A photograph of a modern living room. The ceiling is made of dark wood planks. A large, light-colored sofa with patterned cushions is the central piece of furniture. In front of it is a dark wood coffee table with a light-colored top. To the left, there is a side table with a lamp and a vase of flowers. To the right, there is another lamp and a potted plant. The room has large windows and a sliding glass door leading to a lanai. The overall style is contemporary with a focus on natural materials and indoor plants.

This expansive great room's sofas were made in Asia - to a custom upholstery design by Susan Moss. The wool Tibetan rug floats on quartzite tiles, framing a custom koa table crafted by a local furniture maker. Lanai furniture is made of extruded plastic with a raffia appearance, surrounding a McGuire teak coffee table with a limestone top. The lanai and living room are enclosed by louvered pocket doors, fabricated of African mahogany. A side screen, with back painting, was created by a local artist, Deb Thompson. The amber glass light fixture drops from a dramatic cedar ceiling to highlight the dining table.

Susan J. Moss ASID, IIDA

“VARIETY

- it's what I like most about my interior design practice,” explains Susan Moss, when asked about the benefits of her years as a professional. “In our office, we have a lot of experience in both residential and hospitality design. Many residential clients become our good friends and call on us to do additional properties as the years pass. After an initial design project is completed, the commercial clients at the Kohala coast resorts rely on us for repeated projects at spas, in restaurants and for store design.”



The five designers and staff in Susan's office try to avoid a Trans Pacific Design style or “signature”. She also tries to incorporate interior elements relevant to the location or purpose of the project. Her recent Mauna Lani Spa project reflected a view of the volcano's peaks with a ‘fire and ice’ interior design concept, using *kapa* cloth motifs, *a'a* lava walls, and glass the color of molten flows. “We guide our clients to site-appropriate materials and the services of local artists and craftsmen. I don't recommend a lot of seascapes for Waimea homes, but we've done model homes with a local style, and a *paniolo* theme for a large developer.” Susan especially likes the creative process, “drawing sketches, space plans, pulling together the fabrics and surface materials. When there isn't something readily available I also enjoy designing functional pieces of furniture, or planning kitchens and baths.”

For the last decade, the interior design profession has embraced sustainable interior design practices. “We're slowly integrating green products into our design work and material specifications. Paint and carpet with low VOC's, low energy lighting, cork or bamboo flooring. We specify responsibly manufactured fabrics and reupholster or refinish existing furnishings whenever we can.”

Text by Suzanne Watkins

Photos by James Cohn

KOHALA SPA ESSENCE

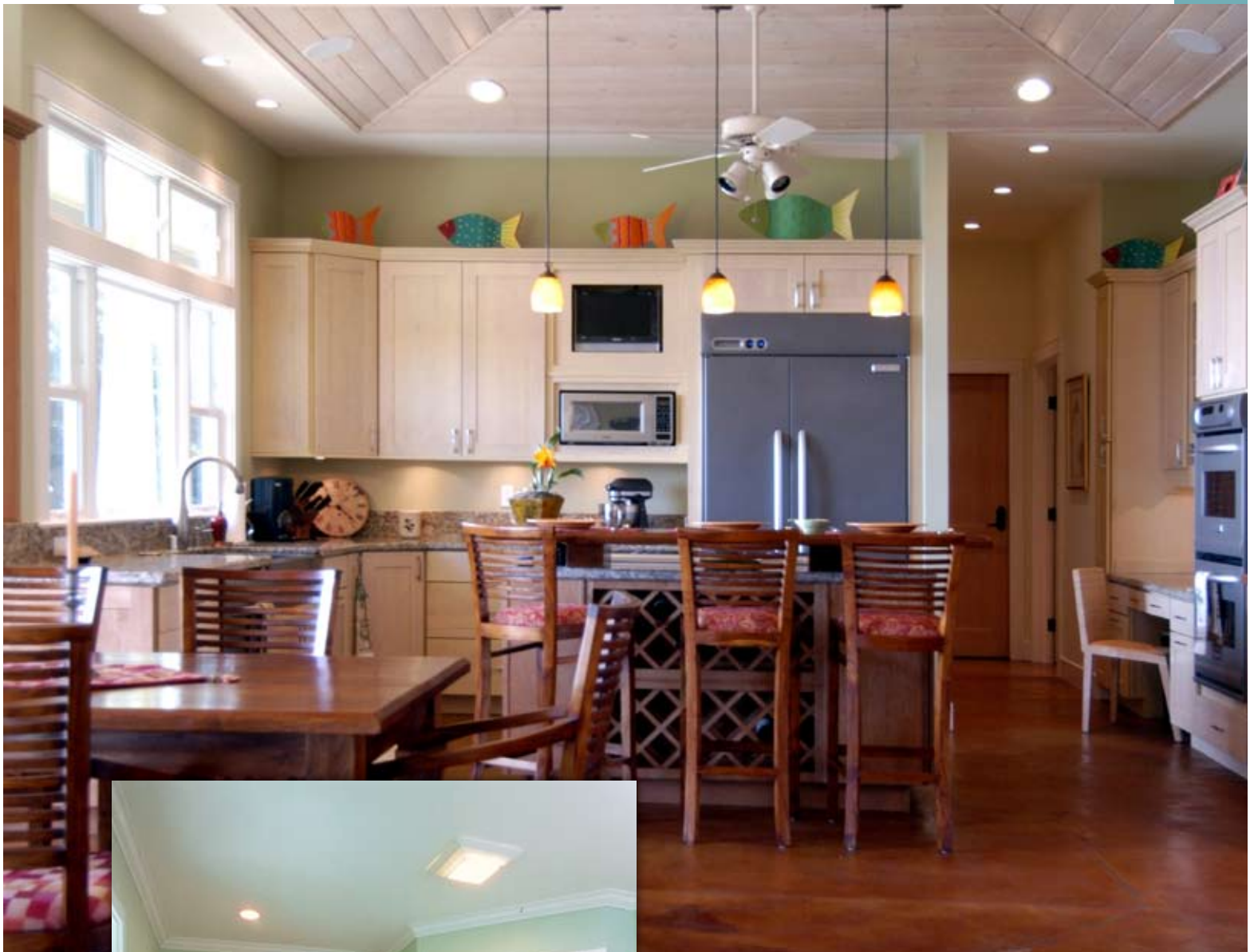
"Don't hire a designer if you think your project is something you can do yourself - you'll just get in each other's way."

-Susan J. Moss

"What's our design process?" Sue continues, "Many of our projects come from architects who see our firm as a vital part of the design team." When called on to renovate an existing resort facility, Susan and her staff interviewed the manager to formulate the design's program requirements, developing a design plan from those inquiries to create a presentation that was then offered to the resort's upper management. "With a specialization in hospitality design, we attend the annual HD trade shows to keep on top of new innovations and resort trends, and get additional training at the conferences."

The Big Island community of Waimea (Kamuela) has provided a rich and varied career for Susan and her colleagues at Trans Pacific Design. In 1990, she followed her heart to the Big Island to be with her long-time partner, Bill Sanborn and his family, "and all the caring people I've found here." When asked what she likes best about living in Waimea, she thought for a minute and replied, "I love the raw nature of the landscape along the coast and in Volcano, especially the intense green of Waimea, even when it's

Kohala Spa Essence is a retail spa shop located in the lobby of the Hilton Waikoloa Resort. Renovated from a former concierge desk, the design team "blew out the walls" to provide a sales point for the resort's spa. The shop's lobby presence is near the tram stop and entrance foyer. Surfboard shaped display carts roll back into the space when the shop is closed. A spoked ceiling effect, with butterfly fixtures, highlights a curved monorail lighting system. Pocket doors and counters are all spaced on the radius. A display shelf on the left rear side can be pushed back into the kiosk's storeroom. This project is a favorite of Sue's - "... a tiny space and yet very creative on how we fit it all in."



(above) This client was retiring and really loved getting involved in the whole design process. Trans Pacific Design refined the kitchen design and worked on the space planning, finishes and furnishings, paint and accessories. The space features pendant glass fixtures, granite counter tops and maple cabinets. The leathery-look floor is a bronze stained concrete. Floors and finishes pull in the green and mango color scheme, with lots of bright colors in many rooms.



(left) A traditional Waimea bathroom features Carrera marble wainscoting and a chair rail surrounding the soaking tub. This is another ASID award winner, with tumbled stone mosaic tiles on the floor and a Peruvian green wave patterned tile in the shower. The accompanying basket weave surface is made of phasos marble with ming accents, also used in the stone that surrounds the opening on the shower entrance. Slab marble covers the double vanity. The client showed the designer a photo example of what they liked, and Sue created it in their vision of a "Big Island Country Home."

On clients... "If you hire an interior designer, be honest and open about what you like and dislike in style and expectations. You might save magazine photos of interiors you especially like and show your collection to the designer - not for the designer to copy, but to provide an example of a style, surface material or arrangement you really are enthusiastic about." *Susan J. Moss*

Susan remodeled an existing kitchen with a ceramic tile floor, Giallo Veneziano granite counters, and coordinating ceramic tile on the back splash. This is a small house - expanded in creative ways - refrigerator drawers were installed in borrowed space from under the stairs. Base cabinets and wine coolers were converted from similar "found space." This challenging project made use of all available space, as with the useful and decorative pot rack.



The client requested a "Hawaiian" bedroom in this Mauna Lani Resort residence. A local craftsman made the *koa* bed, and the round nightstand to fit the angled wall. *Koa* millwork and crown molding compliment the raffia wallcovering and the flat boucle weave carpet with a striated loop. The quilt pattern is a "Pololo" design created in custom colors. Local artists painted the images of a banyan tree and Hawaiian dancers.



Waiki'i Ranch Lodge on the Big Island: a fireplace, faced with lava rock in a cozy alcove, viewed from the game room. Lucky horse shoes decorate the custom made table, in a rustic *paniolo* style, beside deeply upholstered lounge chairs and ottomans.

wet and cold or rainy. Today, we are encircled with *uhiwai* and it is wonderful!" And, what would no Big Island home be without? "A fireplace," Susan laughed. "At 3000 feet above the sea level, even the summer evenings here can be cool."

"My design philosophy is to create interiors that take design to the highest level possible, within the budget's parameters. Our clients hire us for our talent, and we want to make their environments unique to them. No matter how busy we are, we work at not repeating a design or material, even if it was a really great design idea." Susan also has an inspiring personal viewpoint, one born of the tragic loss of her father, when she was fourteen. "Do it now! My dad often talked about what he'd do when he retired, and he died in his early 50's. I learned not to put off doing something important to me. It's probably why I ended up in Hawaii after college - do I move with my family to cold Minneapolis' winters or live on warm Kauai?" Despite the need for an occasional cozy fire, Hawaii won. 🌿



Four Seasons residence. A video conferencing room was created for the owner, with square, suede covered hardboard wall insets, limestone counters and raffia wallcovering. Honolulu's Martin and MacArthur created the teak desk with leather inset panels. Decorative glass panels in the pocket entrance doors were found by the clients in China. Architect Bob Nespor designed the rounded, coffered ceilings. Painting by Lau Chun.



Hilton Grand Vacation Club - Ocean Tower of the Hilton Waikoloa Resort. A prestigious ASID Design Award was presented to Susan J. Moss ASID, IIDA for this activator sales office for resort time-shares. The interior features built-in, flat screen TV's, set in custom cabinets and millwork, with sales images viewed on backlit projection screens. The photos draw people into the office from the Ocean Tower tram terminal. Situated under a unique angled plank ceiling, the furnishings are upholstered in durable textiles with tropical images.

My Favorite Project:

"I really like most of our projects, but the one that made the biggest impression on me was working on the cruise ship the SS Independence for two years in the 80's, culminating in a dry dock installation and delivery with a *shanghai'd* crew! We created the interior design of the disco, the owner's suite, guest cabins and restaurants."

My Mentor:

"The late Richard Crowell was my commercial mentor in Honolulu. Dick trained so many designers and architects in the 70's and 80's that we jokingly called his firm the Richard Crowell School of Interior Design. He taught me the important 'nuts and bolts' of commercial design. Dick was a brilliant and erudite man - I learned all the details of commercial design that one becomes skilled in after graduating from design school."

The illuminated wall unit, custom made in Indonesia with carved banana leaf doors, shelters an upright piano.

Waimea (Kamuela) Big Island of Hawaii

Bachelors in Interior Design, Iowa State University
Professional Member of the ASID and IIDA
Past President of the ASID Hawaii Chapter
Past National Director, ASID 1987-1989

Practice:

Kauai 1977 to 1985

Designer for developers and resort homeowners
Residential Interiors

Oahu 1985 to 1990

Interior Designer, Richard Crowell and Associates
Commercial Interiors

Hawaii 1990 to present

Trans Pacific Design, Principal
Resort Residential and Commercial Interiors
Hospitality Design

A musical family inhabits this tropical room. The illuminated wall unit, custom made in Indonesia with carved banana leaf doors, shelters an upright piano. A textured grass-cloth textile covers the ceiling. A decorative rug was custom designed by textile artist Joan Weissman in New Mexico. The rug's details were planned to fit the furniture plan, so the leaf pattern is highlighted. A glass topped *koa* cocktail table, fabricated by a local wood worker, showcases the rug's colorful hues and whimsical pattern.