

## BIRD TALK Editor's Note: Home Is Where The Birds Are

Well we did it — finally bought a home. The American dream realized. Now if I just can make those pesky payments ...

The birds played a big role in the move. We decided to move the birds in a week after we got the keys so we would have plenty of time to paint the place and air it out so the birds wouldn't be affected in any way.

The first thing we had to do was choose the color. Who would have thought a husband and wife could disagree so much on colors? We finally decided on a nice green for the birds' room. I thought it would be soothing. So we bought two types of tester paint — one called Sherwood Forest and another that had some odd name I can't remember. Sherwood Forest was too dark (big surprise) and the other color didn't even look green, more like a gray. So back to the paint store we went. My husband was sick of testing, so we just chose a color in the middle — Citrus Mint. We painted the room. Citrus Mint turned out to be a bright, almost Day-Glo, green. But we had bought all the paint and were running out of time (we had four more rooms and a hall to paint). So that's what the birds have, this hyper-natural green glow.

We have a mixed-breed senior dog named Sprey. I wanted to make sure she was OK with the move, so we brought her over every time we were at the house. She hung out in the backyard or in whatever room we weren't in, napping in as many different places as possible. However, even with Sprey, my husband and I at the house, the place still didn't feel like home. Then I realized, it's just not home to me until the birds are there, singing, playing and calling out to me. It was just too quiet, too empty.

The day finally came when we moved in the birds, the guinea pigs and all of our stuff. The birds have moved many times with me. Carlisle could have cared less, and Natty Bird screamed the entire time. I kept them in this big travel cage together. They both picked a perch and I never saw them move from it the entire day, even to get food or water. They were very happy to see their big double decker cage when it was finally moved in and they waddled right in.

After everyone was safely situated in our new digs, we fell exhausted into bed to sleep. Carlisle got up the next morning at 5 am, ringing his bell. Although their last room had two big windows on one side, this room has two windows on different walls — even more light. Carlisle has been hyped up like a kid on candy: singing, ringing his bell, screaming to hear his echo in the room, waking us all up early in the morning and singing late at night. (Yes, there are shades and, yes, I've pulled them down.) I remember reading a reader letter about an African grey who just wasn't so active anymore, and the owners attributed it to him entering his senior years. Then they had someone come live with them, and the bird was like a new person — animated and interactive. That is Carlisle to a T.

Perhaps, on top of a sunnier, brighter, neon-green room, he was just bored at the other place.

Natty Bird, on the other hand, has always been a nervous little bird. He has been calling out anxiously the entire time. He usually wants to go to bed around 11 pm, and now he wants to go to bed at 10 pm. He contact calls constantly. I can't even get the piggies ready for bed before his shrill demands to turn off the light become a crescendo, which I know probably have my new neighbors cringing.

I am sure that in a few weeks everything will settle down and we'll all be living in our new home like we've been there forever. I'm just grateful that I'll never have to explain chewed-up baseboards to another bewildered property owner. Now I'll just replace them myself.

— Melissa L Kauffman