



RIDING

By Elizabeth Exline

the WAVE

DEFINED AS MUCH BY ITS SURROUNDING SURF AS BY ITS TERRA FIRMA,
THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS HAVE INSPIRED BOOKS, FILMS, HONEYMOONS
AND, LATELY, A WAVE OF LUXURIOUS RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.

IN HINDSIGHT, THE DECISION of Kevin Knight, the chairman and chief executive of Knight Transportation, and his wife, Sydney, to build in Hawaii's upscale Kuki'o community seems obvious. The Peoria, Ariz.-based couple wanted a second home someplace warm and sandy, and the island state had long been their family's vacation destination of choice. But the Knights nevertheless spent several years searching for the right place to call home sweet vacation home. And while they toyed with the idea of buying in California, it was Hawaii's sparkling shoreline that eventually won them over. After all, as Kevin puts it, "In California you look at the ocean; in Hawaii, you get in it...We do it all," he adds. "We swim, we snorkel, [and] the kids surf."

Considering the aquatic appeal that the Big Island held for the Knights, it was fortunate that their architect, Bing Hu, managing principal at H&S International, saw only one obvious way to position the house: toward the water. Although the home actually sits on a golf course lot, the

horseshoe-shape, French-Polynesian-inspired dwelling trains its focus on the surf located 2,500 feet away on the horizon. This is the view that Hu deemed superior to all others, and the influence it had on the house was dramatic.

In no way does the dwelling pay homage to its inspiration better than the manner in which it greets you. At the entry, a blue lava rock wall curves upward—as though it were itself an ocean wave just about to crest—and then breaks open by way of a wooden gate. You enter a lanai and cruise through a tropical courtyard before the house's pocket glass doors usher you through the building to the *view* of the pool, the golf course and then the wide ocean beyond. They are essentially waves of architecture, and as you swim through each one, you get closer to the proverbial shore. In this house, that shore is, ironically, the ocean.

"You open up the gates on the home, and you're immediately in this very lush courtyard," explains the builder, Jeannine Doyle, vice president and partner of



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HAWAIIAN SETTING AS MUCH AS THE LIQUID SURROUNDING IT.

Linthicum. "You have the sound of the water, and you look through the house, and there's the pool, the grass of the golf course and the ocean. So it captures everything somebody could want right there at the house."

With 12,200 square feet of indoor and outdoor space (just under half of which is air-conditioned), there's not much that the home doesn't capture. Yet the house was built with such remarkable efficiency that it has become the stuff of custom home legend. Its speedy construction—it was completed in 11 months—can largely be chalked up to the detailed planning of the builder, Linthicum. Both Linthicum and H&S International are based in Scottsdale but have satellite offices in Hawaii, something that simplified the transportation of materials and manpower. (Linthicum, for example, brought carpenters from the mainland to Hawaii to frame the house.) "We weren't one of the first to acquire land here," Kevin says, "but we were certainly one of the quickest custom homes [to be] completed."

Despite its spatial largesse, the house retains a surprisingly modest quality. "We didn't want anything to really stand out," Kevin notes, "because we wanted to be focused on the ocean,"

"You look through the atrium, through the front door, through the back door, out into this grand picture of the ocean and the golf course and the lava rock of the pool," Sydney adds, "and that's what our main focus was."

Accordingly, the Knights pulled their home's color palette from nature. The smooth, blue pearl granite countertop in the kitchen soothes the eye; the green-blue tile in the master bath echoes the grass of the golf course and the sea beyond.

The limestone floors include pieces of fossilized shell; and spongy-blue lava rock borders the pool, encircles the home and encapsulates the outdoor showers of the master and guest suites.

Balancing the flow of these deep-sea blues and greens are rich, gleaming woods. The doors, the windows and the pitched ceilings are made from Honduran mahogany, while pommele sapele is used in the office cabinetry and in conjunction with mahogany in the entertainment center and the dining room pillars. Posts made from ohia, a wood indigenous to the Big Island, provide support for the lanais in the front and back of the house. Tiger wood, meanwhile, spans the bedroom and office floors, creating texture with its contrasting light and dark stripes.

The oceans influence on the home shows up in other, more striking ways as well. The roof, for instance, quietly peaks and plunges, almost as though emulating the surrounding waves. And then there's the pool, which features azure ceramic tiles the exact color of the water and seems to reach out toward the sea instead of just sinking into the ground.

Yet the home celebrates its luxurious Hawaiian setting as much as the liquid surrounding it. Its lush landscaping and suite-style layout (the guest quarters are attached to the main house, but are accessible only through the courtyard) are reminiscent of what Hu describes as "residential resorts." "Most of my clients," he says, "want a vacation home that has a resort lifestyle to it." And nowhere else is there a place so conducive to resort living. Hawaii's temperate climate and warm breezes make the hammock in the backyard and



CRAZY about Kuki'o

Whether it's coast or course you crave, Kuki'o can oblige. Located on Hawaii's Big Island, this private, oceanfront beach and golf club is part of the impressive portfolio of Discovery Land Company. (Its siblings include, among others, Estancia Club in Scottsdale, CordeValle Golf Club in Silicon Valley and Iron Horse in Montana.) Kuki'o specializes in Hawaiian life: It is at once luxurious and easy-going. Besides the white sand beaches, the community boasts the only two Tom Fazio-designed golf courses on the Big Island as well as a beach club, complete with an open-air Spa, Fitness Center, Events Lawn and Beach Bar.

Residential opportunities at Kuki'o are just as enticing. Three- to five-bedroom cottages, two- to three-bedroom villas, traditional hales, luxury homes and quarter-acre to two-acre-plus homesites are all up for grabs with prices starting at \$2.5 million. At press time, just 130 properties remained. Call 808.325.4040 or visit www.kukio.com for details.

the extensive lanais throughout the property integrated parts of the home. "The outdoor spaces are treated as much [like] a room on the inside," Doyle observes. "The lanais are very much furnished [in] the way you could sit out and have a casual conversation, almost like a little family room area."

In keeping with Hawaii's laid-back culture, the house easily transitions between spaces. Nothing is too formal or even too defined; rooms flow lazily into one another. "One of the things I really like about this house is it's not overstated," Kevin says. "Everything in the home seems to have a purpose."

By all accounts, that purpose is to facilitate revelry. "They get there as often as they can," Doyle says of the Knights, "and I know they just enjoy the heck out of the house." From family vacations to girls-only jaunts, the Knights' Hawaiian domicile is a place that accommodates the various branches and generations of their family. There, they can relax and luxuriate, all under the watchful gaze of the sea.

PROJECT PROS

Architect: Bing Hu, AIA, H&S International, 480.585.6898 (Scottsdale), 808.331.8170 (Hawaii), www.handsinternational.com.

Builder: Linthicum, 480.515.1700 (Scottsdale), 808.326.7077 (Hawaii), www.linthicumcorp.com.