

# all over the shop

## THE CULT SHOP

A pleasing purveyor of quality and quirk

## FOR GOODNESS' SAKE

A trinity of channels for charitable urges

## THE SMART MONEY

Studying form for the speculative enthusiast

## THE GANNET

Tucker tips for the galloping gourmet



## WRY SOCIETY

# the feng shui fanatic

When a mother becomes obsessed with energy flows and feeding the soul, will her son feel the force or feel chi-ted?

**M**um! Where's my bed gone?!" Ever since his parents' extremely messy divorce, Ben's mother had been acting strangely. Naturally, he had cut her some slack – his father had left her for Ben's 18-year-old sister's best friend, after all – but that had been eight years ago, and she was still showing absolutely no signs of being anything other than completely mental. "I gave it to the cleaner, darling. Its chi was all wrong. Would you like a green tea?"

"No, Mum, I would not like a green tea. I would like my bed back, please."

He waited for a response, but knew it would never come.

Ben stood, school bag over his shoulder, looking despondently at his bedroom. The room that had been a safe haven when he had gone to stay with his father four days ago was now completely unrecognisable. His bed had been replaced by a futon in the centre of the room, his wall of Arsenal and Abbey Clancy posters had been replaced with a gigantic mirror, and the sink, where he had once been able to

squeeze his whiteheads in peace, was now a trickling water feature.

"Isn't it beautiful?" By virtue of the fact that she was always barefoot, Ben's mother could creep up on him like a ninja.

"But my exams start next month, Mum. Where am I supposed to work?"

"On the bamboo rush matting, my darling. Energy flows much better at ground level."

"Right. And what will Anna think?"

"Who's Anna?"

"You know, Mum, the girl I've been trying to persuade to go out with me for about three years. Who's coming over for the first time this weekend..."

"Oh, she's going to love it," his mother enthused. "The sound of running water calms the spirit and feeds the soul."

Feng shui, Ben thought, as he dug out his exercise books (in a bamboo box with a black turtle painted on it –

"turtles are the best activators for income, protection and support"), really had become the bane of his life, not least of which was being moved into a new room on a startlingly regular basis – part of his mother's desperate bid to optimise his positive life force.

Of course, if she had *really* wanted to optimise his positive life force, she would have let him play for the school football team. But this had been forbidden on the grounds that the school sports block had been built with a clear disregard for the Chinese philosophical system of harmonising a building with its environment. This, his exasperated PE teacher Mr Whitmore had tried to explain to her, was because they were in Barnes, not Beijing, but she had refused to budge.

Still, the good news was that he was turning 18 in less than a month and, with the help of his trust fund, would soon be able to move out of home, preferably to somewhere full of empty pizza boxes and with permanently unopened curtains. Perhaps, if things kept going as well as they were, he and Anna could find somewhere together? Somewhere, despite his newly single father's recent offer, that wasn't the annexe in his garden...

"Mum! Where's the phone?"

"Oh, I took it to the charity shop. It was creating..."

"Negative energy flow, don't tell me. And I'm presuming that my mobile is off limits too?"

"Oh no, darling, what do you take me for? You know perfectly well that using your mobile is absolutely fine, as long as you only do so from the northwest corner of a room."

After consulting the magnetic compass that his mum had attached to his house keys as a Christmas present last year, Ben positioned himself inside his bedroom cupboard to WhatsApp Anna. "Can't w8 to c u this wkend. What time u coming ova?"

Ben's heart thumped happily in his chest while he waited for a response. "Not till 6. Have acupuncture till 5.30. Need 2 mke sure my chi is flowing nicely when I c u!"

Before he had the chance to reply, the WiFi dropped out on Ben's phone.

"Mum! Where's the internet gone?!" **CHLOE FOX**

**This was Barnes, not Beijing, his exasperated PE teacher explained**