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Valentine-themed workshop pairs feng shui, romance

BEFORE YOU sign up with an online dating service or head for a marriage counselor, give a thought to a workshop at Maison Reve in Mill Valley.

"Feng Shui for Love and Romance," presented by feng shui practitioner Terumi Leinow, is one of the most popular workshops at Maison Reve, a home accessories store with a French accent. The workshop is open to both single and married men and women, and, says owner Yasmine Ahmed, it's back "just in time for Valentine's Day."

She swears by the results, claiming that just 10 days after Leinow did a two-hour consultation at Ahmed's Mill Valley home, she met her future husband, David McGuane. "Sure, it could be coincidence, but the energy really felt so much better and stronger, I can't help but believe it was a definite factor."

Ahmed and McGuane had been invited by different friends on a rafting trip seven hours north of Marin, on the Salmon River. "I didn't know anyone but the organizer but still decided to go. David had been invited by another friend who, at the last minute, couldn't go. ... Seven hours into the trip, he realized no one knew his friend who invited him."

So, she continues, to make a long story short, "the rafting company had put him on the wrong trip with the wrong group. Coincidence? Or maybe it really was the 'right' trip after all? While David and I had both lived in the same neighborhood for seven years, we just never met. But after one visit from Terumi, our paths collided on the water."

Not only did she get a new husband, but Ahmed also got a well-designed space in the process. "Terumi offered many suggestions on simple things, like where to hang crystals to help energy flow through my home, and how my front door was 'lost' and too hard to find. To help love come into my life even easier, she suggested I needed to more clearly mark the entrance" — which she did with a beautiful pair of urns and spruce trees.

"One of the main areas she helped me with was the creation of my 'Love and Romance/Marriage Corner' in my home." Feng shui has taught for thousands of years that there are areas within every home marked for eight distinct areas, Ahmed continues: career, marriage, knowledge, family, fame, children, benefactor and wealth. "My 'marriage' area had been somewhere I'd been using for my office."

Leinow moved Ahmed's office to the appropriate "career" corner and decorated her "marriage"



Terumi Leinow

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area with flowers "and beautiful, whimsical things that I loved and hoped to bring into my life. She also told me to write my dream about love in a sealed envelope and put it by my bedside ... as positive reinforcement for this new element to come into my life."

Leinow, she says, also did a ritual in the bedroom to clear negative energy. "When first entering my bedroom, she mentioned feeling strong negative energy and asked if there had been a divorce recently. ... I had made a point not to reveal much information during our first conversations, but quickly found myself confessing how the previous homeowners had unfortunately ended their marriage in divorce only a year before I purchased the home."

In rearranging the room, Ahmed says she found it to be better suited for a relaxing night's sleep.

Leinow is a certified feng shui and space clearing consultant who trained with grand master Lin Yun, the world's leading feng shui authority. She's also a professional organizer, a karate black belt and a Master Gardener. Her Web site is at www.spiritoffengshui.com.

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The workshop will be held at Maison Reve at 11 Throckmorton Ave., Mill Valley, on Saturday, Feb. 11, from 10 to 11 a.m. The \$10 fee includes coffee and organic juices. Advance registration is required, and the workshop is limited to 25 people. For more information, call 361-9700 or visit www.maisonreve.com

Changing seasons inspire reinvention in a home's decor

AN APRIL WORKSHOP on creating your own garden house is being held by Mill Valley's Maison Reve.

It features Bonnie Trust Dahan, author of 23 home and garden books, including "Garden House," "Bringing the Outdoors In," "Garden Home: Creating an Urban Haven" and "Living with the Seasons: Creating A Natural Home."

In her writing she brings up a good point. "Snow-frosted trees give way to delicate spring flowers," she notes. "Nature is always changing, so why should your home remain the same?"

Why should your house remain the same? Why not change things a little bit and have some fun, adding fresh, cheery little treats to surprise yourself when you enter one of your rooms?

Dahan, who now has a catalog business featuring a line of stylish, environmentally sensitive lifestyle products called VivaTerra, has an impressive creative background in home and garden businesses. As creative director for Banana Republic, she developed and managed the company's image, she launched several successful product lines for Smith & Hawken, and she developed the Illuminations brand.

Yasmine Ahmed, owner of Maison Reve, says many of Dahan's books have inspired her personally over the years, and she wants to encourage other people to be inspired, too.

"From a casual spring table set with fragrant hyacinths to autumn squash displayed like modern art," she says, "our April workshop will give you simple and rejuvenating ideas for inviting the outdoors into every room of your home."

"Join us and you'll leave with creative decorating concepts you can use year-round."

The workshop will be held April 9 from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., at Maison Reve, 11 Throckmorton Ave., Mill Valley; it costs \$15, which includes juice and coffee. If you're interested in going, sign up early, because these workshops sell out quickly. For more information, call



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