

news extra

MORE and more Manningham people are using the ancient Chinese practice of feng shui in hope of finding harmony in their lives. Reporter KELLY EADIE explains why.

Finding balance and harmony in life . . .

IF you had a problem with your finances or business or even your love life, who would you turn to for help?

A financial planner? A psychologist? How about a feng shui practitioner?

Jodi Brunner, manager of the Feng Shui Network, said many people were using feng shui to help solve their problems.

They were finding the answer to their problems by rearranging the interior or exterior of their homes and workplaces, according to Ms Brunner.

She said feng shui had become popular in Australia over the past decade as an alternative way of finding balance and harmony in life.

But she said people shouldn't just rely on using feng shui to find balance and harmony. She believed it should be used with a combination of other techniques.

According to Ms Brunner, the practice

began in China more than 5000 years ago as a means of achieving harmony between the environment and human beings.

The principles of feng shui were originally used for agricultural, then for orienting dwellings, places of business, gravesites, for battle strategies, in fortune telling and as a tool for personal development, she said.

Ms Brunner explained that by using feng shui, people could harmonise their environment and, hopefully lead a happier and more fulfilling life.

"We are fortunate to be able to choose the environment in which we live and work," she said.

"When our environment supports us, we function better. Working the land and building dwelling shapes the land to meet our needs. The result is a visible representation of the way we like to live."

But exactly how does feng shui work?

"The words feng shui literally mean wind and water. It is the harnessing of these two vital elements of nature which provide us with what we need in order to survive in any environment," she said.

"The subtle energies, that which we cannot see, wind, and that which we cannot grasp, water, comprise the meaning of the words feng shui.

"Wind carries the vital breath of ch'i across the landscape where it accumulates at the boundary of water. Ch'i is the energy that breathes life into all things. Veins of ch'i flow through and around all things."

More simply, the principles of feng shui work to encourage the ch'i energy to flow through our homes, gardens or offices.

To illustrate the principle, we asked Ms Brunner to assess the feng shui of some buildings in Manningham.

Council building 'has good vibes'

FIRST stop on our feng shui discovery tour was the Manningham Council building in Doncaster Rd.

Ms Brunner said the most important part of a building was its entrance because that was where the energy or ch'i flowed into a building.

"It's got a nice open entry. That's what we call a bright hall where all the ch'i can accumulate," she said.

Ms Brunner was also impressed that the entrance had a traditional Chinese spirit wall.

"There's a traditional-style Chinese spirit wall. All the negative energy can't come too strongly into the building and the good energy can't escape," she said.

"When you look to the right, there is an area, called the green dragon, to the left is the white tiger. The green dragon should be higher than the white tiger. Here we've got trees on



Good vibrations: the Manningham Council building in Doncaster Rd has good feng shui.

the green dragon side which is very good."

The entrance to the building faces south, which Ms Brunner said was also fortunate. "It's

not facing due south but it is in a southerly direction which is good," she said. The landmark water fountains on Doncaster Rd would bring Manningham

Council good luck, she said. "If you have water in the south west of your house between 2004 and 2024 it will be a fortunate structure," she said.

1st December, 1999

How feng shui can be the perfect mix

IN feng shui, there are three basic principles that will help you achieve harmony.

Firstly, the structures around you and the directions they face will have an impact on you, according to Jodi Brunner from the Feng Shui Network.

The directions around a building are named after animals, she said.

The tortoise was the area behind a structure, and the dragon and tiger flank the building from the left and right respectively — as you look at the dwelling from the front door. The phoenix is the area at the front of the entrance.

The ideal arrangement in feng shui is to have a high tortoise (in the form of a mountain or wall) behind your property, protection on the sides in the form of smaller mountains or trees (but the tiger side should always be smaller than the dragon) and the phoenix area (in front of the property) should be open with a small mound.

To achieve good feng shui, you also need to balance the ying and yang in your home or office. Ying and yang is a Chinese concept that explains why opposite forces work in a complementary way. For example, to achieve good feng shui

you need to balance dark and light in a room, or soft and hard furnishings. Another important factor of feng shui is the flow of good energy, or chi. The interior of a building should be designed to allow chi to flow freely and constantly through the property. For example, clutter or mess blocks the flow of energy while long bare hallways allow the energy to escape too quickly.

■ If you are interested in finding out more about the principles of feng shui, Jodi Brunner from the Feng Shui Network runs seminars on the subject. For more information call 9662 1011.

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To the point: the angled beams at the Doncaster Shoppingtown. 020MK300

Shoppingtown is a poor example

THE angled beams over the entrance to Doncaster Shoppingtown are undesirable for promoting harmony, according to Ms Brunner.

"This is not a fortunate structure. It's too sharp. In feng shui, we like rounded shapes," she said.

"Rounded shapes are better than square shapes because the chi flows around them."

Ms Brunner said the openness of the

entrance was good but the fact that it tapered in was not so fortunate.

"It is quite open. It gets wider and narrower. That restricts the flow of energy into the building," she explained.

The entrance could be improved by putting in plants and a water feature, Ms Brunner said.

"Water at the front helps to generate chi and the plants that are there now are nice but they're spiky. I'd like to see rounded garden beds with softer plants."



Welcome: the driveway of this house in Templestowe is too steep.

Picture: MICHELLE KELCEY.020MK300

Some features are impractical

OUR last stop was a house in Templestowe, built using feng shui principles.

The new owners of the house are modifying the structure because they found some of the features impractical.

Ms Brunner said that it was important to remember feng shui was also based on common sense and if something didn't feel right in your home, then you should make necessary changes.

"There's no point having perfect feng shui if you can't live in the house," she said.

The front door to this home was wide and allowed

a lot of chi to enter but Ms Brunner said the driveway was too steep.

"With a steep driveway the chi will rush up it too quickly and escape before it can flow through the house," she said.

"Long corridors, like long driveways, tend to tunnel the chi. To rectify that you can put things along the hallway or driveway to slow the flow of the chi. Even pictures along a hallway can help."

Another thing to watch out for is that the front door doesn't line up with the back door.

"You don't want them lining up because the chi flows straight out."