

LIVING HERE

Houses Atuned to Feng Shui: Designs That Go With the Flow

WHO Purvi Sevak, 31, an economics professor, and her husband, Jeff Hubbard, 39, a portfolio manager, shown with their daughter, Catalina, 8 weeks

WHAT 3-bedroom house

WHERE Bethel, Me.

Purvi: We live in Manhattan, and we've always wanted a country house surrounded by nature. When we bought this land, people would say, "If you'd clear those trees, you'd have a great view." We'd think: How are trees not a view?

Jeff: I'd commiserate with a ski buddy of mine, Derek Bloom, and he understood completely. Like us, he was a proponent of sustainable building practices. He is an architect; eventually we hired him to design the house.

At the time, our familiarity with feng shui was nearly nil. But Derek and his wife, Eliza Mellen-Smith, would point out the ways feng shui was consistent with our views. We were skeptical but kept open minds, and in the end, many elements of feng shui were incorporated into the design. We used predominantly natural materials, for example, such as stone, wood and slate. And, we sited the house in what feng shui refers to as a "commanding position." It's halfway down the face of the mountain facing another peak and sits on a gently sloping plane. According to feng shui, this balances the flow of Qi, or energy, to and from the house. It also means we have a lovely view. The great room was designed with enormous windows facing south. Maximizing sun exposure is said to increase the energy flow into the home. In practical terms, it means a room that's sunny and energy efficient.

Purvi: Even Catalina's room was selected based on its position in the house. It's in the "knowledge" or "wisdom" corner, which promotes learning. She'll be coming here with us for years. Why not offer her every possible advantage?

As told to Bethany Lyttle



Northwestern for The New York Times



WHERE Franklinville, N.J.

WHAT 4-bedroom house

HOW MUCH \$395,000

A feng shui consultation is included with the purchase of this 2,680-square-foot house. Two years old and on a private wooded acre, it has a two-story foyer, hardwood floors, a vaulted ceiling, a marble fireplace, a full basement, an attached two-car garage and two and a half bathrooms. Franklinville, 25 miles from Philadelphia and 45 minutes from Atlantic City, is a horse and farming community with protected wetlands, pine lands and a state park nearby. Agent: Darlene Supnick, ReMax Infinity, (856) 722-8090; www.infinity.remax-nj.com.



WHERE Downingtown, Pa.

WHAT 5-bedroom house

HOW MUCH \$1.3 million

Built in 2001, this 5,790-square-foot French Colonial-style house has a courtyard with fountain, 12-foot ceilings, three fireplaces, a covered veranda, a swimming pool and five and a half bathrooms. Two of the bedrooms are part of an in-law suite. The house's hilltop site and stone walls that flank the driveway are considered desirable feng shui elements. The property, 7.5 acres that includes a winding stream, is 45 minutes from Philadelphia. Agent: John Schemm, Prudential Fox & Roach Realtors, (484) 875-2506; www.schemmteam.com.



WHERE Orcas Island, Wash.

WHAT 2-bedroom house with guesthouse

HOW MUCH \$3.2 million

This 2,516-square-foot circular house has a symmetrical floorplan to enhance the "chi" or energy flow. It sits within a koi and trout pond that has a fountain, a waterfall and footbridges. The main house has cedar beams, a copper and glass fireplace, maple floors and two bathrooms. The property is nine acres with 291 feet fronting East Sound and a permit for a dock. The guesthouse has two bedrooms and two bathrooms. Brokers: Stu and Patsy Stephens, ReMax Island Properties, (360) 376-6202; www.orcasislandonline.com.



WHERE Fitchburg, Wis.

WHAT 3-bedroom house

HOW MUCH \$469,000

In accordance with feng shui principles, interior walls in this 3,588-square-foot house have been painted colors that correspond with the five elements (earth, metal, water, wood and fire). The house, on a third of an acre about 12 minutes from downtown Madison, has cedar ceilings, two fireplaces, fieldstone accents, a sunroom, three bathrooms and an oversize two-car garage. A brick pathway leads up to and around the house, which was built in 1985. For sale by the owners, Rob Peters and Rebecca Smith, (608) 235-5807; www.fsbomadison.com.