



TOP Sailing majestic
Honolua Bay
BOTTOM Luxury villas
overlooking Fleming
Beach Park.

view. And since the property sits well above sea level, that view is spectacular. In the center of the horseshoe is the tri-level pool, connected by waterfalls and surrounded by the Ritz's signature great lawn, putting greens, bocce ball courts, and enough walking trails to work up an appetite.

One of the trails borders Honokahua Bay, home to Fleming Beach Park, 2006's "America's Best Beach," according to noted oceanographer Stephen "Dr. Beach" Leatherman. It's a wondrous half moon of that thick, soft white sand that carpets every tropical traveler's dreams. Thoughtfully, the Ritz left this stretch virtually untouched. There is the small Beach House Bar & Grill, hidden under a canopy of 40 fully grown coconut palms and populated with tiny red-breasted sparrow-like birds (I never got a straight answer what their

Hawaiian name was). There is also a manned booth with thick towels and chaise lounges. But fear not: no need to get up at the crack of dawn to fight for a spot – my wife and I enjoyed the beach five days straight and never counted more than 10 others around. It made those sunset walks, when the sun dipped behind Moloka'i and lit the sky and Moloka'i Channel on fire, the romantic ideal promised in all the brochures.

It also made offshore adventure more fun. The bay is so vast that snorkeling actually doesn't seem very promising before you launch, but once in the water, that vastness pays off in a big – as in big fish – way. The first time I explored the place, swimming out along the southern rocky reef wall, then trying the seemingly endless northern plateau reef, I swam with colorful parrot fish larger than I had ever seen, too many reef fish to count and two giant sea turtles, whose shells were as large as a VW Bug hood. They let me glide with them for minutes before deciding that this bug-eyed white guy was a nuisance and cruising to deeper waters.

But the experience put an accent on what I had already decided: the buzz was wrong; Maui is as far from Waikiki towers and traffic as you can get.

The main reason that Kapalua has not fallen to the addiction to the tourist's dollar couldn't be simpler: one land owner. Since 1909, this idyllic spot has been owned by the Maui Land & Pineapple Company, which has always operated with the holistic and traditional Hawaiian model of *ahupua'a*, an ancient land division system based on the artful use of land and water resources to sustain island life indefinitely. Part of that is not overbuilding, as evidenced by the thousands of acres that have been left untouched, topped off – literally – by the 8,661-acre Pu'u Kukui Rainforest Preserve, which placed West Maui's highest peak under the stewardship of The Nature Conservancy. That philosophy results in the ultimate luxury of today's frenetic, overcrowded world – space. It's a mantra that's felt constantly while on the Kapalua Resort, which is now a grand master-planned community.

In addition to the golf courses, golf academy, tennis center, and custom lots and estates, one of the more exciting developments is Kapalua Bay, which includes The Residences at Kapalua Bay, featuring 84 upscale, island-influenced homes, and The Ritz-Carlton Club, which includes 62 fractional ownership residences. Located on a 24-acre oceanfront promontory, overlooking Fleming Beach Park with

white sand, shelter from the raucous Moloka'i Channel surf and abundant sea life, this is a true family spot – as evidenced by my four-year-old daughter getting her first nose-to-gill experience with a colorful reef fish 20 feet from the sand. To complement the oceanic experience, a 6,100-square-foot beach club and 8,500-square-foot multi-level recreational area, including a lagoon-style pool, will be built.

The Ritz-Carlton Club residences are fully furnished, two- and three-bedroom, 2-1/2- and 3-1/2-bath units ranging from 1,770 to 2,090 square feet.

But the structures themselves are only part of the reason Ritz-Carlton Club members feel pampered. Being part of the club means you also get all the advantages of staying at the Ritz. "We've taken all the hotel services and introduced them in the club residences," says Robert Phillips, Ritz-Carlton Club senior vice president, business development. "We really specialize in personalized treatment to make sure vacation time is truly a vacation. Whether it's arranging the kids' stuffed animals, the chocolate on the pillow and the turning down of the bed, concierge for pre-planning, or maid service, it's

KAPALUA RESORT OVERVIEW

Located 10 miles north of historic Lahaina, and set amidst a 23,000-acre working pineapple plantation, the Kapalua Resort community has everything from private estates to The Ritz-Carlton Club and The Ritz-Carlton hotel; championship golf and tennis facilities; shopping and fine dining; and three white-sand beaches.

KAPALUA BAY

Two real estate projects are underway at Kapalua Bay, which overlooks a sandy stretch that has been named "America's Best Beach" by Dr. Beach. The Residences at Kapalua are three- and four-bedroom floorplans ranging from 3,000 to 4,200 square feet. Prices begin at \$4 million and sales are underway. The Ritz-Carlton Club is a fractional ownership project of 62 two- and three-bedroom upscale residences from 1,770 to 2,090 square feet. Members can also utilize privileges at six other Ritz-Carlton Clubs (four additional announced). Prices range from \$300,000 to \$700,000 per ownership interest. Both The Residences and The Ritz-Carlton Club will enjoy all the services of The Ritz-Carlton, a 25,000-square-foot spa and a 6,100-square-foot private beach club.

GOLF

Ranked as Hawaii's leading golf destination, there are two premier public courses, one private (under redesign by Tom Fazio) and a Golf Academy, which features 85,000 square feet of grass teeing area, several putting greens, bunkers, 18-hole putting course, and a 3,500-square-foot learning center, state-of-the-art video and strength equipment, and 25 PGA Tour professionals for instruction. Bottom line: if you can't fix your swing here, maybe it's time to take up tennis.

TENNIS

The Tennis Garden is a world-class facility staffed by PBI tennis professionals and featuring 10 plexipave courts, 21 scheduled weekly events, matchmaking services, and a pro shop.



OTHER OUTDOOR POSSIBILITIES

With three white sand beaches fronting open bays, guests can snorkel pristine reefs, rent kayaks and windsurfers, and sign up for instruction or guided tours. One of the favored excursions is the hike and kayak combination, in which guests hike the Nakalele coastline along majestic sea cliffs and explosive blowholes, followed by a kayaking tour that navigates in and out of many volcanic coves.

For information on Kapalua Resort, visit www.kapalua.com or call 1-800-KAPALUA.



Kapalua Bay will feature The Residences (above) and The Ritz-Carlton Club.

like staying at The Ritz, only in your home.”

And, in fact, that’s exactly the sentiment that started The Ritz-Carlton Club more than a decade ago (currently, there are six clubs, with four additional announced as of press time). The original Ritz hotel was built in Boston in the late 1920s and included a residential component. That faded away over time, but the desire was always present among the guests. “People always said they wished they could live at The Ritz,” says Phillips, who started his hospitality career in that original Boston location. By the mid-90s, the demand became impossible to ignore, and many a Ritz’s guest’s dreams became reality.

And at Kapalua Bay, the indulgence can go even deeper, with The Residences, which will satisfy the

demands of even the most exclusive tastes. With spacious floorplans ranging from 3,000 to 4,200 square feet, the 84 homes will start at \$4 million and likely close in on \$10 million. Owners of The Residences will also enjoy the privileges of Ritz-Carlton service. And, included at no extra charge: stunningly romantic tropical sunsets with panoramic views of Moloka’i and Lanai.

And since no resort lifestyle would be complete without a world-class spa, Kapalua Bay has that covered as well, with a planned 25,000-square-foot spa, including modern and ancient therapies that incorporate island ingredients and water-oriented rituals. “A destination spa is really what Kapalua was missing,” says Phillips, “so this was an opportunity to bring one to the resort and community.”

And rest assured, the spa will be used, thanks to the many activities the vast Kapalua Resort offers, the most obvious of which is golf. Personally, I’ve been banned from golf courses by 1) my wife, and 2) a majority of the nation’s better greens keepers. But I didn’t have to hack up a fairway to know that Kapalua is a favored destination for those “with the bug.” There are two courses currently open and one being redesigned by Tom Fazio as the first members-only course. The signature course, and the resort’s premier challenge, is the Ben Crenshaw- and Bill Coore-designed Plantation Course, which each year plays host to the PGA Tour’s season-opening, winners-only Mercedes-Benz Championship in early January. Along with The Bay Course and the Kapalua Golf Academy, which holds a staff of 30 PGA professionals, state-of-the-art equipment, a 3,500-square-foot learning center and much more. Kapalua is considered a mecca for golfers and has earned *Golf* magazine’s Gold Medal Award nine times. (A warning to any fellow recovering golfaholics: unless you want to choke on your fruit cup, do not have breakfast at The Plantation House, which features views of rolling fairways backed by an impossibly blue ocean and that ever-present view of Moloka’i.)

If all this sounds like the “vacation overdose” many destination resorts offer, don’t be fooled. Kapalua Resort is one of the few places left in Hawaii that offers it all, but reserves the possibility to do nothing at all. Each component is grand, luxurious and all-inclusive – yet there is enough raw land, empty beaches and open ocean to allow all the stretched-out decompressing the word “aloha” suggests. So for those who say Maui is now overbuilt, I say, “Head west, son. Head west.”