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*Theresa Glenn at The Old Place Bed and Breakfast in Amory.
(Deste Lee)*

AMORY – When it comes to making guests feel welcome in a home, no one does it better than Theresa Glenn.

Glenn owns and operates The Old Place, a successful bed and breakfast in Amory. She and her husband, Jimmy, opened the business in 2000.

While Glenn's livelihood depends on making strangers feel at home in her B&B, she offers tips

for ordinary homeowners who want to make a comfortable place for family and friends to stay.

"First, put candles everywhere," Glenn said. "That really warms up a room and makes it inviting. For a bedroom, you want something fresh and clean-smelling, like clean linens or something floral. Have those lit when guests arrive."

Next, you want good lighting. Glenn likes to put several small lamps in a bedroom to offer softness, in addition to the overhead fixture.

"Crisp, clean, good-smelling linens are a must," she said. "They don't have to be expensive – they don't have to be 1,000-thread count."

Glenn also likes to keep current magazines in the room for guests. She's found her guests like Cottage Living, Southern Living and Country Living. The men tend to prefer something like National Geographic.

"It's also nice to have a collection of books available to guests who might want heavier reading," she said. "I try for an assortment – classics, romance, Southern writers, even cookbooks."

Fresh flowers are another special touch Glenn likes to use and she is careful to choose them seasonally. In the spring, she might have forsythia or tulips. In summer, she might fill a vase with hydrangeas. Sunflowers make pretty fall displays and, of course, you'll find poinsettias at Christmas.

“I call it fluffing the house seasonally,” she said. “I’ll change out decorative pillows, choosing bright ones for spring and summer. That’s an easy thing to do, but makes a big difference.”

And speaking of pillows, she likes to pile them high on the bed.

“I have eight on this king-size bed,” she said. “That way, they can have as many or as few as they want.”

Glenn also likes to have bedside tables on both sides of the bed, each with enough room for a small reading lamp and a bottle of water. She also provides an alarm clock.

A mirror in the room is important. One over a dresser is nice, but a full-length one is even better.

“That way, they can check themselves out from head to toe,” she said.

In the bathroom, Glenn keeps a bottle of body wash in the tub or shower and hand soap near the bathroom sink. She relies on guests to bring their own shampoo and other hair products.

“I usually keep fluffy white bath towels, hand towels and washcloths in all the bathrooms, just because they’re easier to bleach when guests leave,” she said.

She also likes to put fresh flowers in the guest bath along with, you guessed it, a scented candle.

Glenn even keeps candles going in the kitchen, but these are going to be food-scented ones.

“I have one that smells like cookies baking and one that smells like coffee,” she said. “In fact, if I know exactly when guests are going to arrive, I’ll pop some cookies in the oven so when they walk in, they’re greeted by that friendly smell.”

So that guests don’t feel like they’re imposing if they get a hunger pang between meals, she likes to keep a basket on the kitchen counter full of fresh fruit, boxed cereal, granola bars and other snacks. The fridge holds milk, juice and bottled water.

“I would never want a guest to feel like they were putting me out if they were hungry,” she said.

Glenn said the most important thing to remember about making guests feel comfortable is to make them feel like they’re in their own home, even if you have to steal a few ideas along the way.

“I love doing interior decorating,” she said. “It’s one of my favorite things to do. I get a lot of good ideas out of magazines. Sometimes, I get an original idea, but that’s very seldom.”

ginna.parsons@journalinc.com