

# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

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LEFT: The living area in the cantilevered main pavilion, which overlooks the palapa-shaded pool bar and the ocean beyond, is open on three sides. "The whole idea is for you not to know if you're indoors or out," says Lager, who planned every detail in the house.

BELOW: "Nothing was left to chance," says Lager. "In the dining area, guests seated on the left have views of the gardens and waterfalls, and people on the right see the pool. Everyone has a sunset view." Donghia chairs. Flatware by Ralph Lauren. Bernardaud china.



could read a plan and come back to me about it. That's unusual in a client." He'd pore over drawings late into the night after long days in the operating room, then fax his ideas back and forth between the architect, interior designer and contractor, all based in Hawaii.

Lager had conceived Hale Pau Hana as a series of three pavilions connected by open breezeways; he and Leineweber worked out the problem of situating them on what is, but doesn't appear to be, a relatively narrow piece of land. "I wanted a certain sense of spaciousness between the buildings, and they all had to fit like a jigsaw puzzle on the site," he says.

The roof was another ongoing concern. Because the site is sloped, connecting the three buildings—known as

the main, master and guest pavilions—was a complex task. The style of roof, though, was never in question. Lager is an impassioned fan of Charles W. Dickey, perhaps the best-known Western-trained architect to have worked in the Hawaiian vernacular, and he'd always imagined his house with a high-pitched, sloping "Dickey roof." (The architect's influence is manifest in other ways, too, especially in the use of large rooms inextricably linked with the outdoors.)

Although the roof was crucial, "the whole focus of the house isn't the roof, it's rock and water," Leineweber says. Water flows through the house in the form of several streams and seven waterfalls, including, most dramatically, one that cascades

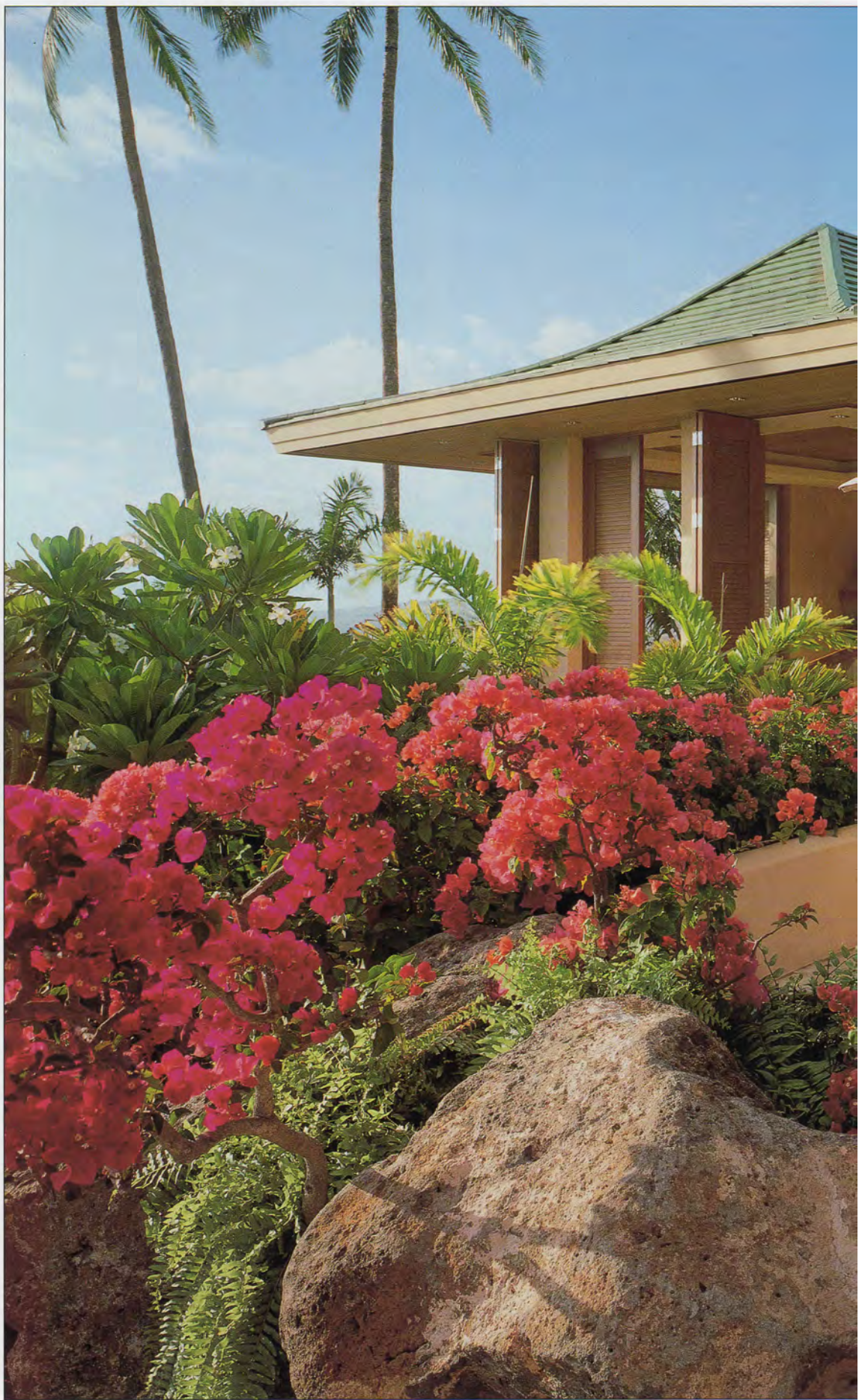
from the master pavilion into the banana-shaped swimming pool, concealing a grotto with a spa behind it. Along with a veritable jungle of tropical plants—among them orchids and lipstick trees—running water is used to divide the indoor space.

In the absence of walls (the glass panels that enclose the main pavilion fold back into the wall), sound provides a means of orientation, particularly in the hexagonal-roofed, multilevel main pavilion. And not just the sound of water. “There are nineteen speakers between the front door and the ocean side of the pool,” Lager says; numerous others are hidden in the ceilings of the other pavilions. Music is a constant, and it’s always Hawaiian, which, Lager is quick to point out, has nothing to do with “that clanging ukulele stuff.”

His hands-on approach encompassed much more than just the architecture: From the compound’s banana-leaf-patterned gates (a design that Lager purloined from a hotel’s wallcovering), everything bears his stamp. Even the property’s ambitious landscaping, which includes eighteen varieties of heliconia, two of birds-of-paradise and African tulip trees, among many others, was already detailed in Lager’s mind’s eye by the time he approached Scott Seymour, a local landscape architect, for help.

He turned to Rose Marie Alvaro at Honolulu’s RobertRose Interiors to assist in creating an interior that, again, had long been envi-

**Bougainvillea surrounds the breakfast terrace off the living and dining areas, which has a view toward the top level of the two-story guest pavilion. A giant root of kiawe wood was reworked to serve as the table’s base. McGuire chairs. Umbrella from Smith & Hawken.**



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sioned. Lager knew the look he wanted, both in terms of the overall design and in specific furnishings. Curved sofas provide an effective way to delineate smaller spaces within larger ones, such as the media area of the main pavilion or the master suite's sitting room. Local decorator Jim Bolman provided the oval breakfast table on the lanai with a kiawe wood base, as well as custom rugs and accessories.

But Hale Pau Hana was built around art as much as nature. Niches were incorporated to house particular artworks, including an eighteenth-century teak carving from Thailand in the dining room. Some works are found in unexpected places: In the kitchen, nineteenth-century Buddhist giltwood statues share counter space with gadgets. Still others take center stage: One guest bedroom was designed around figures of four eighteenth-century jeweled and hand-painted Burmese dancers.

Lager acknowledges numerous sources of inspiration, including architect Julia Morgan, whose work served as the basis for the floor plan, which he calls “a story that slowly unfolds.” He also

**FOLLOWING PAGES:** “The strongest Hawaiian tradition is the concept of rock and water,” says Honolulu-based architect Spencer Anne Leineweber, who turned Lager’s ideas into reality. A hand-carved outrigger canoe in the pool, foreground, faces the main pavilion.







The bedroom in the master pavilion is perched above a waterfall that cascades into the pool. "You can swim from the pool through the waterfall and into a grotto, which was planted with ferns and orchids," explains Lager.

## A HAWAIIAN IDYLL

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credits the Pirates of the Caribbean ride at Disneyland as an influence, remarking on the way visitors “serpentine back and forth in that space.”

The two-story, three-bedroom guest pavilion has eighteen-foot-tall louvered teak plantation doors and was lifted directly from Morgan, whom he calls “a champion of the idea of the serially episodic layout.” Lager loves the whimsical two-story bedrooms with spiral staircases she did for William Randolph Hearst’s castle at San Simeon; here, he “just used that concept and tropicalized it.” He conceived the private guest pavilion as a series of back-to-back bedrooms. And this space, like the rest, is given over to nature. From its sitting room is a view of the garden’s yellow corner—a combination of golden-hued shrimp plants, shower trees and yellow lantana, among others.

The house’s ultimate luxury, though,

is a dramatic volcano view from every bedroom. One guest room also looks over Pu’ukohola Heiau, a *luakini* (or temple of human sacrifice) that is still one of the most famous sites in the Hawaiian islands. The master bedroom overlooks a more modern place of pilgrimage—the golf course at the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel.

More than ten years after Ray Lager first began to dream of it, Hale Pau Hana is now triumphantly complete. He delights in the times when the place

“is fired into life” by the presence of guests, whether half a dozen who’ve flown in for a weekend or at evening parties for over a hundred. Needless to say, he’s never at a loss for visitors. “When you have a house in Hawaii, you get a lot of friends,” he jokes. But he confesses to having other architectural ideas in mind. “This is not the last house,” he says. For the time being, though, he aims to enjoy Hale Pau Hana: “I plan to spend some time smelling the plumeria blossoms.” □

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“I was fascinated by how Hawaiian architecture engages the environment.”

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