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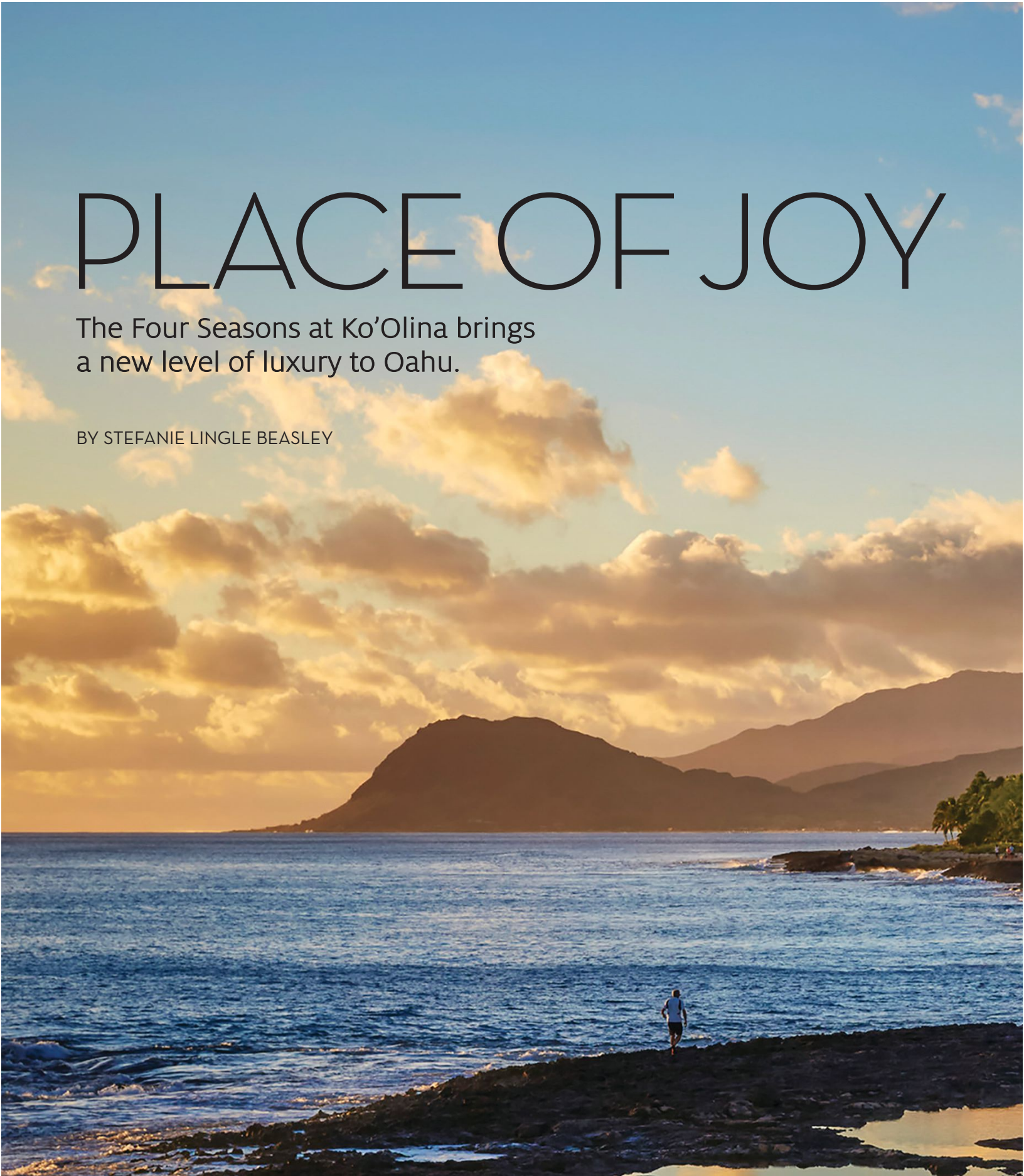


Case Swenson

PLACE OF JOY

The Four Seasons at Ko'Olina brings
a new level of luxury to Oahu.

BY STEFANIE LINGLE BEASLEY





The stunning adults pool (right) at the Four Seasons Resort Oahu at *Ko' Olina*. The resort's newest acquisition (opposite, above) is a 35-foot Sea Ray SLX 400 dubbed *The Entertainer*. Relates Four Seasons General Manager Charlie Parker, "*The Entertainer* is the ultimate luxury lifestyle experience and offers guests the exhilaration of high-speed cruising with first-class amenities and the opportunity to drop anchor at secluded beaches and coves rarely accessible by land including Kaena Point, Pokai Bay and the mystically beautiful Makua Valley. Four Seasons' guests can charter *The Entertainer* through the concierge. The enticing bar at Michael Mina's Fish House (opposite, below) at the Four Seasons.

A wind whipped at my face, the Hawaiian sun grew stronger and the powerful Sea Ray carrying me hit top speed. To my right the emerald peaks of the Waianae Mountains rose out of the Pacific, while on my left the seemingly endless blue water glistened toward the horizon. Then, just 30 feet from the prow of the boat, dolphins shot canon-like out of the azure waves. First two, then five, then dozens of adults accompanied by babies (the size of small footballs) danced and jumped and as quickly as they appeared, vanished into the depths.

Moments of pure joy like this are commonplace at *Ko' Olina*—a 642-acre resort community on Oahu's leeward coast. The jewel in the community is the Four Seasons Resort that stands adjacent to the *Lanikuhonua* Cultural Estate—a precious section of coastline that has been admired and enjoyed for centuries.

Hawaii's last monarch, Queen *Lili'uokalani* (1838 to 1917), was said to be a frequent visitor of the area that was purchased in 1877 by industrialist James Campbell. Campbell saw opportunity in the vast arid Ewa plains and had wells drilled for irrigation to breathe life into a sugar plantation.

In the 1930s, Alice *Kamokila* Campbell moved to what was then a secluded shore in the *Ko' Olina* area. She named her little corner of paradise *Lanikuhonua*, the Hawaiian term for "where heaven meets the earth." During World War II, she invited army and navy servicemen to use *Lanikuhonua* as a recreational retreat. They quickly nicknamed it "Camp Bell" in her honor.

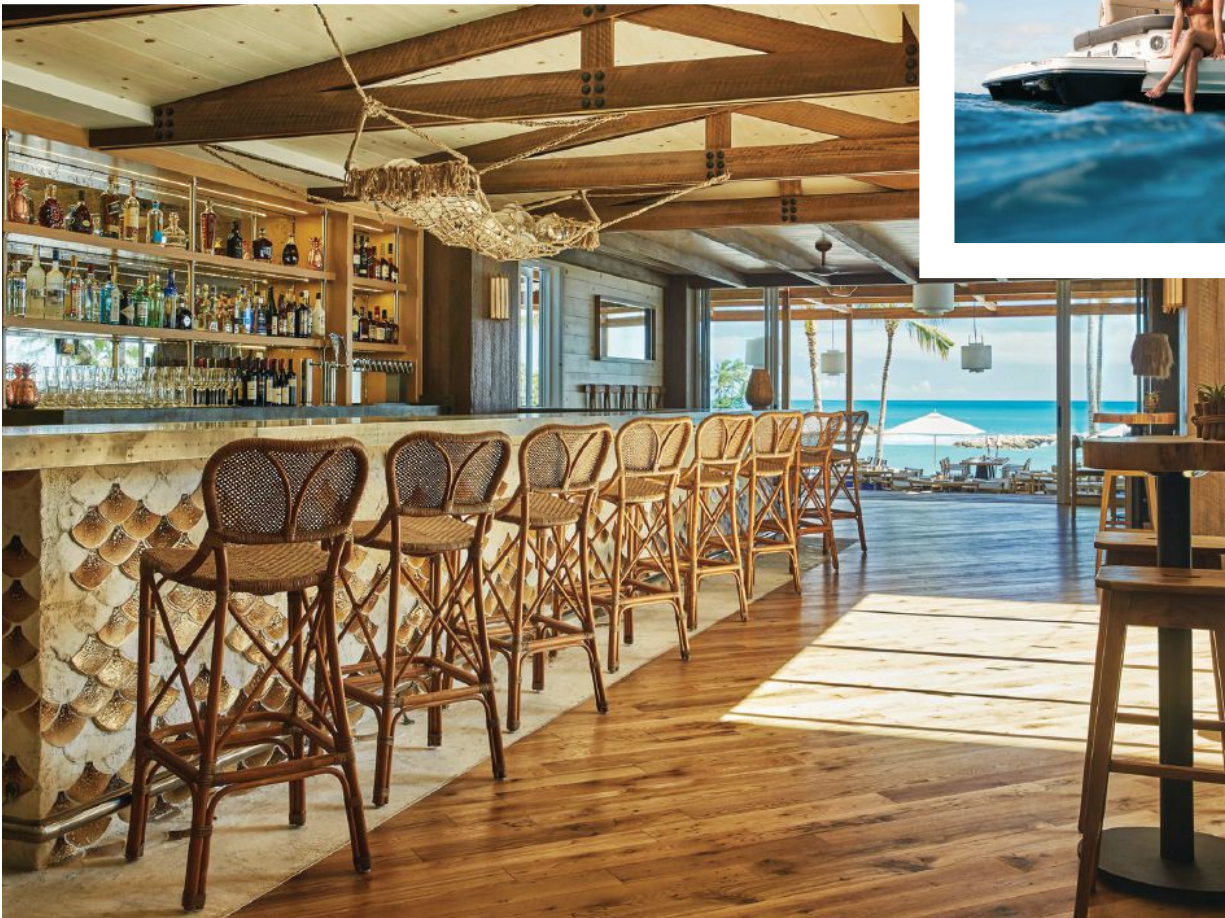
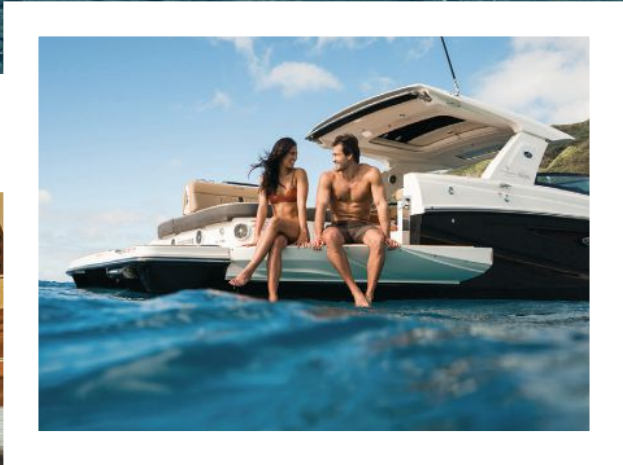
Fifty years later, plans came together to transform *Ko' Olina*



into a resort community, and in 1987, the *Lanikuhonua* Cultural Estate was established, reflecting Alice's respect for the history and royal legacy of the property. This pristine preserve of 10 acres of impeccably maintained grounds remains an inspiring place to visit on your own or to host special events. Visiting the estate is a must when spending time at the Four Seasons.

A quick 30-minute drive from Honolulu's airport brings guests to the stunning Four Seasons Resort Oahu at *Ko'olima* with its elegant towers that evoke the grace of a ship's sails pulled taught by the tropical breeze. Service, of course, is impeccable, and guests are quickly whisked to elegantly appointed rooms dressed in pale sand-like tones with balconies overlooking the ocean. Guests lucky enough to book some of the hotel's signature suites, like the penthouse and presidential suite, are in for an over-the-top experience with jaw-dropping views and amenities like private plunge pools.

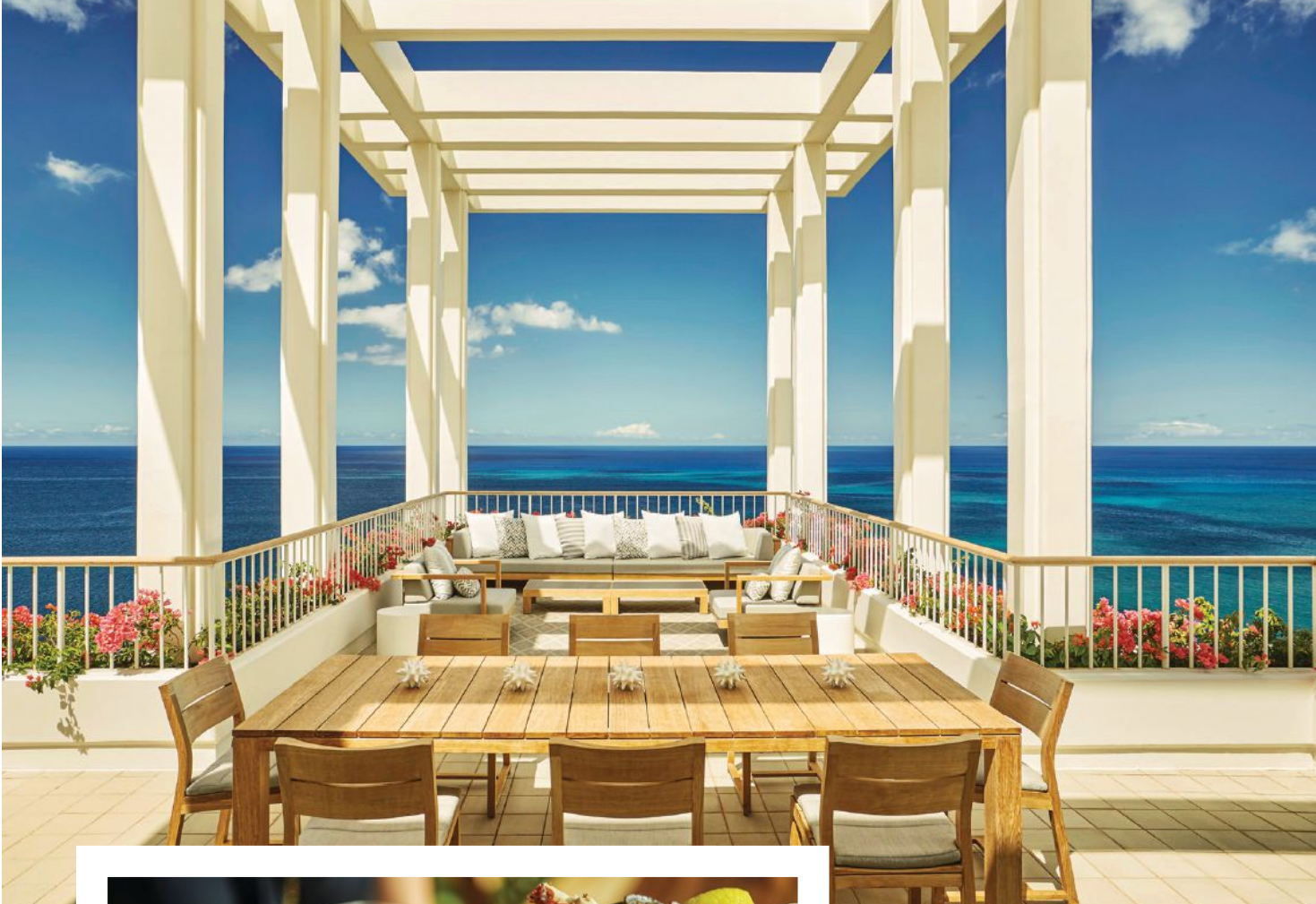
With my bags unpacked, I was eager to explore the property. The main building of the hotel features a sprawling open lobby with abundant orchids and wide, welcoming terraces. The delightful *Hokulea* coffee bar overlooks the pool and is the perfect spot to start your day with a fresh juice or Kona coffee.







The stunning Four Seasons Resort Oahu at *Ko' Olina* is the northernmost property at the *Ko' Olina* Resort which is known for its four man-made circular coves and beaches which provide a beautiful spot for swimming, snorkeling and a host of watersports.



The Four Seasons Resort Oahu at Ko' Olina is the epitome of barefoot luxury. The entire resort from the guest suites to the beachside dining terrace at Michael Mina's Fish House exudes contemporary sophistication.

A bevy of boutiques will entice fashion-forward shoppers. On the ground level The Waterman Bar beckons for afternoon cocktails, while *La Hiki* Kitchen + Restaurant and Mina's Fish House bring new meaning to barefoot luxury dining. Dinner *al fresco* at Mina's was one of the highlights of our trip. Anyone who has had the pleasure of dining at a Michael Mina restaurant knows they are in for a treat—and his spin on a traditional

Hawaiian Fish House lives up to the Mina name. We let our knowledgeable server make a few selections for us and were so glad we did. Fresh catch doesn't even begin to describe the quality of the ingredients all expertly prepared and served with an artistic eye.

Beach or pool? Selecting where to swim has to be one of my all-time favorite decisions on a vacation, and the Four Seasons offers many choices, from the pearl-shaped pool next to Waterman's bar, to the family-friendly pool steps away toward the beach, to the luxurious adults' pool with infinity edge overlooking the ocean, or the hotel's lagoon with soft white sand beach and swaying palm trees. Golfers will love hitting the links at the Ted Robinson-designed *Ko'Olina* Golf Club, and tennis buffs can hit the plexi-pave courts on the sixth floor of the *Naupaka* Spa + Wellness Center surrounded by views of the mountain and ocean. For those who just can't go a day without a good workout—the state-of-the-art gym and certified trainers are at the ready along with everything from weights to Peloton bikes.

For guests seeking total relaxation, be sure to book an outdoor massage in a private hale. The *Naupaka* Spa offers seven different massages. I indulged in the *Hau'oli* massage—a gentle aromatherapy treatment with energizing essential oils. My therapist let me know that she was gently encouraging my lymphatic circulation and balancing my energy meridians. All I am certain of was the general sense of bliss it left me.

After a soothing day swimming and spending time at the spa, we were ready for dinner and met friends at the Capri-meets-Oahu *Noe*, helmed by award-winning chef Ryo Takatsuka. The sophisticated restaurant overlooks the *Lanikuhonua* Cultural estate and is a magical spot. Chef Takatsuka clearly has a love affair with Italian cuisine that shows in his delicate dishes and bright, light flavors. We ordered a round of *Noe's* signature cocktail *Piccante* with a mix of Don Julio Blanco, Del Maguey Mezcal, pineapple, lime, orange liquor, and yuzu sorbet to start, followed by a Mushroom and Asparagus Salad with watercress, walnuts, pecorino, apple, and raspberry dressing, *Noe's* Signature *Tagliatelle* with truffles, and finally a divine Swordfish with broccoli puree, fennel, and capers.

During an after-dinner walk on the beach with a full moon and blanket of stars above and cool sand under our toes, we were reminded why this special spot on the planet is named *Ko'Olina*—Hawaiian for “place of joy.” ♦

