Vertical wood dowels on the surface of the main house encourage plant growth, while the lanai features a curved grass roof.

RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

Mork-Ulnes Architects

By **ANH-MINH LE** Photography by **MARIKO REED**

The dark green exterior of the house—designed by Mork-Ulnes Architects and built by Concept 2 Completion—is intended to blend into the verdant surroundings.

LEFT: Mork-Ulnes Architects designed the kitchen island like a piece of furniture, with legs and open shelves; the teak and leather stools are by Balè.

ABOVE: A dining table and backless bench, both by Hay, are combined with an Audo Copenhagen pendant and an Ilse Crawford-designed bench for De La Espada. **BELOW:** The living room is furnished with a Muuto sofa, chaise lounge by Bruno Mathsson and custom coffee table by Satoshi Yamauchi.

You could say that Mork-Ulnes Architects' inaugural project in Hawaii was several decades in the making. The clients are a married couple; during the wife's high school days, she was a foreign exchange student in Norway. In 2014, when it came time to renovate the couple's home in San Francisco, they sought out a firm with a Norwegian background. Enter husband-and-wife team Casper and Lexie Mork-Ulnes, who successfully took on the challenge of making the Edwardian house light and bright.

Five years later, the clients were planning to relocate to Hawaii and reached out again—this time for a ground-up build in the Honolulu suburb of Kailua. While the settings and architectural styles of the two homes vastly differ, the similarities in the material palette can be traced back to the wife's time in Norway. Case in point: the Douglas fir used in both residences, which was treated with lye to lighten the wood and prevent it from yellowing.

Along with Nordic influences, the new dwelling—built by Concept 2 Completion—exhibits architectural features that bring to mind California modernism (an amplified indoor-outdoor connection) and Japan (the frosted glass panels flanking the staircase are reminiscent of shoji screens). "It's a very cross-cultural project," Casper says. "It's specifically designed for this Hawaii site but has these other layers."

The local design vernacular, as interpreted by Mork-Ulnes, is also expressed in the property's two

ABOVE: The primary bedroom, which peeks out onto the Mokulua Islands, includes a De La Espada bed, a bedside table by Nobuto Suga, wall-mounted wave-like wooden works by Sebastian Parker and a Heather Levine Ceramics wall hanging. **BELOW:** The primary bath features a Japanese soaking tub by Bartok Design Co.

structures: The two-story main house has board and batten siding and the lanai references a traditional open-air, roofed space. With the former, Casper recalls, "We thought, 'How can we riff on this to make the vernacular bespoke for this house and tie it into the concept of the house, which is very much about the verdant surroundings?'" Hence the vertical wood dowels on the building's skin. "It became this trellis-like facade to allow the plants to climb up and soften the form of this otherwise rectilinear volume," he elaborates, noting that his firm worked closely with landscape architecture design studio Terremoto.

The ground level of the house contains the public spaces and the wife's office, while the bedrooms are upstairs. A pool is situated between the house and the lanai, which comprises a combination kitchen-dining area, tearoom, bathroom and the husband's office. The lanai's green roof is "a nod to the typical Norwegian language—to have a grass roof on top of a house," Lexie explains. She and Casper have implemented them in Norway, but this was their first such endeavor elsewhere. Since the curved roof

The lanai's outdoor shower is clad in Western red cedar and illuminated by an Artemide sconce.

The exterior of the pool is polished concrete—the same material comprising the flooring in the house.

The wife's Douglas fir–lined office holds a desk and chair from Mjölk, with a pendant from the Stockholm-based Malmsten store overhead.

is visible from the second floor of the house, it was conceived as the "fifth facade," he says.

Like all Mork-Ulnes undertakings, Lexie spearheaded the interiors, including the kitchen design and finishes. The client was heavily involved in the furniture and lighting selections—which, not unlike the home's architecture, reflect a multicultural approach. The living room, for instance, is outfitted with a sofa by Scandinavian brand Muuto; a chaise lounge by Swedish architect and furniture designer Bruno Mathsson; and a coffee table by Satoshi Yamauchi, a custom furniture maker in Honolulu. Rounding out the space are a light sculpture by American artist, furniture designer and landscape architect Isamu Noguchi that draws on Japanese paper lanterns, as well as a Beni Ourain rug from Morocco.

The project's success has the Mork-Ulneses eager to spend more time in Hawaii. In fact, in addition to their offices in San Francisco and Oslo, they recently established an outpost in Honolulu. Of the latter, Casper says, "It's an area we really enjoy working in and are super excited to have other projects there."

The private spaces on the second floor of the main house overlook a landscape designed by Terremoto.