

Spare Rooms

by Steven M Swersky

One seldom-discussed institution pertinent to most immigrated SAfricans is the spare room. Definition: - a segment of your dwelling's valuable living space dedicated as a temporary hotel for visitors from abroad. These spare rooms often double as mini storage, warehousing for unused furniture that arrived in your lift which cannot be squashed into the rest of your home. They often hold your books, computer gear, fax machine, sewing equipment, spare clothing, and generally all the important paraphernalia which you need desperately at seven thirty in the morning, co-inciding with the time in which your guests are in their deepest sleep. Though you are fully aware that it is heartless to wake them up after such a wild night, wake them you do, which goes to prove how heartless you really are.

Spare rooms have a weird tendency to transform themselves during their phases of visitor occupation. Though normally the smallest room in the house they always seem to be the neatest and best organized. All contents are carefully stowed within a closet, drawer, or sit very straightly on a shelf. It takes only minutes of unfolding sleeper couches, re-arranging bedside tables, and eruption of suitcases when company arrives to disrupt this state of harmonious decorum and turn it into the after math of a swapmeet. Three or four days of piling up jet-lagged dirty washing on the armchair will convert any respectable spare room into the least desirable 120 square foot in the locale.

The partner of the spare room is the second bathroom, the vital living space commonly taken for granted by your kids. A guest can often do special justice to these small ablution centers: - cases in which a nine by five bathroom has been found to contain more cosmetic and cleansing chemicals than any Thrifty are by no means rare. Funny looking bottles and tubes with foreign writing on them will broaden your childrens' eyes if not their horizons. But at least the kids will appreciate their bathroom for about twenty minutes after you have scrubbed it clean when your guests are on their plane, outward bound.

In spite of all this, spare rooms are happiest when they have people living in them. They bring with them laughter, comfort, warmth, and renewed bonds of family and friendship, not to mention gifts, money and baby sitters. Spare rooms often bring into your homestead acquaintances and long lost friends who you regretfully have not had the time to socialize with. Cousins you feel guilty about because you did not make time to call suddenly arrive with cakes. Children in the house get to stay up later, and get taken out much more. A spirit of *P*A*R*T*Y* is in the air.

When a spare room is tired and worn out from too much of a good thing it has a built-in self-preservation device: - a piece of paper taped to the back of its door entitled: "What to do in the event of an Earthquake." Underneath this daunting literature is a map showing that the FAULT runs right through the kitchen.


Hereafter follow a set of rules that you should enlarge with a photocopier and hang on your spare room's wall. The frame should be painted bright orange or apple green, luminous if possible, so as to insure the attention of guests.

HOUSE RULES FOR GUESTS

1. We are very happy to have you with us. Please make yourselves at home.
2. Thanks, but no thanks, we have been to Sea World, Disneyland, and the Zoo at least 73 times.
3. As much as we hate it, we have to work. This means that we cannot take you to every place of interest in our fair city.
4. In light of the above, we strongly urge you to rent a car, since we need ours for car pool and work. (Notice the order: - car pool is more important than work).
5. Our weekly or live-in help most definitely expect tips!!
6. As far as dishes go, the official duty of guests is to set and clear off the table. Put the dishes on the countertop next to the sink. Please do not load or unload the dishwasher. No-one will stop you from scrubbing pots.
7. Please keep us informed as to your every-changing eating schedule: whether you will be here/not be here, at what time, how many friends you have invited. On the subject of meals, please do not be too embarrassed to cook a few for us.
8. Yes, we are more than grateful if you will wash our clothes as well!
9. We will respect your privacy in the spare room, and thus we will not be so rude as to clean it for you.
10. We have before-and-after photos for your reference, if you wish to restore our homestead to the position it was in before you arrived.
11. Please book you outgoing flights later than 4:30 in the morning.
12. Finally, thanks for coming, you really have brightened up our lives!!

compsoft inc.
consulting • software • services

David L. Roth
PRESIDENT

4275 Executive Square. #320 • La Jolla, CA 92037
Tel: (619) 587-0467  Fax: (619) 587-0466

Hours
Monday - Friday 10AM-5PM
Alt. Saturdays 10 AM - 12 noon

BARRY J. BROOMBERG, M.D.
Family Practice

6515 LA JOLLA BLVD.
LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA

Telephone
(619) 454-7157