

Bedrooms

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"It's kind of really girly, and it's just not me," the Arcadia, Calif., eighth-grader said with a sigh. For now, Mom won't go to the expense of changing Alena's room because she suspects her daughter will only want to change it again.

Let her, says teen psychologist Michael Bradley.

"A teenager's job is to figure out who they are and to break apart from the parents in an appropriate way, so the bedroom becomes the initial outpost of this new adult that's emerging through the adolescent years," said Bradley, author of the books "Yes, Your Teen Is Crazy!" and "Yes, Your Parents Are Crazy!" "The point of adolescence is identity exploration. They try on 10,000 different hats to see what fits and what doesn't," he said. "You want to encourage them to do crazy, zany stuff. That's healthy."

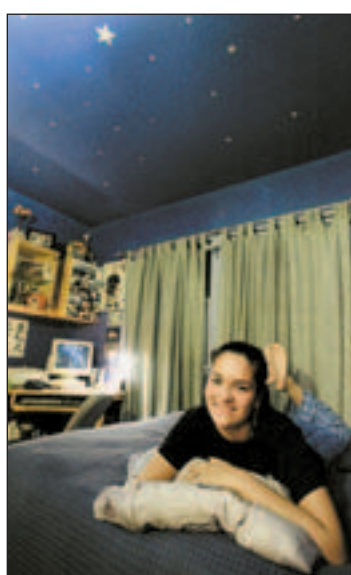
For the most part, it's the girls who want to applique their curtains, customize their armoires and put their

personal stamp on their space. It's the rare adolescent boy who cares about the color of his lampshade or the shape of his pillows.

Most are content to hang a poster, prop a trophy on the shelf and call it a done deal. They don't seem to care. Their rooms are nondescript crash pads. Overhauling the decor has always been much more of a girl thing.

"This whole generation has lots of stuff, including their own cellphones, and definitely their own voice in how they want their rooms to look," said Nan Sloan, contributing designer to HGTV's "Decorating Cents." "Particularly the girls who grew up with these purple and pink frilly little rooms, now they're early adolescents. They want to make a statement."

And they're making a statement in their bedrooms, with designs that are closely related to their clothing. Trends in today's teen rooms tend to mirror the racks at Forever 21, Planet Funk and other shops frequented by girls without a driver's license. Junior high is the time when girls begin to pay



more attention to how they look and dress, and the more self-conscious they are about their own appearance, the more self-conscious they seem to be about remodeling their rooms to reflect their taste.

These days that taste is running toward splashy colors, mix-and-match patterns and items that are handmade.

"A lot of the personalization and color you see in their fashion, they want reflected in their room as well," said Sloan. "That's why a lot of time a parent will call me in, because



Los Angeles Times photos /Anne Cusack

Left, Alexandra Manzano, 17, wanted her room to reflect her interest in the stars, moon and sky. Above, she used green drapes and purple walls to give it a darker look.

they know it's a passing trend. In some cases, these are obnoxious colors for parents doing tasteful homes. She wants lime green walls and a watermel-

on bedspread and orange draperies. Help!"

As a parent, if you don't like the fuchsia walls, decoupage windowsill or stencils on the antique bed

frame, remember this: All too soon, the kids will be going off to college, taking their purple butterfly chairs and electrifying taste with them.

Restore

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degree. She started her cleaning business in 1999, and through ads and word-of-mouth, developed a loyal client base. As she did so, it became clear that many of the houses she cleaned needed organizing, as well.

"Occasionally, I took it upon myself to organize the closets and any spaces that contain the cleaning supplies, but over time,

I've found that I just 'need' to organize the other areas," she said. "I didn't want to offend anyone by suggesting that, but when I did get the nerve and asked clients for permission, I found that they welcomed any help they could get."

One family was the Chins, who live in Washington, D.C., and have a summer cottage on Crystal Lake. Yee Wah Chin said that items have accumulated in the 80-year history of the

cottage, leading to clutter and disorder. Turmel tackled the task of organizing the house, its furniture and contents. In one week, she rearranged every room, got rids of garbage bags full of unusable and unnecessary items and organized the house in a way that left the Chins proud of its new look — and also determined to keep it that way.

"She accomplished a reorganization and rationalization of the cottage

that otherwise was unlikely to be achieved for years," Chin said. "She demonstrated good judgment in doing so, developing arrangements that we are comfortable with and identifying a substantial amount of items we clearly did not need to clutter our lives further."

As the "Order Restorer," Turmel offers free consultations. There, she consults with the client, views the area to be organized, takes suggestions and

offers hers. She feels that it is a good idea for clients to purchase shelving and organizing tools, but will also organize a room with what is on hand. She is willing to purchase and assemble shelving and bins, something she includes in the total bill.

Once Turmel and the client agree on what is to be done and for how much, a time is set for the job, and in short order, the home in question might just look like one of the

homes showcased on *Clean House*.

"At one time, I had to share a room with my brother and it was constantly messy, which drove me crazy," she said. "Once I had my own room, it was always clean."

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