

DESIGN IDEAS

SLEEPING BEAUTY

A beautifully dressed bed is just as important as the other decor elements in a bedroom – and these ones are the fairest of them all



FEATURE ARABELLA YOUNG PHOTOGRAPH TIM VAN DE VELDE

A NEW LEAF

The glazed printed cotton fabric we know as chintz has long been associated with English country house decor. For this scheme, London-based designer Stephanie Barba Mendoza was asked by Anglophile clients to create a chintz-filled bedroom for a house outside Antwerp, and chose Jean Monro's Fern Stripe fabric and wallpaper. 'This whimsical room is warm and inviting and we felt it was the perfect opportunity to create a canopy for the bed,' says Stephanie. 'I love the idea of climbing into bed at the end of a day and being totally encompassed by soft florals and foliage. It's almost dreamlike, which feels appropriate.' →



GRAND GESTURE

An imaginative alternative to using the frame of a four-poster as a structure to drape fabric around is to take advantage of the wall and ceiling behind and above the bed. In this bedroom scheme, interior designer Rachel Chudley has hung Jennie Velvet by Schumacher all the way up the wall then up and over the bed itself, in a floral pattern that contrasts with the bamboo stalk repeat on the headboard. 'I wanted to pay homage to the use of tapestry in traditional bed hangings, such as those seen in Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire, but with the feeling of something more contemporary,' Rachel says.

PHOTOGRAPH SIMON UPTON

DESIGNING BOLD BEDROOMS

Furniture, colour and layout advice for a statement sanctuary

RETURN OF FOUR-POSTERS While once the preserve of the grandest houses, four-poster beds – and their cousins, bed testers and canopies – are becoming more popular, especially in refined and pared-back styles without the acres of chintz that they were typically draped in. These features immediately add drama to a bedroom. For those who are not keen on traditional designs, makers including Max Rollitt offer four-posters with simple silhouettes in their collections. ‘It’s the theatre of four-poster beds that I’m drawn to,’ says Max. ‘Even undressed, just a simple frame and cornice. Glorious.’

Tester or canopy beds are coming back in a big way, agrees Tiffany Duggan, founder of Studio Duggan. ‘We like to choose a pattern on the front face of the canopy then something complementary but smaller-scale inside. A stripe always works well. Fringes or trims in a zingy colour like a berry red or citrine green can add a playful twist.’ Nicola Harding is fan, too. She likes to use them even in small bedrooms: ‘The eyes are drawn to the main frame which fills the room and nobody notices what’s going on around the edges.’

BOLD CHOICES Many shy away from big patterns and bright colours in a place that is intended to be a calming sanctuary, but going bold in a bedroom doesn’t mean sacrificing soothing tranquillity. Be confident with colour, recommends Verity Woolf, interior designer and founder of Woolf Interior Architecture & Design. Build textile drama by layering bold patterns through bedding, curtains or upholstered headboards and explore the scales of prints, combining rich velvets with tactile fabrics and textured wallcoverings. ‘The right colour creates a cocoon-like environment that feels both cohesive and soothing,’ says Verity. ‘Don’t shy away from painting all four walls and the ceiling – the enveloping effect is surprisingly

calming.’ Greens work particularly well to create a restful feel, adds interior designer Kate Guinness.

LAYOUT TIPS The arrangement of furniture plays a part in balancing a colourful or highly patterned bedroom with it also feeling like a sleep sanctuary. ‘Zoning is essential,’ says Verity. ‘Position the bed as the focal point, using symmetry or axial alignment with architectural features such as windows or doorways. Frame the space with integrated joinery or soft furnishings to create spatial intimacy without clutter, then include personal sanctuary elements such as spaces for quiet moments including a reading corner, a meditation area or a beautifully styled vanity.’

GUEST ROOM DRAMA As no one expects to sleep in a guest room for too long, these are ideal spaces to unleash yet more creativity. Charlotte Tilbury, co-founder of interiors studio Penrose Tilbury, believes they represent a chance to explore colours and patterns that might otherwise be avoided. ‘We tend to focus on incorporating a couple of really eye-catching features, such as fabric and antique lighting, then balancing them out with calmer, more subtle accents,’ Charlotte explains.

Focus on statement elements and limit contrast to one or two key moments, agrees Verity. ‘This could be a bespoke headboard a sculptural pendant light, or monolithic bedside tables in stone or lacquer. These interventions should carry weight – materially and visually – while maintaining tonal harmony.’

“Choosing the right colour will create a cocoon-like environment that feels both cohesive and soothing”

VERITY WOOLF, Woolf Interior Architecture & Design

The sourcebook: bespoke headboards

LOVE YOUR HOME

A small but eye-catching collection of statement designs featuring elegant curves and pretty silhouettes with nail-head trims that are made to order in a wide choice of in-house fabrics.

THE HEADBOARD WORKSHOP

These upholstered headboards are available in a large range of fabrics including ticking by Ian Mankin and block prints from Charlotte Gaisford, all handmade in Wales.

ENSEMBLER LONDON

A favourite with interior designers, the highly creative collection features historically influenced designs such as the Livia, which is inspired by Moorish architecture and has beautiful varied detailing.

TORI MURPHY

English textile brand Tori Murphy has worked with a skilled team in Derbyshire to design seven striking headboard styles that can be fully customised with fabrics and trims. →



IN NEUTRAL

As well as being decorative, headboards can have a practical side too, with integrated lighting or audio-visual systems, or floating nightstands fixed into the joinery for a seamless look. Here, the team at Elicyon commissioned this Redannick headboard from Ben Whistler, which wraps around the bed. 'Gentle neutrals and layered textures create a sense of calm while every functional detail is carefully considered,' they explain.

CREATIVE FORCE

Oversized headboards can be a beautiful artwork in their own right. This design, a collaboration between artist Natasha Hulse and furniture maker Lorforde Contemporary, combines handcrafted, responsibly sourced materials with a bespoke appliqué of floral and foliage motifs that brings the outside in. 'I make all my pieces in the mindset of appreciating our environment, celebrating nature and creating designs that will stand the test of time,' Natasha says.

HIGH PROFILE

A floor-to-ceiling headboard introduces a luxury hotel feel and tailored modern aesthetic to a scheme. Here, interior designer Portia Fox paired a full-height rust-coloured headboard with crisp white bed linen and neutral cushions and throws. 'Calacatta Viola marble was chosen for the otherwise uncomplicated bedsides to draw on the earthy tone of the headboard in this space, which feels grounded and refined,' she says.

PHOTOGRAPHS (IN NEUTRAL) NICK ROCHOWSKI; (CREATIVE FORCE) JAMES BEDFORD; (HIGH PROFILE) RICHARD PICKAVANCE



PHOTOGRAPH DEAN HEARNE

ON THE LEVEL

Using the same fabric on the headboard and divan helps to visually anchor a bedroom, especially in an eye-catching or highly patterned material choice. Against walls painted in a fresh bone white, Alicia Meireles, creative director of Own London, used a single piece of joinery upholstered in Schwarzwald, a rich tapestry-like linen by Dedar, to form the headboard that spans the full width of the wall in the main bedroom of this family house in west London. 'The softly padded cocoon invites you to hop into bed and stay,' she says. The curved rust-coloured chair adds a light-hearted touch and complements the greens in the fabric. →



ARTISTIC STATEMENT

Neutral hues, natural materials, a vast unadorned bed and a deep velvet carpet all set the tone for this tranquil and calming bedroom scheme by Brigitta Spinocchia Freund, in a house in London's Chelsea Barracks. Balancing comfort with art, she has used a bespoke upholstered headboard with a mural by London-based artist Robert Cooper, overlaid with embroidery, exemplifying her studio's style of integrating artwork and furniture by emerging talents and established makers. 'The space feels serene yet is layered with pieces that have meaning and a rich design narrative and spark curiosity,' says Brigitta.

PHOTOGRAPH FELIX SPELLER



DOUBLE VISION

Using a contemporary design on a traditionally shaped headboard introduces a pleasing contrast between modern and classic. In this Tuscan property, Karolina Wierzbicka, head of design at co-owned holiday homes company August Collections, chose a small square pattern from Gastón y Daniela for the pair of bespoke headboards and matching bolsters. ‘This strikes a thoughtful balance between old and new and ensures the interiors feel rooted in the region,’ she says.

IN HARMONY

Emma Deterding, founder and creative director of Kelling Designs, is an expert in the art of mixing patterns without the results feeling overwhelming. ‘The joy of this bedroom scheme lies in the unexpected harmony, with stripes, florals and delicate motifs playing together beautifully,’ she says. The headboard features a vibrant suzani textile from Uzbekistan: ‘Its history and intricate embroidery bring soul and storytelling to the room.’

SWEET DREAMS

For children’s rooms, it’s best is to plan a space that works today and carries through as they grow up. This Voysey Park wallpaper design by Lewis & Wood felt ‘timeless and classic,’ says Amy Dalrymple, co-founder of Dalrymple Studio. It offsets the princess-style bed canopy hung with contrasting fabrics draped around the scalloped headboard. Trim and piping from Samuel & Sons was added to highlight the curved shapes. →



“The contrast of a contemporary print on a traditional headboard strikes a thoughtful balance of old and new”

KAROLINA WIERZBICKA, August Collections

PHOTOGRAPHS (IN HARMONY) MARK BOLTON;
(SWEET DREAMS) KENSINGTON LEVERNE, STYLED BY MILLY BRUCE



PHOTOGRAPHS (IN FOCUS) BOZ GAGOVSKY; (ALL IN THE MIX) SIMON BROWN;
(RUFFLED EDGE) ALEGIA NEO/NEON STUDIO

IN FOCUS

There are few limitations when designing a headboard; providing it gives enough support behind the head, the rest is personal choice. 'We wanted this bedroom to feel bold and memorable, so weren't afraid to make a statement,' says Melissa Hutley, co-founder of Hutley & Humm. Her starting point was Thibaut's High Plains wallpaper in Bluestone. 'We pulled out the rich yellow and diamond motif to inspire the bespoke headboard, which has a Marrakech-influenced silhouette and playful diamond cut-out for extra personality.'

ALL IN THE MIX

This daybed illustrates the exceptional ability of Kit Kemp, creative director of Firmdale Hotels, to combine patterns and prints to striking effect; here using linens and weaves from Blithfield with embroidery from Fine Cell Work, a charity that teaches the skill to prisoners. As for her approach, she says, 'I will only use one large repeat, one small repeat and possibly a smaller geometric, otherwise it won't be a restful experience.'

RUFFLED EDGE

Interior designer Elizabeth Hay put together this scheme for a modern apartment in Singapore, with walls covered in a wallpaper by Lake August featuring a tumble of vines, delicate flowers and leaves. Her clients already had the bed frame so the team made this tie-on headboard cushion, covered in Eythorne by Fermoie and finished with a pretty ruffled border. →



HEAD IN THE CLOUDS

One sure-fire way to create a memorable bedroom scheme is to let your imagination run wild with a standout headboard shape. This playful creation by interior design Pandora Taylor is made up of wooden discs covered in Rooksmoor mohair velvet in Blue Boy from Lewis & Wood, which rise up from the main headboard against the soothing ombré shades of Aurora Azure wallcovering from Calico. The composition was inspired by a dream the decorator had with the circles representing floats. 'I've always wanted to create a headboard that wasn't just static but had a sense of movement and fluidity,' Pandora says. 🌿

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