

HAWAII NEVER AFTER

Hawaiian legend says that if you wish to nurture the body, relax the mind and rejuvenate the spirit, go to the water. Paddle out through the sheltered and calm waters of Hulopé Bay on the island of Lana'i and you'll soon discover the legend is right. The warmth of the sea, which seems to caress your body with each passing swell, provokes an innate sense of calmness and it also harbours a magical secret. This secluded bay, which sits directly in front of The Four Seasons Resort Lana'i at Manele Bay, is a protected marine reserve and a favourite hang out for spinner dolphins.

Though there are various places both on and around Hawaii that you might be able to see dolphins, Hulopé Bay is one of the few places in the world where you can have your own private and unticketed encounter with them. At any given time, you can catch pods at play, their dorsal fins moving rhythmically through the water. Enter the water with them and you'll find that they're as equally pleased about the meeting as you are. Not only are they happy to let you inside their watery domain, they'll offer up their hospitality; weaving their way in and out of the water around you, making you feel part of their pod (which can range from 40 to 100 dolphins) while calves swim obediently by their mother's sides and adolescent males turn tricks above the water.

Listen carefully and you'll even hear their chitter chatter as they communicate to each other under the water.

The possibility of such an interaction makes Lana'i a very special destination. But then, everything's special about the experiences the island offers. Despite its size (21 kilometres wide and 29 kilometres long), this is one tropical paradise that isn't just about waterside vistas and beach sunsets, there's also a mix of lunar and rocky terrains ready to be explored.

Travel to Lana'i is by plane or ferry but either way, once you arrive, you'll feel a thousand miles from everything. Formerly a pineapple plantation, there is not a single set of traffic lights on Lana'i and only two luxury accommodation properties. Both are part of the Four Seasons hotel chain and each make use of Lana'i's landscape contrasts to their fullest potentials.

Manele Bay is very much the secluded, beachside oasis in the sun, think cocktails and pupus (afternoon canapés) lounging by the pool looking out over an endless expanse of ocean, while The Lodge transports its guests

to a manor house on an English country estate. Tucked inland, a noticeably cooler temperature allows for lush green, immaculately landscaped grounds to flourish. There's certainly no sign of traditional Hawaii at The Lodge - hula and surfing give way to high tea and horseback riding.

Private and diverse, both ready-to-weds and newlyweds will love Lana'i. Away from the hustle and bustle of Honolulu, you can marry in one property and then take a 20 minute drive to the other to begin your honeymoon. For the ultimate affair, follow the lead of Bill Gates; book the entire island for your exclusive use and marry on The Challenge at Manele golf course looking out to Hulopé Bay, no doubt while the spinner dolphins watch on.

An island-hopping adventure through Hawaii's

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islands offers ready-to-weds and newlyweds magical experiences that extend far beyond hula and surfing.
By Kristy Meudell.



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THE MAGIC OF MAUI

Lana'i might have appealed to the world's richest man, but the island boasting the most celebrity names in its visitor book is Maui. Nicknamed 'The Magical Isle', it's the second largest of Hawaii's islands and its affinity with Hollywood's glitterati means that of all the islands, you'll find it's the most sophisticated, stylish and the most glitzy.

A mega menu of designer shopping, world class dining, wedding chapels, beach houses and luxe accommodations are as much a part of Maui as its line-up of bronzed, big sunnied bodies you'll find poolside in cabanas or stretched out on the beach. Of all the fine hotels you could check into though, the Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea is perhaps the most talked about, not only because of its beachfront location, luxurious rooms and the fact that it houses Wolfgang Puck's acclaimed Spago restaurant - but because

of its celebrity connections. A favourite of many of the US's biggest celebs (including Britney Spears and Kate Bosworth), it was also Paris Hilton's first stop when she famously checked out of prison in 2007.

Of course, you don't have to be famous in order to receive the star treatment - it's something the hotel extends to all of its guests. Complimentary scented handtowels, orchid leis and chilled tea are presented to you upon check-in so by the time you make it upstairs to your room to discover a customised welcome gift

and oversized bathroom cum dressing room, you'll not only feel like a celeb, you'll start to believe that you are one. To fully complete your star transformation, at the hotel's spa you and your partner can design, create and name your very own Ajne fragrances ala David and Victoria Beckham.

A spot of paddleboarding or surfing will ensure you don't develop any diva tendencies. It's out in the crystal clear aqua marine waters that you might have a run-in with one of Maui's true stars anyway as giant green sea turtles are regular visitors to the area. Back on dry land, another popular pastime in Maui is getting married. Weddings mean big business - around 20,000 people marry or 'get Maui'd' in Maui each year - and the majority of the luxury resorts have dedicated inhouse wedding planning teams to make any ceremony dream come true. The Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea has one too, but what sets it apart from the rest is that they have a strict one wedding per day policy. Used to catering to VIPs, they understand that nobody would want to be caught out in the same outfit, particularly if you're a bride and it's your wedding day!

THINKING BIG

True to its name, Hawaii's Big Island is the largest of the six Hawaiian islands so if you can only visit one of them, then this should be it. Offering a spectacular juxtaposition of scenery and climes from beach to desert to rainforest and snow, the Big Island has everything you will find on the other islands and more - world class golf, shopping, dining, beaches, spa treatments, diving, whale watching, stargazing and even skiing.

Home of the Hawaii Ironman Triathlon and Kona coffee, its other notable attractions are its volcanoes, Mauna Loa, which is the world's largest volcano and Kilauea, the world's most active. Depending on the level of volcanic activity, or, if you believe local legend, on what mood Pele, the Hawaiian goddess of fire, is in, expect that the air will be a little cloudy with vog (volcanic air pollution). Vog or not, every scene on the Big Island is deserving of a photo, from the massive expanses of black lava which line both sides of the highway for as far as the eye can see, to its stunning azure waters, white sand and lush green vegetation. (These could also double as great wedding

backdrops!). You'll get your most un-Hawaiian pictures though from atop of Mauna Kea. Meaning 'white mountain', a reference to its summit being regularly snow-capped during the Northern Hemisphere winter, Mauna Kea is a dormant volcano and the tallest mountain in the world when measured from base to summit. The world's largest astronomical observatory is set up here, with telescopes operated by astronomers from 11 countries, including Australia.

Back down on sea level, Hawaiian hospitality at its finest awaits at The Four Seasons Resort Hualalai at Historic Ka'upulehu. Nothing is too much trouble and staff here will go above and beyond the call of duty to cater for your

every need and make you feel extremely welcome. Located on the Kona-Kohala Coast, total beachfrontage means you won't have to share the beach with anyone, unless you count its resident green sea turtles who come ashore to rest (seriously, there's even a sign to verify this). Guests actually don't have to share much of anything here. Set over approximately 32 acres, among its facilities of an award-winning sports club and spa, Jack Nicklaus golf course, three restaurants, and two lounges, there are six pools, one of which, King's Pond, is a manmade pool stocked with hundreds of brilliant fish and rays.

Bungalow-style rooms are spacious and luxurious, all featuring private, furnished lanais, ocean views and blissful special touches like room fragrance diffusers which emit your choice of scent into the air at bedtime.

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THE HEART OF HAWAII

Oahu has the biggest population of all the islands and is the most popular with tourists, particularly Australians. Fly direct to the island's capital, Honolulu, in just over nine hours and land in a hive of activity. Busy, bustling and buzzing, Honolulu is Hawaii's heart - there's accommodation and activities galore; surfing lessons, spa treatments, shopping, whale watching, eating, visiting movie locations or experiencing an authentic Hawaiian luau - plus it's also rich in history. Pearl Harbor, the beginning and end location of World War II, is just a short drive from the city and features on as many 'to do' lists for visitors as walking on legendary Waikiki Beach.

For couples, the Halekulani is a private oasis away from the crowds. Long renowned as being one of Honolulu's best hotels, its located right on Waikiki, within minutes walk from the best Honolulu has to offer - not that you're likely to want to leave. Rooms are large and luxurious and most have water views over the sparkling Pacific and world-famous

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There's also three restaurants, one of which, La Mer, has Hawaii's only five-diamond rating and a choice of two wedding locations (courtyard or lanai).

Loved up newlyweds can summon happily ever after with an experience unlike any other available in the world as the hotel has a luxurious suite designed by Vera Wang herself. The super-sized suite is furnished entirely with Vera Wang and other rare Hawaiian pieces and comes with a list of perks that includes private butler service, Vera Wang fragrances, signature cocktail menu, private spa services at Spa Halekulani, VIP passes to theatre and arts and private limousine transfers.

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WHEN IN MAUI

- Check into the Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea (www.fourseasons.com).
- Go paddleboarding, it's the authentic Hawaiian pastime and not only does it give you a full body workout, you might get to swim with dolphins and green sea turtles!
- Create your own designer fragrance in Mele Wailea, the Fours Seasons Maui's spa; the Ajne perfume experience is a favourite of some of the world's biggest celebrities.
- Have dinner at Spago (Wolfgang Puk's famed restaurant) and Duo.
- Hit the shops: Gucci, Tiffany & Co., Coach are all located in The Shops at Wailea, including Enchantress Boutique (www.mauienchantress.com), a fave shopping spot of Paris Hilton.

WHEN IN HONOLULU

- Check into the Halekulani (www.halekulani.com).
- Go shopping! Head to Ala Moana Shopping Centre (www.alamoanacenter.com) for designer and American brands as well as big US department stores and Nordstrom Rack (www.nordstrom.com) for hugely discounted premium brands like Betsy Johnson and Rock & Republic.
- Catch a shuttle to Waikale for premium outlet shopping at its best - top picks include Barneys New York, Polo Ralph Lauren, Nine West, Coach and Calvin Klein.
- Indulge your sweet tooth at Godiva Chocolates and the Hawaiian Cookie Company.
- Take a dolphin watching cruise with Sail Hawaii (www.sailhawaii.com).
- Dine at the award-winning Alan Wong's (www.alanwongs.com) and Elua Restaurant and Wine Bar (www.eluarestaurant.com) - this unique venture offers two menus, Italian and French - make sure you order dessert and their decadent handmade chocolates.
- Check out The Kahala (www.kahala.com) even if it's just for breakfast - their wall of fame, featuring their celebrity guests, is endless so keep your eyes peeled as you never know who you might bump into!

WHEN IN LANAI'

- Check into the Four Seasons Resort Lanai' at Manele Bay and/or Four Seasons Resort Lanai' The Lodge at Koele (www.fourseasons.com).
- Swim with the dolphins in Hulopé Bay.
- Book a private spa experience with your partner with 'Spa After Hours' at the Four Seasons Resort Lanai' at Manele Bay and afterwards, order in - you'll feel like you are in a fine dining restaurant as room service is delivered on silver platters with silver cutlery and candles.
- Have lunch at Challenge at Manele Clubhouse, the onion fries and cocktails are amazing! (www.fourseasons.com).
- Visit the town centre - there are some brilliant little finds like the Mike Carroll Gallery where you can get original artworks and prints (www.mikecarrollgallery.com).

WHEN ON THE BIG ISLAND

- Check into the Four Seasons Resort Hualalai at Historic Ka'upulehu (www.fourseasons.com).
- Leave a message with white pebbles in the black volcanic rock lining the highway.
- Have a Lomi Lomi massage at the Fairmont Orchid's Spa Without Walls (www.fairmont.com/orchid).
- Eat dinner at Pahui'a (www.fourseasons.com/hualalai/dining) - the food and cocktails are world-class - and Sansei Seafood Restaurant and Sushi Bar (www.sanseihawaii.com), you'll never have tasted sushi as good as this.
- Take a trip to Mauna Kea with Hawaii Forest Trail's Summit and Star Adventure (www.hawaii-forest.com), the seven hour tour takes you to the very top of Mauna Kea and includes dinner and stargazing.
- Go out on Fair Wind's Hula Kai for a Deluxe Morning Cruise (www.fair-wind.com), for three hours of snorkelling, guided sea cave tours and exploring the water with a motorised rocket.

GETTING THERE

Hawaiian airlines fly from Sydney to Honolulu three times per week with connections to the neighbour islands. For prices and info visit www.hawaiianairlines.com.au.