

ISSUE #20 | WINTER 2015

CONNECTIONS

LIVE | TRAVEL | CONNECT

A Z I N E

OSLO

THE GRAND TRIP

PERU

THE HIDDEN JEWEL

MAUI

IS FOR FOODIES

FLORIDA

IT'S SO BEACHY

CALIFORNIA

THE PINK LADY

DELUXE LIFE





Photo by: David Duran

TRAVEL: MAUI



Every Foodie's Dream Destination

Kaanapali



Written by & photos: David Duran

David is a culinary, hospitality and travel writer who focuses on both domestic and international travel destinations for several different markets. His love for discovering cities and travel spots is evident as he is away from his favorite place and home base of New York City the majority of the time.

It's no secret that I consider myself a part time resident of Maui, and find myself never leaving the island without having a return trip already in the works so that I won't be so sad when I board the plane.

It used to be that I could just go, without any plans and just enjoy all the magical paradise the island has to offer, but as of late, the events on the island have been drawing me more and more. At the start of the summer I found myself attending the Maui Film Festival over in Wailea, and tasting amazing culinary delights by Chef Ryan Urig, Executive Chef at the Grand Wailea, a Waldorf Astoria Resort, at the "Taste of Summer" Film Fest Opening Night party, which was attended by Hollywood heavyweights Colin Farrell and Scott Eastwood, in addition to others. On a side note, I also ran into Farrell by my pool cabana the next day, which was also a highlight of the trip.

Kaanapali: Foodie's Dream Destination

At the end of this summer, I headed back to Maui for another massive event, The Hawaii Food & Wine Festival, held over in Kaanapali. Being the foodie that I claim to be, I knew I was in for a week of non-stop amazings because after reviewing the list of invited chefs, I was salivating at all the possibilities of food creations that each one could come up with, using only the freshest and most creative ingredients Maui has to offer.

The Kaanapali side of the island is a bit livelier, with resorts lining the beachfront, filled with activities and restaurants. I opted to spend my time at the Westin Kaanapali Ocean Resort Villas (KOR) because they were at the end of the strip, in a more relaxed setting, but still easily accessible to everything, especially with their free shuttle service that runs on a regular schedule. The resort was also playing host to one of the major events of the festival, and since it was a boozy event, I figured it would be conveniently located just steps from my villa, where I could catnap before later events.

The one-bedroom villa I occupied provided me with an abundance of space, with a full kitchen, living/dining room and even a washer and dryer, located next to the oversized bathroom.

The Westin KOR is also home to some extraordinary chefs. Executive Chef Francois Milliet has done a tremendous job of taking the dining experience at the AAA four-diamond resort to new heights of success. And one of the major successes was in the addition of Chef Matt Skaletsky, Executive Sous Chef at the resort. Both Chef Milliet and Chef Skaletsky have an abundance of experience and are elevating the Westin KOR with exciting new menus and dining options. Pulehu, an Italian Grill, is one of Maui's best Italian restaurants, and recently appointed Chef de Cuisine, Alvin Savella to spice things up with his own touch.

I had the opportunity to test out some of the new menu which was introduced this past September, and Chef Savella has not only surpassed every



Travel: Maui

expectation of wonderfulness we all expected, but has also brought a new flavor and style to Pulehu, which I expect will continue to keep it as one of the island's favorite places to eat. Sous Chef Jesse Pita is also killing it over at the Ocean Pool Bar & Grill which happens to have a very cost friendly happy hour...I personally know this from my many visits, but my favorite place to grab some grub at the Westin KOR is at Pailolo Bar & Grill. The open-air sport bar serves up food truck style offerings from an eclectic menu of local, contemporary twists on classic food truck favorites, all which highlight the farmers, growers and products of Maui. The Hot Honey Sriracha Wings are unbelievable but my top pick is hands down, the "Bi Bim Bap Style" Tots, served with kalua pork, tater tots, tobiko aioli, sesame seeds, micro cilantro, kale kimchi, and a farm fresh egg. I may have over indulged in those tots a few times, especially from my poolside cabana that was located just steps from Pailolo.

The Westin KOR hosted the Hawaii Food & Wine Festival's Moscow Mule Maui Style event, a mixology pairing lunch, located at the award winning Pulehu, an Italian Grill. I was able to learn about the history of the Moscow Mule, but then was able to taste variations of this classic cocktail, prepared by a panel, including Jason Vendrell from Monkeypod Kitchen Wailea, who demonstrated how to make your own ginger beer, the staple ingredient in a Moscow Mule.

The Sheraton Maui Resort & Spa's Black Rock lawn was the location for the Maui on my Mind event which featured eight renowned chefs serving up gourmet delights, inspired by the best of what Maui has to offer – its beauty, bounty of locally grown, raised and caught products, as well as its talent for a truly unforgettable experience. The craft cocktails here, paired with the beautifully set up food stations, performance artists, music and perfect backdrop, made this a really great evening to share with other foodaholics.





The Hyatt Regency Maui Resort & Spa played host to the final dinner of the back-to-back events in Kaanapali. The Hawaiian Airlines pPresents Legend of Shep Gordon Dinner was a tribute to legendary chef Gordon. From managing the careers of prominent musicians such as Alice Cooper to celebrity chef, Emeril Lagasse, Shep Gordon has more than earned a documentary movie about himself. *Supermensch: Legend of Shep Gordon* was produced in 2013 by Mike Meyers to honor a kind and gentle soul, who has coached, counseled, supported and helped many of his friends in the entertainment business. Mensch means gentleman in Yiddish. To celebrate his life and achievements, the Festival honored Shep with a six-course dinner created by six of his chef friends. The lawn at the Hyatt was another gorgeous location with stunning views of the ocean.

The entire food and wine festival in Kaanapali was a food-filled few days of gluttonous indulgence, but in the very best way possible. It was hard not to taste and try everything being offered because the chefs who were invited were truly masters of their

craft, each bringing something so special to the Kaanapali while complementing the specialness that Maui already has. With events like the Food & Wine Festival, as well as the Film Festival, Maui is proving to be not only a leisure destination, but also a festival and event destination for all LGBTQ travelers and allies. Of course, I'm happy to go and just be a bum in a cabana for a week while sipping on cocktails all day long, but having these types of events makes it possible to do just that, while also experiencing some pretty epic events.

The Hawaii Food & Wine Festival is the premier destination event in the Pacific. The festival took place over two weeks on multiple islands, featuring a roster of over 100 internationally renowned master chefs, culinary personalities, and wine and spirit producers. Co-founded by two of Hawaii's own James Beard Award-winning chefs, Roy Yamahuchi and Alan Wong, the festival showcases wine tastings, cooking demonstrations, one-of-a-kind excursions, and exclusive dining opportunities with dishes highlighting the state's bounty of local produce, seafood, beef and poultry.