



Real Estate



That's what I call country living

Two decades ago, Steve Sharpe took a chance on a young architect. Now, he's glad he did.
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SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 2008

THE NEW MEXICAN

Forget Feng Shui; think Vastu



Photos by Erika Blumenfelt

Beauty and comfort are requirements for Vastu homes. The center of the room is open, which honors the space element and allows for improved health and a greater feeling of expansiveness.

'Yoga of design' addresses sacred space, design and architecture

By Heather Wood
For The New Mexican

Sherri Silverman believes that our homes are our sanctuaries in the world.

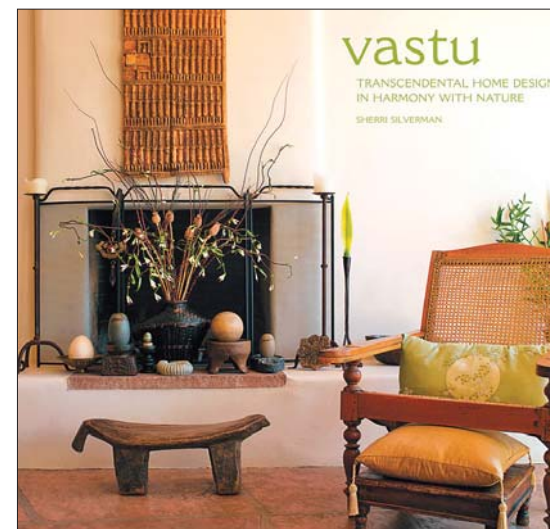
A long-time Santa Fean and a student of Vastu since 1975, Silverman is the owner of Transcendence Design and author of *Vastu: Transcendental Home Design in Harmony with Nature*. Dubbed the "yoga of design," Vastu is the ancient East Indian Vedic practice that addresses sacred space, design and architecture.

"Vastu is attunement with nature and beauty," Silverman says. "It honors the five elements ... air, fire, water, space and earth energies, as well as cosmic forces. These are all universal factors wherever you live and work on the planet." Whether you're looking for increased happiness, prosperity or simply better sleep, "with Vastu everything just seems to go more easily."

Vastu is explained in detail in Silverman's newly published book, which is available locally at Casa Natura and Collected Works Bookstore, as well as online. Retailing for \$29.95, this 150-plus-page tome is filled with beautiful images of Vastu-inspired interiors, gardens and diagrams, as well as images of Silverman's own artwork. Pointing out the variety of decorating styles included in the pages, Silverman explains that "Vastu works with any decorating scheme — from Southwest style to Middle Eastern."

She began offering Vastu design services professionally in 1999. "I was visiting a friend in Boulder, Colo., and she asked if I would help her with her space using Vastu," Silverman says. "She wanted a relationship and support for her business. We changed things in her home. The next day three men literally came to

Please see **VASTU**, Page G-2



Vastu: Transcendental Home Design in Harmony with Nature by Sherri Silverman (Gibbs Smith Publisher, 2007, \$29.95). Available locally at Casa Natura and Collected Works, as well as online.



Erika Blumenfelt

According to Vastu philosophy, this Santa Fe kitchen is properly placed in the southeast of the home, which is the area in which the fire element is predominant.

Vastu: Yantas considered more than artwork

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her door and her business picked up”

Vastu vs. Feng Shui

Both Vastu and Feng Shui bring solutions to peoples' lives, work and home spaces through cures and remedies based on principles of space orientation, alignment and energy flow, Silverman says, but Vastu is thousands of years older — and more effective — than Feng Shui. “Each wants you to be happy, healthy and prosperous. From my research, Vastu gives the best results,” she says.

In the Vastu approach, each of the five elements has a predominant relationship to a certain sector of the home. The ideal placement of the kitchen is southeast, explains Silverman, because “subtle infrared rays that come in from the southeast are very nourishing.” The northeast is good for water, which is essential to life. “Water features such as fountains, ponds, and waterfalls belong in the northeast or northern corner of the home or property,” she says.

The southwest represents the earth element. “Earth is grounding and quieter, more secure. A master bedroom would ideally be situated here. And the northwest is the air element — perfect for the placement of a window to bring freshness into the home,” says Silverman. “The center of any room or building is the element of space. If it's open and not obstructed, it encourages expansiveness and supports health.”

Of course, you can't just pick rooms up and rearrange them according to optimal Vastu placement, so there are cures that Silverman relies on. “A yantra is a little cosmic diagram that generates specific life-supporting energies,” she says. “These can be placed throughout the space. I consider them beautiful artwork, but they can be placed behind framed artwork or in a cupboard.”

Looking at ‘flow’

Carol Williamson found

Vastu to be just what she needed for her Glorieta home.

“You reach a point you don't know what to do next,” she says. “I felt like the energy was jammed in the house. Sherri was able to go right to the issues, address them and come up with solutions that really worked out. It was totally worthwhile.”

Clients find Silverman in a variety of ways, including word of mouth, from her book, via Internet searches on Vastu and through her Web site, www.transcendencedesign.com.

Santa Fe resident Tami Carlson got interested in Vastu when she heard Silverman on KSFR 101.1 in December 2007. She and husband Geoff Towle had “been in tune with Feng Shui,” Carlson says, but didn't realize Vastu was so much older. “That appealed to us,” she says. Towle adds, “It's a lot like Feng Shui. The difference comes down to what you want to believe in.”

The couple had just moved into their new home when they enlisted Silverman's expertise. “We work from home and have two young kids, and we wanted to figure out how I could focus better while working,” Towle says. “We've gotten hold of the craziness around here using Vastu and Sherri's help.”

Carlson agrees. “We noticed a difference. We have a yantra in the kitchen and it really changes the energy,” she says. “Sherri also knows design and color really well. She encouraged us to go with what we really love.”

Jacqueline Antonius sought Silverman's input before opening her new salon, Lotus Beauty, on the corner of St. Francis Drive and Agua Fría Street a few months ago. Specializing in organic and chemical-free hair color, Antonius wanted the space to reflect a calm and healthy environment.

“Sherri looked at the space and helped me plan it,” she says. “We looked at flow, where the energy travels, where the entrance should be and where we should place our retail products. Each different part of the salon has a special pur-

IF YOU GO

What: Talk and reading from *Vastu: Transcendental Home Design in Harmony with Nature* with Sherri Silverman; book signing to follow

When: 1 p.m. Saturday, April 12

Where: Casa Natura, 328 Sandoval St. (at Aztec Street)

For more information: Call 820-7634.

pose. I go to work and I feel serene and all my clients are happy. I've gotten great feedback.”

Antonius believes Silverman “really knows her stuff. I just trust her,” she says.

‘Feeling the space’

Silverman can consult from the initial design and placement of a home or business to creating solutions for existing spaces. She says has worked

on large and small projects in Santa Fe, Italy, Australia, Korea and the United Kingdom,

“Right now I am working on a remodel in Massachusetts and new construction in New England,” she says. “Clients send me the floor plans marked with cardinal directions with a compass. They sometimes send photos, and the issues and problems with the space and their lives.”

To do her work, Silverman relies on her intuition, sensitivity to beauty and on asking the right questions. “I'm not just following a checklist,” she says. “It's not mechanical. I'm feeling the space, and I'm listening to what people need. We're exposed to so many influences that are unsettling in a world that can be stressful. It pays to create a positive effect wherever we can.”

For more information on *Vastu and Transcendence Design*, visit www.transcendencedesign.com or contact Sherri Silverman at (505) 984-0108.

THE NEW MEXICAN'S local mortgage rates

LENDER	30-YEAR RATE*PTS/APR	15-YEAR RATE*PTS/APR	ARMs RATE*PTS/APR	30-YR FHA/VA RATE*PTS/APR
Quest Mortgage Corp	5.375+0+2	4.875+0+2	5.375+0+1	5.50+0+2
505-984-8855	5.875+0+0	5.50+0+0	(5/1 ARM)	6.00+0+0

Weekly Mortgage News

McLean, VA – Freddie Mac (NYSE:FRE) today released the results of its Primary Mortgage Market Survey® (PMMS®) in which the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage (FRM) averaged 5.88 percent with an average 0.5 point for the week ending April 3, 2008, up from last week when it averaged 5.85 percent. Last year at this time, the 30-year FRM averaged 6.17 percent.

The 15-year FRM this week averaged 5.42 percent with an average 0.5 point, up from last week when it averaged 5.34 percent. A year ago at this time, the 15-year FRM averaged 5.87 percent.

Five-year Treasury-indexed hybrid adjustable-rate mortgages (ARMs) averaged 5.59 percent this week, with an average 0.6 point, down from last week when it averaged 5.67 percent. A year ago, the 5-

year ARM averaged 5.92 percent this week with a 0.5 point increase from last week when it averaged 5.85 percent. Last year at this time, the 5-year ARM averaged 6.17 percent.

“While prime, conforming mortgage rates have historically low levels, long-term rates have drifted slightly upwards this week. The economy may have a little more breathing room, but financial markets forecasters are still cautious. Freddie Mac vice president and chief economist Frank Nothaft said in a report that the Fed's February's personal income

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Consumers: To report any inaccuracies email info@iMortgageGuide.com. Information is current as of April 4, 2008 and believed to be accurate but can not be guaranteed and can change without notice. Credit history, FICO Score and other factors may affect program terms. Rates based on \$165,000 single family loan. Jumbo rates (loans over \$417,000) based on a \$417,000 loan. Minimum downpayment requirements, and other restrictions, may apply. Closing costs may vary. Contact each company for details. R = refinance program only. Pts = points include origination and discount fees. Lock = rate lock period. 30 - 60 day lock unless specified. APR = Annual Percentage Rate and is calculated by each company – includes costs to obtain loan and private mortgage insurance if required. ARM (p/m) = Adjustable Rate Mortgage program. Copyright 2008 iMortgageGuide.com LLC

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Loan

30yr fixed
30yr fixed
15yr fixed
15yr fixed
5/1 ARM
5/1 ARM

A yantra, Sherri Silverman says, is ‘a little cosmic diagram that generates specific life-supporting energies.’ Above: yantra is for Mercury, ‘planetary lord of the north.’



Courtesy Transcendence Design