

Creativity is key for cheap decorating

DIY good way to spruce up a place

BY MARIA WARD
STAFF WRITER

Many UNC students have found that the best things in University living are free.

The key to furnishing dorms, apartments and houses has been finding ways to cut down on spending — and still amp up creativity.

Some students found ways to personalize their living space by emulating a specific theme.

"We didn't have anything to hang up around the house, and we wanted something that represented all of us," said sophomore Channing Dalton, who lives on Coolidge Street.

She and her six roommates decided to draw a group portrait emulating the MTV show "The Real World."

"We drew each one a little differently, according to our personalities, what we each like to do and what kind of style each of us has," Dalton said. "Then we just added the phrase, 'Seven strangers picked to live in a house... It turned out to be really cute, and the fact that we made it ourselves makes it so much more fun."

Other students decorated with items they collected from different places they had seen around the world.

"My sister and I both bought some cloths from different countries we have visited, like Mozambique and Bolivia," said sophomore Emily Frantz, who lives in a near-campus apartment.

"They are really beautiful and unique, and we use them for both table cloths and as wall-hangings." Even those who didn't travel

were able to think of ways to add some culture to their residences.

"Whenever my friends or family travel, I ask them to send me a postcard," said sophomore Emily Saunders, who lives in Cobb Residence Hall.

"I have decorated my entire door with them, so I have quite a collection, including postcards from Jerusalem, Toronto, Barcelona and Indonesia. It was basically free, and it reminds me of the people I love."

Some students even built their own furniture.

"We knew we wanted a bar, but we couldn't find a place that already had one built, so we just decided to make one ourselves," said junior Jacob Hess, who lives in the Stratford Hills apartment complex.

"We looked on craigslist and saw that this lady wanted to get rid of her bamboo in her back yard, and that's how we came up with the idea of making a Tiki bar."

"We just tied a bunch of pieces together with rope, added some palm branches and some beach posters to set the mood, and there you go. It wasn't that hard, and it was pretty cheap."

But if you aren't a modern-day Paul Bunyan or can barely even draw a stick figure, there are other places to go to find a way to furnish your dorm or apartment cheaply.

"We went to some Good Will and thrift shops and ended up finding some end tables and a few kitchen appliances," said senior Matt Morrison, who lives in the Town House apartments. "We didn't pay hardly anything for them, and they all work great."

Contact the Features Editor at features@unc.edu.

Higher standards for graduates

Focus more on space, less convenience

BY TED STRONG
SENIOR WRITER

For graduate students, housing presents a unique problem: play it cheap or start to get the kind of digs more appropriate to "real life."

It is, no doubt, tempting to go with an undergrad-esque hole of an apartment, replete with peeling paint in the bathroom, a stove that mostly works, walls thinner than tissue paper and deliciously

low rent. But if, in the course of the 18 years it takes a student to finally land that Ph.D. in intraurban opportunity cost discourse analysis, he or she also lands a spouse and kids, that standard of living is no longer acceptable.

And some students are frankly tired of scarce hot water, keggars at the neighbors' every weekend and carpet stains more resistant to

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LAUREN ANDERSON, GPSF PRESIDENT

nuclear apocalypse than the cockroach. They want to upgrade.

In fact, most students opt for something that's not quite starter home but a little beyond the reach of undergraduates, said Graduate and Professional Student Federation President Lauren Anderson.

Anderson said some students might want to live in some place a little nicer than that, even.

"If you've worked for three to five years, your standard of living is different than if you're coming from undergrad," she said.

Most graduate students pick spots and set up shop there for the entire time they attend UNC, she said.

For master's students that stay can be about two years, but the overall average is up around five and a half years, she said.

Most grad students don't have time for jobs but work one on the side anyway to supplement the income they receive from fellowships and working for the University, she said.

Even so, "You're probably going to have a loan," she said.

But with that loan, graduate students finally might afford that picket fence, dog named Spot and two-point-five kids of which they've been dreaming.

"The area is a good place to raise a family," she said.

UNC provides graduate students with Odum Village, an on-campus community set aside for grad students.

Though undergraduates also can live in the complex, it is focused on grad students and provides apart-

ment-style housing.

It is located off Manning Drive, near the medical facilities and the Kenan-Flagler Business School, convenient for grad students working on degrees in those fields.

According to the University's Web site, though, generally graduate student housing fills up before every request can be fulfilled.

Parking is available on a limited basis, and Odum Village is located on several bus lines.

The rate next year for graduate students is \$2950 per student per semester for a one- or two-bedroom apartment with a private bath.

As is the case with Odum, hot spots for graduate student living are similar to those for undergraduates but tend to be slightly farther away.

"You won't see them very often," said Anderson, but most of these students actually own cars.

That makes places like Carrboro particularly attractive.

Another hot spot is Durham, specifically the area between N.C. 55 and Southpoint Mall, Anderson said.

That part of Durham is within easy striking distance of the Friday Center, which provides park-and-ride lots, she said.

But she cautioned that at the Friday center, promptness is the key to making it to campus on time.

"As economical or convenient as it may be to live in Durham, attempting to find a parking spot after nine is impossible," Anderson said.

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