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WHAT'S NEW IN
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**+ FUN IN FORT LAUDERDALE!
SWIMWEAR 2016**

MAUI

by JIMMY IM

In Hawaii, a luau is a centuries-old, Polynesian tradition where hundreds gather for a massive feast, generally marked by a special occasion. The dinner spread is unimaginably generous, brimming with typical dishes (like *poi* and pig, fruits and *moi*), with the festivities going late into the night. But now, I'm standing on the sprawling lawn of Montage Kapalua Bay for the Grand Tasting of the 34th annual Kapalua Wine & Food Festival. It's a whole different kind of *aha aina*, where discerning visitors graze on refined dishes from some of Kapalua's best restaurants. The Grand Tasting is packed with top chefs, gourmards, and simple hedonists alike who congregate for one of Maui's most demanding annual events, a testament that the island's culinary scene has come a long way since pig on a stick (which, incidentally, I will never decline an invitation to eat). On the brink of a foodie revolution, Maui has reached great heights with elevated dining experiences at new and old restaurants, proving the upscale island is leading Hawaii's culinary renaissance.

KA'ANA KITCHEN AT ANDAZ MAUI

Since the island was settled in 450 AD, Maui has never seen a restaurant like Andaz Maui's signature **Ka'Ana Kitchen**. Sure, it's



Coconut Shrimp at Tommy Bahama



a big statement, but the restaurant speaks for itself. As soon as you enter, you're whisked into a truly memorable dining experience that's lively, progressive, and, most of all, fun. The open-kitchen concept (where you can book seats up front and center near cooking stations) bustles with young chefs handling farm-fresh, organic ingredients. The dining room flaunts massive ceilings and spacious seating yet still feels intimate with its inviting, contemporary design and tiered layout (even more intimate is its outdoor terrace with ocean views). Ka'ana feels more like an exhibit space than a restaurant, where diners are encouraged to walk around and explore. Naturally, it's the market-based, farm-to-table menu that inspires. The award-winning culinary team has a thing for local harvest, and the flavors they develop simply pop in creative dishes that are rooted in Hawaii's diverse culture (with a dash of Asian influence). The pork belly with foie gras and poha berry is irresistibly savory, and a variety of Wagyu beef plates are adventurous like the Wagyu hanger with Thai basil, green papaya, and peanuts. You can't leave without trying the grilled octopus: it's tender, chunky, and ocean fresh. While the wine list is ace, the craft cocktails created with fresh ingredients and herbs are the

perfect accompaniment to the perfect meal. 3440 Wailea Alanui Drive, Tel: 808-573-1234. www.maui.andaz.hyatt.com

MAMA'S FISH HOUSE

The grand dame of Maui restaurants, **Mama's Fish House** is the most popular and highly esteemed dining establishment on the island. Hugging a beautiful beach with unparalleled sunset views, Mama's Fish House has a timeless feel, an unmissable retro allure that truly captures the island's authentic vibe. It's an attraction unto itself, and seats need to be booked well in advance. Mama's is utterly charming, undeniably romantic, and also decades deep in tradition (the restaurant has used four generations of fishermen since opening in 1973). Even the prideful enthusiasm of the waitstaff proves they'd rather be there than anywhere else. The fish is as fresh as they come; you're literally eating ahi tuna that was caught just six hours prior. Crab cakes are seasoned to perfection with fresh chunks of crab that are juicy and tender. A popular dish is the wasabi-crusted calamari, gorgeously breaded with a subtle wasabi kick and so flavorful there's no need for dipping sauce. Cocktails here enhance the experience,

including the lime and coconut martini that's so sweet and fluffy you feel like you're drinking the best part of a cloud. Many visitors are so obsessed with Mama's that they build their entire vacation around the institution. In fact, the restaurant has an inn with large, beautiful rooms and private outdoor lanais. With the best food in town and the breathtaking beach out front, Mama's is a self-contained paradise where guests never really have to leave. 799 Poho Place, Tel: 808-579-8488. www.mamasfishhouse.com

TOMMY BAHAMA WALLEA

It's not often discerning diners will seek out a shopping mall to discover great food. Restaurants here in general are predictable, not very inspiring, and almost always part of a chain with unimaginative chefs. Simply put, there's a reason why the restaurants aren't swarming with foodies. On rare occasions, there are exceptions, like **Tommy Bahama** at the Shops at Wailea, a surprising gem in a highbrow emporium. An extension of the retail shop, the indoor/outdoor restaurant is an impressive feat for the island-inspired clothing line. A friendly young waitstaff demonstrated prompt service and even strong interest in the menu that focuses on locally sourced, crowd-pleasing favorites. While imagination didn't run wild, the dishes were fresh, exciting, hearty, and memorable. The coconut shrimp had nice textures and a



Ahi Tacos at Tommy Bahama

notable crispiness, and the crab cakes were substantial, light, and flavorful. The ahi tuna citrus salad was delightful with tuna lightly seared and seasoned. As a tough critic for fish tacos (my favorite), the bites here were quite exceptional, with fresh flour tortillas and blackened mahi that blend perfectly together. The outdoor terrace gets a nice coastal breeze, which amped up the ambience for a lunch that was unexpectedly special, proving not all shopping center restaurants are created equal. 3750 Wailea Alanui Drive, Tel: 808-875-9983. www.tommybahama.com

CANE & CANOE AT MONTAGE KAPALUA BAY

It's no surprise West Coast-based Montage Hotels & Resorts has a huge cult following with affluent travelers. With

large, sumptuous suites, stellar service, and fine dining outlets, Montage truly spoils guests who enjoy the finer things in life. The hotel chain's Maui opening in 2013 took over the former Ritz-Carlton Residences, making the resort one of the most exclusive and luxurious properties on the island (every single room starts at a whopping 1,000 square feet). Among the highlights is **Cane & Canoe** which has racked up accolades for its top-notch, elevated dining. The alfresco restaurant dazzles diners with its smart design inspired by a traditional Hawaiian canoe house that impresses with a subtle art-deco/Frank Lloyd Wright ring to it. One feels Lilliputian under the vaulted ceiling but it's the view of the Pacific that feels large. Modern Hawaiian cuisine reflects the island's multicultural heritage and Executive Chef David Viviano (formerly from St. Regis Princeville in Kauai) dishes out spectacular, thoughtful plates, from Hamachi poke with caviar to goat cheese tempura. Cane & Canoe has made a name for itself with its Calamari "Chow Fun," an innovative twist on the traditional dish with fresh squid as the "noodles." 1 Bay Drive, Tel: 808-662-6600. www.montagehotels.com/kapaluabay

CLAY OVEN PIZZA

Delicious pizza in Hawaii is seemingly a paradox but, thankfully, the reality of perfect little



Inside at Ka'ana Kitchen at Andaz Maui



Cane & Canoe

pies is an all-organic manifestation in Hana. This region on the eastern end of Maui has forever lured hippies, beatniks, wanderers, and backpackers who often work as volunteers in exchange for housing at Hana Farms. As a side project, they launched a pizza outpost that's attracted visitors island-wide. **Clay Oven Pizza** is not your typical pizza joint: the pop-up spot is only open a few nights a week where the wood-burning outdoor clay oven in the lush countryside is fired up, picnic tables are spread out, and some of the best pizzas in the state are served piping hot. All the pizzas are made with locally grown ingredients from the farm, so expect only the freshest toppings. The famed "Potesto" pizza is topped with thinly-sliced potatoes, roasted garlic cloves, caramelized onions, pesto, béchamel, and Parmesan cheese. The crust is lightly charred in the most heavenly way. Even the pizza box is an oversized banana leaf, truly embracing the island's charms. Most visitors bring their own beer and gather in the family-friendly, couples-heavy, Millennial-centric random pizza destination that's set literally in the middle of nowhere, under the stars, like a true fantasy location for pizza lovers. *Hana Highway Mile Marker 31, Tel: 808-248-7371. www.facebook.com/clayovenpizzahana*



Mean Kine Ramen at Migrant Maui

MIGRANT MAUI AT WALLEA BEACH MARRIOTT

Quite often, just being a contestant on Bravo's *Top Chef* opens doors, but Sheldon Simeon, "fan favorite" from *Top Chef Seattle*, already came equipped with bragging rights. Simeon has racked up numerous awards, including Best New Chefs by *Food & Wine* and Rising Star Chef of the Year by the James Beard Foundation in 2011. The young, native-Maui chef shows his skills and honors heritage at **Migrant**, an innovative restaurant rooted in regional cuisine with influences by island flavors, Asian cuisine, and his grandmother's cooking. Sheldon thinks big: sharable plates with an elevated street-food twist are of generous proportions, whether one of seven heaping ramen dishes or main entrees like Hoy!sin baby back ribs. Don't think twice about ordering the "KFC" chicken and waffles (Hawaiian vodka-battered Korean fried chicken wings)...it's a signature dish. Considering the chef's caliber and the sizes of the plates, prices are reasonable for the tony beach town of Wailea. *3700 Wailea Alanui Drive, Tel: 808-875-9394. www.migrantmaui.com.*