

MODERN LUXURY HAWAII

JULY/AUGUST 2018

SURF STYLE

Neon & Neoprene Are What's Now

PLUS

Design Darling Ross Cassidy Hits Hawai'i. Get Cozy With Nicole Naone & Wellness Rediscovered in Pa'ia



The Feast Issue

40 of the Island's Top Restaurants, Talents & Culinary Feats



EXPANDING HIS GAME

In-demand designer Ross Cassidy is now designing in the islands, and his California coastal aesthetic is translating perfectly.

By Margaret Kearns

Celebrity designer Ross Cassidy landed his first custom home commission in Hawai'i via existing clients in California, much like other in-demand mainland-based creatives. The initial project, at Hualalai Resort on Hawai'i Island's toney Kona/Kohala Coast, came at the request of a high-profile power couple who reside primarily in Los Angeles, home to his firm, Ross Cassidy Inc., and the luxury estate he previously created for them.

"They not only introduced me to Hualalai, but to Hawai'i as well—I'd never been here before, and I absolutely fell in love with the islands and the people," Cassidy says.

High praise from this South African native who spent several years as a fashion model in London, Hong Kong and New York, traveling to exotic locations worldwide prior to pursuing his love for design.

"As a kid, I'd spend Sundays wandering around our neighborhood with my dad. We'd sneak into

construction sites and look at what people were building. I was completely obsessed with the design and construction of houses and hotels. It was something we really bonded over, and my dad eventually dubbed me "The Architect," he says.

Architecture, however, was not in the cards, Cassidy says, "since math is not a favorite of mine!"

Now after 13 years in Southern California, Cassidy is a well-established designer, winning stellar clients with his signature ultramodern, bold, minimalist style. Among them, pop-star Sia, actor/comedian Billy Eichner, model Amber Valletta and actress Gwyneth Paltrow.

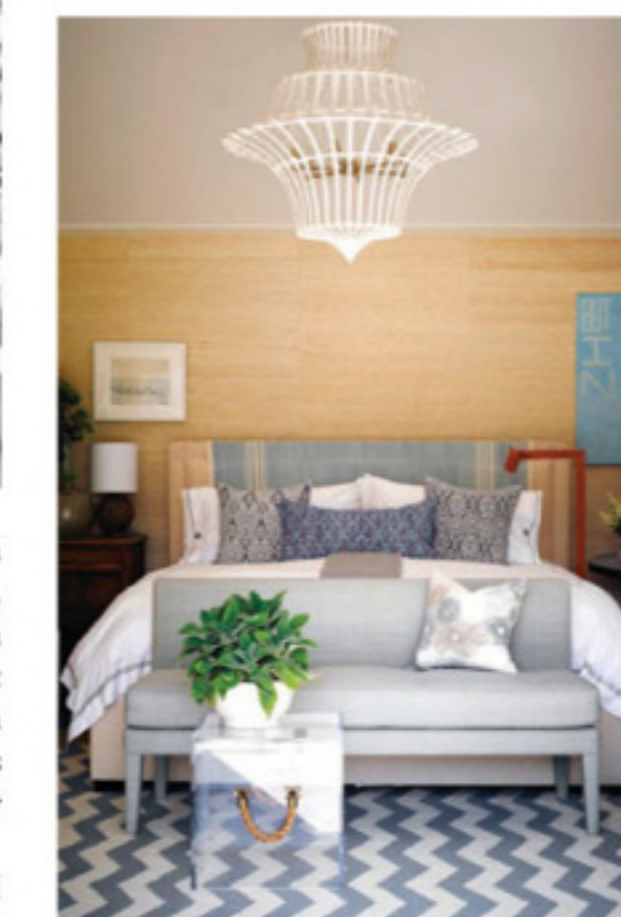
"My projects come strictly by word of mouth on the mainland and now on Hawai'i Island as well," he says. The home at Hualalai Resort, internationally lauded as one of the world's top luxury residential communities, was completed early this year, and he was immediately tapped for a second project at Kukio Golf and Beach



From top: Bold, clean style in a great room; beach-house vibes define an office nook.



Clockwise from left: Casual dining; curated accessories for a guest bedroom; Cassidy's philosophy on the master bedroom: "Ditch the recessed spot lighting. Chandeliers and candles are more romantic."



Club, an exclusive oceanfront club situated just next door to Hualalai.

"In this case it was a mutual friend who made the introductions—and recommendation—to the clients who had just purchased a large estate site at Kukio. We're in the very early planning stages at the moment," Cassidy says.

Architectural renderings feature multiple, pod-style pavilions, with interior spaces totaling about 8,000 square feet with natural, native woods as the predominant material throughout, he says, while the overall look and feel is Asian-inspired.

His beachy, casually elegant style combined with the use of superior quality materials and functionality translates perfectly from a California coastal sensibility to one that is modern Hawaiian. Cassidy favors organic materials, sustainable fabrics and has a penchant for blues, greens and neutral sand tones—clearly shades of ocean and beach.

"My work is almost always based on the environment, what's happening in the outdoor surroundings. When you really listen, design tells you what it wants to be—and, of course, your clients [do] as well," he says.

Throughout the design process, the designer is acutely tuned into his clients' wants and needs, however diverse they may be.

"One client, for example, has a collection of motorcycles—46 in total—and we styled the home completely around that collection. Each bike was treated as a piece of artwork, a focal point in each room," Cassidy says.

Inspiration for his signature restrained yet warm modern design also

comes from noted French designer Christian Liaigre, whose refined, clean lines are something that captured his imagination years ago. "One of his books always sits on my coffee table," he says.

"The one thing I always encourage clients to do is embrace minimalism.

For the most part, people tend to buy too much furniture. Almost everyone needs to edit their living spaces in a major way and only buy the highest quality essential, functional pieces," says Cassidy, who prizes a highly curated approach. "Less is always more."

At the top of Cassidy's agenda now is the charitable organization, Healthy Decorating, he recently founded to explore the impact of design on the mind.

"Decor has the power to heal. I really firmly believe this, and science is starting to prove it to be true. Studies, for example, are showing how color can increase healing—great info for creating healthy home environments and hugely important for hospitals and wellness facilities," he says. ■