

# COASTAL LIVING®

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# Pacific Breeze

A Los Angeles couple builds an open-air retreat on a picturesque plot along Hawaii's Kohala Coast

Just one visit to Hawaii's Kohala Coast was all it took to hook one vacationing couple. So taken were they with the Big Island's plum spot—known for its pristine shore, posh eateries, and humpback whale sightings—that they began house-hunting only a few days into their trip. But rather than choosing one of the completed homes they toured, a striking plot of empty land caught their eye, one with 180-degree water views and natural black-lava flows (volcanic remnants characteristic of the island). The couple enlisted L.A. designer Christine Markatos Lowe and local builder Gregg Todd of GM Construction to create a beach house that capitalizes on the vistas. Here's how they designed an airy escape for the family of five.

**1 MAINTAIN THE VIEW.** The team designed a wet deck—a deck submerged in just a few inches of water—to optimize views while lounging. "It sits higher than the infinity pool, so it's a prime spot to take it all in," says Lowe. The teak chairs are stored on the dry deck when not in use, and the wicker table is treated with a water-resistant finish. ➤



KONA, HAWAII

The chaise longues are by Smith & Hawken. The cushion and umbrella fabrics are by Holly Hunt.



The siding is Cumaru teak. The interior wall treatment is Venetian plaster.

**2 INVITE FRESH AIR IN.** To take advantage of Hawaii's temperate weather, the main dwelling—primarily housing a great room, kitchen, and the master bedroom—was fitted with large glass pocket doors that merge indoors with out. "The owners wanted everything to feel open," says Lowe. With the sliding doors, she explains, each room functions like a covered lanai and also allows for ample overflow when entertaining. A pair of pavilion-style guest suites flank the central residence.

**3 FOCUS ON NATURE.** Wanting to play up the organic beauty of the island surroundings, the designer used Cumaru—a smooth Brazilian teak—throughout, including the floors and kitchen cabinetry. A sea grass ceiling treatment and woven barstools further establish a natural palette and allow the glimmering blue-gray tile backsplash to really shine. ▶



The backsplash tiles are by Heath Ceramics. The stools are by TK Collections.

**4 CHOOSE PRACTICAL MATERIALS.**

The couple wanted to entertain outdoors as often as possible, so Lowe and Todd designed a breezy dining lanai that overlooks the pool and neighboring golf course. To ensure the furnishings' longevity in the open-air room, Lowe chose a 12-foot powder-coated metal table and simple wicker armchairs. "It establishes a casual aesthetic, which was important to the owners," says the designer.



The table is by JANUS et Cie, and the chairs are by Baker. The flooring is sandstone.



The sofa upholstery is by Peter Dunham; the coffee tables are custom.



The side chairs and lounge chairs are by JANUS et Cie. The table is by Munder-Skiles.

**5 BRING BIG ROOMS DOWN TO SCALE.**

At 600 square feet, the expansive great room easily could have felt overwhelming if it had been furnished as a single conversation area. Instead, Lowe opted for several intimate seating arrangements. Pairs of inlaid Indian chairs, printed linen sofas, and custom walnut coffee tables keep the Far East-inspired furnishings cohesive in the large space. ➤

EACH ROOM FUNCTIONS LIKE A COVERED LANAI

## H HOUSE TOUR

A PALETTE OF BLUES, PURPLES, GREENS, AND GOLDS LIGHTS UP THE ROOMS

**6 CHOOSE JEWEL TONES.** A palette of blues, purples, greens, and golds lights up the rooms. "There is color in the house, but it is soft and subdued," Lowe says. In the master bedroom, for example, pastel striped shams and a custom-designed quilt are coupled with a printed cotton sheer by John Robshaw for a serene splash of color. The hand-carved 18th-century Dutch trunk adds another layer of texture to the space.



The bed is by The Country Bed Shop. The trunk is from Charles Jacobsen, Inc.



The wall tile is by Nemo Tile. The garden stool is from Treillage.

**7 GIVE YOURSELF SOME PRIVACY.** The master bath opens to a private patio via sliding doors. "The space is designed in the style of an Asian spa and is incredibly relaxing," explains Lowe of the spa tub, bamboo-inspired vertical glass tile, and tropical greenery. A built-in daybed is swathed in colorful Perennials outdoor fabrics and accented by a natural lava rock wall. [For more information, see Sources, page 102.](#)