

Decor Score: Get that office out of your bedroom

by *Rose_Bennett_Gilbert*

Q: I work part time at home and really need a little desk somewhere besides our bedroom. It's no fun to wake up and see all the papers I have to deal with! Downstairs there's the front-hall closet I've been eyeing, but then we'd always be throwing our coats - and our guests' coats - over the stair railing or somewhere. My husband thinks I should buy an armoire for an "office," but then I'd have to give up the china closet's space in the dining room. New ideas wanted!

OFFICE SPACE ANYWHERE - This office area has been slipped into normally dead space under a staircase. The decorative shelf space softens its presence in the front entry hall. CNS Photo courtesy of Phillip Ennis. A: As much as I dislike the expression, "Thinking out of the box," this is the occasion to say it. Obviously, all your existing floor space is spoken for. Ergo, new thinking is in order for new solutions, such as the eye-blink of a home office in the photo we show here.

It's been slipped into normally dead space under a staircase - not much bigger than Harry Potter's habitat before he went away to school, but still big enough for a computer and accessories, plus decorative shelf space that softens its presence in the front entry hall.

Flip off the overhead light at quitting time and the workaday world will fade away in the dark under the stairs.

Author Wendy A. Jordan has crammed many other such clever space-makers into her new book, "Making Room: Finding Space in Unexpected Places" (Taunton, \$20), where we found this smart idea. More of her suggestions: Line the back wall with corkboard or pegboard. Cut storage drawers into the remaining triangle of space under the descending stairs to the right. Assemble stock cabinetry for an inexpensive desk system.

Most of all, just get your office out of your bedroom. That's bad feng shui, says top New York designer firm Clodaugh, which insists that you need to see something lovely - not aggravating - last thing at night and first thing in the morning.

Q: I know that you don't go to jail for taking the tags off pillows, but what about the cellophane wrapped all around my new lampshades? Is it there to keep them clean? Hey, I'm a new bride and new at thinking about this stuff.

A: Off with their wraps! The cellophane, like the tissue in engraved wedding invitations, is only there to protect the goods till they go into use. After that, an occasional snap with a dust cloth should keep your shades dust-free.

ARE YOU LIVING WITH ENOUGH BLING?

Not according to the folks at Swarovski, the uber-crystal company that partnered with the venerable Rhode Island School of Design this spring to bring bling! bling home in a big way. Students from the Department of Furniture Design dazzled visitors at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair last month, making everything sparkle plenty, from an ordinary aluminum deck chair to a dining table and chandelier.

No run-of-the-mill crystal chandelier this, however. Student designer Annika Schmidt's "Ice Branches" were just that, draped with fish netting twinkling with dozens of crystals. James Lear's black armchair was upholstered in black and sparkling fabric; and Paul Choate's black "Iconic Table" was outlined in crystal studs instead of the usual nailheads.

See for yourself why ICFF-goers blinked in amazement at www.risd.edu/swarovski.

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