

Welcome
TO THE
new
frontier
OF
shared
housing.

Friends (and sheets)
included.



In Brooklyn's Crown Heights neighborhood, a bedroom at Herkimer—one of many co-living residences by Common—comes move-in ready with basic furniture, a Casper mattress, Parachute sheets, Snowe towels—and 17 roommates.

→ **Let's**
get
moving.

JAMES
UX DESIGNER

“As the house leader, I facilitate community—organizing events and helping new members when they move in. There’s a small stipend, but I volunteered to do it because I genuinely like the people I live with.”



ALEX
SOFTWARE DEVELOPER

“The ability to move seamlessly between Common homes was a big plus for me. It’s nice to know that I have the option to switch it up, but the longer I stay here, the more attached I get.”

DEEDEE
PUBLICIST

“I came here sight-unseen from Los Angeles. The whole process took two days: I applied, then I did an interview via FaceTime. When I got here, everything was ready—the bed was made, there were hangers in the closet. My Uber pulled up, I unpacked, and I went to sleep. It took... 30 minutes? Driving from the airport to the house took longer than moving in.”



Establishing yourself in a new city is, to put it lightly, complicated. Tumbling into a so-so apartment with strangers you found on Craigslist is an everyday necessity for many—and even then, the rent is often astronomical.

But imagine this: a bedroom of your own in a fully furnished house that is shared with pre-vetted roommates and perpetually stocked with household basics like coffee, olive oil, paper towels, and trash bags, so you never again have to fight about who bought what the last time. By offering exactly that, the two-year-old co-living company Common may well be urban living’s closest thing to utopia.

“Roommate living is prevalent all over the world,” says Sophie Wilkinson, the head of design and construction at Common. “What’s new is addressing it as a company. We take away the nuisance of having roommates so that the people you live with actually add value.”



WE VISITED COMMON'S HERKIMER, A FOUR-STORY TOWNHOUSE IN BROOKLYN'S CROWN HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD. IN ADDITION TO PRIVATE BEDROOMS—AND BATHROOMS SHARED WITH JUST ONE OR TWO OTHER MEMBERS—THE 18 PEOPLE WHO LIVE HERE SHARE A LIVING ROOM (PREVIOUS PAGE), KITCHENS ON EVERY FLOOR, AN EXPANSIVE ROOF DECK, AND A BASEMENT-LEVEL REC ROOM AND OFFICE.

When Common opened its first property in 2015, it was overwhelmed with applications, and its portfolio has quickly grown to include 375 rooms in four metro areas. Demand is still staggering—more than 3,000 applications each month—and founder Brad Hargreaves has raised \$23 million from investors who are betting on this being the housing model of the future. Others see the potential, too: In Manhattan alone, coworking brand WeWork launched its first WeLive location in early 2016; Ollie, with a Tinder-like roommate-matching algorithm, opened that summer.

Co-living has been dubbed “dorm living for adults” by skeptics, but you won’t find recent grads or bunk beds at Common. The typical tenant is 29 years old, and the rent isn’t exactly cheap, either: Common prices its bedrooms to be competitive with nearby studios, not other shared apartments. We visited the residents (called members) of Common’s Herkimer, a brownstone in Brooklyn’s Crown Heights. While the average studio in the neighborhood goes for \$1,800, the average monthly rent at Herkimer is \$1,600.

Why pay so much for a share? Common has found an audience that’s willing to spend more for a better experience: Roommates are background-checked and interviewed by the company. (Still not a good fit? Move to a new residence with a day’s notice.) Utilities, Wi-Fi, cable TV, a weekly cleaning, and household supplies are included. Simple luxuries like central air and in-unit laundry—all too rare in New York rentals—are standard.

Having roommates often means forgoing nice things—who wants to invest in a couch that someone else is likely to spill on?—but Common’s residences are filled with pieces from stores like West Elm and Restoration Hardware. Each bedroom is outfitted with of-the-moment brands, too, as well as thoughtful touches like wall hooks for hanging artwork. “We supply the essentials but leave room for you to make it your own,” Wilkinson says.

For all of the amenities, the most surprising feature of our visit to Common was the camaraderie. The Herkimer residents we met were a fun bunch with busy lives and robust careers, who are glad to have fast-tracked friend-finding in a new city. They enjoy each other’s company—and never have to worry about running out of toilet paper. “The great irony of crazy-busy cities is that they can be quite lonely,” Wilkinson says. “We provide a network to help you get to know people.” —KP

RAYON RICHARDS (2)

Co-living: Not just a New York thing

IN CHICAGO



A balcony affords sweeping skyline views in Ukrainian Village, just outside of the Loop. From \$1,325 per month.

IN WASHINGTON, D.C.



Stately slate-gray trim provides a sense of place in the Shaw neighborhood. From \$1,627 per month.

IN SAN FRANCISCO



Bedrooms feature wood-paneled accent walls in this cozy apartment at Minna in South of Market (SoMa). From \$2,600 per month.