

Woman gets 'energy' from home design

Interior decorator, teacher adopts old Asian practice

MOORPARK

When interior designer Pat Sendejas studied feng shui, she discovered there was a lot more to interior design than she'd ever imagined.

An ancient, respected practice in Asia, feng shui interprets the types of energy in a home or business, Sendejas said. It's based on when a building was constructed and

where it is placed, its interior design and environment, and the people who will live or work there.

"There is no good or bad," she said. "Feng shui is the Chinese art of living in a harmonious environment in order to receive the greatest benefits in life, health, love and prosperity."

Trained at the American Feng Shui Institute, Sendejas teaches the subject at Moorpark College and incorporates her knowledge in her interior design business.

"When I consult with clients regarding feng shui, I am giving information about the energy around them," she said.

Not long ago a couple called her to "read" their new home.

Exploring the home and asking questions about the changes they had made, Sendejas soon found some remedies. The new owner had overenthusiastically trimmed the trees and plants on the sloping back yard and had changed the house's interior paint from green to white.

"Plants on a slope hold in energy and wealth," Sendejas told them, adding that the formerly green walls had supported the home's prosperous energy.

Sendejas has been fascinated with interior design since she was a youngster growing up in Omaha, Neb.

"At 8 years old, when I'd sleep overnight at a friend's house, I would wake up and say, let's rearrange your parents' furniture," she said.

The family moved to Southern California when she was 9. After deciding early on a career in interior design, she got her associate's degree at Santa Monica College, where she also met her future husband Sal. a



Evan Yee/Daily News

Pat Sendejas uses a type of Chinese compass to determine which way a house faces.

wanted to work, but not regular hours. Deciding on selling cosmetics, she found it offered her the experience of learning how to run a business and how to speak in public.

She soon was pursuing a certificate in interior design from University of California, Los Angeles, then she started her own interior design business and was hired in 1980 to design the laundry room for the Design House in the Conejo Valley.

The small room with a gazebo effect on the ceiling was so inviting that the new home's owners "hired me to do the whole house."

Her career took another turn when she taught a workshop on marketing for interior designers. A woman, who turned out to be the head of the Interior Design Department at Moorpark

part time. The next few years were busy with teaching, designing and taking the courses for her bachelor's degree at California State University, Northridge.

For a while she took a full-time job at a shutter company, but when her brother was dying of cancer, Sendejas left the company. A friend from work gave her a parting gift of two books that changed her life: "Feng Shui" and "The Choice" by Og Mandino.

"I left a good, paying job and went to the Feng Shui Institute," Sendejas said, a choice she's never regretted.

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