



At the entry, Chiang Mai Dragon aquamarine wallpaper sets the tone for Peggy's color choices throughout the home. A family heirloom, the Chinese rosewood altar table came from Peggy's great-grandfather, Samuel Wilder, who founded the Wilder Steamship Company in Honolulu in the 1870s.



Peggy breathed new life into older furnishings by hiring Vasey Upholstery in Kailua-Kona to reupholster her plush couch, which happens to be the first couch she ever owned. Brazilian oak (Amendoim) flooring with antiqued finish imparts a warm, golden tone.



Interior designer Peggy Chesnut, with her grandmother's glass bottle collection.

A Perfect Fit

At Home with Interior Designer Peggy Chesnut

By Kristina Anderson
Photography by Giselle Thompson

Big Island interior designer Peggy Chesnut wanted to make a new start in a new house. It wasn't just about her newly single status — it was also about economics.

"I loved my other home, but I had a mortgage," she recounts. "So when prices started dropping in Kona, I sold it and was able to buy an affordable lot and build, all the while staying within my budget. My vision here was to create a wonderful, tasteful design that would inspire me every day and be comfortable for family and guests."

Perched on a half acre in Holualoa, the 2,000-square-foot, two-bedroom, two-bath residence accomplishes just that. A perfect fit for one person yet ►

suitable for entertaining large groups of friends, the house evokes a casual elegance in both décor and floor plan. Designing the home herself, Peggy sought to minimize and simplify, economizing wherever she could.

For example, she sourced inexpensive beadboard from Lowe's for interior paneling, staining it ebony to achieve the look the old Vermont barnwood. The effect helps to "pop" the stellar views of the Kailua-Kona coastline through the expansive, living room picture windows.

In the kitchen, Peggy chose affordable appliances, then shopped around for the best deals on oak cabinets (from HPM) and white marble countertops (from Davis Tile and Marble). The backsplash tiles from Lowe's cost only \$5 a square foot. One of her only splurges, the nautical-inspired lighting with exposed-filament bulbs casts an "antique" glow.

Elsewhere in the home, Peggy employed client castoffs such as scraps of leftover grasscloth or an old koa bookshelf that she re-purposed for display shelves. A set of shell-lacquered dining room chairs, ordered for client who decided they didn't want them, were gladly adopted by Peggy.

"I was looking downsize and simplify wherever I could," says Peggy. "I wanted to realize my dreams and not go overboard, which is easy to do."

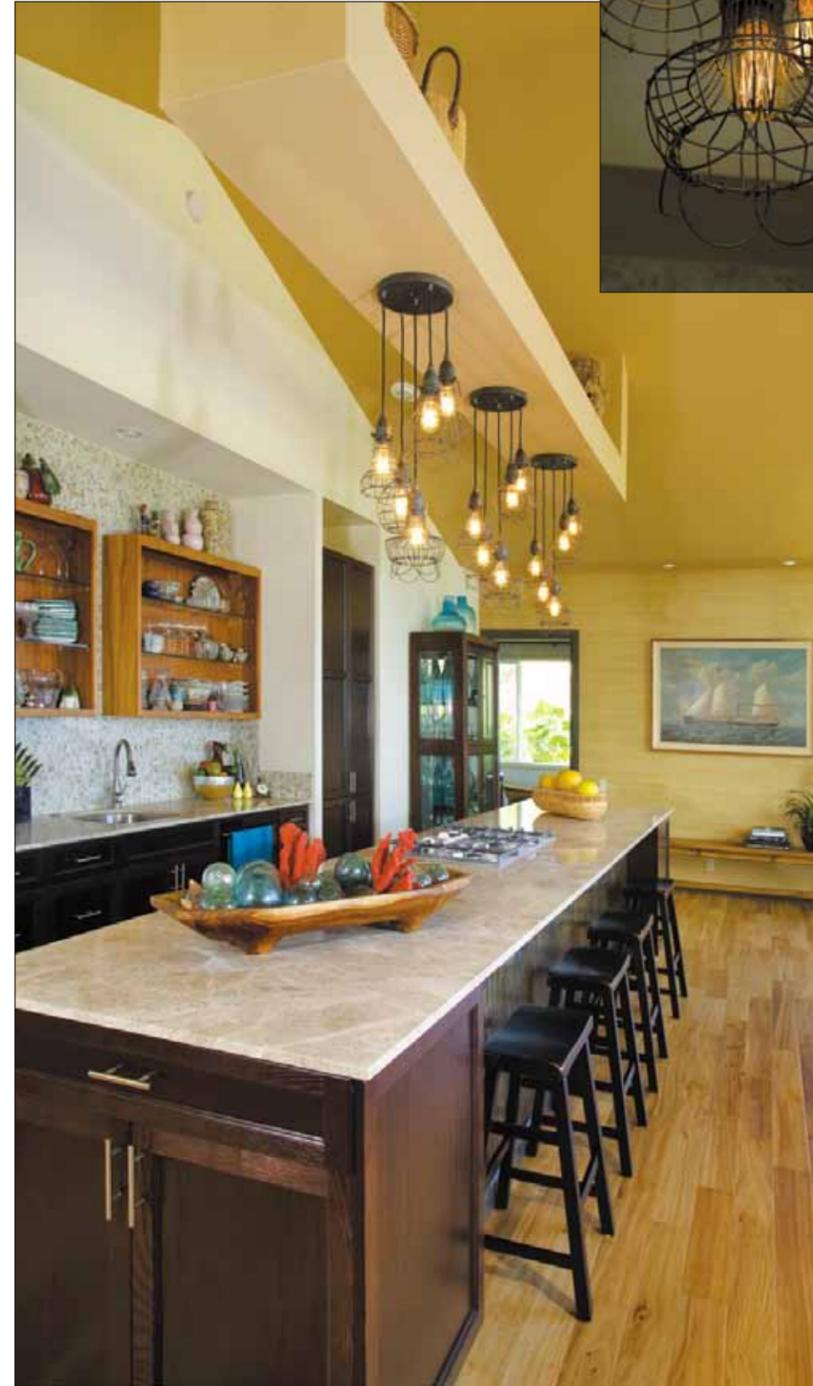
The builder she hired for the job was her ex-husband, high-end contractor Gary Chesnut. The match proved a good time-and-money saver, she says. He already knew her preferences and understood her goals, so who better?

"I am so happy Gary agreed to build it," she says. "He's a wonderful builder. It's tasteful and came in under budget."

A sixth-generation Hawai'i resident, Peggy traces her Island heritage to Dr. Garrett Judd, who arrived in the Islands in 1828. Peggy's great-grandfather, Samuel Wilder, founded the Wilder Steamship Company in Honolulu. ▶



Expansive picture windows unveil coastal views through stately monkeypod trees on the property. For interior paneling, Peggy applied ebony stain on inexpensive beadboard to achieve the look of old Vermont barnwood. Rug from Indich Collection.



The galley kitchen features a white marble countertop from Davis Tile & Marble in Kailua-Kona, along with oak cabinets from HPM and backsplash tiles from Lowe's. At the far wall, an original painting from 1896 depicts Peggy's great-grandfather's steamship, the *Likelike*. (Inset above): Nautical-themed lighting with "antique" filament bulbs.



Logs from a fallen monkeypod tree on the property provide the perfect option for a creative entry path.



The guest bathroom showcases the playful use of colors and textures throughout, highlighted by an "ili-ili" pebbled shower floor.



The en-suite master bedroom includes a niche in the hall for the washer and dryer, which are conveniently located directly across from the walk-in closet. Above the bed hangs a woodblock print Peggy obtained at a Donkey Mill art auction in Holualoa.

He brought with him a Chinese rosewood console that Peggy displays in her entry. In the dining room hangs an 1896 painting by Joseph Lee depicting the ship that originally delivered the console.

“That ship, the *Likelike*, eventually sank off the coast of Mahukona in 70 feet of water,” Peggy says. “It’s now a dive site.”

Through the years, Peggy has become one of the most respected and sought-after interior designers in Hawai‘i, working on everything from restaurants and commercial spaces to high-end residential along the Kohala Coast. Her passion for interior design is fueled by her travels on the mainland and abroad, where she is continually on the prowl for great ideas and unique finds.

Throughout the house, Peggy used a minimalist approach as her guiding philosophy, asking herself the question: “What is the minimum I can get away with here?”

For example, in the bathroom, she knew she didn’t ►



Surrounded by marble, the 30-gallon furo takes center stage in the master bath, where an original painting by local artist Lynn Capell adds a splash of color.

need two sinks, opting for more closet space instead. And speaking of closets, Peggy logically located her washer and dryer directly across from the walk-in closet for maximum convenience. “Makes sense, right?” Peggy explains.

Clad in marble, the master bath leads to an outdoor shower composed of lava rock. Inside the bathroom, a Japanese-style soaking tub (furo) uses just 30 gallons of water and features a “fancy” bathtub spout that is really meant for a kitchen sink, and thus, costs much less.

Everything in the bath, according to Peggy, is salvaged — from the stone sink and faucet to the tiles and wallpaper.

Although Peggy designed the home to suit her needs in retirement, she is a long way from hanging up the fabric samples. She continues to have an active career in interior design, and in fact, is presently completing a large Kukio home that she designed from the ground up.

“I’m really loving life right now,” Peggy says. “I love this little house; it is everything I need it to be. It’s affordable, comfortable and small, but will still allow me to throw a party for 100 guests. Yes, life is full of twists and turns but I’m still here. And very happy.” **AH**

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