

Destination
U.S.A.,
Hawai'i



Waikiki Beachcomber by Outrigger

by Shane Boocock

It's hard to believe I first visited Waikiki Beach in 1984 - 35 years ago - and Aloha, I wasn't surprised to find that it has changed beyond recognition. Once a stopover on the way to Australia or New Zealand, today it is a bon-a-fide destination that welcomes over 10 million visitors a year.

The Waikiki Beachcomber by Outrigger has been around a long time - 41 years in fact, but with a recent US\$ 37 million renovation, the old girl is sparkling again. The property has 498 rooms but still enjoys a high occupancy year round due to a competitive rate structure and by being only one block back from the beach. In every room, behind every bedhead, is a full wall-to-wall surfing picture by the famous underwater photographer Zac Noyle. In fact 12 local artists contributed to the designs and décor in the property from hand painted plant species on the walls outside each elevator floor to specially commissioned paintings in each bathroom.

Room types in this property consist of Deluxe Ocean Views to 1 Bedroom Suites...just remember the higher the floor the better the ocean and beach views. Each room has a king sized bed, luxury bathroom amenities, a large 52 inch screen TV, kimono style bath robes and balconies with those amazing views.

On the lobby level (which is a long escalator ride above street level) you'll find the Maui Brewing Co. and the Aroma Coffee Café, which serve both lobby guests and swimming pool guests. Aroma has laid back, beach shack like vibes as well as a good range of Hawaiian style coffees, light breakfast and lunch options, bar snacks and a range of fruit based cocktails.

The Maui Brewing Co. Restaurant & Bar is their signature dining and drinking establishment in Waikiki. Breakfast starts at 7.30 am and I can really recommend the Eggs Benedict. For lunch try one of their well-priced beef burgers or more expensive fresh caught fish and chips with coleslaw. I didn't try their evening menu but I'll bet it serves some belting meals. If it

is beer, wine or cocktails you desire – mosey on up to the very long, oblong shaped bar and just let the bartenders do their stuff.

As shopping is on everybody's mind when they come to Waikiki, your first port of call should be Duke's Outdoor Market in the side alley of the hotel, so it's literally on the doorstep. This is the perfect place to buy a range of goods from stall holders such as trinkets, Hawaiian T-shirts and baseball hats, embroidered blankets, shawls or towels, costume jewellery, knick-knacks, curios and anything with Waikiki Beach written on it.

For more shopping options pop into Macy's Department Store at street level below the Waikiki Beachcomber by Outrigger – here they offer a 10% discount card to all international travellers just by showing your passport. It's a great place to shop for women and men's apparel, shoes, jewellery, make-up, eyewear and a range of home-style décor.

However if you're into bigger ticket items, with bigger price tags, on the same block as the hotel is the famous Waikiki International Marketplace – once a collection of shacks selling trinkets, it is now a high-end fashion mall over three floors with a dazzling array of flashy stores as well as nine unique restaurants to choose from. During my stay I chose to eat lunch at the Street Food Hall on the ground floor and on my last night I dined at Herringbone Restaurant on the top floor of the International Marketplace – both were completely different but both were downright excellent.

The Street Food Hall is a low cost alternative to all the higher priced restaurants that seem to be on every street corner. It delivers a clever concept by combining eight different dining experiences as each outlet delivers a different menu. Inside or outside are a number of areas in which to eat – there is also a regular pull-up-a-stool drinks bar as well as a smaller cocktail bar inside the dining venue. If you are travelling with a family try pre-booking a Street Party Pass online. This allows you to have either a four or seven value-priced sampler



option (four is US\$ 24.99 or seven is US\$ 36.99). All you then need to do is choose your food preferences and have your card swiped. Five US dollars on average is then deducted per meal, beer, special coffee or soft drink – so it's a very cost effective way to feed the whole family.

One of eight options on the top floor of the International Marketplace is Herringbone Restaurant, with a décor and ambiance in nautical themes but stylishly presented. Light fixtures hang from up-turned wooden outrigger canoes and elsewhere there is a floor to ceiling hanging wall garden and one room is enclosed with greenery cascading out of suspended wooden troughs.

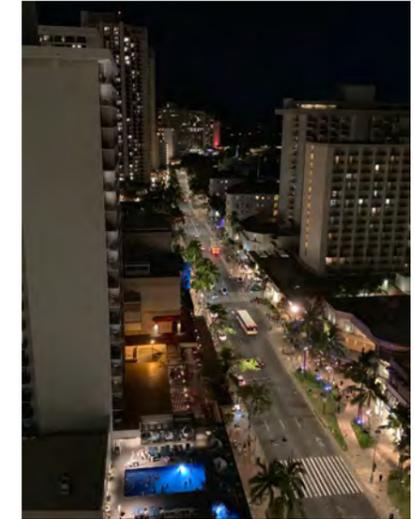
The Executive Chef of Herringbone is a born and bred Hawaiian, Gary Tamashi. His dishes reflect his years working in restaurants in Phoenix, Arizona and Las Vegas, Nevada before he moved back to his native island home. I passed on the first portion of the menu that were nibbles from a Salt & Brine Raw Bar in favour of a starter of cold Yellowtail Crudo with truffle yuzu, crispy garlic and micro shiso followed by hot Buffalo Octopus with black eyed peas. For my main course I couldn't resist ordering the Kona Kanpachi – king Hawaiian shrimp and Portuguese sausage on a bed of balsamic rice surrounded by a rich delicious sauce. The dessert menu was placed before me but I had to decline it, because, the starters and main dishes had been so exceptional, I was still savouring the flavours and fine dining experience.

Another favourite place to hangout to see a great sunset is Sky Waikiki, which is on the 18th floor of the adjacent building to the Beachcomber. It offers spectacular views with an outdoor seating area and bar that serves food from 5.00 pm until 11.00 pm Tue-Thu, 5.00 pm until 1.00 am Fri, and 5.00 pm to 2.00 am Sat.

The Waikiki Beachcomber by Outrigger Hotel is only one block to the beach and the best way to get there is via Duke's, named after Duke Paoa Kahanamoku, the famed surfer. Aged 21 he was an Olympic swimming

gold medalist and sometime actor in Hollywood. In 1914 he introduced surfing to New Zealand and Australia. Duke's is located below the Waikiki Outrigger Beach Resort – a sister property to Waikiki Beachcomber by Outrigger.

Duke's on Waikiki Beach is one of the iconic places to order cocktails and watch the sun set before dinner, it's especially well known for its prime location. Besides a hearty dinner menu Duke's also offers both a breakfast buffet and lunch buffet...so expect soups, salads, fresh fish, sandwiches and burgers and of course dessert. On Sundays a live band rowdily gets the locals and visitors alike barefoot grooving to a range of old-time classic tunes. ■



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The author would like to thank Outrigger Hotels and Resorts for assistance with coordinating his visit to Waikiki Beach, and the Waikiki Beachcomber by Outrigger W: www.outrigger.com

Maui Brewing Co.
W: www.mauibrewingco.com

Duke's Waikiki
W: www.dukeswaikiki.com/duke

The Aroma Coffee Café
W: www.hawaiianaromacaffe.com

The Street Food Hall
W: www.thestreetfoodhall.com

Herringbone Restaurant
W: www.herringboneeats.com

Macy's Department Store
W: www.macys.com

Sky Waikiki
W: www.skywaikiki.com

Waikiki Outrigger Beach Resort
W: www.outrigger.com

Waikiki International Marketplace
W: www.shopinternationalmarketplace.com