

Insight

CREATING A GUEST BEDROOM

Do as Victoria and John Hemmings have done and design a serene, multifunctional space



Even the most modest of spaces can serve as a comfortable guest room, and clever use of furniture allows for study and storage areas, too. Opt for a cohesive decorative scheme with hard-working furniture and you won't look back.

Forward planning

Creating a guest bedroom that's both appealing and practical starts with good spatial planning. This is particularly important if you are creating a room that will serve several purposes, whether as a study, informal dressing room or an additional clothes space. Once you've covered all the functions of the room, you can plan the furniture placement.

Daybeds or truckle beds are a great option for rooms that host occasional visitors. Choose multifunctional pieces, such as a desk that can double as a dressing table, or a lidded ottoman to provide handy occasional seating as well as an invaluable place to keep linens and clothes. Window seats that conceal

storage are another good choice. If the room is used solely as a guest room, consider two single beds combined with vibrantly upholstered, generously sized headboards to add a sense of symmetry and scale, as well as allowing for flexible sleeping arrangements when visitors stay. In a small space, create cohesion with decorative accents – try finishing your headboards, curtains or rugs in identical trims for a smart look.

Add a little luxe

Making a space feel luxurious is all in the detail. Anticipate the needs of visitors by incorporating touches that will turn a guest room into a welcoming home from home. If you can, include a full-length mirror, fitted on the inside of cabinetry or the back of a door where space is tight, while an ornate wall-hung option creates a decorative accent.

Finally, a few personal touches will ensure a warm welcome – add reading material, a carafe of water, fresh linens, a sleep mask, earplugs and flowers.

PROFESSIONAL ADVICE



'Decorating a nook in a city apartment requires a different approach to a guest room in a larger house, but they both share the same ethos, which is that of a warm, welcoming

space combining the facilities of a hotel with the intimacy and charm of a home.

Inviting schemes rely on calming, restful interiors, which are often achieved through symmetry and scale. The most satisfying layouts are usually the simplest, but pattern, colour and texture all play a part.

The bed is the most important item in the room, so be sure to have a good mattress. Freshly laundered and pressed sheets are a must, as are down pillows and duvets. Use high thread count fine linens whenever possible to enhance the feeling of well-being. Finish the bed with a throw in cotton, wool or cashmere, depending on the season.

Good layered lighting is crucial. If the bedside light is also the reading light, then ensure that the bottom of the shade is at shoulder height so that the light will fall onto the book. When installing switches by the bed, consider a USB port, too, which is a practical touch.

If there is space, incorporate a comfortable armchair, ideally next to a window, with a small table beside it on which to place a cup, book or laptop. Make sure that there is somewhere to unpack a suitcase, too.'

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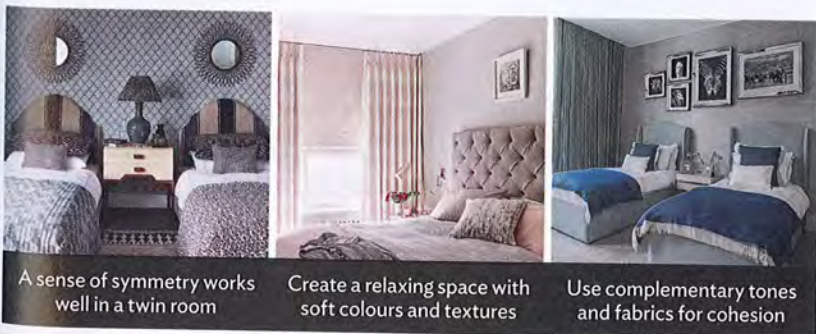
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■ **British Institute of Interior Design**,
020 7628 0255, biid.org.uk

An organisation for interior designers with a database of names and suppliers

■ **Bonbon**, 020 7823 9090, bonbon.co.uk

A range of space-saving furniture solutions, including pull-down beds



A sense of symmetry works well in a twin room

Create a relaxing space with soft colours and textures

Use complementary tones and fabrics for cohesion



EXPERT EYE 'A guest room can be an opportunity to go for a more unusual scheme that you wouldn't consider in your everyday rooms. For example, if you are drawn to a dark colour, it's the perfect space to try something different'

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