

Room SERVICE

To add a little something extra special to a home, look no further than the bedroom, writes Cheryl Markosky

With John Lewis running hotel bed finishing classes to get that smart hotel-bed look (silk linen, flat sheets, throws and 'your side, my side' duvets with different tog ratings in each half), will this kind of measure join the ranks of ideas to help sell a house?

James Bailey from Henry & James thinks this could well catch on, as we now spend so much time in our bedrooms and the way we use them has changed. "Whereas once we only slept in our bedrooms, nowadays we read, watch TV and work. Bedrooms and beds have become bigger, and with so many people staying in boutique hotels, people want to recreate this look at home."

If your target demographic is the frequent-traveller international set, then aim for the boutique hotel bedroom look argues Simon Buhl

Davis from Interiors. "The key is to be as dramatic as possible without alienating the audience. Muted colours are safest, although we sometimes go for a mono-chromed look, or add colours through soft furnishings."

It's all part of the process of 'preparing for sale', points out Lulu Egerton from Strutt & Parker Chelsea. Purchasers respond to lifestyle imaging, and historic favourites (flowers, fresh coffee, freshly-baked bread) still matter. "The whole business of lifestyle presentation has gone up a gear, responding to the needs of an increasingly young, aspirational and international audience," she says.

Egerton recommends using a specialist furnishing company to reinvent not only bedrooms, but to get the right feel of light and space for the entire house. She says items such as beds and chandeliers are obvious, but it's in the detail that you witness brilliance.

"I'm talking about the photo of a daughter on a pony in a silver frame, delicious soaps from Penhaligon,

Richoux chocolates in a bowl, Louis Vuitton luggage in a cupboard, Louboutin shoes on show racks and the fabulous fake fur on a bed. I've never been surer the look of a home is key to the sale," she insists.

It's a major investment, but if you want to get the maximum price then do dress your home, says William Hughes-Ward of Marsh & Parsons Chelsea and

Mayfair. "We were struggling to sell a property with bland bedrooms, and after adding colour via cushions, throws and pictures, we sold it within a fortnight."

It takes time to get the ultimate hotel look

however, so allow at least three weeks before marketing, advises Mohamed Nurmohamed of Chesterton Humberts Mayfair. It's worth the trouble, as "vendors should never underestimate the emotional response a purchaser has to a home that they aspire to live in. Knowing how to make a bed look appealing can help a buyer respond more positively."

So, trotting along to a John Lewis seminar before that For Sale sign is hoisted up could be a sensible option. "A property that looks right can help speed up a sale on a property that's sticking, encourage offers on overpriced property and even improve the prospects of rundown homes," Nurmohamed adds. ■

