

## Just Another Stay in Paradise

Hawaii can be a rambunctious state, with Oahu and Maui rowdy, raucous, and full of tour buses. But the Big Island is different: quiet and low key, not crowded. And the Mauna Lani does quiet, low key luxury very well. Half its guests are repeats lured back by the beauty of the setting-29 acres at Kalahuipua'a on the rugged black lava and groomed white sands of the Kohala coast of Hawai'i-and the relaxed, friendly personalized service of the staff, eighty of whom have been with the hotel since it opened 14 years ago.

On arrival, guests are greeted with fresh, fragrant leis -a rarity in Hawaii, despite what you've seen on TV. The atrium lobby lush with plantings is serenely arresting. Ten pools stocked with native awa and mullet fish and rare green sea turtles are networked with streams flowing under the guest walkways on the ground floor. Besides shaded lounge chairs, the beach, with its tall coconut, loulou, and milo trees, has large rope hammocks ideal for reading, napping, or studying the horizon. With the climate a steady 78 degrees and a mere seven inches of rain a year, guests are almost guaranteed great weather. For those who feel compelled to do something, the hotel offers the usual (tennis, golf, snorkeling etc.) resort activities-and some unusual ones, such as hula-dancing, lei-making, and Hawaiian quilting classes.

The rooms, elegantly appointed in cool tones of beige and white, are over 550 square foot - each the size of a small apartment. Furnished with plush chairs, a teak coffee table, comfortable couch, firm double and king size beds, each has storage space for all the gear a vacationer might bring. Were it not for the compelling lure of the outdoors, with the cable-equipped oversized TV with VCR, well stocked honor bar, air-conditioning, and 24-hour room service guests might never care to venture out of their rooms. Indeed, unlike many other resort hotels, nearly every room has its own balcony (lanai, in Hawaiian) with a spectacular ocean view that might even allow the occasional lucky winter guest a whale spotting. And, for guests with fatter wallets and more need for privacy, five secluded 4,000 square foot bungalows are available, each with its own private swimming pool, whirlpool spa, steam bath, and round-the-clock butler service.

Mauna Bay runs three restaurants, the Ocean Grill providing pool side fare like burgers, sandwiches, and salads, the Bay Terrace, American regional cuisine, and, for dinner, the hotel's signature CanoeHouse, featuring a menu that uses the freshest island produce and seafood with a mix of Pacific Rim ingredients and techniques accompanied by the natural beauty of spectacular sunsets for desert. Chef Pat Saito's culinary creations, like his seaweed wrapped, deep fried spicy tuna appetizer (nori-wrapped, tempura ahi), whole lobster with mushroom stuffing, and CanoeHouse ice cream pie, home-made vanilla and Kona coffee ice cream layered with fudge on a chocolate chip cookie crust, provide adequate incentive for prolonging an already pleasant visit.

Mauna Lani Bay Hotel & Bungalows, 68-1400 Mauna Lani Drive, Kohala Coast; 800-327-8585, fax 808-885-1484; 350 rooms, 12 suites; 5 bungalows; doubles \$275-\$530, suites \$835, bungalows \$3,200- \$4,100.