

Hawaii's first master-planned community turns 25 this year, and with plans for further growth, its future looks bright

By Diana Lomont

Listening to Tom Leppert, president and chief executive officer of Castle & Cooke Properties Inc., talk about Mililani is like listening to a prize-winning gardener patter on about how careful planning and tedious attention have created a varied and thriving environment admired by everyone. Of course, the environment Leppert speaks of with such devout enthusiasm is the master-planned Mililani Town, home to 32,000 residents. And while this young "garden" is still growing, there's no denying that the 25-year-old community in Central Oahu is a fine example of what true "community building" can create, in the words of Leppert, a former White House Fellow who holds an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School.

"We really think of ourselves, not as home builders, but as community builders," says Leppert. "We're not just building a home, we're providing an environment that is absolutely the finest in Hawaii."

Mililani could be, at least as one resident puts it, "God's country." ("Mililani" *does* translate to "exalted" or "lifted heavenward.") It offers: cooler, upland climate; ample park space and recreational facilities; nearby shopping centers; varied affordable housing; eye-pleasing architecture; clean, tree-lined streets; good schools and low crime rates; a com-

munity that takes pride in itself. There's not much more you could ask for in a community, says Leppert.

While Hawaii's first master-planned, fee simple community is still considered new, it certainly didn't pop up overnight. Plans for Mililani as a quality, affordable housing project began even before statehood. In 1958, realizing that the state's sugar and pineapple industries had limited futures, Castle & Cooke drafted a plan to turn its agricultural highlands into a 3,500-acre community to be built over a 20-year period. In 1964, after much debate, the state Land Use Commission redesignated 705 acres of land in Waipio from agricultural to urban use. Another 140 acres were zoned for development of Mililani Golf Course, which opened in 1966.

Mililani Town officially opened on June 3, 1968, when the first of 112 fee simple single-family homes went up for sale. The majority of the units were sold before the model homes could open. And 12 of those houses represented the first "affordable" homes sold in Hawaii through the Honolulu Redevelopment Agency.

From the beginning, the Mililani masterminds envisioned far more than a "subdivision"—considered a dirty word by Leppert and his staff. Mililani would contain everything that makes up a happy community—parks, rec centers and churches, as well as shopping centers and schools—all intermingled and con-

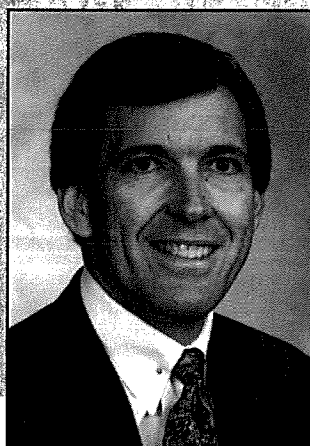
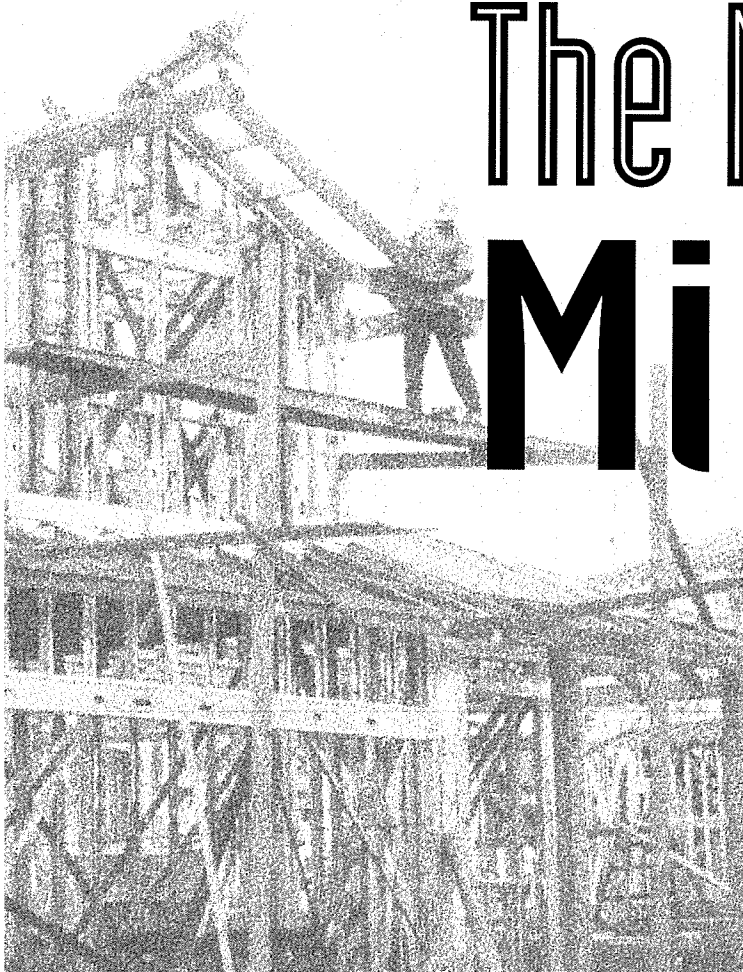


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veniently located within a small geographic area. Passing through the town today, one can see the result: You can scarcely drive a half-mile without passing by open park space; and in the town center are churches within walking distances of condominium developments and shopping centers.

Mililani today has three elementary schools and a high school, four recreational centers, a library, fire station, YMCA, and 50 acres of parks. There are three shopping centers, including The Town Center of Mililani, which will soon become the fifth largest shopping center in the state when Wal-Mart opens its 136,000-square-foot store in May. Recent expansions include a 40,000-square-foot City Mill and the two-story, 21,000-square-foot Mililani Professional Center with medical, realty,

The Making of Mililani



Castle & Cooke is moving forward on Mililani Mauka (left), the second stage of Mililani's development. Castle & Cooke Properties' CEO Tom Leppert (inset).

banking and insurance offices, and a new Italian restaurant next door.

Today, approximately 32,000 residents live in 10,000 units that comprise the area known as Mililani Makai. The number of residents who call Mililani home continues to grow by the day as Castle & Cooke moves forward on developing the second half of Mililani, Mililani Mauka. When completed, the 1,250-acre parcel of land on the Koolau side of the H-2 Freeway will contain approximately 6,600 units in six distinct villages linked by greenbelts, bikeways and pedestrian walkways. The \$100 million Phase I of the Mililani Mauka development began in 1990 and is slated to continue through 1998. Currently, 1,850 units are completed or under construction. The number and variety of Mililani Mauka's housing devel-

opments are a challenge to keep track of, even for Castle & Cooke. Following are the newest developments on the market, half of which are required to be sold as affordable units to income-restricted residents:

✦ **Hampton Court**—100 townhomes in five handsome "country mansions" reflecting the grace and elegance of English manor estates. These units feature quality finishing touches such as brass hardware, ceramic tile entries and alder wood cabinets; some are even furnished with fireplaces. Prices range from \$270,000 to \$370,000. Currently for sale.

✦ **Na Pua**—109 single-family homes featuring classic Island architecture from neighborhoods like Manoa and Nuuanu. Set on 4,500-square-foot lots, the prices range from \$295,000 to \$375,000. Mostly sold.

✦ **Na Lei**—171 single-family units similar to those of Na Pua with an average price of \$335,000. Nearly sold out.

✦ **The Cottages at Mililani Mauka**—164 single-family homes, set on lots averaging 3,900 square feet. The metal-framed houses, designed as modern interpretations of the cottages that dotted Diamond Head and Kahala in the 1930s and '40s, are being marketed as affordable homes, selling from \$260,000 to \$310,000. All 60 units of the first phase are sold, but the remaining 104 will be coming on line through mid-1994.

✦ **Pacific Traditions**—three subdivisions on 1,200 acres, which Castle & Cooke calls "the most popular single-family homes ever developed in Mililani." The one- and two-story homes feature the "great

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tended families and retired couples."

All right, so Mililani is a pretty nice place to live now. But surely as the years pass, this neatly tended project will look like any other lived-in community, won't it? Don't count on it, says the Mililani Community Association, which is the community watchdog, maintenance crew and general manager. Every Mililani homeowner is required to join the association and pay its monthly dues, currently \$21. (Condominium

homeowners are also required to join the association of their town-home complex.) The association derives its power from protective covenants, conditions and restrictions that all homeowners agree to when purchasing their homes.

Association president Eric Matsumoto explains that the community's far-reaching goals are to preserve property values and the health and welfare of the community. This is accomplished through maintaining public spaces, reviewing the appear-

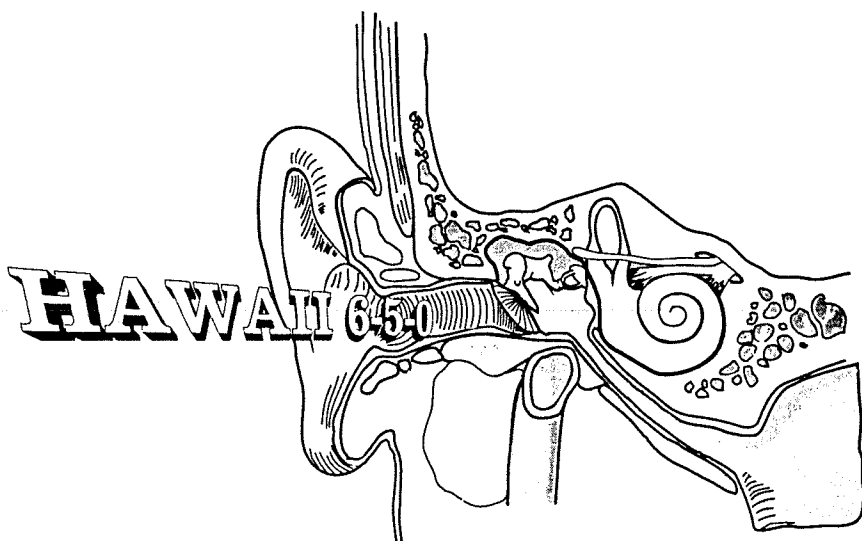
ances of condominium buildings and houses, and managing recreational facilities to the extent of hiring lifeguards and security guards.

"There are no opportunities for blights to occur," says Matsumoto, an engineering supervisor at the Pearl Harbor shipyard, who has been president of the association for 12 years. "Should they start to crop up, we step in and take care of them, whether they are overgrown weeds or garbage buildup in garages." All houses and condominium buildings are reviewed every three months by an enforcement officer, who cites violators of the association's conformance rules. Matsumoto admits that in some cases, homeowners are not happy when they discover they can't paint their homes any color they wish, or that a boat protruding from their carport may constitute a violation.

But there's plenty of proof that an association such as this has the strength of the majority to protect the best interests of the community it serves. In 1986 Mililani became the first town in Hawaii to receive an All-America City award from the National Civic League. Castle & Cooke says the award was given in recognition of "community leadership, government performance, civic education and community volunteerism." Matsumoto, however, recalls that the award primarily recognized the community activism that centered on pesticide contamination of the water supply from nearby pineapple and sugar fields. Responding to community concern and pressure, Castle & Cooke agreed to build water filtration systems for the area, which can be seen today on the Mililani Mauka hillside.

The association also has a role in ongoing development in Mililani. A design committee with a minimum of two architects is included in Castle & Cooke planning of all new developments, including housing projects, shopping centers, churches and recreational centers. "Our working relationship with the developer has been good," says Matsumoto. "They have been fair and willing to meet with us along the way."

The association is proud of Mili-



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lani's schools and reputation as a healthy family community. But the Central Oahu homeowners are hardly complacent. Instead, they're addressing issues like street gangs, drugs and teen sex before they creep in through the back door.

In 1989 the community formed a teen support organization made up of school administrators, teachers, businesspeople and community leaders. In recent years, the organization has canvassed the town with educational information about drugs and gangs, and persisted in finding ways to keep kids out of the shopping centers. The work is beginning to pay off. Castle & Cooke has agreed to foot 50 percent of the cost to build a youth center in Mililani Mauka, and the association is looking at holding dances and other events for youth at the rec centers or churches.

Recently, a community poll conducted by the association discovered that Mililani teenagers were traveling to the Waikiki Health Center for anonymous AIDS and other testing.

The Mililani Town Association lobbied the Legislature for funds to provide local teen health services, and a contract was awarded to Wahiawa General Hospital for that purpose. The Department of Health's School Health Services Branch plans to provide educational outreach to youth in Mililani schools.

The association currently has a paid staff of nearly 20, which will need to grow as the town expands, says Matsumoto. A member of the West Oahu Chancellors Advisory Committee, Matsumoto hopes one day to see a branch of the University of Hawaii in Mililani. "People don't recognize this as God's country, but it is," he says.

With an expanding residential community, an effective means to maintain it, and a growing technical job base, the future of Mililani looks, as some would say, "not too shabby." So congratulations and good luck, Mililani, on your 25th anniversary. And if there is anything wrong with living there, Tom Leppert would like to know about it. \$



MILILANI TECHNOLOGY PARK: BRINGING QUALITY JOBS TO CENTRAL OAHU

The last test of a truly successful community is if it can provide not only quality homes and a full community life, but good job opportunities, as well. The 6-year-old Mililani Technology Park is currently the worksite of approximately 700 Hawaii residents, many who live in Mililani and Central Oahu.

Originally conceived exclusively as a high-tech business center, the park was rezoned last year to a mixed use commercial-industrial status, allowing Castle & Cooke more latitude in attracting tenants. Under the new zoning, Castle & Cooke must still sell 45 percent of the park's lots to high-tech companies, a proportion that Lucien Wong, senior vice president of Castle & Cooke Properties' commercial division, says

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