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WHAT IF YOU COULD ACHIEVE HEALTH, harmony and prosperity by decorating your home with specific colors and through design and the placement of furniture and objects? That's the philosophy behind the mystical Chinese art and science of Feng Shui (pronounced Fung Shway), a concept that has been gaining momentum the past couple of years.

Feng means "wind" and Shui means "water" in the Chinese culture. Inherent in the culture, gentle wind and smooth water are associated with good health and harvest. Feng Shui involves understanding the forces of nature in order to decorate and design your home or workplace so that it blends with the environment, promoting harmony and positive energy.

Beverly Biehl of Frisco is an interior decorator with The Intuitive Interior and specializes in the art of Feng Shui.

"It is a 5,000-year-old philosophy on the way that energy (chi) moves," Ms. Biehl said. "It's not a religion nor a decorating style but it is a way of analyzing the flow of an interior room or an outdoor environment. Feng Shui is also concerned with balancing the yin and yang, the feminine, heavy, nurturing side with the masculine, light, outgoing side."

It was several thousand years ago when ancient Chinese shamans, diviners and sage-kings established the building blocks of Feng Shui.

Ms. Biehl is trained in the Western tradition, which melds the ancient traditions with the Law of Attraction. Ms. Biehl studied at the Feng Shui Training Institute in Salt Lake City, UT under the direction of Sharon Stasney and at the Nine Harmonies School in Nashville, TN under Carol Bridges.

"Feng Shui deals with the feeling of safety which is why a chair that has its back facing a door is rarely used because a person can't get comfortable if they are always twisting around to see who is coming up behind them," Ms. Biehl said. "When a person enters a room the position of the furniture can either help to funnel them into the center of the



Feng Shui Style

By DeAnn Daley Holcomb

space and invite them to sit down and relax or it can give them the impression that they aren't welcome."

The Yin-yang theory in Feng Shui explores the effect of opposites and extremes in your environment. For example, a place that is lively and full of energy is considered "yang" and a place that is still and dark is considered "yin."

There are five elements involved in the yin and yang concept. Fire is thought to be expansion and transformation, so colors like red, orange and bright yellow add energy to a room and, according to Ms. Biehl, will fire up your creativity.

"Think of these colors as rocket fuel for your ideas," Ms. Biehl said. "Shiny finishes, diamonds, triangles and sunbursts are common decorating Fire elements. "Electronics, animal prints and pets have a Fire vibration."

The next concept is the Earth, considered grounding and support when muted with darker, earth tones, providing a sense of safety and stability.

"Heavy furniture, objects that are low to the ground and soft, comforting items will help a person feel calm and peaceful," Ms. Biehl said. "Horizontal shapes, squares and rectangles add the Earth element to a room."

The Metal concept means mental power and organization. White, silver and grey help people focus and are useful in office settings. According to Ms. Biehl, homes with too much white can make people sharp and sarcastic.

"Rainbows are associated with the Metal element since it is merely white broken up into its separate pieces," Ms. Biehl said. "A circle is a very strong Metal element. It can not only combine many different items in one container but also can spin energy outward." Ms. Biehl adds, "A circular, oval or octagonal rug is a great shape for the entryway to your home if you want visitors."

In fact, in the Feng Shui school of thought, the front door to your home is considered one of the most important areas. In home designs where the garage door is more prominent than the front door, owners should use color, lighting along the path to the front door and flowers to emphasize harmony.

Another element in the yin and yang concept is Water, considered to be release and renewal.

"Black is associated with still water energy, symbolizing hibernation,



“Pillars, vertical stripes and upward-facing elements all will work together to encourage you to try more, be more and experience more,” Ms. Biehl said.

Feng Shui considers interior architectural features an important element that can promote or impede the flow of positive energy and introduce or neutralize negative energy. To prevent negative energy, avoid installing rough interior features such as rock walls, exposed beams and rafters,

“If you want to attract more abundance into your life, add vertical elements and jewel tones to your wealth and prosperity sector. A set of matching side tables and lamps is crucial to creating equality in a relationship.”

McKinney homeowner Keir Burke felt overwhelmed trying to decorate her home. Her desire was to have her home feel warm, comfortable and happy for her whole family. She turned to Ms. Biehl for a Feng Shui consultation.

To promote the flow of positive energy consider round and smooth features like rounded corners on kitchen counters.

“First Beverly had my husband and I fill out a questionnaire on elements and our preferences and I loved that my husband’s tastes and preferences were included, not just mine,” Ms. Burke said. “Beverly came to my home and did a walk-through and asked questions about items. She made a few suggestions as we were walking through like the shift of the couch a foot this way or moving a pot off the front porch to let the iron jug that has huge significance in my life stand out.”

The Burkes then received a more detailed report from Ms. Biehl with ideas, suggestions and recommendations for certain improvements in their home.

“We began right away with simple, inexpensive projects and are slowly doing the larger projects. We have added plants and vases in some spaces, rugs and pillows in others along with paint in the dining room and master bath,” Ms. Burke said. “We changed the color in our master bedroom and now I sleep better and love to be in my room.”

Ms. Burke said the biggest improvement that Feng Shui has provided for her and her family is that it has energized them to make their house into the home they want it to be and even a year later she is excited about the projects they continue.

“My ten-year-old son, who is obsessed with football, commented on how he

germination and a return to the womb. Black is a good color to employ when you need to develop inner wisdom or want a new beginning,” Ms. Biehl said. “Deep blues are associated with moving water which influences career and the flow of money into your life. If you find your career needs new energy use dark blues instead of black which can signal less social interaction.”

Ms. Biehl suggests adding vases full of water, birdbaths, pools and aquariums to achieve the Still Water energy in a home. Alternately add a fountain and hanging objects or downward sloping shapes to add Moving Water energy.

The final element is Wood considered to be personal growth. Ms. Biehl said clear and energizing colors like green and purple are traditional Wood colors bringing direction and focus to your actions.

knotty wood wall paneling, vaulted ceilings and oversized fireplaces and avoid wedge-like, knifelike and arrow-like ceilings and wall structures. To promote the development and flow of positive energy consider round and smooth features like rounded corners on kitchen counters.

Ancient Chinese practitioners found correlation between certain directions and various aspects of life also called Bagua, which is a way of dividing a home or room into nine separate sectors and is a part of the Feng Shui fundamental. The nine sectors include career and life path, skills and self-knowledge, family and ancestors, wealth and prosperity, fame and reputation, intimate relationships and partnership, children and creativity, helpful people and travel and health.

“Each of these areas has certain colors, directions and elements that enhance the impact on your life,” Ms. Biehl said.

loved the couch the way it was shifted and my husband who is not into decorating or “energy” has gotten into making some changes in our wealth section and intimate relationship sections of our house,” Ms. Burke said.

Feng Shui analyses and consultations can cost between \$100-\$400 an hour, depending on the work required.

Some tips on choosing a Feng Shui consultant include first deciding on whether you want to hire the services of a traditional Chinese Feng Shui or a Western Feng Shui practitioner. Make sure that your consultant thoroughly explains the rationale behind every recommendation and take the time to learn about Feng Shui so you can ask intelligent questions about your evaluation.

The art and science of Feng Shui continues to gain popularity as more business professionals consult with Feng Shui practitioners before finalizing their architectural plans. Real estate agents are also turning to consultants to assist in staging a house before it is listed on the market.

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