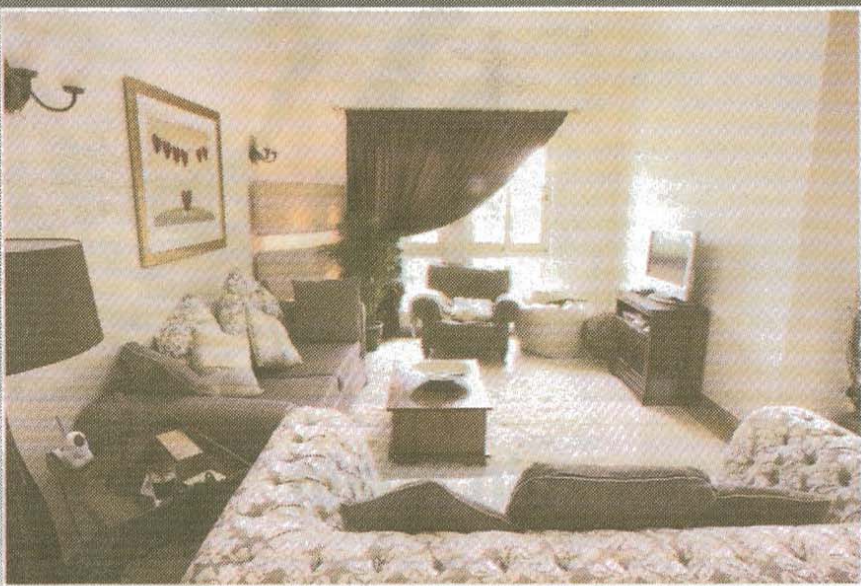


Metrolife

GOT A STORY TO TELL? EMAIL FEATURES@7DAYS.AE

BEFORE



HOME-NOT-SO-SWEET-HOME: The Gill Family avoided their main living room

AFTER



PLACEMENT: After some feng shui magic, it's finally a home

Interior design - the feng shui way

Imagine that when you walked through your front door you felt more at peace, and not just because you had a hectic day at the office and were pleased to be finally at home, but rather as a result of the interior design arrangement of your home. Suppose the décor of your living room, the placement of your bedroom furniture or even the colour of paint on the walls could bring more harmony to your household - would you believe it? To many people this may sound wacky, superstitious or even absolutely ridiculous, but to someone like Kerri Dann from Lotus Designs, who has studied the art of feng shui, this is a normal part of everyday work.

GO FENG SHUI

Feng shui and colour is all about bringing a room to life. Feng shui isn't a cure-all, but simply a way to create beautiful and harmonious homes, which, in turn can promote general well-being. For more information on Feng shui please contact Kerri Dann at www.lotusdesigns.ae or call 050 633 8579. Contact interior consultant Phillipa Maxwell at maxwellinteriors@mailme.ae

A new villa for the Gill family presented some teething problems with settling in, so 7DAYS sent in a feng shui expert to see if moving furniture would help

Feng shui, the ancient Chinese practice of placement and arrangement of space to achieve harmony with the environment, is a growing trend and while many people have heard the words muttered in passing, not so many actually know what it's really all about. Diane Gill, who recently relocated from the UK to Dubai with her husband and young daughter, is one such person. The Gills were excited to move into a beautiful new villa in Jumeirah Islands at the beginning of this year, but since the move Diane's family have said that they felt more unsettled in life. So 7DAYS teamed up Kerri at Lotus Designs and interior designer, Phillipa Maxwell, to see if the feng shui principals of furniture arrangement and colour could help lift the mood in Diane's new home. "Back in the UK our 18-month-old daughter used to sleep straight through the night from 7pm to 7am, but then when we moved into this new villa in Dubai she started to wake up at the same time every night screaming crying," says Diane. "My husband and I eventually put it

down to the new and huge big concrete room she was sleeping in. We put up her pictures and decorations, but something still wasn't nice and cosy about the room. It was this cold and unwelcoming feeling in the house that inspired us to think about using a feng shui expert."

The first step for Kerri was to measure the house with a compass and then draft out a mathematical grid over the house, which, without getting too technical, simply tells the feng shui expert something about the energy and the harmony in the house. Kerri's graph reflected that Diane's family would enjoy general good luck of fortune, but she also uncovered a lack of harmony, as well as, extraordinarily, a pointer to ill-health in Diane's daughter's bedroom. "Kerri discovered that the harmony in my daughter's bedroom wasn't conducive to good health. It was bizarre, because of the problems we had with her sleeping there, and

also because after that I actually had to take my daughter to the hospital twice, although for nothing too serious. Kerri suggested we move our daughter out of that room, and since we did, she is a lot happier."

Next on Kerri's list was to boost the harmony and support within the home, which she did with the help of interior designer Phillipa Maxwell. "To achieve the feeling of being in a private sanctuary in the main living room space, we closed the curtains to encourage a more relaxed, inviting atmosphere and moved the larger sofa against a solid wall for protection," Kerri explained. "The chaise lounge was then positioned in the living room to create an intimate area to relax and unwind." Since the changes, Diane claims to be a lot more settled in her new home. "The living room is main space in the house, but we rarely used it. It never felt welcoming, I bought nice furniture, but something still always felt off. Once Kerri changed it around, however, we use the room a

lot more. It is a real family room now," says Diane.

To allow a flow of healthy and positive energy or 'chi' throughout the whole house, Kerri enhanced the corners of rooms through lighting and potted plants. Apparently, feng shui also refers to yang and yin energy, so it is imperative to balance these two elements through decoration. Meanwhile, Phillipa added homely touches and suggested incorporating cushions and bamboo into the main living room to help harmonise the room. These simple steps the experts say, immediately lifted the energy of a room. "This is a happier house after Kerri did the feng shui. I really thought that I had placed everything nicely the first time around, but now I see I was wrong and that my placements blocked the flow of energy in the main living room," says Diane. "I do understand why people might be sceptical, but feng shui can only benefit you and if you don't like it, change it. "You don't need to spend a fortune either, because it's more about the placement of items." To change to main living area into a more cosy and homely environment, Kerri and Phillipa only spent a modest total of dhs541.

