

The Ying-Yang Balance

Feng Shui's popularity on the rise



Entertainment center before (top) and after.

A design concept that has garnered more attention lately, yet remains highly misunderstood, is Feng Shui. You may be surprised to learn that the concept entails more than meticulously placed mirrors, Chinese symbols and water elements.

"Feng Shui is about looking at the land and the building on the land and the people in that space. It does include design concepts, but that is after we've assessed energy that is there," explains Diana Garber, president/CEO of Intuitive Concepts, Inc., a Sunbury-based company that creates Feng Shui environments.

Feng Shui has been around for thousands of years; however, Western culture has been reluctant to embrace it completely. "I think it's been misunderstood as religious-based, and people get intimidated by things they aren't fully familiar with," Garber says. "But in the classic, traditional form, it's science-based and it's very environmentally-friendly, so we're starting to get it." Hence how she's able to maintain a full-time practice, incorporating Feng Shui designs at offices and homes around the world. Prior, Garber worked as vice president of a major bank.

Trying to assess energy – or Chi – is a complicated process. It takes a specific formula derived from an energy map and incorporating information such as when the building was erected, its compass direction, number of rooms, etc. The result is a more complete understanding of what is needed for functional interaction of that energy. No two homes or buildings are the same.

Once the energy in a space is assessed, light, color, purposeful placement of furniture, etc. are planned. Clutter is eliminated, as it causes stress and sucks energy. Feng Shui works intimately with five elements – fire, earth, metal, water and wood. "The balance of those elements helps us determine how anyone is going to experience that space," Garber says.

However intricate the process is, the goal remains simple – to create a high energy, positive and flowing space where you are subconsciously content and, ultimately, healthier.

"You shouldn't know you've walked into a Feng Shui space, you should only feel it," Garber says. "You'll feel welcome, safe and secure. And, of course, happy."

Find out more information about how to create a harmonious space at www.intuitiveconcepts.com. – *Alicia Kelso*



Feng Shui is appropriate both inside and out, and incorporates the energy balance of five elements – fire, wood, metal, water and earth.

Retro

A throwback to the iconic popular culture-inspired designs of the mid-20th century, retro style is bright (think aqua, yellow, red, blue and pink) and fun. Common elements include polished chrome, linoleum, plastic and vinyl. Stay heavy on the kitsch, and be sure to incorporate collectibles, jukeboxes, lava lamps, wall art and anything else that brings an offbeat and funky feel.

Traditional

This style is classic and comfortable. Steer clear of busy accessorizing and focus on symmetry. It is not uncommon to see pairs of matching furniture, soft edges, lighter colors, crown molding or wood pieces.

What's nice about this concept is that the accessories are very basic – think of floor lamps, pieces of art, mirrors, books and plants. "Most people who decorate their homes stop when it comes to accessories, but it's the final missing piece. It doesn't need to



RETRO

be an intimidating process. I suggest investing in two or three bigger, more expensive pieces, and then filling in the rest of the room with smaller, cheaper ones. Accessories, even if basic, are very important," Reese says.

Victorian

Based on a very romantic period, elaborate details, deep/dark woods and sophisticated furniture best define the Victorian style. Influenced by the reign of Queen Victoria from 1837 to 1901, this design revolves around ornamentation, rich colors and textured walls.

It is also abundant on decorations, motifs and accessories. During this time period,