



Laura Archibald Interior Design recommends incorporating bold colors in places like wallpaper, curtains and throw pillows.

be our *guest*

Make your visitors feel at home with these tips about designing and decorating guest rooms

by Moment Palmer



A nice-sized sitting area is always a convenient way for guests to have more space in their room.

The holidays are synonymous with traveling to visit friends and family and that often means hosting overnight company at your home. Creating a space for them to feel warm and welcome is essential and easy. Even if they are staying in one of your kid's rooms or an office with a bed in it, there are easy ways to make them feel relaxed and like it's a space designed just for them.

"The goal when creating a guest room is to create a place where people will feel comfortable while they are away, but also to have a retreat experience," says Lauren Riddiough Clement, owner/decorator of Lauren Nicole Designs. "It can be hard to be away from your comfort zone, but if you are staying in a beautifully decorated and appointed space it makes the stay much more fun."

ITEMS TO INCLUDE

Accommodating your guests and making sure they have all the comforts of home is tremendously important. Some items – be it furniture or just simple things like toiletries – are a must for all guest rooms.

Comfortable bedding – A good mattress is one of the most important components. You should include options such as extra pillows, a couple of extra blankets or a decorative throw at the foot of the bed, which is a nice finishing touch. This is especially important if the room doesn't have its own thermostat. Laura Archibald, owner of Laura Archibald Interior Design, recommends that “everyone should sleep in their guest room at least once before offering it to guests.”

Sufficient lighting – Throughout the room, especially in the bathroom, provide ample lighting to get ready by and more ambient lighting to read by at nighttime. A full-length mirror is also a particularly thoughtful detail.

Nice linens – Supply pretty bath towels that are reserved for guests only. Bathrobes are also a nice touch, so that visitors don't have to get dressed first thing in the morning before they have their coffee and breakfast.

Space for clothing/luggage – Free up some drawer and closet space, or have an empty dresser or bureau. That way guests can unpack instead of digging through his or her suitcase. Be sure to have hangers free in the closet, too. If there's not enough room for a dresser, or the closet in the room is packed full, luggage



A neutral palette using creams, tans and grays gives a softer touch, according to Lauren Nicole Designs.

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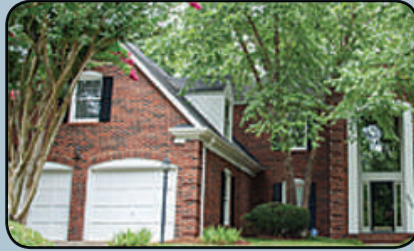
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Keep plush linens, extra toiletries, and scented soaps in your guest bathrooms.

racks and/or a bench at the foot of the bed will work, too. Luggage racks are the perfect height and make it easy for your friends and/or family to work from their suitcases during their stay.

Extra toiletries – Always have new, unopened toothbrushes, toothpaste and razors in addition to other staples in case they've forgotten anything. This way, they won't have to ask you for it, because it will already be supplied for them and easily accessible.

Miscellaneous items – Include an alarm clock, preferably with a speaker for the guest to play their own music, accessible outlets to plug in all their devices, deodorizing spray for the bathroom and scented candles or incense. Magazines in various genres, including local magazines or guides, are a great addition, too, and a way for out-of-town guests to learn about the area where they're staying.

Flowers – Fresh flowers are always inviting and show your guests that you took extra time out of your schedule to welcome them.

Finishing touches – When possible, "It's nice to have extra seating if the space allows, for company to work on a laptop or read without getting in the bed," says Holly Hollingsworth Phillips, owner and designer of The English Room. "I am a huge fan of a chaise." A tray of treats – like granola bars, chocolates or candies, nuts and bottled water – adds a nice touch.

CHOOSING YOUR COLOR PALETTE

While there's no right or wrong decorating theme, ideas for an appropriate color scheme will vary depending on the homeowner and how they've already



Photo Courtesy of Dustin Peek Photography

This functional, colorful guest room designed by The English Room includes dresser space and a large mirror to accommodate guests.

decorated other parts of their home. “I really think that any color palette can work for a guest room,” says Archibald.

One popular design concept is using soft colors (pale blues, greens, grays or pastels), which creates more of a tranquil, spa-like environment that is both inviting and relaxing. Another approach is going with a warm neutral palette, incorporating creams, tans and perhaps even some metallics. Then, add a pop of color by throwing in some brightly shaded pillows, depending on the season.

“Since a variety of people with a variety of tastes will be staying in this room, you need to know that you will never please everyone,” Clement advises. “I personally would stay away from anything too heavy such as bold dark colors on the walls, but rich accents of reds, blues and greens would be OK, if that is in keeping with the rest of your home already.”

If you do plan to go with a more vivid and richer color scheme, try using a bold fabric for the curtains, comforter or wallpaper. A bright and colorful guest room can be both fun and functional, and since its purpose is mainly for visitors, you won’t get tired or overwhelmed with the color palette. “I believe in making it a jewel box and a space the guest would not normally have the opportunity to stay in,” says Phillips.

A WARM WELCOME

No matter how you choose to decorate a guest room, it’s always important to design a space that’s welcoming and will make your guests feel comfortable during their visit. And going the extra mile by completing the space with your friends’ or family members’ favorite goodies – such as treats they like or lotions or soaps you know they use at their house – will immediately make your guests feel welcome and excited to start their stay. **HD**



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