



FOUR SEASONS RESORT HUALĀLAI

Experience the perfect blend of elegance and aloha

BY LAURIE JO MILLER FARR

MY RECENT SOJOURN AT THE FOUR SEASONS RESORT Hualālai was nothing short of extraordinary, an experience that seamlessly blended luxury with the warm embrace of Hawaiian hospitality. From the moment I touched down on the Big Island, I knew this trip was going to be memorable. Just a short drive from the Kona International Airport, this remarkable oasis, where the landscape shifts from ancient lava fields to lush tropical gardens, set the scene for a truly unforgettable escape.

Upon arrival, an enchanting kukui nut lei and a refreshing plumeria-infused cold towel welcomed me, instantly immersing me in the essence of *aloha*. The resort's architecture, inspired by traditional Polynesian design, radiates elegance and serenity. With low-slung profiles and expansive outdoor spaces, the buildings invite the gentle sea breeze to flow through, creating an atmosphere of integrated indoor-outdoor living. I felt grateful as I admired the beautiful views of the Pacific Ocean and the well-kept gardens around me.

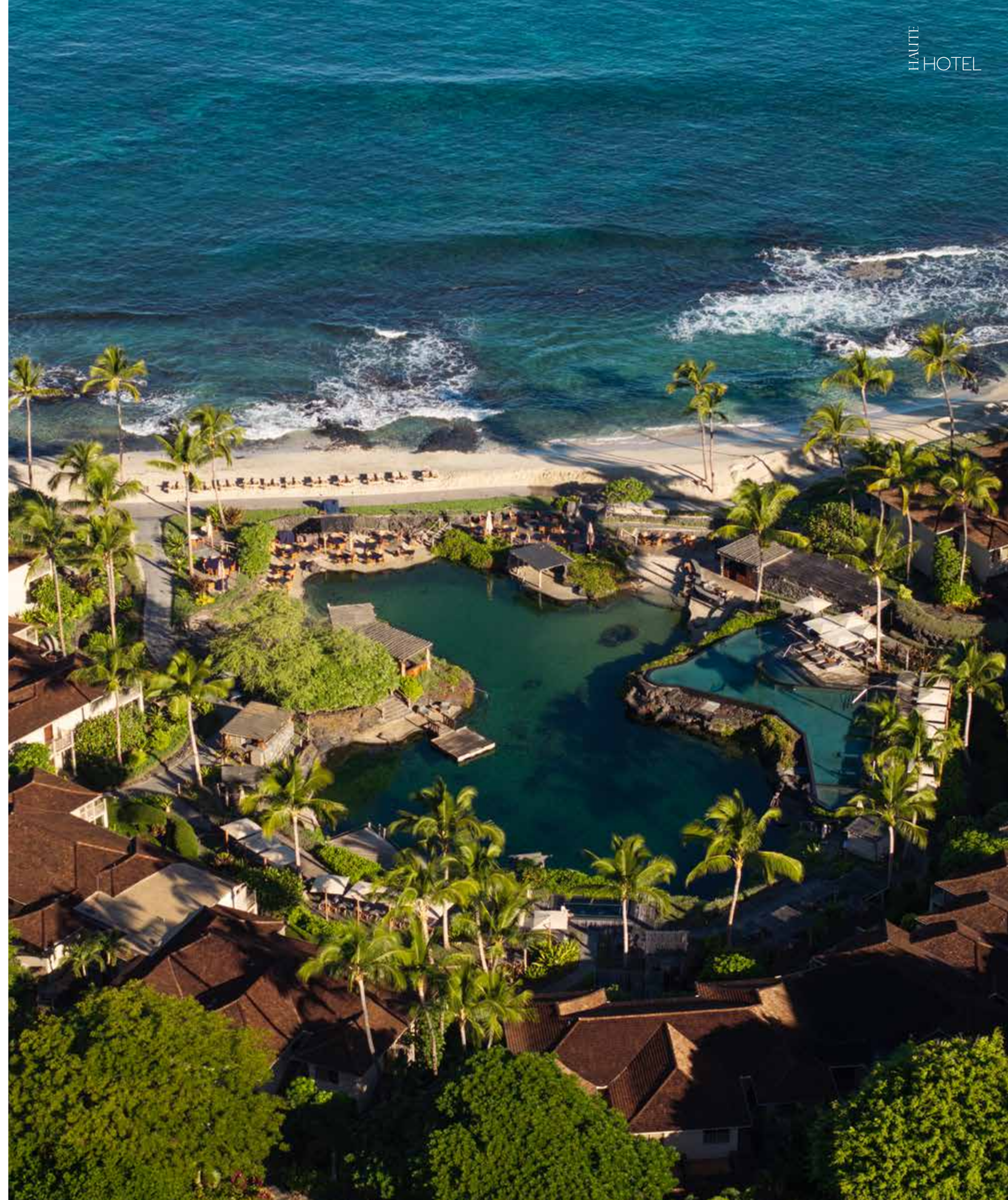
As I entered my beautifully appointed second story room, I was struck by the chic yet understated décor that perfectly captured the spirit of Hawaii. Subtle touches of Hawaiiana adorned the space, with textured grass wall treatments and vintage woodblock prints enhancing the overall aesthetic. The expansive layout included a private outdoor lanai, where basking in the golden Hawaiian sun

became a morning ritual and staring out at the ocean became a source of relaxation.

As a vintner and luxury travel writer, I am often asked about the food and wine programs at luxury resorts. Where the accommodations may be extraordinary, the food and beverage may sometimes be out of sync with expectations. What truly set my stay apart at Hualālai was the exceptional food and beverage program the resort has meticulously crafted under the watchful guidance of Paul Jimenez at ULU, the beachfront restaurant which quickly became my favorite dining destination. The focus on fresh, locally sourced ingredients was evident in every meal paired well with some incredible wines. Each meal celebrated the island's culinary heritage, elevating my dining experience.

One evening, my husband and I were invited to embark on a culinary adventure at NOIO, the resort's elegant sushi lounge. Under the skillful guidance of chef Nuri Piccio, we were treated to an unforgettable *omakase* experience. Each course was a masterpiece, beautifully presented and expertly crafted, showcasing Chef Piccio's culinary prowess. The intimate setting, with the sun setting on the horizon, created a romantic ambiance that enhanced the overall experience. We savored every bite, delighting in the harmony of flavors and textures that unfolded with each course paired with a delightful sake tasting menu recommended by Tia, the restaurant's sommelier.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF FOUR SEASONS RESORT HUALĀLAI





The resort boasts a variety of dining venues that cater to every palate, from the casual beachfront Beach Tree, which offers pizzas and seafood, to Miller & Lux, a sophisticated steakhouse overseen by our very own San Francisco celebrity chef, Tyler Florence. The latter, overlooking the 18th green of the golf course, features an impressive selection of prime cuts and fresh seafood, making it a must-visit for any food lover.

As I immersed myself in the resort's offerings, I discovered that Four Seasons Resort Hualālai is designed to cater to guests of all ages. The array of interactive activities ensures everyone in your extended family unit can engage in enriching experiences. A particular favorite is the Kumu Kai Marine Center, located next to the resort's stunning King's Pond, which is home to a team of passionate biologists dedicated to educating guests about the vibrant marine life that inhabits the waters surrounding the resort. During my visit, I had the pleasure of meeting biologist Jason Falcone, who escorted me to the resort's oyster farm. This unique endeavor allows guests to savor the freshest oysters harvested on-site—something I had never experienced. Later that evening, my husband and I indulged in a chilled plate of these exquisite oysters, their sweetness a testament to the meticulous care taken in their cultivation. (Thank you, Jason!)

The commitment to excellence extends beyond the culinary realm; the Four Seasons Resort Hualālai prides itself on providing seamless service that enhances the overall guest experience. The staff's warm demeanor and attentiveness made me feel like a cherished guest, their genuine hospitality adding an extra layer of comfort to my stay. It's worth noting that villas and specialty suites come with access to a dedicated concierge team, ensuring that every desire is met with grace and efficiency.

The combination of luxurious accommodations, exceptional dining, and the warmth of the staff created an ambiance of serenity and indulgence that was truly unparalleled. The resort's commitment to sustainability and the preservation of Hawaii's natural beauty further solidified my appreciation for this extraordinary destination.

Four Seasons Resort Hualālai is not merely a luxurious retreat; it is a sanctuary where elegance meets authenticity. The blend of relaxation and activity, coupled with the vibrant spirit of *aloha*, ensures every moment is filled with joy and discovery. I departed Hualālai with a heart full of cherished memories and a longing to return. This enchanting haven has etched itself into my soul, and I eagerly anticipate my next visit, knowing that the Four Seasons will always be a place where luxury and *aloha* coexist in perfect harmony. ■



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF FOUR SEASONS RESORT HUALĀLAI

