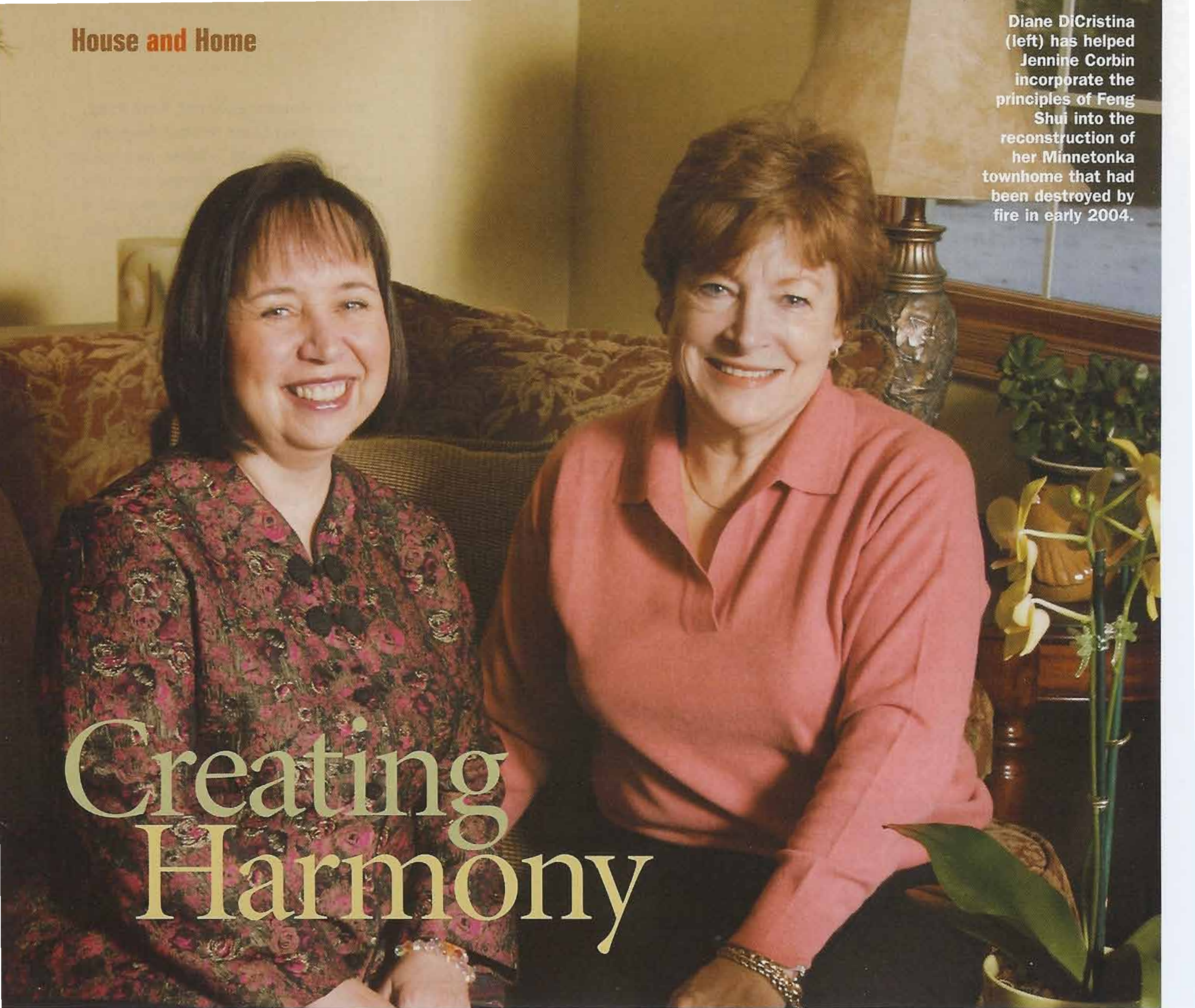


Diane DiCristina (left) has helped Jennine Corbin incorporate the principles of Feng Shui into the reconstruction of her Minnetonka townhome that had been destroyed by fire in early 2004.



Creating Harmony

Feng Shui brings peace to a newly rebuilt Minnetonka townhome

By Angela Alwin Photo Diana Watters

After a devastating fire consumed her Minnetonka townhome, Jennine Corbin is hoping to rise like a phoenix from the ashes. Corbin's home of 14 years was completely destroyed by flames in early 2004 and the yearlong reconstruction process has given her time to consider the nature of peace, life and happiness, and the role that Feng Shui can play in bringing harmony to her newly rebuilt home. Feng Shui (fung shway) is an ancient concept based on the desire to live consciously in harmony with the natural

environment and to create harmony through the art of placement. Practitioners believe that by making subtle changes in your surroundings, with intention, you will create positive changes in your life.

After the fire, Corbin called Diane DiCristina, a Bloomington-based Feng Shui consultant. The two women met three years earlier in a spiritual guidance training program and Corbin was eager to learn how she could incorporate the principles of Feng Shui into the reconstruction of her home. "There's really no such thing as a typical consultation," explains DiCristina, "but an initial consultation will usually take about two to three hours. Upon scheduling a consultation, I send a confirmation letter to the client that spells out what I expect from them. I request an 8 1/2 x 11-inch line drawing of the main level of the living space. It

doesn't have to be anything fancy, but it does need to be accurate and drawn to scale. It should include the attached garage, if applicable, and it's also helpful to include the placement of doors and windows. I also ask clients to really think about or meditate on three intentions that they would like to focus on during the consultation. I also include a description of the red letter tradition – as a Feng Shui consultant I'm paid in a red envelope, so I include an explanation of that practice. Finally, I ask that all children or anyone that isn't part of the consultation be absent from the space during the consultation so that we really create a sacred space and truly honor the time together and the exchange of energy."

During the consultation, DiCristina lays a life map, or bagua, over the line drawing provided by the client. In that map are the

nine areas that reflect one's life: knowledge, family, wealth, fame/reputation, partnership/relationship, children/creativity, helpful people/travel, career and – at the center touching all areas – health. DiCristina bases her Feng Shui recommendations on the relationship between the bagua and the sketch of the home. How radical are these recommendations? Will a homeowner be advised to knock down walls or add windows? Will the modifications be subtle or fairly dramatic? "Subtle," DiCristina assures. "One of my taglines is 'working with you and the treasures you already have'. Often times people have everything they need within their space, but perhaps it's just out of placement."

Corbin was pleased by the recommendations made for her home, "There wasn't anything I felt would have been difficult to do. My kitchen has a lot of drains, so we placed mirrors to prevent the draining of energy. Also, because my house is a townhome, I put a mirror on a common wall that my bedroom shares with a neighboring unit. The

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JENNINE CORBIN


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mirror helps keep my neighbors' energy in their space. The only thing I needed help with was placing a crystal ball in the center of the vaulted ceilings to create a good energy flow. One of the construction guys placed that for me – he was so nice and respectful of that. Now I'm just waiting to move in so that I can work on furniture placement. Once I'm settled I'd love to have Diane come over and perform a blessing ceremony."

Practitioners of Feng Shui believe that it supports change and works with the ch'i (flow of energy or life force) in all our living and working areas, creating a positive envi-

ronment. When energy is aligned, there is harmony. "I can't imagine doing anything different," says DiCristina. "I absolutely love what I do and, in the end, what I'm doing is helping people. My intention is to share my knowledge and help people change their lives. Feng Shui is about change and I'm here to help people make positive change.

Although 2004 was a difficult year for Corbin, she is quick to give thanks to all those who have helped her through that trying time, "I can't say enough about the firefighters from the area. They showed so much compassion when I lost everything. It was overwhelming at first, but now I see [the reconstruction] as a new start and by incorporating Feng Shui into it I'm hoping to create the best home I can."

For more information, contact Diane DiCristina at Wind Water Harmony by calling (952) 346-9339 or by visiting www.windwaterharmony.com. 

Angela Alwin is a contributing editor for Minnetonka Magazine.