

FUNCTIONAL *comfort*

It's a study.
It's a den.
It's also a
guest room.

BY PAULA ANDRUSS
FOR USA TODAY

GUEST ROOM
in an Avalon, N.J.,
home designed
by Anne Scardino
of Belle Maison
Design LLC.

PHOTOS BY ANDREW BISHACK/BELLE MAISON DESIGN

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THIS GUEST ROOM in designer Anne Scardino's Philadelphia home makes great use of the multifunction principle. The office easily turns into a sleeping area

CREATING AN INVITING SPACE TO ACCOMMODATE OVERNIGHT GUESTS CAN BE A CHALLENGE

for any homeowner, especially when that room serves another purpose once visitors pack and leave.

"Just about everyone today, whether you're just starting out, raising a family,

or downsizing, has a need for a guest room that has to be used for another purpose, such as a den or office," says interior designer Anne Scardino, owner of

Belle Maison Design in Philadelphia. "The problem is, how do you make the space meet the needs of your guests and at the same time give yourself a room in which to work or relax?"

With a few design tricks and some smart furniture and accessories, making a dual-function room is easier than you may think.

SLEEP RIGHT

Every guest wants to sleep on a nice bed. Fortunately for both you and your guests, there are comfortable and

versatile options to suit both the room and the needs of your visitors.

Designer Jamie Herzlinger of Jamie Herzlinger Interiors says many of her clients like to employ a daybed that acts as a sofa for daily use but can just as easily be slept on by guests.

"You put the bed flat against the wall and use pillows and back bolsters to give it a sofa feel most of the time," she says. "But because you're using a real mattress, it's super comfortable when guests come to stay. Add a wonderful coverlet and you've got a beautiful and functional

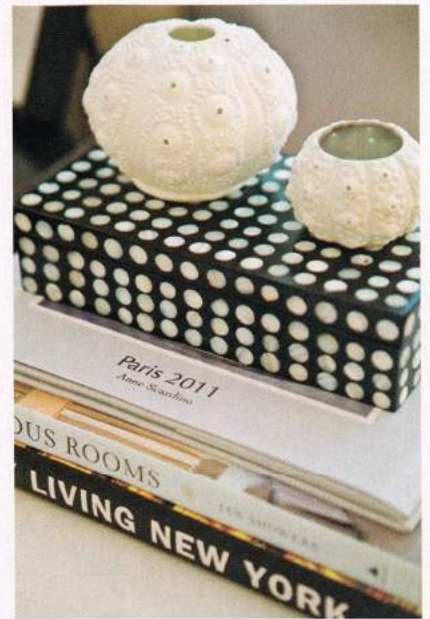


area and returns to everyday use when guests depart.

place to work and sleep.”
 If space is tight, Alice Cramer of Atlanta-based Alice Cramer Interiors recommends a quality pullout sofa or Murphy bed. Either can be just as comfortable as a bed, but much easier to work with in a dual-purpose room.
 “Today’s pullouts can be quite comfortable and offer good sleeping space,” Cramer says. “And the European Murphy bed units, known as Eurobeds, are incredible in how they incorporate a desk area with a bed that can actually be easily opened and put away.”

Quick tip

Cabinetry and organizational items provide great opportunities to clean up quickly and change the feel of a room. “People don’t want to sleep in other people’s environments, and an office is an extremely personal space,” says interior designer Jamie Herzlinger. “Cabinetry with lots of doors lets you get all of your office or other work closed up and put away, which makes your guest so much more comfortable.”



THE LITTLE DETAILS make a difference in the Philadelphia guest room (top) and this one in Avalon, N.J.

STOW AND STORE

While a comfortable bed is the centerpiece of any guest room, effective storage is just as important, especially when the room is serving dual purposes.
 To create an inviting feel for guests, choose functional pieces that can be easily cleaned up or put out of sight when not in use.
 For example, a computer armoire with lots of drawers can be closed to keep papers and office supplies out of sight when guests visit. Cramer suggests transforming a closet, if the room has

one, into an office or hobby area. That leaves the rest of the room open and available for guests.
 “Even in a small closet, you can build a desk space with shelves. Something as simple as a Parsons table makes a nice work space,” Cramer says. “Then when guests come, it’s nice to be able to just shut the door so they don’t feel like they’re sleeping in your office.”
 To keep larger items out of sight, Cramer recommends using risers to lift the bed high enough to create good storage space underneath. “That way »



you can clear clutter off the desk or table and store it easily under the bed when guests are there," she says.

LIGHT IT UP

One of the essential steps to creating comfort is using good lighting. Guests don't want to have to stumble around a strange room in the dark, and the right lights set an inviting and comfortable mood.

A task light near the desk or bed accommodates both office work and reading at night. A more traditional lamp brings warmth to the room. If space is limited, a wall-mounted swing-arm lamp can illuminate different areas of the room as needed.

Interior designer Anne Scardino recommends dimmer switches as an excellent way to give one room two distinctly different feels.

"Recessed lights in the ceiling are great for office or task-oriented lighting, but you want something softer for guests who want to relax," Scardino says. "With dimmers, you can control the whole

feel of the room simply by adjusting the brightness of the light."

ADD THE LITTLE THINGS

A few finishing touches make a big difference in making guests feel comfortable and welcomed. Cramer says draperies and some sort of floor covering should be installed to make the space feel warm and inviting.

"Whether they're traditional or contemporary in style," she says, "they just make the room feel like you cared and like it's finished."

Standard guest-bedroom niceties include fresh flowers, current magazines, and clean linens. Keith Fitzpatrick, a senior designer with Arthur McLaughlin and Associates Inc., provides his visitors with a water carafe (which doubles as a vase when guests are gone), a light blanket, and a fresh bar of soap wrapped in decorative ribbon.

"It's those little touches that make them feel like they're intentionally welcomed," Fitzpatrick says. ■

Quick tip

Don't forget that storage for your guests is important. In addition to a few drawers and some hanging space, interior designer Keith Fitzpatrick suggests setting out small trays, baskets, and bowls for guests to drop daily items in. "When guests are in an unfamiliar place, it's great to have one designated area where they can throw all of their daily stuff, from cellphones and wallets to jewelry and keys," Fitzpatrick says. "It helps them feel more organized and at home."

