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TRANSLATING THE ARTS AND CRAFTS IDEAL ON THE BIG ISLAND

Architecture by Mark de Reus, AIA, of Hart Howerton/Interior Design by Werner Design Associates
Landscape Architecture by Vita Planning & Landscape Architecture/Text by Jeff Turrentine/Photography by Mary E. Nichols

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For clients on Hawaii's Kona Coast, architect Mark de Reus and his team achieved an American Arts and Crafts aesthetic within a tropical setting. ABOVE: Landscape architect Don Vita conceived the "palm walk" to connect the main house and the guesthouses. A Song Dynasty stone tiger sits at rear; the bronze sculpture, right foreground, is by Delos Van Earl. OPPOSITE: On the main lanai, Asian-inspired furnishings chosen by designer Jeffrey Werner stand up to massive architectural elements. Michael Taylor lounge chairs.





Here's one way to find an architect: Politely kidnap him at a party, toss him into a commandeered golf cart and spend the next several hours scooting along the North Kona Coast while discussing your shared affinity for Greene & Greene, sibling avatars of the American Arts and Crafts Movement.

Admittedly, it's an unortho-

dox way to go about it. But that's how one married couple persuaded Mark de Reus, an architect based in Hawaii who was then with Hart Howerton, to build them a house in which the celebrated "Aloha spirit" would reside along with them and their frequently visiting children and grandchildren.

The wife found de Reus at an event sponsored by a private residential community on Ha-

waii's Big Island. "She knew a lot about architecture," he says. "And our interests overlapped, in that we both had a strong affection for the Craftsman style." As they talked—of bungalows and built-ins, of stone chimneys and Stickleys—they bonded. "We were both intrigued with the notion of reinterpreting that style in a tropical setting."

What de Reus liked about

Craftsman houses was the way they "simply and straightforwardly expressed their structural elements, and did so using natural materials like wood and stone." The clarity and directness of the style, he felt, was well suited to a house like the one his clients had in mind—one in which spectacular views would have a starring role and where days and evenings would be spent in the open air.

A team was assembled that included project architect Scott Dale, also then with Hart Howerton, California-based interior designer Jeffrey Werner with Terry Kuperschmid, and San Francisco Bay Area landscape architect Don Vita. Together they set about the task of giving the clients the sensation of "living in a garden," in de Reus's words. He imagined the residence hidden in greenery,

revealing itself slowly in a series of visual events.

The entrance to the property is inspired by *candi bentar*, the split gates that mark the entrance to Balinese Hindu temples. "It's about celebrating the entrance and giving it some ceremony and drama," says de Reus. "It's a person's first introduction to the melding of the sensibilities and the approach to the expression of the archi-

ture." After passing through it, one ventures down a long, lush corridor of palms leading to the house. There, via a pavilion whose procession of curved teak brackets creates the effect of an arboreal tunnel, a visitor finally enters something that feels like an indoor space—except that in front of him, where it seems a wall should be, there isn't one.

This would be the house's

ABOVE LEFT AND ABOVE: "Floating" above wraparound reflecting pools, the dining room opens almost completely to the cooling island breezes. De Reus hid a series of glass, screened and louvered pocket doors behind the teak brackets and within the quartzite corners of the room. Summit chairs. Stone table base from Michael Taylor.



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ABOVE: The master bedroom flows seamlessly onto a covered lanai and an outdoor spa. **OPPOSITE ABOVE:** The master bath is equipped with its own “shower garden,” where de Reus was committed to “continuing the strength of the Craftsman detailing” with signature curved teak supports. Architectural lighting of his own design, inspired by Indonesian carvings, is on the mirrors.

main gathering area, essentially a single room attached to a lanai, though the phrase “attached to a lanai” presumes that the two spaces are separated somehow. In fact, de Reus has designed pocket doors that slide open to fuse the two. And, this being the Kona Coast, those doors are open pretty much all of the time.

“The architectural challenge was to hide the pocket doors so

that they’re not pronounced,” says de Reus. “When you gang the doors together—three sets of them: one glass, one screened, one louvered—they can get pretty bulky. The proportions of those pockets can overwhelm the space. I worked really hard to try to tuck these doors away.” They disappear inside casings of stacked quartzite that resemble structural columns.

Other rooms share the main gathering area’s happily confused identity as spaces that are neither indoor nor outdoor but rather a combination of both. The dining room, with its own set of sliding doors, is lined on three sides by reflecting pools that make it appear as if it’s floating on water. The master bedroom is similarly conceived. If they’re so inclined—and why wouldn’t they be?—the

clients can experience the unusual luxury of stepping out of their bed, onto the lanai and into the swimming pool without having to pass through a single barrier.

For Werner, the challenge was how to confront all that wood—not only teak, which is practically everywhere, but also *wenge* and red gum. “We needed to complement it and counterbalance it at the same

time,” he says. “I was dealing with how to keep everything from blending into the wood walls, how to keep the eye moving around the room.” In close consultation with the wife, he looked for fabrics on the lighter end of the spectrum that wouldn’t disappear next to the walls’ warm, reddish tones.

“The palette is fairly neutral,” he remarks. “The clients’

desire for inclusion of Asian accents led to a generous use of black, which offsets and highlights the teak and red gum.”

Werner’s main objective was to “add human scale to a grandly scaled residence.” If any of the furnishings were going to have a sporting chance at catching people’s attention, they needed to be big—“the kind of big that almost looks overwhelming in the showroom,” he says. “Be-

cause you put anything into that house, it’s going to look small. I would tell people [who were out shopping]: ‘If you’re scared it’s going to be too big, then it’s just right.’”

Or, to put it another way: No piece of furniture can ever hope to beat a sunset over the Pacific, as seen from a Hawaiian lanai. Everything else in the world is competing for second place. □



Tiered swimming pools uniting the main and guest *bales*, or houses, spill into one another under the dappled shade of a specimen Singapore plumeria. Summit chaises with custom stainless-steel legs rest on an in-pool ledge. "The proportions and detailing grew out of a desire to harmonize with the surroundings," explains de Reus.

