



island idyll

With a 'less is more' mantra, one designer raises the bar for a vintage beachfront cottage in Maui that brings joy, style, and peace.

"I create spaces that interact," says designer and homeowner Niko Prevolos of his 1950s Hawaiian cottage renovation. "Sitting on the lanai you look at the art on the living room wall, you hear the coconut trees moving in the wind, you enjoy the fragrant plumeria. It's all part of the experience."

PHOTOS AND STYLING BY John Ellis ✨ WORDS BY Suzanne Morrissey



H Along Maui's south shore in the town of Kihei, designer Niko Prevolos found a cottage he describes as a train wreck with good bones.

The owner of Dwellingpoint Design, a California-based architectural design firm focusing on residential design, Prevolos knew the beachfront spot had all he needed to create a lush home.

Built in 1954, the 900-square foot structure appealed to Prevolos with its dramatic rooflines, high windows, and "nice, big overhangs," that gave it a simple, beach house vibe. "Whoever designed this originally did a nice job, and I don't always say that," he notes.

Prevolos has a straight forward approach to his projects: "You need to love your home." His mission to create open, inviting spaces that work well with the other areas of the house encourages that love, and he believes does something else: "When you have these interactive spaces, it allows for more socializing between members of the home, and that actually helps make us happier." Gone are the days when formal living rooms were off limits unless guests were coming over and the kitchens were tucked in one corner of a house, away from rooms where the family relaxed together. "We live life differently now," he says.

For this project, renovations included adding 500 square feet of living space and a guest cottage. Prevolos describes the interior as having modern, retro,

continued on page 00

Prevolos added a 600 square foot guest cottage, **top**, to the front of the house. With neighbors on each side, the original home was a "bit of a fishbowl," he says. Landscaping and architectural choices added privacy and built an "inner-world feel" once inside the property.

A rustic chic wire lighting fixture and bamboo cabinet to display just a few colorful treasures, **left**, are all part of Prevolos' vintage vision. "For many people, the challenge is not to overdo their houses. People just like to have lots of stuff," he explains, chuckling. "I curate it so it doesn't overwhelm."



In the guest cottage's living room and kitchen, Prevolos chose aqua and orange to echo the retro-style architecture. Weathered metal and wood accents offer vintage appeal while bright tangerine lockers provide storage and flair. Sheer panel treatments for the windows are a must in a beach house with beckoning outdoor views.



The metal-wrapped island is the focal point of the kitchen, **above**, but the unique range hood made from street signs is the feature Prevolos, an avid cook, likes the most. "I love incorporating everyday objects into the design in a different way," he says of the piece.

Prevolos' "consummately happy" rescue pup, Kiki, trots through the steel and glass hallway that connects the guest cottage to the main house, **right**. "When you walk to the bedroom, you can't help but look at the garden and its artwork," he says, adding that jalousie windows are the practical choice in a tropical setting.



Get the Look

"As a cook, it was important to me to have a beautiful, functional space with balanced work/storage areas," Prevolos says. Here's how he did it.

***ART? YES.** Place artwork in the kitchen. Just keep it away from sinks and stovetops to avoid splatters.

***GET CLOSE.** An island and nearby table and chairs welcome guests, but keep the work zone clear.

***SPREAD STORAGE.** Upper cabinets are too formal for a beach house, but the island has oodles of drawers and roomy cabinets flank the refrigerator built into an adjacent wall.

In the dining space, vintage metal chairs play against a retro light fixture, reinforcing the home's personality. Prevolos keeps walls and ceilings painted, bringing in natural wood only with furnishings and flooring, as with this well-loved farm-style dining table. Although tile floors are necessary for a house near the beach, these have a wood tone pattern.



Instant Idea
 No room for a
 nightstand? Hang a
 magazine holder for
 slim storage.



This bedroom gets colorful touches from bedding inspired by vintage Hawaiian fabrics, **above**. “Many things can play well together,” Prevolos notes. “The vintage iron bed is simple and almost monastic, but the playful quilt and art bring some life.” Favorite pieces from personal collections on the built-in shelves help move the eye around the room.

Prevolos chose to wrap three accent walls in metal, including one in this bath, **right**. Distressing galvanized sheet metal softens and ages the look. “Metal is one of the materials I love and use on every project in some way,” he says. “It’s earthy, can be warm or cold depending on its application, and makes a statement.”

continued from page 00

industrial, and “plantationish” touches that offer doses of the unexpected. But even with this eclectic mix, his “less is more” mantra always wins out.

Prevolos once worked as an art director in the film industry, and knows the importance of moving a viewer’s eye around a scene. As a designer, he works in much the same way, using color, special pieces, architecture, art, and nature to move people’s eyes around a home to create a pleasing experience. “Your eye naturally goes to the biggest, brightest item in the space, then it wanders left or right, not up or down. So it’s about finding what the next object will be,” he explains. “In that sense, my job is curating. If there’s too much that breaks your eye in that travel, it becomes staccato and less peaceful.”

“A home can be a house,” he says, “but it also can, and should be, an experience.”

