

KAPALUA

Where Champions play

OB

'It's hard to narrow down one or two things that define or make the golf experience at Kapalua great, but I would have to say that we have an amazing location, beautiful weather, two world renowned golf courses that are a perfect complement to each other and a Golf Academy ranked in the Top 25 in the USA.'

Dustin Irwin, PGA. Sales and Marketing Manager - Kapalua Golf.



Paul Prendergast - Twitter: @paulprendo



Photo by: Mark Wilson

The Resort

The Kapalua Resort and the Hawaiian island of Maui are both world renown for their exquisite, yet rugged natural beauty. Blessed with stunning natural assets and a temperate climate, Kapalua's charm is also linked in many ways to its relative seclusion from the more populated areas on Maui. The location of Kapalua takes in a pristine coastline of individual bays and beaches, which are a magnet for a sunset strolls and a popular attraction for swimmers,



surfers and snorkelers, with the backdrop of the distant West Maui mountains forged by centuries of volcanic activity.

The turquoise waters at nearby Honolulu Bay are regarded by locals as one of the best snorkelling spots in the state of Hawaii and along with Kapalua and Oneloa Bays, are within easy walking distance from the Resort allowing guests to enjoy clear, tropical waters and beaches that are surprisingly uncrowded when compared to others further afield on Maui.

The Kapalua Resort itself is unlike most 'resort' complexes; more a comfortable, rambling estate of villas surrounded by expanses of nature, lapping up against the ocean and the Resort's Bay golf course. Tall and distinctive Cook Island pines, planted when the area was first developed, line the streets and resort entrances and residents and guests enjoy intoxicating ocean aspects across the channel to the often cloud enshrouded island of Molokai.

Most popular and prolific among the accommodation options available to guests at Kapalua are the spacious and well appointed 1, 2 or 3 bedroom villas which are located around the bay or on the golf course. The villas are self contained which many couples, groups and families take full advantage of after a hectic day at play, either using the pools and BBQ facilities or choosing to wine and dine at home while enjoying the serenity of a private balcony with picture postcard views.

The Plantation Course

Mention the name 'Kapalua', and most golfers the world over will instantly recognise it as a dream destination with two excellent Troon Golf-managed courses and a host to professional tournament golf, dating back to the Kapalua Invitational which was played for 16 years from the early 1980s

over the resort's initial course – the Arnold Palmer designed Bay course.

The Resort has been defined in more recent times as the site of the PGA Tour's season opening 'Hyundai Tournament of Champions', for tournament winners of the previous year. The tournament is played over the newer of the two courses, the Plantation Course designed by Ben Crenshaw and Bill Coore, which opened for play in 1991. And could there be a more idyllic location to reward the exalted few, who get to prolong their success from the previous season by bringing their families to paradise to kick off a new season in style?

Coore and Crenshaw have created a spectacular and challenging layout over a rugged piece of coastal land, taking optimal advantage of the steep ridges formed by volcanic activity, gullies and spectacular ocean views that are a feature of this part of the world.

The low four round totals often posted by Tournament of Champions winners would suggest to the first time visitor that the Plantation course is a pushover, when nothing could be further from the truth. Kapalua's exposed location virtually guarantees a prevailing breeze, which can soon whip up to something stronger to make this 7,411 yard par 73 course all the more challenging. While sub 20 under par scores have been the norm, Stuart Appleby's third successive victory in 2006 was achieved with a four round total of 'only' 8 under par, which shows what sort of test the Plantation can be even to the world's best when the trade winds blow in.

The very significant elevation changes and generous fairways and greens are generally a shock even to those who are familiar with the course from television coverage. Players are faced with all of these elements from the very first hole, which drops sharply from an elevated position. In fact, the golf course rises and falls throughout the round and walking the course

is certainly not for the faint hearted. Coore & Crenshaw have also routed a number of holes along volcanic ridges and have factored in that the elements will inevitably play a part, by creating optimum lines with room to play away from trouble.

It's difficult to identify the 'most' spectacular holes on a course that features ocean views on almost every hole but holes 5 and 6 are memorable for their routing along separate ridges, separated by a cavernous gorge from which there is no escape. Distance control at the par three 8th and 11th holes can be particularly difficult to judge, especially in a breeze. The worst of the trouble on the downhill 8th is short of the narrow green as the tee shot needs to cross one of the deep gorges and a menacing bunker. Likewise, number 11 plays downhill with bunkers eating into the left and front of the green with the gorgeous backdrop of Honolulu Bay and the ocean beyond to test your concentration.

The Plantation Course culminates with a two spectacular holes that both dogleg right to left and downhill with a cavernous gully guarding the left of each fairway. The 17th at over 500 yards is certainly a long par four but plays downhill and often down breeze. The deep gorge to the left can provide plenty of nervous moments for professional or amateur alike.

The 663 yard par five 18th has of course become well known to TV viewers as a stage for some drama charged action over the years – as players attack the hole to set up eagle chances, tournament victories and equally, losing balls in the menacing gorge to the left. A big tee shot can propel the ball vast distances down the steep fairway to within striking distance of the green in two. Playing from a severe downhill lie with all the trouble in the world to the left contributes to the 'risk reward' nature of the hole and the excitement of playing it.

Who can forget Bubba Watson's driver 'off the deck' from over 300 yards in the first round in 2011? Watson's mighty blow was ranked as one of the PGA Tour's Shots of the Year, aiming 60 yards right and slicing the ball to take advantage of the lie of the land to run the ball on to the front to back tilting green and inside 20 feet for eagle.

While the 18th can be played comfortably in 3 shots by playing to the wide fairway well away from the trouble on the left, most visitors take to the Plantation Course with a view to attacking this unique finishing hole - just like the pros do - and a chance to claim bragging rights in the clubhouse after the round.

Golf Academy

PGA and Champions Tour legend Hale Irwin was the designer of the expansive facilities of the Kapalau Golf Academy, ranked as one of the Top 25 of its kind in the United States. The Academy is state of the art - featuring 23 acres of short and long game practice areas, putting

greens and the very latest in equipment and skilled instructors ready to work some magic on your game.

Kapalua Spa

Unique among the services offered from the luxuriously appointed Spa are Golf Fitness classes with lead trainer Thomas Ockerman, who has worked with NFL teams and attends to many of the PGA Tour professionals while they're in Kapalua to start their season. In these Fitness classes, Ockerman explains how the body's muscles work and interrelate during the dynamics of a golf swing and demonstrates what stretches players should perform to open up the 'turning' muscles at the base of the back, along with muscles on the side of the body.

The sessions also cover the importance of breathing correctly to maximise performance during a golf swing. For example, Ockerman recommends breathing in on the backswing, then out on the downswing - as you would if you were to stretch or exert

yourself. Ockerman notes most players hold their breath during a golf swing, which tightens the muscles especially in pressure situations.

Following a Fitness session or after working at the Academy, golfers can recuperate in the Hydrotherapy Facility that includes steam, sauna, hot tubs, sun deck and a spa infinity pool.

Transport

The Villas and facilities within the Kapalau Resort precinct are serviced by a fast and efficient shuttle service, which will take you anywhere at no charge and with a minimal wait.

The Kapalua-West Maui Airport is just a 10 minute drive away and flight time to Honolulu is a mere 30 minutes.

Hiring a car is an easy and enjoyable option to explore the world famous sights of Maui, which include extinct volcano, lava flows and stunning tropical vegetation in Forest Reserve areas. The Honoapiilani Highway snakes around the western coastline, affording scenic views at every turn. The historic

seaside village of Lahaina is only a short drive south from Kapalua and a great spot to explore and for some casual shopping and dining.

Clubhouses and Resort Dining

Both the Bay and Plantation courses are serviced by their own clubhouse, with well stocked pro shops, bars and award winning dining facilities. The Plantation clubhouse is the larger of the two, with extensive lockers rooms and architecturally designed lounge areas that take full advantage of the panoramic course and ocean views out to Molokai.

An array of award winning restaurants and dining options abound at The Kapalua Resort, including the Pineapple Grill, Merriman's Kapalua and Sansei. These restaurants and in fact all of the Resort services, are complemented by the unfailingly helpful and courteous staff, one of the unsung features that help make time spent at Kapalua such an unforgettable experience.

Photo by: Mark Wilson



For **Special Stay**
and **Play Package** Rates
adventures@obgolflifestyle.com