

# Modernist Hawai'i





**OPPOSITE:** Artist Scott Potter created the bamboo motif etched glass entry doors.

**LEFT:** Set above sparkling Keauhou Bay the home offers stunning views of the surrounding golf course and the Kohala Coast. “The level of work on this house is the same as all the houses we do,” says Patton. “It’s how we approach all our homes.”

## WORKMANSHIP SHINES IN A MODERN KEAUHOU HOME

Architecture/ Roger Brasel, AIA,  
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Interior Design by/ Christina Birtcher  
Text by/ Linda Hayes  
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**R**oger Brasel, AIA, of Hawai‘i Island Architects LLC, recalls a moment early on in a project he and general contractor Bud Patton had undertaken near Kailua-Kona on the Big Island of Hawai‘i. “The lot we were planning to build on was a third-acre in the Keauhou Estates subdivision,” Brasel says. “Before we even started drawing up plans, Bud and I drove his pick-up truck to the site and stood on the roof to check out the possibility of—and views from—a second story.”

With the information gleaned, Brasel and Patton devised a plan that would allow for the house to have a second level that would serve as a multiple-use room, and still remain under height restrictions set by the subdivision. “Only a section of the house would have a second story,” Brasel says. “Designing a flat roof for that section, instead of a peaked roof like for the rest of the house, would bring us in under height.”

Finding solutions such as these was a common trait of the relationship and camaraderie between this architect and builder. Their alliance has resulted in many notable projects around the Islands over the years. It would prove to be a strong foundation for the Keauhou project as well. “Roger and I have worked together for a long time,” Patton says. “This project was ‘design-build’ from the get-go. It allowed us to make the best use of the lot and the design to utilize everything there was to offer.”

Set above sparkling Keauhou Bay, and just a house away from the golf course at Kona Country Club, plans for the three-bedroom, four-bath house called for 3,759 square feet “under roof,” as well as 422 square feet of lānai area.

Approached via an expansive drive, a formidable stretch of stone retaining walls provides a hint of some of the construction challenges. “There was so much site work on that small lot,” Patton says. “The piles of rock that were generated were unbelievable.” Putting it into



**“When you open up a house this much you can really connect with the outside,” says Brasel.**

**ABOVE:** The dining area opens to the family area and the kitchen, as well as the lānai. The dining table circular area rug is by Azadi Fine Rugs. Dining and bar pendants from Sunlights. Dining table and barstools from Furnitureland. Stairway art from Pictures Plus. A Pegge Hopper print graces the kitchen area. The flooring throughout is a random flagstone Golden Rei quartz on mesh purchased from Marblehaus Hawai‘i in Kona.



**Top:** The spacious kitchen offers granite counters in Kasmir Gold coloring from Marblehaus Hawai'i. Cabinetry by DeWills in cherry.



the walls, which also stretch off-site, was an attractive and functional solution.

Subtle landscaping provides a bit of privacy for the house and, along with a linear footprint, helps tie the house to its natural surroundings. Exterior materials, including creamy stucco walls and soft brown-toned concrete tiles on the peaked roofs further the effect (the flat roof is topped with basic roofing material in a similar tone).

The inside is a “wow.” A pair of African mahogany doors, etched with birds of paradise and bamboo by local artist Scott Potter, open to reveal straight-on ocean views. “You enter between the living room and dining room, walk through the house with its 12-foot-high ceilings, continue out through a 24-foot-wide pocketing door system, and fall into the pool,” laughs Brasel.

Open and inviting throughout, the house has distinctly modern lines and detailing. Abundant African mahogany-trimmed windows and doors, including a second 11-foot pocket door off the kitchen, create an immediate connection with the outdoors. “To bring the outside in, or vice versa, is the essence of what a Hawaiian house is,” says Patton. “Disappearing doors and walls create a lifestyle that mainlanders don’t get to appreciate and enjoy because of the climate.”

All those windows and doors provide an additional benefit as well. “During the day, you get airflow off the ocean, but at night it reverses and comes off the mountain,” Brasel explains. “Having as many rooms as possible open to both sides helps encourage ventilation from both directions.”

Another key feature of the house is flagstone flooring in soothing camel, beige and soft green tones, the addition of which was contributed by local interior designer Christina Birtcher ASID Industry Partner. “The flooring pulls your eye straight to the outside,” she says.

While Birtcher joined the project after it was well underway, her contribution in the way of a pleasing, neutral color palette and elegant finishes and furnishings that combine a touch of British Colonial style with “just enough Hawaiiana so

In the living area an Azadi Fine Rug grounds the sofas which Birtcher had reupholstered in a bourbon color. The accent pillow fabric is from PHF Hawaii. The coffee and side table were purchased from Furniture Land. Lamps from Koehnen's.





ABOVE: “We wanted an island feel, elegant and comfortable, but not kitschy,” says Birtcher. In the upstairs second master suite Birtcher used an Azadi rug and decorated the room with art from Pictures plus. The sofa bed and woven side chair were purchased from Koehnen’s in Kailua Kona.



RIGHT: “The staircase is an absolute piece of work,” says Brasel. “It’s like a fine piece of furniture.”



**ABOVE:** The master bedroom opens out to the pool. The pocket door window treatment is a woven wood Averti drape by Horizon Blinds purchased through Let's Talk Window Coverings in Kailua Kona. Bedding by Tommy Bahama. "Leilani" by Maui artist Jan Kasprzycki hangs on the wall that leads to the master bath.

**LEFT:** The master bath offers open shower with hand carved Balinese tile accents from Bella Pietra. Aqua Sink, an Italian company that manufactures in China, provided the sink, cabinets, mirrors, and faucets.



**ABOVE:** At night the home glows around the central pool and creates a tranquil private oasis.

that people feel like they're in Hawai'i," proved invaluable.

For instance, on the lower level of the house, she filled the living room with comfortable velveteen couches accented with palm tree-patterned pillows, polished, honey-colored tables and a tropical area rug from Azadi's Hawaiian line. The dining room features a carved wood table with a clear glass top and matching chairs with palm leaf detailing. In the kitchen, natural cherry cabinetry is accented by swirled granite countertops and high-end stainless steel appliances.

Beyond the kitchen, the master suite is a sanctuary complete with Tommy Bahama bedcovers on a Japanese-style Elmwood bed and vertical, woven drapery blinds at the windows. Adjoining it, the master bath is a stunner, the highlight being a pair of glass-topped vanities with matching mirrors set against 24- by 36-inch brick-set travertine walls.

Brasel, Patton and Birtcher all agree that a key feature of the house is an elegant African mahogany stairway, designed by finish carpenter and "right-arm man" Scott Gee, that leads to the upper bedroom/office/entertainment level. "The wood-

work is one of the glories of the home, and the stairs in particular," says Patton. "Scott built it and put it together without fasteners, which is a special type of work." Patton also praises finish carpenter John Cobb and lead painter Tracie Jeffress for their talent and contributions.

Completing the picture are a tranquil pool and the lānai on the view side. While the waterfall effect provided by the infinity edge is sublimely soothing, it also serves to drown out any transient sounds from the surrounding neighborhood.

The Keauhou house, which began as a challenge of fitting into a rocky site with height restrictions, ended as a graceful and lovely home that not only fits the landscape but enhances it. The residence is currently available for sale or as a rental property. Patton, having invested some of himself in this residence as he does with every project, looks upon the final result with pride. "It's hard to approach a job from any other way than to just throw yourself at it," he says. "We work with people who do their job with pride and make it as good as we can." 🌿