



LEFT: A view of the Four Seasons Hualalai at dusk.
RIGHT: Vibrant design at Meridia, inside the Westin Hapuna Beach Resort.



HAWAII ISLAND, the state's largest island, is a year-round escape located less than six hours away from Los Angeles. Apart from its five-star resorts and recreational activities, it also offers fine dining, galleries and artists' studios, making it the perfect place to renew your mind and appetite for design. Here's how I spent my time during a blissful few days away this fall:

DAY ONE

After a comfortable flight on Hawaiian Airlines, arriving on Kona International's tarmac feels glamorous. My driver, in a colorful floral shirt, is easy to spot amongst the thatched huts in the small and very busy airport.

Black boulders punctuate the bright green landscape that accompanies the short trip north, a reminder that there's a volcano on the other side of this island, almost two hours away, that's been burping up lava for thousands of years. Its sporadic belches of smoke, colloquially known as vog, heighten the already legendary sunsets.

Leis are placed around my neck on arrival at the Four Seasons Hualalai. Designed by Hill Glazier

Architects, the collection of bungalows nod to the look of ancient Hawaiian villages. The vibe here is restful retreat with plantation shutters and granite bathrooms. After an early dinner at 'Ulu Sushi Lounge, one of three restaurants here, we take a stroll along the soft white-sand beach.

DAY TWO

My outrigger canoe glides silently over the early-morning ocean and through a group of frolicking manta rays. Later, I head off-resort, cruising up Hualalai mountain's winding roads to stop at Hula Daddy to pick up a bag of Kona coffee.

The pint-size enclave is thick with galleries and artists' studios, including furniture maker Tai Lake, printmaker Hiroki Morinoue, ceramic artist Matt Lovein and graphic designer Mike Field. After lunch at the fairy-lights-strung Holuakoa Gardens cafe, we stop by Cinderella Gallery and Pat Pearlman Designs, where we pick up a leather cord and pearl bracelet before heading back to the Four Seasons for a spa treatment. Ah, bliss!

Return to the Big Island

A guide to finding relaxation and design on Hawaii

by **ABIGAIL STONE**

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE BRANDS



DAY THREE

Further north, the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel radiates island glamour. Developed by Laurance S. Rockefeller, the brutalist structure was architected by Edward Charles Bassett of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Our seventh-floor room's thoughtful design offers a sliver of his genius with its catty-corner sinks, a tub and shower sited for ocean views and a bright orange and white color scheme.

After a lunch of poke at the beachside Hau Tree, we head up to Waimea/Kamuela where, the taxi drops us at Parker Square, anchored by the Gallery of Great Things. Owner Maria Brick is the go-to for art and decorative items and her shop is a treasure trove of everything from jewelry to paintings. Across the street, the Isaacs Art Center houses the largest collection of work by Madge Tennent. We're glad we remembered a jacket; the island's legendary 11 climates finds some of its chilliest expression here.

Warmed by cocktails back at Mauna Kea's Copper Bar, we walk to the Westin Hapuna Beach Resort down the beach for an elegant dinner of branzino at Meridia.

DAY FOUR

The next morning, we rise early to partake in a Hawaiian rite to welcome the sun then head to breakfast at Manta. We reluctantly bid farewell to our time in paradise. Mahalo!

TOP: Elegant landscape design adds to the ambiance at the Four Seasons Hualalai. **BOTTOM:** Layered design that leads to sweeping views at Copper Bar inside Mauna Kea Beach Hotel.

