



A Moroccan-style chandelier was the inspiration for Michael Coyne's vacation retreat design.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BETH SINGER

# Vive La Romance!

Set the mood with a romantic bedroom.

By Susan Kehoe, Ph.D.

**W**hat better time than the month of Valentines and heart-shaped candy boxes to think about creating a romantic bedroom.

However, the idea of a romantic bedroom can conjure up unusual images, perhaps visions of lace and frills and ... pink.

If your partner is not impressed with such trappings, Cupid's arrow will definitely miss its mark.

Setting the right tone in the bedroom depends upon an array of sensual impressions. Designer Michael Coyne ([michaelcoynedesign.com](http://michaelcoynedesign.com)) of Bloomfield Hills shared one of his designs from a Northern Michigan vacation home. A Moroccan-style chandelier was the inspiration for this octagonal retreat with a breath-taking view. "Nothing adds elegance and romance like a chandelier," Coyne says.

A light bar between the ceiling and wall continued the soft atmosphere, and the dark panels of a television armoire were exchanged for mirrors that extended the waterscape into the space. Floor-to-ceiling silk drapes were trimmed in the same exquisite linen Schumacher fabric found in the custom-made bedding. The white leather inset on the mahogany bed was also used to finish the border around the silk carpet.

When Coyne created a bedroom sanctuary in a Birmingham home, he began by painting the walls and ceiling in dove white to create a calming space. A Palladium mirror above the fireplace emphasized the vaulted ceilings and reflected the French Normandy-style chandelier. Mirrored bedside chests can dazzle the eye at any time of day, especially in evening candlelight. The silk satin bedding was selected from

four different collections by Ann Gish to create an elegant presence; 100 percent New Zealand wool carpeting produced a plush touch under bare feet. Hydrangeas and roses filled the room with enticing fragrances.

"Use real flowers; better to buy fresh affordable flowers at Kroger than display artificial flowers. The whole idea is fragrance as well as natural beauty," Coyne suggests.

## Thrill The Senses

Paul Feiten ([paulfeitendesign.com](http://paulfeitendesign.com)) shared a sensuous bedroom featuring a four-poster bed, which is often considered archetypal fairy-tale furniture.

"Whether it is a four-poster, panel or sleigh design, the bed is the foundation upon which the entire room is built," Feiten says.

In this case, the clean lines of the masculine gun-metal Parsons-style

bed, and the sexy curves of the French bombe chest and chair set the contrast, the yin and yang of exciting anticipation.

The sunburst mirror, symbolic of the "Sun King," Louis XIV, established a French influence.

Feiten found inspiration in a Parisian shop where he discovered a 100-year-old fabric used for a priest's vestments. He surrounded the embroidered gold thread design of wheat and grapes with fringe to create the sofa pillow, a one-of-a-kind accessory that fills the imagination with romanticized tales. Valentine-red flowers, tulips instead of traditional roses, continued the masculine-feminine balance within this bedroom.

In a different client's house, the identical wall color and silk horizontal stripe drapes were used to create an

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEORGE DZAHRIKISTOS

Paul Feiten used the same backdrop of paint and drapes from the French influence bedroom to create a neo-classical feel for a different client's room.



## TIPS FOR A ROMANTIC BEDROOM

A romantic bedroom accommodates all the senses: sight, sound, touch, smell and taste.


**Sight** – a soft color pallet with dimmed lighting, mirrored or reflective surfaces and the flicker of candles. A chandelier bestows a special presence in the bedroom.

**Sound** – any favorite love songs, Ella Fitzgerald standards or a movie sound track, possibly from *As Good as it Gets* or *Out of Africa* to stir the emotions.


**Touch** – the feel of high thread-count Egyptian cotton sheets, with silk bedding and goose-down comforters and pillows. Walk barefoot on luxurious New Zealand wool or silk linen blend carpeting.


**Smell** – the fragrance of fresh-cut flowers and scented candles, mixed with your own exotic perfume or cologne.

**Taste** – a delicious French martini or a sip of Prosecco with your partner. Indulge in rich chocolates or your favorite aphrodisiac.



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PHOTOGRAPHY BY BETH SINGER

Michael Coyne created a bedroom sanctuary in a Birmingham house using calming dove white paint, a Palladium mirror, crystal chandelier and silk satin and linen bedding.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEORGE DZAHRISTOS

Paul Feiten designed a sensuous bedroom with French influences.

entirely different and timeless charm.

The substantial bed frame was dressed in tailored linens and a diamond-quilted pattern of the same color pallet, with sand-hued damask pillows to connote a casual mood.

Against the masculine frame, Feiten added a frosty silver-finished chandelier with a delicate swag of crystal beads hung from its graceful arms.

The feminine, sexy shapes of calla lilies were framed and artistically placed to follow the curve of the headboard. Black bedside chests finished in gold leaf trim added a neo-classical ambiance. As viewed from the entrance archway, toile-patterned porcelain lamps completed a sweeping line above the bed.

**Unique Character**

In a home originally built for Henry Ford's sister in turn-of-the-century Dearborn, Metro Detroit designer Dan Davis ([dandavisdesign.com](http://dandavisdesign.com)) renovated the master bedroom. To update while maintaining the char-

acter of the house, Davis used colors and mixed metal finishes to resemble a luxurious and romantic hotel room in Europe.

An Italianate feel was achieved by using a bed and bedside chests finished in blue-gray, metallic gold and silver from the Roche Bobois Provinciales series. Faux fur and velvet textures on bedding and chairs imparted an opulent ambiance.

"Updating a bedroom can be as basic as using mixed textures and incorporating shimmer from mirrors, crystal frames, lamps or candlesticks," Davis says. "Even a mirrored tray holding perfume bottles adds shimmer. Most important for a romantic atmosphere, ensure all lighting is on a dimmer."

Designers agree that a romantic bedroom is defined by the preferences and desires of the couple who share it. **NS**

*All of the designers in this article can be found in the Michigan Design Center Directory, [michigandesign.com](http://michigandesign.com), (248) 649-4772.*