



# Zen in the City

*The Art of Feng Shui:*  
Bringing More Chi  
Into Your Home

By RACHEL SOKOL  
Photography By DAVID KOLODNY



**Left:** Before, this New York City apartment was in foreclosure when purchased by its current residents.

**Above:** Thanks to the vision of current resident, Elizabeth Knowles and Feng Shui designer, Jennifer Frank, the apartment is now colorful and calming.

**Right:** The 'money corner' is a place for homeowners, Elizabeth and Tom, to reflect on the abundance they both enjoy thanks to flourishing careers and a happy, new marriage.



“What is Feng Shui? You’ve heard of it. You may have even purchased a book on the subject. Perhaps you’ve even made attempts to Feng Shui your home but found yourself with no clue as to what you were doing.

*Never fear! The Feng Shui expert is here!*

*Exercising her powers of improving one’s personal space according to “principles of harmony and energy flow”, Jennifer Frank, interior designer and master of the ancient Chinese art of Feng Shui, has rescued yet another cramped city space. In doing so, this New York City apartment that was once in foreclosure, is now a calm, safe haven providing its prosperous owners with a soothing space to sit back and say “Abhhh!”*

When Manhattan artist, Elizabeth Knowles, first laid eyes on her new home, the apartment was an utter mess. The space, which had been in foreclosure before being purchased by Knowles, was dark, dingy, dirty, and had been divided into a series of very odd and ugly spaces. Fortunately, Knowles knew that she had a diamond in the rough. Thanks to the oversight and guidance of Feng Shui designer, Jennifer Frank, her apartment is now a bright, balanced, and relaxing space for Knowles and her husband Tom, who works in finance.

“According to my client, they couldn’t give that apartment away, which was perhaps one of the reasons it went into foreclosure in the first place!” said Frank. “Things were falling down, and the décor was weird. People in Manhattan have a way of just randomly sticking things up to section things off with makeshift dividers. By the time I was hired by my client, she had already done some work and had moved in.”

“She’s very artistic –a professional artist. Clearly, she could see the apartment’s potential, but wasn’t quite sure how to pull it all together. My job was to take what she had already done to the next level. The good thing about Elizabeth was that she’s so creative. I could give her ideas, and she’d just run with it.”

“When I design a home based on Feng Shui, I first find out what going on in the clients lives,” says Frank. “I hear a lot of the same stuff from my clients—that they either want money or a honey!” In Knowles’ case, she wanted her relationship with her new husband

to prosper, and so it has. The couple even purchased the apartment next door, and joined them together into one space.

In addition to understanding her client’s needs and desires, Frank lays out a floor plan with a compass to figure out what needs to go where, according to ancient Chinese Feng Shui principals. From there, she creates a chart for each client based on their lives to determine the best way to Feng Shui their home. She’ll even ask them about their family and spiritual beliefs to get a sense of their rituals and personality. “It blows me away if someone doesn’t have a spiritual system,” she says. “It’s mind, body and soul...you have to have a balance of these three to have a connection to Feng Shui.”

**Add balance to your home by bringing in ‘two’s’. It adds balance and harmony, and if used in the bedroom, it can invite in a life partner!**

One key ingredient that Frank incorporated throughout the apartment is the concept of balance through the use of two’s. “It wasn’t like the apartment wasn’t already beautiful by the time I was hired, but it needed more balance to create a more lasting relationship, which was one of my client’s primary goals with Feng Shui. It just needed to be activated.”

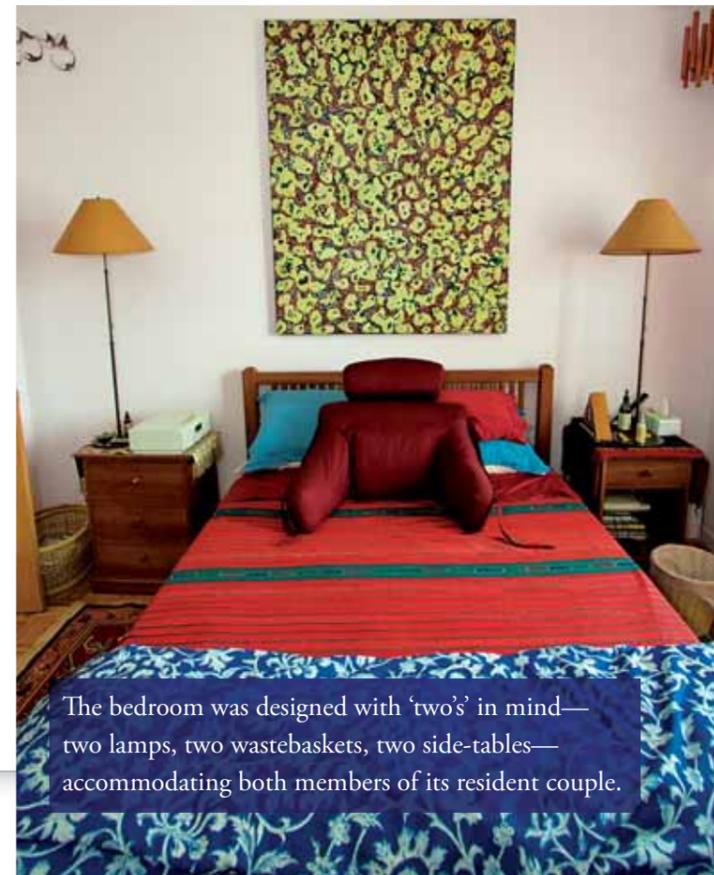
For example, the homeowner wanted a great relationship and a wonderful marriage so in order for Tom to be welcomed into the household, Frank and her client went to work on the



The entranceway was enlivened with the color blue and images in prints on the walls that reflect a watery theme. In doing so, the Chinese believed that it would invite “flow” into the career section of the home.



The homeowner honored her new husband with a workspace that reflected his unique personality. Custom cabinets allow the space to remain uncluttered with little effort.



The bedroom was designed with ‘two’s’ in mind—two lamps, two wastebaskets, two side-tables—accommodating both members of its resident couple.



The ‘Knowledge Corner’ of the home pays homage to the couple’s mutual love of intellect, critical and creative thinking.

bedroom. “In the bedroom and throughout the home, everything’s in two’s—two side tables, two lamps, two wastebaskets. It’s both practical and creates balance. And, we used really warm, passionate colors,” says Frank.

When Tom moved into the apartment, Frank and her client made sure that he had his very own space that matched his needs and quiet personality. “We gave Tom his own office. Some of the tricks we used to make it feel large and to function properly was to organize the clutter and to build-in plenty of storage space. So, even if things aren’t always neat on the shelf, there’s always a place for his things,” said Frank. “The desk and shelves above it were custom built by a carpenter who the couple knew ahead of time.”

The wood in the room is very important for it emphasizes Tom’s love of the Mission style, and a more modern, Asian influence. “It’s just a ‘manly’ office!” says Frank. “Everything’s very clean and neat, and makes you want to sit up straight in your chair. The wood cabinetry also balances the vibrancy of the red rug. It’s a very balanced office and he can concentrate in there, and that’s the bottom line.”

In the corner of Tom’s office, the designer created an area called the “Knowledge Corner”. The candles and the bamboo plant create a mini-altar to honor knowledge in the household and Tom’s office. Knowles and her husband change the open book on the altar from time-to-time to reflect new knowledge brought into the household through each of the couple’s experiences.

In the hallway, an area that Frank determined was the “Career Area” according to Feng Shui, they used a vibrant tone of blue, and created a sense of flow through the use of prints which depict boats, water and fish. “Before, there was nothing there—it was just an empty hallway. For career we need a lot of movement and flow, which is why we used the bright blue paint, and placed the water-inspired images there. Plus, the Japanese curtain over the side closet door gets your attention and says ‘hey, don’t go into the closet!’ The beautiful rug directs traffic into the main living space.”

Bold color and lighting transformed the small kitchen into the “Health Corner” of the home. Frank drew attention to this important area of the home with the placement of the homeowner’s nine paintings above the refrigerator. “The number nine draws together heaven and earth. The lighting was also designed to draw the eye up towards the paintings, illuminating this area of the home.”

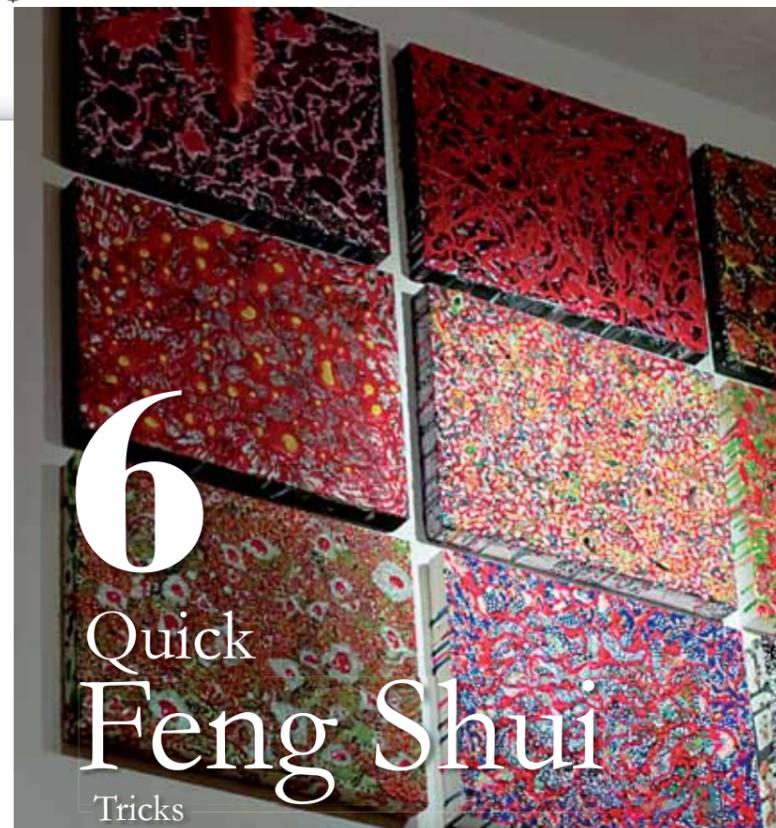
The whole apartment has a lot of custom cabinetry and shelves, created by the homeowner, with a little bit of guidance from Jennifer. In the main living area, Japanese shoji screens were added for privacy, but also create balance and orderliness. In the center of the main living space is the couple’s Creativity Center featuring an original painting by Knowles.

“For the Chinese, the Creativity Center was all about ‘making babies’, but for those not interested in making babies, it’s all about what turns you on”, says Frank. “For my client, it was literally about art, painting and well...creativity.”

Despite the bad economy, and a rough and tumble New York City lifestyle, Franks’ clients, Elizabeth and Tom, continue to thrive. Nonetheless, Frank discourages those who are interested in Feng Shui as the cure-all for their problems. Instead, she believes that Feng Shui is merely a practice for living a more conscious life—one that honors the value of money, health and relationships—while also establishing order and serenity within the home.

*Jennifer Ellen Frank earned her Certificate of Feng Shui studies from the Metropolitan Institute of Interior Design, the Black Sect Tantric Buddhist School, a Certificate in Classical Feng Shui at the New York School of Feng Shui under the guidance of Roger Green, has studied at Interior Design (Sheffield Interior Design School), and the Four Pillars Chinese Astrology with David Twicken. She has also studied extensively in China. She has been trained and continues to study under the tutelage of Master Sat Hon. She also teaches at the Sheffield Interior Design Feng Shui Program. Her official websites are [www.jenniferfrank.com](http://www.jenniferfrank.com) and [www.AnasaInteriors.com](http://www.AnasaInteriors.com).*

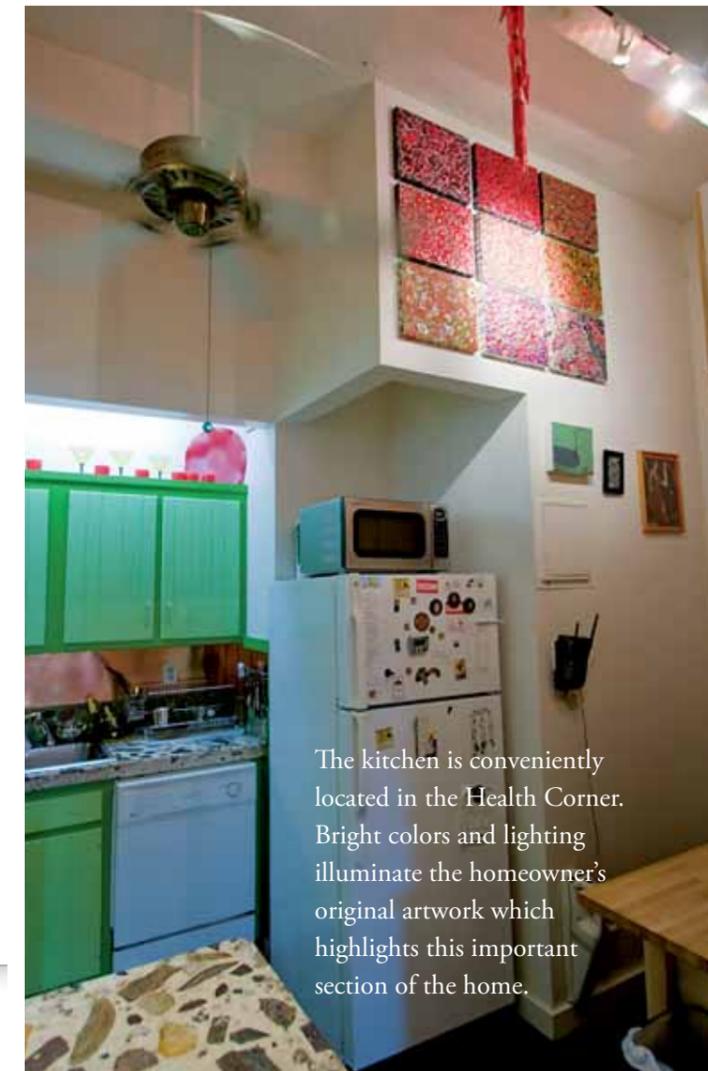
*Elizabeth Knowles is a NYC-based designer. Her official Web site is [elizabethknowles.com](http://elizabethknowles.com).*



# 6 Quick Feng Shui Tricks

While the design process to transform this Manhattan apartment into a little oasis in the city took six months, Feng Shui designer Jennifer Frank says you can make small changes in your own home and life quickly, and without hiring an outside designer. Here are just six quick tips:

- 1 If romance is what you’re looking for, think “two’s” in the bedroom. Two candles, two lamps, two wastebaskets, and so on. It makes room for a new partner in your space.
- 2 No mirrors in the bedroom! The Chinese believed that bad dreams can get stuck in them, but for the rest of us, it’s about not waking up looking at ourselves so early in the a.m.
- 3 For abundance, put a picture of a waterfall with mountains in the Wealth Corner of your home. This corner is in the southeast quadrant of the home or office.
- 4 Add color where you’re intuitively inspired to do so.
- 5 Put a huge money jar (a change jar) in the Wealth Area (in the southeast section of the house along with the mountain and waterfall image).
- 6 In the ‘Family Area’, put pictures of friends and family together, all using the same style and color of frame. It promotes a sense of cohesion and togetherness.



The kitchen is conveniently located in the Health Corner. Bright colors and lighting illuminate the homeowner’s original artwork which highlights this important section of the home.