

Town&Country TRAVEL

WINTER 2006

STEP INTO PARADISE

Buenos Aires

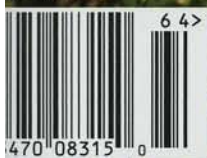
Hawaii

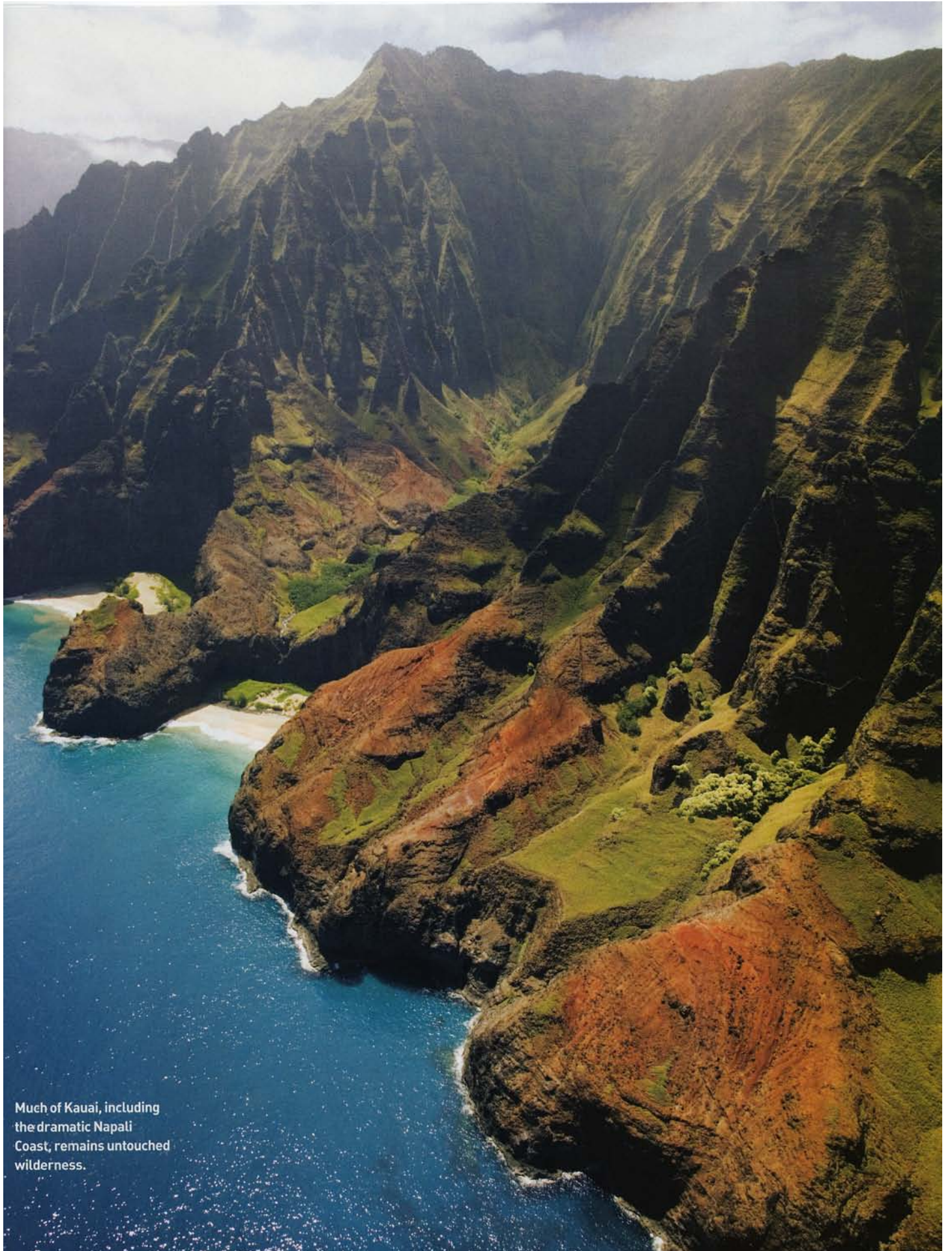
Jackson Hole

Dubai

St. Bart's

R 2006
\$9.95 CANADA \$5.95
\$5.95





Much of Kauai, including the dramatic Napali Coast, remains untouched wilderness.



Taking the plunge near the Queen's Bath. **OPPOSITE:** Manawaiopuna Falls tumbles through a mountain gorge in the island's interior.





rickety bridges that are often impassable because of heavy rains, Hanalei sometimes finds itself isolated from the rest of the island. In winter, when the waves are at their peak, the town attracts hardy surfers.

FROM TOP: Tunnels Beach; Jamie Dillberg and family at Kauai Surf School. OPPOSITE: Melissa Terry, an owner of the local Jungle Girl shops, posing in the Allerton Garden.

Once favored by Hawaiian royalty, the eastern shore of the island is known as the Coconut Coast because of the thousands of coconut trees planted there more than a century ago. Nowadays it's home to the capital, Lihue, where the airport is located, as are many of the island's budget hotels, condominiums and malls. There are sites like the impressive Wailua Falls and the Lydgate County Park, which has some of the safest swimming on the eastern shore, where currents can be treacherous.

In the southern shore's Poipu area, the weather is much drier and sunnier, so the region draws more tourists. "Our" home is on Poipu Beach; for the past ten years, we have swapped houses with friends, and year after year we look *(continued on page 150)*



NATIVE INTELLIGENCE

When to Go

The temperatures are mild year-round—from seventy to eighty-five degrees—so the main consideration is rain. The wet season typically runs from November through March, but the weather can vary greatly, depending on which side of the island you visit (the northern shore is the wettest, the southern shore drier and the western shore the driest). Whale watching begins in late December and often lasts through April.

Lay of the Land

The 555-square-mile Kauai is seventy miles across the Pacific from Oahu. It's shaped a bit like a heart, with Hanalei in the far north and Poipu in the far south. There is one main highway that traverses the perimeter of the island, with the exception of the impassable twenty-two miles of the northwestern Napali Coast. It takes at least two hours to drive around Kauai. Four-wheel-drive vehicles are suggested for getting to parts of the island's interior.

What to Wear

Island attire is strictly casual: shorts, Hawaiian shirts and sweatshirts for cool evenings. Flip-flops will do for almost any occasion, though closed-toe shoes for men are preferred at night in some restaurants.

Where to Stay

The top hotels on the island are the Princeville Resort, in the north, and the Grand Hyatt, in the south. They book up quickly year-round, so it's wise to make reservations well in advance.

Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa The 602-room Grand Hyatt has a memorable lobby that opens onto the ocean and looks out over Keonelo Bay. Built into a hillside on the sunnier southern shore, the hotel has two freshwater swimming pools (one with a 150-foot waterslide) and a five-acre man-made lagoon at the ocean's edge. It's a good spot for a family getaway. For kids between three and twelve, there's Camp Hyatt, with water sports, theater night and

crafts. For adults there's a Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed 18-hole championship golf course. The hotel recently unveiled a 20,000-square-foot addition to its luxurious Anara Spa that makes it the second-largest spa in Hawaii. *Double rooms from \$400 to \$750, suites from \$1,445 to \$4,945. 1571 Poipu Rd., Koloa; 800-55-HYATT; fax: 808-742-1557; kauai.hyatt.com.*

Princeville Resort For those who don't mind the steady mists that crop up in the north, this hotel is as private and romantic as it gets. And the romance factor is greatly enhanced by the lovely setting overlooking Hanalei Bay, with its deep green mountains, gushing waterfalls and endless rainbows. Part of the Starwood Luxury Collection and the focal point of a 9,000-acre resort community in the planning stage, the opulent Princeville feels smaller than its 252 rooms and suites suggest. More than 90 percent of the accommodations boast ocean views, and they all have Hawaiian-style furnishings accented with tropical colors and orchid-filled bathrooms.

Built in 1985, the hotel was closed for thirteen months after Hurricane Iniki hit, in 1992, when it underwent a total renovation. It doesn't have a spa, but in-room massages are available, and there's a fitness room and a beauty salon. You can also play one of the resort's two golf courses, including the challenging Prince Course, which runs through lush foliage, waterfalls and ravines. The Keiki Aloha camp is a half-day program designed to entertain children aged five to twelve. Every water sport imaginable is offered either at the hotel or in Hanalei. The nearby Queen's Bath, a dramatic natural pool, is worth a visit as well. *Double rooms from \$500 to \$735, suites from \$875 to \$5,100. 5520 Ka Haku Rd., Princeville; 800-325-3589; fax: 808-826-1166; www.princevillehotel.hawaii.com.*

Premier Rental Agencies

Kauai Vacation Rentals With more than 200 homes in its portfolio, this is the biggest vacation-rental agency on Kauai. *800-367-5025;*

kauaivacationrentals.com.

Pure Kauai Specializing in sumptuous homes on the northern shore, the agency also has a full-service concierge who can arrange for a private chef or surf lessons. *866-457-PURE; purekauai.com.*

Houses to Get

Here are three standouts, each with a special emphasis.

BEST ROMANTIC HIDEAWAY

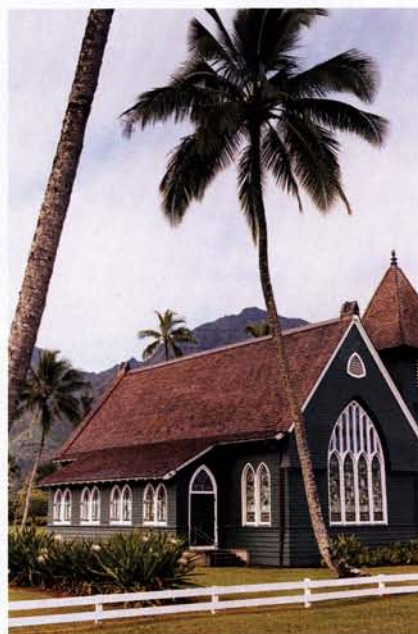
An 1,100-square-foot bungalow nestled in the hills above the southern shore's Kalaheo Valley provides seclusion and seductive views perfect for honeymooners. Handcrafted of bankirai wood imported from Indonesia, the house is owned by Bruna Stude and Carter Corey, who spent two years decorating it with objects from their travels, like a Turkish prayer rug and a tub made of crushed stone. An outdoor shower, a dreamy bed dressed in mosquito nets and an herb garden complete the picture. A private chef, a housekeeper and a masseuse are also available. *\$800 a night (three-day-minimum rentals). For more information, call the owners at 877-867-5150.*

BEST FAMILY-REUNION GETAWAY

The ten-bedroom **Kalihiwai Ridge Estate**, on the northern shore, comprises four buildings on a five-acre compound with lovely views. The property has beautiful bamboo gardens, koi ponds and a pool area set up for private luaus. The main house includes two large kitchens, an entertainment center, a conference room, a library and a solarium. Butler service, chefs, masseuses and a concierge can be provided through Pure Kauai. *From \$3,500 a night. 866-457-PURE; purekauai.com.*

BEST MODERN RETREAT Situated on fourteen acres of fruit orchards in the north is a 5,500-square-foot New York-style loft, a splendid haven for art lovers

(the owner, Jackie Yellin, has a noteworthy contemporary collection). The ocean views are impressive too. Cement floors keep rooms cool when temperatures rise, and a painted screen separates the bedroom and bath from the large open spaces. *\$3,000 a night (two-week-minimum rentals), \$500 extra for the small guesthouse. For more information, call the owner at 808-828-1180.*



Top Dinner Tables

While Kauai has never been known for fine dining, these days there are some very good restaurants, mostly in the north and south. For lunch, don't be afraid to try one of the roadside stands offering coconut shrimp or fresh fish. Most of them are excellent and inexpensive. For dinner, give the newcomers and old-timers below a try.

Bar Acuda Owner and chef Jim Moffat, who often surfed in Kauai before moving here in 2005, grew frustrated when he couldn't find decent wine or Parmesan, so he decided to open Bar Acuda, in the north (it's the first new restaurant to grace Hanalei in many years). The food—a blend of southern French

and Spanish peasant cuisine—is served tapas style. The spare decor is Hanalei casual. *In the Hanalei Center, Hanalei; 808-826-7081.*

CasaBlanca at Kiahuna The atmosphere is relaxed and the food creative and delicious at this southern-shore Mediterranean dining room, at the Kiahuna Swim and Tennis Club. *Poipu Rd., Poipu; 808-742-2929.*

Dondero's For years this has been the place for northern Italian

cuisine. The truffled pasta with a Cognac bisque sauce is notable and the wine list arguably the finest on the island. The attractive dining room evokes Tuscany, with marble flooring and colorful murals. *In the Grand Hyatt hotel; 808-240-6456.*

Tidepools Dine on Hawaiian fish and vegetables under a series of thatched-roof *hales* built over a tranquil lagoon. The seared opah is a favorite. *In the Grand Hyatt hotel; 808-240-6456.*

Glorious Beaches

White sand beaches make up 50 of Kauai's 113 miles of shoreline—twice what you'll find on Oahu, its closest rival. A word of advice: since several spots around Kauai have very strong currents, always check with a lifeguard if you aren't sure about a particular place. Those interested in learning how to ride the waves should contact the **Kauai Surf School**, in Poipu, in the south; it's run by Jamie Dillberg and

Nathan Metzger. *808-651-6032.*

The longest and widest beaches are in the north and west, including **Polihale**, a seventeen-mile stretch that marks the end of the road at the western edge of the Napali Coast. There are no lifeguards, so pay attention to the rip currents. The two-mile **Mahaulepu Beach**, which borders the Hyatt's golf course, is part of Grove Farm, now owned by Steve Case, one of the island's two biggest property owners. It's among the most beautiful on the southern shore.

Be sure to visit the secluded **Shipwreck Beach**, also on the southern shore, which is popular with windsurfers and in the winter with whale watchers.

Tunnels Beach, on the northern shore, has stunning views and is terrific for snorkeling. Expert surfers come here in the winter. Beginners should head to nearby Hanalei Bay, whose sandy bottom makes it a great place to learn. Also in the north is **Anini Beach**, which starts just past the town of Kilauea and runs for two miles to Princeville. It is safe for swimming and a wonderful spot for picnics and novice windsurfers.

Kauai Must

Nature lovers will be enthralled by the National Tropical Botanical Garden's **Allerton Garden**, just west of Poipu. At the entrance, visitors stop for a magnificent bird's-eye view of the eighty-acre property, which houses the 1870s retreat of Hawaii's Queen Emma (the island's most noted gardener). Her home is in the valley where *Jurassic Park* was filmed, and the first sight of it will take your breath away. The Allerton family purchased the garden in 1937 and afterward maintained it, leaving it in a trust with an endowment for its upkeep. The two-and-a-half-hour walking tour takes visitors past blue and red jade vines and sky-flower shrubs dripping with large blue blossoms. As Richard Hanna, the garden historian and librarian, explains, "Besides the cacophony of color, this is a real plant melting pot. You won't find this mix of botany anywhere else in the world." *3530 Papalina Rd., Kalaheo; 808-742-2433; www.ntbg.org.* —D.T.



Sunlight dapples through a bamboo forest at the Allerton Garden. **OPPOSITE:** The Waioli Huiia Church, in Hanalei.