

# Living in Harmony with Feng Shui

Feng shui (pronounced "fung shway") is an ancient Chinese design system that embraces the connection between person and place. The goal is to create living environments that support our life experiences.

Interior redesigner Gwen Williams of SpaceTransform incorporates feng shui principles in her work. She offers one-day consultations in which she rearranges her clients' furniture, art, and accessories to create a more harmonious environment.

"Feng shui is really about how you feel in a space and how it supports you," she explains. You should be able to feel feng shui. It should make sense at a deep level."

According to feng shui, says Williams, all forms have energy. We can look to nature for information about the optimal arrangement of these forms. For example, the best position for a house is on level ground, with a sense of support behind – such as a tall fence or grove of trees – and an unobstructed view in front. Trees, hills or other "guardians" on either side of the house add to the sense of power and security. In contrast, a home at the end of a T intersection with a street pointed at your front door leaves you energetically exposed and vulnerable.

Harmonizing the energy of your home is a multifaceted effort. Rather than leaning too heavily on one element, you want to include objects, colors and textures that represent all five – earth, wind, fire, water and metal. You want a balance of warm and cool colors and a mix of sharp edges and curves. All of this ties into the overarching concept of yin and yang, the complementary forces of light and dark, female and male, passive and active.

Cynthia Chomos (see advertisement on page 24) offers in-home feng shui consultations and

a feng shui education program for real estate professionals. When making recommendations to her clients, she looks at furniture placement, color, flow, plant life and something called "sha" energy.

"Sha energy is anything that has a point that is extending out toward us," she explains. "It could be a point off an entry table or maybe coming off plants by the front door. It's the energetic equivalent of a negative arrow shooting toward us." Aggressive sha energy is often problematic when it comes to home sales. Potential buyers may experience it subconsciously and have a bad "gut feeling" about the property.

Certain spaces in your home are particularly significant in feng shui.

Your main entrance, for example, should be proud and welcoming. "Entry is the room of first impression," says Chomos. "It sets the tone for the energy of your life." This area should always be bright, warm and free of clutter.

Bedrooms are also key. "That's where we spend the most time," Chomos explains. "Even though we're asleep, whatever's going on in that room is imprinting on us for better or worse." Ideally you should not walk right into the bed when you come into the room, but you should be

able to see the door from the bed. Soothing colors, artwork, and a relatively small size contribute to an energetically restful bedroom.

The heart of your home is what Chomos calls the Ren Chi, usually the kitchen and family room. This is the area where you connect with family members. It should be generously sized with cheery and dynamic colors and textures. "Terra cotta is great in a kitchen because it stimulates communication and socializing," says Chomos. "It's uplifting."



**-Joriel C. Foltz**