

Decor Score: There can be life after moving back home with the 'rents

by *Rose_Bennett_Gilbert*

Q: I am moving back in with my parents after being on my own for nearly 10 years (don't ask). My question is, how to make the one-room-and-bath I'll have compensate for the three bedroom-with-pool condo I just left?

A: Obviously, you can't. Who are you kidding? But for whatever reason you've left that three-bedroom-etc. living space - and that's not my business here - you are blessed with a fall-back living situation, be it ever so "humble."

Living with parents again is seldom a win-win arrangement, from either your perspective or theirs. Fair to say that parents who've given over, what, at least 18 years of their lives to their children have a right to a more peaceful, that is, childless, ever-after. But never mind the ideal: real life being what it is, I offer you this attractive triple-purpose room by New York designer Rona Landman (www.ronalandmaninteriordesign.com) as proof that there can be life after moving back home.

BACK HOME AGAIN - This is a bedroom for many reasons. It is designed to serve for lounging and working, as well as sleeping. CNS Photo courtesy of Peter Rymwid. As Rona designed it, one room can be pressed into service as an office, as a space for entertaining, and also as a space for crashing. She's flavored it with elements from the 1940s forward to today, including chocolate-colored patent leather wallcoverings, smartly off-set with cool blue elements. Timeless Missoni curtains work with a Lucite desk from the 1960s, giving the space more personality than you'd expect from its average square footage.

The lesson here: measure your new digs, not in relation to your former home, but in terms of what you can make of the space your parents have been able to make available. Thomas Wolfe got it mostly right - you really can't go home again - but you can go and remake "home" to fit your revised needs if you're creative with your furnishing and design.

Q: I just bought a home in Bridgehampton (Long Island, New York), which is our second home, a vacation home. I want to furnish it casually, yet with a Hamptons cottage look. Where can I find pictures or ideas to help me?

A: I'm so glad you asked, having once co-authored (with designer John Eston) a book called "Hampton Style" (Little, Brown), which - alas - is out of print today.

If you can't find us on your library shelves, try searching for "Hamptons design books" on Google. As you can imagine, a spot as chic as the Hamptons has a history filled with fascinating people and design ideas you can borrow. Beginning in the mid-1700s - and never-ending as long as the rich and famous can limo or helicopter to the far, far east end of Long Island - the Hamptons have gone from potato farms to international renown, where all is about peace, quiet, and ... well, money. Old money, as in manicured family estates secluded behind privet hedges; new money, as in industrialist Ira Rennert's 110,000-square-foot, 29-bedroom-39-bath spread in Sagaponack.

No wonder many New Yorkers are rediscovering the affordable, accessible Catskill Mountains as second-home sites instead.

But never mind. Half of Manhattan's top designers still vacation out in the Hamptons. You have but to peer through the right windows to find ample examples of how to decorate your own Bridgehampton retreat.

Q: We are remodeling our house in Spanish style - Saltillo tile floors, stucco walls and exposed beams (faux). We'd like to add a corner fireplace but it may be too expensive to bring in a mason to build it. Would a free-standing stove ruin our theme?

A: Not at all. Either a wood-burning model in black iron, or a white enameled gas-burning version should blend into your Spanish theme. But before you vote, have a look at ready-made kiva fireplaces, the oval-shaped corner fireplace that's traditional in the Southwest. One resource is at www.santafekiva.com.

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