

This Residential Resort For Billionaires On Hawaii Island Will Amaze You

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Courtesy of Four Seasons Resort Hualalai

The Palm Grove swimming pool at the Four Seasons Resort Hualalai.

One of Earl “Uncle Earl” Regidor’s unofficial duties as Ka`upulehu Cultural Center Manager at the Four Seasons Resort Hualālai is performing a blessing at home sites before ground is broken.

Home buyers at the sprawling luxury residential development that surrounds the [Four Seasons Resort Hualālai](#) often invite Uncle Earl to perform the ancient blessing to consecrate the land---once the site of an ancient fishing village---before building a new home. The blessing, which is attended by the homeowner’s family and their contractor, consecrates the land out of respect for the Hawaiian people who lived there for centuries before them. “I do the blessing for the sake of asking permission and guidance,” explains Regidor, who performs another blessing once construction is completed in each room (or when an already existing home is purchased).

This rich Hawaiian culture, in addition to a laid-back and relaxing lifestyle, family-oriented community and an extremely friendly staff, plays a large role in enticing people from around the world to invest in a home at [Hualālai, the master-planned residential community and private club](#) that is located on exclusive Kona-Kohala coast on the leeward side of Hawai`i Island.



Photo by Don Riddle

A golf course at Hualalāi on Hawaii Island.

Where billionaires live alongside millionaires

Upon entering the resort, visitors are mesmerized by the beautifully landscaped 865-acre property. The elite, which includes many members of the [Forbes 400](#) and [Forbes World's Billionaires](#) lists, come here to decompress, relax and recharge like nowhere else in the world. “The energy here is different than any other place,” says Regidor. “It is soothing and relaxing. You feel it immediately the moment you step on the property.”

At Hualālai, high profile guests, celebrities and homeowners can let their hair down while their children can roam freely throughout the expansive property. There’s no need to be concerned about security in this gated enclave. The crime rate is non-existent while the staff at the private club and the hotel are so discreet that the names of high profile hotel guests and homeowners are rarely mentioned above a whisper. Homeowners and their families are respectfully referred to as “Members” and recognized immediately by staff members, many of whom have worked at the [Four Seasons Resort Hualālai](#) for 20 years or longer.



Courtesy of Four Seasons Resort Hualālai

Members have access to a broad array of amenities at the Four Seasons Resort Hualālai, which includes access to swimming pools (of which four are at the hotel and one is at the spa), three oceanfront restaurants and two oceanside lounges. [-]

While the rich and famous can afford to own a home (or even a private island) just about anywhere in the world, there are countless reasons why they are drawn to Hualālai. To begin with, the property is pristine with immaculate landscaping, the water is crystal clear, and the Four Seasons-trained staff is beyond compare. It is utterly impossible to pass one of the many staff members while on the property without being greeted with a cheerful “aloha”. And, unlike the Caribbean and Mexico, there’s no risk of contracting the ZIKA virus from menacing mosquitos while the possibility of devastation caused by unpredictable weather is remote---the last tsunami in 2011 did minimal damage to the property.

While most other vacation destinations have off-seasons due to bad weather, Hawai`i Island is a four-season destination that can be enjoyed all-year round---and the sun shines nearly 300 days a year. There is no bad weather season here---or even a rainy

season---only sunny days with temperatures that average 85 degrees Fahrenheit during the hottest month (August) and 75 degrees Fahrenheit during the coldest month (January). The total annual rainfall averages only eight inches. The resort, including the [Four Seasons](#), does experience busy seasons, which coincide with school breaks, Christmas and the month of August.



Photo courtesy of Hualalai Resort.

Tee times are never required at the private golf course which is off-limits to anyone other than Members and their guests. [-]

Avid golfers, including some well-known members of the professional golf community, rave about [Hualālai Club](#), where they can play golf to their heart's content. Tee times are never required at the private golf course which is off-limits to anyone other than Members and their guests. In total, fewer than 13,000 rounds of golf are played annually on the club's private Tom Weiskopf-designed 18-hole golf course. The [hotel's Jack Nicklaus-designed course](#), which is open to both Hualālai Members and hotel guests, hosts approximately 25,000 rounds a year---but this is still a paltry number compared to other comparable resort golf courses

around the world. In other words, rarely would a twosome or foursome need to wait to tee-off or feel rushed by a group playing behind them. In addition to two golf courses there are two practice facilities including a short game practice area at both courses, three putting greens with two at the Ke`olu golf course and two teaching pros on staff at each course.



Courtesy of Four Seasons Resort Hualalai

The Four Seasons Resort Hualalai offers three restaurants and two ocean-side lounges, including 'ULU Ocean Grill (seen above). [-]

Four Seasons Resort Hualālai is a Forbes Five-Star Resort

Originally developed during the early 1990's by Kojima, a Japanese general contractor with investment from Cosmo World, the hotel officially opened for business in 1996. Today, it is co-owned by billionaires Michael Dell and Rob Walton, former chairman of Walmart. The Hualālai development consists of the [Four Seasons Resort Hualālai](#), a Forbes Five-Star rated hotel that offers 243 guest rooms and suites located in a series of two-storey bungalows. The residential component of Hualālai is currently

comprised of 330 homes and private club facilities.

The rate for a room or suite at the [Four Seasons Resort Hualālai](#) ranges from approximately \$900 a night to upwards of \$15,000 a night with a minimum stay of seven nights (or ten nights during peak seasons). The hotel is so popular that it is necessary to book a reservation to stay there during peak periods, include the holiday season, up to a year in advance. It's worth noting that [Four Seasons Resort Hualālai](#) is the [only hotel on the Hawai`i Island awarded a Forbes Five-Star rating](#) and one of only a handful throughout the islands of Hawai`i with such a rating.



Courtesy of Four Seasons Resort Hualālai

Four Seasons Resort Hualālai's Kings Pond is a 1.8-million gallon "aquarium" carved out of the natural lava rock. It features more than 4,000 tropical fish from more than 98 species (including a spotted eagle ray) swimming freely. [-]

Home ownership at Hualālai

Of the 330 homes on the property, there are [only 33 homes on the market and eight empty lots](#) available to purchase if a buyer

prefers to custom build a home. The [inventory of Hualālai properties available](#) for purchase currently includes empty lots (which typically sell for \$2 million to \$2,695,000).

[Villas](#) without pools, currently on the market, range in price from \$1,475,000 to \$2,650,000 while larger residential villas with pools range in price from \$4,418,000 to \$6,950,000. There are also a number of single family homes currently available for purchase ranging in price from \$3,975,000 to a [\\$14,950,000 home that was recently featured on Forbes](#). This custom-built home offers 7,070 square feet of interior air conditioned space with five bedrooms, five full baths and two half baths. The home is offered completely furnished (including a valuable art collection), and features an additional 2,437 square feet of covered outdoor space. ([See more information about this listing at this link](#)).



Photo courtesy of Hualalai Realty

The lanai at a private residence at the Hualalai Resort.

Most homeowners [purchased their property through Rob Kildow](#), who is the unofficial mayor of Hualālai. A homeowner himself,

Kildow had a long career in residential real estate in Seattle, Washington before moving here 17 years ago. Kildow bought a condo in 1982 with a business partner elsewhere on the island where he vacationed before buying a home in Hualālai in 2001 with his wife, Barbara, a retired school teacher. He initially moved here under the auspice of a semi-retirement but found himself back in real estate three years later---only this time, he is selling a lifestyle that he has himself chosen. “The lifestyle here is an easy sell,” says [Kildow, the affable Director of Residential Sales at Hualālai Realty](#). “It is an easy sell for me because I sold myself first and we haven’t regretted a second of it ever since. It’s the proverbial, ‘put your money where your mouth is.’”

Kildow says buyers relish the proximity of [Ellison Onizuka Kona International airport \(KOA\)](#), which is a quick ten-minute drive from Hualālai. Kona offers non-stop service to and from such cities as Seattle, Portland (Oregon) Los Angeles, San Diego, Oakland, San Francisco, Denver, Salt Lake City, Dallas, Vancouver (British Columbia) and Tokyo.

With such easy commercial air-service, in addition to an airport that can accommodate private jets of all sizes, most homeowners hail from California, Texas, Canada and Japan. According to Kildow, the majority of homeowners started off as hotel guests and one-third of all home sales each year are to existing homeowners who are trading up for a larger property. Only six of the 330 families who own homes here call Hualālai their full-time residence, including Kildow and his wife, Barbara.

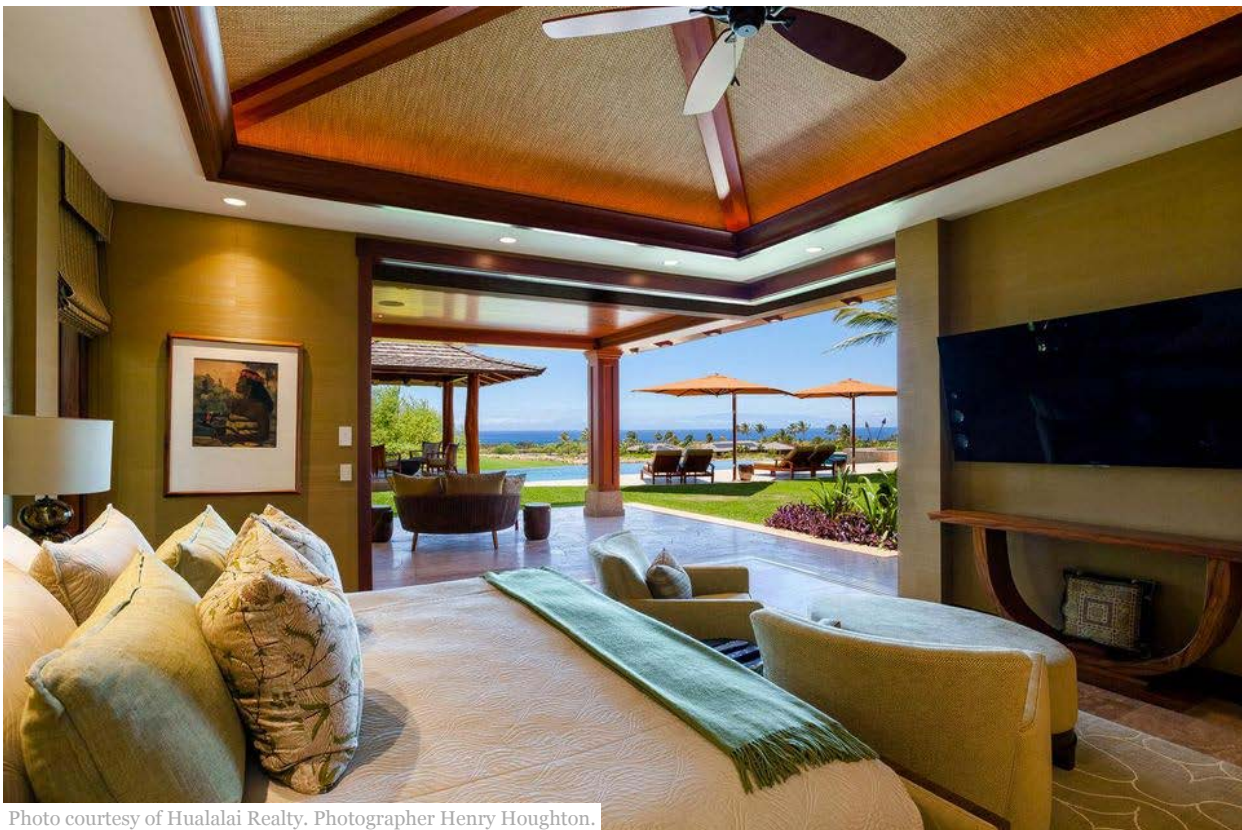


Photo courtesy of Hualalai Realty. Photographer Henry Houghton.

Located on the 10th fairway of the Members' only Ke`olu Golf Course, this \$14,950,000 home is one of Hualālai Resort's premier residences. Situated on the Kona Kohala Coast on the Island of Hawaii, the home offers expansive ocean views and spectacular Hawaiian sunsets. [-]

Surprisingly, some of the most expensive [real estate that has sold at Hualālai](#) are [homes](#) and [lots](#) located furthest from the ocean. Except for the front row of properties that are oceanfront, there is no premium placed on proximity to the water, according to Kildow. “That's because everything is only five minutes away by golf cart,” he explains. In fact, the homes that are farther from the water have the best vistas---wide, open views of the ocean---and as such, they often trade for the highest per square foot price. Nine years ago, Kildow sold a spec home for \$20 million home “as far from the ocean as you can get at Hualālai ,” he exclaims. The buyer liked the property there because he wanted more space and moved there from another, smaller, Hualālai home that was very close to the water. The same owner also bought an adjacent vacant lot for an additional \$4 million.

Currently, two spec homes are under construction in the newest neighborhood at Hualālai. Four of the eleven four-bedroom homes

(each with just under 3,500 square feet of air-conditioned indoor space) have already sold to existing homeowners for between \$4.4 million and \$4.9 million. “Every one of those buyers is moving from a three-bedroom condo,” Kildow explains. “On a relative scale, it is an easy jump---just another \$2 million to spend. And it provides us with some resale inventory to sell.”

Hualālai homes are airy, light-filled, feature high-end kitchen appliances and are equipped with outdoor showers. Many have ocean vistas, private swimming pools and outdoor kitchens. New construction must be approved by Hualālai and roofline heights are regulated in order to protect the vistas of other homes.



Photo courtesy of Hualalai Realty. Photographer Henry Houghton.

Located on the 10th fairway of the Members' only Ke`olu Golf Course, this \$14,950,000 home is one of Hualālai Resort's premier residences. Situated on the Kona Kohala Coast on the Island of Hawaii, the home offers expansive ocean views and spectacular Hawaiian sunsets. [-]

Condos are either single story homes attached to another unit, or two-story homes in clusters of three. An entry-level property at Hualālai would be a 19-year-old 2,400 square foot home with three bedrooms priced at \$1.85 million. A four-bedroom 4.5

bathroom home with nearly 3,500 square feet will sell for between \$4.4 million and \$4.9 million. [A custom home with 7,070 square foot home currently on the market is priced at \\$14,950,000.](#) The home features indoor and outdoor gourmet's chef kitchens, five bedrooms, and a guest suite with two bedrooms, a living room and its own laundry. The expansive home also has an additional 2,500 square feet of covered outdoor space that includes an expansive entertaining space, a gazebo, and a swimming pool with an infinity edge ([this listing is featured on Forbes.com at this link](#)).

[Residential properties](#) are typically sold furnished, regardless of whether they are new construction or on the secondary market. Some people opt for the smaller condos if they don't plan on visiting the island often as monthly costs for such expenses as landscaping and maintenance can be pricy.



Photo courtesy of Hualalai Resort.
The beach at Hualalai.

Homeowners have full access to the hotel and a private club

Homeowners are also required to pay a membership deposit of \$250,000 and annual club dues of \$43,229 which provides membership for their immediate family (including parents, grandparents, grandchildren and son-in-laws and daughter-in-laws) at the [private Hualālai Club](#).

Upon joining the [Hualalai Club](#), Members have access to two private club facilities, that are off-limits to hotel guests, which includes two private Members'-only club restaurants, Ke`olu Clubhouse and the Hualālai Canoe Club, a fitness center, two private swimming pools and the [Members'-only 18-hole Tom Weiskopf-designed Ke`olu golf course](#). The golf course features several complimentary “comfort stations” that are tended to daily by the club’s chefs that offer a wide range of fresh food---from chicken, tuna and fruit salads to a wide range of snacks and cookies---in addition to a full bar.



Courtesy of Four Seasons Resort Hualalai
The Spa at the Four Seasons Resort Hualalai

[Annual membership dues](#) also provide Members with a broad array of amenities at the Four Seasons Resort Hualālai, which

includes access to the [resort's swimming pools](#) (of which four are at the hotel and one at the spa), [three oceanfront restaurants and two oceanside lounges](#). Members can also use the [Four Seasons' world-class 28,000 square foot full-service luxury spa and fitness center](#) equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and a plethora of complimentary fitness classes, from spinning to yoga. There's also a tennis club with eight Rebound Ace surface courts and teaching professionals, a beachfront watersports program that features outrigger canoes, paddle boards and snorkeling, and the previously mentioned golf program. There's little need to leave the property as a [trading post on site called Hualālai Trading Company](#) is stocked with all the essentials, from grocery items, wine and beer to prepared food.

There's no need for Members to carry a wallet during their time at Hualālai, as everything, including all charges at the hotel's restaurants, bars, boutiques and sports facilities, can be assigned to the Member's account number. Members receive a 10% discount on all food and beverage purchases at the hotel. And every home is equipped with a golf cart, which is the only transportation necessary to get around the grounds of Hualālai. In addition, transportation to and from Kona airport is also provided for Members. "Imagine returning to Hualālai with only a carry-on bag," says Kildow. "Your arrival is care free with a staff member at the airport waiting for you. And when you leave Hualālai, a staff member will meet you at your front door to drive you to the airport. It's a very personalized service."

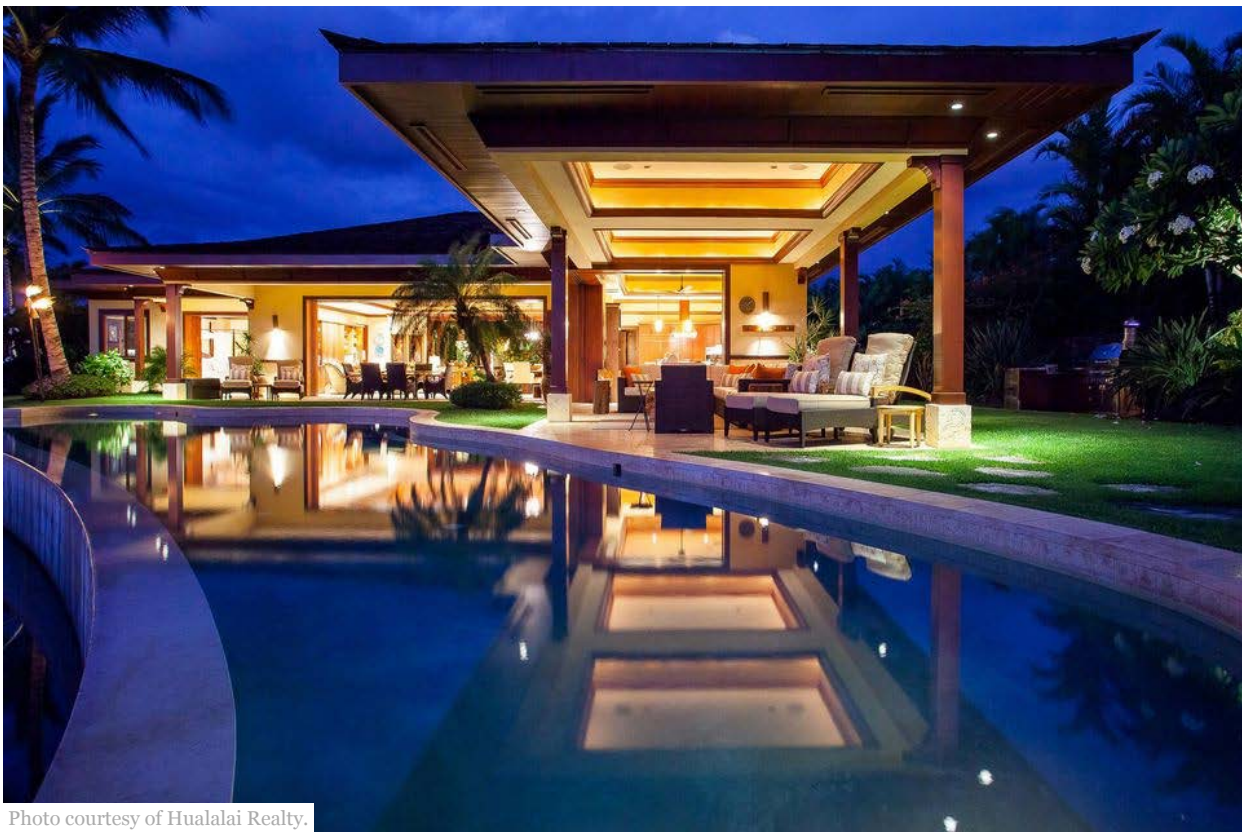


Photo courtesy of Hualalai Realty.
A private residence at Hualalai.

The Hualālai home owning experience

Once a home is purchased, Four Seasons Resort Hualālai offers a management service called [Hualālai Villas & Homes](#) that takes care of a homeowner's every need---from arranging for grocery shopping to catering a dinner party. Other services, such as housekeeping, landscaping and home maintenance are also taken care of, as well as receiving deliveries and packages. And before the homeowner returns to their property, the property manager will make sure that it is clean and everything is in place according to the owner's preferences, from organizing their shoe racks to stocking their kitchen with favorite foods and beverages.

The monthly cost to have [Hualālai Villas & Homes](#) manage the property is between \$750 and \$4,000, depending on the size of the home and the needs of the owner. Landscaping, which is a separate expense, can cost upwards of \$2,000 a month, depending on the size of the lot. Other expenses, such as pool maintenance,

utilities, pest control and HVAC maintenance, are also additional expenses.” We provide a very convenient, care-free home ownership experience,” says Russell Schoon, director of Hualālai Villas & Homes. “It’s a very personalized service.”

The management service can also take care of all aspects of renting out a property. When a property is rented, the property manager will make sure that all personal effects belonging to the homeowner are safely tucked away. The service currently manages 73 properties, of which 23 are available for short-term rentals (several other homes are rented out through outside rental management companies). When a home is rented through through [Hualālai Villas & Homes](#), Four Seasons housekeeping is offered twice daily, the beds are made with Four Seasons’ linens and the bathrooms are stocked with Four Seasons bath products and towels.

A four-bedroom 6,000 square foot home that will sleep eight guests will rent for \$6,000 to \$8,000 a night, depending on the time of year, with the revenue equally split between the homeowner and the management company. A two or three-bedroom home will rent for \$1,325 per night plus taxes during off-peak periods, while a five-bedroom home will rent for \$10,000 per night with a ten-night minimum during peak periods and \$6,000 per night with a five-night minimum throughout the rest of the year. On top of rental fees, each guest must pay a daily resort fee of \$65 during off-peak times of the year and \$250 during the peak periods in order to use the [Four Seasons’ facilities](#) (children pay a reduced daily rate). Renters do not have access to the Members-only club facilities.



Courtesy of Four Seasons Resort Hualalai

The Sea Shell swimming pool at the Four Seasons Resort Hualalai.

The Hualālai community

Members of the Hualālai community celebrate “ohana”, which is a Hawaiian concept that emphasizes that families are bound together and must cooperate and support one another. According to Uncle Earl, nearly every Hualālai Resort resident supports the [Hualālai `Ohana Foundation](#), a fund started by a group of homeowners wishing to provide funding for qualified Four Seasons Resort Hualālai employees and their families who have educational and medical expenses. The foundation also pays for transportation and other related costs incurred when [Four Seasons Resort Hualālai](#) employees and their families seek medical care off-island.

[The Hualālai `Ohana Foundation](#) is an example of the meaning of “aloha” at Hualālai , says Regidor, who explains that the word

means much more than “hello” and “goodbye”. Indeed, once you visit Hualālai Resort, you quickly see first-hand that aloha also translates into love, peace and compassion.

These attributes, which are not found at many other luxury resort destinations, make [Hualālai Resort](#) a unique and magical place to own a home.

Carrie Coolidge is a luxury travel and real estate contributor to Forbes Life. You can follow her on Twitter at [@carriecoolidge](#)