

The entry to the Brasel home leads one over an area rug filled "Zone" and into the main living space which is open to the dining and kitchen areas as well as the outdoors. The Chandelier by Mirika Lavery was purchased at Smith's Hawaii. Leaded glass provided by Jeff Smith of Architectural Stained Glass.

## Hawai'i MODERN

AN ARCHITECT BUILDS HIS DREAM HOME ON THE BIG ISLAND

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"The geometry, how the soft fits interplay with the angles, give a real sense of being in a designed space," Roger Brasel says. The sofa and tables were custom made by SMITH Furnishings of San Francisco. Tibetan area rug in living seating area by Azadi Fine Rugs.



Architecture by/ Roger Brasel, AIA, Hawaii Island Architects, LLC  
 Interior redesign by/ Christina Birtcher, ASID-IP, IR, Interior re\*DESIGN  
 Text by/ Linda Hayes  
 Photography by/ Alvis Upitis



“ARCHITECTURE IS A LIFETIME EXPERIENCE,” SAYS ROGER Brasel of the captivating home he designed for himself and his wife, Nancy, on a verdant hillside overlooking Keauhou Bay on The Big Island of Hawaii. “This is the fifth house we’ve designed and built for ourselves in the last 15 years. It reflects who we are now and enhances our lifestyle today.”

Starting with the selection of the site itself—a third of an acre within the exclusive gated community of Keauhou Estates, near Kailua-Kona—every aspect of the home was carefully considered, and every option weighed. Maximizing the sweeping ocean view was key. “This was one of the few lots wide enough to allow us to stretch the house out so that every major room faced the ocean,” Brasel says. “You can literally see the curve of the earth from up here.”

At 3,000 square feet, with another 1,000 square feet dedicated to lanais and a two-car garage, the house is ample in size. In any other hands, the contemporary architectural concept, which features clean, horizontal lines and “symmetrical

ABOVE: Most of the wood in the house is clear vertical grain fir treated with a paint glaze that darkens the wood and makes it shiny. “We wanted a modern take—wood, but not “woody,” says Brasel. The Buddha figurine in the entry niche was purchased from C.S. Wo Furniture. The area rug in the dining area is from Irlich Collection. The dining table was custom made on island by John Cobb. The dining chairs were purchased locally at Koehn’s Furnishings and are upholstered in chocolate leather.



ABOVE: “The kitchen is totally gourmet,” Birtcher says. “The appliances are Wolf, SubZero, Fisher Paykel, the sinks are Kohler and Verity.” The sleek stainless appliances are offset by custom alder wood cabinetry with glass fronts and brushed nickel hardware. Bordeaux Granite tops reflect the warm color scheme, which is also picked up by tall counter stools. Double this and

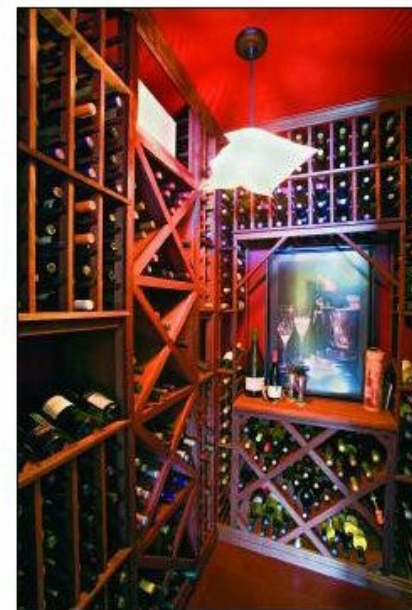
herys islands (one of which is slightly taller to accommodate Roger’s height) provide plenty of workspace for when company arrives. The pendant lights are Tech Lighting Melrose Pendant in Ferrari Red color.

RIGHT: A 400-bottle wine room is located off of the kitchen for easy access. Pendant Chandelier from FireFarm Ariel in Copper Mesh.

vignettes” that define the two diverging wings, might have seemed at odds with such a lush natural setting. But Brasel has lived in Hawaii for 30 years. Deftly pairing his sense of place and understanding of the Island’s heritage with a keen design sense, he created a residence that intrinsically belongs.

Laid out on a single level, the home is approachable, not imposing. “It’s a modern take on Hawaiian architecture,” Brasel says. “We wanted a real feeling of comfort starting from when you first drive up.” To that end, the walls are organic, earth-toned stucco; the flared, concrete tile roof suggests a bit of an Asian influence; and brown basalt cornerstones subtly hint at the earth.

Before even stepping inside, a visitor is enticed by the interior, which is clearly visible through a custom-designed, glass-enclosed entry. Above the doors, a leaded glass transom by artist Jeff Smith of Architectural Stained Glass hints at the geometric shapes and vibrant tones beyond. Inside, the sense of warmth and welcome is overwhelming, and it’s delivered in every detail, from the soft surface of the cork floors that run throughout the





“At some level,” notes Brasel, “what we do as architects is custom design a living environment for people that enhances their life.”



ABOVE: In the master bedroom Birtcher placed a mahogany Cal King bed with side tables from Indonesia (purchased at Kaloko Furniture). The chaise in the corner was recovered by Birtcher with vintage barkcloth. The television cabinet is mahogany. “The combination of colors and materials gives the room a very comforting ambiance,” says Birtcher.

LEFT: A glass block wall in the master bath lets in lots of light and separates the wet area from the rest of the space. Onidata marble was purchased locally and was installed European style on floors, shower/bath walls and countertop. The cabinets are mahogany stain in Mission Door Style.

RIGHT: The artriche in the master suite foyer is filled with candles and a water element that provides soothing background noise.

BELOW: In one of the bathrooms Birtcher repurposed an existing dining buffet into a vanity. The vessel sink and faucet are from Kohler. The tile/granite is Rainforest.



house to the tiered and dramatically lit soffit systems to the hand-picked fabrics that reflect the sunset red, bronze and gold color scheme.

For much of that, local interior designer Christina Birtcher is to thank. “Christina was a great resource for design ideas,” Brasel says. “She picked up on our tastes and then developed a theme that we could integrate throughout the home.” “Roger and Nancy are very earthy people, and Roger was an architect doing his own home,” Birtcher says. “I tried to lead with my ears to capture their lifestyle, and to interpret the sophisticated structure and design and present it organically in furniture and style.”

The focal point of the house is the central great room, which encompasses the living room, dining room and kitchen, all of which flow together gracefully and open onto the ocean-view lanai and pool area. The living room, which Birtcher describes as “an island metropolitan sanctuary,” features a grouping of couches and chairs upholstered in Cinnabar Passion ultra-suede, and solid mahogany coffee and end tables—all custom made by Smith Furnishings of San Francisco. A Tibetan area rug pulls the room together.

An elegant dining room (complete with a stunning, solid wood table hand-crafted on the Island by John Cobb) sits off the living room. Beyond that, the meticulously customized kitchen is as efficient as it is pleasing to the eye. “The kitchen is totally gourmet,” Birtcher says. “The appliances are Wolf, SubZero, Fisher-Paykel, the sinks are Kohler and Verity. It works hard and it all flows.”

The sleek stainless appliances are offset by custom alder wood cabinetry with glass fronts and brushed nickel hardware.



Birtcher says. "I tried to lead with my ears to capture their lifestyle, and to interpret the sophisticated structure and design and present it organically in furniture and style."

Bordeaux Granite tops reflect the warm color scheme, which is also picked up by tall counter stools. Double his and hers islands (one of which is slightly taller to accommodate Roger's height) provide plenty of workspace for when company arrives. Brasel's 400-bottle wine room sits within easy reach.

On the kitchen end of the house, the master wing is accessed by a set of double doors. It offers the privacy and comfort so vital to the Brasel's lifestyle. The master bedroom is surprisingly small and intimate. "We've lived in houses with big master suites, but we always gravitated to sleeping in one of the smaller bedrooms," says Brasel. "This one we designed to fit and be more cozy." Grasscloth on the walls and ceiling and sheer, billowy drapery add to the feel. In contrast, the master bath is a bit more decadent, with marble used European style on the counter tops, floors and wet area walls, a Jacuzzi tub and his and hers sinks.

The master is just steps away from the outdoor Jacuzzi, lanai

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ABOVE: When the pocket doors are open the living area becomes indoor-outdoor. The woven poly Brown Jordan furniture is durable and low-maintenance. Around the pool are square tiles set at an angle as well as mesh pebble tiles.

BELOW: In the pool bathroom a custom made Fused Glass Sink by Mark Ditzler through Functional Art Gallery sits on a glass top pedestal. It is 16" x 6.5" Red Venetian Fused Glass in cranberry. The sink features a traditional Italian design in bold colors with twisted "laticino" canes and frit

spirals. It is fused into one seamless piece and molded into the final shape. Wallpaper is from Maya Romanoff and is Grassweave Diamond in gurneal. Sconces are from FireFarm JAK SCONCE in copper mesh.



ABOVE: The outdoor Jacuzzi, lanai and the 40-foot infinity edge pool, which features a 3-foot waterfall and a swim-up bar are only steps away from the master bedroom and an outdoor entertaining and barbecue area. An outdoor shower is tucked behind a glass block wall.

and the 40-foot infinity pool, which features a 3-foot waterfall and a swim-up bar. There's also an outdoor entertaining and barbecue area. An outdoor shower is tucked behind a glass block wall, and the entire area is serviced by a little jewel-box of a bath. Two guest bedrooms and baths are sequestered in the opposite end of the house, and the attention to detail and comfort is evident there as well.

A year after completion, all parties agree that the design-build process was pivotal in the successful stance of the home and the personal fulfillment experienced there since. "It was a joy to work on this project," Birtcher says. "Every detail was painstakingly decided upon to make it as much of their house as we could."

"Building a house like we've done is something every architect should do," Brasel says. "Personally going through the construction process and seeing where every dime goes and how everything gets done was just a huge learning experience. For us, it's been fun and the house enhances our lives."