

Garden Isle Golf

Written by Tom Mackin

Tuesday, 21 January 2020 09:45 - Last Updated Thursday, 23 January 2020 11:53



Poipu Bay Golf Course

Tee up at above-par island courses.



Timbers Kauai Ocean Club & Residences

Infinity-edge pools are well-named, aren't they? Find one with a memorable view and you want to stay in it, well, forever. A perfect example, with two-tiers no less, can be found on Kauai at the Timbers Kauai Ocean Club & Residences.

This private residential club opened in the summer of 2018 on the island's southeast coast, just a short drive from Lihue Airport. Part of the 450-acre Hokuala resort community overlooking the Pacific, the club comes with luxury vacation rentals, resort amenities and mesmerizing Pacific Ocean views from said infinity pool that include Ninini Point Lighthouse and the occasional gigantic cruise ship arriving or departing from nearby Nawiliwili Bay. Two-, three- and four-bedroom residences are elegant and comfortable. They're also for sale as whole ownership—from \$2.59 million to \$9.75 million—or as fractional ownership interests starting at \$399,000.

And yes, there is golf, in the form of the only Jack Nicklaus Signature design on the island. The Ocean Course at Hokuala—winner of "Hawaii's Best Golf Course" by the 2019 World Golf Awards—was renovated in 2017 and is everything you would expect from a course on the Garden Isle. Wide fairways greet you over the first few holes, while the par 3 fifth ramps up the challenge. It's the back nine however, with four oceanfront holes (especially the stunning par 3 14th), that you won't soon forget. Make sure it's that half of the course you play with the new Swing & Sail experience, which includes nine holes and a two-hour Kalapaki Sunset Catamaran Cruise where you may encounter Hawaiian Spinner dolphins, sea turtles, flying fish and even humpback whales. Take the water adventure one step further with a longer cruise along the unforgettable N? Pali Coast, home to jaw-dropping scenery that will fill up a memory card quickly.

Garden Isle Golf

Written by Tom Mackin

Tuesday, 21 January 2020 09:45 - Last Updated Thursday, 23 January 2020 11:53



Princeville Makai Golf Club, Patrick Koenig

There's more to see, including plenty of golf, on other parts of the island. At Kauai's northern end is the Princeville Makai Golf Club. There you will find a high-end, lushly manicured layout and countless views that will stop you in your tracks, but especially the par 3 third, a downhill with views of Hanalei Bay in the distance. The course is good enough to place fourth on Golfweek's 2019 "Best Courses You Can Play in Hawaii," making it Kauai's top-ranked layout. Almost as fun as the golf is a Sunset Golf Cart Tour that makes seven stops at scenic points around the course, ending up on the coastline at the par 3 seventh where the sunsets are, well, let's just say the pictures barely do it justice.

At the opposite end of the price spectrum is Wailua, a beloved muni course that opened as a nine-holer in the 1930's before adding what is now the front nine in 1961. It's a bit scruffy around the edges, but you can still see why the strong layout hosted the USGA Public Links Championship in 1975, 1985 and 1996. The first two holes run along the ocean before the front side turns inland on a straightaway par 3 that tips out at 245 yards. And the par 3 17th, with an elevated tee and the Pacific in the background, is up there with the island's best short holes. Wailua also has one of the coolest driving ranges around, with the glistening Pacific Ocean providing the backdrop.



Puakea Golf Course

Back on the island's southeast coast, not far from Lihue Airport, sits Puakea Golf Course. While the opening hole is not a dazzler—flat with water up the right side and an industrial center providing an uninspiring backdrop—the rest of the course more than makes up for that slow start. Things really take off at the par 3 sixth, with a downhill tee shot over a ravine filled with tropical undergrowth, all set against soaring mountains in the distance. Tasty options await at the low-key Ho'okipa Café in the clubhouse.

Poipu Bay Golf Course may ring a bell for diehard golf fans. It hosted the PGA Grand Slam of Golf from 1994 through 2006, won by Tiger Woods a mere seven times. One spin around the layout and you can see how it could test the world's best golfers thanks to subtle elevation changes and trade winds often coming into play. The three-hole closing stretch may be Kauai's best, with the 16th and 17th offering ocean views. The course is ranked sixth on Golfweek's 2019 "Best Courses You Can Play in Hawaii."

Of course, you'll miss out on too much if all you do on Kauai is golf. A helicopter ride provides the best vantage points, but hikes around the Ohi'a Forest and Waimea Canyon, or a day spent exploring the town of Hanalei, are worthy activities off the course. Then again, there is that infinity-edge pool beckoning as well.

To Learn More

Go Golf Kauai gogolfkauai.com.

Timbers Kauai timberskauai.com.