

CURSE OF THE SEXUAL WASTELAND

Is your house trendy? Well, then it's probably too pristine to live in



The kitchen floor was lacquered concrete. The dining table was ridged, immaculate steel. The garden was an option, but the neighbours had an incriminating view and conservative values. Besides, the lawn was sprouting and couldn't be disturbed. Essentially, some houses are just not built for sex.

I house-sat an architect's chic bachelor wet dream last summer. It was awful. Once you left the bed (the rest of the main bedroom was just cold tiles and a collapsible Ikea desk), it was a sexual wasteland. I had a better chance of having comfortable sex in my car than anywhere else in the house.

And this is the problem when it comes to decorating a house for aesthetic rather than for actual living purposes. Kitchen floors are there to get laid on. Couches are to be slept on and

for shoed feet to be tucked up on without a second thought.

Why do people torture themselves like this? When I was a kid, my mom devoted the house's main living space to guests. It turned out that as a family we didn't have any friends, so there weren't too many guests to entertain, and it was too clinical for any of the family members to endure. Instead, we all crunched into a neighbouring box room around the television.

The guest area had the prized couches, the sound system and a fireplace. As a consequence I never learnt how to build a fire, and I appreciate television more than music, which makes me appear "uncultured". And the couches were scratched to death over a 10-year period by our cat. They were used so infrequently that my mum noticed their destruction only when time came

for us to sell them. We ended up giving them away instead.

My mother isn't such an anomaly. Her spirit is alive in this guy's modern bachelor flat. This pad I house-sat had a cupboard that exclusively stocked towels. Its spare room was essentially the dog's room. A docile Labrador kipped on a stained, wooden bed, looking at box-framed modern art that no human saw from one week to the next. One of my jobs (along with watering the cactus) was to Hoover the dog hair off the spare bed. "For what?" I asked, expecting him to be taking the piss. "Just in case," he said with a knowing nod.

Don't become that guy. Why do that? You don't have to be a slob, but you need to appreciate that the white rug you bought for the lounge is probably going to get red wine on it. Accidents happen and if you're too protective then

these "accidents" might become vindictive attacks.

For the record, I left all his belongings in perfect order. But I realised what it comes down to is: if you buy a coffee table that demands a coaster, you should just go ahead and shoot yourself. A coffee table exists to support mugs of piping-hot beverages. If it can't do that without a coaster, perhaps you'd be better off with a coffee table built out of coasters.

If you have kids one day you'll have to toss it all out and buy second-hand crap anyway, I explained to my architect mate. He said he knows, but that he likes to buy "stuff". He's addicted.

Even if his Labrador is the only animal able to relax in this house, I assume that all this tidiness and wealth impresses the women. It's just too bad they have to sleep in the spare room with the dog to feel at home. ▲