Decore Score: Couple has a shady future

by Rose Bennett Gilbert

Q: We love our country house, but are so naive about many things. (We think the working title for the book we should write would be "Survival of the City Slickest.") Our neighbors have been very helpful, but I'm bringing this decorating problem to you. It's about the huge windows in our great room. They go practically from floor to ceiling, cathedral ceiling. At first, we wanted them bare for the view of the lake, but at night those black glass panes are too spooky for us. We come from a city apartment filled with other people. Besides, the glare off the lake can be hard - and hot - in the daytime. What to do?

A: You city slickers will survive, all right, but it's still curtains for you. Or, shades, at least. And not just the old-fashioned roller kind. Hie yourselves to your nearest window treatment store, and investigate some of the newfangled window "shadings," as they're called.

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS - A natural habitat for city slickers blends eye-filling natural materials and invisible high-tech innovations. CNS Photo.The name's apt because shadings combine the best features of plain shades and soft fabric window treatments. For example, one called "Silhouette" (by Hunter Douglas) has fabric-covered vanes suspended between fabric panels so they look like sheer curtains and work like regular blinds. A twist of the wrist and you can open them to the view; twist again, and they turn to filter out the sun. Best, by night, they'll brighten up that black glass, and shore up your courage in the process.

There's yet another way to handle your glare problem. Have a light-filtering film applied directly to the glass (it requires a pro). You can't see the film - witness the totally bare (looking) windows in the country room we show here. They're actually protected by Vista UVShield window film (www.uv-shield.com), which blocks the bad rays that fade your furniture, cause skin problems and encourage squint lines, even in city slickers.

Q: Our new master bath is really big, 14 by 20 feet. We're installing a lot of built-ins and are thinking about putting the whirlpool in the center of the floor, rather than against a wall. The problem is, there's still so much floor space I'm afraid the room will feel cold and lonesome. Can we bring in some furniture? What would work in a bathroom?

A: The answer is absolutely. Today's ever-growing bathroom is all about being furnished as poshly as any

other room in the house. Think of a love seat, upholstered chairs or, best of all, a chaise lounge. We're talking about shades of Rome here!

However, you have options the Romans would envy when it comes to upholstery and slipcovers. Look for indoor/outdoor fabrics engineered to stand up to wet and heat. You'll have to look closely, because these fabrics have gotten so appealing you'd think they belong in the living room. Ditto for decorative indoor/outdoor tassels, braids and fringes.

Designers have also come up with free-standing furniture made specifically for bathroom duty: washstands, stools, etageres, "bathside tables," that don't lose their charms where it's hot and humid.

A couple of resources to check out are www.sunbrella.com; www.waterworks.com; and www.kallista.com (the Barbara Barry Collection).

PS. Fill any remaining empty spots with live plants. As long as there's enough light, they'll thrive in the hothouse environment.

Â© Copley News Service

Decore Score: Couple has a shady future by Rose Bennett Gilbert