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BJ Kobayashi

A BALANCED LIFE

Running two businesses—The Kobayashi Group, which has developed more than \$3 billion worth of Hawaii properties to date, and BlackSand Capital, a real estate private equity firm—keeps BJ Kobayashi busy. His full calendar and always-on lifestyle includes frequent, world-wide travel and constant meetings.

Kobayashi's busy schedule hasn't left much time for other important aspects of his life—important aspects, like family, yoga, or sleep. So three years ago, Kobayashi realized he needed to work on bringing a more even keel to his life.





A Balanced Life



“Balance is the cornerstone of a happy life,” he says, “and of being able to provide for your family and your business.”

Three pillars provide that sense of balance for Kobayashi: Diligent work, community connection and strong relationships.

Kobayashi co-owns Kobayashi Group along with his brother and sister. Major luxury residential developments include the Big Island’s Kukio Golf and Beach Club community and Hokua, Capitol Place, and ONE Ala Moana condominiums in Honolulu.

Currently, Kobayashi Group is working on the ultra-luxury Park Lane Ala Moana residential project in partnership with The MacNaughton Group, General Growth Properties, and BlackSand Capital. As an example of what a collaboration like this is able to build, Park Lane Ala Moana offers a bevy of residences with private garages and elevators, as well as prime ocean and sunset views. When the first units went on sale, buyers lined up at 2 a.m. to snag their first choice—ranging from a one-bedroom unit to a five-bedroom penthouse.

When referring to these momentous real estate projects, Kobayashi emphasizes that balance and healthy lifestyle considerations also play a role in his firm’s development projects. Leaning forward, with a sense of import, he explains:

“It’s not just a condominium in a building.”

He describes that beyond the structure itself, the company considers how the building’s residents will experience the space. Plans include carefully envisioned pools, spas and fitness centers amid thoughtful landscaping. He incorporates features that can lead to a more balanced and satisfying life and includes those in the residences the company develops.



Building does not simply mean the act of construction, but the act of building neighborhoods and creating a real sense of community in the company’s projects.

Kobayashi describes that many homes these days have shifted their outdoor living spaces to the back of the house, meaning residents don’t interact much with their neighbors. “In the ’40s and the ’50s, you’d see a lot of homes where the lanai was in the front, and people would socialize,” he says, “But now, oftentimes, you don’t know people down the street from you.”

A company goal, therefore, is to promote camaraderie among its projects’ residents. One way it does this is by consciously revisiting some of what was so appealing about living in Hawaii in generations past, such as there being open spaces where people can socialize together.

“(Having these meeting areas) makes for a more interesting and more lively community,” points out Kobayashi.



Kobayashi Group partners takes these details seriously, as they live in the projects they develop, and having a sense of community is something they want for their own families, too. BJ Kobayashi and his family reside at Park Lane Ala Moana, “So we eat what we cook, so to speak,” he says.

Additional aspects of a healthy lifestyle, he notes, are paying attention to your relationships, both personal and business, and working with people you trust. Trust is invaluable where security and finances are concerned, and Bank of Hawaii has been a key constituent in Kobayashi Group’s projects. Kobayashi says he knows he can count on the people he works with, whether it’s the highly-trained security staff at Park Lane Ala Moana, or experts at Bank of Hawaii.

“When you’re really busy—and we’re all really busy—the more that can be taken off your plate and done by a professional, and done really well ... that’s very important,” he says, and referring to the team at The Private Bank at Bank of Hawaii, he continues, “It’s a huge value add for me.

You get these people who are very gifted, and who you can trust. They’re talented, and it lets me sleep at night.”

Adding a healthy melding of community engagement and valued partnerships to his work efforts has enriched Kobayashi’s life, he says with an easy smile. Building authentic business relationships with people he trusts, and making the time to add in some hiking, running and yoga has been the perfect recipe increasing his energy, focusing better, and he says even his sleep has improved.

That’s balance.



YOUR MENTORS:

I have only one. My Dad.

PEOPLE DON'T KNOW THAT I:

Can breakdance.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU:

The huge underdog who somehow pulls it off!

BUCKET LIST GOAL:

Stand up comedy.

FAVORITE BUILDING IN THE WORLD:

'Iolani Palace.

WHAT MAKES YOU SMILE:

Seeing my daughter play the guitar.

I COLLECT:

Art. Hitchcock, Walden, Tavernier.

FAVORITE COCKTAIL:

Vodka, splash of ginger. Rocks.

PROUDEST ACCOMPLISHMENT:

Co-founding the Gift Foundation of Hawaii.

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