

The Best of Maui

Maui, also called the Valley Isle, is just a small dot in the vast Pacific Ocean, but it has the potential to offer visitors unforgettable experiences: floating weightless through rainbows of tropical fish, standing atop a 10,000-foot volcano watching the sunrise color the sky, and listening to the raindrops in a bamboo forest.

Whether you want to experience the “real” Hawaii, go on a heart-pounding adventure, or simply relax on the beach, this book is designed to help you create the vacation of your dreams.

It can be bewildering to plan your trip with so many options vying for your attention. To make your task easier, this chapter highlights what I consider the very best that Maui has to offer.

1 The Best Beaches

- **D. T. Fleming Beach Park:** This quiet, out-of-the-way beach, located north of the Ritz-Carlton hotel, starts at the 16th hole of the Kapalua golf course (Makaluapuna Point) and rolls around to the sea cliffs on the other side of the cove. Ironwood trees provide shade on the land side. Offshore, a shallow sandbar extends out to the edge of the surf. The waters are generally good for swimming and snorkeling, but sometimes, off near the sea cliffs, the waves are big enough to suit body boarders and surfers. See p. 173.
- **Kapalua Beach:** On an island of many great beaches, this one takes the prize. A golden crescent with swaying palms protected from strong winds and currents by two outstretched lava-rock promontories, Kapalua has calm waters that are perfect for snorkeling, swimming, and kayaking. Even though it borders the Kapalua Resort, the beach is long enough for everyone to enjoy. Facilities include showers, restrooms, and lifeguards. See p. 176.
- **Kaanapali Beach:** Four-mile-long Kaanapali stands out as one of Maui’s best beaches, with grainy gold sand as far as the eye can see. Most of the beach parallels the sea channel, and a paved beach walk links hotels and condos, open-air restaurants, and the Whalers Village shopping center. Summertime swimming is excellent. The best snorkeling is around Black Rock, in front of the Sheraton; the water is clear, calm, and populated with brilliant tropical fish. See p. 176.
- **Wailea Beach:** This is the best gold-sand, crescent-shaped beach on Maui’s sun-baked southwestern coast. One of five beaches within Wailea Resort, Wailea Beach is big, wide, and protected on both sides by black-lava points. It serves as the front yard for the Four Seasons Resort, Maui’s most elegant hotel, and the Grand Wailea Resort, its most outrageous. From the beach, the view out to sea is magnificent, framed by neighboring Kahoolawe and Lanai and the tiny

crescent of Molokini. The clear waters tumble to shore in waves just the right size for gentle riding, with or without a board. All the beaches on the west and south coasts are great for spotting whales, but Wailea, with its fairly flat sandy beach that gently slopes down to the ocean, provides exceptionally good whale-watching from shore in season (Dec–Apr). See p. 177.

- **Maluaka Beach (Makena Beach):** On the southern end of Maui's resort coast, development falls off dramatically, leaving a wild, dry countryside punctuated by green kiawe trees. This wide, palm-fringed crescent of golden sand is set between two black-lava points and bounded by big sand dunes topped by a grassy knoll. Makena can be perfect for swimming when it's flat and placid, but it can also offer excellent bodysurfing when the waves come rolling in. Molokini and Kahoolawe can be seen off in the distance. See p. 178.
- **Waianapanapa State Park:** In east Maui, a few miles before Hana, the 120 acres of this state park offer 12 cabins, a caretaker's residence, a picnic area, a shoreline hiking trail, and, best of all, a black-sand beach (it's actually small black pebbles). Swimming is generally unsafe, though, due to strong waves and rip currents. But

it's a great spot for picnicking, hiking along the shore, and simply sitting and relaxing. See p. 179.

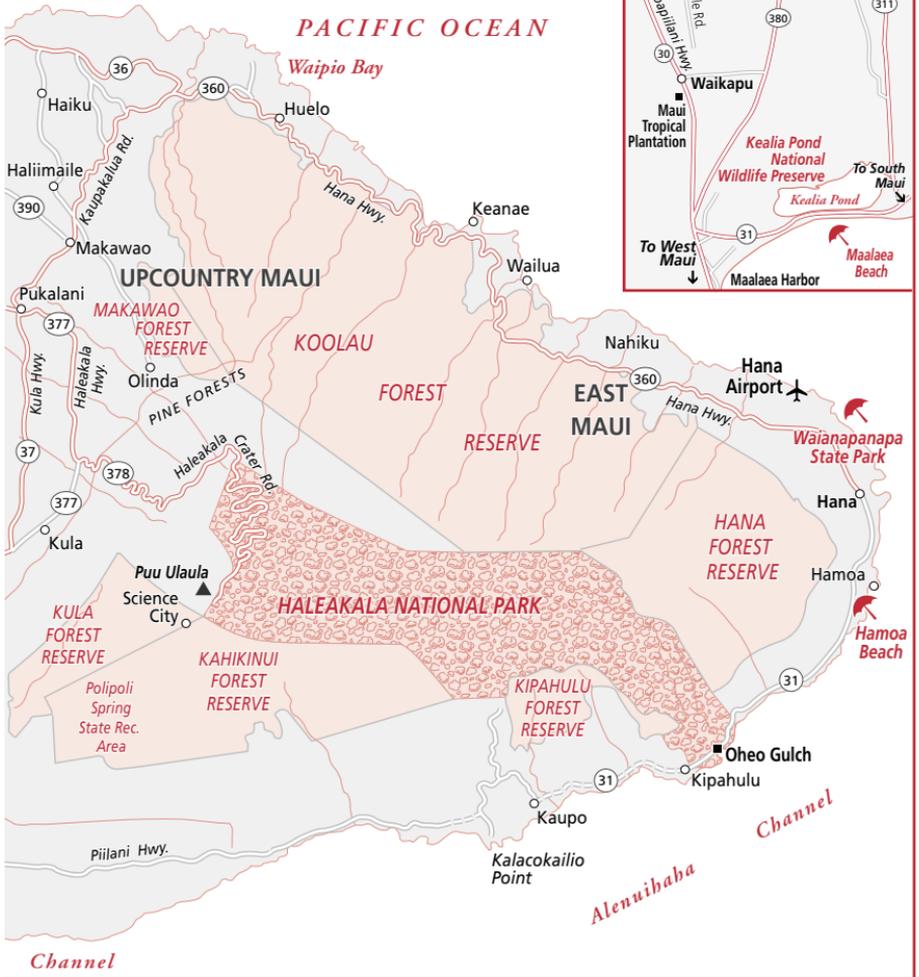
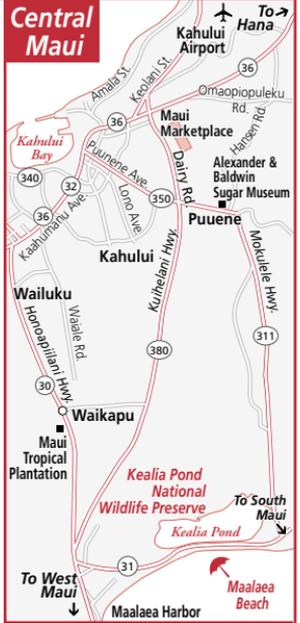
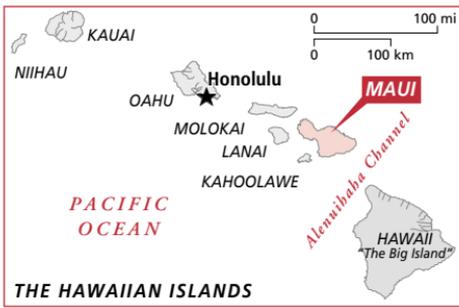
- **Hamoia Beach:** This half-moon-shaped, gray-sand beach (a mix of coral and lava) in a truly tropical setting is a favorite among sunbathers, snorkelers, and bodysurfers in Hana. The 100-foot-wide beach is about 900 feet long and sits below 30-foot black-lava sea cliffs. An unprotected beach open to the ocean, Hamoia is often swept by powerful rip currents. The surf breaks offshore and rolls in, making this a popular surfing and bodysurfing area. The calm left side is best for snorkeling in the summer. See p. 179.
- **Hulopoe Beach (Lanai):** This golden, palm-fringed beach off the south coast of Lanai gently slopes down to the azure waters of a Marine Life Conservation District, where clouds of tropical fish flourish and spinner dolphins come to play. A tide pool in the lava rocks defines one side of the bay, while the other is lorded over by the Four Seasons Lanai at Manele Bay, which sits prominently on the hill above. Offshore, you'll find good swimming, snorkeling, and diving; on shore, there's a full complement of beach facilities, from restrooms to camping areas. See p. 304.

2 The Best Maui Experiences

- **Taking the Plunge:** Don mask, fins, and snorkel to explore the magical underwater world, where kaleidoscopic clouds of tropical fish flutter by exotic corals; a sea turtle might even come over to check you out. Molokini is everyone's favorite snorkeling destination (see "Snorkel Cruises to Molokini," p. 186), but the shores of Maui are lined with magical spots as well (see "Beaches," p. 173). Can't swim? No problem:

Hop on a submarine with **Atlantis Adventures** (☎ 800/548-6262; p. 187) for a plunge beneath the waves without getting wet.

- **Hunting for Whales on Land:** No need to shell out megabucks to go out to sea in search of humpback whales—you can watch these majestic mammals breach and spy-hop from shore. I recommend scenic McGregor Point, at mile marker 9 along Honoapiilani Highway, just outside Maalaea in



south Maui. The humpbacks arrive as early as November, but the majority travel through Maui's waters from mid-December to mid-April. See "Whale-Watching" (p. 187).

- **Watching the Windsurfers:** World-championship contests are held at Hookipa, on the north shore, one of the greatest windsurfing spots on the planet. Sit on a grassy bluff or stretch out on the sandy beach, and watch the world's top-ranked windsurfers twirling and dancing on the wind and waves like colorful butterflies. See "Windsurfing" (p. 189) and "Driving the Road to Hana" (p. 228).
- **Experiencing Maui's History:** Wander the historic streets of the old whaling town of Lahaina, where the 1800s are alive and well thanks to the efforts of the Lahaina Restoration Society. Drive the scenic Kahekili Highway, where the preserved village of Kahakuloa looks much as it did a century ago. Stand in awe at Piilanihale, Hawaii's largest *heiau* (temple), located just outside Hana. See "Lahaina & West Maui" coverage, beginning on p. 207.
- **Greeting the Rising Sun from Haleakala's Summit:** Bundle up in warm clothing, fill a thermos full of hot java, and drive up to the summit to watch the sky turn from inky black to muted charcoal as a small sliver of orange forms on the horizon. Standing at 10,000 feet, breathing in the rarefied air, and watching the first rays of light streak across the sky is a mystical experience of the first magnitude. See "House of the Sun: Haleakala National Park" (p. 221).
- **Exploring a Different Hawaii—Upcountry Maui:** On the slopes of Haleakala, cowboys, farmers, ranchers, and other country people make their homes in serene, neighborly communities like Makawao, Kula, and Ulupalakua—worlds away from the bustling beach resorts. Acres of onions, lettuce, tomatoes, carrots, cabbage, and flowers cover the hill-sides. Maui's only winery is located here, offering the perfect place for a picnic. See "More in Upcountry Maui" (p. 226).
- **Driving Through a Tropical Rainforest:** The Hana Highway is not just a drive but an adventure: Stop along the way to plunge into icy mountain ponds filled by cascading waterfalls; gaze upon vistas of waves pummeling soaring ocean cliffs; inhale the sweet aroma of blooming ginger; and take a walk back in time, catching a glimpse of what Hawaii looked like before concrete condos and fast-food joints washed ashore. See "Driving the Road to Hana" (p. 228).
- **Taking a Day Trip to Lanai:** From Lahaina, join **Trilogy** (☎ 888/MAUI-800 [6284-800]) for a snorkel cruise to Lanai, or take the **Expeditions Maui-Lanai Passenger Ferry** over and rent a four-wheel-drive jeep on your own. It's a two-for-one island experience: Board in Lahaina Harbor and admire Maui from offshore; then get off at Lanai and go snorkeling in the clear waters, tour the tiny former plantation island, and catch the last ferry home. See "Day Cruises to Lanai" (p. 180) and chapter 12.

3 The Best Adventures

Branch out while you're in Maui. Do something you wouldn't normally do—after all, you're on vacation. Some of the following adventures are a bit pricey, but these splurges are worth every penny.

- **Skimming over the Ocean in a Kayak:** Glide silently over the water, hearing only the sound of your paddle dipping beneath the surface. This is the way the early Hawaiians traveled along

the coastline. You'll be eye level and up close and personal with the ocean and the coastline, exploring areas you can't get to any other way. Venture out on your own or go with an experienced guide—either way, you won't be sorry. See "Ocean Kayaking" (p. 181).

- **Scuba Diving:** You're in love with snorkeling and the chance to view the underwater world, but it's just not enough—you want to get closer and see even more. Take an introductory scuba dive: After a brief lesson on how to use the diving equipment, you'll plunge into the deep to swim with the tropical fish and go eyeball to eyeball with other marine critters. See "Scuba Diving" (p. 184).
- **Exploring a Lava Tube:** Most people come to Maui to get outdoors and soak up some Hawaiian sunshine, but don't miss the opportunity to see firsthand how volcanic islands were formed. With **Maui Cave Adventures** (☎ 808/248-7308), you can hike into the subterranean passages of a huge, extinct lava tube with 40-foot ceilings—an offbeat adventure and a geology lesson you won't soon forget. See "Spelunking" (p. 202).
- **Seeing the Stars from Inside a Volcanic Crater:** Driving up to see the sunrise is a trip you'll never forget, but to *really* experience Haleakala, plan to hike in and spend the night. To get a feel for why the ancient Hawaiians considered this one of the most sacred places on the island, you simply have to wander into the heart of the dormant volcano, where you'll find some 27 miles of hiking trails, two camping sites, and three cabins. See "Hiking & Camping" (p. 189) and "House of the Sun: Haleakala National Park" (p. 221).
- **Hiking to a Waterfall:** There are waterfalls and then there are *waterfalls*: The magnificent 400-foot

Waimoku Falls, in Oheo Gulch outside of Hana, are worth the long drive and the uphill hike you have to take to get there. The falls are surrounded by lush green ferns and wild orchids, and you can even stop to take a dip in the pool at the top of Makahiku Falls on the way. See "Hiking & Camping" (p. 189).

- **Flying over the Remote West Maui Mountains:** Your helicopter streaks low over razor-thin cliffs, then flutters past sparkling waterfalls and down into the canyons and valleys of the inaccessible West Maui Mountains. There's so much beauty to absorb that it all goes by in a rush. You'll never want to stop flying over this spectacular, surreal landscape—and it's the only way to see the dazzling beauty of the prehistoric area of Maui. See "By Air, Land & Sea: Guided Island Adventures" (p. 203).
- **Taking a Drive on the Wild Side:** Mother Nature's wild side, that is—on the Kahekili Highway on Maui's northeast coast. This back-to-nature experience will take you past ancient Hawaiian *heiau* (temples); along steep ravines; and by rolling pastures, tumbling waterfalls, exploding blowholes, crashing surf, and jagged lava coastlines. You'll wander through the tiny Hawaiian village of Kahakuloa and around the "head" of Maui to the Marine Life Conservation Area of Honolua-Mokuleia and on to the resort of Kapalua. You'll remember this adventure for years. See "Lahaina & West Maui" in chapter 8.
- **Riding a Mule to Kalaupapa:** Even if you have only 1 day to spend on Molokai, spend it on a mule. The **Molokai Mule Ride** (☎ 800/567-7550) trek from "topside" Molokai to the Kalaupapa National Historical Park (Father Damien's world-famous leper colony) is a once-in-a-lifetime

adventure. The cliffs are taller than 300-story skyscrapers, and the narrow 3-mile trail includes 26 dizzying switchbacks, but Buzzy Sproat has never lost one of his trustworthy

mules (or any riders) on the difficult trail. The mules make the trek daily, rain or shine. See “The Legacy of Father Damien: Kalaupapa National Historical Park” (p. 286).

4 The Best of Underwater Maui

An entirely different Maui greets anyone with a face mask, snorkel, and fins. Under the sea, you'll find schools of brilliant tropical fish, green sea turtles, quick-moving game fish, slack-jawed moray eels, and prehistoric-looking coral. It's a kaleidoscope of color and wonder.

- **Black Rock:** This spot, located on the Kaanapali Beach just off the Sheraton Maui Resort, is excellent for beginning snorkelers during the day and for scuba divers at night. Schools of fish congregate at the base of the rock and are so used to snorkelers that they go about their business as if no one were around. If you take the time to look closely at the crannies of the rock, you'll find lion fish in fairly shallow water. At night (when a few outfitters run night dives here), lobsters, Spanish dancers, and eels come out. See “Kaanapali Beach” (p. 176).
- **Olowalu:** When the wind is blowing and the waves are crashing everywhere else, Olowalu, the small area 5 miles south of Lahaina, can be a scene of total calm—perfect for snorkeling and diving. You'll find a good snorkeling area around mile marker 14. You might have to swim about 50 to 75 feet; when you get to the large field of finger coral in 10 to 15 feet of water, you're there. You'll see a turtle-cleaning station, where turtles line up to have small cleaner wrasses pick off small parasites. This is also a good spot to see crown-of-thorns starfish, puffer fish, and lots of juvenile fish. See “Snorkeling” (p. 185) and “Lahaina & West Maui” (p. 207).
- **Hawaiian Reef:** Scuba divers love this area off the Kihei-Wailea coast because it has a good cross section of topography and marine life typical of Hawaiian waters. Diving to depths of 85 feet, you'll see everything from lava formations and coral reef to sand and rubble, plus a diverse range of both shallow- and deepwater creatures. See “An Expert Shares His Secrets: Maui's Best Dives” (p. 182).
- **Third Tank:** Scuba divers looking for a photo opportunity will find it at this artificial reef, located off Makena Beach at 80 feet. This World War II tank acts like a fish magnet—because it's the only large solid object in the area, any fish or invertebrate looking for a safe home comes here. Surrounding the tank is a cloak of schooling snappers and goatfish just waiting for a photographer with a wide-angle lens. It's small, but Third Tank is loaded with more marine life per square inch than any site off Maui. See “An Expert Shares His Secrets: Maui's Best Dives” (p. 182).
- **Molokini:** Shaped like a crescent moon, this islet's shallow concave side serves as a sheltering backstop against sea currents for tiny tropical fish; on its opposite side is a deepwater cliff inhabited by spiny lobsters, moray eels, and white-tipped sharks. Neophyte snorkelers report to the concave side; experienced scuba divers, the cliff side. Either way, the clear water and abundant marine life make this islet off the Makena coast one of Hawaii's most popular dive spots. See “Watersports” (p. 179).

- **Ahihi-Kinaiu Natural Preserve:** Fishing is strictly *kapu* (forbidden) in Ahihi Bay (at the end of the road in south Maui), and the fish seem to know it—they're everywhere in this series of rocky coves and black-lava tide pools. The black, barren, lunarlike land stands in stark contrast to the green-blue water, which is

home to a sparkling mosaic of tropical fish. Scuba divers might want to check out **La Pérouse Pinnacle** in the middle of La Pérouse Bay; clouds of damselfish and triggerfish will greet you on the surface. See "Snorkeling" (p. 185) and "An Expert Shares His Secrets: Maui's Best Dives" (p. 182).

5 The Best Golf Courses

- **Kaanapali Golf Resort** (☎ 808/661-3691): All golfers, from high handicappers to near-pros, will love these two challenging courses. The North Course is a true Robert Trent Jones, Sr., design: an abundance of wide bunkers; several long, stretched-out tees; and the largest, most contoured greens on Maui. The South Course is an Arthur Jack Snyder design; although shorter than the North Course, it requires more accuracy on the narrow, hilly fairways. Just like its sibling course, it has a water hazard on its final hole, so don't tally up your score card until you sink your final putt. See p. 198.
- **Kapalua Resort** (☎ 877/527-2582): Kapalua is probably the best nationally known golf resort in Hawaii, due to the PGA Mercedes-Benz Championship played here each January. The Bay Course and the Village Course are vintage Arnold Palmer designs; the Plantation Course is a strong entry from Ben Crenshaw and Bill Coore. All sit on Maui's wind-swept northwestern shore, at the rolling foothills of Puu Kukui, the summit of the West Maui Mountains. See p. 198.
- **Makena Golf Courses** (☎ 808/879-3344): Here you'll find 36 holes by "Mr. Hawaii Golf"—Robert Trent Jones, Jr.—at his best. Add to that spectacular views: Molokini islet looms in the background, humpback

whales gambol offshore in winter, and the tropical sunsets are spectacular. The South Course has magnificent views (bring your camera) and is kinder to golfers who haven't played for a while. The North Course is more difficult but also more stunning. The 13th hole, located partway up the mountain, has a view that makes most golfers stop and stare. The next hole is even more memorable: a 200-foot drop between tee and green. See p. 199.

- **Wailea Golf Club** (☎ 888/328-MAUI [6284]): On the sunbaked south shore of Maui stands Wailea Resort, *the* hot spot for golf in the islands. You'll find great golf at these three resort courses: The Blue Course is an Arthur Jack Snyder design, while the Emerald and Gold courses are both by Robert Trent Jones, Jr. All boast outstanding views of the Pacific and the mid-Hawaiian Islands. See p. 199.
- **The Lanai Courses:** For quality and seclusion, nothing in Hawaii can touch Lanai's two golf-resort offerings. The **Experience at Koele** (☎ 800/321-4666), designed by Ted Robinson and Greg Norman, and the **Challenge at Manele** (☎ 800/321-4666), a wonderful Jack Nicklaus course with ocean views from every hole, rate among Hawaii's best courses. Both are tremendous fun to

play, with the Experience featuring the par-4 8th hole, which drops some 150 yards from tee to fairway, and the Challenge boasting the par-3 12th,

which plays from one cliff side to another over a Pacific inlet—one of the most stunning holes in Hawaii. See p. 308.

6 The Best Luxury Hotels & Resorts

- **Hyatt Regency Maui Resort & Spa** (☎ 800/233-1234 or 808/661-1234; www.maui.hyatt.com): Spa-goers will love Hawaii's first oceanfront spa. The 806 rooms of this fantasy resort, spread out among three towers, have very comfortable separate sitting areas and private lanais with eye-popping views. This huge place covers some 40 acres; even if you don't stay here, you might want to walk through the expansive tree-filled atrium and the parklike grounds. See p. 110.
- **Kaanapali Alii** (☎ 800/642-6284 or 808/661-3330; www.kaanapali-alii.com): The height of luxury, these oceanfront condominium units (right on Kaanapali Beach) combine all the amenities of a luxury hotel (including a 24-hr. front desk) with the convenience of a condominium. One-bedroom units (1,500 sq. ft.) start at \$395 for four people. The beachside recreation area includes a swimming pool, a separate children's pool, a whirlpool, gas barbecue grills and picnic areas, exercise rooms, saunas, and tennis courts. See p. 111.
- **Sheraton Maui Resort** (☎ 866/716-8109 or 808/661-0031; www.sheraton-maui.com): Offering the best location on Kaanapali Beach, recent renovations, and a great hassle-free experience, the Sheraton is my pick of Kaanapali hotels. This is the place for travelers who just want to arrive, have everything ready for them, and get on with their vacation. (Sheraton has a "no-hassle" check-in: The valet takes you and your luggage straight to your room, which means no time wasted standing in line at registration.) See p. 111.
- **Ritz-Carlton Kapalua** (☎ 800/262-8440 or 808/669-6200; www.ritzcarlton.com): With its great location, style, and loads of hospitality, this is the best Ritz anywhere. Situated on the coast below the picturesque West Maui Mountains, this grand, breezy hotel overlooks the Pacific Ocean and Molokai across the channel. The natural setting, on an old coastal pineapple plantation, is the picture of tranquillity. The service is legendary, the golf courses are daunting, and the nearby beaches are perfect for snorkeling, diving, and just relaxing. See p. 120.
- **The Fairmont Kea Lani Maui** (☎ 800/659-4100 or 808/875-4100; www.fairmont.com/kealani): This all-suite luxury hotel in Wailea has 840-square-foot suites featuring kitchenettes with microwaves and coffeemakers, living rooms with high-tech media centers and pullout sofa beds (great if you have the kids in tow), marble wet bars, and spacious bedrooms. The oversize marble bathrooms have separate showers big enough for a party. Large lanais off the bedrooms and living rooms overlook the pools and lawns, with views that sweep right down to the white-sand beach. See p. 129.
- **Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea** (☎ 800/334-MAUI [6284] or 808/874-8000; www.fourseasons.com/maui): This is the ultimate beach hotel for latter-day royals, offering excellent cuisine, spacious

rooms, gracious service, and Wailea Beach—one of Maui's best gold-sand beaches—right outside the front door. Every room has at least a partial ocean view from a private lanai. The luxury suites are as big as some Honolulu condos and full of marble and deluxe appointments. See p. 130.

- **Grand Wailea Resort Hotel & Spa** (☎ 800/888-6100 or 808/875-1234; www.grandwailea.com): There's nothing subtle or understated about it, but many travelers adore this over-the-top fantasy resort. It has 10,000 tropical plants in the lobby; a fabulous pool with slides, waterfalls, and rapids; Hawaii's largest spa; plush oceanview rooms; and a superb location on a gorgeous stretch of beach. See p. 130.
- **Hotel Hana-Maui** (☎ 800/321-HANA [4262] or 808/248-8211; www.hotelhanamaui.com): Picture Shangri-La, Hawaiian style: 66 acres rolling down to the sea in a remote Hawaiian village, with two pools and access to one of the best beaches in Hana. This is the atmosphere, the landscape, and the culture of old Hawaii set in the latest accommodations of the 21st century. A white-sand beach just a 5-minute shuttle ride away, top-notch wellness center, and numerous activities (horseback riding, mountain bicycling, tennis, pitch-and-putt golf) all add up to make this one of the top resorts in the state. See p. 137.

- **Four Seasons Resort Lanai at Manele Bay** (Lanai; ☎ 800/321-4666 or 808/565-2000; www.fourseasons.com/lanai): The high-end resort chain Four Seasons took over management of this 236-unit property after a multimillion-dollar makeover. Facing the deep-blue Pacific, this luxury resort has become even more luxurious. The remodeled rooms (most with an ocean view) now feature 40-inch flatscreen TVs and huge marble bathrooms. The nearly beachfront hotel (a 2-min. stroll puts you on the sands of one of Hawaii's best beaches) also has many pluses for families: child-care programs, a teen center, and an excellent fitness program and pampering spa. Add to that great golf, plenty of tennis, and all the ocean activities you can think of. See p. 299.
- **Four Seasons Resort Lanai, The Lodge at Koele** (Lanai; ☎ 800/321-4666 or 808/565-4000; www.fourseasons.com/lanai): After some \$50 million in renovations, the Four Seasons took over management of the former Lodge at Koele. All of the 102 guest rooms were totally renovated, with new carpeting, furniture, and fabrics, plus luxuries such as signature Four Seasons beds, 42-inch flatscreen TVs, and high-speed Internet access. This inn, which resembles a grand English country estate, was built in 1991 and needed the renovation. The new look is spectacular. See p. 300.

7 The Best Moderately Priced Accommodations

- **The Plantation Inn** (☎ 800/433-6815 or 808/667-9225; www.theplantationinn.com): Attention, romance-seeking couples: You need look no further. This charming Lahaina hotel looks like it's been here 100 years or more, but looks can be deceiving. The Victorian-style inn is

actually of 1990s vintage—an artful deception. The rooms are romantic to the max, tastefully done with period furniture, hardwood floors, stained glass, ceiling fans, and four-poster canopy beds. The rooms wrap around the large pool and deck; also on site are a spa and an elegant pavilion

lounge, where breakfast is served, all starting at \$169 double. See p. 107.

- **Lahaina Inn** (☎ 800/669-3444 or 808/661-0577; www.lahainainn.com): If the romance of historic Lahaina catches your fancy, a stay here will really complete the experience. Built in 1938 as a general store, it has been restored as a charming, antiques-filled inn right in the heart of town, with room rates as low as \$150. Downstairs, you'll find one of Hawaii's most popular storefront bistros, David Paul's Lahaina Grill. See p. 109.
- **Kahana Sunset** (☎ 800/669-1488 or 808/669-8011; www.kahanasunset.com): This is a great choice for families, featuring a series of wooden condo units stair-stepping down the side of a hill to a postcard-perfect white-sand beach. The units feature full kitchens, washer/dryers, large lanais with terrific views, and sleeper sofas (starting at \$165 for up to four people). See p. 116.
- **Punahoa Beach Apartments** (☎ 800/564-4380 or 808/879-2720; www.punahoabeach.com): This small oceanside Kihei condo complex is

hidden on a quiet side street; the grassy lawn out front rolls about 50 feet down to the beach. You'll find great snorkeling just offshore and a popular surfing spot next door, with shopping and restaurants all within walking distance. Every well-decorated unit features a lanai with fabulous ocean views, starting at \$116 off season. See p. 125.

- **Paniolo Hale** (Molokai; ☎ 800/367-2984 or 808/553-8334; www.molokai-vacation-rental.com or www.paniolo-hale.org): This is far and away Molokai's most charming lodging and probably its best value. The two-story old-Hawaii ranch-house design is airy and homey, with oak floors and walls of folding-glass doors that open to huge screened verandas. The condos start at just \$105 for two. See p. 270.
- **Hotel Lanai** (Lanai; ☎ 800/795-7211 or 808/565-7211; www.hotel-lanai.com): This simple, down-home, plantation-era relic has recently been Laura Ashley-ized. The Hotel Lanai is homey, funky, and fun—and, best of all, a real bargain (starting at \$139 for two) compared to its ritzy neighbors. See p. 300.

8 The Best Bed & Breakfasts

- **Old Wailuku Inn at Ulupono** (☎ 800/305-4899 or 808/244-5897; www.mauiinn.com): Located in historic Wailuku, the most charming town in central Maui, this restored 1924 former plantation manager's home is the place to stay if you're looking for a night in the old Hawaii of the 1920s. The guest rooms are spacious, with exotic ohia-wood floors and traditional Hawaiian quilts. The morning meal is a full gourmet breakfast served on the enclosed back lanai or on a tray delivered to your room if you prefer. Rates start at \$150. See p. 103.
- **Guest House** (☎ 800/621-8942 or 808/661-8085; www.mauiguesthouse.com): This is one of the great bed-and-breakfast deals in Lahaina: a charming inn offering more amenities than the expensive Kaanapali hotels just down the road. The spacious home features floor-to-ceiling windows, parquet floors, and a large swimming pool. Guest rooms have quiet lanais and romantic Jacuzzis. Breakfasts are a gourmet affair. All units are \$169 double. See p. 108.
- **Nona Lani Cottages** (☎ 800/733-2688 or 808/879-2497; www.nonalanicottages.com): Picture this: a

grassy expanse dotted with eight cottages tucked among palm, fruit, and sweet-smelling flower trees, right across the street from a white-sand beach. This is one of the great hidden deals in Kihei. The cottages are tiny but contain everything you'll need. At \$105 a night, this is a deal. See p. 127.

- **Pineapple Inn Maui** (☎ 877/212-MAUI [6284] or 808/298-4403; www.pineappleinnmaui.com): Opened in late 2004, this charming inn (only four rooms, plus a darling two-bedroom cottage) is not only an exquisite find, but also a terrific value (rates start at \$119 a night). Located in the residential Maui Meadows area, with panoramic ocean views, the two-story inn features a giant salt-water pool and Jacuzzi overlooking the ocean. Each of the soundproof rooms is expertly decorated with a small kitchenette, comfy bed, free wireless Internet access, TV/VCR, and an incredible view off your own private lanai. See p. 128.
 - **Two Mermaids on Maui B&B** (☎ 800/598-9550 or 808/874-8687; www.twomermaids.com): Two avid scuba divers are the hosts at this very friendly Kihei B&B, professionally decorated in brilliant, tropical colors, complete with hand-painted art of the island (above and below the water) in a quiet neighborhood just a short 10-minute walk from the beach. Comfy rooms start at \$115, including breakfast. See p. 128.
 - **What a Wonderful World B&B** (☎ 800/943-5804 or 808/879-9103; www.amauibedandbreakfast.com): Another one of Kihei's best B&Bs offers a great central location in town—just ½ mile to Kamaole II Beach Park, 5 minutes from Wailea golf courses, and convenient to shopping and restaurants. All rooms boast cooking facilities and private
- entrances, bathrooms, and phones. A family-style breakfast (eggs Benedict, Alaskan waffles, skillet eggs with mushroom sauce, fruit blintzes) is served on the lanai, which has views of white-sand beaches, the West Maui Mountains, and Haleakala. From \$89 double. See p. 128.
- **Ekena** (☎ 808/248-7047; www.ekena.maui.com): Situated on 8½ acres in the hills above Hana, this Hawaiian-style wooden pole house, with 360-degree views of the coastline, the ocean, and Hana's verdant rainforest, is perfect for those in search of a quiet, peaceful vacation. Inside, the elegantly furnished home features floor-to-ceiling sliding-glass doors and a fully equipped kitchen (starting at \$225 for two); outside, hiking trails into the rainforest start right on the property. Beaches, waterfalls, and pools are mere minutes away. See p. 138.
 - **Hamoia Bay House & Bungalow** (☎ 808/248-7884; www.hamoabay.com): This enchanting retreat sits on 4 verdant acres within walking distance of Hamoia Beach, just outside Hana. The romantic 600-square-foot Balinese-style cottage has a full kitchen and hot tub. This very private place is perfect for honeymooners. The price? Just \$225. See p. 139.
 - **Heavenly Hana Inn** (☎ 808/248-8442; www.heavenlyhanainn.com): Just a stone's throw from the center of Hana is this tiny Japanese-style inn, where no attention to detail has been spared. Flowers are everywhere, ceiling fans keep the rooms cool, and the delicious gourmet breakfast is served in a setting filled with art. The 2 acres of grounds are impeccable, with tiny bridges over a meandering stream and Japanese gardens. Rooms start at \$190. See p. 140.
 - **Aloha Beach House** (Molokai; ☎ 888/828-1008 or 808/828-1100;

www.molokaivacation.com): Nestled on the lush East End of Molokai is this Hawaiian-style beach house sitting right on the white-sand beach of Waialua. Perfect for families, the impeccably decorated two-bedroom,

1,600-square-foot property has a huge open living/dining/kitchen area that opens onto an old-fashioned porch for meals or just sitting in the comfy chairs and watching the clouds roll by. Just \$290 for up to five people. See p. 272.

9 The Best Resort Spas

- **Spa Moana at the Hyatt Regency Maui Resort & Spa** (☎ 800/233-1234 or 808/661-1234; www.maui.hyatt.com): The island's first ocean-front spa, this 20,000-square-foot facility offers an open-air exercise lanai, wet-treatment rooms, massage rooms, a relaxation lounge, sauna and steam rooms, a Roman pool illuminated by overhead skylights, and a duet treatment suite for couples. See p. 110.
- **Spa at the Ritz-Carlton Kapalua** (☎ 800/262-8440 or 808/669-6200; www.ritzcarlton.com): Book a massage on the beach. The spa itself is welcoming and wonderful, but there is nothing like smelling the salt in the air and feeling the gentle caress of the wind in your hair while experiencing a true Hawaiian massage. See p. 120.
- **Spa Kea Lani at the Fairmont Kea Lani Maui** (☎ 800/659-4100 or 808/875-4100; www.fairmont.com/kealani): This intimate, Art Deco boutique spa (just a little over 5,000 sq. ft., with nine treatment rooms), which opened in 1999, is the place for personal and private attention. The fitness center next door is open 24 hours (a rarity in Hawaiian resorts) with a personal trainer on duty some 14 hours a day. See p. 129.
- **Spa at the Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea** (☎ 800/334-MAUI [6284] or 808/874-8000; www.fourseasons.com/maui): Imagine the sound of the waves rolling on Wailea Beach as you are soothingly massaged in the privacy of your cabana, tucked in among the beachside foliage. This

is the place to come to be absolutely spoiled. Yes, there's an excellent workout area and tons of great classes, but the specialty here is hedonistic indulgence. See p. 130.

- **Spa Grande at the Grand Wailea Resort Hotel & Spa** (☎ 800/888-6100 or 808/875-1234; www.grandwailea.com): This is Hawaii's biggest spa, at 50,000 square feet and with 40 treatment rooms. The spa incorporates the best of the Old World (romantic ceiling murals, larger-than-life Roman-style sculptures, mammoth Greek columns, huge European tubs), the finest Eastern traditions (a full Japanese-style traditional bath and various exotic treatments from India), and the lure of the islands (tropical foliage, ancient Hawaiian treatments, and island products). It has everything from a top fitness center to a menu of classes and is constantly on the cutting edge of the latest trends. See p. 130.
- **Spa at the Four Seasons Resort Lanai at Manele Bay** (Lanai; ☎ 800/321-4666 or 808/565-2000; www.fourseasons.com/lanai): The new spa facility here features a variety of massages, facials, wraps, and scrubs (don't miss the signature Ali'i banana-coconut scrub). In addition, the Four Seasons has added a 1,500-square-foot fitness center (with one of the best ocean views in the resort) that features the latest cardiovascular and strength-training equipment, free weights, and a wood-floor studio for classes (spinning, yoga, Pilates, and meditation). See p. 299.

Moments Pampering in Paradise

Hawaii's spas have raised the art of relaxation and healing to a new level. The traditional Greco-Roman-style spas, with lots of marble and big tubs in closed rooms, have evolved into airy, open facilities that embrace the tropics. Spa-goers in Hawaii are looking for a sense of place, steeped in the culture. They want to hear the sound of the ocean, smell the salt air, and feel the caress of the warm breeze. They want to experience Hawaiian products and traditional treatments they can get only in the islands.

The spas of Hawaii, once nearly exclusively patronized by women, are now attracting more male clients. There are also special massages for children and pregnant women, and some spas have created programs to nurture and relax brides on their big day.

Today's spas offer a wide diversity of treatments. Massage options include Hawaiian lomilomi, Swedish, aromatherapy (with sweet-smelling oils), craniosacral (massaging the head), shiatsu (no oil, just deep thumb pressure on acupuncture points), Thai (another oil-less massage involving stretching), and hot stone. There are even side-by-side massages for couples. The truly decadent might try a duo massage—not one, but two massage therapists working on you at once.

Body treatments, for the entire body or just the face, involve a variety of herbal wraps, masks, or scrubs using a range of ingredients from seaweed to salt to mud, with or without accompanying aromatherapy, lights, and music.

After you have been rubbed and scrubbed, most spas offer an array of water treatments—a sort of hydromassage in a tub with jets and an assortment of colored crystals, oils, and scents.

Those are just the traditional treatments. Most spas also offer a range of alternative healthcare like acupuncture and chiropractic, and more exotic treatments like ayurvedic and siddha from India or reiki from Japan. Some offer specialized, cutting-edge treatments, like the Grand Wailea Resort's full-spectrum color-light therapy pod (based on NASA's work with astronauts).

Once your body has been pampered, spas also offer a range of fitness facilities (weights, racquetball, tennis, golf, and so on) and classes (such as yoga, aerobics, spinning, tai chi, and kickboxing). Several offer adventure fitness packages (from bicycling to snorkeling). For the less active, most spas also have salons dedicated to hair and nail care.

If all this sounds a bit overwhelming, not to worry: All the spas in Hawaii have individual consultants who will help you design an appropriate treatment program to fit your individual needs.

Of course, all this pampering doesn't come cheap. Massages are generally \$180 to \$275 for 50 minutes and \$265 to \$300 for 80 minutes, body treatments are in the \$150-to-\$250 range, and alternative healthcare treatments can be as high as \$200 to \$300. But you may think it's worth the expense to banish your tension and stress.

10 The Best Restaurants

- **Mañana Garage** (☎ 808/873-0220): It's great fun dining here, and the food is fantastic, too. Tuck in to fabulous *arepas* (cornmeal-cheese griddle cakes with smoked salmon), fried green tomatoes, excellent ceviche, and a host of new flavors in a colorful, edgy, industrial atmosphere. You'll dine among vertical garage doors, table bases made from hubcaps, cobalt walls, and chrome accents, with *Buena Vista Social Club* on the sound system and very hip servers who will bring you the best desserts in this neck of the woods—Kahului, of all places! See p. 142.
- **A Saigon Cafe** (☎ 808/243-9560): Jennifer Nguyen's unmarked dining room in an odd corner of Wailuku is always packed, a tribute to her clean, crisp Vietnamese cuisine—and the Maui grapevine. Grab a round of rice paper and wrap your own Vietnamese “burrito” of tofu, noodles, and vegetables. See p. 144.
- **A. K.'s Café** (☎ 808/244-8774; www.akscafe.com): Chef Elaine Rothermel has a winner with this tiny cafe in the industrial district of Wailuku. It may be slightly off the tourist path, and the decor isn't much to look at, but it is well worth the effort to find this delicious eatery, with creative cuisine coming out of the kitchen—most of it healthy. Prices are so eye-poppingly cheap, you might find yourself wandering back here again during your vacation. See p. 145.
- **David Paul's Lahaina Grill** (☎ 808/667-5117): Endlessly popular and universally appreciated for its high quality, David Paul's is still most folks' favorite Maui eatery—even without David Paul. No one seems to tire of the kalua duck he turned into a Maui institution, or the Kona coffee-roasted rack of lamb, or the much-imitated tequila shrimp. The menu changes often, but thank goodness the room doesn't: Its pressed-tin ceilings and 1890s decor continue to intrigue. See p. 146.
- **Gerard's** (☎ 808/661-8939; www.gerardsmaui.com): Proving that French is fabulous, particularly in the land of sushi and sashimi, Gerard Reversade is the Gallic gastronome who delivers ecstasy with every bite. From the rack of lamb to the spinach salad and oyster mushrooms in puff pastry, every meal is memorable. The fairy lights on the veranda in the balmy outdoor Lahaina setting are the icing on the gâteau. See p. 148.
- **Mala Ocean Tavern** (☎ 808/667-9394; www.malaoceantavern.com): Perched right on the ocean, this tiny “tavern” is the brainchild of Mark and Judy Ellman, owners of Maui Tacos and Penne Pasta Café. They use healthy, organically grown food and fresh fish to make intriguing dishes. The atmosphere could not be more enticing, with just a handful of tables out on the oceanfront lanai and several more tables in the warmly decorated interior. The staff is helpful and efficient, and the food is outstanding. See p. 150.
- **Son's Maui at Swan Court** (☎ 808/667-4506; www.sonzmaui.com): For 30 years, the Swan Court was *the* dining experience at the Hyatt Regency Maui Resort, and under Tri-Star Restaurant Group it's even better. The restaurant already had perhaps the most romantic location in Maui, overlooking a man-made lagoon with white and black swans swimming by and the rolling surf of the Pacific in the distance. The culinary team's

creative dishes, coupled with fresh local ingredients, have made it a must for every Maui visitor. See p. 153.

- **Roy's Kahana Bar & Grill** (☎ 808/669-6999; www.roysrestaurant.com): This restaurant bustles with young, hip servers impeccably trained to deliver blackened ahi or perfectly seared lemon-grass *shutome* (broadbill swordfish) hot to your table, in rooms that sizzle with cross-cultural tastings. See p. 156.
- **Pineapple Grill** (☎ 808/669-9600): This is the best new restaurant on Maui—if you only had a single night to eat on the island, I'd send you here. In fact, if you eat here at the beginning of your Maui trip, you might end up coming back! Chef Ryan Luckey is a genius at turning fresh local ingredients into culinary masterpieces such as the Maui-style seafood paella with Portuguese sausage and Kula herbs. See p. 158.
- **Plantation House Restaurant** (☎ 808/669-6299): Plantation House features teak tables, a fireplace, open sides, mountain and ocean views, and chef Alex Stanislaw's love for Mediterranean flavors and preparations. It's a friendly, comfortable restaurant with great food, including sublime eggs Mediterranean at breakfast, and polenta, crab cakes, fish, pork tenderloin, filet mignon, and other delights at dinner. The ambience is superb. See p. 158.
- **Sansei Seafood Restaurant & Sushi Bar** (☎ 808/669-6286 in Kapalua, 879-0004 in Kihei; www.sansei.hawaii.com): Relentlessly popular, Sansei serves sushi and then some: hand rolls warm and cold, udon and ramen, and the signature Asian rock-shrimp cake with the oh-so-complex lime-chile butter and cilantro pesto. This place is flavor central—simplicity is not its strong suit, so be prepared for some busy tasting. See p. 158.
- **Joe's** (☎ 808/875-7767; www.bevgannonrestaurants.com): The impressive view spans the Wailea golf course, tennis courts, ocean, and Haleakala—a worthy setting for Beverly Gannon's style of American home cooking with a regional twist (also see "Haliimaile General Store," below). The hearty staples include excellent mashed potatoes, lobster, fresh fish, and filet mignon, but the meatloaf (a whole loaf, like Mom used to make) upstages them all. See p. 165.
- **Haliimaile General Store** (☎ 808/572-2666; www.haliimailegeneralstore.com): Bev Gannon, one of the 12 original Hawaii Regional Cuisine chefs, is still going strong at her foodie haven in the pineapple fields. You'll dine at tables set on old wood floors under high ceilings. The food, a blend of eclectic American with ethnic touches, bridges Hawaii with Gannon's Texas roots and puts an innovative spin on Hawaii Regional Cuisine. Examples include sashimi napoleon and the house salad— island greens with mandarin oranges, onions, toasted walnuts, and blue-cheese crumble. See p. 165.
- **Moana Bakery & Cafe** (☎ 808/579-9999; www.members.aol.com/moanacafe): In the unlikely location of Paia, the Moana gets high marks for its stylish concrete floors, high ceilings, booths and cafe tables, and fabulous food. Don Ritchey, formerly a chef at Haliimaile General Store, has created the perfect Paia eatery, a casual bakery/cafe that highlights his stellar skills. It may not look like much from the outside, but don't be fooled. This innovative eatery serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner and offers live entertainment at night. See p. 169.
- **Colleen's at the Cannery** (☎ 808/575-9211; www.colleensinhaliku.com):

Way, way, way off the beaten path lies this chic, fabulous find in the rural Haiku Cannery Marketplace. It's worth the drive to enjoy Colleen's fabulous culinary creations, such as wild-mushroom ravioli with sautéed portobello mushrooms, tomatoes, herbs, and a roasted-pepper coulis. See p. 170.

- **Old Lahaina Luau** (☎ 800/248-5828 or 808/667-1998; www.oldlahainaluau.com): It's not exactly a restaurant, but it's certainly an unforgettable dining experience. Maui's best luau serves top-quality food that's as much Pacific Rim as authentically Hawaiian, served from an open-air thatched structure. It's one-third entertainment, one-third good food, and one-third ambience. See p. 260.
- **Ihilani** (Lanai; ☎ 808/565-2296; www.fourseasons.com/manelebay/dining): During their tenures here, a number of top Hawaii chefs (such as Philippe Padovani and Edwin Goto) have added their own style to the menu, which melds Mediterranean with Island cuisine. The result is one

of Lanai's top gourmet restaurants. The latest incarnation of this classy restaurant, overlooking the resort and the ocean beyond, is traditional Italian cuisine that is actually reasonably priced. Not to be missed. See p. 301.

- **Lanai City Grille** (Lanai; ☎ 808/565-7211): Celebrated Maui chef Bev Gannon (Haliimaile General Store, Joe's) redesigned the menu in this cute eatery, where the decor consists of pine-paneled walls, chintz curtains, and a fireplace. The menu sticks to whatever is in season and fresh that day, from the fish and seafood to the rotisserie chicken. See p. 303.
- **Pele's Other Garden** (Lanai; ☎ 808/565-9628): You don't have to spend a fortune at the high-priced eateries in the two resorts on Lanai: This charming bistro in the heart of Lanai City has a full-scale New York deli (yummy pizzas), and you can also get box lunches and picnic baskets to go. Dinner is now served on china on cloth-covered tables—a real dining room! See p. 304.

11 The Best Shops & Galleries

- **Summerhouse** (☎ 808/871-1320): Bright and sassy tropical wear and the jewelry and accessories to go with it are a cut above at Kahului's Summerhouse. T-shirts are tailored and in day-to-evening colors, while dresses are good for either the office or a night out. See p. 243.
- **Bailey House Museum Shop** (☎ 808/244-3326): You can travel Hawaii and peruse its past with the assemblage of made-in-Hawaii items at this museum gift shop in Wailuku. Tropical preserves, Hawaiian music, pareu, prints by esteemed Hawaiian artists, cookbooks, hatbands, and magnificent wood bowls reflect a discerning standard of selection.

Unequaled for Hawaiian treasures on Maui. See p. 244.

- **Brown-Kobayashi** (☎ 808/242-0804): At this quiet, tasteful, and elegant Asian shop in Wailuku, the selection of antiques and collectibles changes constantly but reflects an unwavering sense of gracious living. There are old and new European and Hawaiian objects, from koa furniture (which disappears fast) to lacquerware, Bakelite jewelry, Peking glass beads, and a few priceless pieces of antique ivory. See p. 244.
- **Village Galleries** (☎ 808/661-4402 in Lahaina, 808/669-1800 in Kapalua): Maui's oldest galleries have maintained high standards and the respect of a public that is increasingly

impatient with clichéd island art. On exhibit are the finest contemporary Maui artists in all media, with a discerning selection of handcrafted jewelry. In Lahaina, the contemporary gallery has a larger selection of jewelry, ceramics, glass, and gift items, as well as paintings and prints. See p. 248 and 250.

- **Hui No'eau Visual Arts Center** (☎ 808/572-6560): Half the experience is the center itself, one of Maui's historic treasures: a strikingly designed 1917 *kamaaina* (native-born, or old-timer) estate on 9 acres in Makawao; two of Maui's largest hybrid Cook and Norfolk pines; and an arts center with classes, exhibitions, and demonstrations. The gift shop is as memorable as the rest of it. You'll find one-of-a-kind works by local artists, from prints to jewelry and pottery. See p. 251.
- **Viewpoints Gallery** (☎ 808/572-5979): I love this airy, well-designed Makawao gallery and its helpful staff, which complement the fine Maui art: paintings, sculpture, jewelry, prints, woods, and glass. This is Maui's only fine-arts cooperative, showcasing the work of dozens of local artists. See p. 253.
- **Hana Coast Gallery** (☎ 808/248-8636): This gallery is a good reason to go to Hana: It's an aesthetic and cultural experience that informs as it enlightens. Tucked away in the

posh hideaway Hotel Hana-Maui, the 3,000-square-foot gallery is known for its high level of curatorship and commitment to the cultural art of Hawaii. It's devoted entirely to Hawaiian artists, who display their sculptures, paintings, prints, feather work, stonework, and carvings. See p. 254.

- **Dis 'N Dat** (Lanai; ☎ 866/DIS-N-DAT [347-6328]): This is my favorite shop on Lanai, where Barry (Dis) and Susie (Dat) have collected the unusual, the bizarre, and the hilariously funny. You'll find everything from finely crafted teak and exotic wood sculptures and carvings to mobiles and wind chimes (the more outrageous, the better), plus an impressive line of handmade jewelry, stained glass, and more. See p. 313.
- **The Local Gentry** (Lanai; ☎ 808/565-9130): This wonderful Lanai boutique features clothing and accessories that are not the standard resort-shop fare. You'll find fabulous silk aloha shirts by Iolani, Putumayo separates (perfect for Hawaii) in easy-care fabrics, a fabulous line of silk aloha shirts by Tiki, top-quality hemp-linen camp shirts, inexpensive sarongs, fabulous socks, and the Tommy Bahama line for men and women. There are also great T-shirts, swimwear, jewelry, bath products, picture frames, jeans, chic sunglasses, offbeat sandals, and wonderful children's clothes. See p. 314.