

HOME

WINTER EDITION

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SUPPLEMENT TO THE RECORD-EAGLE

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When the kids' bedrooms hits teen years

BY SUSAN CARPENTER
Los Angeles Times

Gianna Henke's preteen bedroom was a study in boring — a matching, if uninspired, mix of tan walls, tan carpet and leopard-print bedding. Then came high school, and with it Henke's burning desire to shed her room's parent-approved color palette for something more reflective of the teen she had become.

Out went the carpet, and in came the hot pink throw rug. Gone were the yawn-inducing beige walls, repainted with eye-popping yellow and orange. The animal-print comforter was swapped for a Hawaiian theme, the glare of megawatt overhead lighting replaced by the ambient glow of star-shaped lights dangling in the corners.

The days when a new beanbag chair, bedspread and pop poster sufficed as a remodel are long gone. Today's teen rooms reflect a decorative savvy that rivals their parents'. If pictures of Ashlee Simpson or Orlando Bloom are present, they're often on the back of the door, overshadowed by purple walls and black lights, tie-dye bedding, tattered curtains and marked walls — designs that could prompt well-meaning par-

ents to double-dose on their Xanax but appeal to adolescents' evolving sense of self.

Earlier generations weren't subjected to the nonstop eye candy of quick-cut commercials and effects-laden video games that today's teens experience. They weren't bombarded with TV decorating shows, youth-oriented home furnishings stores or magazine articles on how to customize their own space. Celebrities weren't same-age peers buying and decorating their own homes.

Today's teens can't escape the cultural tilt toward design and decor, and their bedrooms show it.

"What we're noticing now is that teens are very, very advanced. They're more adult than teens of previous generations," said Rob Callendar, senior trends manager for Teen Research Unlimited in Illinois. "Instead of putting up concert posters or cutting things out of magazines, some are very interested in the very adult idea of getting furniture that reflects their own personality. Part of it is their own savviness. Part of it is there seems to be enough money that the parents can afford to and are willing to do this."

And part of it is that home furnishings companies are

finally opening their eyes to the \$170-billion annual spending power of the country's 35 million 12- to 19-year-olds.

The same stores that for decades have targeted grown-ups, college kids and parents-to-be are now pursuing teens. In the last couple of years, Urban Outfitters has expanded from being near college campuses to suburban malls. Pottery Barn and Crate & Barrel have each launched youth brands, offering items that not only speak to teens visually but do so in lingo that tries to be hip. A worktable with folding legs is a "flip-out desk"; a throw for girls is "furlicious."

"As kids grew up, there was this group spending more on home furnishings who had their own opinions of how they wanted things to look, and our Pottery Barn and Pottery Barn Kids brands weren't it. They were a little bit funkier," said Abigail Jacobson, public relations manager for PBTeen, the teen-oriented catalog and Website that launched last year.

"Other industry sectors are catering to them big time — food, movies, electronics, clothes," she added. "They expect it from furnishings retailers as well."

PBTeen and Target are at the forefront of this growing market trend, offering free-spirited and offbeat designs at prices that acknowledge the fleeting nature of adolescent taste and the limits of parents' willingness to pay for it. Think cargo-pocket pillow shams for \$16, hot-pink telephones for \$60, disco ball lamps for \$33 and "diva" and "little miss drama" fun rugs for \$70.

In the case of 17-year-old Alexandra Manzano of San Gabriel, Calif., it's green drapes, purple walls and glow-in-the-dark stars on the ceiling — a design scheme that appealed to her interest in the stars, moon and sky.

"I kind of thought my room was boring because it was all white," Manzano said of her old decor — the pencil-themed bed, shelves and Mickey Mouse rug she banished three years ago.

Now, she says, "I love coming into my room. It's kind of cool because it's darker."

Others don't have it so easy. Alena Henke, Gianna's 12-year-old sister, has had no luck convincing her mom to let her switch to the room she envisions: something "retro-y, like pop-artish," she said. "You know, Andy Warhol paintings."

Alena's sensibility has



Los Angeles Times photo/Anne Cusack

When Gianna Henke started high school she jettisoned her preteen pastel bedroom decor in favor of a more mature scheme, complete with vivid colors, star-shaped pendant lights and plenty of candles.

been informed and shaped by TV, specifically VH1 retro shows such as "I Love the '70s" and decorating makeover programs on HGTV. Right now, Alena's room is "garden-y," with

lemon yellow walls and floral, picket fence wallpaper. Painted on the wall above her bed: a Tinker Bell-size fairy.

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Getting outside help to restore order in the home

BY NANCY SUNDSTROM
Special to the Record-Eagle

Are your holiday decorations down but still in plain sight? Has your computer room turned into a living area of its own? Do you step over piles of clothing in your closet to get to a wardrobe that's about 25 percent wearable? Are you a regular viewer of TV shows like *Extreme Home Makeover*, *Trading Spaces*, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* and *Clean House*? Do your intentions to follow some of their tips never seem to get put

into action?

If you answered yes to at least two of these questions, you belong in a majority of Americans whose clutter controls their lives. There is a big difference between a clean house and an organized one, but the reality is that an organized abode is much easier to clean. The problem for most people is just how to get a handle on their clutter chaos.

Home organizers are quickly becoming an in-demand service from people who have a knack for keeping the usable, discarding

the unnecessary and putting essentials in their place. One local woman with a cleaning business is branching out to put clutter in its place.

Laura Turmel of Interlochen says that she has been organizing everything from single rooms to entire households ever since she was young, and is now making those skills available in addition to her cleaning service.

"The whole purpose of my new business, the Order Restorer, is exactly what the name implies," Turmel said.

"I want to restore order to areas that have gotten completely out of hand. This could include kid's bedrooms, playrooms, garages, storage rooms, closets, basements, kitchens and any other area of a house."

"Generally, I clean for working families that just don't have the time to clean their own homes," she said. "These same people also have a hard time finding time to set aside an entire day to organize. And even if they do have the time, they are usually completely at a loss as to where to start."

That is where my idea started."

Turmel said that she first began organizing rooms as a teenager with a friend whose house was a "complete disaster." Starting with her friend's bedroom, Turmel didn't stop until the entire house was in order, and hasn't slowed down since.

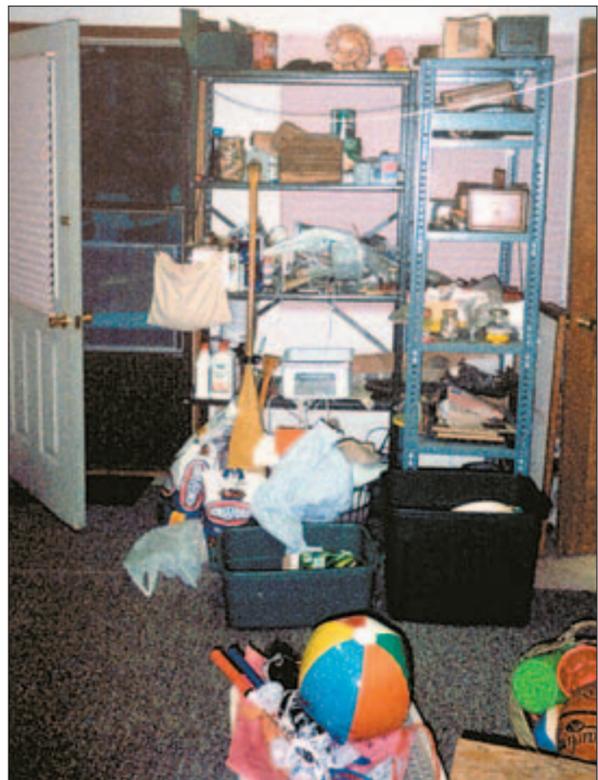
A Navy veteran who has been cleaning steadily since she was 14, Turmel is a full-time student nearing the completion of her Bachelor's

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The Chin family's Crystal Lake Cottage got a makeover by Laura Turmel, owner of the Order Restorer. With the family's input, Turmel was able to sort through the clutter and arrange it to be — and stay — easily accessible.

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