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# Jetset

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MELANIA  
TRUMP

DOWN TO EARTH AND  
OUT OF THIS WORLD



# HAWAII'S KOHALA COAST

TRADE WINDS, SANDY TOES  
AND THE PURSUIT OF OPULENCE.

BY DOUG SINGER

Known by few, loved by many, Hawaii's golden Kohala Coast is a pristine slice of paradise that rambles down a gorgeous, sparsely populated shoreline enriched with powder-soft white sand. Amidst sparkling black lava fields, four "master resorts" were plotted for development here, and a gorgeous playground for the "well-to-do" has sprung up like a phoenix rising from the flames. I decided to embark on a detailed exploration of this area after hearing that during the busy season, private jets arriving at the airport are in such abundance that at times, they are required to go and park in Maui for the duration.

My first stop on this quest for enlightenment had me checking into the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel. Founded in 1965 by Laurance S. Rockefeller as the most exclusive and expensive resort of its day, it recently underwent a \$150 million renovation and has regained its former glory as a landmark of luxury on the Big Island's Kohala Coast. The rooms are spacious with vast, spa-like bathrooms, large flat screen TVs, media hubs, bedside iPod docks, luxury L'Occitane amenities, elegant furnishings and many more thoughtful touches, including two lanais.

The resort is highlighted by the legendary Mauna Kea Golf Course, which has been updated to current USGA standards of play and is where the expertise of Rees Jones shines as a glowing beacon for Big Island golf. Recently, Mauna Kea pulled off a coup, as they landed Peter Pahk from Napa's Silverado Resort to take on the key role of Executive Chef for Mauna Kea's Manta & Pavilion Wine Bar, and the results are stellar. Perched on the edge of a bluff overlooking the pristine waters of Kaunaoa Beach, the restaurant features a dynamic new exhibition kitchen to showcase Chef Pahk's artistry and the next step in the evolution of oenology: the "Enomatic wine experience,"

an innovative way to serve 48 distinctive wines by the glass from various vintners. This is just one of the highlights of Mauna Kea's extensive wine program. Add to that a gorgeous, crescent-shaped beach and unsurpassed Hawaiian hospitality, and you will see why folks like Michael Mondavi have decided to become homeowners on this exquisite piece of property. The fact that the land mass of Mauna Kea's hotel and its residential plots are owned by Michael Dell makes it no surprise that it continues to draw a discriminating crowd — one that expects a significantly heightened level of service and amenities.

*"There is no better place to revitalize your life rhythm and rejuvenate your body and soul than Hawaii's sun drenched Kohala Coast."*

After a day of snorkeling and exploring the beaches of Mauna Kea, I was off to the Canoe House Restaurant at The Mauna Lani Bay Hotel & Bungalows. Boasting an ultra-fresh menu, this was an inspired culinary experience. From the *Warm Ano Farm Potato Salad*, to the *Kona Black Cod*, to the *Molokai Sweet Potato Haupia Cheesecake*, this was a true cornucopia of local delights. In addition, the Mauna Lani is equipped with two championship golf courses that have both received *Golf Magazine's* Gold Medal Award every year since 1988.





Image by the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel



Image by the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel



Image by the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel

Feeling fortified from a great night's sleep, I did the only natural thing — I went off in search of more relaxation and indulgence. I didn't have particularly far to look, as less than a 10-minute drive away I discovered the Fairmont Orchid's Spa Without Walls. This award-winning spa takes advantage of the splendor of Hawaii's tropical climate by offering eight private outdoor waterfall huts, six oceanside gazebo-style locations and four indoor treatments rooms. Enhanced by the soothing sounds of flowing water, the pleasant ocean breezes and the floral scent that fills the air on the Big Island, my Lomi Lomi massage was extraordinarily therapeutic as I absorbed the wisdom of this ancient healing art.

My decision to spend the entire day at the Fairmont proved to be a prudent choice, as I discovered Norio's Japanese Restaurant & Sushi Bar. Located alongside a serene koi pond on the garden level, this charming restaurant blends contemporary Japanese cuisine with a nod to traditional favorites. Featuring fresh-out-of-the-water sushi specials along with my favorite, the outrageously delicious *31-Day Dry Aged Wagyu Rib Eye* with a *Foie Gras Demi*, this is quite simply the food of gods and a "must try" if you are within striking distance.

After a few days at the Mauna Kea, I decided to mix it up and move over to the Four Seasons. Housed in intimate two-story bungalows, Four Seasons Resort Hualalai exudes a nostalgic sense of Hawaii's Golden Age. A peerless collection of native Hawaiian

*"The word Aloha means to be in one's presence...presence of Spirit or Force of nature."*

art complements expansive, open-air living spaces and Island-inspired décor. Another incredible place to hit the links, the Jack Nicklaus signature Hualalai golf course, gracefully winds over 7,100 yards. Beginning in a lush kipuka (oasis), and then flowing across brilliant green fairways contoured against the backdrop of the black lava fields, the course ultimately returns to the ocean, where the finishing holes capture the drama and beauty of seaside golf and the Hawaiian coastline.

The accommodations are certainly up to standards as Four Seasons quality is apparent at every turn. Boasting spacious rooms, a custom bamboo bed canopy, rattan chaise lounges and a granite bathroom with a deep soaking tub, this was an extremely comfortable space. With a thoughtful variety of pools, a gorgeous beach that draws sea turtles right onto the shoreline and a nice selection of dining options, your comfort and ease of living is assured.

My favorite of the onsite restaurants was the Beach Tree. This casually elegant beachside eatery truly has the feel of a Hawaiian



Hualalai Golf Course - Image by Joey Terrill



beach house. Diners choose between al fresco seating and an elegant covered dining room with 16-foot vaulted ceilings. The commitment of the chef at Beach Tree is apparent as the staff works with 140 farms to assure that what is put on the plates is always fresh, always local, and, from my experience, always delicious.

*“The unadulterated beauty of the land, the perfect year-round climate and the warmth of the locals will certainly be missed.”*

After yet another restful night of sleep, I ventured from the grounds of the Four Seasons to experience the Dolphin Quest Encounter at the Hilton Waikoloa Village. Guided by Dolphin Quest’s marine mammal experts, guests are led through a rare opportunity to come face-to-face with one of the ocean’s most amazing and intelligent creatures. Participants learn about the dolphins’ fascinating abilities and gain a personal appreciation for the importance of preserving the world’s oceans and its inhabitants for future generations — a truly remarkable experience. While onsite, I did a little recon and found that the Hilton is probably the most family-friendly of the resorts, as they have a tremendous amount of activities and entertainment available for children.

Ready for another meal, I felt like this was a good time to mix it up, venture off the path of decadence and kick off my shoes.

So I was off to the brand new Lava Lava Beach Club at Waikoloa Beach Resort for an experience in “barefoot chic.” Lava Lava Beach Club’s flair for the laidback lifestyle dominates this environment as guests enjoy island-style pupus, entrées and desserts, as well as a nice selection of wines and masterful creations from the in-house mixologist. *The LLBC Burger* is not to be missed (Wagyu, stuffed with blue cheese and queso fresco, topped with fried sweet onion, heirloom tomato, arugula and chive aioli) — yum! I would be remiss not to suggest a complimentary cocktail, and the Sandy Toes was simply extraordinary (fresh sage leaves, blueberries, Bombay Sapphire, lemon and honey, with a salt and pepper rim).

Being my last day on the island, it seemed wise to get active and check out some fun on the water. So I was off to the Hualalai Resort for some Scooter Snorkeling which is snorkeling powered by a motorized underwater scooter. It is a true blast for those with an adventurous heart, as you can effortlessly skim the surface or dive down to view the reefs and marine life up close.

To put the cap on an extraordinary trip, I climbed aboard a massive catamaran and hit the open sea on the Champagne Sunset Sail with Ocean Sports. I was told that if you’re lucky, you just may see the legendary green flash or even dolphins and whales, as they have a tendency to playfully escort you on your journey. This is all enjoyed while feasting on a *paniolo* (that’s Hawaiian for “cowboy”) barbecue buffet prepared by an award-winning local chef and, of course, sipping champagne — a lovely but bittersweet ending to what was an extraordinary trip.

As luck may have it, I didn’t experience the green flash, but my time in Hawaii was certainly magical. The unadulterated beauty of the land, the perfect year-round climate and the warmth of the locals will certainly be missed. I greatly look forward to a return trip in the not too distant future.



The Four Seasons - Image by Don Riddle



Image by the Fairmont Hotels and Resorts



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