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# 805

## LIVING

JUNE 2007



# Time to Play

GREAT GOLF IN THE 805, GIFTS FOR DAD  
NEXT STOP KAUAI, SAKE, AND MORE!







With a perfect mix of urban and rural flavors,  
Hawaii's "Garden Isle" offers the ultimate  
South Pacific escape.

By Scott Resch



The iron-rich dirt road that leads toward the base of Mount Waialeale is lined with giant ferns and strewn with deep potholes, but even though I'm riding shotgun I don't immediately notice. I'm too distracted by the pieces of fruit I've just been handed—a couple of bananas so small and so sweet I'd swear they were scientifically made.



"Aren't those things crazy?" asks my friend behind the wheel, Todd Stewart (better known as "Stewy"), as the beat up Nissan Xterra he's navigating splashes through another mud puddle. "Have you tasted anything like that in your life?"

I've been on Kauai for less than a week, but already it's wildly apparent: Everything about this Hawaiian isle is just a little different.

And that's the appeal. In contrast to the other four main islands (the Big Island, Lanai, Maui, and Oahu) that primarily make up our 50th state, Kauai, the oldest in the chain, is a unique blend of urban and rural environments. One minute you're en route to Starbucks. The next you're stopping to let chickens cross the road.

Where Stewy has taken me today, I half expect to see dinosaurs. We are less than an hour from the main town of Lihue but entirely a world away. The view I had this morning of clear blue skies and white sand beaches while standing on the balcony of my plush room at the **Kauai Marriott Resort & Beach Club** has been replaced by the exact opposite: heavy clouds and dense jungle.

But this is the kind of spot one must see in order to truly experience the Garden Isle; its interior can receive up to 450 inches of rainfall a year, and it produces one of the highest concentrations of endemic plants anywhere. That's why Stewy, the head pro at the coastal **Kauai Lagoons Golf Club**, has decided to spend his day off inland, hiking along the Wailua River. And that's why I have decided to abandon my top-floor hotel perch and join him. As it turns out, that prehistoric vibe was no fluke; indeed, the gates to the set of *Jurassic Park* are only a T.rex step away from the trailhead, where Stewy and I lace up and begin our north fork descent. As we casually wind our way down the foliage-crowded path, my personal guide tells me stories of other adventures he has experienced since moving to Kauai three years ago from Canada. There was trekking through Waimea Canyon, a verdant version of the Grand Canyon. There was kayaking sea caves on the Na Pali Coast, where cliffs drop down into the Pacific at unfathomable angles. And then his favorite: ATVing on **Kipu Ranch**, a 3,000-acre property where scenes of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* were filmed. He also notes that helicopter tours are popular ("**Blue Hawaiian** is probably the best," he says) and that ziplining—an activity made famous here by an *Amazing Race* episode—is all the rage.





By the time we're on our way back to civilization, the conversation has shifted to a current event—the NCAA Basketball Tournament—but it's short-lived.

"To be honest, I don't really know what's going on," he admits. "I don't watch TV. There are too many better things to do here."

Kauai is just 33 miles long and 25 miles wide, yet only three percent of it is developed. Sure, conservation efforts and an abundance of steep cliffs and tangled foliage make most of it uninhabitable. But the island's bucolic character also has to do with the 65,000 people who call Kauai home.

"There's a bumper sticker you'll see around the island that says, 'If you love Kauai, send your friends to Maui,'" says Sue Kanohe, executive director of the Kauai Visitors Bureau. "It's a sustainability thing."

Still, what *has* been constructed is appealing, especially on the resort front. The aforementioned Marriott, near the airport in Lihue and on Kalapaki Beach, is worth visiting for its pool alone. One of the largest in Hawaii, it possesses 26,000 square feet of water surface and almost two million mosaic tiles in a design reminiscent of the Hearst Castle at San Simeon. It's also just a few minutes from the **Children's Discovery Museum**, with interactive exhibits that can keep kids occupied for hours.

Farther north, past lush paddocks and on a bluff overlooking the popular surf breaks of Hanalei Bay, lies **Princeville Resort**.

Wedding parties and honeymooners have been coming here for years, and it's no wonder. Even as far back as 1850, when Robert Crichton Wyllie purchased the land the hotel now sits on, the place inspired amorous feelings.


"I never saw such a romantically beautiful spot in all my lifetime," Crichton Wyllie wrote more than 150 years ago.

The resort is close to a pair of wonders, too: **Limahuli Garden and Preserve**, an endangered Hawaiian plant preserve with lava rock terraces ancient Hawaiians carved to grow taro; and the **Prince Golf Course**, which plays over and around gaping tropical ravines and is widely considered the best layout in the state.

Another links gem is found at **Poipu Bay**, which has hosted the PGA Grand Slam in years past. Its finishing holes rest precariously along a 100-foot-high cliff, and signs warn golfers of the dangers of stepping too close.

Fortunately, sanctuary isn't far away. **The Grand Hyatt Kauai**, situated on 50 immaculate beachfront acres and accented by vibrant bougainvillea and a lavish atrium lobby, is right next door. More than 600 luxurious rooms were integrated into the four-story low-rise design, which conforms to the island's quaint architectural code: "No buildings can be higher than the tallest coconut tree."

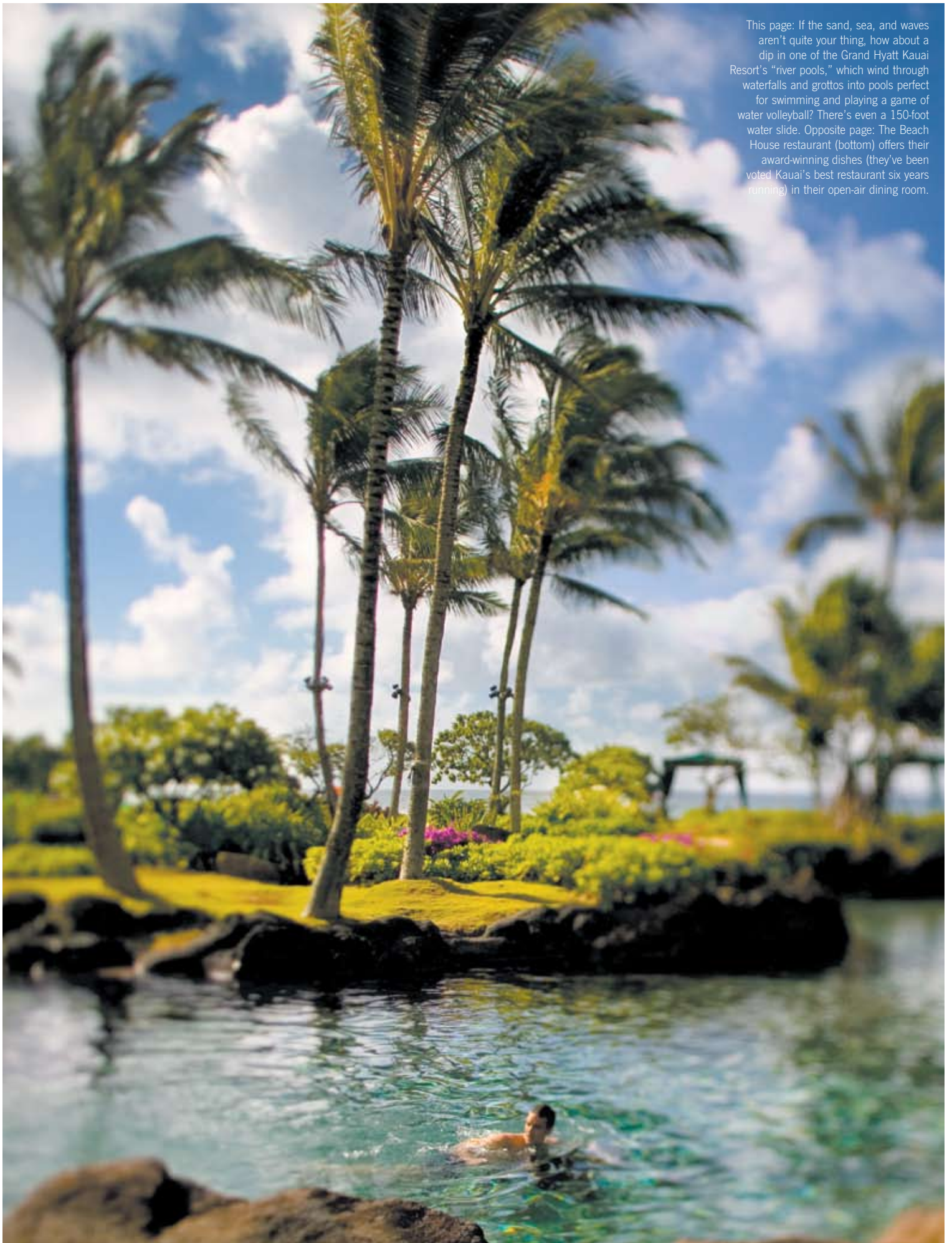
All of the Grand Hyatt's facilities exude greatness. And two of them just got even better: the spa, which remains open as it is



Opposite page: Less known for its tourist entrapments than Maui or Oahu, Kauai still boasts world-class recreation and amenities, including Princeville Resort's Prince golf course (top), the Kauai Marriott Resort & Beach Club, with its 26,000-square-foot pool (middle), and ANARA Spa at the Grand Hyatt Kauai. This page: Kauai's breathtaking landscapes have played host to a wide range of television and movie sets, everything from *Gilligan's Island* to *Jurassic Park*.



This page: If the sand, sea, and waves aren't quite your thing, how about a dip in one of the Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort's "river pools," which wind through waterfalls and grottos into pools perfect for swimming and playing a game of water volleyball? There's even a 150-foot water slide. Opposite page: The Beach House restaurant (bottom) offers perfect award-winning dishes (they've been voted Kauai's best restaurant six years running) in their open-air dining room.





undergoing a multimillion-dollar expansion to make it the largest on the island; and Stevenson's Library, an elegant lounge whose handcrafted koa-wood surfaces were refinished.

But it's **Tidepools**, one of four fine-dining venues on-property, that can't be missed. Locals won't even deny it.

"The food here is tough to beat," Poipu Bay's director of golf, Craig Sasada, tells me one evening, as I savor seared opah with bok choy and vanilla hollandaise.

One establishment that's been driving Kauai's culinary ascent since its renovation in 2004 is **Plantation Gardens**, just a few miles from the Grand Hyatt. Set in a botanical oasis of koi ponds, orchids, and bromeliads, the former plantation manager's house oozes freshness. A spacious veranda, Brazilian cherry floors, big wicker chairs, and vintage photos add to the pleasing atmosphere, but it's the menu that unleashes every sense.

Executive chefs Teri McLeod and Thomas Connolly use produce grown organically and picked on nearby farms to create dishes that reflect the fare of bygone-era Hawaii. A sucker for fish, I try the Tuna Sashimi Platter, followed by the Seafood Lau Lau—fresh mahimahi with large shrimp, jumbo scallops, and julienne vegetables, wrapped in a ti leaf. With my glass of Edna Valley Chardonnay, every bite is to die for.

Around the corner and right on the water, Todd Barrett sparks the same kinds of thoughts in patrons at **The Beach House**, where the scent of items such as Cajun-spiced ono (a catch of the day) and macadamia-nut-crust crab cakes wafts through an open-air dining room with views of the Pacific. Owned by the same duo that established the lauded Seawatch and Plantation House restaurants on Maui, it also offers the highest quality of service as well as a *keiki* (kids) menu.

"We think it's important to cater to everyone," says Barrett. "We want to provide as much as we can for the traveler, so we prepare every dish with the same kind of care."

Epicurean pride runs just as deep at **Gaylord's**, an iconic venue a mile west of Lihue. Located in a restored 16,000-foot home on a working sugar plantation, the historic eatery is renowned for its breakfast buffet. Guests are greeted with a shell lei—and frowned upon if they don't try the cinnamon rolls; they're the kitchen's claim to fame, and the cooks get up very early to bake them.

When satiated, visitors may wander the manor's boutique shops, art galleries, and Tudor-style rooms, or go for a horse-drawn coach ride around the original 35-acre property, listening to the driver talk and the Clydesdales clomp. A recently improved railroad line allows for tours of the entire 100-acre property—including sugar, pineapple, and banana fields—on an authentic narrow gauge train. But don't stick around forever. After all, Kauai is an island that has it all. Just ask Sasada.

"Lanai is good if you just don't want to go anywhere or see anybody. And Oahu and Maui have got a lot going on," he says. "But here you have the best of all worlds. Plus, the serenity. The beaches, the pastures ... and have you seen any of the waterfalls or rivers yet?" ■







## KAUAI RESOURCES

### Accommodations:

**Kauai Marriott Resort & Beach Club**  
Kalapaki Beach  
3610 Rice St.  
Lihue, HI  
808-245-5050  
[www.marriottthawaii.com](http://www.marriottthawaii.com)

**Princeville Resort**  
5520 Ka Haku Road  
Princeville, HI  
808-826-9644  
[www.princevillehotelhawaii.com](http://www.princevillehotelhawaii.com)

**Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort and Spa**  
1571 Poipu Road  
Koloa, HI  
808-742-1234  
[www.kauai.hyatt.com](http://www.kauai.hyatt.com)

### Dining:

**Tidepools at the Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort and Spa**  
1571 Poipu Road  
Koloa, HI  
808-742-1234  
[www.kauai.hyatt.com](http://www.kauai.hyatt.com)

**Plantation Gardens**  
2253 Poipu Road  
Koloa, HI  
808-742-2121  
[www.pgrestaurant.com](http://www.pgrestaurant.com)

**The Beach House**  
5022 Lawai Road  
Koloa, HI  
808-742-1424  
[www.the-beach-house.com](http://www.the-beach-house.com)

**Gaylord's at Kilohana**  
3-2087 Kaunualii Highway  
Lihue, HI  
808-245-9593  
[www.gaylordskauai.com](http://www.gaylordskauai.com)

### Recreation and attractions:

**Kauai Lagoons Golf Club**  
3351 Hoolaulea Way  
Lihue, HI  
808-241-6000  
[www.kauailagoonsgolf.com](http://www.kauailagoonsgolf.com)

**Kipu Ranch Adventures**  
Kipu Road  
Lihue, HI  
808-246-9288  
[www.kiputours.com](http://www.kiputours.com)

**Blue Hawaiian Helicopters**  
3501 Rice St., Suite 114  
Lihue, HI  
808-245-5800  
[www.bluehawaiian.com](http://www.bluehawaiian.com)

**Children's Discovery Museum**  
4-831 Kuhio Highway  
Kapaa, HI  
808-823-8222  
[www.kcdm.org](http://www.kcdm.org)

**Prince Golf Course at Princeville at Hanalei**  
Princeville, HI  
800-826-1105  
[www.princeville.com](http://www.princeville.com)

**Limahuli Garden and Preserve**  
5-8291 Kuhio Highway  
Haena, HI  
808-826-1053  
[www.ntbg.org](http://www.ntbg.org)

**Poipu Bay Golf Course at the Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort and Spa**  
1571 Poipu Road  
Koloa, HI  
808-742-1234  
[www.kauai.hyatt.com](http://www.kauai.hyatt.com)

## ON THE CALENDAR

**Concert in the Sky**  
July 4  
808-245-7277  
Lihue's Vidinha Stadium is the site of family fun and aerial fireworks.

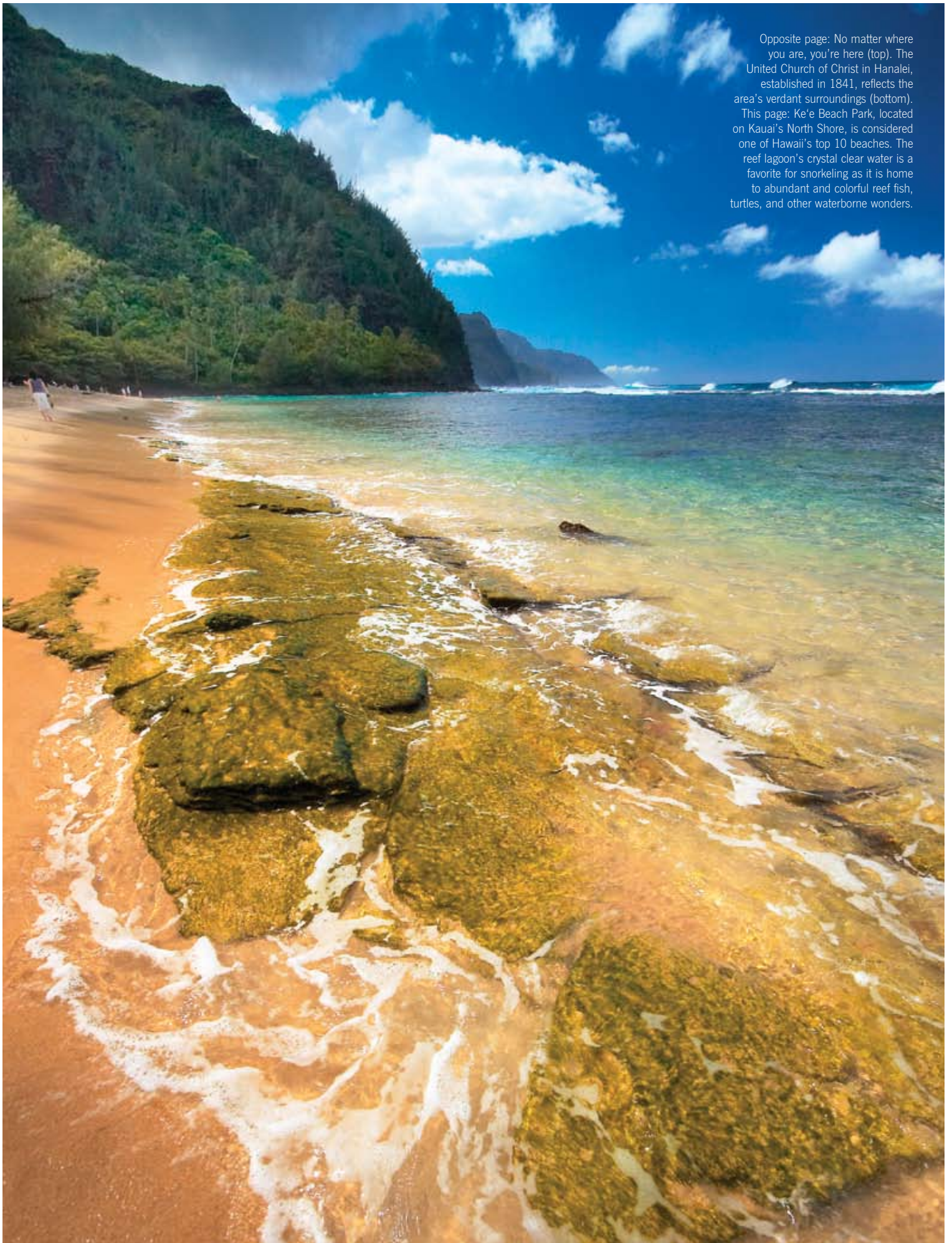
**Heiva Kauai-Iorana Tahiti**  
August 4-5  
808-822-9447  
Groups from Tahiti, Hawaii, the US mainland, Japan, and Canada take part in this Tahitian dance competition.

**Matsuri Kauai**  
September 29  
808-332-7466  
Celebrate Japanese culture by participating in *mochi* pounding, *oshibana*, a tea ceremony, and kimono dressing.

**Coconut Festival**  
October 6-7  
808-651-3273  
Learn about the cultural, social, and historical importance of the coconut, and participate in coconut games, crafts, and contests.

**Holiday Hula Christmas Celebration**  
December 16  
808-335-6466  
Celebrate the holidays with an island favorite by attending this performance of chants, hula, and Christmas melodies.





Opposite page: No matter where you are, you're here (top). The United Church of Christ in Hanalei, established in 1841, reflects the area's verdant surroundings (bottom).  
This page: Ke'e Beach Park, located on Kauai's North Shore, is considered one of Hawaii's top 10 beaches. The reef lagoon's crystal clear water is a favorite for snorkeling as it is home to abundant and colorful reef fish, turtles, and other waterborne wonders.