

GUESTROOM BEDS

GET A MORE MODERN TWIST

While the white duvet isn't going away anytime soon, new headboards, shapes, colors and textiles are making for dreamy new hotel beds—here's how.

By Gina LaVecchia Ragone

AS THE LARGEST ELEMENT in most guestrooms, it is the natural focal point, so good design often begins where the guest's day ends—the bed. Interior designers specializing in hospitality predict some current trends will hold strong while other new and exciting elements gain traction.

HEADBOARDS: CUSTOM FOCAL POINTS

In some settings, including suites and other large rooms, designers are creating custom, oversized headboards to serve as a dramatic focus of attention for the guestroom. “Headboards are becoming more three-dimensional, extending all the way up to the ceiling and over the bed with lighting coming down from that,” says Cheryl Hillberry, principal, CBH Design.

At Perkins Eastman, Barbara Mullenex says, “We've reached a level of luxury in mattresses and linens that the new place to go is the architectural use of the bed. That's where the innovation is going: beds becoming more of an architectural feature in some settings. They are also being designed not just with lighting but with thoughtful places for phones and other electronic devices.”

Melissa Breen, designer/specifier for DiLeonardo, says the trend is especially visible at higher-end properties. “The look provides romance, drama and a focal point,” she says.

That's not to say the classic upholstered headboard is going by the wayside. Both luxury and midscale properties will continue to use soft headboards. Designers agree that the inherent plushness of these pieces will ensure their usefulness for as long as guests continue to bring their electronics—tablets and laptops—to bed. Hillberry said textile improvements will continue to expand options for upholstered headboards. “New fabrics offer more longevity and luxury now,” ensuring their use in upscale and midscale headboard applications, she says.

More designers and hotel brands are selecting platform beds for hotels across the price spectrum. “More recently, we've been detailing true platform beds in for our U.S. clients with simply a high-quality mattress placed on top,” says Breen. In some cases, the platform look is being achieved with wood or upholstered box spring covers. However, in addition to being fashionable, the true platform bed is practical and economical, eschewing the need for a box spring and bed skirt. Another practical (though largely unspoken) advantage to the platform is its role in eliminating bed bugs by giving them fewer places to hide. Elizabeth Temple, senior designer for Baskervill, says, “It's so much

easier to clean platform beds and we're definitely seeing things moving away from bed skirts and metal bed frames for a more residential look.”

Technology might play an important niche role when it comes to the beds themselves, says Mullenex, who shared an innovation she saw during a recent visit to Marriott International headquarters. The company is considering bringing an element from its AC Hotel brand in Europe to its AC properties stateside. That is, a king bed that slides apart to become two twins. The parts glide along a track (not old-fashioned casters) and move apart and back together easily. “This has the potential to catch on as an alternative to two doubles, because it provides space for a lounge chair or other amenities,” Mullenex says.

ACCESSORIES: GOODBYE TO THE SCARF?

While the throw pillow has largely disappeared from the midscale segment, designers are predicting at least one will be tossed back onto the bed, for both comfort and color. As for the ubiquitous bed scarf? It remains the most popular accessory in midscale hotels (though they are more commonly



PHOTOGRAPHY: Amanda Sullivan Studio Architecture/Perkins Eastman, Warren Jagger Photography, Ralf Tooten

sewn onto the top sheet these days to prevent loss and to make life generally easier for housekeeping).

Some higher-end properties, however, are sending scarves packing. Instead, the look is getting an update with textural throws and blankets on the bed. "They can provide both color and pattern as well as function...softness and warmth and more luxury than a bed scarf," says Mullenex. "We're seeing them in fuzzy, warm fabrics that people would really want to curl up in."

TEXTURE AND PRINTS: CHIC AND ACCESSIBLE

Petra Michael, director of marketing for Kay Lang + Associates, says printed embellishments will become more prominent and allow brands the opportunity to create custom prints at an affordable price. "We are doing some graphic prints on textiles for throw pillows or bed scarves...even on the top sheet," she says. The firm predicts large architectural graphics and custom patterns will become more accessible and commonly used. "It is interesting technology because the newest printers are very large, and because you don't need to order hundreds of units. You can do it in smaller quantities," Michael says.

She also says that while bedding will stay white across all segments, more jacquards, including the hotel's logo or even custom, brand-specific designs, will be incorporated for texture and subtle pattern, especially in top sheets, shams and duvet covers. "So you can keep white bedding [but] still have texture or graphics, and it doesn't deteriorate in repeated washings," Michael says.

At Baskervill, Patricia Lopez says some designers will replace color on the bed with texture. "The trend has moved toward using different textures and combining different scales as a pattern," she says. Michael says, "Another [textile] trend we love is pre-wrinkled fabric, which helps to overcome the challenge of keeping materials wrinkle-free." Borrowed from women's fashion, the new technology creates puckered, durable textiles for hospitality. "It's chic and it's practical," says Michael.

Designers will take advantage of the advancements in durability that make more textures practical. Expect to see more super-plush and residential-type fabrics. Even metallics and faux furs will make appearances in accessories.

Breen concurs and says it's a great time to be a hospitality designer. "The fact that what we're seeing now is not only beautiful but functional can give us new confidence moving forward," she says. "New textiles can withstand temperatures and be laundered on property, so we don't have to compromise design aesthetic for a good lifespan. We are also able to use more residential-type textiles, which is always desirable in hospitality."

COLOR: WHITE STILL REIGNS

While guests and hotel operators will continue to favor white sheets for their connotations of luxury and cleanliness, color will continue to find its way to the bed in the form of accessories, stitching and hems.

"Things will stay neutral with bold pops of color. We could see things like a neutral upholstered headboard with a richly hued wall panel behind it," says Hillberry.

Deep brights and bright jewel tones are what many designers are predicting for guestroom accent colors. Purple will be strong (Pantone's color of the year is orchid), as will cayenne, cobalt or hemlock, crimson, cabernet, bright yellow and cerulean. "You can get by with one little pillow. A little bit of these colors will go a long way," Mullenex says.



Following residential design, "In U.S. markets, we are seeing a strong shift to 'greige' monochromatic rooms with a bright pop of color," Breen says, or for resort locations, "calming pops of color like peach, orange and blue."

Down the road, influences from some of the luxury Middle East hotels may find their way stateside. There, designers are installing audacious accent palettes of bright reds and greens that verge into neon territories.

Last, designers should consider this about mattresses and pillows: comfort remains the most important feature of any hotel bed. Mullenex says the high-end trend of branded mattresses in hotels, such as Dux (found in a handful of luxury properties) and the Simmons Heavenly Bed mattress at Westin, might trickle down to midscale hotels.

"More manufacturers will develop products to market through the hospitality industry," she says. "It's going to be a very interesting trend to watch." **HD**

Opposite:
The James New York.
Above from top to bottom:
Bangalore Brigade Gateway, Bangalore, India;
St. Regis Yalong Bay Resort, Sanya, China.