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Need for landscape architects grows on Kauai

Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - April 6, 2007 by [Jon Letman](#) PBN Contributor

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Large-scale luxury residential developments have come to Kauai, and with them the need for more landscape architects, designers and plant inventory.

As development trends, already well established on Oahu, Maui and the Big Island, reach Kauai, large high-end projects from Princeville to Poipu illustrate how the lack of landscape architects provides statewide opportunities.



Jon Letman

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Most of Kauai's high-end residential landscaping work is done by Neighbor Island firms such as Greg Boyer's Kahaluu, Oahu-based **Hawaiian Landscapes Inc.** Boyer estimates that 10 percent of his work is on Kauai, for developments like Kealia Kai where lots sell for \$1.5 million to \$3.5 million.

For a typical \$2 million residence, landscape design fees begin at \$20,000 to \$25,000, he said.

"I see high-end projects increasing on Kauai, certainly more than five years ago, and that's good for business," he said.

The largest residential project on Kauai today is the **Kukuiula Development Co.**'s 1,010-acre "luxury destination community" in Poipu, which has approval for up to 1,500 housing units, community parks, a 216-acre golf course and 10-acre retail/commercial development.

A smaller, newer market like Kauai requires collaboration with Oahu companies, according to Mark Mahaney, landscape vision manager for Kukuiula.

Kukuiula has started its own design guild, combining architects, interior designers and landscape architects to provide a resource for clients.

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Each island has its own landscape design character and plant palette, Mahaney said.

"Pulling designers from other islands isn't so easy when designing a distinctly Kauai landscape," he said. "The subtleties in design go beyond pretty plants."

Increased demand for landscaping luxury properties on Kauai will become even more noticeable as other projects across the island grow, Mahaney said. He sees the potential need for as many as several hundred landscape designs each year, requiring five to seven talented landscape architects to keep pace.

The largest new development on Kauai's North Shore is Kaiulani of Princeville, a low-density development of 77 attached houses ranging from less than \$1 million to just over \$2.5 million, according to Don Schultz, managing member of developer QEB III.

"We hire locally as much as possible, but with such a big project you need the depth and breadth of a larger firm to ensure quality and continuity," Schultz said.

While Kaiulani of Princeville is being landscaped with stock from smaller Kauai nurseries and even purchases from private individuals, QEB III is using Pacific Aquascapes of Kapolei and Miyabara Associates of Honolulu for landscape design.

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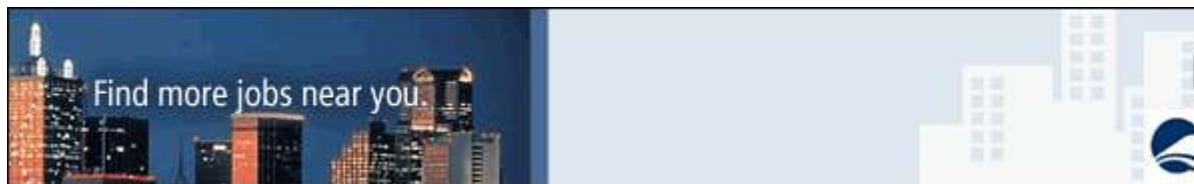
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