lighting be flexible. Think of lamps and fixtures as an opportunity to accessorize while providing for each functional need in your bedroom. Choose a fixture with character and then try putting it on a dimmer switch.

Live with layers Layer your window treatments. Blinds that feature a sheer



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component, or drapery sheers, give you the option of enjoying daylight while retaining an element of privacy. Layering also helps you achieve more versatile levels of darkness based on your sleeping needs and the changing seasons. Finally, layered window treatments impart a sense of luxury to a bedroom.

Dressing it up Accessories have the power to transform a plain bedroom into an inviting space filled with warmth and character. When “dressing” your bedroom, place accessories as if you were merchandising your room for a presentation. Before you begin, look at the space and identify several focal areas. Try these ideas:

- Hedge in the bed with lamps, artwork and accent throw cushions;
- Surround a draped window with framed photos, or add wall sconce lighting;
- Accent an armchair with a throw, small table, plant and lamp.

When grouping multiple objects, make sure each cluster is composed of an odd number of items to achieve an eclectic look.

Know yourself You don't have to be a professional designer to know your own tastes. If you're willing to put in the time to identify an inspirational object and you follow these professional tips, you'll have your own beautiful bedroom in no time. Providing beauty in this most personal space of your home will influence your frame of mind and create a sense of well-being every day. ■

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See SOURCES page XX for contact information.