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# Suite Retreat

## Creating the Perfect Bedroom

BY HANK MATHENY, ASID, IIDA

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Remember when being sent to your bedroom was considered a form of punishment? Funny how differently we think once we are grown up!

Today, the bedroom is considered our most private haven and our most personal retreat. And, while there is no perfect blueprint for the ideal bedroom, it should be, by all standards, personal, intimate and relaxing!

At one time, the bedroom was little more than a place to sleep – a modest chamber, void of much decoration or detail which was saved for the more public rooms of the home. Aesthetics were deemed unimportant since it was private and not shared or viewed by others. Things have definitely changed.

Today's bedrooms serve a multitude of purposes – for it is here where we dress, watch TV, listen to music, read a book, eat an occasional meal and surf the web. It is also our refuge when we are ill. Thus, it takes considerable planning when designing today's bedroom to accommodate the functions that are required. The finished space must not only have the style and look you desire, but serve many functions as well – becoming your personal retreat filled with favorite and personal items, reflecting your unique style of living.

To create your perfect bedroom, you first must define its style. Since the bedroom is most often separated from the rest of the home, this is an excellent opportunity to set a different tone, if you wish. I recommend you close your eyes. Then think of the most relaxing place you would want to be and what you would be doing. Perhaps it's lying on the beach in the Caribbean or it might be sitting in a lush garden reading a book or sitting in a porch swing with a glass of wine, watching the sunset. Whatever your dream, use the imagery as

a guide for the colors, textures and materials of your new, private retreat.

The bed is the namesake of this room and with good reason. It is the room's most basic element and its focal point, and the one piece that is most likely to set the tone and style for the entire room.

In selecting a bed, first remember your vision we just discussed.

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The bedroom is a cocoon from your hectic outside world.



Your bed's style should reflect that dream – whether it has a tropical style or something evoking a garden feel – the bed can be an expression of that fantasy relaxing spot. Next, consider its functions. If you like to read in bed, consider a taller and padded headboard for neck comfort and support. Also check a bed's height to fit your stature best. A four-poster bed creates a room within a room, particularly if fabric is used around the bed. This can add coziness in a larger space, but can confine and shrink an already small room. For a small room, you may want to consider a low or no footboard to help open up the space. Finally, consider your linens carefully. Nothing is more personal and more relaxing and rejuvenating as wonderful linens. Always purchase the best you can afford.

Next, you need to consider the other functions of the room. If you plan to read, then a comfortable chair or chaise is in order with an area for books and magazines. If you write or do computer work, then a small desk or writing table is ideal for this purpose, while also providing some storage as well as display area for favorite objects and family photographs.

If you watch TV in your room, first consider if it is while in bed or relaxing in a comfortable chair and place the TV in the appropriate spot. Plasma TV's have made

things much easier regarding placement and today it is fun to hang the TV on the wall in lieu of a picture. For those who have an aversion to even a plasma TV in plain sight, a cabinet or armoire, reflecting your room's style, can be used to house a TV as well as provide much needed storage.

Finally, as for function, think carefully about the bedside table. Chests, floating shelves, and skirted fabric tables are all excellent choices, but just make sure they accommodate the daily proliferation of items – books, alarm clocks, telephones, eyeglasses, etc. that accumulate. Drawers or lower shelves can sometimes be a boon to those who require lots of items near the bed.

If you love to enjoy coffee, tea or wine in your bedroom or require that late night snack, why not consider a small master bar

in the area. Steal space inside a closet for a small refrigerator for drinks and a microwave for popcorn and/or a coffee-maker. And just like a 4-star hotel, you have room service without leaving your oasis.

After selecting the bed and other furniture to accommodate your personal needs, you should consider the room itself – the floor, the walls and the ceiling. Remember, this room is a cocoon from your hectic outside world. Every surface is important and can infuse the room and your senses with a calm and peace. As you consider wall color remember this is a room to relax and calm yourself. Color is vital to this. And don't forget the ceiling. In the bedroom, you will be looking at this – make it reflect your room's overall vision - experiment with color, texture or even a material: bead board for a summer cottage feel or a rough texture paint treatment to evoke the sense of an old Italian villa. Finally, flooring should always be luxurious to the bare touch. Even with wood or tile floors, consider a rug of unequalled lushness and wonderful style.

Next, remember to personalize your space with favorite pictures, photographs and objects that have deep and personal meaning to you. Think about the things that make you smile each time you see them. Those items

are what you want close to you. Finally, great lighting can set the mood and tone of your bedroom. The right reading lamp can not only function beautifully but make a beautiful statement. Hang a stunning chandelier or lantern in the room to evoke a strong sense of your personal style.

Remember, you are all grown up now and your bedroom should be your suite retreat. Let it reflect your favorite places and things and be customized to your needs. That way, you create your own relaxing hideaway as an escape from the outside world. **CS**

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