



Photos by Giselle Thompson

Frank's gardening skills are in full bloom outside their seaside cottage. Active with the Lunch Bunch Ministry at Mokuaikaua Church, the Millers help cook hot meals for the hungry and homeless every Monday morning. The meals are then served at The Friendly Place in the Old Industrial.



A Painter's Paradise by the Sea



By Kristina Anderson

On Ali'i Drive, a cheerful pink and white cottage, cascading with colorful wildflowers and perennials, presents a pretty picture to passersby. There's even a welcoming water fountain by the road for joggers to sip from. The inviting cottage, along with its adjoining art gallery, is a painter's paradise by the sea for artist Rosemary Miller and her husband Frank.

"It's a total dream to have a house on the ocean, a place where I get to paint every day," says Rosemary, an accomplished artist who has had her artwork featured in private and corporate collections in Hawaii, including the Mauna Lani Hotel & Bungalows, and around the country.

Rosemary and Frank bought the little cottage ▶

The Miller's "backyard" epitomizes easy, breezy oceanfront living. The manmade tide pool, uncovered by Frank from beneath the rocks, is a relic from years past. (Inset above): Rosemary paints from the lanai of her Seaside Art Gallery, located next door to their colorful cottage on Ali'i Drive.



From their spacious lanai, Rosemary and Frank enjoy the daily view of the cruise ships and boating activities in Kailua-Kona. "It's fun to watch the parasailers every day," says Frank.

B I DOORS ; 57p11.02; 5.5 in; Black plus one; 382231



Photo by Giselle Thompson

Next door to the Miller's cottage, the Seaside Art Gallery showcases Rosemary's many works, which include acrylics, oils, pastels, collage and mixed media.



Photo by Giselle Thompson

The bathroom is filled with Portuguese tile that Rosemary found in Miami. (Above inset): The couple designed all the tile work in their house, including the kitchen countertop made of Italian tile and mosaic glass. Checkerboard and palm tree designs are featured in the powder room.

14 years ago, and surprised even themselves by doing so. “We were at the University of the Nations taking classes, living like missionaries,” Rosemary recounts. “We went out one day to see houses, and even though this one was already sold and in escrow, we looked at it anyway. We loved it and couldn’t stop thinking about it.”

Early the next morning, Rosemary awoke with a start. “I woke up Frank and told him, ‘I just dreamed we are going to get that beach house!’ He laughed and said, ‘Rosemary, no way, go back to sleep!’” Later that day, the couple got a call from their realtor, who told them that indeed the two-bedroom, two-bath house had fallen out of escrow and they were free to make an offer. They somehow got the financing together and the house was theirs.

The condition of the little house at the time is described quite succinctly by Rosemary as “a dump.”

Fortunately, Frank, a landscape designer and ornamental horticulturalist in his previous life in Key Biscayne, Florida, had the necessary training, patience and experience to renovate the house as well as install the environmentally appropriate garden and grounds. After much trial and error, he only uses potted flowers on the oceanfront — varieties that remain hardy in the salty air, sea foam and mist. Their little sand beach ►



made of imported Australian sand has been washed away three times by high surf, but as Frank notes with a laugh, he'll take that over the yearly hurricanes that made an unwelcome appearance at Key Biscayne every summer for the 18 years they lived there.

The 60-year-old house was added on to many times, according to the Millers. Winding passages reveal hidden bedrooms and baths, including some interesting details such as the built-in Deco vanity combined with checkered Portuguese tile, giving the beach house a charm as eclectic as one of Rosemary's collages.

The piece de la resistance of the home might well be the picture window in the master bedroom framing the exquisite panorama of the ocean. "It's just like a Shangri-la," says Rosemary of the room. She says she never loses her sense of awe and gratitude about living where she does.

The Millers, who have been married 20 years and have three daughters and nine grandchildren, also own ►



Photo by Giselle Thompson

Rosemary found the tapa tablecloth on a trip to Samoa. (Above left): One of Rosemary's recent works, the banana-bark wall hanging features shells and artifacts from Polynesia and Hawaii.

TEAK GARDEN ; 57p11.02; 5.5 in; Black plus one; 381436



Photo by Giselle Thompson

Frank incorporated the heliotrope tree into the roof above their portable spa, which sits on top of a rock wall platform. "We love that tree," says Frank. "It has butterflies and birds in it."

the Seaside Art Gallery next door, where Rosemary's work is featured for sale. They rented the space for a while, until one day the owner gave them 30-day notice to move because he wanted to sell it. The Millers put in an offer and it was accepted.

"For years, we had prayed for a studio close by," Rosemary recounts. "And we got one right next door!"

Although the side-by-side homes require constant maintenance and upkeep, the Millers have made sure to set aside plenty of time to devote to their pet project through their church, the historic Mokuaikaua Church across from Hulihe'e Palace. Called the "Lunch Bunch" Ministry, this group of volunteers serves hot meals every Monday at 11 a.m. to the hungry and homeless. The lunch for about 50, cooked mostly by Frank and Rosemary at home, is served at Kona's new homeless center in the Old Industrial called "The Friendly Place."

For the Millers, friendliness is a way of life. Here in Hawaii, they strive to express the aloha spirit in everything they do.

"I just love this house, I love our life here," says Frank. "It was my life's dream to live here someday, and it just seemed impossible. And my dream finally came true." **AH**



HWN SOLAR SV; 57p11.02; 5.5 in; Black plus one; 381421