

ANNUAL REAL ESTATE ISSUE

Palm Springs Life

California's Prestige Magazine

Stage Your
Home to
SELL!

Part-Time Love

The joy of fractional
home ownership

Plus: Tom Doak beats
the elements in Palm Desert

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Everything in its Place

**Use our A-to-Z guide to align your home
with some of feng shui's smartest principles**

BY ANITA ROSENBERG

Whether you spend your days soaking up the sun, sipping a pinot blanc, teeing off at the club, or getting scrubbed head-to-toe at the spa, it's important that your digs reflect who you are and what is important to you. Living with feng shui can improve your health, enhance your love life, empower your business, and help you create your personal nirvana one room at a time. (Its techniques for polish and placement may even make it easier to sell your house.) Good feng shui is a lifestyle choice, and working with — rather than against or unaware of — its powerful energies promotes success.

Three thousand years ago, this ancient Chinese art was exclusive to emperors and kings. No longer. East has met West and the secret is out. Now everyone can enjoy and prosper from the environmental science that is feng shui. Literally, the term means “wind” and “water,” a concept that incorporates the things we see with those we don't. People living in China, Taiwan, Singapore, and Malaysia regard feng shui as a vital part of everyday life, having studied how people are affected by their surroundings, for better or worse. An excerpt from the California Building Standards Code even states “Citibank, Shell, Donna Karan, and Donald Trump consult experts on their properties. They know that the structure of a building can affect a person's behavior, which, in turn, can determine the success of a person's personal and professional relationships.”

As someone who has come to be known as the “Hollywood House Whisperer,” I believe that living in a place that reflects our highest ideals, our sense of peace, our present abundance, and our hopes for the future is one of the most powerful and effective ways to create a lasting personal nirvana. My secrets to designing your desert home — whether its your full-time retreat or a coveted vacation getaway — are easy to bring into your personal space.

A HOME MAKEOVER CHANGES more than how spaces look. Breathing new life into the home your eyes have become accustomed to lifts your spirits every time you walk in. Life becomes exciting again, from the outside in. What is closest to you affects you the most; make your home your personal oasis.

BATHROOMS ARE THE MOST watery rooms in the house. Showers, sinks, and bathtubs are where money energies leak out. Since water is equated with wealth in feng shui, you want to keep your toilet lid closed to symbolically avoid your money being flushed down the toilet. This helps bring in more money than you spend — and is kinder and more attractive to the ladies in the house.

CACTUS GARDENS DO NOT MAKE great greeters. Desert landscapes thrive on succulents. However, in feng shui, plants that are stabby and pointy send the wrong message to guests: "Come visit, but it's going to hurt." If your front walkway is lined with cacti or plants with pointed leaves, consider relocating them and planting a friendlier greeter. At the very least, keep them trimmed back so guests don't tear their golf shorts or stab their ankles. The longer and wider the walkway, the more opportunities the universe has room to bring you.



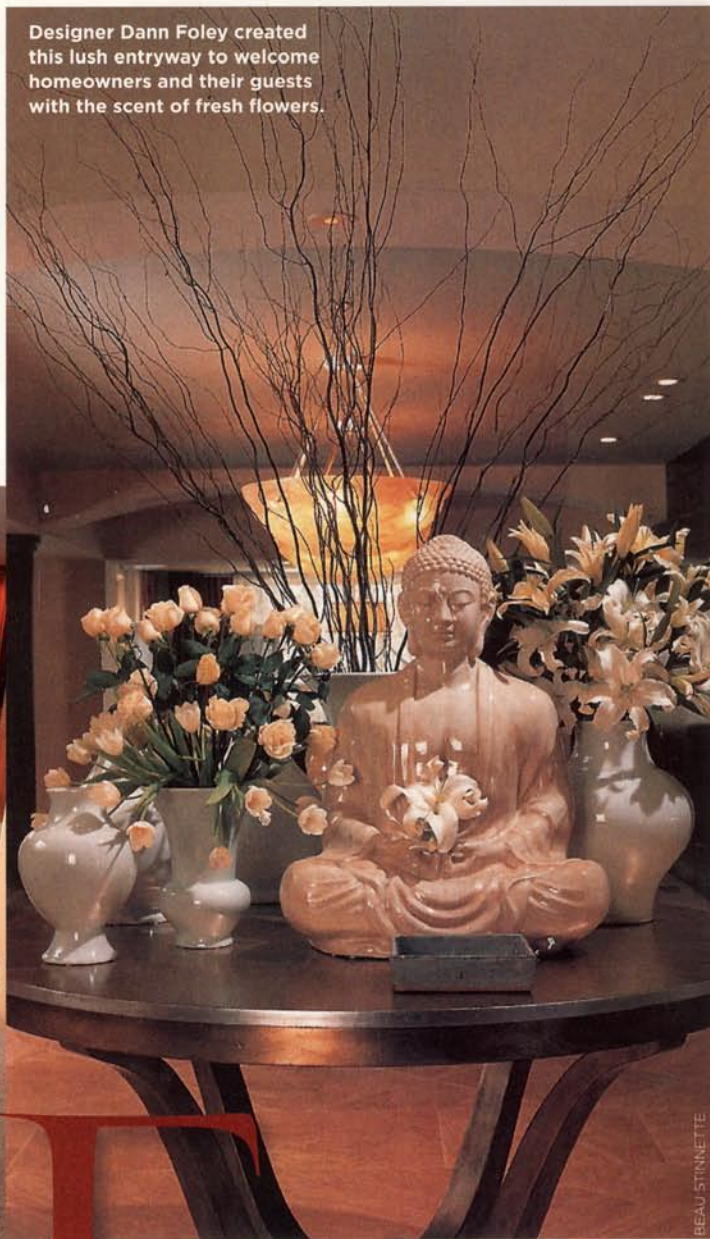
An oval or circular dining table promotes equality among those who gather there.

ANITA ROSENBERG

DINING ROOMS ARE ABOUT maintaining family harmony. In every culture, families gather around the dining table to break bread and share stories of the day. Round or oval tables are best. Make sure dining chairs are equal in size (no kings or queens). The idea is that everyone should feel equally appreciated, loved, and honored. Adding a centerpiece of flowers or fresh fruit from your trees provides a luscious touch.

ENTRYWAYS ARE WHERE opportunity knocks. This is where you want fabulous greeters: an entry table, a bench, a favorite piece of art, a welcome rug, and healthy plants or flowers. An inviting foyer opens up its arms to all who enter and says, "Oh good, there you are at last! I'm happy to see you," rather than "Oops, I forgot to take out the recycling, and where is that light switch?" A mirror placed on the side wall not only opens up a small space, but sheds light on your destiny and true calling.

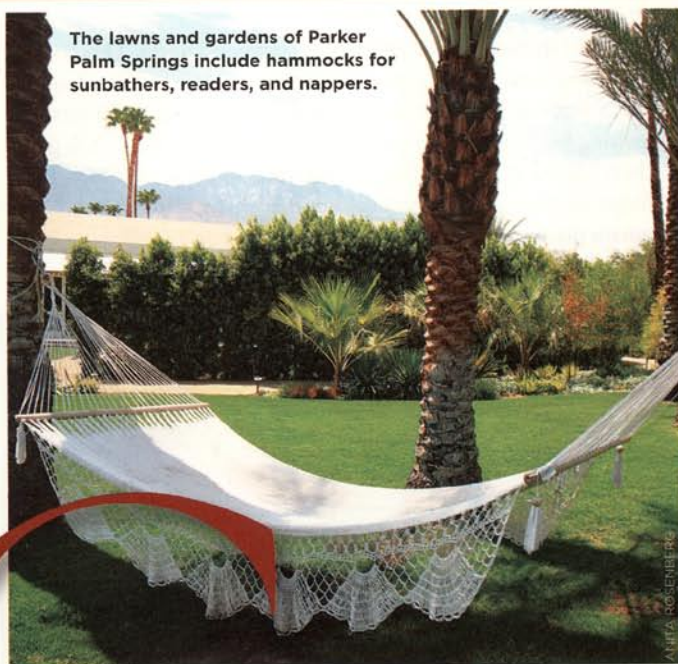
Designer Dann Foley created this lush entryway to welcome homeowners and their guests with the scent of fresh flowers.



BEAU STINETTE

FRESH FLOWERS BRING MONEY and abundance. Fresh flowers look and smell fabulous, and their energy is magical. Adding them to any room is one of those little tricks that works wonders. Silk flowers may seem easier to care for if you are only in town on weekends, but keep in mind that silk and dried foliage have a shelf life of three months, after which they are dust catchers and negative energy. Buy fresh ones for your visits. And if you enjoy potpourri in your powder room, keep it fresh and fragrant.

The lawns and gardens of Parker Palm Springs include hammocks for sunbathers, readers, and nappers.



REAT HEALTHY GARDENS

Great healthy gardens bring "earth luck." In feng shui, land is considered more valuable than buildings. When you live on beautiful land, you are assured great things. Healthy landscaping brings good luck and prosperity. "The challenges in an arid landscape are in our perception of what a garden should look like," says local landscape designer Charles Pearson. "These are not always lush green gardens. They are about survival, strength, and protection." Clean up brown dirt patches, dead bushes, and sickly plants; they indicate that negative things may be going on in your life. If you don't have a green thumb, hire an expert.

HOME IS WHERE YOUR STUFF IS. Live like every home is your second home. Second homeowners take a lighter more carefree approach to their weekend hideouts, learning to live with just the essentials. Their homes are usually minimalist and uncluttered when compared with many main residences that are stuffed with rarely used items. Less is more in feng shui, so keep your clutter and chaos in check. Live with what you love — and make a bold decision to get rid of the rest.

INSPIRE YOURSELF through good design. Inspiration comes from creating your own personal haven that reflects who you are, where you have been, and what you value. Whether your desert home is for relaxing, energizing, entertaining, or romance, living with good feng shui means designing with intention. Look at each room as a place that's waiting for improvement, and an opportunity to build an environment that moves you. Find inspiration in your travels, in books you read, in who you want to be. A great designer can translate your wishes into reality.



UST FIND A THEME

for your romantic bedroom. Nirvana begins with a dramatic boudoir where the bed is the king or the queen of the room. When you choose a theme with personal meaning, like jungle safari from your trip to Kenya or Italian Renaissance that reminds you of that lost week in Tuscany, it helps pull the room together. Even if the theme is subtle, (say a combination of you and your partner's two favorite colors), creating a fantasy bedroom is important when you want to sleep and dream better, fire up the passion in your current relationship, or attract a new companion. Decorate in pairs to emphasize duality.

NOW YOU CAN'T DO IT ALONE. In life, you need good friends, good family, a good personal trainer, a good housekeeper, a good agent, and a good therapist. A good Chianti classico is helpful sometimes, too. Inviting people into your home creates that special bond of connecting with others. Your place does not have to be picture perfect to host a small soiree or cocktail hour. It's all about sharing a part of yourself. (So if the living room is messy, hit the patio!)

QUIET RETREATS ALLOW FOR personal growth and wisdom. When you create a home library or a meditation room, you give yourself permission to slow down and get back in touch with yourself. Yours might come in the form of an overstuffed chair and a reading lamp, a reclining double lounger on the patio, or a den that converts to a morning yoga studio. Make sure you have a space devoted to recharging your battery and renewing your spirit.

UP LIGHTING RAISES LOW CEILINGS. "Up" lighting softens those vaulted ceilings and abstract angles that can create chaos. Placing standing lamps that offer light that shoots upward helps raise the low part of a slanted ceiling. Hanging lamps at the high end is another way to even out the room. Balance is the key — as is a number of lighting options that allow you to adjust the room to your mood.



Paint your front door red — or a related hue — to bring good luck.

An Old World brick archway frames the view on the back terrace of this home at Andalusia at Coral Mountain.



RED IS THE CHINESE COLOR for good luck. Painting your front door red is one way of getting attention from the neighbors, as well as ushering in prosperity. However, not everyone can live with a red door, and it doesn't match all home styles; so experiment with shades that go with your exterior. Don't force it, of course. Shades of orange, rust, or burgundy are just as effective and will create that wow factor.

STORAGE SPACES ARE DIAMONDS in the rough. Closets, pantries, and garages are important, too. Brighten them with soothing colors and excellent lighting. Since every space counts, keep them clean, organized, and smelling fresh. There is nowhere to hide in feng shui, and using a spare closet, bedroom, or your two-car garage to dump your old treadmill or aquarium keeps new things from coming into your life — not to mention leaving no space for parking your vintage Thunderbird.

TELEVISION SETS BELONG INSIDE closed cabinets. Watching television is our window into the world. How else would we rate those moves on *Dancing With the Stars*? Whether turned on or off, they are powerful and emit harmful EMFs (electromagnetic frequencies). So it is important to keep them housed inside closed cabinets when not in use. As for that flat screen above the fireplace, it's great for watching your shows, but it detracts from the hearth as the room's focal point. Mike Valles of Interior Illusions suggests concealing it behind a hinged wall painting or a floating cabinet.

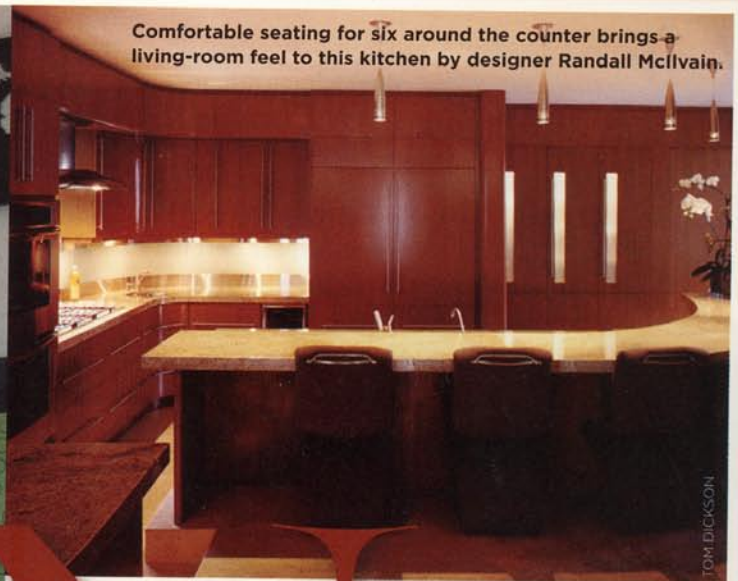
VIEWS ARE PRICELESS. Windows are the eyes of a house; and when they frame those magnificent, million-dollar mountain views, it creates instant artwork that adds great value to your property. Norman Foster of The Desert Connection Realtors says, "Mountain landscapes are a great draw for buying property in Palm Springs. Views of the majestic San Jacinto and Santa Rosa mountains is what we are famous for." Showcase those views with pride through the use of stunning window treatments, including blinds that keep out the harsh sunlight and hot temps and curtains that add color and pizzazz.

A pair of prints encourages a close partnership in this bedroom designed by Christopher Kennedy at the Biltmore Colony in Palm Springs.



JEFF SHOTWELL

Comfortable seating for six around the counter brings a living-room feel to this kitchen by designer Randall McIlvain.



TOM DICKSON

OW KITCHENS ARE THE NEW LIVING ROOMS. Palm Springs-based designer Victor Parker agrees. "Just as with fashion, if you wait long enough, everything comes back in style. Current design has brought the kitchen back to being the center or hub of the home." Since

kitchens are the hot spot of social interaction, make sure yours has plenty of seating with stools, pub chairs, or even cozy couches for coffee chat. Kitchens also represent your wealth center. In ancient China, if you had food in your cupboard, you were thought to be truly rich. When you eat well, you are healthy and prosper. Keep your kitchen and pantry well stocked and share the wealth of good eating by hosting friends for a home-cooked meal.

LIVING ROOMS ARE WHERE the action is. This is where brilliant minds gather to exchange ideas, hash out their views, and share saucy gossip. Create conversational seating around oval or round coffee tables; square shapes and furniture with sharp edges are bruises waiting to happen. One wrong move en route to refill your mojito and it could be all over that new rug. Make sure you have plenty of coasters, options for mood lighting for all occasions, and a stereo system that's up to snuff.

MIRRORS BELONG OVER FIREPLACES to balance all that fire with water. Certainly there is nothing sexier than a dramatic fireplace with a roaring fire. But feng shui tells us to balance the energy of the fireplace (which is the fire element) with a mirror (the water element). When you elementally balance energies, it just feels right — and so do the people in that room. Another idea would be to hang a painting depicting water or a place a glass sculpture nearby (glass also represents the water element).

OUTSIDE SHOULD BE BROUGHT INSIDE. Good feng shui calls for bringing nature inside. You want healthy plants indoors to lift the life-force energy. When ferns and hanging vines are placed on top of armoires, shelves, and even refrigerators, they charge up that room. Because corners are where energy gets trapped, this is where interior trees and palms come in handy to stir things up. The rule is that when a plant is sick you must replace it or it will sap your good health.

PATHWAYS SHOULD ALWAYS MEANDER. Think of the pathways inside and outside your home as ch'i energy. (Ch'i is the life-force energy that exists in all things). Like a gentle river, you want pathways leading to, from, and through your home to curve and ramble. When a river runs too straight, it rushes quickly and causes havoc along the banks, pulling up roots and soil. Use stones, cement, and landscaping elements to build exterior meandering walkways and rugs, runners, and furniture inside to create that same sense of discovery.

Manicured landscaping, a wooden café table and chairs, and comfortable, cushioned chaise lounges balance the water element of this Palm Springs pool. Ted Tuttle designed the home and grounds.



WATER FEATURES MAKE YOU RICHER.

Whether you have a bubbling fountain in your entryway or a dramatic waterfall at the guard gate of your condo complex, water brings prosperity. And who couldn't use more of that? In this case, size does matter, so make sure your water feature fits proportionally. Water rules include keeping the water moving and making sure it spouts towards the house, not away. Jacuzzis and swimming pools are other essentials that add wealth and enjoyment. Balance water elements by surrounding them with healthy plants and flowers and lots of comfortable seating. Then keep them sparkling clean.

X-AMINE YOUR LIFE to determine what is flowing and what is stuck. Seeing through "feng shui eyes" what is going on in your home and office is a great indicator for what is going on in your life. Living with clutter and chaos will show up as missed opportunities, being stuck in a rut, and the inability to move forward. Living with what you love makes you happy and feeling blessed. When you see clearly what needs to be changed, you can take the right action.

YOU REALLY CAN MIX ANIMAL PRINTS with just about anything. Gathering influences from around the globe creates an eclectic style that makes your home totally unique and original. Desert folks have that adventurous spirit that makes their world rich and interesting. Take those life experiences and don't be afraid to mix and match. Moving a piece or two from your main residence to your second home (or vice versa) helps you appreciate them in a new light.

BEST FOR LIFE IS THE DESERT CREDO. When you live every day with joy and passion and apply feng shui design to your home, it assures more good health, more happiness, more prosperity, and success. Allow your home to reflect who you are now and who you want to become. Personality should be reflected in each room so that when you come home, the space looks like no one's but your own.

For more information from the "Hollywood House Whisperer," go to www.anitarosenberg.com. ■

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C a l i f o r n i a D e s e r t L i v i n g

