

# HAWAIIAN STYLE

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# Keeping the “Vintage” in Villa



HOMEOWNERS PRESERVE THE ORIGINAL  
WHILE ADDING WORLD-CLASS ART  
COLLECTION TO MAUNA KEA VILLA GEM

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ABOVE: A dramatic Lau Chun commission “Mauna Kea” at the home’s entry hall welcomes visitors in the grandest of ways. It’s an especially personal piece as homeowners Peter and Kathy Murphy wanted a painting that celebrated the couple’s connection to all aspects of the Mauna Kea Resort: The beach, the hotel, the mountain, the ocean. “We came here on our honeymoon and have such a sentimental feeling about this island, we wanted to commemorate our love of this place,” says Kathy Murphy. Altar table and Chinese wedding baskets are from Nevara International. The authentic Hawaiian spears and weapons are part of the homeowner’s personal collection.





ABOVE: As part of their commitment to keeping the villa vintage, interior designer Shirley Wagner ASID and her team saved and refurbished the home's original McGuire bamboo dining table. Chairs are new and from McGuire to match. Also visible is the villa's original floor tile.

**A**T WHAT MAGIC MOMENT DOES A 1980s HOME CEASE TO LOOK dated and begin to acquire the aura of a vintage classic? Certainly in 2008, any sense of nostalgic appreciation for the decade's pop-culture icons (like big hair and Smurfs) may still be in the eye of the beholder. So it is that rare homeowner who demonstrates the foresight to recognize that original 1980s details should be preserved for the future—starting now. Fortunately, this is the heartfelt philosophy of Peter and Kathy Murphy, owners of one of the coveted Villas at Mauna Kea, located within the Big Island's venerable Mauna Kea Resort.

"Everything in this home is original 'Villa,'" explains Shirley Wagner ASID, owner of Kamuela-based Fine Design Interiors, Inc., and interior design principal on the project. "I was so delighted to work with the Murphys on the refurbishment of their villa, as I am a strong believer in preserving and enhancing vintage homes. While I love all the homes I've worked on, helping clients to conserve the vintage character of older homes remains a pursuit always near and dear to my heart."

During the early 1980s, a decade known for explosive growth in technology, including the advent of the personal com-

puter and mobile phones, the sleepy Kohala Coast was still under development. The Villas at Mauna Kea were a group of 35 stunning homes built as part of the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel and Mauna Kea Resort, developed by the late environmentalist Laurance Rockefeller.

The Murphy's villa, at about 5,000 square feet, was one of the development's original show/model homes, designed and customized by renowned New York designer Jack Adams ASID. Adams' original designs for the Villas balanced tropical fantasies while mixing art and artifacts from the Far East and the Mediterranean. One of his signature elements was a grouping of antique Greek urns arranged to "spill" water into the swimming pool, one of the many features that the Murphys have retained to pay homage to the intent of the original designer.

"When we bought the villa, I wanted to keep it as original possible, just like when it was first built," says owner Peter Murphy, a retired Seattle-area businessman. "So many of these villas have been torn apart and completely remodeled, without a shred of their original character left, which is such a shame. Our working philosophy has always been 'Keep it Original!'"





ABOVE: Showing off pure vintage style, the Murphy's sunken living room features the original model home couch modified to fit the room and a hideaway Vision Art television. Local artist Mary Spears created the covering painting that celebrates sunset at Mauna Kea. The fish tank is original to the villa. Cocktail table from Nevara International. Accent pillows in custom fabric by Jim Thompson.

**"I wanted to bring a high level of Hawaiian inflection and Asian influence to the home. It was a joy to work on this home with these clients," says Wagner, ASID**





**ABOVE RIGHT:** In one of the three guest bedrooms, a McGuire chair and ottoman with Jim Thompson custom fabric are balanced beautifully against a gorgeous Darrell Hill triptych, "A Place of Silence." Hill is a Big Island painter known for capturing the essence of the Islands, using shadows, light and a dash of Impressionism. Much of the art in the home was specially commissioned from artists represented by Lahaina Galleries. Paddle from Harbor Gallery.

The home's short history of ownership (only two others before the Murphys) made this proposition much easier. Original elements that the Murphys left intact include the floor tile, wet bar, soffits and woodworking, koa cabinetry and trim and Mexican tiles in the kitchen, dining table, sectional couch (which came from another Villas model home and had to be adapted as it was the mirror opposite) and even the oversized fish tank. As an example of their strong feelings about maintaining originality whenever possible, Kathy Murphy points out the gold-plated bathroom fixtures: some of which are original to the villa; others were custom-made by a New York company as





ABOVE: A gallery of art at the entrance to the kitchen includes from left, the Darrell Hill diptych, "Reflections," Hill's "Night Scene," and far right Lau Chun's "Kona Coast."



LEFT: The Murphy's original bar is one of the few that remain in any of the Villas at Mauna Kea, which were built in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Many homeowners tore them out during remodels, but fortunately, the Murphys felt strongly about preserving the original integrity of their Villa, leaving the bar and other elements intact. The bar is framed by two commissioned pieces, "Man Climbing Palm" and "Hula Dancer" by Darrell Hill that communicate a nostalgic, carefree sense of Hawai'i landscapes. "Painting is my life," says Hill. "Through this unique language I can say things that are impossible with words."





ABOVE: An example of how Shirley Wagner worked a different theme in every guest bedroom. This colorful room is "classic" Asian, picking up bright colors in a playful way. "The colors in here are fun; great for kids," says Wagner.

The beds are from Statements, lamps from Baik Design, and the custom linens are Henry Calvin. The Murphys worked closely with artist Darrell Hill on the matching samurai-inspired paintings entitled "The Sixth Warrior" and "The Seventh Warrior." Wall is fauxed by Suzanne Gailey to look like Venetian plaster, while at the same time, echoing the original cork wall coverings that had survived in the bathroom but not the bedroom.



LEFT: Elegant guest suite with a McGuire bed, Barbara Beckman custom linens and Jim Thompson shams. The work of immensely popular British artist Robert Bissel called "The Perfect World" adds a whimsical, soothing charm to the space. "The thing I like best about it," says Peter Murphy, "is that it looks just like the Kohala mountains to me." The smaller Lau Chun work, entitled "Kohala Coast" hangs nearby.





ABOVE: The custom, built-in dresser by Martin & MacArthur in the tansu style, and showcases the elaborately lacquered, antique kodansu chest, the centerpiece of the master bedroom. This breathtaking chest, from Robyn Buntin of Honolulu, was a gift to an ambassador of Japan in the 1920s, and features medallions in glossy gold and low-luster gold. The rug is from Azadi.



LEFT: In the master bedroom, an exquisite gold leaf painting by David Lee entitled "Golden Touch," is one of the showpieces of the Murphy home. Lee is a world-renowned Chinese artist who excels at capturing the serenity of flowers, birds, bamboo, mountains and other scenes of nature, using media such as handmade watercolor paints on raw silk. The chair is McGuire and the antique rain drum is from Nevra International.





ABOVE: A McGuire bed with custom linens creates an elegant, restful setting in the master. Applied squares that resemble tile make up the wall coverings. Eschewing the idea of heavy bedroom drapery, Shirley Wagner preferred to go with soft, light and airy panels to catch ocean breezes and add a dreamy quality to the suite.

an indistinguishable match to the originals. Indeed, the Murphys are so dedicated to preservation that they left intact some fixtures needing replacement because ripping them out would have harmed the surrounding vintage tile work.

During the October 2006 earthquake, which closed the hotel for major repairs, the Murphy's villa sustained only minimal damage. Peter Murphy muses: "I think it was because they are so solidly built, and built in line with the land, which helped diffuse the quake's effects. Amazingly, most of the villas had no damage, even though the hotel did."

In keeping with the theme of "original," the Murphys decided to furnish the home with all original art and hired Maui-based fine art dealer Lahaina Galleries with the task, working closely with gallery consultant Lee Cloud.

Peter Murphy, an amusing storyteller, recalls the incident that inspired his decision to go with all original art: "I got my brokerage statement one day and decided that instead of continuing to watch this ugly thing go down in value, let's invest instead in something that's beautiful and will always hold its value—original art." In all, the Murphys purchased 15 original paintings for their home—some selected from the gallery's displays and others commissioned to be painted especially for certain rooms.

Cloud says she appreciated and enjoyed working with the Murphys, as Peter Murphy has a real eye for art, and was very active in not only choosing the art but in expressing his vision in

the pieces he commissioned. The large, front entryway piece by Chinese artist Lau Chun is a case in point. Peter Murphy wanted a painting that would capture the inspiration he felt upon arriving at Mauna Kea, a place he and Kathy Murphy had first visited on their honeymoon. Composing the piece himself, he gathered numerous photographs of the Mauna Kea Resort, including aerial views. Chun's peaceful work beautifully reflects the sentimentality the Murphys feel about this island, and the Mauna Kea Resort area in particular.

Also featured in the home are paintings by Darrell Hill, another Lahaina Galleries artist. Many of Hill's colorful works convey nostalgic themes, making them a perfect fit for the Murphy's design theme.

All parties cite a rare cooperative dynamic as crucial to the success of the finished result. "The harmony, chemistry and teamwork that went into this collaboration was beyond description," says Cloud. "Through the fusions of everyone's talents and gifts, along with the personal camaraderie, we were able to create a beautiful space and leave the integrity of the original villa intact. We all had the same goals."

Kathy Murphy agrees, adding: "Yes, we have a lovely home—but the most important thing of all is the friends we've made along the way. We always stop in at Fine Design in Waimea and go out for ice cream when we're in town. We are all good friends!" ❁