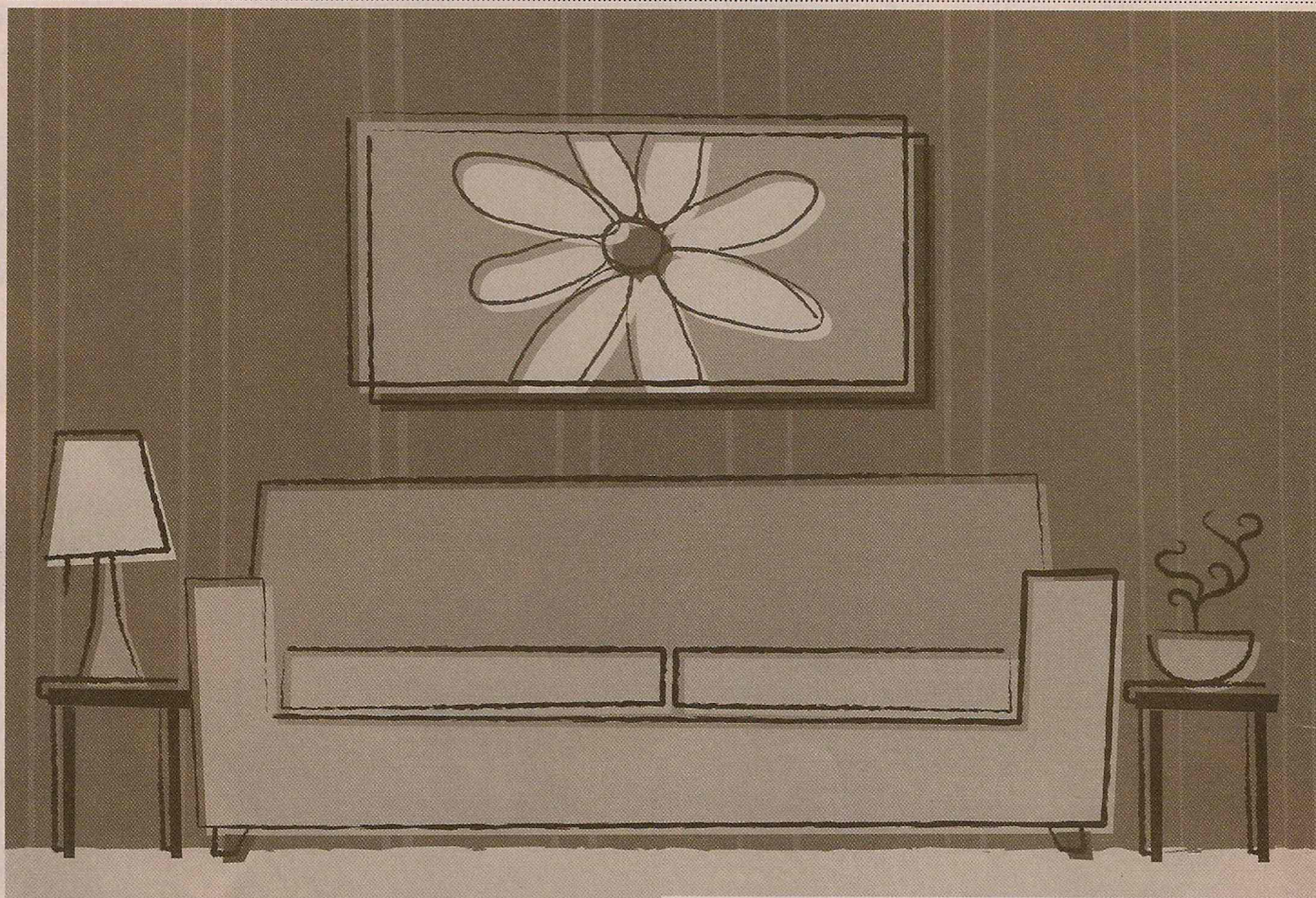


Changing rooms



Before you stampede through IKEA at a rate of knots, erratically grabbing bags of 1,000 tea lights and spatulas from here, there and everywhere, take a deep breath, listen to what feng shui master, **Shivani Adalja** has to say and sort out your bagua. Words *Anna Whitehouse*.

The phrase feng shui is so often bandied about that we have almost convinced ourselves that we know what it means. But feng shui consultant, Shivani Adalja has had to step in to explain the details: 'Feng shui is the ancient Chinese art that balances the chi, or positive energy, in your home through rearranging items and colours,' she explains. 'The bagua is a diagram of the nine areas of your life that you can apply to your floor plan,' she adds. 'Each area corresponds to a different natural element, such as water or fire, and can be represented by a shape, colour, object or texture.' Even if you're concerned about only one 'sphere' (money, perhaps), you must feng shui your whole space.

While it's difficult to justify investing

such effort and money in a rental property, restoring harmony is essential, according to Adalja—particularly since so many people move to the city to grow, prosper, and expand their careers. 'Feng shui is the best medium I've come across,' she adds, explaining that she's solved problems from divorce, through to loneliness and depression.

This doesn't mean that your apartment needs to look as Zen-like as a spa interior. 'There are no concrete rules—every design will be different,' Adalja says. 'Feng shui is about how you feel, and you should ultimately choose the elements yourself so you identify with them.' For more information call 050 681 1728 or email chariot70@hotmail.com.

A-Zen

- 1 To jump-start your career, ensure the area around your front door is clear of clutter and the hinges don't squeak. Since the front door is represented by water, place a fountain, a picture of water, a vase with water, a fishbowl or a mirror near it.
- 2 Having living things—plants, pets, fresh flowers—in your space helps the chi circulate. Adalja particularly recommends a fish aquarium.
- 3 Bold colours create the most energy—yellow, pink, green and red—but can cause insomnia if used in the bedroom. If you suffer from the latter, calm the colours in your bedroom down.
- 4 To empower your intentions and fill your home with energy, put some music on, wash your home and self in salt water (it rebalances the chi) and open the windows.
- 5 Mirrors—which represent good luck—are excellent everywhere (except in front of your bed).
- 6 Feng shui is about balance and equality, and in the relationship sector, everything must be in pairs. For example, there should be two bedside tables, and if you have one painting over your bed, add another.
- 7 Don't keep a TV in the bedroom; if you live in a studio, cover it. According to Adalja, the tube takes the focus out of a relationship: It's always moving energy around, meaning you're not inclined to focus on each other.

Home help

Once you've feng shuied your humble abode, @home brand manager, Shaheen Domingo has a few tips up his sleeve to make a happy home:

- 1 Add a dash of ginger or cinnamon to coffee grounds for an exotic taste.
- 2 Pour syrup from canned fruit into ice cube trays and freeze it to use later.
- 3 Use two or three pieces of dried fruit, like peaches or prunes, to keep your brown sugar soft.
- 4 Hollow out a red, yellow or green pepper and fill it with dip. Remove a thin slice from the bottom of the pepper to get it to stand up straight.
- 5 Use sweets that have holes in the middle (like Polo mints) for birthday candleholders on a cake. They catch the wax and look pretty.
- 6 Use a wet paper towel to pick up broken glass slivers.