

# Escape to Maui

## The Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea



photo by Ardiles-Arce, Jaime, Four Seasons Resort, Maui

The signature fountain pool at the Four Seasons Resort Maui offers spectacular ocean views, an abundance of complimentary pool-side cabanas, and friendly attendants ready to cool you with an Evian spritz, popsicles, and chilled water. The beach is just a few steps from the pool, offering the same complimentary services.

BY KAREN VILLALPANDO

Our family needed a vacation. A vacation with all the amenities, great food, fantastic location, and top drawer service. Having just completed a year-long home remodel, we were ready for some much needed rest and relaxation. We chose a destination that had done a little work itself -- about \$50 million worth, to be exact.

The Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea had just put the finishing touches on the complete remodel of all 380-guest rooms when we arrived at the end of June. Upon entering the open-air lobby with the Hawaiian trade winds gently blowing through, we were greeted with a plumeria lei and a cool, oshibori towel for refreshment. Following our escort to a beautifully appointed guest room, we quickly settled into our Hawaiian digs. With

the replacement of all guest room furnishings, carpeting, and bath updates, the resort looks like a brand new hotel. Our room offered a splendid ocean view, as do 85 percent of the guest rooms. Rooms are angled so the patio – or lanai – faces the water. All guest rooms have one or more lanai. Suites offer even more spectacular views, with a picture-perfect sunset every evening. The spacious bathrooms offer piped-in music of your choice, with separate bath and shower.

The 17-year-old resort is the only AAA Five Diamond and Mobil 5 Star property on the islands. With the recent renovations, a new restaurant was added to complement Wolfgang Puck's Spago, and the Italian Ferraro's Bar e Ristorante — DUO, a steak and seafood house featuring Kobe beef. In addition, three oceanfront haies, built in the Hawaiian tradition without any nails or screws, were added for spa treatments.

In short, this world-class hotel has been entirely updated.

The outstanding service offered by all staff members has always been a hallmark of the Four Seasons. Mark Simon the director of sales and marketing, made sure our every need was accommodated. It's apparent that service starts at the top at the four Seasons, and everyone makes it their life's ambition to serve you and make you feel at home. We enjoyed breakfast and a tour with Mark, and he pointed out all of the services and amenities included with a stay at the Four Seasons. A few examples are: twice daily maid service; high speed wireless access from your room; a 42" flat screen TV in every room, a cappuccino maker; an honor bar where you select the beverages to be stocked; and a refrigerator replenished with complimentary bottled water and juices.

Green space is something you may not expect at an island resort. Sand and water seem to be the landscape of choice. At the Four Seasons Resort Maui, expansive lawns and gardens abound. Perfect for weddings, or a leisurely stroll, there are plenty of nooks and benches for a quiet escape.

But if you're looking for outdoor entertainment, there are three pool areas, including the large, main pool, a kiddie pool and a smaller pool with a



photo courtesy of the Four Seasons Resort Maui

The inlaid mother of pearl and black marble walls at DUO add elegance to the restaurant that is quickly becoming Maui's hottest new restaurant.

rock waterfall. Friendly attendants offer complimentary ice water, popsicles, and fresh fruit, even a spritz of Evian water to cool you. Beverage and lunch service is available poolside, or if you choose to dine at Ferraro's, your chairs and cabanas will be held for you. Unlike some hotels where you must stake out a location by 6am to get a poolside seat, the Four Seasons policy is if a lounge chair has been left unattended for a period of 30 minutes or more, the towels are replaced and a new guest is invited to take their seat. Use of cabanas and umbrellas are complimentary as well. We had a good daily routine: sit poolside with an ocean view, beneath a cabana for a few hours, order lunch around noon, and then spend the late afternoon at the beach. Ah, the life of leisure in Maui!

At the beach, water activities are encouraged with snorkel gear available for use for one

hour at no charge. After that a small fee does apply. For the more adventurous, the hotel offers a complimentary scuba training class. A one-hour dive with a trained scuba diving guide following the class is very affordable at \$126 per person, and conveniently located right on the property. Just make arrangements with the concierge and charge it to your room.

My daughter Rebecca and I opted out of the scuba class (they have an age limit of 12 and over), but Michael and daughter Emily were all over it. They spent an hour in the pool learning how to use the equipment. A dive master and another experienced diver went out with their group of six. I watched with a sense of trepidation as they submerged into the ocean – it was their first dive, after all. An hour later, the group returned all smiles and excited to tell us about their underwater journey. The dive master had a



photo courtesy of the Four Seasons Resort Maui

All 380 guest rooms were smartly updated in the Four Seasons' recently completely \$50 million renovation.

professional underwater camera, and he took many shots of the divers. Everyone received a CD loaded with photos of sea life and the dive.

**We had a good daily routine: sit poolside with an ocean view, beneath a cabana for a few hours, order lunch around noon, and then spend the late afternoon at the beach. Ah, the life of leisure in Maui!**

If scuba seems a little intimidating for you, I suggest you try "snuba". Snuba is a cross between snorkeling and scuba, but you are tethered to a tank floating on a raft above you, and you have the ability to dive up to 25' without the weight of the scuba gear on your back. It is truly an unbelievable experience and I highly recommend it. After a brief lesson on breathing, you are ready to go down for a guided, 35-45 minute dive. We chose to go out with Aqua Adventures, a

new chef, Paul Luna, who routinely rides his bike to work, strives to create healthy and satisfying dishes. Chef Luna hails from Washington DC, and Atlanta and recently consulted for Vin Antico in San Rafael. With Ferraro's updated look comes this new, well-known chef, bringing his unique dishes to Maui. Fresh Hawaiian fish are offered daily, such as the Branzino (Hawaiian roasted sea bass) Big Island hearts of palm salad, creamed spinach and lime aioli, are typical culinary creations. The lobster risotto is spectacular. Lighter dishes like the crab gazpacho are great for a pool-



photo by Michael Villalpando

Emily, holding a sea cucumber, and Rebecca were careful to avoid the coral reef while snuba diving at Molokini Crater, and touch only what the dive master pointed out. The coral reef off the Hawaiian islands is endangered due to the high volume of underwater visitors. The coral reef dies when touched by humans. The girls are tethered to a raft floating above holding the air tanks.

friendly team of experienced divers, captain and crew, operating out of Maalea harbor, just a 20-minute drive from Wailea. The boat carries about 30 people, so it is a manageable group, giving everyone plenty of time to snorkel when you're not on your snuba dive. Captain Daryl helmed the wheel the day we went out, while Kapono was the videographer who records the entire day, with the option of purchasing a DVD of your dive experience. For \$144 per person, you choose to snuba at Molokini Crater, or at Turtle Bay, then spend the rest of the time snorkeling. Emily took to the experience so well, she was free diving with Kapono through under-sea arches, and swimming with the turtles! After the under-the-sea experience is through, the bar is opened and a nice lunch is served on board as you travel back to the harbor.

For more information go to [www.mauisnorkelsnuba.com](http://www.mauisnorkelsnuba.com).

All of this outdoor activity can make one hungry, and the dining opportunities at the Four Seasons are excellent. Ferraro's

side lunch, and the ahi tuna, shrimp cocktail, and California roll combination is perfect for sharing. During the evening, a strumming guitar and ukulele create a romantic atmosphere among the lit tiki torches and the sounds of waves rolling in.

The new DUO restaurant is an indoor/outdoor dining room, with black marble and mother of pearl inlaid walls, an open kitchen and inviting bar. DUO offers an affordable and abundant breakfast buffet at \$30, yet transforms into a magnificent steak house by night, serving amazing Kobe and prime beef, Keahole Maine lobster, and Alaskan king crab legs. Chef Noel Badillo invites diners to choose their own sauces and sides to accompany their dinner, like béarnaise, green peppercorn, merlot or Chef Badillo's barbeque sauce.

Enticing appetizers like the oysters Rockefeller, and the goat cheese fritters were amazing. Rebecca enjoyed the best Maui onion soup we've ever tasted. The Kobe beef was incredibly tender, while fresh island fish (different selections



photo by Dive Master Zev

Sea turtles abound in Turtle Bay, where Emily and Michael experienced their first scuba dive. Their dive master instructed them on the proper dive techniques, as well as only pretending to pet the turtles.

offered nightly) like opakapaka and ahi big eye were moist and juicy. Be sure to save room for dessert, as your server will surprise you with the evening's finale, a blast from the past, if you will. In addition to the "tongue in cheek" sweet, the macadamia nut, rum raisin ice cream parfait is outstanding.

The wine list covers California fairly well, and includes France, Italy, Spain, and Germany. If you choose to order wines by the glass, over 30 choices are offered. Dining here is haute cuisine, earning DUO the "hottest new restaurant on Maui".

Walking was a requirement the next morning after the wonderful and filling dining experience at DUO. A paved trail stretches behind the pool area, along the sand, covering most of south Wailea. The Shops at Wailea are not too far, and if

you have too many bags to carry, a free shuttle can return you to the hotel. Still needing more exercise? Golf in Wailea is a very popular activity. Be sure to read the side bar on Michael's golf adventures. Or try the fitness center at the Four Seasons, with all the latest equipment, private locker rooms with showers and a steam room. For further body therapy, The Spa at Four Seasons offers 13 indoor treatment rooms and suites, as well as the aforementioned beach-front haies. A lounge relaxation area, separate men's and women's lockers, steam rooms, and rain showers are also available in the 21,000 square foot facility. Tradition-based Hawaiian healing techniques are utilized at the spa, like the Lomi Lomi massage, which celebrates living in harmony with oneself, others and nature. Take time to experience a massage in

the beach-front hale, listening to the ocean waves rolling in while being completely pampered. You will be totally relaxed and at peace.

A week in Maui tends to fly by, and on our last day, we wished we were staying longer. Ocean adventures, spectacular sunsets, moonlit nights, and fabulous dining will be part of our Maui memories. The Four Seasons Maui at Wailea is the total Hawaiian experience, and one we hope to experience again sometime. Now through December 18, 2007, the resort is offering a special travel package - book four nights and receive the fifth night's stay free. Now that's a great way to enjoy the islands!

For more information about the Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea, visit [www.fourseasons.com/maui](http://www.fourseasons.com/maui), or call 1-800-332-3442.



photo by Dive Master Zev

Digging our feet into the soft, powdery sand at the beach, we pause for a family photo album shot after the scuba divers returned from their under-sea excursion. The warm water in Wailea is crystal clear, with a nice surf break, perfect for frolicking in the waves.