

THE GLASS HOUSE

Two apartments are remodeled as one, and now enjoy penthouse status.

By Aimee Harris • Featured Designer, Geoffrey Hassman Design • Photos by Kyle Rothenborg

Opposite: The penthouse has two pairs of crystal-jeweled, 8-foot Herculite double glass doors. The tempered glass doors were made by KKK Glass, and custom etched by glass artist Bill Grix, of WM Grix Art Glass. Below: The living rooms' two large, structural pillars offer enough support for the perimeter walls to be replaced with stacking sliding glass doors, which can be pushed back to the corners of the room. The openness transforms the living room into one vast lanai.

Does the sum of the parts equal the whole? In the case of this beachfront, high-rise apartment, it's debatable. At times the apartment's elaborate "parts" nearly top the whole. Overall, the owners kept the remodel "contemporary and simple." The project's interior designer, Geoffrey Hassman, says, "My first design of this apartment looked nothing like this. It was much more traditional, with crown molding, pillars and so forth. But it was imperative to the husband to keep it simple. That was very important to him." However, the apartment's "parts" were mostly determined by the wife, a person with an eye for interior design. From a one-of-a-kind murano glass table from Italy to custom-etched glass herculite doors, the parts of this apartment define the whole.

Almost a decade ago, the couple bought one of the two top-floor apartments of this Diamond Head building, hoping that the second one would someday become available. They wanted to combine the apartments, making the building's top floor one large penthouse.

When the neighboring apartment finally opened up, they jumped on the opportunity to buy it. They hired Hassman, a well-seasoned New York designer, who recently relocated to Hawaii, to merge the two spaces. The new 2,150-square-foot floor plan includes a bedroom

and bath, media room, guest bath, kitchen, dining/family room and master suite, with bath.

"The original apartments weren't very attractive," Hassman notes. "They were very long and narrow." Once Hassman connected the two spaces, the residence became u-shaped, with a sweeping view of the south shore.

Hassman says the interior design was mostly a collaboration among himself, the wife and ... the color purple. With a passion for a particular shade of purple, the woman of the house had many of the furnishings custom made in that hue.

Perhaps the most fabulous purple piece is the murano glass dining table, with blue and purple legs. Hassman says, "The owners were in Italy when they found this table. We were considering some other tables, but they kept coming back to this one. They asked the Italian artist, Roberto Fortunati, of Marco Polo Int'l, to design some new glass legs for the table to incorporate her special shade of purple."

The glass table's seats, which were designed in the '30s, are metal chairs that were originally upholstered in leather. Hassman reupholstered them with purple mohair velvet to match the table. The same fabric was also used to reupholster the modern kitchen chairs from INspiration.



The touchable, washable vinyl on the bench and headboard brings purple passion into the master bedroom.

The master bedroom also has a punch of purple. The bed's bench and the floor-to-ceiling headboard were upholstered in Designtex purple vinyl by Romeo, of VRS Upholstery. "Vinyl has a bad wrap, Hassman explains. "When you think of vinyl, you think of nalgahide. But the design market has taken vinyl to such brilliant levels, it's now as expensive as some fine fabrics. People mistake it for satin."

"The wife had everything to do with the interior design. The husband ... he is spectacular ... totally respected his wife and what she was capable of doing. He just stepped back and let us go."

However, he did have one demand.

"He's heavy into football," says Hassman, "so his only major request was that everywhere he walked in the house he would be able to see a TV."

Home Automation Hawaii, a high-tech home-theater company, wired the house with five TVs, and three separate surround-sound systems. One system was designed for a separate media room, with a

Sony V Wega Engine wide-screen plasma TV.

Because of the breathtaking view, the owners decided to remodel with glass rather than concrete. Hassman says, "They realized that by combining the two apartments, they'd get a giant, three-sided glass room."

The apartment is enclosed with a series of sliding doors and windows. The three ocean-facing sides were installed with stacking glass doors. When open, the entire apartment becomes one gigantic lanai.

"Since this home is all glass and on the ocean," Hassman says, "in the afternoon, this place fries. Window coverings were a major issue, but I didn't want shutters or anything that would block the view. So we installed UV blocking solar shades from Kreative Kamaaina. The company is excellent ... they've done a whole string of jobs for me."

The 27 electric shades are on one of the three computer systems (shades, lights and audiovisual) that Kerry Bradshaw, in conjunction with Home Automation Hawaii, installed to run the apartment. "The

shades can be raised and lowered individually, room by room or the entire apartment at once.

In keeping with the apartment's contemporary, clean-lines, the wife chose simple, light maple cabinetry for throughout the space. The cabinetmaking was done by Mark Gavin, of Gavin Woodworking. "He did the media room, the kitchen, the master bedroom ... the woodwork here is staggering."

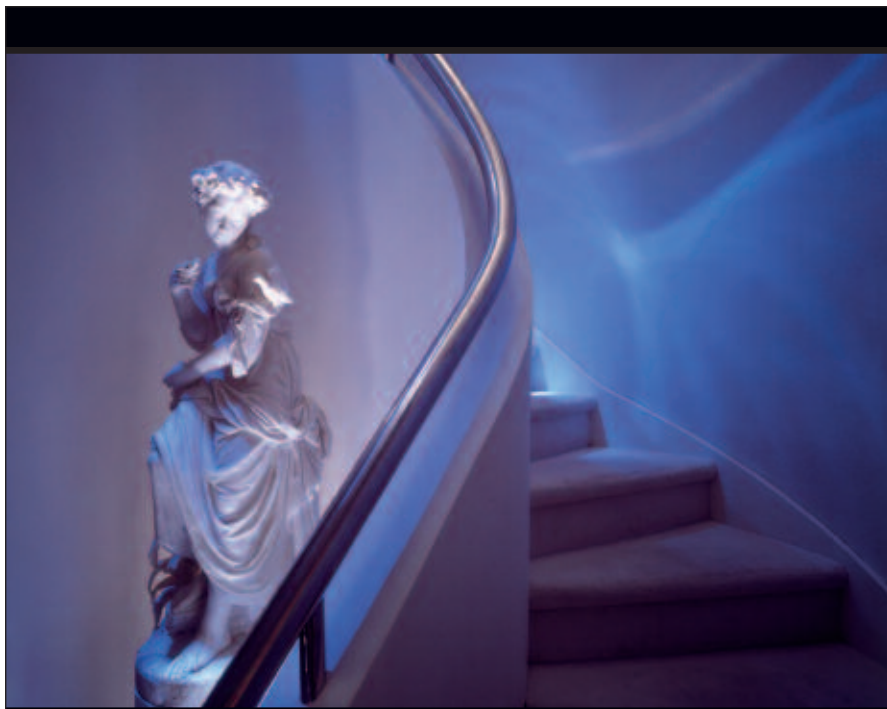
The walls without cabinetry are textured with Venetian plaster. The plaster recipe is based on a mix of aged slaked lime, ground marble dust and pigment. "The plaster I ordered from Bonded Materials Co. is from Italy. The company sent me sample boards, so I could approve the color," Hassman says.



Above: The Italian murano glass table, with custom-made purple/blue legs, glistens in the afternoon sun.

Below: Halls of specially-treated limestone tile and walls of custom maple cabinetry line the entire penthouse in subdued luxury.





Geoffrey Hassman Design
924-1941

Working with Venetian plaster is remarkably labor intensive, with several coats of plaster, sealer and polish. Hassman says, "It's really about technique. It's only as good as the person who does it."

Bonded Materials' representative, Guy Hamilton, instructed Hassman's painter from Mariano Painting & Wallcovering, on the intricacies of this traditional plastering technique. Hassman walks up to one of the room's plastered pillars and admires the workmanship. "The plaster is polished so well, you can see the reflection of your face in it."

The apartment's floor also underwent special treatment. After the 18-inch tile limestone was installed, Hassman had it ground down by a 1/16 of an inch with a grinding machine. Hassman says that the treatment smoothes out the floor. "You can barely see any of the seams," Hassman says. "Like the plaster paint job, it's very subtle, but it makes a huge difference. This is the way all the old Italian villas used to be built."

For a final twist, Hassman asked his clients to bring down the ceiling by 3.25 inches. "It's always the most shocking thing I ask my clients to do. But, because of this building's concrete ceilings, I wouldn't be able to do any creative lighting unless I could come up from underneath."

He notes that this apartment's structural vertical beams and doors draw your eye up, making the ceiling appear taller. "The ceilings don't feel like they're coming down on your head. And, now, with all the lighting, this place has some real drama ... at sunset and nighttime, this place is mind blowing."

S U P P L I E R S

Cabinetry: Custom maple cabinets, by Gavin Woodworking

Fabrics: Sofas covered in Tysilk, from Steven Harsey Textiles.

Vinyl & velvet mohair: Designtex mohair velvet for the chairs and vinyl for bed

Floors: 18-inch-square limestone tiles, from Marmol

Herculite glass etching: By Bill Grix, of WM Grix Art Glass

Herculite glass maker: KKK Glass

Kitchen counters: Granite, from Marmol

Hand-painted light switch covers: Todd Michaels, of Todd Michaels Design

Lighting: Lighting Elegance

Murano glass table: Artist Roberto Fortunati, of Marco Polo Int'l in Venice

Painting: Armondo, of Mariano Painting & Wallcovering

Solar Shades: Kreative Kamaaina

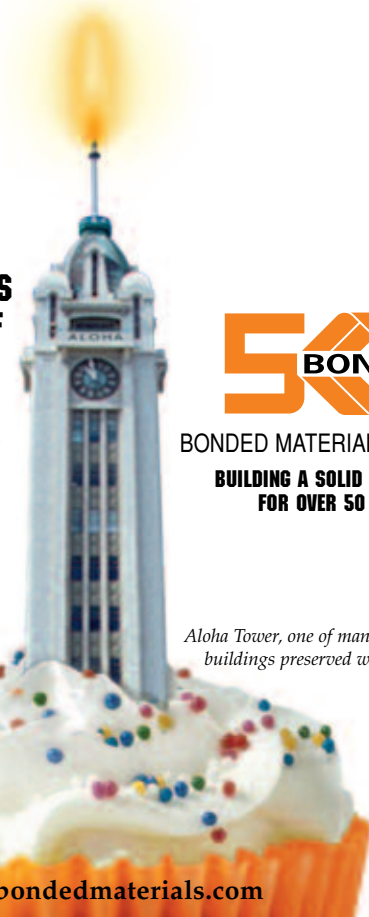
Upholstery: Romeo, of VRS Upholstery

Venetian Plaster: Bonded Materials Co. ✪

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