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ADVENTURES IN PARADISE

(Along Kaanapali Beach, Maui) -

We are looking at a massage table set up on the patch of green between the walkway and the luxury hotels that line the shorefront. Why would anyone want a massage in full view of the hundreds of passing vacationers I wonder. Just then we notice a patch further up near the Hyatt where a young woman and her personal trainer are going through some very energetic moves.

The swans that inhabit the grounds and one of the larger ponds at the Hyatt have paused to watch. They stretch their necks to watch the two humans trying to do stretches that they do with ease. This is the site of some of those exercise shows you click past on cable, with those fantastically constructed human beings whose major worry in life seems to be whether or not that can move or lower a deltoid to where they want it. I am on this walk fearful that we may run into an aerobics class that Angela will ask me to join. I think it is very unhealthy to exercise while on vacation because of the dehydration possibilities and because you expend so much energy just calling the cabana boy over for drinks.

The Hyatt has a number of swim-up bars, waterfalls, and an open-air design that was quite revolutionary when first introduced about sixteen years ago. I was working for a cruise line then and we were having our annual meeting at another Maui resort. After dinner one night, the President and I walked over for our first visit to the Hyatt. Two years later, we announced that we were building a revolutionary new ship with an open-air interior design and an atrium lobby with lots of plants. The interior was to be done by the same design team that had done the Hyatt. The Pres had liked it.

The Marriott has a well received signature restaurant in traditional Japanese design called the Nikko. It's the current "in" place to dine on Kaanapalai. Everyone seems to be seeking out the Japanese wondering why there aren't more of them. In fact, most of the hotel executives we have met with on this trip have told us that the Japanese only make up 15% of the tourists visiting Hawaii.

(Kapalua Bay, Maui)

Driving out to Kapalua Bay, north of Kaanapalai, we pass some condos that look as though they were built by one of the cookie cutters at Keebler. Our host points out that a two-bedroom just sold for \$299,000. "Of course it needed some work.

Angela and I stayed for two nights in one of the Kapalua Bay Villas. This luxurious retreat is situated on some of Maui's most beautiful real estate. The elegant Ritz Carlton is just next door. The Villas, mostly privately owned, are nicely furnished by their owners and placed in a rental pool. Our two-floor unit

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was set up high with a back view of the magnificent Kapalua Bay course. You could hear the conversation on the tee just outside our living room, where birds of many hues sat watching the golfers in the trees that enclosed our terrace. There was nice artwork scattered throughout the villa and a huge telescope for training on the golfers as they teed off. In many ways, this is far nicer than a room at a resort.

There is a general store on the premises that looks like old time Hawaii. In the back room, there is a Chinese-out and a relatively exciting selection of local goods including the justifiably famous "Kitchen Cooked" Maui potato chips. These are the ones you want, the ones in the red and yellow bag. Lots of the bug boys have made franchise offers to this family-owned form but they won't sell out. You can barely find their chips on the other islands let alone the mainland. Don't read the fat content on the package and don't expect that they were cooked in non-fat vegetable oil. Just eat the chips, smile, and don't worry.

We're standing on sacred ground at the moment. We've been brought to the burial ground that became so controversial during the planned construction of the Ritz Carlton. The Ritz people had a perfect site on which to build a new resort. A number of local historians rushed forward to point out that the hotel would be built over land that had been used to bury their ancestors since before the arrival of the missionaries. History here is written BM and AM. Nothing much good happened in the AM near as I can figure.

Rather than fight a small but loud group of locals with the facts on their side, the Ritz people decided to relocate the entire architectural plan. Standing on this promontory, with the west Maui hills to my back and to my right, enveloped by slopping grounds that wind down from the 8,000 foot peak to the sea dead ahead, one can only imagine what the hotel's architect must have thought when he got the order to "make just a few slight adjustments".

The pure Hawaiians started at the mountaintop. Land was divided like a pie, with each piece ending at the water. No one owned the land but everyone got the benefit of the water irrigating the land on its way down the mountain and across the valleys.

There is not space here to discuss the spellbinding intricacies of Hawaiian culture. But the culture is rich and more and more of the better resort and hotel properties are trying to incorporate "Hawaiiana" into their daily programs. There is a strong feeling among true Hawaiians, as those of pure blood are called, to separate from the United States in order to maintain their own cultural identity. But since there are fewer than 2,000 of these people left, the movement has little chance for success. In fact, on the entire island of Kauai, there are only 46 native Hawaiians remaining.

The missionaries, it appears, did more than preach.

Later in the afternoon we went on a tour of the Pineapple Hill Homes that are across the highway and behind a security gate in the Kapalua highlands. We were taken to a magnificent home whose front door opened to a huge sunken

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living room with sliding glass doors that opened to a private swimming pool and terrace with adjacent ponds overlooking the fairways. There were double balconies overhanging the corners of the living room and five bedrooms. Robin Williams had just checked out with his family and staff.

As he was shown the home for the first time, "Robin walked up to the edge of the swimming pool, raised his arms and began screaming "AH YES, IT'S GREAT TO BE BACK WHERE I BELONG".

I remember running into Mr. Williams on the streets of San Francisco when he was miming, absolutely better than anyone else. He had a hat placed on the grass in Union Square back then. He no longer seeks donations but, instead, raises money for others.

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