

Longevity in Design



When you step off the elevator, you step into another world. The environment transforms what could be a stressful situation into a tranquil oasis. Stark unadorned halls are replaced with warm inviting colors and inspiring artwork. Soothing music fills the air and blends with the subtle scent of lavender. A receptionist offers you cucumber water and a warm towel as you settle into a soft cozy chair. Just as you are about to daze off into a blissful day-dream, the receptionist announces that the doctor will see you now.

This is what patients at the Center for Longevity and Wellness experience when they come to see their doctor.

When a physician approached me to help him design a new medical spa, I was excited with the possibilities. What a wonderful use of the balancing and healing principles of Feng Shui. His intention was to create a space that was nourishing, tranquil, as well as professional and state of the art. He valued the ideas of conscious design and wanted to utilize many eco-friendly and efficient materials and processes in his medical spa. The blending of both western medical practices and complementary services offered a palette of possibilities for an inspiring design.

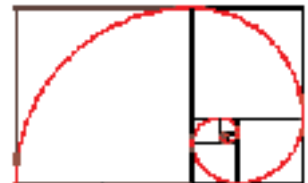
When all was said and done, the design included many concepts from Feng Shui, green design, sacred geometry and environmental psychology.

One of the first recommendations I made was to change the name of the “Waiting Room” to the “Reception Hall”. This gave both the staff and patients a new perspective and reinforced their intention of not having patients sitting around waiting hours for their appointments. The management process they utilize insures that patients are brought to the treatment rooms within 15 minutes of their arrival.

Using most of one floor in an existing building, we had many set parameters around which to work. The use of sacred geometry solved a major challenge that the support columns in the Reception Hall presented. I discovered that making the Reception Hall a golden rectangle would conceal the columns and create a pleasing proportion.

(For those of you unfamiliar with sacred geometry and the golden rectangle, it is a proportion 1:1.618 used by artists and architects since the Renaissance to replicate proportions found in Nature.

For more information visit en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_ratio)



Using the auspicious shape of the ba-gua from Feng Shui, I designed a raised ceiling in the Reception Hall. This created an architectural interest and provided the practical placement of mechanical ductwork.

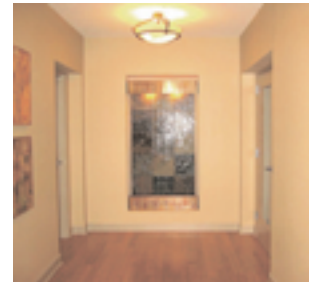
We installed eco friendly materials such as bamboo flooring in the Reception Hall and retail areas. Using natural fabrics for upholstery and full spectrum bulbs brought more “green” awareness to the design. We placed linoleum floor tiles in the hallways and treatment rooms. I selected three different colors and designed a random pattern for the hallway. This created variety and slowed the fast moving chi along the long hallway. Linolium is a durable, biodegradable material constructed from all nat-

ural ingredients and creates a comfortable surface for the staff to stand on for hours. It is a perfect eco-friendly choice for high traffic areas that need to withstand excessive cleaning.



Another eco-friendly choice was making the entire Center paperless. We all know how much paper accumulates from needed documentation around offices. By implementing a state of the art computer network system, the staff was able to become more efficient and do away with the typical mounds of paper records. And as the historical records are input into the system, the center will recoup the area we had to earmark for a large filing room. This will be extremely useful as the medical spa grows.

We incorporated a wall water fountain to distinguish the entry of the treatment areas from the Spa area. The soft soothing sound encourages patients to feel relaxed before their treatment. We used residential styled pendant lighting in the front entry hall to give a more elegant atmosphere. And the medical director's office was placed in the wealth area of the center to reinforce the prosperity of the medical spa.



The Center has been flourishing for several years now and has grown into a rejuvenating haven for its staff, physicians and patients. Utilizing the subtle yet profound principles for conscious design have paid off and the Center's success is testament to the value of blending the worlds of modern medicine with the contemporary awareness of eco-friendly design and the ancient art of Feng Shui.

Lou Stewart is a professional Feng Shui Interior Designer, living in Asheville, North Carolina. She co-authored a book with her husband, Bruce entitled *Your Way Home- The Psychology of Place Inside and Out*. They also invented *The 9 Star Adventures*, a learning tool that offers insightful adventures into the magical world of Inner Feng Shui. They can be reached at (828) 251-8299
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