



A glider's-eye view.

A heavy wave at Waimea Bay.



OAHU

"It's not just a different place—you are different. It's sensory: the music, the fragrance, the breeze and the blue." The year is 1967, and "Mad Men's" Don Draper is rhapsodizing about Oahu, the storied Hawaiian island that played a starring role in the season's opening episode. Flash forward to real life 2013: Everything Draper found so bewitching—the sea, the scented air, the seemingly daily rainbows—still intoxicates honeymooners today. —Mary Clarke



Duke Kahanamoku watches over Waikiki Beach.



"Mad Men's" Don and Megan Draper at the Royal Hawaiian.

Ono (delicious) dining

The range of eateries on Oahu is head-spinning, with options for every budget and craving. Honolulu's Ono Hawaiian Foods features real-deal local dishes like kalua pig and lau lau chicken; award-winning chef Ed Kenney's mantra for the food at Town Kaimuki is "local first, organic whenever possible, with Aloha always." Translation: ahi tartare, risotto cake and apple-banana cream pie. On the North Shore, you'll find fresh vegetarian fare at The Beet Box Café and crunchy coconut shrimp and tempura crab rolls at Haleiwa Joe's. Be sure to sample shave ice at Matsumoto's or Aoki's—it's Haleiwa's signature dessert.



Yummy shave ice.



Local fusion fare.



Gliding over the northwest coast.

UP AND AWAY

There's hiking across the island, but climbing Diamond Head is practically a requirement for first-time visitors. The 1.6-mile (round trip) trek is not terribly challenging until the last 1/10 mile, where the trail becomes steep. The reward

at the top more than makes up for any effort, with killer views of nearby Waikiki, Honolulu and the ocean beyond. Get another perspective altogether, and book a piloted glider ride with Honolulu Soaring on the North Shore. An airplane tows an engineless seaplane high into the air, where thermals and trade winds from nearby mountains take over to keep the aircraft aloft as your pilot guides the craft to and fro along the northwestern coast. Below, you'll see taro, alfalfa and coffee fields, the Waianae mountain range, the sea and, in season (January-April), humpback whales.

BLUE CRUSH

With their distinctive lateral floating supports, called *amas*, outrigger canoes are a common sight on Hawaiian waters. But there's only one place where you can experience outrigger-surfing, and that's upon Waikiki's gentle rollers. Sign up for a ride with the pros at Waikiki Beach Services—they also offer surfing and SUP (stand-up paddleboard) lessons and equipment rentals. Swimming with captive dolphins is one thing; snorkeling with a pod of these creatures in their natural habitat is another experience altogether. Charter some open-water time on a catamaran with Wild Side Specialty Tours for close encounters with spinner dolphins, green sea turtles and all manner of colorful sea life. Trust us: not to be missed.



An outrigger rides the Waikiki waves.



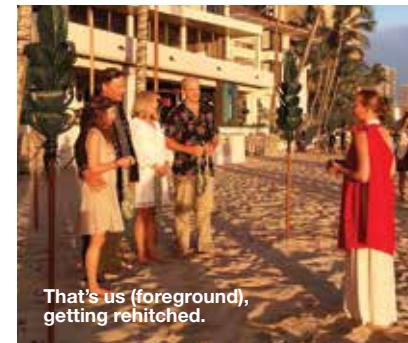
Oahu's Waianae Coast.



A spinner dolphin in motion.

SAY "I DO"—AGAIN

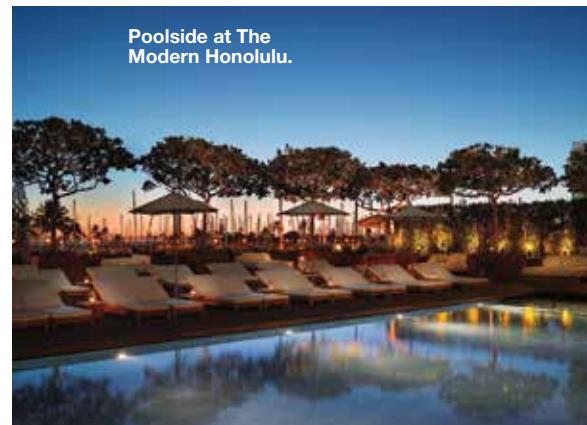
"Ho'i hou ke aloha" means "let us fall in love all over again." That's what my husband, Bill, and I are doing here, in a vow renewal ceremony at Outrigger Reef on the Beach (complimentary for guests at both the Outrigger Reef and Outrigger Waikiki hotels). If you're anything like us, you'll become teary-eyed as the traditional Hawaiian ceremony unfolds. We weren't surprised to learn that it's not unusual for many newlyweds to partake. "So many brides dream of getting married on the beach in Hawaii, so when a couple visiting the hotel on their honeymoon finds out about the vow renewal ceremony, they are quick to sign up," says Outrigger's PR director, Nancy Daniels. —M.C.



That's us (foreground), getting rehitched.

HOTELS WE LOVE

For all its grandeur and sweeping scale, the ambience at the Royal Hawaiian is sunny and welcoming. Enter the lobby barefoot with a sandy surfboard under your arm and no one will give you the side eye. Now that's the spirit of aloha! The service is beyond stellar, the guest rooms newly spiffed—and there's no better place to salute the sunset than the Royal's iconic Mai Tai Bar (room rates start at \$730 a night; royalhawaiian.com). A bit removed from Waikiki's tourist fray, The Modern Honolulu offers a chic refuge for guests with two stunning pools and in-house restaurant Morimoto Waikiki, helmed by James Beard Award-winning Iron Chef Masaharu Morimoto (room rates start at \$289 a night; themodernhonolulu.com).



Poolside at The Modern Honolulu.



Waikiki's legendary Pink Palace: the Royal Hawaiian

MASTER STROKES

Your first impulse may be to jettison the idea of making time for a spa visit. After all, who wants to be cooped up in a dark room when it's 75° and sunny? Reconsider, and book a



Serenity now: Moana Lani Spa.

treatment for two in the oceanfront couples' suite at Moana Lani Spa, A Heavenly Spa by Westin at the Moana Surfrider, A Westin Resort & Spa. Thanks to the suite's private lanai and large windows that overlook Waikiki beach, you'll feel at one with the ocean breezes as you enjoy the likes of a soothing lomi lomi massage, a kona coffee and vanilla body treatment or shiatsu.

WHO KNEW? The Hawaiian alphabet contains just 12 letters: A, E, I, O, U plus H, K, L, M, N, P and W.

PHOTOGRAPHY: (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) BILL KOMOSKI; OAHU VISITORS BUREAU; MARY CLARKE; MICHAEL YARISH/AMC; OAHU VISITORS BUREAU (2) HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY.

PHOTOGRAPHY: (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY; WILD SIDE SPECIALTY TOURS; OAHU VISITORS BUREAU; OUTRIGGER REEF ON THE BEACH; STARWOOD HOTELS & RESORTS (2) THE MODERN HONOLULU.