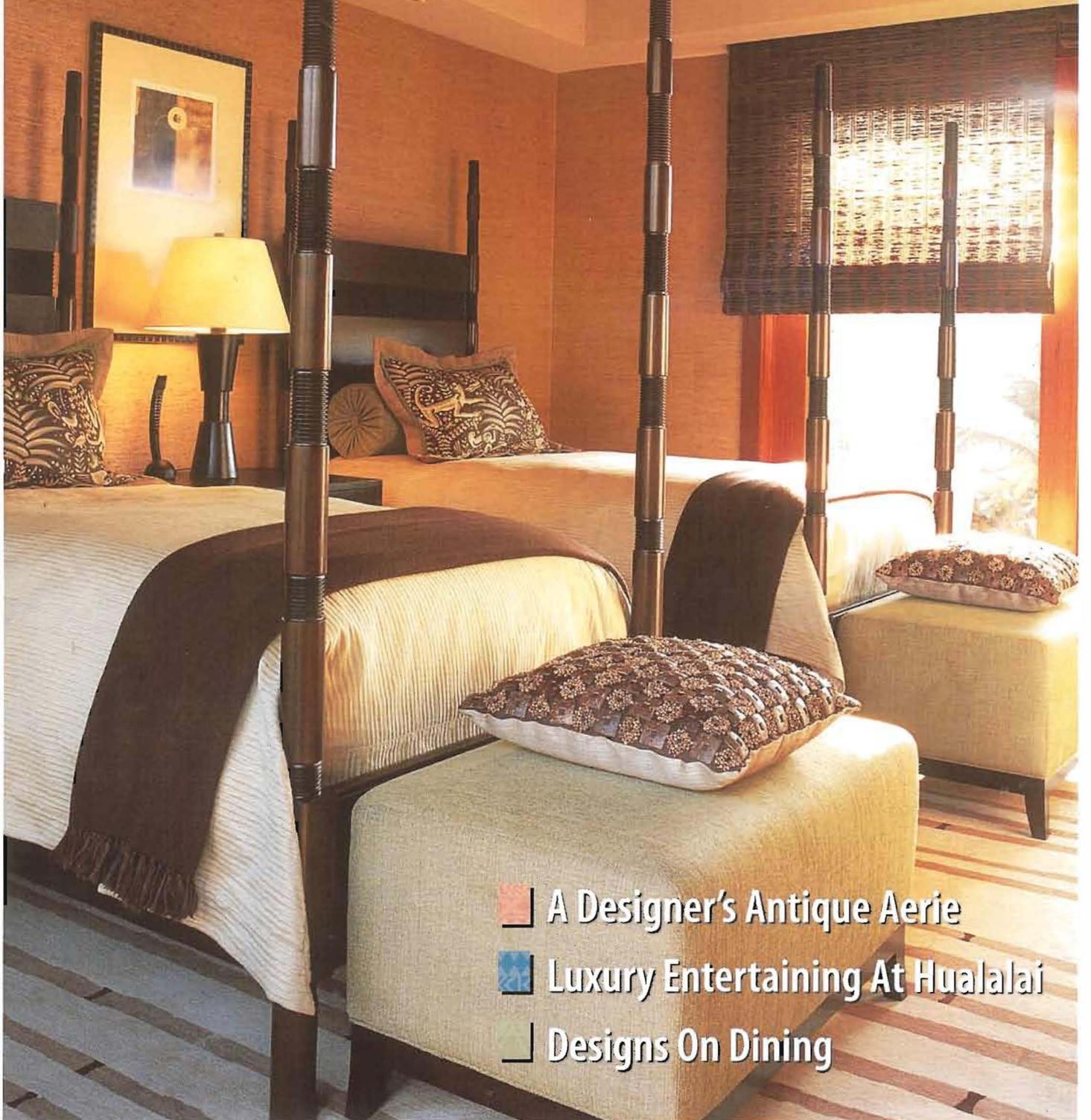


HAWAII INTERIORS & ARCHITECTURE™



- A Designer's Antique Aerie
- Luxury Entertaining At Hualalai
- Designs On Dining

DESIGN

Luxury Entertaining at Hualalai

Text by Suzanne Watkins

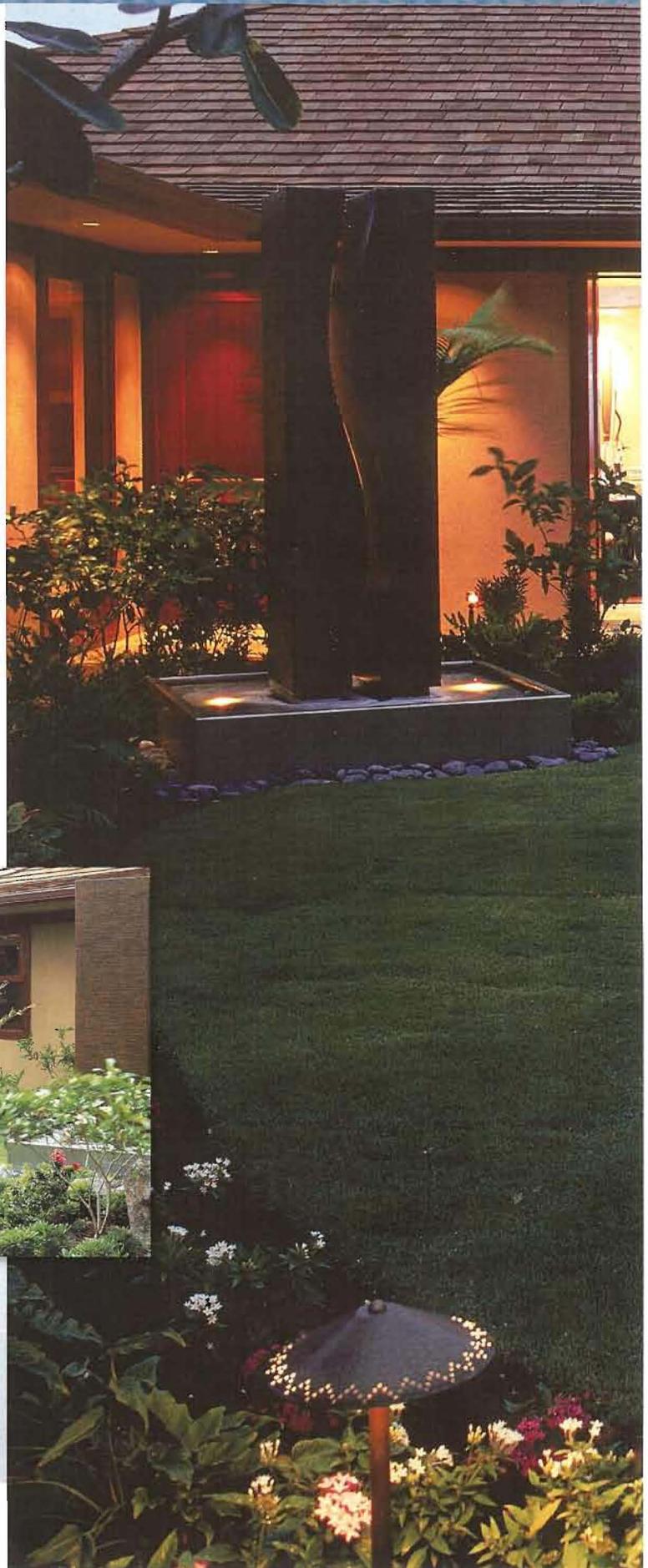
Interior by Gina Willman, ASID

Photos by Linny Morris

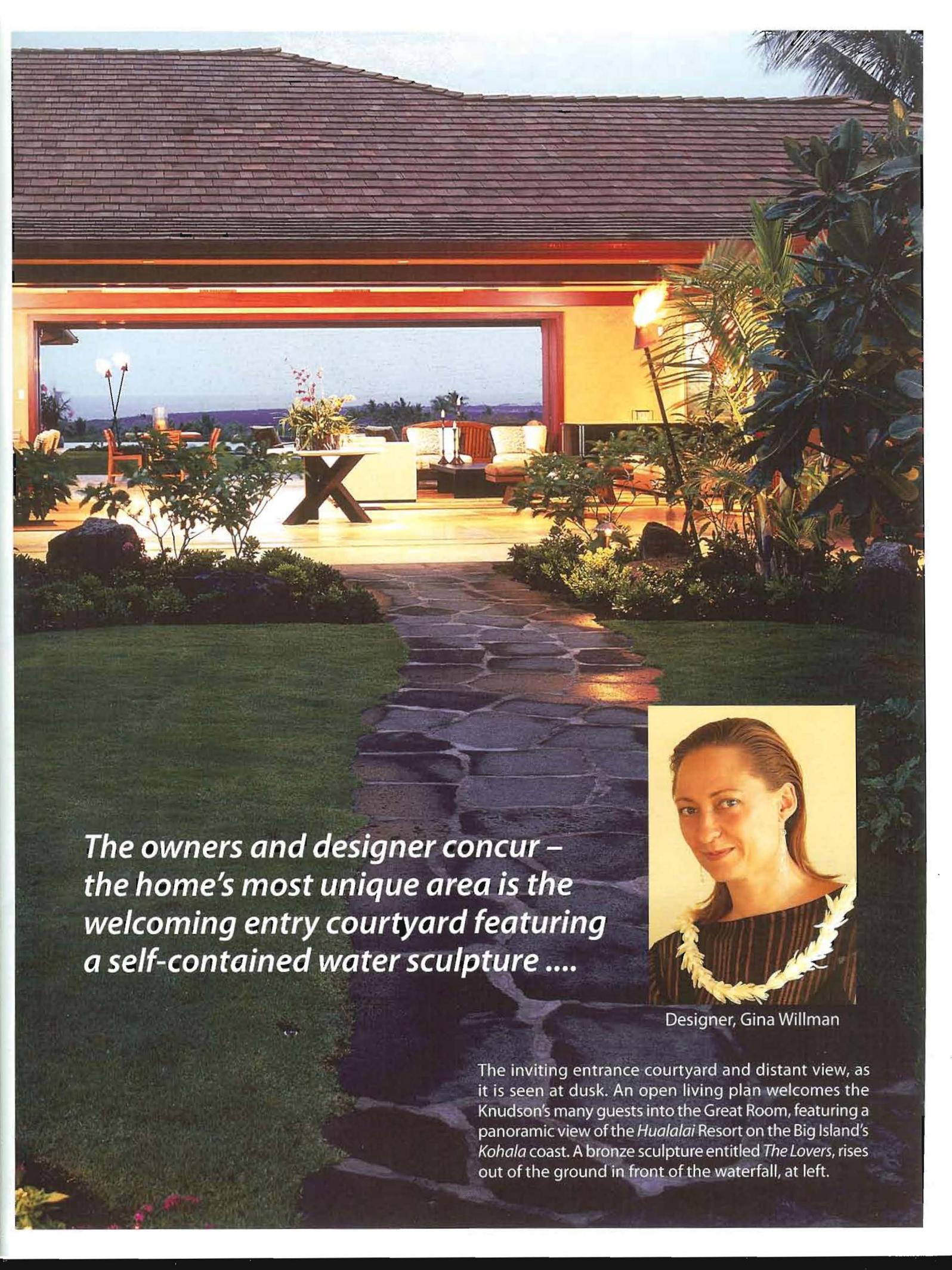
Additional Photos by David Duncan Livingston

The Kohala coast boasts some of the most luxurious residential properties in *Hawaii*. Native New Zealander Gina Willman, ASID of W Interiors in *Kamuela*, specializes in sumptuous residential projects at the *Hualalai Resort* at *Ka'upulehu* on the Big Island of *Hawaii*. Her latest effort won the ASID *Hawaii* Chapter's 2006 Award of Honor for a large residential project.

Gina's favorite clients are luxury home developers Toni and K.C. Knudson, who together planned a new 6,500 square foot residence with an open living area, four family bedrooms, four and a half baths, a media room and a one bedroom/bath attached guest house for their frequent visitors. The Knudsons are avid entertainers who requested an elegant,



A graceful lava rock pathway frames the lush courtyard garden, inviting the Knudson's guests into their home. Mahogany frames support bamboo for the custom designed entrance gates, with bronze bamboo pulls. An artist on the mainland fabricated a bronze bench. This was one of the first homes built on the *mauka* portion of the *Hualalai* resort.



The owners and designer concur – the home's most unique area is the welcoming entry courtyard featuring a self-contained water sculpture



Designer, Gina Willman

The inviting entrance courtyard and distant view, as it is seen at dusk. An open living plan welcomes the Knudson's many guests into the Great Room, featuring a panoramic view of the *Hualalai* Resort on the Big Island's *Kohala* coast. A bronze sculpture entitled *The Lovers*, rises out of the ground in front of the waterfall, at left.



A large mirror placed behind the piano allows the pianist's hands to be seen from many vantage points throughout the room.

The Knudson's are music lovers and their home was designed for entertaining. They requested an open Great Room/Grand Lanai area where they could dine intimately with friends or entertain with classical piano concerts accommodating up to 100 people. The tables are an ebonized pine, a Japanese finishing process. Bronze candlesticks are by an artist on the mainland; a small lamp to the left of the sofa is fashioned from agate strands. The walls are covered in a Venetian plaster finish, with a slight sheen and texture. One of the breathtaking highlights of the Knudson's personal Hawaiian art collection hangs over the sofa – Lionel Walden's *Crashing Waves*. The owners often hold large fundraisers for The Hualalai Ohana Foundation.

understated interior with roomy and comfortable open spaces to host large crowds for parties, concerts and philanthropic fundraisers, as well as cozy areas for intimate family functions. They also specified expansive walls to display their historic art collection featuring works by major *Hawaii* artists Walden, Hitchcock, Foley, Sharp and Vos. A fast track design-build schedule, with a dream team that included very experienced clients and a knowledgeable local contractor, enabled the project to be completed in one year.

Design

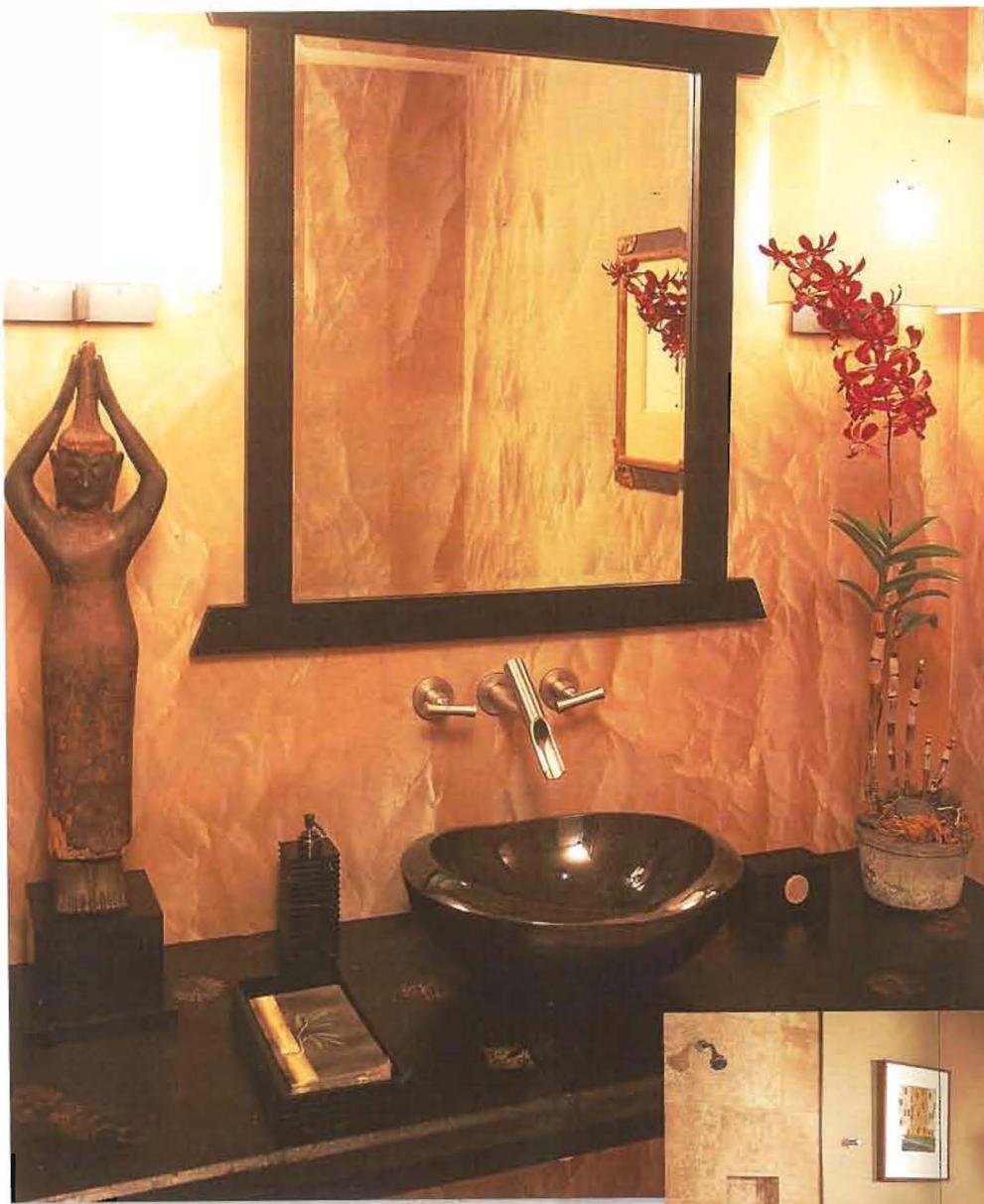
With extensive creative input from the clients, the interior designer developed an inviting open interior space plan tailored to their unique social requirements, as well as the potential needs of

future buyers. Travertine flooring was specified for indoor and outdoor locations to unite all portions of the plan. A design palette of neutrals and muted earth-tones was selected to highlight the Knudson's extensive art collection and will accommodate any new furnishings that might be incorporated by later occupants. The owners and designer concur – the home's most unique area is the welcoming entry courtyard featuring a self-contained water sculpture by artist Archie Held, entitled *Lovers*. A contemporary stone carving of an embracing couple harmonizes with the water's splashing resonance, while a nearby bronze bench invites the Knudson's guests, and other loving couples, to enjoy the lush landscaping in this art-filled and peaceful setting.

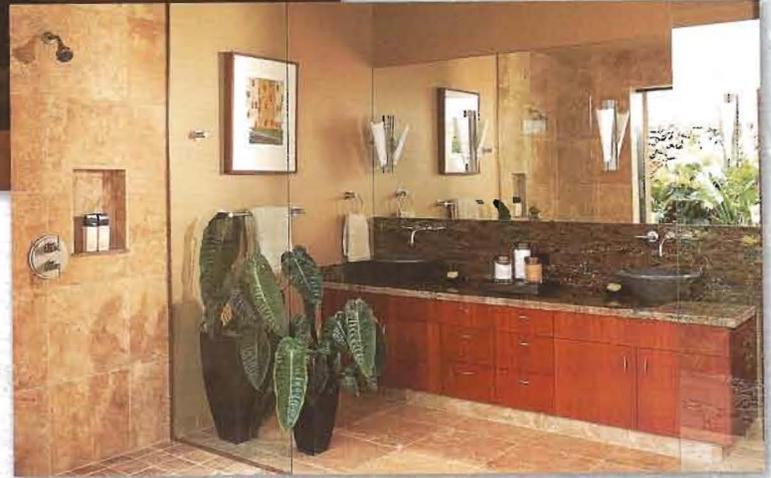
(text continued on page 22)

An 1898 portrait by Hawaiian artist Hubert Vos, entitled *Iohepa*, Hawaiian Fisher Boy, presides over the dining room. The custom-made wenge veneer dining table seats ten; another dining table is on the grand *lanai* for *al fresco* entertaining. The rug is by fiber artist Joan Weisman, custom designed in New Mexico. Asian inspired steel lighting pendants help subtly distinguish the kitchen from the dining space. Shutter doors open into the master suite. Rare, fuzzy heliconias grace the table setting.





The powder room provides an opportunity to wow those guests who might not see past the Great Room. A cast stone counter embedded with Asian emblems rests on a console table, designed by W Interiors, handcrafted on the Big Island by Hap Tallman of HeartWoodWorks. A black granite vessel catches the water as it emerges from the bronze wall-mounted filler, modeled on a bamboo stalk. Paper sconces flank a custom designed mirror. A rare female Buddha contemplates the space. A custom wood mirror and console base, are coated with an aniline dye, highlighting the grain.



This guesthouse suite is attached to the main residence, off the entrance courtyard. The suite's bathroom has mahogany cabinets supporting granite countertops and concrete water vessels. Travertine flooring tiles are used on both the shower and bathroom walls. The shower opens to the lush garden.



(left) Two walnut Chinese buffet pieces were retrofitted to become his and her vanities. The open shower feels as if it is outdoors. A curved shower wall suggests "enclosure" for a feeling of privacy. The freestanding amenity shelf also supports plumbing fixtures and a hand held shower.



A serene bathroom with a sculptural tub opens to the private Zen garden, sheltered by pocket door systems. Water spills in a sheet from the travertine ledge to fill the sculptural bathing vessel, fabricated in the bay area of concrete to similar proportions of an expensive limestone tub the owners admired in their travels.

Entered from the courtyard, the spacious Great Room is the hub of the entertaining area, opening to the informal dining room and gourmet kitchen, as well as the large outdoor *lanai* and an infinity pool. A grand piano is the centerpiece of the seating area, with a framed mirror strategically placed to reflect the moving hands of the musician for the guests seated on the comfortable sofas in the living area.

The master suite is a spectacular blend of Asian contemporary design, with tropical details echoing a subtle repetition of design motifs used throughout the residence. Gina Willman's design philosophy is to create "Clean lined interiors that inspire, soothing the soul. The Master bedroom and bathroom suite is my favorite area. It's a very serene and elegant space – it has an ethereal feeling."

In the garden view bedroom, the wings of a custom upholstered headboard enfold the Cal king bed and its textured silk bedding. The luxurious spa bathroom is the showcase of the suite, featuring individual custom vanities, a luxurious soaking tub and a shower that can be opened to the enclosed bamboo garden.

Shoji style sliding doors, embossed with a design of water reeds, pocket into the wall. A bubbling granite *mizubachi*, a faceted Japanese fountain, provides sounds of tranquil serenity for the bather. A random mosaic of travertine and marble tiles define the slightly curved shower wall, accented by a ledge for showering accessories. Contemporary Chinese buffets were retrofitted as vanities for plumbing and storage needs.

Construction

"The Knudsons had admired a stunning solid limestone tub priced at an exorbitant \$30,000, plus shipping charges," Gina explained. "The design problem was to provide an alternate tub that would be equally as beautiful, but a lot less 'pricey.' We designed a deep ovoid and had a new tub formed in concrete, colored to simulate limestone. Another design challenge was installing the tub filler on a half-wall pedestal in a way that water would gently cascade into the tub without splashing." An innovative plumber collaborated with Gina to



The area that receives the most accolades is the Master Suite. "The client," says designer Gina Willman, ASID, "loves this retreat." A dramatic upholstered headboard symbolizes a "strong unity" according to *Feng Shui* principles. The neutral color palette and layers of textural fabrics, on a custom Tibetan wool rug by Joan Weisman, create an elegant sanctuary.

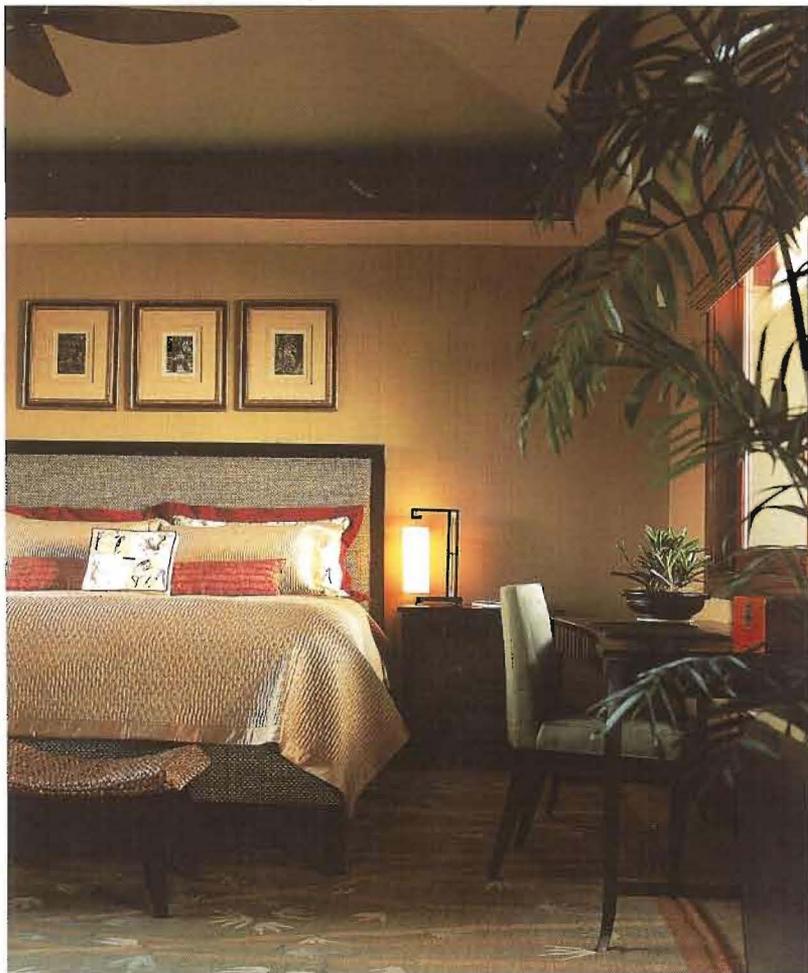
design a wall that encased the plumbing fixtures, as well as delivering the bath water into the tub.

Of course, as with any construction project, a few glitches appeared now and then. Gina continues, "Only one of the custom vanities ordered for the

master bathroom turned up – the other 'missed the boat' in China. It was promptly air freighted to *Hualalai* to meet our deadline. And then the accent tiles that define the shower area arrived from the supplier's showroom in the wrong color and were partially installed before we discovered the mistake."

The installation was briefly halted, the mosaics were quickly removed off the mesh mounts, and new tiles were located in Seattle. "We also had a contractor worried about installing a crumpled texture wallcovering in the powder room – he thought it was damaged. We all laughed when he realized it was definitely supposed to be that heavily textured!"

Gina and the Knudsons are delighted with the results. "It is very important to have compatible personalities and for the clients to define their interior design expectations," explained Gina. "These clients have exceptional taste and are very decisive. With the success of two projects behind us, my dream clients are now dream business partners! With our mutual love of luxury home design, Toni Knudson and I have partnered in *W Interiors* to create luxurious ocean-view residential properties at the exclusive *Hualalai Resort*." 🌿



A guesthouse bedroom sports wall finishes by master artist Joe Eby, giving the walls a striated faux texture that reads like a seamless wallcovering. The quilted silk coverlet is repeated in upholstery throughout. A printed Asian-motif fabric covers shams that rest on the king headboard. Accent pillows are tufted with bamboo buttons. (The designer used beads from a bracelet for the buttons). The bench at the end of the bed is woven from water hyacinth. The desk conveniently allows guests to check their email, write postcards or contemplate the lush courtyard. Lanterns feature silk shades and mother of pearl accents in an elm wood frame. Etchings by Cornelia Foley complete this restful guest oasis.

(Cover Photo) This guest room, one several off of the courtyard, features a pair of four-poster twin beds. A tasteful whimsical fabric is used on the pillow shams. The bed coverlets are a matelasse, enhanced by cashmere throws. Other finishes are mostly textural, including arrowroot wall coverings, and woven tobacco roman shades.





On a clear day, the semi-circular infinity pool offers a distant view of *Maui* and the peak of *Haleakala*. Lava pavers were used for the pool coping, with a concrete surface carried into the water. Three lounge chairs are submerged 6" into the water on a platform. The dining *lanai* is to the left, with views of *Hualalai* resort and the North *Kohala* coast, to the right.

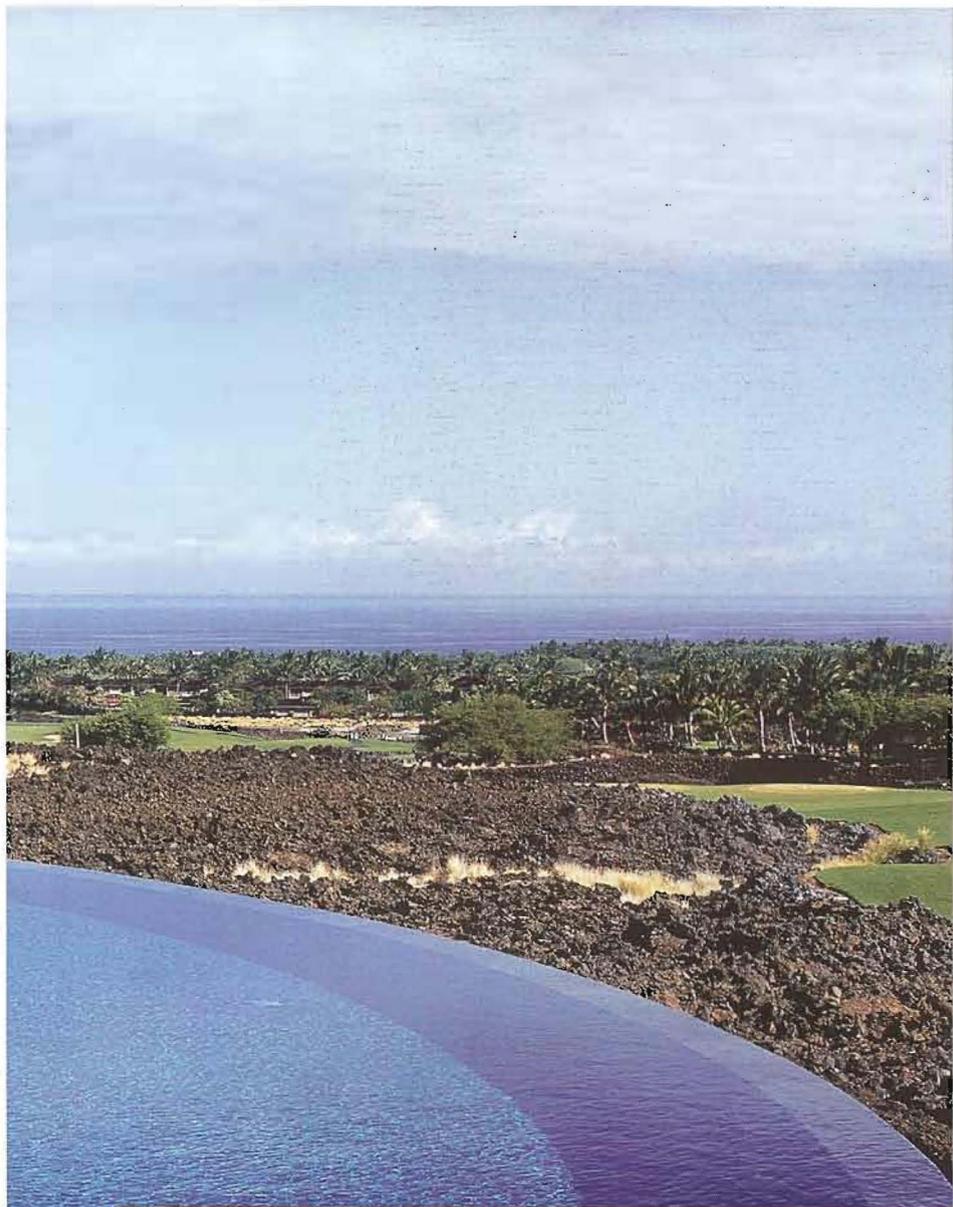


Photo by David Duncan Livingston



Colors pop off the wall in the office, used by both K.C. and Toni Knudson, luxury home developers. The chocolate walls complement the dramatic rug, woven in combinations of brown and blue yarns of wool and silk, that was custom made for the designer by the Indich Collection. Leather desk chairs are upholstered with suede seats and backs. The freestanding desk features a blackened "tray top" of ebonized wood. Art is by Joseph Sharp of *Oahu*, featuring windward *Oahu* landscapes. The colorful paintings enhance the room's view of the pool – humorously referred to as "the lake".