

Big View On The Big Island

DESIGNERS SUE MOSS AND JENNY SCOTT NERY
PROVE THAT SPACIOUSNESS IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

Architecture by/ Clem Lam, AIA
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TRANS-PACIFIC DESIGN PRINCIPAL SUE MOSS HAS CREATED the interiors of such well-trafficked public spaces as the acclaimed Spa at Mauna Lani and more than a few cruise ships. But when this Big Island local set out to furnish a less-than-gargantuan vacation home on that same isle, built by architect Clem Lam for a Pennsylvania couple, Moss knew that a different sensibility would be required. Moss and Jenny Scott Nery, an interior designer at Trans-Pacific, understood that the home would be best served by a light and nimble touch. Ostentation or too much fuss could easily cramp the 3,702-square-foot retreat, of which 2,675 square feet is interior living space.

To Nery, the home's intimacy was challenging yet refreshing. In this case, the watchwords would be comfort, lightness and hominess for a couple who were planning longer stays than the occasional weekend jaunt. "We have clients who stay two weeks," Moss explains, "but these homeowners would spend the winter here." Given that the house would serve as an escape from Northeastern winters, Trans-Pacific's mission was to offer their clients the ultimate soft landing—a contemporary environment not dissimilar to their main residence, but with what Moss refers to as "a distinctly Hawaiian twist."

The North Kawaihae house is situated within a growing gated community, and the lot, which Moss says "was difficult to build on, since it was rocky and vertical," in the end proved to be an advantage. Says Moss, "Though the house looks like it's sitting on the ocean, there's a house below it that you never see." What you do see are panoramic views that stretch down the coast to Kona, taking in Hualālai (the lush location of the Four Seasons resort) and, in the distance, the island of Maui.

Moss recalls that the house was completed in December 2005, just before an earthquake. "Yet the foundation was so strong that there were only minor cracks," she says.

The owners were hands-on from the beginning, giving the project the same consideration that they did to their primary home. "Sometimes it's either the wife or the husband who takes the lead," Nery says, "but in this case both were really involved." The couple met with Moss in Los Angeles, sat in furniture, and were flexible enough to try to evoke, but

LEFT: David Sutherland Teak Furniture & Perennial fabrics make this lanai the perfect haven to enjoy the panoramic views of the Big Island and Kohala Coast.



OPPOSITE: Custom crafted and carved unit encloses the owner's piano and displays their prized art pieces. Joan Weissman Hawaiian inspired rugs adorn the concrete floors.

ABOVE: The den creates a cozy nook for TV watching and relaxing using an A.Rudin sofa and lounge chair. The design team incorporated the small office that can be closed off when not needed.

not produce a carbon-copy of, their mainland house. In the end, the only feature replicated was a favorite light fixture.

Real estate on the Big Island is booming, and with construction prices to match, the couple remained practical. "They didn't expect tons of guests," explains Moss, and those who would visit would likely be spending more time in the home's 40-foot-long pool than in their rooms. Accordingly, the owners limited the number of bedrooms to three. But given the Hawaiian building ethos of indoor/outdoor living, the home seems ample enough with its roomy, 1,027-square-foot lanai, clerestory windows and outdoor shower in the master bath (the two guest bedrooms contain indoor showers), not to mention a dramatic, columned observation deck situated in the front of the house that Moss says is "perfect for cocktails at sunset."

The polished concrete floors are not only economical in comparison to pricey stone, but when used throughout the residence, the material helps to achieve flow; its color, as in many Hawaiian homes, "brings the outdoors in," according to Moss. "There's tile in the showers, but that's about it," she says. Moss notes that every concrete mix yields a slightly different hue. The sea-green stain, called Copper Patina, manages to individualize this home, since with concrete, "you never know what color it's going to be."

The soothing surfaces have found a natural partner in the home's dozen custom-made, earth-toned area rugs, which feature a leaf pattern and were crafted by Joan Wiseman of New Mexico. The leaf placement was even adapted to the position of the furniture and vice-versa. In one case, a glass coffee table had to be situated in just the right spot to make one of the leaves visible from above. The flooring dictated much of the design; Moss and Nery used bolder, complementary reds in the bedding to play off the green concrete.

If the two guest bedrooms are modest, the master suite makes a statement with its king-sized woven-leather bed, by McGuire, which rests under a hand-woven, bamboo-blade ceiling fan and enjoys a direct Pacific view. The master bathroom, with its brushed nickel Kohler fixtures, is equally luxurious. The open-air shower (outfitted with a bronze rainfall showerhead) is set under the home's eaves. Backed by honed Pacific basalt and black-stained concrete on one side, the shower is embraced by a semicircular lava rock wall punctuated by purple orchids on the other. The stream hitting the textured, pebble-rock floor evokes a faux-waterfall experience. Residing within the bath-

RIGHT: Verde Fire Granite covers the counters and the green is accentuated throughout the space with fabrics on the barstools from Jacques Bouvet.



ABOVE: McGuire chairs with a Robert Allen ultra suede fabric create an inviting place for dining. A Harry Wishard painting adds to the tropical decor.

room is a Trans-Pacific signature: the “floating” vanity (constructed from subtly-striped ribbon maple and topped by green rainforest marble) hangs nine inches above the floor. Touches such as this make a modestly-sized house feel more livable. “This is one thing we do in almost all our houses,” Nery says, “because it leads to more openness and also makes the bathroom look more custom.”

What was custom-designed by Trans-Pacific was the living room’s expansive, wall unit. A personal touch was required to create the large wraparound piece intended to display the owners’ prized pottery and hide a piano—“all these pieces meant

something to them, and they all made it through the earthquake,” Nery recalls. Nery had the unit fashioned from Indonesian wood ornamented with recessed, banana-leaf carvings—again, a move that respects Hawaiian living by blurring the distinction between indoor and outdoor space.

That green flow between indoors and outdoors is reinforced by the use of mostly light materials that recur throughout the house. The lava rock found in the master bathroom shower is echoed in the surface of the outdoor six-foot-by-eight-foot Jacuzzi tub. Natural woven lounge chairs have cushions—made from perennial acrylic by David Sutherland—on the observation



LEFT: Asian inspired custom crafted cabinet black stain creates a combination of cultures in a small space. Stone vessel from Bella Pietra.

ABOVE: A. Rudin custom sized lounge chair creates a cozy reading nook in the master suite with throw pillow accent fabric from Barbara Beckman.

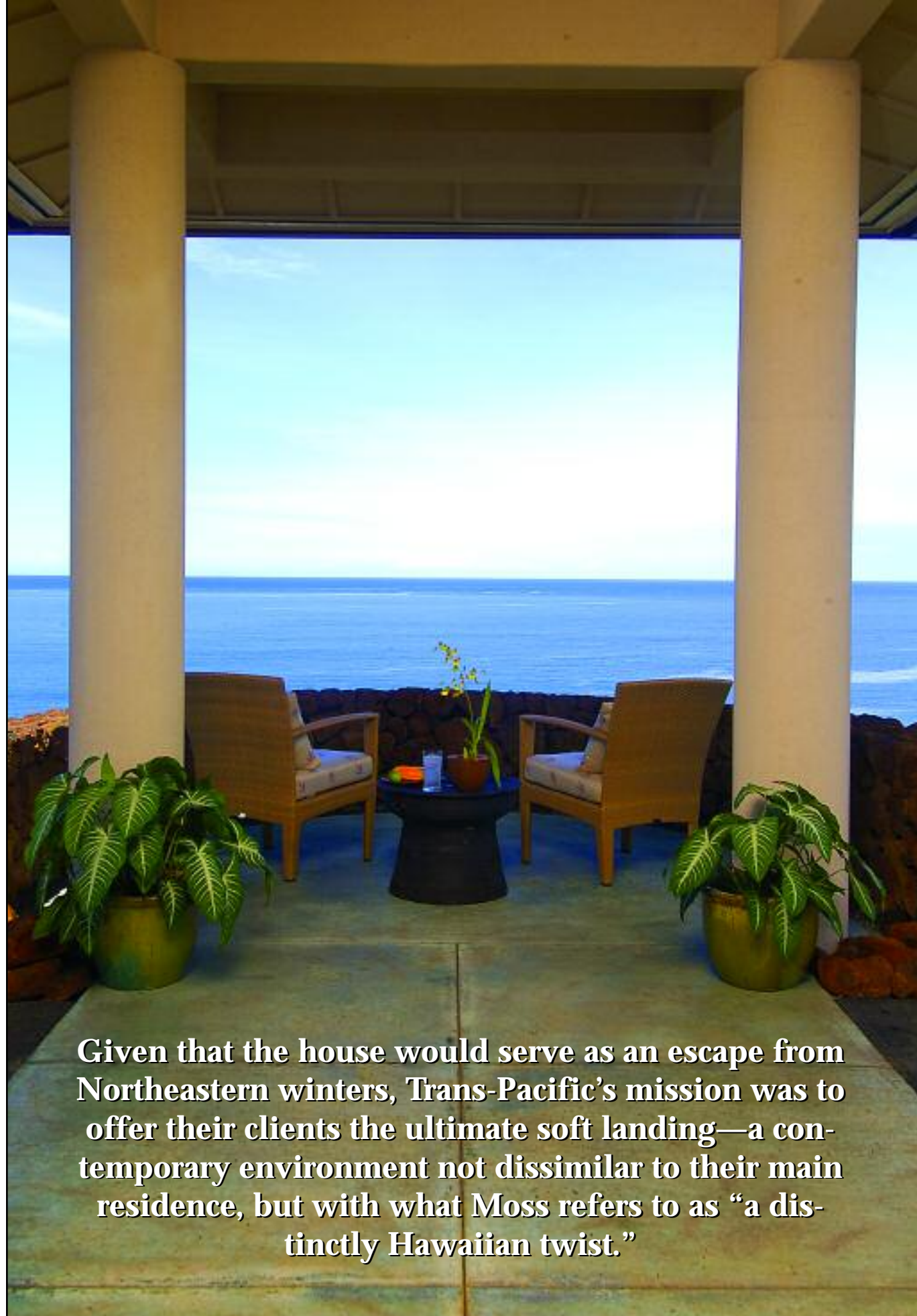
RIGHT: Basalt, concrete, and black pebble rock create a backdrop for a lush tropical rain shower.

RIGHT BOTTOM: The vanity cabinet made of a ribboned maple with rain forest countertop and custom created Hawai'i inspired rugs from Joan Weissman create a tropical environment.



This oxblood woven leather bed from McGuire provides a perfect space to relax and enjoy the views under the natural woven ceiling fan from Fanimation. Touches of color from Barbara Beckman fabrics (in the throw) and the custom crafted Joan Weissman rug added splashes of color in this relaxing room.





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OPPOSITE: The observation deck creates a perfect place to relax in the Janus et Cie woven lounge chairs sipping on a Hawaiian Mai Tai.

ABOVE: From its perch nestled into the protecting hillside, the home enjoys commanding views of varied ocean activity—including dolphins, whales, passing ships, and spectacular sunsets.

deck. Clean concrete is found on both the floors and the walls of the shower. The ribbon maple used in the master bathroom was also enlisted to construct the cabinets in the kitchen and den. “This is what helps expand the space,” Moss observes. “Materials go in and out, and lighter equals larger.”

For a hillside home with a Pacific view, space is clearly in the eye of the beholder—and, in this case, the designers. 🌴