



NEWS RELEASE

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THE MAUI NUI PLAYGROUND: MAUI, LĀNA'I, MOLOKA'I

MAUI, Hawai'i – As sea levels rose, the ancient mega-island forming Maui Nui (Greater Maui), became five individual landforms: Maui, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, Kaho'olawe and the crater rim of Molokini. Today, this distinctive island cluster, within visual distance of one another, creates a perfect playground for romance. The great humpback whales know this, convening here every winter to mate and give birth in the warm waters between the islands. Hawaiian ali'i (chiefs) also chose the western shores of Maui for their royal retreats. Today, convenient ferry service and flights connect the three largest and habitable islands of Maui, Moloka'i and Lana'i. As each Maui Nui island is unique, island-hopping is recommended!

Moloka'i has been dubbed the "friendly" isle, but it is best described as the "most Hawaiian" of the eight principal Hawaiian Islands. While only the fifth largest at 260 square miles with a population of 8,000 residents, 40 percent of residents can claim Hawaiian descent, the most of any island. In ancient Hawai'i, this reclusive island was home to powerful spiritual leaders, and often given clemency in time of war due to strategic martial alliances and the residence of venerated priests. Today, true to its roots, Moloka'i remains very rural, relaxed and cognizant of old-style Hawaiian ways. Still a stronghold of religious practice, Moloka'i has numerous churches island wide. Many are picturesque and historic, ideal for small wedding ceremonies. Island wedding planners also coordinate breathtakingly scenic beach weddings along Moloka'i's miles of empty shoreline.

Historic monuments of authentic Hawaiian culture abound on Moloka'i. A visit here is not complete without a pilgrimage to Phallic Rock, an auspicious altar to fertility; the Kaloko'eli Fishpond, estimated between 700-800 years old; and the Ili'ili'opae heiau (temple); believed to

be one of the largest in all Hawai'i. As the birthplace of Hawai'i's hula, each May, the festival of Ka Hula Piko honors its hula heritage. Here is also the site of the infamous 1865 leper colony of Kalaupapa, where martyr Father Damien dedicated his life caring for Hawai'i's banished. A cure for Hansen's disease (leprosy) in 1969 thankfully ended this era, and today visitors (with permission) can visit the private and still populated historic settlement via a 3,000-foot descent on mule back.

Today, Moloka'i reflects the strong desire of the people to live off the land, as their ancestors did. The island offers greater opportunities than anywhere else in Hawai'i to witness or partake in an ongoing authentic cultural lifestyle. Local fishermen cast their nets out into Moloka'i's rich ocean "refrigerator"; paniolo (cowboys) ride the working 65,000-acre Moloka'i cattle ranch; hunters stalk wild boar in the forests; taro farmers work knee-deep in muddy lo'i (terraces); and 'ohana (family) gather to eat and talk story. Visitors can get a taste of the local farming community with a visit to family-owned Purdy's Macadamia Nut Farm or a tour of the Coffees of Hawai'i Plantation.

Besides Moloka'i's rich culture, the island's stunning geography and untouched natural reserves make it one of the most classically romantic paradises in Hawai'i. Boasting the world's highest sea cliffs; Hawai'i's tallest waterfall and longest white sand beach; almost 3,000 acres of rainforest sanctuary full of indigenous and endemic plants, insects and birds; and the windswept Mo'omomi Dunes; Moloka'i is the ultimate fantasy backdrop for any love affair. Outdoor enthusiasts seeking independent or organized hiking, biking, horseback riding, kayaking and fishing excursions will find plenty to do here. Rental cars are available for self-exploration, or personal guides may be hired for an informative ramble around the island.

The trendy new concept of "lamping," or luxury camping, is at its best here in Moloka'i Ranch's Beach Village. A shore side camp offers a "beach-and-barbecue lifestyle" with open-air bathrooms, solar-heated water, outdoor dining hall, and canvas two-bedroom dwellings pitched on wooden platforms. Each "tentalow" is furnished for maximum comfort, and a camp host supplies an array of sports equipment. On the hill above, the spacious Lodge at Moloka'i Ranch provides full resort amenities and guestrooms for those more accustomed to four solid walls. Near the main town of Kaunakakai, the Hotel Moloka'i offers quaint oceanfront open-air bungalows. Private homes and bed & breakfasts also make great getaways. No matter the accommodation choice on Moloka'i, it's important to remember this island moves slowly, island-style, making Moloka'i best suited for couples who have a mutual interest in (and respect for) the outdoors, history and culture, and won't mind roughing it a bit.

For a posh and indulgent honeymoon vacation, do as the celebrities do and stay on the smaller island of Lāna'i. Once the largest pineapple plantation in the world – Dole Pineapple – responsible for as much as 75 percent of the world's commercial pineapple supply, this island is still owned almost exclusively by one man, David Murdoch. Originally, Lāna'i was sparsely populated by Hawaiians, their folklore praising a banished Hawaiian prince who finally rid the island of evil spirits to make it habitable. Today, the island supports a resident base of just over 3,000 people, mostly multi-cultural decedents of the plantation workforce recruited from Korea, the Philippines, Japan, China and Portugal.

Lānaʻi City was built in the 1920s by the Dole Pineapple Company to serve and house plantation laborers. Constructed at the center of the island, this charming town is laid out in a classic grid pattern with numerical and alphabetical streets. One-story buildings line the perimeter of a large square park. Towering pines create a rustic, ranch-like feel and are also credited with catching clouds, leading to the town's cooler climes. A beautiful spire church, three general stores, a movie house, a library, a few administrative buildings and real estate offices, a small hotel and a handful of cafes and art galleries round out the town. Quaint one-room plantation cottages with outdoor "privies" are clustered to the south. After the pineapple plantation closed in the early '90s, upscale tourism took its place. Residents now primarily staff the island's two luxury resorts: the Four Seasons Resort Lānaʻi at Mānele Bay and the Lodge at Kōʻele.

Despite its small size, Lānaʻi offers honeymooners and other visitors plenty of interesting options for a relaxing or invigorating afternoon. Popular activities include browsing the art galleries, horseback riding, skeet shooting (sporting clays), archery, tennis, four-wheeling, hiking the eight-mile Munroe trail, visiting the red rock Keahiakawelo "Garden of the Gods," and walking the black sand Kaiolohiʻa "Shipwreck Beach." Microsoft legend Bill Gates chose Lānaʻi for his wedding ceremony, discouraging paparazzi by booking up hotel rooms and

helicopters island wide. Other celebrities who have retreated here for rest and relaxation include Emeril Lagasse, Roger Ebert, Dave Barry, Jane Seymour, Guy Buffet and Kanye West.

Nestled above Lānaʻi City is the Four Seasons Resort Lānaʻi, The Lodge at Kōʻele. It's easy to see why this 102-room mountain-style hunting lodge with large dual-sided fireplace, cozy reading nooks, fine dining, elegant bar and game room is consistently raved about by travel publications like Conde Nast. Attentive staff greet arriving guests with fresh flower lei, offer refreshing beverages and lead them to comfortable seats for check-in and orientation. Honeymooners can relax on a comfy veranda lounger, partake in an afternoon lobby tea, try lawn bowling or croquet, steal a kiss in the orchid greenhouse or take a dip in the spa pool. A labyrinth of pathways for strolling the manicured grounds lead to romantic gazebos, Japanese gardens, waterfalls and bridges arching over koi ponds. At night, moonlight reflects off a peaceful lake gracing the back of the grounds.

Visiting celebrities treasure the island's championship golf courses, along with its privacy. Golfing begins with the 18-hole, par-72, "Experience at Kōʻele" golf course, designed by Greg Norman and Ted Robinson. Spectacular fairways are enhanced by a forest setting, gorgeous ocean vistas and wandering wildlife, and made formidable by steep slopes, foggy weather and a signature hole some 300 feet above its fairway. Avid golfers will also enjoy the Jack Nicklaus-designed "Challenge at Mānele." Also an 18-hole, par-72 championship course, it rambles along red rock cliffs directly above the ocean. Warm sunshine, salty breezes and a dramatic signature hole spanning an ocean gulch make it one of the world's most memorable courses.

Honeymooners may divvy up their stay between properties, but sun worshipers are sure to choose the 236-room Four Seasons Resort Lānaʻi at Mānele Bay. The resort pampers guest with spacious oceanview guest rooms, a luxurious spa and fitness center, and an open-air lobby and dining room that overlook the Hulupoʻe marine preserve and sandy beaches at

Manele Bay. Boat restrictions in the vicinity make both bays superb for snorkeling and diving. Here too, spinner dolphins are likely to frolic. Tucked between the two bays is Pu‘u Pehe (Sweetheart Rock). According to the legend, a jealous husband confined his lovely wife to a sea cave where she would be out of reach to other men. A storm ensued, and she was swept into the ocean and drowned. Her distraught husband buried her on the rock and then leapt to his own death.

On a smaller scale, the 10-bedroom Hotel Lāna‘i and caretaker’s cottage is a charming option for Lāna‘i honeymooners - and it’s right in town. Built to house VIP visitors during the plantation era, the Richardson family opened it as a hotel in 1996. With all the trimmings of historic charm, this country inn is also home to a restaurant notably recognized by food critics.

The island of Maui may be the most popular choice for destination weddings and honeymoons, but that doesn’t spoil its romantic appeal! As the most cosmopolitan of the three islands, it still offers serene destinations but with a more diverse array of accommodations, activities and wedding services. Catering to more mainstream tourism, Maui is the place to attend a lū‘au, shop for souvenirs, take an informative bus tour, and dine out every night at different restaurants.

Most popular for wedding parties are the resort meccas of Kā‘anapali, Kapalua and Wailea. For a serene “Lāna‘i-like” luxury resort, the Hotel Hāna-Maui is a close approximation. And those seeking a bit of Moloka‘i on Maui will want to look Upcountry or to the North Shore. Private estates are becoming more and more popular as wedding sites, with many providing secluded gardens for catered dinners, manicured grounds perfect for hosting large events, and bed & breakfast packages for the newly wedded. Maui restaurants happily book out their facilities, providing a more intimate urban-style celebration, with everything from rooftop to outdoor lānai-style settings.

If deciding between the beautiful islands of Maui Nui is too difficult, adventurous couples can incorporate all three into one romantic agenda. True stories: one wedding party tied the knot on Lāna‘i, then flew the bridal party by helicopter to the Grand Wailea for post-wedding pampering. Another began their journey in the seaside town of Lāhaina, then married aboard a yacht while sailing to Lāna‘i, celebrated at Mānele Bay and then departed via helicopter to Moloka‘i for a quiet honeymoon.

Making it easy to island-hop, Maui Eco-Adventures offers a “Land, Air & Sea 3-Island Adventure” as part of their personal guide services. A private helicopter flies honeymooners across the ‘Au‘Au Channel to view the world famous tropical waterfalls and rainforests of Moloka‘i, and then across the ocean to the resorts of Lāna‘i. Their personal guide services can even create weddings in remote locations, such as in the beautiful valley at Maui’s Makamaka‘ole Falls, with flowers floating down the streams. “If you can imagine the dream, we can make it reality!” says Maui Eco-Adventures owner Geoff Brown.

Couples need only bring their ultimate desires, and Maui Nui will provide the rest...

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