

Global travelers call this stretch of the Na Pali coast a must-see, by helicopter or by boat. Or for the really intrepid, by both.



KILAUEA LAKESIDE, HAWAII

# Change of Pace

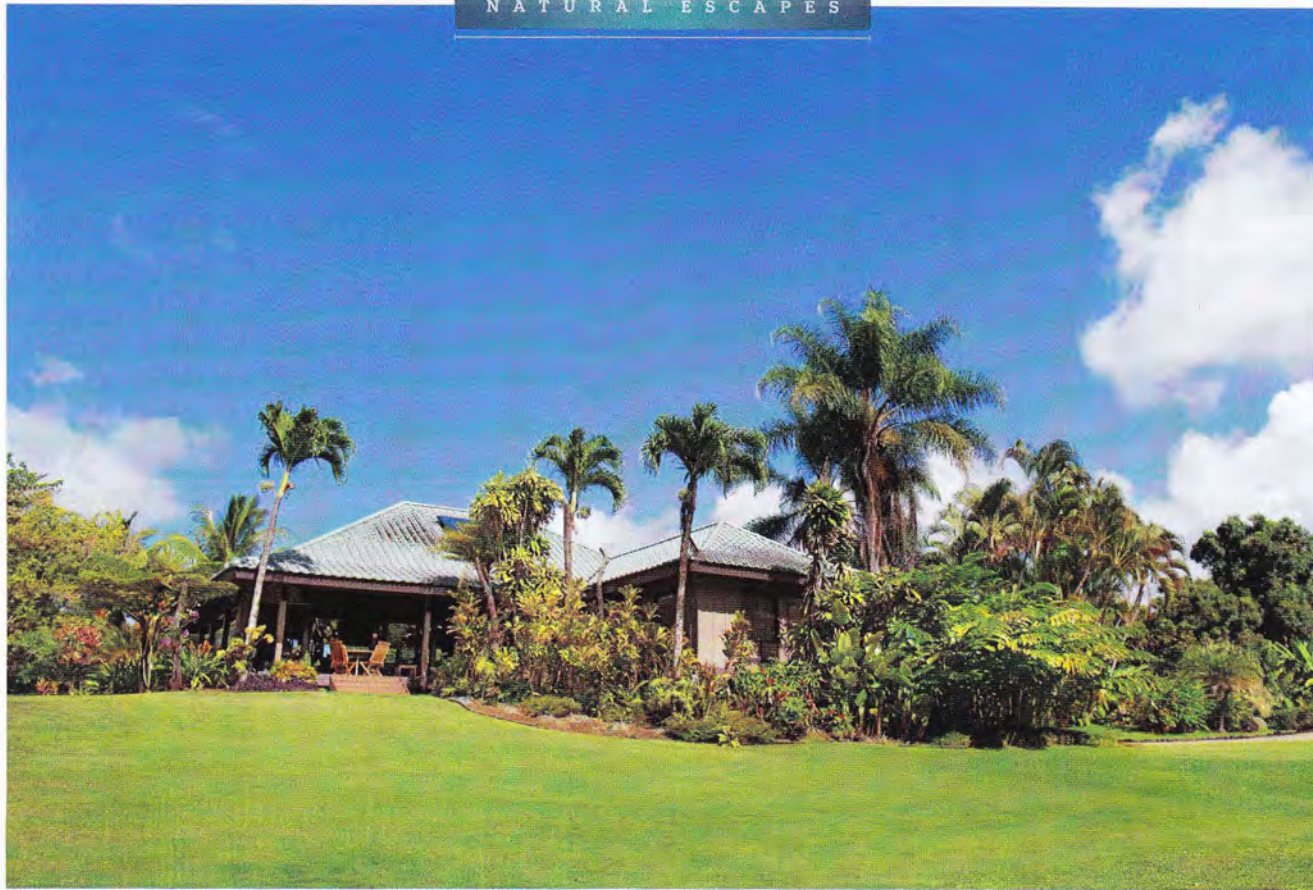
BY LORI BARBELY

IT'S MY FIRST MORNING IN KAUAI AND already an age-old question is being answered. I slow the Jeep to a stop and let a chicken cross the road. His destination? The beach. It's tempting to join him, but I'm a Jersey girl. If I wanted to lounge around and work on my tan, I would head to the Jersey shore, or to Maui. But I came to Kauai to avoid the crowds, and to check off a list of adventures before those same crowds discover this unsung Hawaiian island. So I left the lazy comforts of Kilauea Lakeside Estate (the hammock, spa tub and inflatable boat) before dawn, knowing I had just three days to do it all. With the chicken safely on the other side, I punch the gas.

My kind of action is found 1,000 feet over Kauai in a small chopper, doors off. With the skill of a former Ms. Pacman junkie, the pilot uses a joystick to maneuver us over craggy ridgelines and into tiny canyons. From up here Kauai is green. Incredibly green. Hanapepe Valley has shades of the color I didn't know existed. But it's the Na Pali coast that forces me to lower my camera and stare in awe at the nearly 17 miles of accordioned coastline framed by insanely blue water.

"Flying and boating are the best ways to access the Na Pali," the pilot says. "Unless you feel like hiking 11 miles. And who has time for that?" Not me. Though I can't help but pause and imagine me ... down there ... on that sand ... but I'd be 11 miles, and hours, from my next adventure.

With my feet firmly back on the ground, I hustle to the Jeep and swing by the Hanalei Valley for a peek at the taro fields below. It's a quick peek. With no one here to snap a shot of me, I finagle an



I was here. I have just enough time to get back to Kilauea Lakeside, shower, and change for dinner. Barely. I wish someone had warned me about helicopter hair. It will take precious minutes to untangle the mess of microscopic knots.

I'M UP BEFORE DAWN AGAIN, AND THIS time I leave the estate without even the luxury of a shower. The sun casts its golden glow over the private lake and the inflatable boat. While loading my gear into the Jeep, I can't help but think, "Who flies 10 hours to Hawaii just to spend time floating on a lake?"

It's nearly an hour's ride to Kikia'ola Small Boat Harbor. Except for a few surfers, Kauai sleeps. Out on the water I employ a death grip on the Zodiac's safety rope as a handful of us bounce over waves. At least I'm not packed like a sardine with 137 people. A pod of dolphins plays tag in the water alongside us. The 3,000-foot cliffs of the Na Pali dwarf our 24-foot boat. It's awe-inspiring,

Steve puts his napkin down and presses a business card into my hand. "Call Dana," he says. "I see her once a week. It's changed my life."

Look at the time. I have to get back to the Jeep, grab a quick bite at Puka Dog and visit Kilauea Lighthouse at the northernmost point of the Hawaiian Islands. It's late in the day and I have the place to myself. The peninsula's rock foundation and green landscape give the lighthouse a stately presence over the ocean. An amazing sight — but I have dinner plans.

At Bar Acuda I regale Steve and Janine Hunt, owners of Kilauea Lakeside Estate,

with stories of my first two days. Steve looks serious. "You need to schedule a massage. And some downtime."

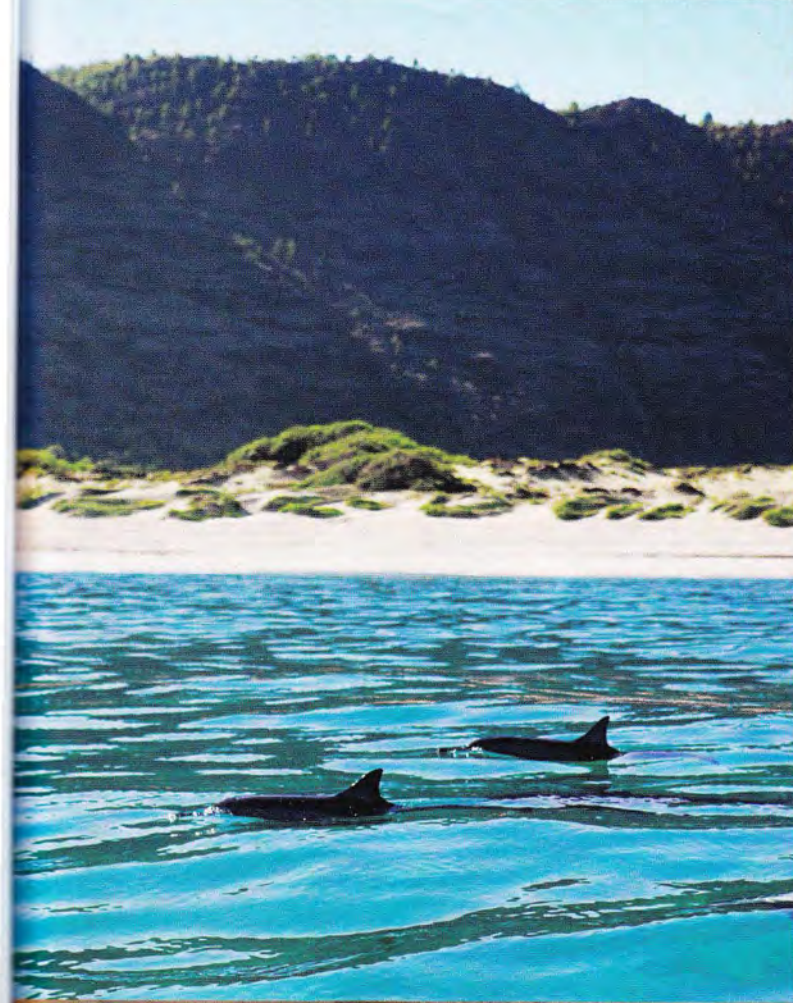
Janine agrees. "Polynesian paralysis is an integral part of the Kauai experience."

Steve scrapes the last spoonfuls from his chocolate pot de creme and puts his napkin down. He presses a business card into my hand. "Call Dana," he says. "I see her once a week. It's changed my life."

I nod politely and tuck the card in my wallet. On the road back to the estate, my eyes heavy, I think: Could lying down for a massage really be *integral* to the Kauai experience? I still have the hike tomorrow, and a tube ride, and a bike tour. Back at the house I take the card from my wallet and make a phone call.

The massage does change my life, or at least my day. Because after Dana melts my muscles, I go down and drag the inflatable boat into the lake and set myself adrift. That chicken was smarter than I'd thought. | [KAUAILAKESIDE.COM](http://KAUAILAKESIDE.COM)

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Being swallowed up in the estate's comforts is just as critical to the true Kauai experience as are close-ups with the island's natural beauty.



## Kauai

"While Kauai begs to be explored, be sure to plan for plenty of downtime. Give into Polynesian paralysis — you'll know it when you feel it." — LORI BARBELY, *photo editor*

### First Steps

DAY

1

Fly to Lihue, Kauai (LIH), and pick up your rental car. Whether for lunch or dinner, try the Hanalei roll with shrimp tempura and seared tuna at Hanalei Dolphin. Live like a local and rent the three-bedroom Kilauea Lakeside Estate for the week. The door will be open and the lights will be on — no need to pick up keys.

### Catch Some Air

DAY

2

See Kauai with Jack Harter Helicopters, sans doors. Your photos of Waimea Canyon and the Na Pali coast from thousands of feet in the air will plaster your walls at home forever. Don your aloha wear for dinner at the St. Regis' Kauai Grill. Sip a pineapple mojito while you watch the sun sink over Bali Hai.

### One if by Land

DAY

3

For a different experience, explore the former Lihue sugar plantation — from an inner tube. What was once 2½ miles of irrigation tunnels is now Kauai's version of a water park. Grab your headlamp and meander down five pitch-black tunnels and through remote landscapes. Cap off your day with a classic Hawaiian experience: the Smith Family Garden Luau.

### Two if by Sea

DAY

4

Rise early and drive to the south side of the island to meet Captain Andy's Sailing Adventures. There, board a Zodiac for a tour along the Na Pali coast. It's a bumpy ride, but the spectacular views make it worthwhile. Then hit Puka Dog in Poipu. Grilled Polish sausages are smothered with hot sauce and island-inspired relishes such as mango, pineapple and star fruit.

### Get Fresh

DAY

5

Go to Hanalei Farmers Market for Kauai's freshest fruit. Once full, snorkel at Tunnels Beach. Rest, then have a tapas dinner at Bar Acuda. Order the North Shore honeycomb with Kunana Farms goat cheese, mizuna greens and apple.

### A Hui Hou

DAY

6

Most flights home don't depart until late in the evening. So use this day to hit anything you've missed. Or just book a lomi lomi massage with Massage by Dana. Float in the Waiakalua Lake one more time, and enjoy your last day of aloha. A *hui hou* (until we meet again).

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