

December 2007

WHAT'S NEW IN THE ISLANDS OF ALOHA

ACCOLADES

- ◆ Thirteen Hawai'i resort hotels and 11 restaurants have received the prestigious AAA Four Diamond and Five Diamond award for 2008. The Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua and Four Seasons Resort at Wailea, along with the Four Seasons Resort Hualālai at Historic Ka'ūpūlehu were awarded the coveted Five Diamond award as was O'ahu's La Mer Restaurant at Halekulani. The Four Diamond award hotel winners include:

- ◆ Mauna Lani Bay Hotel and Bungalows
- ◆ Fairmont Orchid, Hawai'i
- ◆ Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa
- ◆ Four Seasons Resort Lāna'i at Manele Bay
- ◆ Hotel Hāna-Maui
- ◆ Hyatt Regency Maui Resort & Spa
- ◆ Grand Wailea Resort Hotel & Spa
- ◆ Fairmont Kea Lani Maui
- ◆ Halekulani
- ◆ The Kahala Hotel & Resort
- ◆ JW Marriott Ihilani Resort & Spa at Ko Olina

The Four Diamond award restaurant winners include:

- ◆ Pahu 'ia
- ◆ The Hualalai Grille by Alan Wong
- ◆ The Grill at Fairmont Orchid
- ◆ Sarento's on the Beach

-more-

- ◆ The Banyan Tree at the Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua
- ◆ Bali by the Sea at the Hilton Hawaiian Village
- ◆ Chef Mavro
- ◆ Hoku's at The Kahala
- ◆ Tokyo Tokyo Restaurant
- ◆ Orchids at the Halekulani
- ◆ Azul at the JW Marriott Ihilani Resort & Spa at Ko Olina

For more information, visit AAA.com.

- ◆ Hawai'i ranks No. 1 on ISLANDS magazine's coveted "Blue List" in the December 2007 issue. The Hawai'i Tourism Authority took top honors for its efforts to sustain and preserve the native Hawaiian culture. Out of the 100 eco-tourism outfitters featured, 12 are found in Hawai'i. The magazine combined reader recommendations with its own favorites to compile the list of 100 leaders in responsible tourism who ensure that islands remain environmentally and culturally sound for future generations. For more information, visit Islands.com.
- ◆ Halekulani is the winner of the highly coveted "2007 Leaders Club Gold Award" for exemplary Customer Service at the Leading Hotels of the World, Ltd., 2007 International Convention. Guest satisfaction surveys and letters of appreciation from Leaders Club members have earned Halekulani the Gold Award, proving that guests are welcomed with the true "Aloha" spirit. For more information, visit LHW.com.

EVENTS AND ATTRACTIONS

- ◆ Kapalua Resort will be opening Kapalua Adventures Mountain Outpost, a new venue for outdoor-adventure in January 2008, featuring the largest and longest zipline in North America. Mountain Outpost will also feature suspension bridges, a rope-challenging course, and climbing tower, along with eight ziplines (the longest at 2,200 feet). Mountain Outpost was designed with the environment in mind and has created an experience that minimizes the impact to the natural environment. Guests will be transported in biodiesel-fueled Mercedes-Benz Unimogs and 10 percent of profits will benefit Pu'u Kukui Watershed Preserve, Hawai'i's largest private water preserve. For more information, visit Kapalua.com.

- ◆ Imiloa Astronomy Center of Hawai'i's new 3-D planetarium show "Dawn of the Space Age," is the world's first to use technology that makes the audience feel like they're floating in space. Open to the public in January 2008, participants will relive the excitement of space exploration from Sputnik's launch and Apollo to current voyaging space tours. In 2008 the center will also be home to the new exhibit "Cosmic Questions," a national traveling exhibit created by the Smith Astrophysical. For more information, visit ImiloaHawaii.org.

- ◆ For a new experience on Hawai'i's Big Island, Big Island Abalone Corporation offers weekday tours of its 10-acre farm, the only abalone farm in Hawai'i. The farm uses pure, nutrient-rich cold seawater from 3,000 feet below the Kona Coast to raise the mollusks. Guests are able to hold, taste, and purchase the live abalone Monday through Friday from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. and 10:30-11:30 a.m. or 12:30-1:30 p.m. for the Japanese-speaking guided tour. Adult admission is \$12 and children under 12 are free. For more information, visit BigIslandAbalone.com.

- ◆ BikeVolcano.com takes adventure seekers on a guided Summit to Sea bicycle tour of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, followed by a visit to Volcano Winery. Its new Bike Kīlauea Volcano & Wine Tasting Tour includes all equipment, lunch, beverages, an interpretive guide, and transportation. Riders bike on a downhill route of paved roads and trails with the tour at Volcano Winery, where participants can relax and sip on local fruit-infused wines born of the rich, volcanic soil. For more information, visit BikeVolcano.com.

- ◆ Atlantis Submarines and Sergio's Italian Restaurant have partnered to offer guests an undersea tour and Waikīkī dining experience. The 90-minute tour begins with a scenic cruise to an offshore dive site marked by views of the Waikīkī shoreline. Couples then head over to Sergio's, a short stroll from the landing pier, where Executive Chef Alfredo Lee will prepare a delicious three-course meal. Bringing the kids? A children's menu is also offered. For more information, visit AtlantisSubmarines.com.

- ◆ Hawai'i Governor Linda Lingle and Hawai'i County Mayor Harry Kim have proclaimed 2008 the Year of the Paniolo in recognition of the Hawaiian cowboy, or paniolo, and the contribution they made to local culture and the American West. Visitors to Parker Ranch's Visitor Center & Museum can check out the "Paniolo Hall of Fame" which recognizes yesterday and today's paniolo statewide. For more information, visit ParkerRanch.com or PanioloPreservation.com.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

- ◆ The Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau is working with TurnHere, Inc., an online video solutions platform, to distribute GoHawaii videos across the Internet. The GoHawaii videos showcase stories of people living in Hawai'i and will introduce Hawai'i visitors to the unique diversity of activities and culture here on the islands. TurnHere has created a YouTube channel for the seven videos, a GoHawaii travel blog (GoHawaii.TurnHere.com), and has loaded the videos onto all major search engines. For more information, visit GoHawaii.com.

- ◆ Pahu i'a restaurant at Four Seasons Resort Hualālai at Historic Ka'ūpūlehu has announced its newest regional specialties menu "Savory – Spicy – Sweet," a selection of appetizers, entrees, and a dessert that highlights the abundance of Hawai'i's local products. Available through February 2008, selections include Shichimi-Spiced Scallops, Big Island Goat Cheese Polenta, Hāmākua Mushrooms, Pan-Seared Uku-Hawaiian Gray Snapper, and much more. For more information, visit FourSeasons.com/Hualalai.

- ◆ Waikiki Beach Walk welcomes Taormina Sicilian Cuisine, which recently opened in October offering the traditional cuisine of southern Sicily, inspired by the flavors of Taormina, a Sicilian seaside village. Chef Aki Yamamoto adds his own contemporary flair to dishes, such as pasta with fresh fish and lobster, grilled lamb chops, and free range chicken. The Sicilian style pastas are unspoiled by heavy sauces and simply dressed in extra virgin olive oil. The restaurant also offers a wine list selected by Master Sommelier Roberto Viernes. For more information, please visit TaorminaRestaurant.com.

- ◆ Green beer is the craze at Kona Brewing Company where they have brewed Hawai'i's first all organic beer using malted barley and hops to create a Belgian-style saison brew named Oceanic Organic Ale. The new unfiltered beer has a crisp, dry, quenching flavor and spicy aroma with notes of lemon peel, clove, white pepper, cardamom, and fresh hops. The new brew is available exclusively at Kona Brewing Company's Kailua-Kona pub on Hawai'i's Big Island, as well as at O'ahu's Hawai'i Kai location. For more information, visit KonaBrewingCompany.com.

- ◆ Take a stroll by Royal Hawaiian Shopping Center to see The Royal Grove, the largest open green space in Waikiki and part of the center's revitalization project. For the first time in 30 years, Royal Hawaiian Hotel is now visible from Kalakaua Avenue. The grove features over 33,000 square feet of lush Native Hawaiian flora as well as dozens of *kumu niu* (coconut trees). For more information, visit RoyalHawaiianShoppingCenter.com.

- ◆ Relax and unwind at the Outrigger Waipouli Beach Resort & Spa's new, full-service Aveda Lifestyle Salon and Spa. The facility offers guests a full menu of facials, massages, and other pampering treatments, featuring only Aveda products that are purely plant-sourced. In addition to the individual spa services offered, Aveda Spa offers combination packages including "The Waipouli Experience," complete with a Lomi Lomi massage, Waipouli Flower Milk Bath, and an Aveda gift to take home. The spa is the first Aveda Spa on the Garden Isle and the only Aveda resort spa in Hawai'i. For more information, visit OutriggerWaipouli.com.

- ◆ Aqua Hotels and Resorts' Ocean Tower Hotel in Waikīkī has officially changed its name to Hotel Renew on December 1, 2007. The property is the first hotel in Aqua's new Elite brand and O'ahu's first true designer boutique hotel, rated No. 1 on TripAdvisor.com. Designer Jium Ho is designing the property, creating a casually elegant oasis of tranquility; a subtle and calming contrast to the vibrant energy of Waikīkī. For more information, visit HotelRenew.com.

- ◆ Aqua Hotels & Resorts now offers hassle-free "No Commitments" wedding programs for couples planning to marry in Waikīkī. By eliminating hotel contracts and minimum room requirements, Aqua takes the anxiety out of the wedding planning process and allows guests to focus entirely on their special day. The program also features personalized service and recommendations, creating a customized plan for the couple, and allowing the guests to choose their Aqua hotel and book their stay on the web. For more information, visit AquaResorts.com.

- ◆ Unleash your creative side at Outrigger Waikiki on the Beach where the hotel has recently partnered with a local scrapbook company to offer guests a new Hawai'i-themed scrapbook activity. Every Thursday at 10:00 a.m., guests of the hotel and its sister property, Outrigger Reef on the Beach, are invited to an hour-long scrapbook demonstration. Creative Native Crafts, specializes in island-themed supplies and offers its newest products of Hawai'i-themed kits including a special "Waikīkī" kit developed with the Outrigger Waikiki. For more information, visit Outrigger.com.

- ◆ The newly renovated Hawaiian Hall at Bishop Museum will reopen in summer 2009 following a \$21 million restoration of its architectural glory and adding modern comforts including elevators and air conditioning. The project also modernizes the Hall's methods of interpretation, bringing multiple voices and Native Hawaiian perspective to the museum's treasures and creating new ways of exhibiting fragile objects in order to enhance their beauty, creativity, and uniqueness. For more information, visit BishopMuseum.org.

TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

- ◆ Delta Airlines will launch two new daily direct flights to Kona and Līhu'e from Los Angeles on June 5, 2008. The flight to Kona will depart Los Angeles at 12:15 p.m., arriving in Kona at 2:50 p.m. and will depart Kona at 8:50 p.m. arriving in Los Angeles at 5:10 a.m. The flight to Līhu'e will depart Los Angeles at 12:00 p.m., arriving in Līhu'e at 2:50 p.m. and will depart Līhu'e at 8:50 p.m., arriving in Los Angeles at 5:20 a.m. For more information, visit Delta.com.
- ◆ Hawaii Superferry takes off again, commencing service between O'ahu and Maui on December 13 with an inaugural \$29 one-way fare between the two islands from December 13–20. The daily round trip voyage between O'ahu and Maui will leave Honolulu at 6:30 a.m. and arrive in Kahului at 10:15 a.m.; departing Kahului at 11:15 a.m. and arriving in Honolulu at 2:15 p.m. For more information, visit HawaiiSuperferry.com.

-pau-

Special note to media: The Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau (HVCB) recognizes the use of Hawaiian diacritical markings (e.g. glottal stop [ʻ], macron [ā] in place names of Hawai'i such as Lāna'i). However, HVCB respects the individual use of these markings for names of organizations and businesses.

-more-

Media Contacts:

Darlene Morikawa
Director, PR/Communications
Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau
E-mail: dmorikawa@hvcb.org
Phone: 808-924-0259

Nathan Kam
Vice President
McNeil Wilson Communications
E-mail: Nathan.Kam@MWC-Anthology.com
Phone: 808-539-3471

NR/25/07