

EVERYDAY FENG SHUI

Feng Shui by Maria

December 2013 Column for Benicia Herald

Kitchen Remodel in Time for the Holidays

“To me the kitchen is the most special room in the house. It’s a place for adventure, discovery, sharing and to come together to create something with family and friends.” Ted Allen

The kitchen is the hearth of the home. This is where families come together for nourishment. It is said that food and a warm kitchen are what makes a house a home. The kitchen, or “nourishment birthplace,” is especially important over the holidays where families gather to bake an abundance of sweets, and cook meals to be shared with loved ones.

What better way to nourish your Chi than to give your kitchen a facelift. Our 20 year old kitchen was beginning to look tired, and had some features that were not as efficient as we needed. We decided to begin this massive project at the end of August, with the goal to be finished by Thanksgiving. All went well and we were back in our new kitchen and entertaining by Halloween.

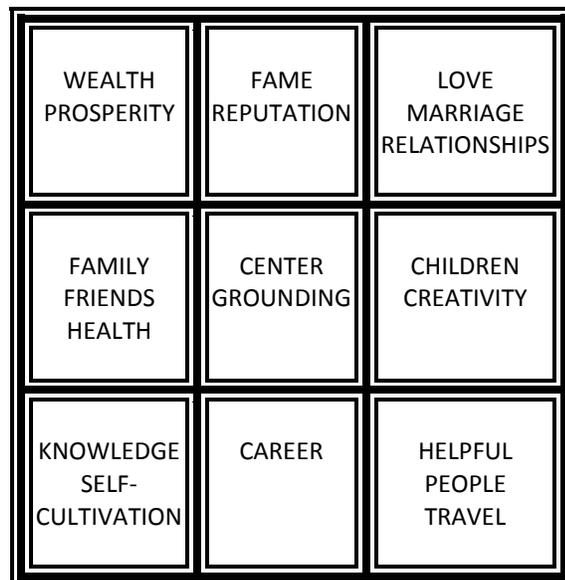
When deciding to remodel your kitchen consider these very important things:

- Surround yourselves with Helpful People by choosing the most skilled and experienced contractor and kitchen designers
- Use Feng Shui principles to guide you
- Have fun with it

Helpful people: We chose John Laverty (Laverty Construction) as our contractor, not only because he built our house 20 years ago, but because of his excellent reputation in Benicia and the surrounding area. For our cabinetry, counters and design we selected Affordable Quality Cabinets in Benicia for their high quality, furniture grade cabinetry, and their amazing kitchen designers. These talented helpful people guided us, helped us problem solve, and exercised patience every step of the way. They were knowledgeable, efficient, punctual and extremely neat. We also consulted with other helpful people in friends, family, Feng Shui teachers from the Western School of Feng Shui, and Michael Trahan Interior Designer. It took a village, but we’re extremely happy with the result.

Incorporating Feng Shui Principles:

1) Live With What You Love: When starting a kitchen remodel begin with something you truly love that you want to incorporate in your new kitchen, and build around that. It could be cabinetry, a sink, a special appliance, window etc. For us it was the Italian red glass tile I found in the Lucca’s Restaurant, in Benicia. We wanted this as a backslash and went through an extensive search to find it.



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ENTRANCE QUADRANT

2) Kitchens and the Bagua: The Feng Shui Bagua (Ba-gua) Map, is represented as a grid of nine sectors. The Bagua comes from the Chinese philosophy, “The I Ching,” and literally means “eight trigrams.” Check the location of your kitchen on the Bagua Map, and if it’s an area you want to energize, be creative. The most auspicious location for kitchens is the center of the home. This is the centering and grounding area – a perfect place for the “hearth” or heart of the home. However all other sectors can be enhanced and energized as well. Our kitchen is in the Love and Marriage Area, so I knew the red tile we already loved would be a perfect enhancement.

Kitchens should take on the qualities of the Bagua area they reside in. Review the Bagua diagram and locate where your kitchen is on the map. Here are some examples of using the Bagua enhancements for kitchens:

Kitchens in Career Area

- * Items in items in black or very dark colors, glass/crystal items, items reflecting your work
- * Art depicting water scenes (the sink in itself acts as a water feature)

Kitchens in Knowledge and Self Cultivation Area

- * Items in wood, the colors of blues, greens, or black and in the shape of columns or stripes
- * Healthy plants with rounded soft leaves and art depicting nature scenes

Kitchens in Friends/Family/Health Area

- * Healthy floral arrangements, art depicting vibrant flowers, Items in wood, colors of blues, greens
- * Photos of family, friends or representing perfect health

Kitchens in Wealth Area

- * Opulent items in the purple color spectrum, art representing wealth.
- * Healthy, round leaf plants

Kitchens in Fame Area

- * Items in the colors red and inspirational sayings
- * Art representing the fire element such as suns, sunsets (the stove and lighting also bring in the fire element)

Kitchens in Love and Marriage Area

- * Pairs of items (candles, love birds, vases)
- * Art or photos depicting romance, colors of reds, pinks and white

Kitchens in Children and Creativity Area

- * Photos of children or items made by children (great place for children’s art on refrigerator)
- * Items in metal and the colors of white and pastels, whimsical art

Kitchens in Helpful People and Travel Area

- * Art pertaining to spiritual guides, mentors, helpful people or desired travel locations
- * Items in metal and colors of white, black or grey (most kitchens have metal appliances)

Kitchens in Center Area

- * This is an auspicious location for kitchens because food preparation is associated with the hearth
- * Items and art in ceramics, the colors yellow, earth tones, and rectangle shapes

3) Kitchens and the Elements:

Kitchens are inherently related to the wood element because of food, but need to be balanced combining with the remaining elements: fire, water, earth and metal.

Fire: Our kitchen is located in a Fire Element area (back right corner) so we enhanced with the red tile and accessories.

Water: We balanced the fire with water through our black appliances.

Earth: The water was balanced with earth through all the rectangles in the cabinets and saffron colored pendant lights above the sink.

Wood: The earth was balanced by the all the quarter sawn oak cabinets and hardwood floors. Plus all the wonderful food.

Metal: The wood was in turn balanced by metal in the cream colored granite counters. The result: It all feels wonderful!

Elements can be tricky at first, but they are so effective in creating a wonderfully balanced feeling to any room. Learn more about elemental balance in my September 2011 column on <http://www.fengshuibymaria.com/newspaper-columns.html> (or come to my March class)

The next two are also Feng Shui principles, but are also key to finding and holding on to those helpful people.

4) Five Element Display - calm amidst active chaos: As you can imagine for 2 months our kitchen area visible from our great room, including dining room was in the state of "Active Chaos." Each night the contractors would clean up as best as they could before leaving but we were left with bare walls, floors, boxes and covered furniture. Each night I would place a 5 Element Display in the center of the torn up kitchen and bless the space. My display was comprised of a large white and red orchid (wood-flower, metal-white and fire-red) in a shiny round black pot (water-black) on a red yellow napkin (earth-yellow). This would bring calmness and beauty to the room. I would bless the space with an affirmation, then remove the display each morning before work began.

5) Vision Boards: At the onset of the project I created a Vision Board of what we wanted the process and outcome of the kitchen to look and feel like. It hung first in our original kitchen and while work was in process in our garage kitchen. As Helpful People appeared in the search for the tile I would add their names to the Helpful People Corner of the Vision Board which represented the Bagua map. Learn more about vision boards in my August 2013 column on <http://www.fengshuibymaria.com/newspaper-columns.html>

Lastly, have fun with it:

My husband created a very comfortable, usable kitchen in our garage; he set up all our small appliances on his workbench, a prep table with boxes of utensils, and dry goods and a small fold out picnic table. We were fortunate to have a sink and our old refrigerator also in there. We could BBQ and eat on our deck, but prepare coffee, breakfast and additional meals in the garage. I would move out the car and have my breakfast at the picnic table while greeting the contractors in the garage each morning. We kept a good attitude and focused on the end product rather than the temporary inconvenience we had created for ourselves.

Feng Shui at Work

Our kitchen now feels clean, organized, efficient and filled with love. It will be featured on the back of the January Benicia Magazine. As I prepare to entertain our family for the holidays I give thanks for all my blessings.

Three of my clients have their kitchens in the center of their home. The ceramic tiles and gold colors they chose for enhancement give the space a warm, nurturing feeling. Each is unique, yet each aids my clients to be centered and grounded.

My daughter's kitchen is in the Knowledge and Self Cultivation area of her condo. When she remodeled she added beautiful black counters, upgraded her appliances, painted her cabinets white and enhanced it with bright blue and green striped rugs, towels and accents. She added her affirmations and just got a promotion at work into a role she created for herself, and her boyfriend has gone back to school to complete his Graphic Arts degree.

Affirmations and Inner Work:

Remember that in Feng Shui, intent plays a significant role in enhancing any area of your home or business. That's why all enhancements need to be made with intentionality; written or stated affirmations are very important. It is also important for them to be expressed as if they are already happening. Examples while you're remodeling or enhancing a kitchen:

"The kitchen remodel has gone smoothly, efficiently and within budget." "This kitchen nourishes every part of me and my family."

Feng Shui on a Shoestring:

Feng Shui enhancements do not have to cost a great deal. The act of placing a 5 Element Display with items from your home when you're in the state of active chaos is very easy, inexpensive and garnishes great results.

Whether you're entertaining a kitchen remodel or just making enhancements. Take time appreciate the blessings and nourishment your kitchen gives you. **HAPPY HOLIDAYS and Bon Appetit!!!**

For questions or home consultations email at mtmcull@aol.com and put "Feng Shui" on the subject line, or visit my website at www.fengshuibymaria.com, (where you can read past columns), or Facebook "Feng Shui by Maria", where I post pictures as examples to enhancements.

* **Check out my BLOG** – Just go to the website and click on "Blog": You can view many pictures and, I will respond to your questions quickly.

COME TO MY NEXT CLASS and Receive \$40 Off a Home Consultation

My next two classes will be a series of 2 - Sign up for each separately through Parks and Recreation. You can take just one or both.

Saturday January 18- 9:00-12:00 am - Essential Feng Shui for Beginners

Saturday March 8 - 9:00-12:00 am - Balancing the Elements (for those having taken the Essentials class or with knowledge of the Bagua)

The Parks and Recreation Guide is now available, if you'd like to register. (Participants will receive \$40 off a home consultation.) - Mark your calendars and invite friends.

Until then...Blessings!

Maria McCullough – Bio

Maria McCullough, a Benicia resident, is the owner / founder of *Feng Shui by Maria* (www.fengshuibymaria.com) and is a speaker and educator with over 15 years of experience. She specializes in residential, landscape and business consultations. She is a graduate of the Western School of Feng Shui and has personally trained with Terah Kathryn Collins, founder of the Western School of Feng Shui, specializing in Essential Feng Shui® and author of numerous books including "The Western Guide to Feng Shui."