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A Force Of Nature ~ Aulani Disney Resort and Spa

Oahu, Hawaii

The new Aulani Disney Resort on Oahu features an “over the top” Laniwai Spa . The spirit of *Ohana* (family) abounds in this wonderland . The resort is perched on the sandy shore of a pristine lagoon---one of four lagoons along a most beautiful and gentile coastline ---just 20 minutes northwest of Honolulu, on the island of Oahu .

The resort features four restaurants—from sit down to buffet-style, two lounges, musical performances and story-time for the children. There are endless pools, caves, waterslide and a lazy river, with lifeguards at every turn. Children are reluctant to leave Aunty’s Beach House, Aulani’s complimentary Kid’s Club. The children play games, enjoy music, arts & crafts and experiences that provide the

true essence of Hawaii. Even teens have been factored into the equation at Painted Sky providing teens a place to hang offering their own space and inventive programs & computers, on-line games and a mixology bar for do-it-yourself blending of Hawaiian body polishes and face masks.

But the real magic is behind the glass doors of the **Laniwai Spa**. The Hawaiian translation of Laniwai is *freshwater heaven*. And every aspect of this Spa indeed pays homage to that name---from the unique water features, to the signature treatments, and the lush gardens, the warm pools---this environment welcomes guests to enjoy a momentary glimpse into the aloha spirit of the true Hawaii.

Rainbows. Reflective Light. Cascading Water.

A Connection To Nature.

This Spa Has Set Me On A Journey.....

My Journey Begins

Arriving in the afternoon I was greeted by a Spa Hostess, and the lovely scent of hibiscus transported me to a dreamy place I call Spa Heaven. I was asked to select a Pohaku Makamae, *a wishing stone*, from a bowl with various messages etched atop, and escorted down the O'Hia---a Transformation Corridor. This is the hub of the spa with four hallways all converging together and a large pool with a wall of water providing the soft sounds of relaxation . As I made a wish, I tossed my happiness stone, *hau'oli*, into the pool, beckoning the start of my journey.

A welcoming Attendant escorted me on a well-paced tour of the Spa. All of the predictable were here, from wet steam-room, to dry sauna, locker rooms, showers, relaxation waiting rooms for the women/men and a co-ed waiting area for couples as well. The Salon was dramatic in size and color palette and made me want to sit down and have an up-do, as I peered inside the space.

A Connection With Nature

The real pulse of this retreat is shockingly found outside where you are hidden from the grounds and the sounds from outside. It is the perfect refuge. Lush island-infused flowers, greenery and trees create a perfect backdrop to the clusters of chaise lounges and large circular warm soaking pools with a dusting of Seaweed or Eucalyptus scents. I sunk myself slowly into the Eucalyptus pool with my toes peering toward the sky. The area is expansive with surprises at every turn. I tip-toed across pebbles offering an instant reflexology respite, and danced in the Rain Shower Circle with six different streams and jets, creatively started by stepping on the tiled floor. I was so looking forward to my treatment, however I found myself not really wanting to leave this heavenly playful garden retreat. Next time I will curl up with a good book and bask in this glory for hours!

As we returned to the relaxation room, we paused at a Pulu Bar to create a custom scent for a scrub mixture for use during my visit, or it could be packaged for later use in my guestroom. The fragrances are so authentic. I selected hibiscus, while the other choices included: pineapple, mango, plumeria, orchid and maile (*greenery that is believed to protect the wearer*). For the men, the scents are different. Of course they are!

The list of Laniwai's spa treatments are seemingly endless---from soaks, to scrubs, massages, signature treatments, facials and skin enhancements. But my day was all about water, and I could not resist the Kilikili, *fine gentle rain*, treatment. The journey began in an expansive wet room. Chuck, the lead therapist at Laniwai Spa, first applied a delicious hibiscus scrub, and the gentle flow of warm water covered me completely up and down. Using coconut oil under streaming jets of warm water, a deep-tissue Lomilomi Hawaiian massage ensued. Lomilomi means to soften or tenderize, using rhythmic movements in series of three, to replicate the wave-pattern of the ocean. I floated in and out of a dreamy state of relaxation, and his firm hands soothed the tight muscles in my neck & back. The finishing was a signature body butter to nourish my skin. My arms and legs were aglow. After my shower I was presented with a selection of three teas to enjoy while drying my hair

and getting dressed. It was such a nice touch. The staff is very attuned to the guests and are helpful, however not ever-present.

As my journey concluded, and I was about to re-enter the real world, I was gifted a beautiful fabric packet of bath salts with the word Hau'oli, *happiness*, on the label. I had come full-circle in my journey, and I was lighter than air as I made my way back to the resort's plethora of fun.

The Details:

Aulani is located 25 minutes northwest of Honolulu, on the leeward side, in the town of Ko Olina. In addition to the Resort, there is a marina with boat rentals, four large lagoons, water activities, walking paths, a wedding venue, an 18-hole golf course, restaurants, other resorts, condos and timeshare properties.

Aulani, A Disney Resort & Spa in Ko Olina, Hawai'i
92-1185 Ali'inui Drive
Kapolei, HI 96707

Aulani Resort & Spa: <http://resorts.disney.go.com/aulani-hawaii-resort/>

Laniwai Spa: <http://resorts.disney.go.com/aulani-hawaii-resort/activities-amenities/spa-fitness/>

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To Right of Main Lobby... notes entry to Spa



The Spa Entrance



Circle of Rain---The Rain Shower Circle



Pathway in Outdoor Retreat



Vitality Herbal Bath –Curved for comfort



One of Three Warm Circular Soaking Pool



Pulu Bar for Custom Scrubs



Selection of teas presented after shower



Towel Display near the Shower area



Lush Pool Area At the Resort with the Beach beyond