



Company is Coming

Making Space for Holiday Guests

If the idea of welcoming company to your home this holiday season has you feeling less-than-jolly, you are not alone. And, in the spirit of giving, we're sharing tips to help take the stress out of hosting while ensuring your guests enjoy a warm welcome and a comfortable stay.

Preparing for extended-stay guests begins with a space inventory. After you consider how many guests you'll be entertaining and for how long, you can begin to identify the areas within your home that may need to be adjusted to accommodate a larger crowd.

The living room is a great place to start. This is where you'll gather after a wonderful meal, exchange gifts and take time to reminisce while creating new memories together. Take a closer look at your living room seating, both quantity and arrangement. I often tell clients that a simple reconfiguration of their current furniture will open the space and allow for easier flow and additional seating. If your sofa and chairs are grouped together in the middle of the room, try moving them closer to the walls or repositioning the sofa and chairs to maximize the space. Remember, this is only a temporary solution and you'll be reunited with your desired arrangement in no time.

If you don't have enough seating for everyone, you don't have to rush out and buy more. Instead, look around your home for creative solutions. The bench in the front hall, your cozy bedside armchair or even an upholstered ottoman can all double as extra seating. As a last resort, you can bring dining chairs into the living room after dinner. The narrow design of a dining chair lends itself to being tucked between existing pieces within your living room.

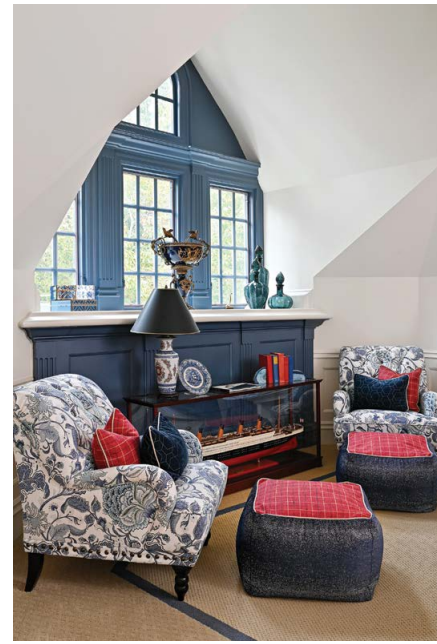
Speaking of the dining room, this is another area that can pose a



challenge when hosting a large group. If you don't have a big table or extensions to add, I recommend experimenting with different arrangements, such as groupings of smaller tables that are collected from other areas of the house or borrowed. Don't stress over coordinating sizes and shapes or matching chairs. I love an eclectic arrangement that feels perfectly imperfect.

Another solution is to swap spaces. If you are hosting a large dinner party and your dining room simply will not accommodate the group, turn your attention to the living room. I've seen remarkable holiday transformations when dining tables are placed right next to the fireplace hearth and the ambience is simply magical. If you intend to linger around the table long after the meal is over, everyone will appreciate the extra space and the crackle of the fire.

Finally, a good stay ends with a good night's



sleep. I always advise my clients to take extra care in preparing a guest bedroom, beginning with quality bedding. Inquire about any special needs or requests, from the firmness of the pillow to the heat-retaining properties of the sheets, that may impact your guests' restfulness.

Here are some other ways to make overnight guests comfortable:

- Ensure the window coverings in your guest room offer ample privacy and light diffusion.
- Provide a generous supply of bath towels and seasonal scented soaps.
- Make sure there are storage solutions for guests to unpack and hang delicate garments.
- Add bedside lighting for reading.
- Provide additional throws and blankets.
- Offer charging cords for entertainment or remote work.

We hope your home is filled with joy this season, and if it's also filled with company, we hope these tips will help ease your stress and make everyone feel right at home for the holidays.

Bren Petrunick is the creative founder of award winning Simply White Interiors. For two decades this notable Niagara based design firm has become sought after for providing stylish and uniquely personal interiors.

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