

HEALING SPACE

Incorporating the principles of feng shui in experiential health care design at Rejuvenation Health. BY DR. GERRY CURATOLA

When Dr. Gerry Curatola, a renowned biologic cosmetic dentist, launched Rejuvenation Dentistry in 2007, he turned to the principles of feng shui for an experiential design for his office. Now, with Rejuvenation Health, the integrative wellness center in the heart of East Hampton Village that opened in 2019, and a new flagship office for Rejuvenation Dentistry planned on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, he returns to the environmental psychology that channels "chi energy" in the office environment to support his holistic health care values with his patients. Here, he tells Purist about it:



Dr. Gerry Curatola incorporates wellness details into his state-of-the-art treatment center.

In 2006, I attended a corporate leadership retreat hosted by Starizon Studio, a management consulting firm, in Keystone, Colorado. It profoundly changed my approach to the health care workplace environment with the simple but powerful belief that the challenges we face in our respective workplaces will be met only through transformational change, not incremental improvement. Studying design philosophies that could create transformational experiences that most closely mirrored the health care values I wanted for my patients, it was feng shui, an ancient Chinese design psychology, that energetically and environmentally supports health and wellness.

When I began this process, I recognized that the old standard dentist's office layout, along with the sound of the drill whirling and the smell of clove oil permeating throughout, needed to go like the Betamax and 8-track cassette deck. The whole energy in most health care offices, especially dental offices, is bad; most people visit only out of necessity, like death and taxes. I knew I had to change that, and create a space that celebrated wellness in every way—the look, feel and even smell of the space. I

wanted it to be welcoming, calming and supportive. In my first architect's meeting, I actually placed the yin-yang symbol over the whole rectangular shape of the office space on the blueprint and told the architect that this had to be incorporated into the layout. I explained that there needed to be two distinct environments in the dental office: a yin space (passive energy), the feng shui energy of relaxation, which was essential at the front desk reception and consultation area; and a yang space (active energy), the feng shui energy expressed in strong, vibrant sounds and colors, bright lights, and upward-moving energy, in the clinical

areas. The two distinct environments balance each other, creating a positive harmonic spirit that channels what is called the "chi energy" in the space. It has flow and works like a charm. The Park Avenue project received an AIA design award after its completion.

At Rejuvenation Health in East Hampton, there is a wellness apothecary; Reiki, acupuncture, and IV vitamin infusions are provided in a very peaceful, nurturing environment. Perhaps the best design feature is the tranquil garden, the perfect setting for the personal and group meditation classes we are now offering.

The Fifth Avenue space is especially exciting since there are 12 windows on ground level across from an iconic view of Central Park. I know that this oasis of green needs to be brought into the space, because in feng shui, an expansive garden confers helpful yang and dragon energy, which in turn energizes a space for health and happiness. What could be better in the heart of New York City than a wellness space for mind, body and spirit?

Dr. Curatola is a frequent contributor to Purist; rejuvdentist.com; rejuv-health.com. 🌸