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On tour:

Afternoon tea at Langdon Hall

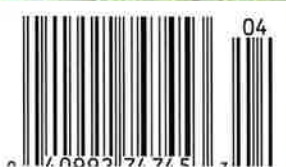
Kapunas and *hales* in Hawaii

Magnificent Miraval

Chile's Cliff's Preserve



Walking into a secret



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Fiery sunsets, active volcanoes and white sandy beaches

History, culture, soulful pampering and pure aloha to all who come its way, The Four Seasons Resort Hualalai at historic Ka'upulehu is located on a stunning half-mile stretch of beach on the northwest Kona-Kailua coast.



Imagine a tropical oasis sitting on sacred grounds that have given birth to some of the most beautiful sites you'll see in Hawaii. Ancient black lava rock contrasts with towering coconut palms, breathtaking beaches and the azure sea. Behind the resort is the famous Hualalai volcano in the

distance; in front, the island of Maui. Fresh from a 15-month, \$40-million enhancement, the Four Seasons at Hualalai had just unveiled its award-winning spa, spacious one- and two-bedroom grand suites and the new Beach Tree restaurant when we visited. Designed by BAMO of San Francisco in

collaboration with local firm Philpotts & Associates, the 20 new suites are 1,100-1,950 square feet and feature commanding ocean views. Exotic woods, slate and natural textures complement clean-lined furnishings, traditional fabrics and collectable pieces of Hawaiian art. Extra touches



include simple slate bathrooms with luscious steam showers and *lanais* (balconies or patios) off both the master bedroom and living room.

The water of life

With a distinctly Hawaiian feel, the new 23,000-square-foot Hualalai Spa

combines delightfully lush gardens with cool interior spaces. An open-air sanctuary called a Waimca garden is where pre-treatment rituals encourage life-frazzled guests like us to reconnect with nature. Interior spaces give off a calm, spiritual feel with their rich, dark tropical woods and high-pitched

woven ceilings. Dappled sunlight falls through bamboo screens.

After casting our cares out to sea during a cleansing Muhuaola On-the-Beach Scrub and Ti Leaf Detox from the apothecary treatment menu, we're off to spend the afternoon in a peaceful outdoor *hale* (one of four) with its

own Hinoki couple's tub. Later, pre-massage, we're transported to another world. Our feet are treated to reflexology in the cool stream as we listen to the soothing sounds of the waterfall and smell the fragrant cinnamon gardenia.

Let the elements lead

Locally trained spa therapists personalize a fresh mix of the finest botanicals and herbs for our customized massage oils. Every treatment at the Hualanlai Spa, it seems, carefully blends healing traditions passed down from island elders (*Kupuna*) and offers personalized combinations of native plants and minerals. Volcanic mud, crushed macadamia nuts, algae or Hawaiian sea-salt are just a few of our choices.

Voyages beyond Hualalai

Later in our visit we take part in a three-hour, on and off the course family golf lesson. When we're done, we watch the golf pros at the Jack

Nicklaus-designed course planning for a glow-in-the-dark scramble and a sunset nine-hole shotgun. They also have a night mini-golf putting challenge.

But perhaps the best outing is the hike to see Kamehameha Rock. It's



between mile markers 25 and 26 on the way to the black-sand beach. Legend has it that the rock was carried there by King Kamehameha. Don't be surprised if you end up in mud up to your knees along the way.

Our kids happily took part in the children's program at what is clearly the best cultural centre on the island. They made us smile with their stories of how the stars guided the early settlers. All together again, a morning soaring on the zip-line in the Pololu Valley sent our blood rushing.

Start packing

Four Seasons Resort Hualalai is the Hawaiian island's first and only AAA, Five Diamond and Forbes Five-Star property. For a treat, reserve one of the 51 suites or villas and enjoy the sunshine. There are six spectacular pools on site and five dining outlets. Alfresco fine dining beachside in the evening tops off activity-filled days. www.fourseasons.com/hualalai



