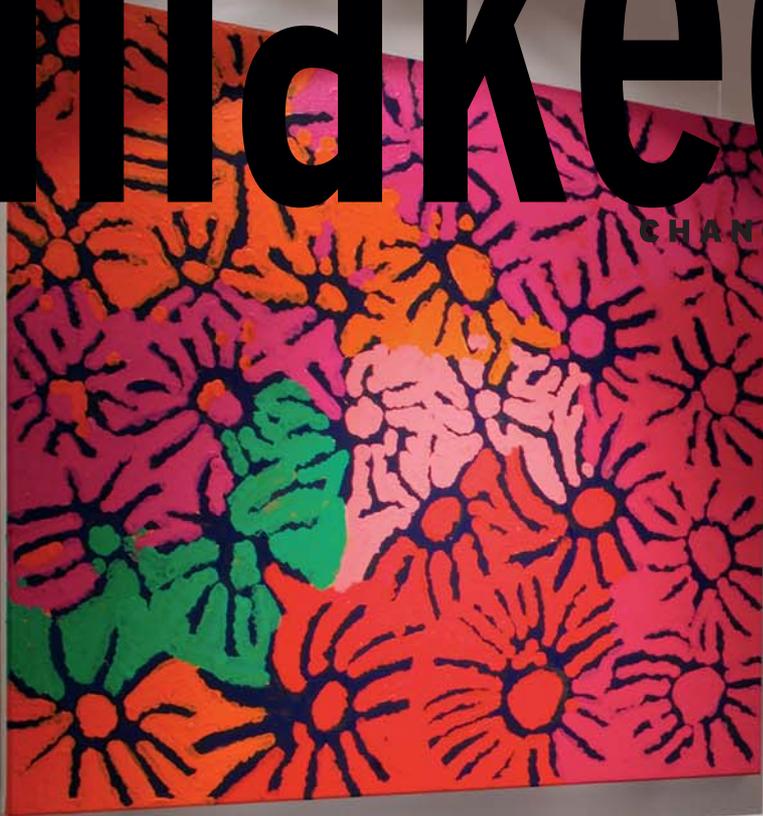


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The Feng Shui way

Directing the not-so-subtle shifts of an ancient current

By Dermot Mack

Imagine feng shui (pronounced “shway”) as an eternal wind that carries with it the horrors and the glory of time. When the belief evolved in ancient Asia, its basic tenets that placement and energy flow dictate fortune, even life, were self-evident.

A house in the direct path of an enemy attack was in danger. A lack of water was the source of famine. A home without fresh air and light would foster disease. The survivors were the disciples.

The power of feng shui still dictates the layout of streets, buildings, even entire cities in China, and its influence now streams through Canadian architecture and design, nowhere stronger than on the West Coast.

As it was in the beginning, feng shui makes practical sense today. Incorporating the belief into a home makeover will result in – even if as a placebo – a sense of better health and balance, and a more comfortable and inviting home.

Bringing feng shui into a home renovation, however, requires planning and some stretching of the imagination.

“Water features are so powerful they should never be decided without a feng shui expert,” said Singapore-born Tien Wee of Vancouver, who founded Lucky Monkey Home Feng Shui Design and Living in 2005, combining “modern sustainable interior design” with the ancient art of placement. Wee, who holds degrees in fine arts, interior design and feng shui, is among the young moderns attempting to knead traditional beliefs into contemporary design. His polished-concrete work/life loft condominium off Granville Street, for



Feng shui-inspired interior designer Tien Wee, in his loft work/life space off Granville Street, Vancouver, is merging ancient traditions with colourful, contemporary thought.

ment, under the influence of feng shui, can improve a modern home.

“One of the most important decisions that a home renovator has to make is in the character of

instance, is a red-draped, mirror-flashing tribute to the juxtaposition of old and new.

A more pragmatic approach to feng shui is seen in the work of MaryAnn Russell, author of *The Feng Shui Factor: Modern Houses Ancient Blueprint*, and a designer who has been kind enough to provide the examples of how some simple changes in building elements and place-

the living space and how it will affect your interaction with the environment,” Russell said. “The art of feng shui emphasizes a system of key principles that focus on making the spaces we live in useful and practical.”

One of Russell’s clarifying tips: “Clear up the clutter so that your living space is not reinforcing a message that your life is overwhelming and unmanageable.”