



Feng Shui and Great Design Energize Homes



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Stacey Lapuk, ASID, CID, Associate AIA, operates Stacey Lapuk Interior Design Group in San Rafael. A fine arts degree and East Coast roots grounded in the arts influenced her career. She describes her design focus as "barefoot elegance"—derived from blending fine quality with comfort and functionality. Lapuk's consultations begin with understanding the client's preferences, the style of architecture, and the household's functional requirements. In business for seventeen years, feng shui has influenced her work for the past decade.

Hand in hand

Lapuk says good design is largely intuitive, so it holds that good design inherently has good feng

shui. Feng shui principles make her more aware of the consequences of placement, but she also recognizes that one person's perception of a small space as cramped, is someone else's idea of a cocoon. "Cocooning space can have good flow too. People need an anchor," she explains.

Unless clients express interest in feng shui, she uses it transparently with all types of decor. Without knowing certain design ideas are influenced by feng shui, Lapuk finds clients frequently single out those design aspects for praise.

"I use ecologically sound materials, which can take longer to source. No throw-away decor items—this stuff will be here for the client's grandchildren," she says when speaking of quality. Her litmus test for evaluating her work measures three things: client satisfaction; design depth—"so the client can adjust and add to it"—and, whether or not clients have learned from the process and can fully appreciate their design choices.

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In achieving the most livable spaces for her clients, especially those in the Bay Area, Lapuk works with certified feng shui consultants when a project calls for cross-disciplines.

Respiring Spaces

Kathleen Horvath's career with chi (energy) started with hands-on healing. Her budding interest in feng shui blossomed as she pursued certification, advanced training, and cross-training in environmental design. She founded Body Mind Environments to "respirit spaces" through consultation and seminars.

Horvath's two-story condominium and home office in Corte Madera were deconstructed to bare studs in several rooms to enliven the condo with her own energy. She selected and installed compatible materials following feng shui principles. Specific music was played during construction and contractors agreed to handle any disagreements outside the structure.

"Feng shui is like acupuncture for your home. The electrical system is the nervous

system, the walls are the skin and so forth," she says. "An unhealthy home creates real problems for the occupants."

Horvath's school of feng shui involves a five element theory of water (equalizer), wood (creator), fire (transformer), earth (nurturer), and metal (condenser). In the proper combination and relationship to each other the elements help homeowners create success, healthy relationships, health, and wealth. For example, Horvath placed Chinese coins beneath the tiles in the wealth corner of her home.

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She chose a color scheme of greens, earth tones, and deep red that flows from the front garden and throughout the home. "I'd love to have a better color for my front door, but in a condominium you live with established constraints—there are feng shui adjustments for that," she explains.

A mirror behind her stovetop in the galley kitchen opens the space and reflects transforming energy (fire). The bedroom is tranquil, uncluttered, and enhanced by rich fabrics. The bed placement meets criteria both as a focal point in traditional Western design, and in the feng shui command position—centered on a solid wall.

Environmental Healer

Linda Johnson's Earthwise consultation business is in Sebastopol. She was introduced to feng shui during travels as a Silicon Valley executive. Feng shui controversy over construction of the Bank of China during a visit to Hong Kong piqued her interest. It led to extensive training and a new profession.

Johnson says several schools approach feng shui somewhat differently with essentially the same end. Her master's training is based on ancient Tibetan Buddhism, which encourages homeowners to create environments to fulfill their intentions.

A self-described environmental healer, Johnson explains that every culture has practices similar to feng shui because "energy is universal and applies to us all." Even so, she was initially surprised that her first client was a Hindu nun. "But it makes sense because Hinduism and Buddhism come from India," she says.

Feng shui is about "divining the earth," starting with the chi (energy) of the land on which the home is situated. Johnson has never seen a perfectly balanced home. She asks clients about the home's history and performs a remote dowsing with a floor plan provided by the homeowner.

She has no difficulty helping clients adapt the practice to their western lives and decor. Rather than placing a stand alone faceted crystal ball to redirect energy, one client hung a crystal chandelier with a round faceted ball.

"Energy is universal and applies to us all."
—Linda Johnson

Simple matters of placement can dramatically change the flow of energy. "Another client wanted a relationship. Removing a picture that depicted the incorrect energy from the relationship corner of his bedroom solved the problem," Johnson relates.

Conclusion

There's no such thing as too much good chi. Horvath's condominium management complimented her renovations and she's pleased that at least one neighbor has been inspired to emulate her efforts. She says anyone who wants to improve the energy in their home can consider three quick fixes:

- Front door—This is how you are viewed by the world. It should be clean, beautiful and no sticking or creaking.
- Stove—It relates to how well you nurture, so keep it clean and in good working order. A mirror behind it doubles wealth.
- Bedroom—This is the place for self, rest, and intimacy. The bed should be centered on a wall, with good light and balanced bed tables.

For more information about pairing your design needs with feng shui visit: www.staceylapukinteriors.com, www.bodymindenvironments.com, or call: Earthwise 888 240-9497. |