

SAVING SPACE



COURTESY PHOTOS

The modern Murphy bed is more than a bed concealed in a wall. It can morph into an entertainment center, corner desk (pictured right), armoire, bookcase and even console table. Library beds, above, look like a wall of bookshelves before the bed is revealed.

The Murphy bed makes a comeback

By Merlisa Lawrence Corbett
Special to The Washington Examiner

Even with nine bedrooms in their Leesburg home, Washington Redskins defensive end Stephen Bowen and his wife, Tiffany, need extra sleeping space to house the many friends and family members who stay with them for every home game. That's why the Bowens bought a Murphy bed system.

Invented in 1918 by William L. Murphy to create more space in his one-room San Francisco apartment, the Murphy bed is making a comeback.

More than just a bed concealed in a wall, the modern Murphy bed can morph into an entertainment center, corner desk, armoire, bookcase and even console table. The Bowens' bed folds into what appears to be a custom-made entertainment center in the playroom on the first floor.

"We're having 30 people over for Thanksgiving, and you have to fit people in where we can," Tiffany Bowen said. "I always liked the idea of the Murphy bed. We had one in our last house."

Todd Carter, co-owner of Reston-based Tailored Living, designed the Murphy bed for the Bowens. Tailored Living specializes in custom closets and built-ins, but started offering Murphy beds about a year ago. "For us it's a newer offering, but that was in reaction to increased market demand," Carter said. "Traditionally you'd only see them in a smaller-footprint-type residence like a condominium or city apartment. We're starting to see demand expand out of the city and into the suburbs."

Prices range from \$1,400 to well over \$15,000. Cost depends on type of wood, options and accessories, which can include fold-down desk,



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Washington Redskins defensive end Stephen Bowen and his wife, Tiffany, created more space in their home with this custom-made entertainment center for the playroom.

Resources:

- » hardwoodartisans.com
- » morespaceplace.com
- » tailoredliving.com
- » murphybedcompany.com/home.php

built-in side tables, and bookshelves.

The Cosmopolitan Panel Bed by More Space Place has a horizontal pull-down, and at 80 inches wide, 49 1/4 inches high and 15 inches deep, when closed it looks like a console table.

"It's kind of like a cruise ship bunk you pull down, and you sleep side to side instead of head to toe," said Robert Meyers, owner of the D.C.-area More Space Place franchise. "It's a really good bed for where there is a vaulted ceiling, dormer or angled ceiling, where you just don't have enough wall space to install a full Murphy bed."

The struggling economy and trend toward downsizing may be driving the increased demand for Murphy beds, said Meyers. "I'm seeing a lot of older owners who have parents coming in for extended stays. They put a Murphy bed in instead of having them sleep on a

sofa bed."

The advantage: The Murphy uses regular twin, full or queen mattresses. "We do not bend, fold or crease the mattress in any way," Meyers said. "We are putting regular bedding on that bed. We are not breaking the line or a spring system the way you would for a sofa bed. ... It's kind of like a platform bed with a spring-assisted lift."

The spring-assisted lift is designed for easy opening and closing. "These beds can be opened with one finger," Meyers said.

More Space Place offers a system with a sofa option in front of the bed. The back and seat cushions can be removed and the bed lies on top of the sofa.

Library beds look like a wall of bookshelves. However, center shelves roll back to reveal a Murphy bed. Hardwood Artisans offers a library bed in seven woods and up to 30 stains. The front shelves can hold up to 125 pounds. "If you roll it softly, the books remain on the shelves," said Julianne Yurek, director of marketing for Hardwood Artisans.

"We had a couple in the other day and the library wall bed was the only bed they had in their condo," Yurek said. "They said that's all they needed."



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