

156 KUHIHANUI ST., OR JUST CALL IT "FABULOUS"

by Shelley Hoose

When developer Mark Richards of Maryl Development got together with Kona architect Hamlet "Lucky" Bennett to build a home in Keauhou Estates, it was one of those fortuitous collaborations (not to overuse the word "lucky") where the whole equals more than the sum of its parts. Their goal: to create a "beautiful, totally unique home that conformed to the rules of the [Keauhou Estates] Design Committee in a completely unexpected way, and to build it to a quality never seen before on the Big Island," says Bennett. "It was a challenging site," he adds, "a 15,000-square-foot lot located on the face of a cliff."

What they accomplished is now one of the Big Island's four 1992 Parade of Homes entries. It's a \$4.5 million home -- among the highest-priced ever in the Parade of Homes -- in which the developer instructed the architect to "do it the best and not worry about the money," according to Bennett. With no bottom-line budget, Bennett believes that this home, of the many custom homes he has designed, "combines all the best of everything in terms of quality, attention to detail, and overall concept."

With four bedrooms, four baths, and two half-baths, the home totals 5,650 square feet of interior space and includes a 1,750 square-foot lanai, a 364-square foot balcony, and a three-car garage.

Built by Maryl Construction, a division of Maryl Development, the home seemingly showcases every luxury item that could be included in a home. Donald Trump, the Sultan of Oman, or even Sylvester Stallone would find it difficult to equal the amenities of this home in any palace anywhere in the world.

A quick tour reveals an extraordinary array of both functional and decorative amenities, such as:

- The entry court and foyer are a stepping bridge across koi and flowering lily ponds fed by an exotic waterfall. The floors and walls are sculpted from French Beaumaniere Limestone and Imperial Red Granite. These regal surfaces are accented everywhere by redwood, Honduran mahogany, and Hawaiian koa in cabinetry, library, and desk pieces.

- Vaulted two-story ceilings, floor-to-ceiling glass doors both upstairs and down exude a light, breezy open-air feel, an ambiance enhanced by magnificent mahogany doors which disappear cleanly into concealing walls, giving the impression that the home is wide open to the elements. The entire estate is organized around a grand, multi-level ornamental garden, with three two-story-high palm trees gracing the central stairway area.

- A complete bar leads to a climate-controlled media center. Leather chairs swivel for viewing, and audio and video are distributed throughout the home from the state-of-the-art electronic center.

- Each of the four bedrooms includes a private bath with enclosed marble deep-soaking tub. Bedroom headboards feature an electronic system controlling the ceiling fan, lighting, and audio. Imported Indonesian marble accents the master bath, which also includes a separate double shower, bidet and toilet, and fixtures finished in silver and gold.

- And now for the center of any house that's a home: the kitchen. Solid granite countertops, koa cabinets, two separate pantries, a custom built-in granite table and wraparound bench, two refrigerator/freezers, two sinks (one in the preparation island), and, of course, a climate-controlled wine cellar equipped to hold 1,000 bottles.

•Outside, views of the Kona Country Club golf course and the Pacific are accented by a spa which spills into a half-moon, black-bottom pool which appears to spill into the ocean beyond. To the eye, the effect is of a plane of water from spa to ocean, uninterrupted from home to horizon.

Will a home like this sell in today's sluggish real estate market? "This home could create a trend," Bennett says. "This may sell where nothing else will. To a person who wants to buy a home like this, price doesn't matter." Betting on this philosophy, Bennett and Maryl are working together on several new projects.

The home's interior design and furnishings were provided by Peggy Chestnut Interior Design. The landscape architect/designer was Gene Power & Associates.

For more information on this Parade-of-Home entry, contact Janine Rhodes at Maryl Development at 329-0866.

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