

Dorm life turning chic

by Debra O'Connor Knight Ridder Newspapers

ST. PAUL, Minn. — When University of Minnesota student Jade Pirlott was looking for a place to live last year, she yearned for a convenient location, a nice kitchen, a spacious bedroom, air conditioning and heated underground parking.

Without having to move off campus, she found what she wanted: Riverbend Commons, a new style of residence hall that serves as an example of what many of today's college students — especially upperclassmen — want and will pay extra to get.

"I think everyone who comes to college should have the classic dorm experience," where small, shared rooms lead to the forced togetherness that helps freshmen get on their feet socially, Pirlott says. Beyond that, though, she wanted a change.

"This, I don't consider a dorm at all. It's small apartments." Following a national trend and responding to student demand, most of the residential construction the U of M has done over the past several years has been upscale, from two single bedrooms connected by a bathroom to places with full kitchens and living rooms.

"Students don't want to live in traditional residence halls anymore, but they don't necessarily want to live off campus," says Chad Horsley, Riverbend's apartment coordinator.

And they're asking for amenities. Riverbend Commons, for example, has barbecue grills on a huge patio overlooking the Mississippi River, a party room with a full kitchen and tables on one end and a big-screen television and CD player with surround sound on the other, basketball and sand volleyball courts, a state-of-the-art computer center, free washers and dryers and an ice machine. The underground parking costs an extra \$100 a month.

The fancier setups cost more: A triple-occupancy room at traditional U of M residence halls costs \$1,696 per semester; a "SuperSingle" at Riverbend Commons costs up to \$3,241 per semester.

Across the country, "people are considering residential living as full service," says Jennie Robinson, residential life director at Hamline University in St. Paul. They want technology, including card access for security, Internet service and cable television. Some colleges eliminate telephone jacks in the rooms and give students cell phones.

Students also want co-ed living — even co-ed bathrooms, kitchens and living rooms. But, Robinson says, "I've only heard of a couple of schools that are doing co-ed rooms."

And students want a "self-directed community," which means they make their own rules and get along without a paid staff person living with them.

Few colleges prohibit members of the opposite sex from staying overnight anymore. The College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, however, draws the line at 2 a.m.

"We get a lot of students who complain, but a lot understand it's about privacy, about the safety of the building, about the mission of the Sisters," says complex coordinator Sabrina Anderson.

St. Catherine's would like to keep more upperclassmen on campus, though, and is considering building more housing. Before construction, they'll listen carefully to what the mostly female student body wants, Anderson says.

Women's colleges seem to be particularly sensitive to the way students live. In a national student survey on dormitory quality, nine of the top 20 "Dorms Like Palaces" were women's colleges, with Smith and Bryn Mawr among the top five. Loyola College in Baltimore ranked first in dorm quality in the Princeton Review's annual college guide, "The Best 351 Colleges."

The top 20 "Dorms Like Dungeons" are mostly at state universities. "Quality-of-life issues have become serious things for schools to consider, especially in the recruitment process," says Erik Olson, editor of the Princeton Review. "It's a key consideration, especially when a student is looking at similarly selective colleges. ... The amount of money that schools are sinking into developing bigger, nicer dorms is astounding."

The rankings are in

by Andrea Coombes Knight Ridder Newspapers

The monikers are straight out of a high-school yearbook: "Most likely to succeed," "most happy," "most quirky."

But they're being used to describe colleges, not people.

Carleton College is the "most fun-loving," Bentley College the "most career-focused" — and they share the trait of being among the 12 hottest colleges, according to the eighth annual Kaplan/Newsweek college guide.

Throwing scientific rigor out the window, the guide's editors opted to find less well-known schools, but those that were likely to offer an engaging and rigorous education through an unusual curriculum, diverse student body, vibrant location or other unique reasons.

"The list is completely biased. It's not a ranking," said Seppy Basili, contributing editor to the "How to Get Into College Guide."

"We look for programs that have something innovative going on," he said. Rankings "totally dominate too many people's minds. Our hope is to represent schools that people may not have thought about."

For instance, Carleton College, in Northfield, Minn., is named the most fun-loving school partly because "there are 1.9 Frisbees per student on campus," Basili joked.

But Frisbees aren't the only reason the school is listed. Carleton also offers 17 theme dorms from which to choose, and two-thirds of students spend their junior year off-campus, he said. Plus, three 10-week terms mean students can take a variety of classes.

Bentley College, a small business school near Boston, is successful in connecting graduates with jobs, Basili said.

"Twenty years ago, Bentley was a small accounting college that didn't get much attention,"

he said, but it's "done a tremendous job of building its core undergraduate business program. Last year, they had nearly 800 recruiters come to campus, and I think the graduating class was only about 1,000."

Most of the schools are private and pricey. Only two public schools are listed, mainly because most state schools aren't spending as much money on innovative programs, Basili said.

At private schools, "people are spending money building new dorms, new libraries. At state schools, we're not seeing that kind of growth," Basili said.

Public schools also got limited play because the guide's editors looked for colleges that received a high number of applications.

"State schools tend to get applications every year from the same high schools. There's not enough buzz about them, because of the sheer demography," Basili said.

Some private schools on the list saw a steep rise in applications, such as St. John's College, which received almost 20 percent more last year, Basili said.

Evergreen State College, in Olympia, Wash., is one of two public schools on the list, because it offers "private college attention at state tuition prices," Basili said.

The liberal arts and sciences school teaches a variety of courses to about 4,000 students, and out-of-state tuition is about \$12,000, he said. "We think it's an unprecedented bargain."

Louisiana State University, in Baton Rouge, is the other public school among the hottest schools, partly because of its diversity program. Twenty-four percent of the 29,000 students are minorities, and the school graduates more black chemistry Ph.D.s than any school in the country, Basili said.

Through the looking glass

by Mike Pingree, KRT Campus

THEY SHOULD PUT A SIGN THERE!

A driver lost control of his van on a highway in Scotland, skidded and came to rest on the side of the road. Minutes later, another driver lost control on the exact same spot, skidded off the road and crashed into the van.

MOM, STOP, YOU'RE OUT OF CONTROL!

A 34-year-old woman threw a birthday party at a Pennsylvania hotel for her teenage son and his friends, during which she became heavily intoxicated on booze and pills. She then proceeded, police say, to come on strong to her son's friends, baring her breasts and trying to lick their faces. She pulled down her pants to show them her thong, but the boys said she wasn't wearing any underwear. The boys kept moving away from her as she approached them. She faces an assortment of charges.

HER FACE? NO OFFICER, BUT I CAN DESCRIBE HERBOOBS!

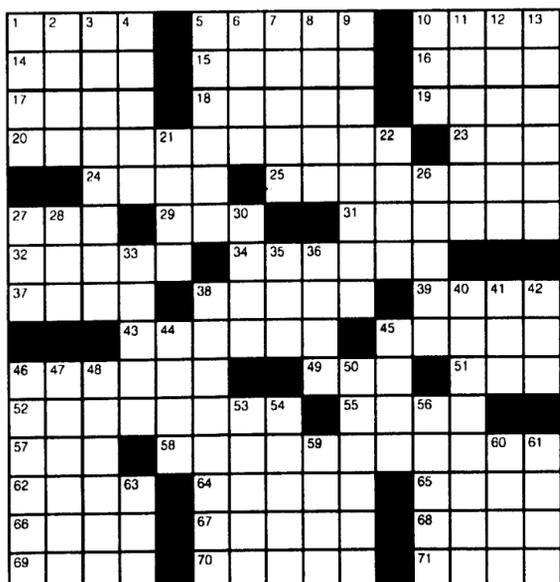
A female mugger snatched a woman's purse in Clapham Junction, England, ran a short distance, then turned and flashed her breasts at stunned onlookers. A police officer speculated on her motives: "Perhaps it was an attempt to confuse the public."



No, Billy. The saying is, 'If you love something, set it free, not on FIRE.'

Crossword

- ACROSS
1 Water trail
5 '60s hairdos
10 Practice blows
14 Maturing agent
15 Intimidate
16 Aggressive remark
17 Geometry calculation
18 Me too!
19 Fall event?
20 Peter Pan's arch enemy
23 Hubbub
24 Planted
25 Splash of liquid
27 Sch. grp.
29 Some NFL linemen
31 Commit capital
32 Gardener's tools
34 "Bill Haley and the ..."
37 Unrestricted
38 Calendar units
39 Newts
43 Turns aside
45 Mall unit
46 Shorebird with an upward curving bill



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- DOWN
1 Female military grp.
2 Taj Mahal's place
3 Memento
4 Poetic Muse
5 Tacking on
6 "I'll Be Seeing You" songwriter
7 Babe's family
8 In first place
9 Police sources
10 E. Bilko or Snorkel
11 Sea villain
12 Remains
13 Gunshot
21 Cobbler's punches
22 Philosopher Immanuel
26 Boob tube
27 PGA member
28 Spigot
30 Wound reminder
33 Make a law
35 Mel the Giant
36 Tableland
38 Itemized
40 Military post honoring the first secretary of war
41 Attempt
42 Meet with
44 Word of action
45 Miss Universe's band

Solutions



- 46 Burning
47 Spoken aloud
48 Seeping
50 Grows dark
53 Sharply defined
54 Make joyous
56 Former Pac. alliance
59 Montand of "Z"
60 "Picnic" playwright
61 College bigwig
63 Expected

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