REVIEW: The Modern Honolulu

This hotel is pretty unique in its own right, because if I were to drop you off here and you took a quick look around you'd probably think you were in Ibiza, or Miami, or somewhere else a bit hipper or party-oriented.

The Modern Honolulu is truly one of the only contemporary art-deco-esque hotels you can stay at in Hawaii, not just Honolulu, but at any of the islands (save maybe the Andaz Maui).

The hotel is a small one by Hawaii standards, with "only" 352 rooms. They're all beautifully decorated, however, with white contemporary furniture and artwork reminiscent of of 90's Miami. The common spaces, however, are what really make this hotel one of my favorites in Oahu.



Check out that awesome lobby. That bookcase opens and closes too!

The lobby hosts some really cool cocktail parties during the weekends, and the pool is a teak affair which makes you feel like you’re lounging on a very nice yacht.



Check out that pool deck. Got Teak?

Many people make the mistake of booking a hotel on Oahu on the beach, but that’s not why you visit Oahu. Sure, there are beautiful stretches on the North shore, near Hanauma bay, and even in Waikiki, but you visit Oahu because you want to take in the culture of Hawaiian living, the incredible cuisine, and because you want to mingle and socialize in paradise. Leave the beach time to places like Maui, the Big Island, and Kauai.



If you read the name of the hotel you'd know what you were to find in the rooms

Did I mention that the service is also impeccable at this property? The staff was willing to help in any way possible at all times, and they did an incredible job making sure my party and I were well taken care of.

PROS:

- The only option on the island for a modern hotel
- Amazing pool area with teak wood decks and a great view
- The service is top notch

CONS:

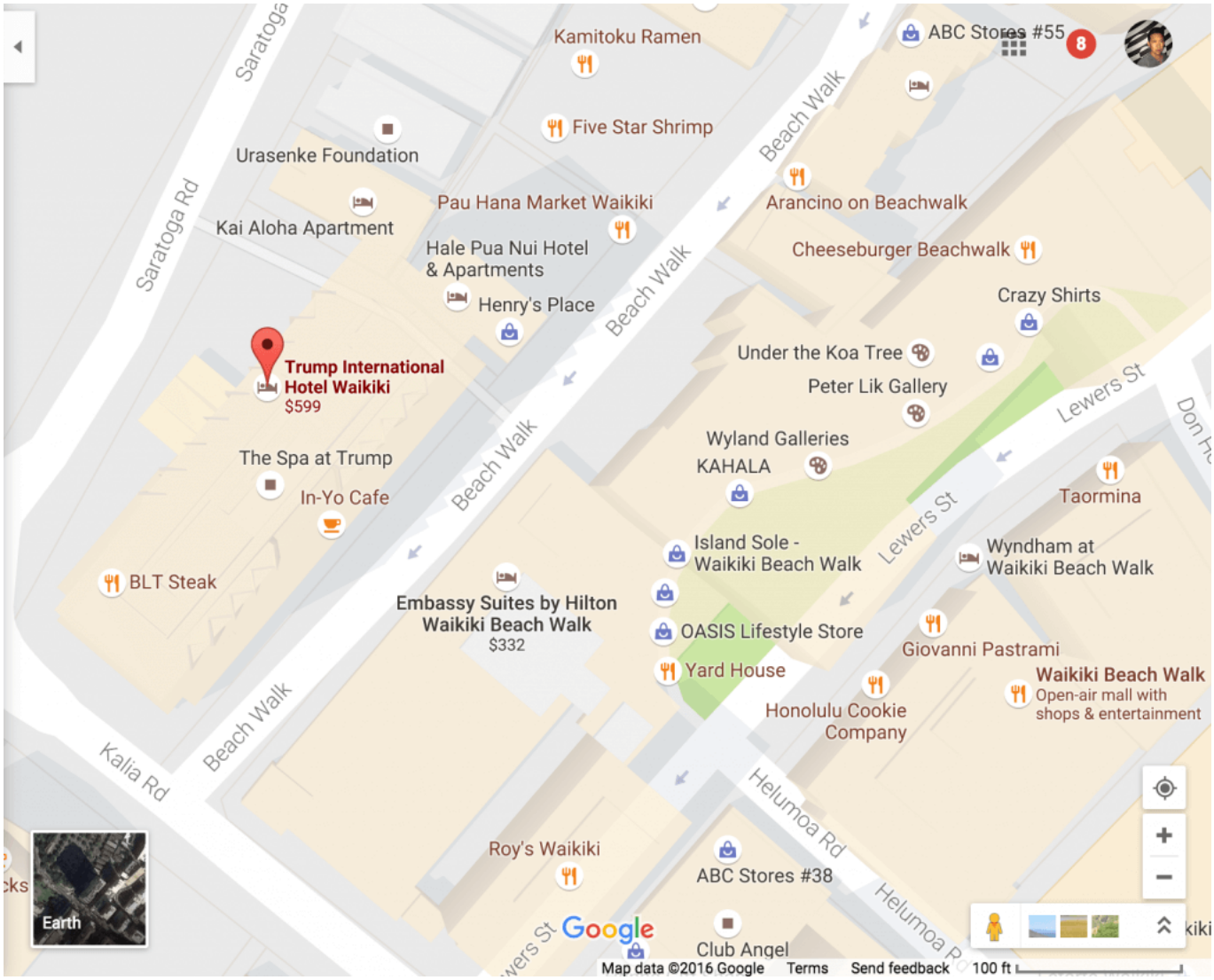
- There's no beachfront, but I don't consider this that necessary at a hotel on Oahu

SECRETS:

- The pool chairs get taken up pretty quickly, so I highly recommend calling ahead to reserve them, this is rare that a hotel lets you do that.

THINGS TO DO IN THE AREA:

- Food trucks in Oahu are huge, especially the well known shrimp truck – Giovannis. However, you can avoid the long drive and the line if you go to this little known food truck area in Waikiki right behind the Trump hotel. See the map below where it says Five Star Shrimp (north middle side of the map)



REVIEW: The Turtle Bay Resort in Oahu

The very last trip I took before throwing my life on the internets was this one a few weeks ago at the end of April. I will **preface this by saying, It's Not the Ritz, but it ain't bad.**

I attended my buddy's wedding and stayed at two different locations while on the trip. The first few days were at the Turtle Bay North Shore Resort which happened to be my very first experience there. The last few days were at the Trump Waikiki.



The views from the hotel were exquisite, and although I was a bit hesitant to pay the close to $3,000 tab for just a short three nights (In their defense I did book very last minute,

and opted for an UPGRADED ROOM – be careful to do this as some of the other rooms are OLD), I must say that it was quite an experience and well worth it. A majority of my expenses also coincided with in-resort activities such as the spa (well worth it), and the dining experiences throughout the hotel.

Total Payments **-2941.98**

Balance Due **0.00**

I have received the goods and / or services in the amount shown hereon. I agree that my liability for this bill is not waived and agree to be held personally liable in the event that the indicated person, company, or association fails to pay for any part or the full amount of these charges. If a credit card charge, I further agree to perform the obligations set forth in the cardholder's agreement with the issuer.

Guest Signature: _____

57-091 Kamehameha Hwy, Kahuku, Oahu, Hawaii 96731
Phone 808.293.6000 I Toll Free 1.800.203.3650 I Reservations 1.866.827.5321

TURTLE BAY
OAHU'S FABLED NORTH SHORE

So as I test and iterate my blog i'm going to start off with a format where I go with the pro's and con's of the hotel that I chose (usually a Ritz, but not in all cases), and then a synopsis of whether I think it was a good choice. I'll also throw in some interesting tidbits of the actual location and places I think are worth visiting while you're at the locale that i'm blogging about.

PROS:

- Lots of privacy – this place is on a peninsula, and it is beautiful, surrounded by water on almost 270 degrees and with its own private beach, cabanas, an incredible restaurant at the golf course, and its own nightclub where locals from the North shore come to hang out
- Impeccable attention to service and detail – the staff were well trained, greeted everyone and tried their best to remember names when they could. One day the elevator went out and we had to use the service elevator and

staff did their best to maintain decorum even when they had to use the service elevator for purposes of running the hotel

- I’m a foodie, and the food here was actually pretty impressive for being a resort. Most resorts suffer greatly when it comes to dining options, but knowing that their guests are basically 20-30 miles from the nearest major city (Remember, this is North Shore Oahu), they went ahead and spent the money to develop a stand up menu.



- The food options on the North Shore aren’t actually terrible. There is a conglomerate of food trucks just a few miles southwest of Turtle Bay towards Hale Ewa town and you can find plenty of grub there

CONS:

- Well if you like nightlife, the only option is the club

downstairs in the hotel, that's about it. Unless you want to ride in a (often hard to find) uber/lyft back to the south shore of the island and hang out in Honolulu
- The rooms, albeit nice, have very thin walls. You would think for resort oriented towards couples and umm, lovers, you'd have thicker walls, unless the concert of love is what they were going for.
- The pool was very nice but needed some upgrades, it was showing some wear and tear

SECRETS:

- If you get a chance, try to book the oceanside villas, or one of the Turtle Bay multi-bedroom villas and split it with your friends. The Oceanside Villas come with some cool little toys including a **very badass Hawaiian wood guitar** for you to play with and some **high end binoculars** from which you can watch the whales all in the comfort of your own room. The multi-bedroom villas are relatively cheap for what you get and the price breakdown makes more sense than the regular rooms. They are spacious, newly appointed, and well equipped.
- If you need a drink early in the morning (don't judge), you can always go to the bar at the golf club, it's 5'o clock there 24/7.

OTHER STUFF IN OAHU

- Having been to the islands quite a bit growing up, due to family being there and all, i'm often asked what to do when you're in Oahu. Here are a few of my faves:
    - Visit the trucks on the North Shore, Giovanni's is the original shrimp truck and go for the garlic scampi, but if you can't make it there, there's another group of trucks next to the Trump Hotel in Honolulu which does the same job
    - Go to Hanauama Bay and snorkel the hell out of that place. Try to go early in the morning before

there’s too many people in the water and the sediment is kicked up – making it hard to see the fishies. Bring your own packed lunch because its hard to find food around there when you’re exhausted and done trying to maintain flotation trying to snap that perfect fish selfie

- Eat Eat Eat – Yelp has a great variety of suggestions but I recommended Sweet E’s Cafe for brunch or breakfast, it’s incredible stuff-yourself-to-the-gills breakfast and brunch food. There’s a reason why people get big on the islands, the food is amazing, and you couldn’t surf enough to salvage that calories in vs. calories out thing if you started exploring all the spots in Honolulu
- Have a drink at the original Dukes Waikiki. This is where the King drank, and surfed, and drank some more. Beautiful views at sunset, add a 151 floater to your drink and be a beast about it, I swear all your worries will melt away. If this place is too busy, go next door to the beautifully restored plantation-esque environment that is the Moana Surfrider and enjoy those same views next to 100+ year old Banyan tree sitting right in the middle of the bar.
- If you want to go to one of the top 10 beaches in the world, it’s at Kailua, on the Northeast side of Oahu. This white sand stretch is beautiful, and one of my favorite things to do is rent a car, throw on my board shorts and sandals, pick a direction, and just drive from beach to beach until the sun sets. Hawaii was made for this type of lackadaisical approach and I recommend you try it out!

