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SOUTH OF FRANCE

PRIVATE AIR

LUXURY HOMES

Volume 3 | Issue 6



Holiday at the
BEACH HOUSE

SET BETWEEN SAND DUNES, BEACH, AND OCEAN THIS SWEET,
MODERN SERAGLIO IN ONE OF THE MOST EXPENSIVE ZIP CODES
IN THE UNITED STATES IS MANNA FROM HEAVEN.

KOHALA COAST PLEASURES

SENIOR EDITOR, GINA SAMAROTTO,
LANDS ON THE BIG ISLAND... AND FINDS
THE TRUE MEANING OF ALOHA.





Photo courtesy of Mauna Kea Beach Hotel.

Golfers tee off to the sound of crashing breakers while enjoying breathtaking views at the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel



At the Fairmont Orchid, yoga classes – including a daybreak practice where participants go through gentle postures while floating on standup paddleboards – help connect mind, body and spirit.



The sunset torch lighting ceremony is a tradition guests look forward to each evening at the hotels and resorts dotting the Kohala Coast.

There are few places one can visit where the final approach as seen from the air could be considered a highlight of the trip. Rare though it may be, the Big Island of Hawaii is one of them. Watching Mauna Kea come into focus and seeing the undulating fields of black lava unfold from that bird's eye vantage point is something I never tire of. The youngest in the archipelago, the Big Island of Hawaii is an exotic land still going through a state of veritable adolescence. Stepping off the plane onto the 300,000-year-old volcanic soil feels unworldly, as if some mythical Phoenix could rise at any moment from the hardened ashes that make up the underbelly of paradise.

The rugged terrain isn't the Big Island's only noticeably unique feature. Rather, it's the tenderness and respect the Hawaiian people have for their island that most effectively draws my attention. Cultural pride is visible here, worn as boldly as the fragrant leis seen around the necks of awestruck tourists – though few wear the affinity more passionately than Earl

Kamakaonaona Regidor. Raised in the sugar plantation village of Pa'auilo, Hāmākua, Regidor is a well-known figure on the Kohala Coast where he is affectionately known as 'Uncle Earl'. In his role in the Ka'upulehu Cultural Center, Regidor readily shares his wealth of Hawaiian knowledge with visitors interested in finding out more about their vacation paradise and Hawaiians eager to unravel the elaborate tapestry of their past. Over a shared lunch of freshly caught fish and with the sound of the surf in the distance, Uncle Earl begins to 'talk story'... and I begin my own love affair with Hawaii.

"Hawaii is really just a tiny cluster of islands created by a continental drift", he says. "Yet, the elders set forth for us a history so thick, it is our job – our role – to deliver it to the next generation." From the modern history of the Hawaiian royal family to the lore and legend of gods and goddesses, Regidor drew me a fascinating picture and gifted me with not just a better understanding of what moves people to choose Hawaii but, as Uncle Earl explained, "How Hawaii chooses you."

DEPARTURES



Photography courtesy of the Four Seasons Hotel, Hualalai



Clockwise from top left: The "ULU Ocean Grill at the Four Seasons Hotel, Hualalai. Freshly caught sushi and accomterment. Four Seasons Hotel Hualalai Executive Chef, Massimo Falsini is quick to share a word, a smile, or a glass of wine with guests. Hawaiian "Ahi Poke features ogonori, Maui onions, white shoyu and sesame oil. Chef Massimo's divine crispy local octopus served "takoyaki style" with pickled ginger and Japanese barbeque sauce.

Within the Hualalai Resort, the elegant Four Seasons Hotel is my host for the first part of my stay. Reaching the open-air reception area by following lushly planted drives laden with graciously opulent private homes, the hotel overlooks pristine beaches and distant horizons; it's accommodations held within townhouse style villas that sprawl out from the main building. A self-contained oasis, Hualalai is a gracious, soothing retreat rich with sparkling pools, world-class golf and fine dining. Following a blissful massage, an expertly mixed Mai-Tai and a stellar dinner prepared by Chef Massimo Falsini - who found his way to the Big Island by way of the

renowned Harry's Bar in Rome - I found my way back to a suite overlooking the ocean where my freshly turned down bed was adorned with a single, perfect plumeria bloom and where any lingering effects of jet lag would soon be swept away on balmy breezes created by the gentle trade winds.

The Kohala Coast holds many of these idyllic resort villages. While all share similar components, each of these tropical demesnes holds a unique charm all it's own. Waikoloa Village is home to the immense and immensely popular Hilton Waikoloa, The Waikoloa

Photography by Gina Samarotto



Clockwise from top left: Senior Editor Gina Samarotto gets to know one of the residents of Dolphin Quest, photo courtesy of Gina Samarotto. A pair of eager students gives a cheerful hello to trainers at Dolphin Quest. Some of the Hilton Waikoloa's more colorful guests. An example of the Asian inspired art that can be found throughout the grounds at Waikoloa Village. Thundering waterfalls cascade into the lagoon at the Hilton Waikoloa.

Marriott and the sustainability focused culinary prowess of Chef Jayson Kanekoa and to one very special, magical Hawaiian experience.

Far more than a tourist attraction, Dolphin Quest is a facility dedicated to marine conservation and the advancement of marine mammal research. Arriving early for my play date with the dolphins, I had the opportunity to watch the trainers interact with their charges. Like kids clamoring for the attention of a favorite teacher, the dolphins twirled, raced and rallied when the trainers came into view. The equally delighted trainers returned the greetings with boisterous

applause, kind words – and the occasional herring. “Most of our trainers hold psychology degrees,” explained Dolphin Quest General Manager Timothy Murphy. “To work effectively with the dolphins, our trainers need to be able to understand them. A background in psychology is very valuable to that understanding– it’s how the trainers are able keep the animals happy and motivated.” When the time finally came for me to enter the lagoon; nothing could have prepared me for the sheer, unadulterated thrill of having these magnificent creatures torpedo through the water on their way to say hello, greeting me with gigantic splashes and gentle nudges.



To visit with some equally enchanting, albeit much smaller, seafaring friends, a tour of the ancient Kalahuipua'a fish ponds at the Mauna Lani Resort with Daniel "Kaniela" Akaka is a must. Combining legend with a lesson in how the earliest Hawaiians sustained themselves, Kaniela's tour is a worthwhile excursion where the appearance of an occasional sea turtle curiously investigating a 'makaha' – the sea gates that have protected the ponds since their inception – reminds you that the more things change, the more they stay the same. A dinner cruise aboard one of Ocean Sports' catamarans is yet another memorable way to commune with Hawaii's wildlife. Sailing along the Kohala Coast with the wind in my hair, toasting a spectacular sunset while watching spinner dolphins dance in our wake, was the kind of picture-perfect travel experience that makes you wish you could bottle the moment to bring home and share with everyone you know.



Photography by Gina Samarotto



Clockwise from Top: Some of the magnificent moments captured through a sunset sail with Ocean Sports - A brilliant sunset over the Kohala Coast. A catamaran provides the perfect vantage point to enjoy the kaleidoscope colors of a Hawaii sky, A pod of spinner dolphins frolic alongside the catamaran as it heads out, A Catamaran Captain can't help but show his enthusiasm, and A champagne toast celebrates the good life.

Opposite: Not so coy Koi at the Mauna Lani Bay Hotel, and Daniel "Kaniela" Akaka, Jr, Director of Cultural Affairs for Mauna Lani Resort, Inc.



DEPARTURES



Photography Courtesy of the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel and Gha Samarotto



Above: Native dancers entertain guests at Mauna Kea Beach Hotel's spectacular luau. Romantic views as seen from the Manta Restaurant at the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel, and Wild Boar Chops with pahole fern shoots, waiialana hearts of palm, lomi tomato and truffle yuzu at the Fairmont Orchids elegant Brown's Beach House Restaurant.

No trip to Hawaii would be complete without attending at least one lū'au, and few do it better than the Mauna Kea Beach Resort. An exceptional example of mid-century modern architecture, Mauna Kea is a legendary Big Island resort built by Laurance Rockefeller and where I would be staying my last few nights on the island. Following the sound of drumbeats, guests arriving at the lū'au find themselves in a beautifully orphic garden where they are welcomed to the feast with handcrafted leis and icy rum punches. "The lū'au is something we're very proud of here," explains Vicky Kometani, Public Relations Director for both the Mauna Kea and her sister resort, the Hapuna Prince Hotel. "It's a beautiful celebration of Hawaiian culture and hospitality." As the sun sets, the torches are lit and the lū'au begins in earnest. Food and music, dance, and history all come together and suddenly the stories of the island that had been shared with me throughout the

week come to life in one fantastic display.

On the last night of my enchanted, Hawaiian excursion I arrive at the exquisitely beautiful Fairmont Orchid Hotel for dinner at Brown's Beach House. After a personal welcome by the chef, I thank him for the beautiful little *amuse bouche* that had been sent to the table, and sit back to drink in delicious views, sip extraordinary wine, and recap my singularly superb week on the Kohala Coast.

Saying goodbye to the Big Island, where the magnificent beauty of nature is surpassed only by the magnificent beauty of her people, is difficult at best. On the morning of my departure, I receive a note from Uncle Earl, "Aloha a huihou a me kealohapumehana." Translated, it reads "good-bye, until we meet again, and keep the warmth of our love with you."

Hawaii, it would seem, has chosen me. ✈