

Happy Blendings

BY Sabra Morris /// PHOTOS BY Olivier Koning
 FEATURED DESIGN/BUILD CONTRACTORS: Phillip Barker and Brett Kappelle
 of Barker Kappelle Construction

This one-story condo combines traditional Japanese and island-style design to function on multiple levels.

The multipurpose tatami room serves as a space for dining, meditation and extra sleeping quarters when necessary. From this room, the homeowner can also enjoy the view of her custom-designed Japanese garden through her hand-etched windows.



Black and gray granite countertops and dark cherry wood cabinetry give the homeowner's kitchen a sleek, modern feel. Frosted glass, top-hinged cabinets store kitchen necessities without revealing too much.

W

hen a structure is well-built, it's hard to take apart. But that's exactly what this Hawaii Kai homeowner wanted to do with her 1,450-square-foot condo. Though the layout was livable, the homeowner wanted to reconfigure the walls. "I wanted my place to be open—no closed-up rooms between dining and living areas," she says.

Along with her desire for an open-concept living space, this homeowner had a few notable and specific wishes. For one, she wanted a great-looking kitchen. "It was going to be an open stage to the living area, so it had to look nice and function well. It had to be more like a showcase," she says.

In keeping with Japanese tradition, the homeowner also wanted an all-purpose tatami room. Such rooms are typically used for dining, meditation and sleeping accommodations. Finally, to promote a sense of visual tranquility, she wanted to make slight-but-dramatic alterations to her master suite.

After interviewing several contractors, the homeowner's financial advisor introduced her to Phillip Barker, of Barker Kappelle Construction. It was a perfect fit. "I felt he would be sincere and would also be able to address all of my remodeling needs," says the homeowner. The result? What was once a standard vanilla unit now functions according to the homeowner's unique lifestyle and expresses her personal aesthetic.

RECONFIGURING THE WALLS

The renovation began with dramatic structural changes. "The hard-core construction is where it started," says Barker. To begin, the team removed part of a large wall that separated the bedroom and living room. Then, the crew sectioned off the

bedroom to maintain a feeling of privacy. The leftover space adjoining the living area was converted into an office. To prevent a closed-off feeling in the newer, smaller bedroom, the team added a high cutout to the wall to let light and air through.

Barker recounts the extensive demolition and site-removal work. He explains: The condo building was constructed so well, and with such solid material, it took four weeks to remove all of the framing and demolished debris. In addition, moving the walls meant moving electrical material. "The electrical was wired through the floor," says Barker. "We had to re-route everything through soffits on the ceiling."

The result, he says, was worth the hard work. Though the entire reconfigured space now features two rooms instead of one, the sense of flow is greatly improved.

A KITCHEN THAT WORKS

A sizable kitchen, complete with an extra-large seating peninsula, adjoins the living area. Dark, cherry-wood cabinetry and patterned dark-gray granite provide a contrast to the warmer, lighter mahogany finishes in the living and tatami rooms. Frosted-glass cabinet faces and sleek, stainless-steel appliances add a sophisticated touch. A



A stacking washer/dryer combination and pullout pantry shelving maximize space in this utility room.



Barker Kappelle
Construction, LLC

BC-27255

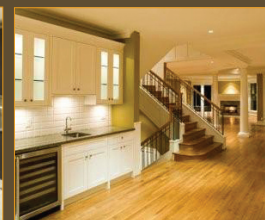


RESIDENTIAL ADDITIONS | REMODELS | NEW CONSTRUCTION | COMMERCIAL CONTRACTING

Brett Kappelle 226-9984

Phillip Barker 754-7315

www.buildhawaii.org





The Barker Kappelle team helped the homeowner pick out this vanity from INspiration. They added a glass tile backsplash for protection and functionality. A partial door to the right hides the homeowner's walk-in closet from view while echoing the style of the rice-paper shoji screen in the tatami room.



A custom-built shoe shelf helps keep entryway clutter at bay.

modern, functional space, the kitchen marries Eastern minimalism with modern convenience.

Just off the kitchen, a laundry room/pantry area illustrates smart use of space for a modern condo owner. A stacked, front-loading washer/dryer combination allows for easy access while taking up minimal space. A cabinetry unit previously intended for the kitchen provides adequate folding and storage space. Ask the homeowner how often she uses the nook and she replies without hesitation, “Every day. It’s where I keep my vacuum cleaner, my shopping cart ... you know, all the items you need to live in a condo.”

OPEN CONCEPT, CLOSED DOORS

Another location where concealment is key? The master suite. Though an open concept worked well for the main living area, a direct view of the walk-in closet and an open doorway to the master bath provided too much information, according to the homeowner. In keeping with the style of the rest of the home, Mr. Kageyama, of Kage Tatami Company—a local firm specializing in Japanese master carpentry and craftsmanship—installed two partial doors to section off these spaces. The door style echoes that of the shoji screen found in the tatami room. Because the doors do not span the entire area from floor to ceiling, a feeling of openness still comes through. Also in the bedroom, the Barker Kappelle team installed a vanity from INspiration and a dark-green, glass-tile backsplash to complement the wood tones throughout the home.

A ROOM FOR ALL REASONS

Upon entering, the first thing visitors notice is the large, light-filled living room and adjoining office. Then, just beyond them, an all-purpose tatami room comes into view. Large enough for six tatami mats (a sufficient standard size, according to the homeowner), the room provides a special backdrop for intimate dining, quiet meditation or even impromptu sleeping arrangements. Furniture, such as a dining table or cushions for sitting or kneeling, can be added or removed easily. A custom-

designed closet adjoining the room holds a futon for overnight guests. The room also includes a Buddhist butsudan shrine used to honor the homeowner’s ancestors.

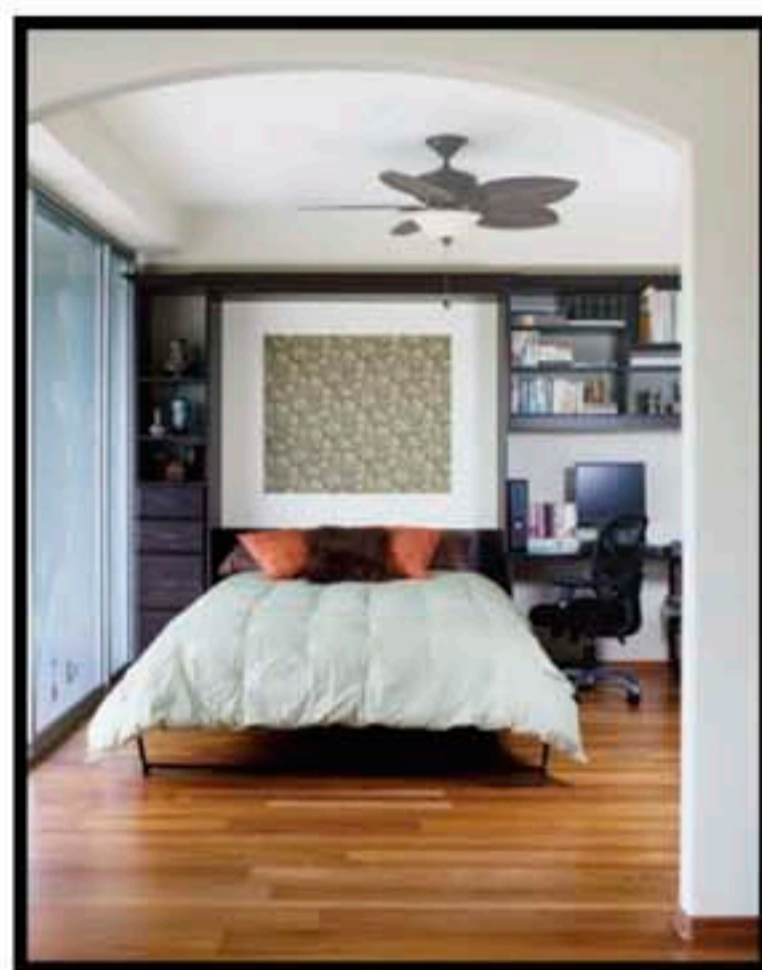
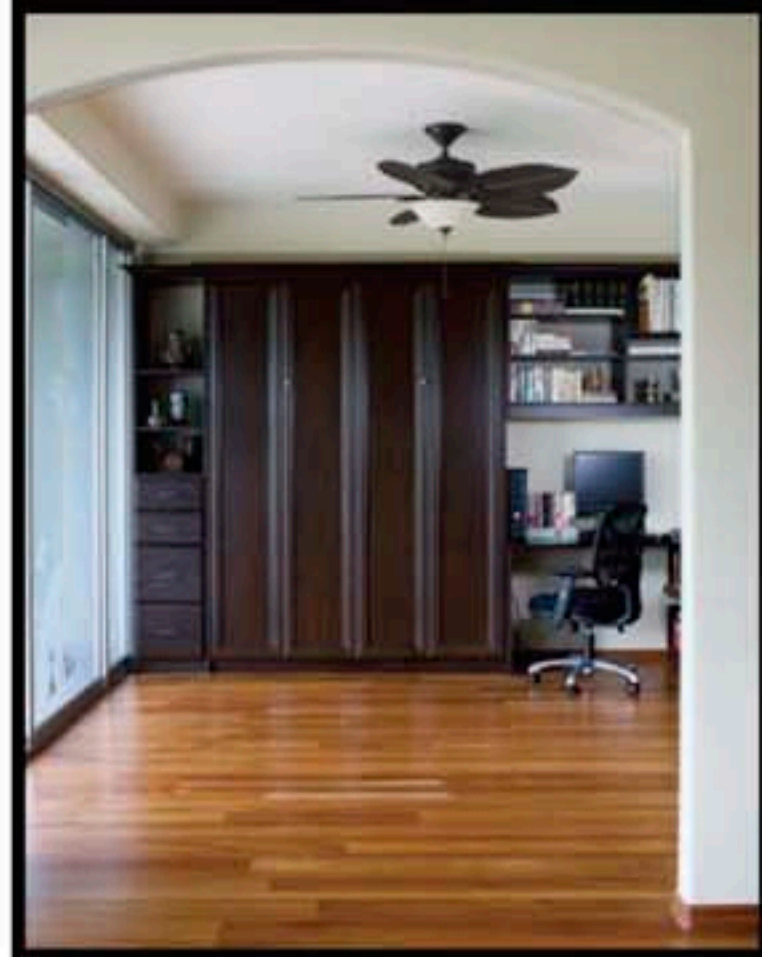
The space was designed and built according to traditional tatami-room specifications by Kageyama. The wall displays a permanent frame that will one day house a hand-painted scroll made by the homeowner’s brother. Another focal point? An eye-level rice-paper shoji screen. “The rice paper screens are traditionally used in Japanese houses instead of Western-style curtains,” says the homeowner. “It brings in a much softer light and also prevents people from looking inside the home,” she says. “The ultimate purpose is to view a large percentage of the garden beyond and still maintain privacy,” adds Barker.

Kageyama also covered one area of the room’s floor space with bamboo instead of the mahogany used throughout the rest of the room. The reason? The bamboo area signifies a transition to the outdoors, where a traditional Japanese garden can be enjoyed.

HIDDEN FUNCTION

When you’re limited by square footage, many spaces must have more than one use. This homeowner’s office area is no exception. Off the main living area, the new office provides ample, well-lit space for document storage and display of precious items. What’s more, a hidden panel made to look like a closet unfolds into a full-size Murphy bed. “I have children on the Mainland,” says the homeowner. “They come over with my grandkids a couple of times a year.” In combination, the Murphy bed, the homeowner’s bed and the tatami room can sleep up to 10 people.

When it comes to reflecting the homeowner’s personal taste and lifestyle, this condo renovation certainly delivers. The successful changes made to this property are a product of quality design/build, reconfiguration and site management by the Barker Kappelle team. “I was on-site every day, making sure everything went smoothly,” says Barker. From start to finish, the company handled everything from jobsite waste removal to installation of the homeowner’s new microwave. Barker even accompanied the homeowner to suppliers’ stores to pick out countertops, flooring and other finish options. The homeowner appreciates the personal attention and follow-through she received from Barker. “You have to be able to communicate with your contractor,” the homeowner explains. “That’s the most important part.” **HHR**



MURPHY ME: This roomy office doubles its functionality, thanks to a Murphy bed, which can be easily pulled down from the wall. Add this extra sleeping space to the accommodations the homeowner’s tatami room and master suite provide, and the condo can sleep up to 10 people.