

## Company's coming: Cozy guest quarters add another ray of sunshine to Florida vacation

BY ANN M. O'PHELAN • SPECIAL TO NEWS-PRESS.COM • SEPTEMBER 6, 2008

With year-round sunshine, sandy beaches and everything else that Southwest Florida offers, out-of-town guests are a given at some point.

Homeowners can make their stay even more memorable by cozying up their guest rooms. A stylish home-away-from-home will undoubtedly bring favored friends and family back to our corner of paradise again and again. First, try on their traveling shoes for a moment. If you would honestly rather check into a hotel than stay in your own guest room, it's time to make some changes.

"There are plenty of simple things you can do to make a room more inviting," says Wrenda Goodwyn, owner of Spectacular Spaces, a room redesign company based in Southwest Florida. She has a Web site at <http://www@spectacularspaces.com>.

"First of all, get rid of the clutter in the room, and leave guests adequate room for their belongings." Start by emptying out a drawer, clearing off the nightstand and making room in the closet.

"Pretty padded hangers and scented drawer liners are always a nice touch," says Goodwyn, who is trained and certified in the Use What You Have Decorator training program, an innovative decorating method by Lauri Ward. When it comes to bedding, think "comfort" as well. There's nothing worse than trying to sleep with box springs digging in your back, after a long flight to Southwest Florida.

"If you need to, you might want to invest in a new mattress, or start over with a new bed. And don't forget to splurge on new pillows," says Goodwyn, who adds that new linens coordinated with a comforter aren't a huge expense, and will make all the difference.

Opting for neutral colors in decor is a best bet, according to Goodwyn, while accent colors can be used sparingly. What's hot right now in guest room decor is the clean and tidy look of a boutique hotel. That look includes incorporating soft, neutral color like whites and ivories, dressing the windows with shutters, blinds or soft curtains and using accent colors with pillows, throws and area rugs.



Wrenda Goodwyn, of Spectacular Spaces, redesigns guest rooms to give the space a calming and welcoming feel. (JACK HARDMAN/Special to news-press.com)

For small, personal touches, incorporate items such as a clock radio with alarm, magazines, candles, hand lotions and hand mirrors.

"You can also add fresh flowers, whether it be a big bunch of fresh-picked stems, or a few special flowers that you know your guests enjoy," says Cynthia Welch, innkeeper of the Bokeelia Tarpon Inn in Bokeelia, who knows just how to make guests feel welcome.

Welch, who has worked as an innkeeper for four years, says personal photos are a good guest room decor idea, too.

"Photos of you with your guest(s) from a previous visit also offer a welcoming feeling," Welch says. "If you place one of the photos in a frame, and give it to your guest as a parting gift, they'll remember their stay forever."

Don't forget a tasty treat, either.

"And nothing beats a plate of fresh baked cookies on arrival," Welch says.