



A Clean Sweep

Green Living—it's the way for me! Meet three pioneers on a mission to promote eco-friendly cleaning.

By Jenny O'Connor
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For these specialists, calling your bluff is part of the fun. You say it's an organized mess. Professional organizer Catherine Carr loves to break it to you that there's no such thing. You say feng shui is a bunch of hocus-pocus. Feng shui master Donna Collins says, oh yeah, well then explain this. You say cleaning organically is too expensive. Juan and Karen Chaparro, eco-friendly cleaning company owners, stand ready to prove you very wrong. These three Dallas companies are making it hard to argue with the benefits of their services and easy to make your house a more energizing, clean, and healthy place to come home to every day.

Organized Nest

At the age of 10, Catherine Carr asked her mom for a filing cabinet in order to properly organize her comic book collection. Twenty years later, as a card-holding member of the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO), she is armed and ready to help the organizationally challenged learn to do what comes so naturally to her: de-clutter, simplify, and... organize.

Carr's company, All in a Row, provides services on a small-project basis as well as on a full "extreme home makeover" total-overhaul scale. Catherine explains, "Organizing is personal. We work closely with all clients to create a system that not only gives them more time, space, and control but also fits their lifestyle."

While staying organized may seem like a small problem to some, Carr believes that disorganization can deplete energy and keep people from fully enjoying daily activities. "As we clean away the clutter," she says, "it gives my clients space to clearly see their goals and to function more efficiently. It gives them peace of mind and renewed energy. It is amazing how their level of stress

decreases and they feel re-energized and ready to take on and enjoy the things they truly love."

Invite Carr to observe the most embarrassing messes and she will not judge. She'll simply dive in, help set goals, sort, take items to consignment or for donation, and keep coming back until the house is functional and stimulating.

For those who believe there is such a thing as "organized mess," Carr challenges them to find exactly what they are looking for every time they need it. Beware: she has never lost at this game. But with her help, some patience, and a label maker, anyone can turn things around and become a poster child for organization in no time at all. She is realistic, however: She allows one—but only one—"junk drawer" in the house. Even *she* has one in her kitchen.

Turning the Tables

Donna Collins admits that she "feng shui-ed" her husband into marrying her. She simply used feng shui to create opportunity for romance and BAM!—her boyfriend was down on one knee. While she laughs about its power, feng shui is no nonsense to Collins and her multitude of loyal followers. Classical feng shui (the kind she endorses) is based on ancient science and Chinese medicine, which is studied and practiced with care and precision. To put it very simply: Feng shui teaches how to tap in to the energy of the environments in which we work and live.

Collins is just the person to show you how. One of only a handful of feng shui masters in the country, she is in very high demand. In addition to serving as president of the Everyday Feng Shui Company, Collins can claim many other impressive achievements, among them founding the Texas chapter of the International Feng Shui Guild, coauthoring the book *A Healthier You* and being a founding donor of the Trinity Center.

FACING PAGE While Catherine Carr is sworn to secrecy for the worst mess she's ever seen on the job, she will admit to what's in her own junk drawer: twist ties, coupons, birthday candles, and fishing line.



THIS PAGE Donna Collins, pictured at the Trinity Trust office, donated her feng shui services to the Trust as a way to assist the City of Dallas with the Trinity River Project. **FACING PAGE** Home sweet home: Juan and Karen Chaparro use only non-toxic, non-fume-emitting, and non-residual cleaning products and supplies.

When she is not doing in-home and corporate consultations, she is teaching classes and holding educational events at which she dispels certain common myths surrounding feng shui. She explains that classical feng shui is the study of the land, not the study of the interior; that it is not superstition or a religious subject; that it does not determine the style in which you must decorate your home; and that it actually has its own language (a form of Chinese shorthand). And for many years, she has seen feng shui's health benefits at work.

But naysayers and skeptics persist. And so Collins prefers to put her feng shui where her mouth is and let the energy do the talking. Contact her for a consultation and she or an expert from her team will assess your house or office, explain how the energy is flowing through it, and suggest changes that will create opportunities specific to your life goals, such as improving your health, prosperity, and relationships.

Home Clean Home

Three years ago, Colombian couple Juan and Karen Chaparro dreamed up a housekeeping company that would use organic, non-toxic cleaning products to improve the health of the homeowners, the health of contract employees who handle the products, and the health of the earth.

Their good intentions are paying off, and today their company, BioClean Maid Service, is a thriving reality. Call upon them and a well-trained, insured, and motivated contract team member who lives near your house (reducing carbon emissions, a result of long commutes)

will arrive at your door, with eco-friendly cleaning solutions in tow. With a giggle, Karen and Juan call them "(eco)ntractors."

Because the (eco)ntractors are typically the people who have been handling the alternative products for years, they are the ones who see the most dramatic health improvements by switching to eco-friendly cleaning. Nosebleeds, a common health hazard, breathing has eased, and burning eyes have cleared up.

As it pertains to the homeowner, these obvious health benefits bring to light just how toxic mainstream products really can be. And although the homeowner is inhaling them on a much smaller scale, Juan and Karen will argue that the difference made by removing toxins from the cleaning routine can be critical. With such consequences, why use them if you don't really need to? Many would mention cost at this point: don't let this go-to excuse stop you from making the switch. The Chaparros stand by the notion that eco-friendly solutions are less expensive in the long run, and they're ready to show you how it's done.

The pair credit their success to a spirit of giving and to the value they place on honesty and respect. "I want to make a difference," Karen says. "I want to make an impact in the world." And this ambitious duo won't be stopping with BioClean Maid Service. They see themselves owning several businesses in the United States and hope to share their good fortune and knowledge by some day opening a children's school in Colombia. ■