

# SURFER'S PARADISE

What do you get when you mix an avid kitesurfer, a classic-leaning architectural designer, and a 1940s plantation along Maui's North Shore? A midcentury hideaway that is as true to its island history as the salty breezes running through it



For an updated spin on Maui's trademark light green plantation houses, the owner painted the newly renovated beach house a custom dark gray-green.

## MAINTAIN ISLAND SIMPLICITY

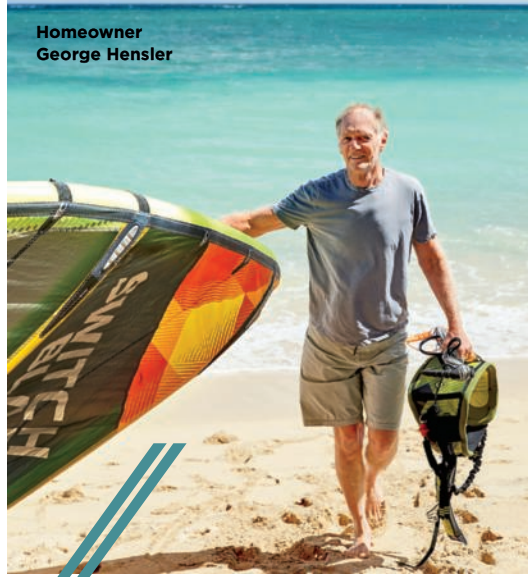
The renovation's less-is-more credo is on full display in the bungalow's airy kitchen, where creamy white cabinetry, globe pendants, and concrete countertops come together for a pretty, understated look. "This is one area where we didn't do a ton," homeowner George Hensler says. "We incorporated simple but sophisticated ideas that felt right by the ocean."



BY CAROLINE MCKENZIE PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID TSAY  
STYLING BY RACHAEL BURROW



Homeowner  
George Hensler



You might say George Hensler goes where the wind blows. The retired fashion executive from Sausalito, California, took up windsurfing 30 years ago and, though he's since switched to kitesurfing, he's been chasing the gusts and swells ever since. This eventually led him to the North Shore of Maui, which is considered the "wind mecca," says Hensler. "Years ago, the area's trade winds led sugar barons to take up residence here—it kept them nice and cool. Now it just provides a fun activity for guys like me." Soon he was spending weeks at a time there, bouncing from one rental to another. That was until he found a 1940s plantation (a leave-behind of those sugar barons) a mere 40 feet from water's edge.

He hired Roberto Sosa, an architectural/interior designer with the New York and L.A. firm OBRA. Sosa instantly connected with Hensler's desire for a sophisticated overhaul of the property's bungalow—simple, organic updates that would allow the architecture to shine. "I like what I like," Hensler says. "Not everyone can channel someone else's ideas, but Roberto and I made a great creative team." They retooled the floor plan, chose materials like native 'ōhi'a wood that hold true to the Hawaiian vernacular, designed sliding doors for additional light and more expansive views, and even designed many of the furnishings themselves in the style of French midcentury visionaries Charlotte Perriand, Serge Mouille, Jean Royere, and Pierre Jeanneret. Newly created outdoor rooms, like dining and lounge pergolas, are designed to help shift everyday activities outdoors, amid native foliage like coconut palms, ironwood trees, and bougainvillea. Here are more of Hensler and Sosa's keys to turning the old plantation into an outdoorsman's oasis, while holding on to every inch of its 1940s character.

### INVITE THE OCEAN INSIDE

Hensler and Sosa updated the bungalow dining area with floor-to-ceiling windows and sliding doors, which allow for abundant natural light. They open to the porch, offering a front-row seat to the ocean. The nearly alfresco space is outfitted with a custom pegged table and a set of antique Parisian bistro chairs.



### STRETCH OUT OUTDOORS

To utilize all of the wrap-around porch, Sosa and Hensler incorporated an outdoor living room with a pair of angular teak Pierre Jeanneret chairs and a modernist-inspired sofa they designed themselves. "The average high in Maui is low 80s in the winter and high 80s in the summer, so it's a 'stay outside all day, every day' kind of spot," Hensler says.



### INCORPORATE VINTAGE DETAILS

Sosa brought the porch-like feel into the master bedroom by cladding the walls with horizontal wood paneling. "It helped the interiors feel more in line with vernacular design," he explains. Adding in even more textural detail is a simple sea-grass headboard and groovy black sconces by Serge Mouille, which help break up the room's horizontal lines.





### USE MOTHER NATURE'S PRIVACY FENCES

"The greenery throughout the plantation makes you feel very remote," says Hensler of the dense naupaka, lilies, and heliconia. And with the beach house only a stone's throw from the water, the property is bordered on all sides by spectacular elements from Maui's island landscape.



### STICK TO EARTH COLORS

Hensler used grassy-hued glazed tile as a jumping-off point in a secondary kitchen. The cerused oak cabinetry has square cutouts in lieu of cabinet hardware, an idea Sosa picked up from designer Thomas O'Brien when he worked with him at Aero (O'Brien's firm). Equally novel are the sheets of rubber Sosa used on the countertops. "I love it because it's incredibly durable," Hensler says. "You can put a hot pan right on it—I've done it!—and it's softer than stone."



### STRIKE A MOD/MELLOW BALANCE

Sosa sketched this low-slung sofa on site to perfectly fit the space and serve as a cozy spot to lounge, with custom cotton cushions softening up the teak foundation. It ties in other wooden elements of the living room, including a raw-wood table and a cool vintage surfboard that was crafted by a California student as a high school project in the 1960s.





### BUILD IN THE BASICS

Top, left: Despite the small square footage and low eaves in this loft bedroom, smart storage—like a built-in bed and nightstands made from Northern California fir—gives the space plenty of breathing room. The bamboo matting on the ceiling is skimmed with a coat of plaster to create a layer of killer texture overhead.

### ROCK AN OUTDOOR SHOWER

Top, right: The simplest “room” might also be the most beloved. The outdoor shower, enclosed with teal-green lattice and a canopy of ironwood trees, is outfitted with an unlacquered brass faucet that achieved its green-brown color in about a day. “Patina comes fast in Hawai’i,” Sosa notes.

### KEEP EXTERIOR SPACES IN SYNC

Bottom, left: Practicality is a must, even in paradise. For a breezy transition between the water and interior, Sosa designed this screened porch to serve as an entryway-cum-landing zone. “We painted it the same green as the exterior so it would relate better to the exterior rooms,” says Sosa.

### WORK WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

Bottom, right: “The bathroom was tough—there was so little space and plenty of weird angles, so we just had to make everything work wherever it landed,” explains Sosa, who designed triangle windows with brass hopper hinges to send natural light into the quirky space.

### GET AN OUTSIDE PERSPECTIVE

“In Hawai’i you don’t want to be stuck inside, no matter how nice the house is,” says Hensler. This breezy dining area is one of two outdoor rooms the team created to extend the living spaces into the fresh air. Its pergola design ensures plenty of tropical foliage peeks through.





**COVER:** Volkswagen Bus, The Hawaiian Photo Bus; thehawaiianphotobus.com. Surfboard, Poipu Surf; poipusurf.com. Tropez Paisley Pareo in Marigold, Echo; echodesign.com. Swimsuit, Target; target.com.

**FROM HAWAII, WITH LOVE page 13:** Swimsuit, J.Crew; jcrew.com. Umbrella (customized with trim/star), Pier 1 Imports; pier1.com. Lulu Tote, Indego Africa, indegoafrica.org. Chaise, IKEA; ikea.com

**VINTAGE ALOHA SHIRTS page 26:** Grasscloth courtesy of Thibaut; thibautdesign.com.

**CABIN FEVER! page 29:** Architects Greg Warner, Clark Sather, and Amadeo Bennetta, Walker Warner Architects; walkerwarner.com. Interior designers Marion Philpotts-Miller and Ginger Lunt; philpotts.net. Builder Link Vaughn, Maryl Group; maryl.com. Landscape architect David Tamura, David Y. Tamura Associates, Inc. **Throughout:** Door, window, and trim in Onyx, sliding doors in Tea, and interior walls in White Heron, Benjamin Moore; benjaminmoore.com. **Exterior, page 29:** Shingles, Atlas International; atlas.com.

**Pool deck, page 30:** Chaises, Warisan; warisan.com. Chaise fabric, Perennials; perennialsfabrics.com. White tables, Gervasoni; gervasoni1882.it. Umbrella, Tuuci; tuuci.com. **Dining room, page 30:** Picnic table and benches, Wilkinson Woodworks. Dining chairs, Red Egg; redegg.com. Dining chair cushions, Opuzen; opuzen.com. Fans, Modern Fan Company. **Living room, page 31:** Sea Cloth lounge chair cushion fabric, Lee Jofa; leejofa.com. Coffee table, Wilkinson Woodworks and Apaiser (apaaiser.com). Rug, Indich; indichcollectionhawaii.net. Lamp, Design Within Reach; dwr.com. Sofa cushion fabrics, Perennials and Full Swing Textiles (now closed). Lounge chairs, vintage. Artwork, Makaha Art Gallery (now closed). Frame, Papali Woodworks; 808/848-9939. Sofa platform, dining table, and benches, Wilkinson Woodworks. **Outdoor dining area, page 32:** Stools, Fong Brothers; fongbrothers.com. Cushions, Perennials. **Kitchen, page 32:** Island in Saguardo, Sherwin-Williams; sherwin-williams.com. Stools, McGuire Furniture; mcguirefurniture.com. **Kolekole hale bedroom, page 33:** Bed frames, Schoolhouse Electric & Supply Co.; schoolhouse.com. Box-spring fabric, Tin Can Mailman; tincanmailman.net. Interior artwork, Mayumi Oda; mayumioda.net. Interior light fixtures, Rejuvenation;

rejuvenation.com. Adirondack Chairs, Loll Design and Design Within Reach. Bedding, Pine Cone Hill; annieselke.com. **Red guest bedroom, page 33:** Headboard, Wilkinson Woodworks. Bedding, Pine Cone Hill. Nightstand, Place; placehawaii.com. Throw pillows, Raoul Textiles; raoultextiles.com.

**SURFER'S PARADISE page 54:** Architectural designer Roberto Sosa, OBRA; obra design.com. Interior design, George Hensler and Roberto Sosa. **Exterior, page 54:** Table, custom Hensler/Sosa design. Chairs, IKEA; ikea.com. Surfboard, Pome Maui; pomemaui.com. Turkish towel, Turkish-T; turkish-t.com. **Kitchen, page 55:** Cabinetry and shelving, custom Hensler/Sosa design. Rug, Surya; surya.com. **Dining room, page 56-57:** Walls in White Dove, Benjamin Moore; benjaminmoore.com. Rug, Loloi; hayneedle.com. Jean Royère lighting and French bistro chairs, vintage. **Outdoor living room, page 57:** Sofa, custom Hensler/Sosa design. Small gray and green pillows, Lacefield Designs; lacefielddesigns.com. End table, Jeffan for Target; target.com. Pierre Jeanneret chairs, vintage. **Master bedroom, page 57:** Headboard, West Elm; westelm.com. Jean Royère wall sconce, vintage. Shoes, Carrie Forbes; carrieforbes.com. **Kitchen 2, page 58:** Boneyard Brick backsplash in Sour Apple, Trikeenan Tile; trikeenan.com. **Living room, pages 58-59:** Sofa platform, custom Hensler/Sosa design. Sofa cushions, Puka Puka; pukapuka.tv. Pouf, House of Cindy; houseofcindy.com. **Loft bedroom, page 60:** Pillows, Target. Nightstands, custom Sosa design. **Outdoor shower, page 60:** Turkish towels, Turkish-T. **Bath, page 60:** Boneyard Brick wall tile in Silk, Trikeenan Tile. **Outdoor dining room, page 61:** Chair pillow, Lacefield Designs.

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