THE BIG SLEEP

HGTV design expert Libby Langdon shows how to make a small bedroom feel like an expansive retreat

Designer Libby Langdon is a pro at putting a lot of living into a small space. As a designer and expert on HGTV's Small Space, Big Style, she dispenses her good advice on the subject regularly. Always ready for a challenge, Langdon doesn't flinch when a small room has to serve several distinctly different functions, as does this bedroom, which accommodates both weekend guests as well as the room's original inhabitant—a college-aged daughter—when she comes home for a visit.

Challenges

This small room was a "little white box," Langdon recalls, with minimal character and virtually no inviting features. Walls were white, furniture was white laminate and twin beds were set on bland laminate platforms without headboards. The room's only attempt at color came from bright, bold-patterned sheets and comforters, which looked more like an afterthought than part of a plan. An overhead light was the room's only fixture.
Libby Langdon accented the bed with layers of subtly textured bedding. Berber carpet extends almost to the edges of the room. "Small rugs can look like postage stamps on the floor, and make a space seem even smaller," says Langdon.

Smart Solutions

Langdon brought some refreshing "Hollywood glam" to the room, making it a welcoming haven for a college girl or for visitors.

**Tone it down.** The room's soft aqua blue is both space expanding and restful. "I call it a spa color," says Langdon. On the solid-colored linens, shades of white and soft cream provide soothing contrast. "In small spaces, big patterns create busyness, with too much going on," says Langdon. "If you want pattern, I'd keep it sparse."

**Bring in texture.** Go light on furnishings and colors, but heavy on texture, Langdon says, combining a variety of elements, like the slubbed silk on the headboard and skirt and matelassé covers and shams on the bed in this room. Additional touches come from a mohair throw, the patterned tone-on-tone carpet and the wicker bench.

**Shed some light.** Having only an overhead light is a big no-no in any room, says Langdon. "It's not functional for tasks and it makes a room feel cold," she says. Lamps make small spaces feel intimate and cozy. In addition, mirrors and reflective surfaces bounce light around and make a room look and feel much larger. Simple window treatments also let in light and views.

**Keep it minimal.** "In a small bedroom," says Langdon, "don't clutter the room up with all sorts of stuff on bedside tables." The solution here is one well-organized closet. Surfaces display just a few special pieces, which can be changed out with the seasons. "You want to keep it light and peaceful," she says. Langdon kept artwork to a minimum.

**Think tall.** To create a sense of greater space, Langdon likes to draw the eye up. Usually, she hangs draperies at ceiling height, but here, a half-moon window above one of the lower windows altered the plan. "To keep a fluid line all the way across," she says, "I opted to hang draperies just above the window tops."

opposite below right: In addition to clutter-concealing storage, bedside tables are mirrored on all sides to reflect light from any angle. Mercury-glass lamps add a retro touch.

left: The legs of the bench expand the sense of space by permitting views beneath it.