

# Your Dream Hobby Room!

by  
Mike Prero

It was September 12th, 2001. My daughter, Allyson, was just about to leave for her first year at University of California, Santa Barbara. She was the last of the kids to 'leave the nest'. I was just getting the last (of many) boxes from her bedroom into her car...

*What am I going to do with all the rest of her stuff still in the room?* I wondered. "I'm just about all set, Dad. I'll get my car keys from the house, and I'll be off," she said excitedly. "Allyson, I don't know what I'm going to do without you," I said, with a tear in my eye. *I can move her bed in the boys' old room and box up all those stuffed animals under the house. Boy, those walls are going to have to be painted! What about all those stickers on the..* "OK, Dad, I'm ready. You know, though, maybe I shouldn't leave until tomorrow. Then I can.."



"What!!" I exclaimed. "...I mean, it's a long drive to Santa Barbara, and, even though we moved you into the dorms last week, you need time to get settled, start making friends, and get familiar with everything. You don't want to be rushed." *I wonder how many book cases I can get along that big wall. Where am I going to put that huge desk?* "You're right, Dad. OK, I'll call you when I get there. Love ya. Bye!" she waved.

*Was there an outlet on that wall? Gee, I've got all those computer cords to deal with!* "Bye, Allyson. I miss you already, Honey!" *That room won't hold all my*

albums, but I'll bet it can handle most of them. "Bye, Sweetheart!" Can't do anything until I paint and put new carpeting in, though... And, thus, after almost 18 years, my little baby had left home, leaving behind an emotionally-wracked father...and her *empty* bedroom!

Twenty-three years I had waited for that room...and now...it was MINE! It had originally been my study, of course, when I had first bought the house, but, when the kids started arriving, it became first the boys' room and then Allyson's room. In the intervening decades [*wince!*], I did my hobby work on the living room coffee table, while the garage and every closet housed my albums, shoe boxes, and collecting paraphernalia. I even had large trays of covers stored under several beds.

The dust from Allyson's car hadn't even settled on the driveway before I was cleaning out 'my new hobby room!' I put everything that was left into her old bedroom (the one my youngest son had vacated a couple years earlier). By the end of the week, I had the room repaired, painted, and freshly carpeted [*OK, so I had the carpeting ordered already!*]. Then came the best part...watching it take shape as the hobby room I had always wanted.

I removed the sliding closet doors from the two large closets as either end of the room. Then I went to my local 'Oak Depot' store and ordered exactly what I needed [*OK, so I had already 'browsed' there once or several times!*]*—*a large L-shaped oak desk and nine book cases. The desk was big enough to house my computer (plus screen, plus printer, plus scanner) and my 'used-all-the-time' reference sources, and still give me plenty of working space to sort covers, work on albums, etc. I installed a nice, antique-looking swag lamp overhead. I put the six 6' book cases in the two closets, which, without the sliding doors, now looked like custom-made recessed storage areas. I put the three 4' book cases side by side, along the large remaining wall. A smaller book case went against the left side of the desk, along with an easy chair for reading. The color copier I use to do the color pages of the *Sierra-Diablo Bulletin* went to the right of the desk, and the final piece of furniture, a small filing cabinet (oak, of course) finished off the floor plan.

Next, came the moving of albums—334, mostly 3" 3-ring binders. While I couldn't fit my entire collection into my new hobby room (I have several huge photo album-types, for example, that are just too big to put anywhere in the house), still it's soooo nice being able to just walk over to a shelf and retrieve what I want rather than having to run down to the garage in all sorts of weather! I also moved in quite a few of my paperbacks. I'm an avid reader and I keep all the books I enjoy so that I can reread them over the ensuing years.



Above my hobby room desk, close to the ceiling, is a wall-to-wall shelf that I found perfect for putting many of my favorite books on, along with the stereo speakers at either end (I had already put in a nice stereo). The small book case by the desk is also crammed with paperbacks.

Finally, I addressed the decor of the room. Since it was a fairly large area, I had quite a bit of empty upper wall space left. H-m-m-m, What to do? What to do? Well, I

covered the walls with 8x10 framed photos—71 of them!—mostly of my earlier travels to Europe, N. Africa, and the Middle East. It's rare that I don't look at at least one of them when I'm working in the room, and it always evokes a number of fond memories...a very pleasant experience. In the empty wall space on either side of the large windows above my desk, I put up my hobby awards—with room left for later acquisitions! And, on the one remaining portion of wall (right behind the opened door) I hung an attractive Rembrandt poster from the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, which I had picked up years ago. I topped it all off with a couple of hanging plants, and...Voilà! Instant hobby room! [*Well, it actually took about six months*]. The only disappointing part was that by this time there wasn't room for the wet bar and sauna!

Now, I've gone through all of this in the hope that it will evoke responses from readers as to what their hobby rooms are like, or what their dreamed-of hobby rooms would be like. I've given you an idea of what I have, but undoubtedly many of you have thought of ideas that have never occurred to me—good ideas—interesting ideas—ideas that the rest of us could steal...I mean, *borrow*! Obviously, any hobby room should have working space, storage space, and good lighting, but how do you achieve those things, and what have you done, or what might you do, to 'personalize' your hobby room to reflect your personality and interests? For me, for example, filling my hobby room with memories seemed to be a very comfortable thing to do, but what about you?

If you'd care to do a similar write-up on your ideas, as I have done here, I'd be more than happy to run your article in an upcoming issue....accompanying photos/scans would be welcome.