



designing a feng shui makeover

Johanna Pockar placed the Ludwigs' patio table at an angle to help the energy flow.

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photography by *marc golub*

SEVERAL years ago, Donna Ludwig visited a feng shui-designed spa and was immediately drawn to the serene atmosphere. She decided to mirror that environment in her own home. “I wanted to create a more peaceful existence,” she says.

When they moved from Chicago to Chagrin Falls three years ago, Ludwig and her family enlisted the help of Johanna Pockar, a feng shui consultant, to design their new home. Pockar, who has studied feng shui for more than a decade, uses the ancient practice to complement her interior design work.

“I felt it was all the things I was missing in design,” Pockar says of her first exposure to feng shui. “It’s about energy and finding balance.”

finding balance

Feng shui means “wind-water” and is the Chinese practice of arranging a space to achieve balance and harmony. Feng shui

advocates maintain it can have an effect on almost every aspect of someone’s life, including health, relationships and finances.

The heart of feng shui arrangement is to encourage positive energy to flow freely through a space while allowing negative energy to escape. The items you choose for your home and how you arrange them, as well as the layout of the rooms and even the placement of the building on the street, can encourage positive or negative energy. Living in the back of a cul-de-sac, for example, allows negative energy to pool near the house. Long, narrow hallways inside a home are also hotbeds for negative energy. Feng shui designers counter areas like these by placing mirrors, plants, or water in the space.

With Pockar’s help, the Ludwigs gave their entire house — inside and out — a feng shui makeover. Everything from the color of the walls, the placement of furniture, and the location of every piece of artwork was chosen with feng shui sensitivity.



The Ludwigs added skylights to the living room ceiling to bring natural light into their home.

Plants and lights bring positive energy to a home.

Ludwig's favorite part of her newly designed home is the patio and outdoor area, completed this spring in time for her son's bar mitzvah. A landscape architect sculpted the area with plants to create an Eastern feel, and Pockar helped arrange the furniture. They used round tables to balance the very "square" feeling of the patio and added outdoor lights for more positive energy. The result is a patio and beautiful wooded outdoor area the entire family enjoys.

"I definitely feel it's more balanced," Ludwig says of her home. "There's a peaceful quality to the house."

Ludwig learned to prevent positive energy from flowing away from her home by placing two red chairs at the bottom of a slope. She also added skylights to the living room to bring positive, natural light inside.

at work and at home

Feng shui design can also be used in offices, gardens, desktops, or any other space. Rose Wong, owner of Pearl of the Orient restaurant in Shaker Heights, uses feng shui at home and in her business.

The Hong Kong native's first restaurant was deemed by a feng shui expert to be a negative energy nightmare. She had her next



restaurant, Pearl of the Orient, built and designed with feng shui in mind so positive energy could flow easily.

"It's not a superstition," Wong says of feng shui. "Everything has a reason."

Pockar adds that feng shui, which has various forms and can become quite complex, is also an individual process. "What makes you feel comfortable and happy might not work for someone else," she says.

So you may want to take Donna Ludwig's advice and "pick and choose what works for you." ▲