

Bamboo Living in Puako



Dark bamboo flooring adds a distinctive look to the dining room, which showcases a massive bamboo table from Inspirations in Honolulu. Furnishings and accessories throughout the home were sourced by Diane Bobek of Fine Design Interiors in Waimea.

**By Karen Anderson
Photography by Giselle Thompson**

Personal tragedies often lead to triumphs, and such is the case for Raymond Schmidt, whose newly completed bamboo house in Puako pays homage to his late mother's love for the pakalana flower that grows in Hawai'i.

Named Pakalana Sanctuary, the multi-level, eco-friendly bamboo residence might never have seen the light of day had it not been for the unexpected passing of Raymond's mother when he and his family came to the Big Island for Raymond's wedding.

"She'd been battling cancer at the time," said Raymond, originally from Anaheim, California. "A week after my wedding in Waimea, she ended up in North Community Hospital. She never made it out."

Unfamiliar with the Puako area, Raymond and his siblings searched for a peaceful beach to toss their mother's flowers into the ocean at sunrise. Returning unknowingly to the same spot a few years later for his daughter's baby luau, Raymond realized that Puako was the place that had brought him so much solace that tranquil morning. ▶



Bamboo construction is the foundation of Pakalana Sanctuary, a vacation retreat in Puako that features a three-story main residence and several haies connected by breezeways. The serene exterior includes Japanese rake gardens, fountains, an open-air yoga studio and vegetable gardens.



Raymond Schmidt, pictured with Diane Bobek of Fine Design Interiors in Waimea.



A teak daybed provides a relaxing retreat on the lanai. Some of the home's furnishings are made of recycled teak from villages in Java, where local craftsmen build furniture by hand.

Photo by Karen Anderson



It took eight people to lift the enormous 5' x 10' granite counter on top of the customized island from Home Depot. Designed for large gatherings, the fully equipped commercial kitchen includes Viking and Wolf appliances and a Bosch high-efficiency dishwasher.

The serenity of Puako beckoned Raymond once again after the devastating demise of his marriage. That's when he threw caution to the wind and decided to purchase a half-acre lot to build a dream home inspired by his mother.

"When this property became available, it was listed at a ridiculous price," said Raymond, who owns a financial planning firm in California he launched in his twenties.

"I knew I needed to come up with a cash offer, so I scrambled to put something together in 30 days with a team of co-investors. It was a total leap of faith and went against everything I knew intellectually."

Needless to say, cost would become a consideration once construction began. Raymond had seen a TV segment about a pre-fab building company in Maui: Bamboo Living, which promotes sustainable building practices utilizing bamboo grown in Vietnam.



At \$85 a square foot, the price tag of a bamboo kit home suddenly made the impossible possible.

With the expertise of Bamboo Living's lead architect, David Sands, Raymond set about to maximize the potential of the lot. They customized a pre-existing kit to include four different structures: a three-story main residence and two haies connected by breezeways, plus a free-standing hale.

Because his father was in construction, Raymond knew the basics of the trade.

For months, he camped on the property with his friend, Tyler Bierbower. Together they grinded out 10- to 12-hour days doing the tile, concrete, carpentry work and flooring.

Determined to be a steward of the earth's limited resources, Raymond credits his friend, Reta Mercedes Parker, for her invaluable research into responsible building practices and ▶



Subtle colors and understated furnishings add a touch of organic simplicity to the relaxed space. Painted pillows came from SoMace Lifestyle in Honolulu. Raymond Schmidt's own photo art is on display throughout the home.



The Nalu Suite overlooks the ocean and features a living area and reading nook. For interiors, Diane Bobek sourced local Kona retailers including Plantation Interiors, Kaloko Furniture, Jeanne Marie Imports, Bali Aga and Baik Designs.



The courtyard leads to an open-air yoga studio located below the Nalu Suite.

Photo by Karen Anderson

eco products — everything from natural stone tile and energy-efficient appliances to denim insulation and soy-based stains.

A crowning achievement, the fabulous interior design showcases the artistic talents of Diane Bobek, of Fine Design Interiors in Waimea.

Her astute choices of hip Hawaiiana fabrics, cool lamps and teak furnishings lend a casual elegance to the premises.

“Because there was a lot going on in texture with the bamboo walls and ceilings, I wanted to downplay the furnishings, yet have it be dramatic in a quiet way,” Diane said. “My vision was to create a calming, serene environment — uncluttered, organic and simplistic.”

Keeping in mind Raymond’s green-building concept, Diane sourced most everything locally to reduce shipping costs. Pieces came from Plantation Interiors, Kaloko Furniture, Jeanne-Marie Imports, Bali Aga, Baik Designs, Pacific Home, CS Wo and SoMace Lifestyle. ▶



Photo by Karen Anderson

With its hip Hawaiian décor and unique design, Pakalana Sanctuary showcases the stylish attributes of eco-friendly bamboo construction. The home was customized by Bamboo Living, a company based in Maui that creates modular prefab homes from bamboo harvested in Vietnam.

Name: RAILING SYSTEMS OF HAWAII
Width: 4.7383 in
Depth: 5.25 in
Color: Black plus three
Ad Number: 000072786r1

Name: ALOHA PLUS STORAGE & PACK
Width: 4.7383 in
Depth: 5.25 in
Color: Black plus three
Ad Number: 000072785r1



Photo by Karen Anderson

King-sized beds and plush mattresses lend a comforting ambience to the bedrooms. “Adding whites to the bedding suggests a softness and delicacy, perfect for recreating placid environments,” said designer Diane Bobek.

“I took advantage of the expansive decks and lanais with the views of the Puako ocean to create areas for taking a nap, relaxing or just reading a book on the oversized daybeds,” Diane said. “The sitting niches allow guests to enjoy the beautiful surroundings.”

The outdoor courtyard, with Japanese rake gardens and open-air yoga studio, promotes community interaction. “This place was always designed to bring groups together; a place where people can hold retreats,” Raymond said.

For Raymond, offering the home as a vacation retreat provides the opportunity to share the attributes of bamboo technology and sustainable living. Additionally, he says anything is possible with a little faith and hard work.

“I had no idea what I was getting myself into, but the strength of my mom and my upbringing paid off huge,” Raymond said. “My mom was all about love, aloha and entertaining. That’s why the kitchen and living room here are as big as they are. She instilled something in my heart. This whole process has been divine intervention.” **AH**

Name: ALOHA BLINDS & INTERIORS
Width: 4.7383 in
Depth: 5.25 in
Color: Black plus three
Ad Number: 000072784r1

Name: Ohana Sportfishing
Width: 4.7383 in
Depth: 5.25 in
Color: Black plus three
Ad Number: 000072764r1