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Does your home need healing? How 'energy cleansing' is captivating the housing market

A flight to ancient rituals in an age of AI is spurring more homeowners, estate agents and architects to call on energy healing practices. What were once hushed whispers are now an open secret

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Rebecca Newman

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1

"For many years nobody had lived here; the energy inside felt sad and heavy," says Violette Serrat of the derelict 1800s farmhouse in Connecticut she bought as a family retreat. Serrat is creative director of Guerlain make-up and founder of French make-up brand Violette_Fr. "Every home I have lived in I have had people to help me clean the energy. In France we have a holistic approach to things, so in my world, it is quite a common thing to do." Stateside, her beliefs were regarded with more scepticism. Still, she called in an "energy cleanser" to work on her new home. "I know it wouldn't be for everyone," she says. "But for those who are sceptical I would ask them the question: if it works for the person doing it, what's the problem?" She shrugs, "For me, I feel the change."

Serrat has Norfolk-based energy healer Amaryllis Fraser to thank. Fraser, 50, has worked with clients from artist Antony Gormley to Hollywood royalty (under inevitable NDAs), and has "cleared" spaces across the UK and the US (including the Tower of London; no NDAs needed for centuries-old royalty). She's aware that what she does is often dismissed out of hand. She is unperturbed.

"You can feel negative energy," she says: "You immediately recognise it if you walk into a room when there's been an argument." Layers of this can live on, she says. In helping to change the energy, she describes herself thus: "I'm like an upmarket cleaning lady."

Violette Serrat, creative director of Guerlain make-up and her own make-up brand: 'Every home I have lived in I have had people to help me clean the energy' © Lea Winkler

Energy healer Amaryllis Fraser: 'You can feel negative energy when you walk into a room after an argument. I'm like an upmarket cleaning lady' © Jonathan Barnwell

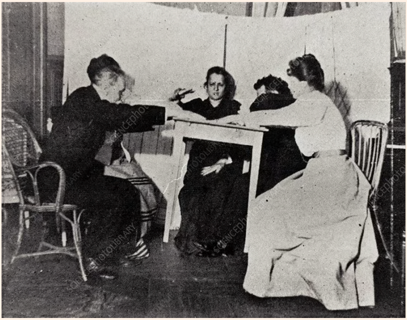
According to a Grand View Research report, the global "mind, body and energy healing" market size (incorporating yoga, meditation and acupuncture) was estimated at $78.5bn in 2023 and is projected to grow year on year at 26 per cent to 2030. And the Venn diagram between this world and that of real estate and architecture is increasing. Buying agents report purchasers investing in energy-cleansing practices; architects are working with dowsers and land energy experts to best orient new-builds along feng shui-like principles, and to heal or bless the land before the diggers go in. Some vendors are seeking out house cleansers to help sell "stuck" properties.

Neuroscientist and MIT Sloan lecturer Dr Tara Swart suggests that the flight to ancient rituals in an age of AI discombobulation echoes the 1800s when, in a time of industrial change there arose a widespread interest in the occult, seances, trance mediums, tarot; a sort of quest for metaphysical order as old certainties changed with steam and steel. Today, she says, "People feel lost, disconnected and isolated — and are grappling for answers. We are turning back to the practices that connect us to something greater than ourselves, and to our forebears." The Society for Psychical Research, founded in Kensington in 1882, boasted Arthur Balfour as president before he became prime minister. Energy healer Fraser is his great-great-great granddaughter.

> **House cleansing has become more prevalent in recent years. It has long been bubbling under the surface, discussed in hushed tones — but now it's an open secret**
>
> **Harry Gladwin, The Buying Solution**

Growth in psychedelic-assisted therapy — now legal in Australia and in certain US states — is also foregrounding the role of the shaman. Healer Richard Creightmore says that energy cleansing "is in the realm of shamanism really, which is being given credence again".

Along with Monica Thomson-Mayassi and Monica Dumont, Fraser is one of the shortlist of "house cleansers" recommended by buying agent Harry Gladwin, head of the Cotswolds branch of The Buying Solution. "House cleansing has become more prevalent in recent years," he says. "It has long been something bubbling under the surface, discussed in hushed tones or not at all — but now it's an open secret." It's particularly common among clients in their thirties and forties buying older houses, he says. He cites one who "recently purchased an old manor house that had a history of distress. She wanted to break the cycle."


A table levitation led by Italian medium Eusapia Palladino and observed by scientists from the Society for Psychical Research in about 1890 © Science Photo Library

Lindsay Cuthill, co-founder of Blue Book Agency, which specialises in selling country houses, has noticed a similar trend with buyers, noting: "I'm regularly asked whether houses are haunted." His own beliefs are, however, more prosaic. "The energy in a house is what you bring to it. My view is that we're all just passing through, what's gone before doesn't affect the future."

$80bn

Value of the global 'mind, body and energy healing' market, Grand View Research report 2023

Not so for Emma Manners, Duchess of Rutland and chatelaine of Belvoir Castle, the 365-room Gothic Revival castle in Leicestershire, which has been (in various iterations) the family seat of the Rutland family since the 16th century. "I understand that what I'm saying may make no sense to you, but I've long been interested in energies; when you live in these houses with families that are lucky enough to trace their ancestry back so far, there's a really thick sense of the past," she says. "In a place like Belvoir, history looks at you — the portraits on the walls, all the people who have gone before."

A friend introduced her to Fraser. "While there's a lot more talk about this sort of thing now, still it may sound strange," she continues, "but it felt like there was some interference going on, and I was interested in clearing that away." Fraser explored the energies within the castle using a small crystal pendulum, which she uses as a kind of diagnostic tool; she asks questions and is guided by how the pendulum moves. This drew her to an area of the castle to work close to where one of Manners' daughters slept.

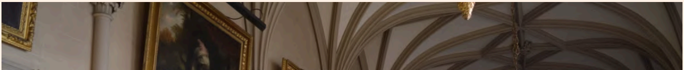
Emma Manners, Duchess of Rutland and chatelaine of Belvoir Castle, who hired Amaryllis Fraser to clear out old negative energies from her home

'Prior to the clearing, my daughter had really low energy . . . her mental, emotional and physical health shifted,' she says

Fraser says she focuses her mind to "tune into the frequencies around us", and clears out the old, stagnant energy by first visualising and then by projecting "a new vibrational field of health, light, abundance and success". Manners describes feeling a difference in the castle, and, "prior to the clearing, my daughter had really low energy; her mental, emotional and physical health has since shifted."

There is an intrinsic power in just taking action, says psychologist Dr Vanessa Ruspoli of energy cleansing. "If you believe the ritual is healing, you are likely to feel safe and positive about the space that you're in . . . you are telling yourself a new story about your life or your home."

It's not just owners of stately homes with centuries of history who are turning to the practice. Belinda Shipman called in an energy cleanser for her new-build, 6,500 sq foot house in a gated development in St John's Wood, London, with electrics that kept playing up. "I'm Australian and I am a bit *whatever* when it comes to energy," says Shipman. But "what I saw was what I saw," she says of the experience.



‘In a place like Belvoir, history looks at you — the portraits on the walls, all the people who have gone before,’ says Manners

Energy healing is also being brought into play before home construction begins. For architect Jessica Fleming, energy considerations are paramount from the get go. “I’ve long been interested in shamanic culture, in things like energy and how it can affect our health and creativity,” she says. Together with husband Christian, she runs Fleming Architects, a Cotswolds-based firm specialising in country houses, often new-builds which doff their hat to Georgian style as well as the local vernacular. When they were looking to lay down plans for their own home, they turned to Creightmore, a specialist in feng shui and land acupuncture, to help them orient the designs.

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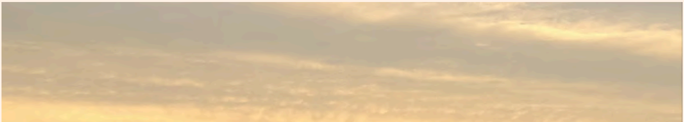
Creightmore looked into underground streams running beneath the house, believed to hold energies, as well as leys — energy lines that run between historic sites of spiritual importance — and where they would cut through the proposed build. They are not disastrous to build over, Creightmore explains — in fact, “it is ideal to locate a building with two leys crossing in the centre” — but you definitely want to make sure the energy in them “is running clean and healthy”. If they are not, he believes, “you may not have such good luck or good health”. Creightmore, who Fleming describes as having a Druid-like presence, performed “land acupuncture” on the lines.

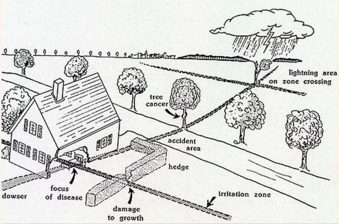


The home of architects Jessica and Christian Fleming; they asked Richard Creightmore to perform 'land acupuncture' on the plot before they began building to help them orient the designs

Creightmore compares land acupuncture with acupuncture on the body. Where the latter uses needles in meridian lines, he places 2ft-long wooden "needles" made of yew — which he calls wands — in leys in the ground. "References to land acupuncture in Chinese texts date back to the 1500s," says Creightmore; it can be seen as a branch of feng shui, with its desire to harmonise the *chi* (energy).

"It felt like an enriching part of the process: it resonated with me to connect with the land," says Fleming. "I believe this kind of work pays dividends." Moreover, "If you're building a new house from scratch, a home you're going to live in, and into which you are putting both emotion and resources, you want to get everything right." She says many of her clients express an interest when she mentions the work she has had done. "I've been surprised at how open clients have been."

Creightmore's services 'felt like an enriching part of the process: it resonated with me to connect with the land', says Jessica Fleming



A drawing of the land and its energies © Dr Joseph Kopp

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For more than 20 years Adrian Incledon-Webber ran Burns & Webber, an estate agency in Surrey. He was intrigued by the houses that seemed perfect but that didn't sell — or the ones that seemed to bring unhappiness to their new owners. One particular Victorian home came back on the market repeatedly, with the new buyers each time splitting up. After the same property came back on the market five times, Incledon-Webber christened it the "divorce house".

> **I'm not self-conscious about whether other people believe it's true or not: the**

"I wanted to find a way of clearing the old energy patterns, so a family could move in and live happily," he says. He trained with a number of healers and learnt to use

> **point is — it's helping me. And if it helps, it helps**
>
> **Violette Serrat**

dowsing rods — "much as you can dowse for water, you can dowse for energy", he says, citing healing traditions in ancient Chinese, Indian and Native American cultures.

He cleansed the house — diagnosing with the rods, and then "channelling a healing light and asking for the energies to be taken and disposed of appropriately in the universe". He reports that the couple living in the "divorce house" have been there more than 20 years and remain married.

Feng shui expert Richard Creightmore: 'References to land acupuncture in Chinese texts date back to the 1500s'

Adrian Incledon-Webber, house healer and a former estate agent

Incledon-Webber is now a full-time house healer. He also teaches homeowners to do it themselves, using the principles laid out in his book *Heal Your Home*. (This may also be a rather more cost-effective approach: prices tend to be "on application", but depending who you choose, and the size of your property, costs rapidly rise north of four figures.)

"Cleansing is very much about the intention," says Incledon-Webber. You don't really need crystals or sage. Swart adds: "The science of manifestation is potent and intention is pivotal: set your intention and it will change your mindset and how you experience things."

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Ruspoli agrees: "If you believe you're lucky, you tend to take opportunities. So, believing that something like energy healing is going to create positive change does not in itself make the positive change happen, but it makes you more likely to make decisions that are going to open doors towards the thing that you're seeking."

"For me, it connects me to the place that will be my home," says Serrat. "I'm not self-conscious about whether other people believe it's true or not: the point is — it's helping me. And if it helps, it helps."

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