



DESIGN SOUNDTRACK

VA VA VOOM IN THE BEDROOM

By Ivy Gracie

We're talking bedroom. We're talking romance. But we're not talking rose petals sprinkled on the bed — that's a derivative move with obvious motives, brought on by predictable occasions like Valentine's Day. This is more far-reaching. This is about creating an adult bedroom with a sensual atmosphere; a bedroom that's ready for action. Every day of the year.

First things first: Sensuality is the cornerstone of good sex. If sex is the currency in a relationship (and we all know it is), then sensuality is banker. Sensuality guards the vault — you don't get to the sex unless you go through sensuality. Not a bad thing — since sensuality, by definition, is the indulgence in the pleasures of the senses. All of them.

And all the senses can be stirred in the bedroom — it's just a matter of being prepared. For sight — change the lighting; bring it down, make it soft. For smell — try fragrance diffusers to create an undercurrent of your favorite aroma; use scented candles to bring both aroma and mood lighting to the occasion. For taste — keep a few individually wrapped Lindt truffles or your favorite candy in your bedside table; for a special occasion, create a finger food tray with fruits and toppings (preferably the kind you can spill on your beloved). For touch — splurge on high thread-count sheets and a soft throw to drape across the bed; keep a bottle of lotion or oil in the bedside table for impromptu massages. For sound — create a soundtrack that stirs the imagination without overpowering what's really happening at the moment; instrumentals are great and vocals are best when they're rather breathy and innocuous — foreign languages work like a charm.

One never knows when the mood will strike, but a few well-chosen accoutrements might help prompt its arrival. And at the very least they'll ensure you'll always be ready. ♣

SETTING THE MOOD TO GET IN THE MOOD

Temptation by Holly Cole. This Canadian chanteuse's delivery is breathy but rich, more naughty than sweet and supported by a first-class jazz quartet. Add a selection of Tom Waits tunes and things get twisted just enough to get interesting.

Longtemps by Louis Bertignac. French sophistication with a five-o'clock shadow. This Algerian-born rocker is alternately vulnerable and edgy, tender and tough — with enough yang to balance the yin. Impossible to resist, even if you don't speak French.

Vicky Cristina Barcelona (Original Movie Soundtrack). With a cast as alluring as Penelope Cruz, Scarlett Johansson and Javier Bardem, the soundtrack couldn't be a shrinking violet. Having a character of its own, this sensual compilation of Spanish guitar selections transports listeners back to every ... every scene.

Balancé by Sara Tavares. Influenced by her Cape Verde heritage and Portuguese upbringing, this vocalist blends both in this CD. Sweet, breezy and downright flirtatious without being overt, Tavares uses acoustic guitar and exotic percussion to elicit a simultaneously African and European vibe.

Comme si de rien n'était by Carla Bruni. Who would know more about love than an Italian supermodel who took to singing in French (and did it surprisingly well) and then married the President of France? Released 10 months after she became the first lady, the title of this CD translates to "Like Nothing Ever Happened," but we know better. Bruni has captured the essence of French whimsy, flirtation and sass in the recording studio and on the world stage.

