

## Interior design

The four-poster is being reinvented for the 21st century, says Amelia Thorpe

**T**HE four-poster might be burdened by its associations with slapstick period dramas (*Carry On Henry*, *Blackadder* et al), but it's being reinvented to create a look that's more relevant to the 21st century than the 16th. In their medieval incarnation, the curtains around four-posters were intended to act as insulation, but even with the advent of central heating, they're prized for their cossetting qualities.

'In a large bedroom with a high ceiling, a four-poster bed with silk drapes creates a "room within a room", offering a sense of cocooning comfort,' says the interior designer Henriette von Stockhausen of VSP Interiors, who designed this scheme for a Grade I-listed country house in Buckinghamshire. The secret, she believes, is to modernise the look by choosing plain fabrics: 'Here, the ivory-silk outer curtains suggest contemporary simplicity and the dark-grey inner ones enhance the enveloping effect.'

However, the drama isn't just about scale—for those who love the look and feel of luxurious fabrics, four-posters are an invitation to indulge themselves. 'Elaborate drapes were the highpoint of the whole ensemble,' says Peter Russell of Stuart Interiors, the specialist in period furniture, doors, staircases and panelling. 'Sometimes, they could cost 10 times more than the bed itself.'

Like anything swathed in fabric, a four-poster will also absorb external sound, creating a hushed atmosphere that's ideal for any bedroom sanctuary.

VSP Interiors (020-8995 6684; [www.vspinteriors.com](http://www.vspinteriors.com))

Stuart Interiors (01935 826659; [www.stuartinteriors.com](http://www.stuartinteriors.com))

