

Pampered Guests

At home away from
home for the holidays.

By Hank Matheny, ASID, IIDA, IFDA
Photography by David Humber





With the holidays fast approaching, you are probably readying your home for all the guests, both family and friends, who will be celebrating with you. But while you are putting the finishing touches on the front door decorations and the beautiful centerpiece and place settings for the dining room, don't forget about the guest bedroom. If there is ever a time that you will have stay over guests, this is it. And while you may not have the time or the money to do a guest room makeover, there are many things you can do to make your guests feel as if they are receiving VIP treatment in a 4-star hotel during the holiday season; or anytime of the year.

While completely redecorating a guest room from scratch may not be in the cards for you, accommodating your guests and anticipating their every need is your responsibility. Why not make it a memorable experience? Consider a splendid basket or tray filled with personal items to use during their stay. These could include snack favorites, some current magazines, as well as various bath necessities. Give the basket a theme that suits your guests' interests or to correspond with a planned activity during their stay. Think of a spa basket filled with a candle, lotions, soaps and beauty products to create a pampered feeling. Or if they are visiting during the holidays perhaps a keepsake ornament or a disposable camera to capture special moments of their visit, and a tin of favorite holiday snacks or cookies will be in order.

Another way to update your guest room and coddle your guests is with new bed linens and bath towels. A new comforter and shams can transform a tired outdated bedroom into a warm and inviting guest space. And think about luxurious new sheets. Sheets with a thread count of 400 and greater will indulge your guests without breaking the bank. Other quick inexpensive decorating touches could include adding a decorative rug, replacing a tired, outdated lamp or lampshade. In the bathroom replace that old tub mat and towels with Egyptian cotton towels and a thick plush fleece rug for the ultimate in lavishness. Don't forget to provide your guests with soft terry cloth bathrobes as an unexpected treat.

And speaking of the bath, a great way to update in a hurry, and for a small expense, is to change out your light bulbs with the new generation of daylight bulbs. These bulbs mimic the light color and quality of daylight and make everyone look better, and feel better even on dreary winter mornings. And don't forget about the showerhead. The market has dozens of new invigorating showerheads that you can easily install in minutes as a super way to pamper any guest.


If you still have time to design or

remodel your guest room be sure to include connections for internet and television. This can provide privacy for your guests to use their laptop to check e-mail or conduct business even while away from home. And a guest room TV is great for guests whose viewing schedule may conflict with yours.

If you are able to incorporate a small table or writing desk into your guest room it can serve as an area for your guest to work on their laptop, unpack clothing and if you can provide an iron — a place to quickly press or touch up an outfit.

Finally, nothing is more inviting and gracious than fresh flowers placed in the room

for your guests' arrival along with a note expressing how much you are looking forward to their stay. As a finishing touch consider placing a favorite photo of you and your guest as a remembrance of past good times.

A few thoughtful amenities and some quality time with a gracious host are certain to make even your most discerning guest feel — at home away from home for the holidays. 

Hank Matheny is the owner of Haskell Interiors Design Collection located in historic downtown Cleveland, TN.

