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Houses Atuned to Feng Shui: Designs That Go With the Flow

WHO Purvi Sevak, 31, an economics professor, and her husband, Jeff Hubbard, 39, a portfolio manager, shown with their daughter, Qatalina, 8 weeks

WHAT 3-bedroom house

WHERE Bethel, Me.

Purvi: We live in Manhattan, and we've always wanted a country house surrounded by nature. When we bought this land, people would say, "If you'd clear those trees, you'd have a great view." We'd think: How are trees not a view?

Jeff: I'd commiserate with a ski buddy of mine, Derek Bloom, and he understood completely. Like us, he was a proponent of sustainable building practices. He is an architect; eventually we hired him to design the house.

At the time, our familiarity with feng shui was nearly nil. But Derek and his wife, Eliza Mellen-Smith, would point out the ways feng shui was consistent with our views. We were skeptical but kept open minds, and in the end, many elements of feng shui were incorporated into the design. We used predominantly natural materials, for example, such as stone, wood and slate. And, we sited the house in what feng shui refers to as a "commanding position." It's halfway down the face of the mountain facing another peak and sits on a gently sloping plane. According to feng shui, this balances the flow of Qi, or energy, to and from the house. It also means we have a lovely view. The great room was designed with enormous windows facing south. Maximizing sun exposure is said to increase the energy flow into the home. In practical terms, it means a room that's sunny and energy efficient.

Purvi: Even Qatalina's room was selected based on its position in the house. It's in the "knowledge" or "wisdom" corner, which promotes learning. She'll be coming here with us for years. Why not offer her every possible advantage?

As told to Bethany Lyttle



Herb Swanson for The New York Times