

RD

RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

FOR ARCHITECTS AND BUILDERS
OF DISTINCTIVE HOMES

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The View From Here



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Three very different custom homes showcase their natural assets.

BY S. CLAIRE CONROY AND CHERYL WEBER

Maui Residence

MAUI, HAWAII
WALKER WARNER ARCHITECTS

It's a daunting responsibility to hold your clients' most heartfelt desires in your hands. In this case, the sought-after dream was a highly custom, ocean-view property on Maui. Part of the draw of the site was its unusual bounty, including one of the best beaches on the best beach island in the Hawaii chain, a combination of sweeping long views of sea and nearby islands, and shorter sight lines to bustling bay activity and jagged mountains.

To nab this particular lot—the premier property in the resort development—Walker Warner's clients had to make a leap of faith. The development was a restart of a failed venture now under new ownership, and the clients were the first to build a single-family house



Opposite: By combining two lots next to protected land, the clients secured 180-degree views from their Maui beachside location. *This page:* Guests enter under a perforated metal brise-soleil, shaded from the sun and shielded from the rain.





This page: Subtle sun control measures appear throughout the house. Series of louvers screens (some fixed and some pivoting) and clerestory windows topped by deep overhangs keep interiors protected from glare.



there. In exchange for their early entry, they were able to secure two adjacent lots next to protected land, providing them with rare, unobstructed 180-degree views. And, equally compelling, they were afforded an extra measure of design liberty—namely the freedom to build something contemporary.

“This was the third attempt at this waterfront development, and the current developer inherited a higher-density multifamily land plan,” recalls Greg Warner. “They took the existing parcels and changed the density from four units to single-family. Because of that we inherited some awkward lot configuration and grading.”

The developer had excavated the building site to allow for a future two-story house within existing height restrictions, creating a kind of pit accessed from the cul de sac above. It was the team’s challenge to maximize the

assets of the site while minimizing its downsides, chief among them “the pit” and the sloped lot’s continual descent toward the water. “When we saw the pit, we scratched our heads about how to contend with it,” says Greg.

The architect knows his way around these islands and the inherent problems of their unique geology, topography, and climate. He has also tackled quite a few developer-inflicted site conditions. His secret weapon is his deep understanding of the place derived from a childhood spent growing up there. Although his firm is based in San Francisco, he has not lost his sea legs for this ocean paradise, and he has a special knack for making homes here for Bay Area clients who love it as much as he does.

“There’s definitely a correlation to how you can live indoors and outdoors in California and Hawaii,” Greg notes, “and our clients have confidence that I



This page: Bespoke interior furnishings support an indoor-outdoor lifestyle. The main level contains all essential rooms and steers them to an elevated view of the panorama. A more casual lower level provides direct connection to the landscape, opening onto a pool and terrace with the ocean just beyond reach.





This page: The primary bedroom suite harnesses the slope of the site to supply both an elevated perspective of the view and a private outdoor shower grounded in nature. Board-formed concrete moves indoors and outdoors, while cypress appears in a rough, natural form outside and a more refined bleached- and wire-brushed expression inside.

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—Greg Warner

have a point of view of how to live there that’s translatable.” Harnessing the light, directing the trade winds, and coping with the relentless salt air are just some of elements every island project must consider. “When you live outdoors as much as indoors, exteriors and interiors are subject to the same wear and tear.”

Accordingly, the firm prefers rugged, low-maintenance materials that resist the harsh seaside conditions—board-formed concrete, cypress, and steel, among them. This sturdy palette complements the rough-hewn beauty of the place, exemplified by the dark, chunky basalt found everywhere—a legacy of the volcanic activity that formed the island chain. These design choices mark a collaborative approach to existing conditions, resulting in buildings that look and feel at home where they are. “It has everything to do with what’s appropriate to a place and how you can best live there,” Greg explains. “I call it mining for the relative influences of a particular spot, the preferences of the client, and matching and marrying all of that together.”

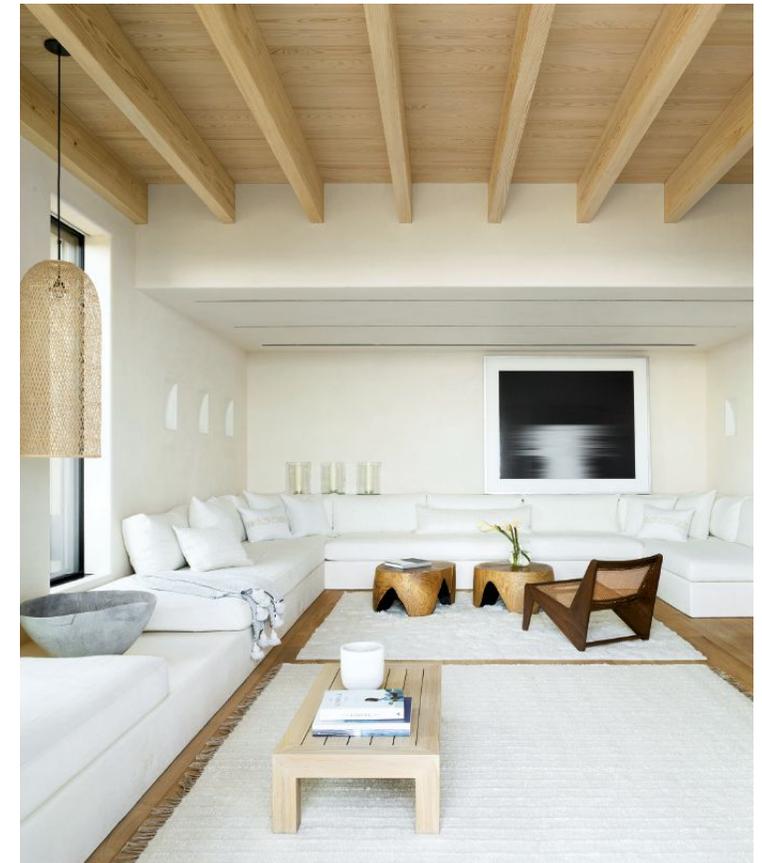


Sea Cruise

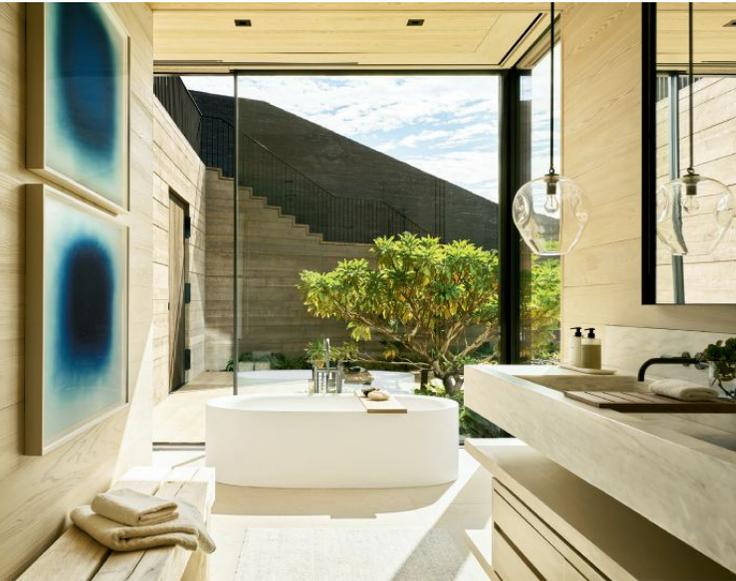
The two-story plan organizes the key components of everyday life—the primary suite, contiguous great room and kitchen space, dining room, and an office—on the main floor. Accessed by a covered boardwalk from the cul de sac, the main level provides a bird’s-eye view of the site’s panorama. All key rooms share that view, grabbing different slices of it when necessary at the corners.

From the lanai at the rear of the house, a metal-and-glass guardrail reveals the full, uninterrupted 180-degree sweep while also deflecting the winds, like the best balcony suite on an ocean cruise. A deep overhang shields the lanai and adjacent great room from the worst of the western sun and pop-up storms. “It tips into the sun like the brim of a baseball cap,” says Greg.

The lower level comprises another three bedrooms (two en suite), a kitchenette, a family room, a cozy lounge space, and the wife’s den/office space. Her office, which was carved out of designated storage space, is interior designer Matthew Leverone’s favorite bit of serendipity on the project. His firm curated the home’s furnishings and impressive art collection, in addition to working closely with Walker Warner’s team and the clients on the finishes and casework.



This page: One of designer Matthew Leverone’s favorite rooms is her den, carved out of designated storage space. “The Venetian plaster walls differentiate the space from the rest of the home,” he says, calling the room tranquil and informally elegant.



This page: Lower-level corner guest rooms are treated as generously as the primary bedroom, with en-suite baths and private views. The pool and terrace soak in the 180-degree views. Sculptural rain curtains convey water off the shed roof in an artful way.

“Venetian plaster walls differentiate the space from the rest of the home, lending the room a sense of import, tranquility, and informal elegance,” notes Matthew about the den/office. “In a home teeming with beautiful objects and spectacular art, Hiroshi Sugimoto’s “North Pacific Ocean,” which slyly references the view outside, is a perfect visual and emotional capstone to the space.”

Although the den may be a stand-out, every aspect of the project received great scrutiny from the entire team and the clients, who were very involved in the intensive selections process. “This house is entirely bespoke,” Greg observes. “It was made specifically for the clients, and it will never be made again. Once we understood the clients’ vision and their artistic sensibilities, it all fell into place—permeating everything from the landscape to the fabrics on the wall.”



Maui Residence

Maui, Hawaii

ARCHITECT: Greg Warner, AIA, lead principal; Mike McCabe, principal; Amadeo Bennetta, project manager; Hana Bittner and Chris Ryan, architectural staff, Walker Warner Architects, San Francisco

BUILDER: Dowbuilt, Seattle

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Leverone Design, San Francisco

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Lutsko Associates, San Francisco

PROJECT SIZE: 7,000 square feet

SITE SIZE: .5 acre

CONSTRUCTION COSTS: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHY: Matthew Millman Photography

KEY PRODUCTS

BRISE SOLEIL: Custom perforated brass canopy, by Zahner and Padilla Designs

CABINETRY: Bleached and wire-brushed bald cypress cabinets by Maui Custom Woodworks; inlaid brass pulls by Padilla Designs

CEILING FANS: Boffi Air

COUNTERTOPS: Calacatta delicato

FLOORING: Wide-plank reclaimed teak and bleached and wire-brushed bald cypress, by Arc Wood & Timber

KITCHEN ISLAND: Custom teak and Marin Brass base worktable by Union Studio via MARCH

OPERABLE LOUVERS: Custom bald cypress louvers

RAIN CURTAIN: Custom copper mesh by Cascade Coil

RANGE: La Cornue

REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER, WINE STORAGE: Sub-Zero

ROOF: Standing seam metal (zinc-aluminum alloy steel) panels

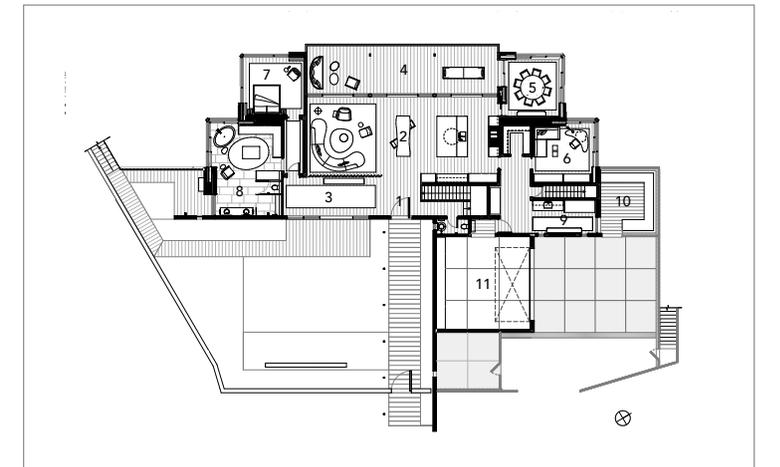
SINK FITTINGS: Watermark

WALLS, CEILINGS, SIDING: Bleached and wire-brushed bald cypress, solid timber by Spearhead; board-formed concrete with integral color

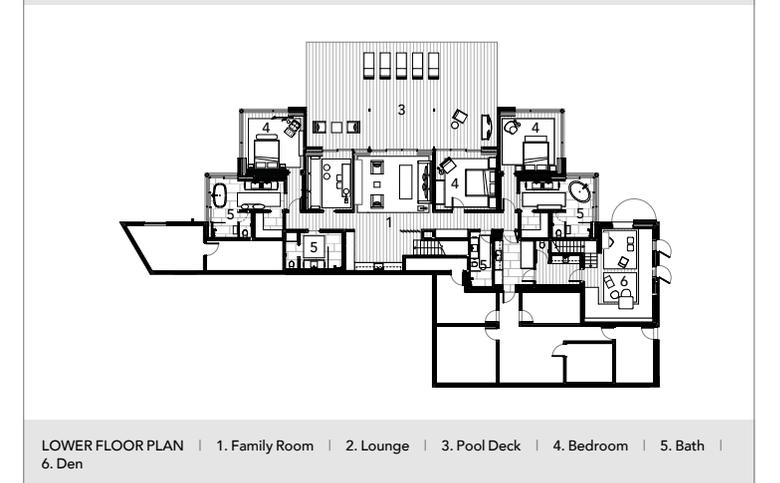
WINDOWS: Vitrocsa Invisible Wall System



- SITE PLAN**
1. Driveway
 2. Entry Path
 3. Great Room
 4. Gallery
 5. Entry Garden
 6. Lanai
 7. Pool
 8. Autocourt
 9. Garden Terrace
 10. Firepit Terrace
 11. Beach Access



- MAIN FLOOR PLAN** | 1. Entry | 2. Great Room | 3. Gallery | 4. Lanai | 5. Dining Room | 6. Office | 7. Main Bedroom | 8. Main Bath | 9. Garden Room | 10. Garden Terrace | 11. Garage



- LOWER FLOOR PLAN** | 1. Family Room | 2. Lounge | 3. Pool Deck | 4. Bedroom | 5. Bath | 6. Den



This page: Architect Greg Warner, who grew up in Hawaii, points out that local residents have always built their properties up on plinths. “It was a simple way to create a level area.” For the design team, the plinth and basalt retaining walls solved the problem of the lot’s steep grade down to the water. The cant of the landscaping resulted in a dynamic wedge-shaped, disappearing-edge pool.



Indeed, aspects of the architecture also rise to the level of art—especially the metal screening elements. At the front of the house, a brass brise soleil tops the teak entry walkway. Solid on one side, the screen protects from sun and rain; perforated on the other side, it conveys and curates rain as it sieves through to a collection pool. As the sun pierces those perforations, it casts a deep, abstracted shadow across the board-formed concrete walls. “It’s a dance between the sun and the rain,” says Greg.

“It’s a dance between the sun and the rain.”

—Greg Warner

At the rear of the house, metal reappears as “chain mail” rain curtains, ushering water off the deep shed roof. “When it rains, the water spreads down those panels,” says the architect.

“It’s always a design challenge about how to get the water off the roof. And everything here slopes to the ocean. You can’t fight it—you have to manage it, embrace it. We’re always thinking about the wind, the water, and the sunlight. This house is all about the light.”
—S. Claire Conroy