

DESIGN & REALTY

home



THE MAIN SPREAD Evoking ranches and camps of yesteryear, Kahua Kuili consists of several structures—including a tiki bar (left) and main hale (center).

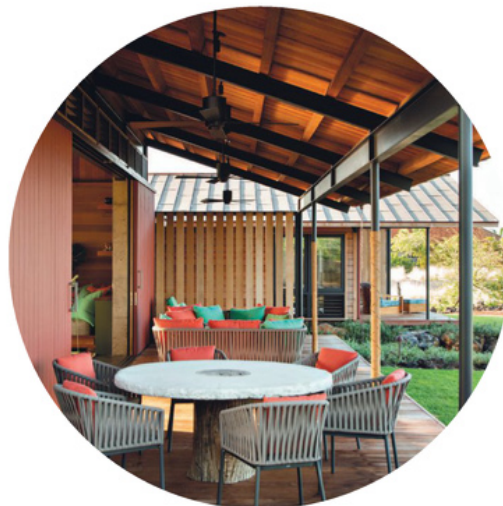
DREAMS OF SUMMER

A contemporized take on a timeless, traditional style of island living takes root on the Kona Coast.

*By Jenn Thornton
Photography by Matthew Millman*

Though located as part of a resort community on Hawai'i Island's Kona Coast, there's nothing remotely resort-like about the residence of Kahua Kuili itself. In fact, it's the modern reimagining of a classic island summer camp designed by California-based Walker Warner Architects (walker-warner.com)—led by principal Greg Warner and senior associate Clark Sather—and built by Maryl Construction, Inc. (maryl.com). Having roamed the grounds where the series of contextually appropriate buildings now stand, Warner brought to bear his homegrown understanding of the island's distinct culture—and its rich agrarian tradition, in particular—to a project he calls “affecting and understated.”

On the outermost rim of the resort, Kahua Kuili's 2-acre lot unfolds as if out on its own, with the simple, restrained architecture at its core evoking remnant buildings from an original ranch. The absence of formality—no fussy details, no big architectural statement—makes way for warmth, spaciousness and a finely honed sense of utility in keeping with a decidedly ranch vernacular. “The big idea was to capture more than just an oceanfront location, relative to what the client wanted—that relaxed camp feel,” notes Warner, who devised an architectural



solution that he and the Pacific Northwest-rooted homeowners came to jokingly call “the camp where cowboys and surfers hang out together.”

A disparate notion, perhaps, but not untrue from a collective sense—Kahua Kuili was designed to be shared and enjoyed by family and friends. Furthering the communal feeling is all six of its sensibly constructed buildings, including the main hale, which contains generously dimensioned dining, living and kitchen areas; a master suite; a studio; a wash room; and incidental structures that form the exterior space (from a guest hale, garage and tiki bar to a lū'au barbecue, pool and spa). Throughout these spaces are cozy nooks. Orientated for cross-ventilation and arranged to create indoor/outdoor spaces, “each building kind of talks to each other in a fairly informal way,” notes Warner. Remarkably, they also dialogue with the environment—in this case, arid and warm, instead of the lush, tropical surroundings often associated with Hawai‘i.

Facing the ocean from a comfortable distance and flanked by mountains, Kahua Kuili is a translation of this terrain, constructed with materials suggesting a luxurious-looking practicality: resilient western red cedar, left natural to weather and fade; durable concrete, colored to pick up on the natural tones of the surround; and steel, which harks back to the logic of simple construction, a very ranch idea, furthered by standardly shaped structures (an extended roofline as inventive as it gets), large barn doors and big easy openings that blur the lines between indoors and out.

Like Warner, Marion Philpotts of Philpotts Interiors (philpotts.net) applied her own grasp of Hawai‘i’s history and tradition to the project. “The fond memories from summer camp stick with us forever,” Philpotts offers. “There is a warm simplicity to it all. Places like Camp Sloggett in Kōke‘e, The Lodge at Kō‘ele, and summer residences of missionary families served as reference points.” In Philpotts’ hands, interior touches transcend tasteful decoration—they’re touchstones of an overriding narrative. “We were going for vintage, so there are elements and designs that you’d find 100 years ago. Palaka [checked Hawaiian fabric], quilting, monkeypod, koa, vintage **CONTINUED...**

OPEN SPACES Clockwise from left: Kahua Kuili’s contemporary take on the tiki bar is the perfect spot for cool libations; accented with soothing pastels, the outdoor seating area is the perfect spot to escape from the heat; the kitchen in the main hale opens up to the lawn and the rest of the property.

