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Bedded bliss

Interior designer Veere Grenney tells Arabella Youens why the only bed to have is a four-poster

GIVEN his designs and his diction, anyone who's met Veere Grenney might be surprised that the London-based decorator didn't spend his formative years skipping along the flagstone floors of an English country house. In fact, he was born in New Zealand, from where he travelled to London in the 1970s.

On arrival, he established an antiques stall on the Portobello Road that was so successful that he traded up to a small shop and he soon caught the eye of the legendary decorator Mary Fox Linton. Before long, he was offered a role at Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler, where he spent eight years. He left in 1996 to establish his own practice in Chelsea, which designs homes all over the world that are distinguished by a distinctive mix of modernity and a timeless English classicism.

Integral to the look is furniture that's not just good to look at, but is also supremely comfortable. Beds, in particular, are a big feature of his new book *A Point of View*. 'I love high beds, particularly four-posters or those that are built in. There's something so comforting about sleeping 30in off the ground, cocooned in womb-like space. I've never met anyone who doesn't sleep better in one.'

Many of the bedrooms in the book have tailored bed-curtain pelmets that, although unquestionably grand, are refreshingly unfussy. To the bed in an apartment on London's Chelsea Embankment (allegedly, the former home of Hitler's foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop), he added some bows to the pelmet, a detail that, he explains, was 'an idea borrowed straight from David Hicks'.

A north-facing bedroom in an 18th-century house in Norfolk has been brightened by a joyful palette of sunshine yellow that has just a single hanging at the head end. 'Not too feminine and yet cosy, it makes it a perfect bachelor's room for shooting parties,' he explains.

Veere's approach to bedroom windows is similarly restrained: 'Well-made curtains >

The bedroom of a Norman Shaw house in Chelsea that was reputedly the home of Joachim von Ribbentrop. The writing table was commissioned by Billy Baldwin





The wallpaper, bed curtains and valance are in Grenney's *Belvedere* in Straw and the window curtains in his *Verandah* linen, again in Straw. Sheer white Holland blinds are hidden within the curtain pelmet. The rug is Swedish and an antique and the chair is by Jamb



create a lovely feeling of luxury in bedrooms. Also, if you want an eclectic mix of furniture in the room, fussy curtains will distract the eye.'

Where space allows, Veere always advocates creating a sleeping area within a dressing room: 'It's practical if one of the couple tends to snore.' Again, he favours a bed that's enclosed on three sides, with bookcases in alcoves, good artwork and a TV discreetly hidden. 'I always make these spaces as charming as possible: not only does it result in somewhere that someone is happy to sleep in, but it adds another dimension and looks good, too.'

Regardless of the size of a house, he believes that every room should work as hard as possible. 'I don't like rooms that are underused; even with bedrooms, my approach is highly functional: lots of plugs and a workspace could suit a student working late into the night. When not in use, it's a perfect display area for pretty objects and fresh flowers from the garden.'

On bedroom flooring, he's emphatic: 'My first wish is for wooden floors, second is rush matting and last—reluctantly—wall-to-wall carpet. I like the opportunity that rugs offer to define the space and play with balance and colour.'

Another subject on which he has strong feelings is bedlinen: 'Linen sheets and blankets are the only option. If a client promises to tuck a duvet in, I might just submit.'

Veere Grenney Associates (020-7351 7170; www.veeregrenney.com). 'A Point of View: On Decorating' (£50, Rizzoli)

The bed canopy is lined in Veere's *Folly* in Peacock Blue and the curtains are a felt in indigo by Claremont Furnishing