

because they don't function, but because they don't nurture the end users," says Lipman, who, along with a growing legion of architects and scholars, believes that by using the principles of Vedic design, it's possible to incorporate health benefits and good fortune directly into a home's foundation. And a growing number of architects and home builders are beginning to put these principles to the test in their designs for the average American family.

The blueprint for this challenge comes from writings thought by western Sanskrit experts to date back to 2,500 B.C. or earlier of ancient Indian Rishis, or seers, who claim to have intuitively understood the laws of physics, the science of nature, and the cosmos, among other things. In these texts, they concluded the human body is somehow reactive to the movements of the sun, as well as spatial orientation. Over centuries of interpretation, the original Sthapatya Veda text one of 40 dealing with everything from music, art, and philosophy to medicine and city planning was modified and morphed by the Chinese into the similar concept of feng shui.

Twenty-five years ago, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the Indian guru who introduced Transcendental Meditation to the world in the 1960s, made it his mission to put the pieces of the original Sanskrit text back together. In 1997, he established Maharishi Global Construction in the U.S. to create a prototypical development, Maharishi Vedic City, just outside Fairfield, Iowa, that would put this ancient architectural knowledge to the test. Today, that city is a thriving community containing more than 150 homes priced from \$200,000 to \$2 million, a 272-acre Maharishi University of Management campus, and a recently built College of Vedic Medicine, partially funded by an endowment from the National Institutes of Health, which often provides money for alternative sources of medicine. The area is also quite prosperous, with Cambridge Investment Research and other locally based firms filtering as much as \$8 billion in managed funds through Fairfield County and Maharishi Vedic City within the last year. That, combined with several other statistics, prompted Wired magazine to dub the farming community "Silicorn Valley."

Vedic architecture is by no means limited to Iowa's borders, however. In the past 10 years, MGC has worked on Vedic homes for clients in Jackson Hole, Wyoming; Austin, Texas; and Potomac, Maryland; it has retrofitted other homes with Vedic elements. The practice isn't just confined to residential design. In addition to building the 27,000-square-foot Comprehensive Blood and Cancer Center in Bakersfield, California, MGC is currently working with the Tower Companies, one of Washington's largest commercial real-estate developers, on a 200,000-square-foot office building in Rockville, Maryland. The building is expected to be a prototypical smart/green workplace incorporating Vedic architecture and earth-friendly building materials.

What's more, since MGC pioneered Vedic design principles nearly a decade ago, other home builders and architectural firms, such as Lexington, Kentucky-based Veda Design and Boone, North Carolina-based Karu Architects, have instituted Vedic theory into many of their homes and office projects across the country. Florida-based builders Richard Bialosky and David Ederer are breaking ground this winter on Mandala Club, a 90-unit Vedic-designed planned residential community being built in Vero Beach. At its core, Vedic architecture proposes that the direction a building faces (east dissipates fear, disease, and poverty; west fosters health decline and loss of income), the size and placement of the rooms (based on mathematical formulas prevalent in the universe and nature), and the materials with which the building is made (all natural and nontoxic) all objectively influence the quality of life of the users. "It has nothing to do with the architectural style or the size of the home," offers