



Maureen Whitemore

Comfort with practicality. Our Penrith-based expert has designs on your bedroom...

Whether you're reading this over Christmas, early in 2015 or perhaps months after publication, have a think about your bedroom. Is it the best place to relax in your home or a constant reminder of too many DIY jobs to be done? Here are some ways to refresh a tired room so that you can sleep well and be refreshed too!

Let's start with the bed itself. Not everyone can afford a beautiful bed made by Matt Jardine (as pictured) - and a lakeside sleep isn't everyone's dream - but I bought sets of percale cotton sheets and duvet covers recently and can't get over the difference crisp new bed linens have made. That change of sheets can transform the feel of a bed and the January sales are often a good time to pick up bargains. Buy to coordinate with your existing scheme; just one new set may be mixed and matched to make a big difference.

Headboards are often part of bedroom design schemes and they are an opportunity to use



Matt Jardine designs amazing beds for Lake District locations

stunning fabric to great effect. Very tall designs are popular at the moment and work well with high ceilings but I also like to create a plainer, simpler style and then ring the changes with a band of coordinating fabric wrapped around the basic headboard - easy to keep clean and quick to change so ideal for rental properties.

Another trick is to fix your headboard to the wall and not to the bed. It avoids scuffs and damage to the walls and is easily done with a wooden lathe screwed to the wall and then the headboard hanging from it.

Lighting is another transformer for a bedroom but many bedside lamps are too short to be useful even though they look good. Think bigger, bolder and taller - we have so many good lighting shops in Cumbria and they can advise on lamps or reading lights that do a job but also add to the style of your bedroom.

Finally, cushions - pillows, bolsters, whatever. There's supposed to be a gender difference on this with many men just not seeing the point of decorative cushions but I think a selection of fabrics and shapes can make a big impact and they're a cheap and cheerful way of adding luxury. Maybe avoid florals as a compromise and a nod to the more masculine approach.

I'd love to talk about rugs and flooring, curtains and blinds too but they'll have to wait for later in the year.

Have a great start to 2015 and sleep well!

With a bustling showroom and workshop in Penrith, Maureen has been in the interior design trade for more than 45 years. See her blog at <http://maureenwhitemore.co.uk>.

Spotted out and about



Since Harriet Simpson opened Blue Poppy in the centre of Appleby-in-Westmorland a couple of years ago, she has doubled the size of the shop, extended its stock and invested in her own range of Blue Poppy ceramics. Worth a look if you're in Appleby - a traditional market town with plenty of independent retailers. www.bluepoppygifts.co.uk

Cabinet maker Matt Jardine and Harriet will be at Rheged, near Penrith for the Cumbria Life Home & Garden Show (Saturday February 28 and Sunday March 1), as will the team from The Wool Room. If you've never tried woollen bedding - pillows and duvets as well as blankets - their range is a revelation. www.thewoolroom.com



Guest rooms are a great opportunity to create a bit of luxury. Bedside lamps can be glamorous as well as functional but they need to be tall