

## WAILEA • 1,500 acres span the warmest, driest side of Maui

### FROM E12

world-renowned chefs, play rounds of golf or engage in some friendly tennis competition, or any of the other myriad activities that you would expect to find at the best resort areas.

Covering 1,500 acres on the warmest, driest and most sheltered side of Maui, Wailea is a resort community located south of the town of Kihui, stretching from the slopes of Haleakala volcano to the Pacific waters. With a true vacation ambience, it includes six world-class oceanfront hotels, three award-winning golf courses, five pristine golden sand beaches, 31 restaurants and lounges, luxurious residential properties, a tennis club, upscale shopping, manicured parks and all the lushly beautiful tropical flowers, plants and trees you could desire to put you in the aloha spirit.

On a recent visit, I spent an extremely enjoyable five days at the Grand Wailea, A Waldorf Astoria Resort, currently in the midst of a \$30 million renovation. Although the hotel is the largest in Wailea, it doesn't feel overwhelming. Spread out over 40 acres of tropical gardens, lawns and water features on Wailea Beach, the resort offers something for everyone, from a stained-glass illuminated wedding chapel to The ROCK, a 20,000-square-foot supervised "children's resort," to Spa Grande, Hawaii's largest spa.

I confess to not normally being much of a pool lover, usually preferring some quiet spot on the beach where I can read in peace and listen to the waves, but I have to admit that I was totally impressed with the



In a view looking out from the Grand Wailea hotel on the southwestern coast of Maui, the island of Kahoolawe is visible in the distance.

resort's 2,000-foot-long Wailea Canyon Activity Pool. Consisting of nine pools on six levels, the pools are connected by a "river" that carries swimmers along a combination of white-water rapids and gentle currents.

Within Wailea Canyon, in addition to the jungle, scuba and infant pools, are a plethora of slides, rope swings, waterfalls, caves, Jacuzzis, the world's first water elevator, and, of course, a swim-up bar. If that sounds like too much activity to you, the adults-only Hibiscus Pool and Jacuzzis are the perfect place to while away an afternoon, sprawled on a plush lounger in the shade of a private cabana, while attendants bring fresh towels or cocktails and casual food.

Speaking of food, the number of standout restaurants in the Wailea resort community is almost staggering (which is what you might be doing after dining at all of them!). From Wolfgang Puck's Spago at the Four Seasons to Masaharu Morimoto's Morimoto at the Andaz, there are plenty of big names to go around.

On my last night at the Grand Wailea, I was able to indulge my culinary fantasies at the James Beard Celebrity Chef Tour dinner held there this past January — a first for Maui — when Executive Chef Michael Lofaro of the resort's internationally acclaimed, multiple award-winning signature restaurant, Humuhumunukunuaia, (aka Humu, for obvious reasons) hosted an epicurean experience under the stars, created by him and rock star chefs Jonathan Waxman, Bruce Bromberg, Nancy Silverton, Tiffany Derry, Johnny Iuzzini and master mixologist Manny Hinojosa. The meal's six exquisite courses and the paired cocktails celebrated the abundance of local produce and products, and the fairy-lit setting on the resort's lawns amid pools and fountains was magical. Seated next to me was Kainoa Horcajo, a native Mauiian who holds the position of Hawaiian Cultural Ambassador at The Grand Wailea, a font of knowledge of all things Hawaiian, and who imparted the legend of

### If you go

**Getting there:** Alaska Airlines is currently the only carrier with nonstop flights between San Diego and Maui.

**Wailea information:** [www.WaileaResortAssociation.com](http://www.WaileaResortAssociation.com), for the comprehensive info about hotels, amenities and events in Wailea

#### Where to stay

**Grand Wailea, A Waldorf Astoria Resort:** 3850 Wailea Alanui Drive, Wailea, (800) 888-6100 [GrandWailea.com](http://GrandWailea.com). Rates from \$300; 780 guest rooms, including 52 suites; 7 restaurants and bars; full scale of amenities. Ideal for families or groups. Ho'olei at Grand Wailea is a group of lavish private residences offering 3-bedroom, 3.5-bath luxury villas

**Fairmont Kea Lani:** 4100 Wailea Alanui Drive, Maui, (866) 540-4456, [info@kealani.com](mailto:info@kealani.com), [fairmont.com/kea-lani-maui](http://fairmont.com/kea-lani-maui). All-suite and villa luxury oceanfront resort, situated on 22 acres. Rates from \$549; 413 one-bedroom suites, 37 private two- and three-bedroom villas.

#### Where to dine

With a plethora of fantastic dining options all within walking distance, Wailea is a foodie's delight, although, be prepared for sticker shock. Here are just a few suggestions, all devoted to highlighting locally harvested ingredients and cuisine:

**Humuhumunukunuaia:** at Grand Wailea resort, (800) 888-6100 [www.grandwailea.com/dine](http://www.grandwailea.com/dine)

**Ko:** at Fairmont Kea Lani resort, (808) 875-2210, [www.korestaurant.com](http://www.korestaurant.com)

**Migrant:** at Wailea Beach Marriott, (808) 875-9394, [www.migrantmaui.com](http://www.migrantmaui.com)

#### Events

**Restaurant Week Wailea:** May 24-30, [www.wailearesortassociation.com](http://www.wailearesortassociation.com)

**Maui Film Festival:** June 3-7, including Taste of Wailea and Taste of Chocolate events, [www.mauiFilmFestival.com](http://www.mauiFilmFestival.com)

#### Chef experience

You don't have to travel all the way to Maui to experience a James Beard Celebrity Chef Tour Dinner. On May 30, The Lodge at Torrey Pines executive chef Jeff Jackson will host chefs Beau MacMillan and Carrie Nahabedian for an exclusive farm-to-table event. Full weekend packages are available, including farm tour. [www.lodgeattorreyPines.com/jamesbeard](http://www.lodgeattorreyPines.com/jamesbeard)

Lea and the canoe makers to me as we spoke of traditional customs and lore. As we listened to the gentle surf roll against the

same shores on which those ancients began and ended their journeys, the question "why Wailea?" very decidedly became, "why not?"