

# ALL CHANGE!

In this rapidly developing country, opportunities are there for the taking. Lucy Manning meets three women who have kick-started brand-new careers since settling in the UAE

## KERRI LEIGH DANN

**In the 14 years Kerri has lived in Dubai, there's very little she hasn't done. After working as a flight attendant, studying for an HND, becoming a business development manager and trying her hand at voiceovers, Kerri's new career is feng shui**

"I've done so many jobs since living in Dubai, but feng shui has been a constant for the last 10 years, although just as a hobby at first. When I left Emirates in 1996, where I'd been working as a flight attendant, my husband, Greg, and I had three problems and we could not shift them. One was financial, one was contractual and the other was personal. It was my sister who suggested that I tried out feng shui. I didn't have much to do, so I feng shui-ed our apartment from top to bottom, and it took me two weeks to finish it. And I swear, three days after the day I finished, every problem was solved.

Since then, I've been hooked. I've been on two courses — one in Malaysia and one in Singapore — and now I'm trying to make feng shui my career. It normally takes me a week to do someone's home. I go in and measure the house, then I go away for two days and I'll plan everything on the computer. Then for the next two days, I completely rearrange the entire house, with the client helping me.

I tell them what I'm doing and why, so they get a mini feng shui course as I'm doing it. I'm very passionate about it, and I'm so thorough, it's frightening! I move TVs and dining rooms into other rooms, and sofas and carpets get pulled out. All your paintings come off the walls and get rearranged everywhere... And you have lots of coffee and chats — it's really fun. And by the time I've finished, the houses always look better, as well.

These days, Greg won't move into a house unless I've feng shui-ed it. And he's an oil trader, so he's very logical and analytical. Another example is a client of mine who had just joined a real estate company. She was sleeping in a bedroom which said that she'd have obstacles in her life. So I just changed the bed position around, and I changed the colours in it. Five days later, she sold six houses in one day. And she's been selling non-stop ever since. It's all really weird — I'm not going to lie! It's not exactly hokey-pokey, but it's a little bit strange.

I believe that feng shui won't change your life completely — it will only enhance it. If you're sitting at home and watching TV, you're not going to get what you're looking for. But if you're out there doing something positive, then something weird will happen. I think your destiny is your own and you've got to make it or break it yourself. It's up to you to knock on those doors and walk forward.

However, I think that when you mix feng shui with a positive outlook, your life will only get better. It makes your good times fantastic, and it makes bad times bearable. It's not going to stop you having a bad day — everyone has bad days, otherwise life would be boring. But feng shui makes your problems much easier.

I'd never have imagined that I could have got into something like this. I actually thought I'd stay in the airline industry for most of my career — certainly not going into people's houses and rearranging their furniture using a 3,000-year-old Chinese art!

I think that living in Dubai can help people to branch out into new things. First of all, people have taken the risk of moving here, so they've got a certain attitude inbred in them anyway. But I also think that people are very open-minded here. When I worked with Emirates, I flew with Indians, Thais, Bangladeshis, Lebanese... Before, when I was flying in Australia, all my colleagues were Australian. I think your mind changes. When you've been here a long time, you start to take that for granted, because it becomes a new kind of normality. When I go home to Brisbane, all my friends are Australian or Italian, but when I'm here, my friends are from all over the world. Living in a place like Dubai makes you step out of your comfort zone, and that puts you in a place where you can try all sorts of new things." ☺

etc 21



## Myfavourite room



**Kerri Leigh Dann is a feng shui consultant for Connections Properties. She lives in a single-storey Mizhar villa with her husband, Greg, their three dogs, Jasmine, Griffin and Rufus, and their cat, Giselle.**

**G**reg and I have lived in this villa for three years, and we absolutely love it. We have to move out soon, which I'm really sad about, but we're going to look for something in the same area. When it comes to feng shui, this house is very well designed. It has protection at the back and the sides but is open at the front to allow the energy to flow. We're going to have to find another house which is equally good! My favourite room is my living room — and it's feng shui-ed to the hilt! Everything has been placed where it is for a reason. I use a combination of three types of feng shui: Form School, Eight Mansions and Advanced Flying Stars. All these disciplines are taken into

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consideration in the layout of my living room, but I don't think it looks overly planned. When feng shui is done well, a room should look comfortable and natural — you shouldn't be able to tell it's been feng shui-ed through commercial objects.

I believe that your home should reflect really good memories. The mind is very powerful and when you look at things, your mind automatically flicks to that memory. I love to have things on display that make me happy, and almost everything in this room was chosen by Greg and I. It's a bit of a sentimental place, though I

always makes me smile. There's a picture that we bought on holiday in France, and there are also two Adam Barsby paintings in here, which were the first paintings Greg and I bought together. The sofas in this room were designed by Greg, even though he's not actually a designer — he's an oil trader! We chose the colours together and had them made to Greg's design. The covers are made from completely natural fabrics.

I also particularly love the candle holder on the coffee table. We bought it from an exhibition at Waf City and it was made by a Welsh blacksmith. I also have a few pieces of furniture in here from Pinkie's in Sharjah. It's absolutely amazing there — you tell them what you're

looking for and they make it for you.

A couple of years ago, I went back-packing with some friends around India. I brought back a small metal statue of a god of wealth, which I keep in the northwest corner.

There's also a large bamboo in the north corner to protect us from legal problems. I've studied feng shui in Malaysia and Singapore and recently started doing professional consultations for Connections Properties. I think that feng shui is a tool that you can use in life — you can't stop destiny but you can help it along with a little nudge down the right route!"