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PREMIUM



**Well &
Good**

View from The
Cliffs at Princeville

Island cures

More than just a vacation, a trip to
Kauai delivers healing adventures

PHOTO COURTESY THE CLIFFS AT PRINCEVILLE





BY KAREN NELSON

It seems only fitting that on my last night on Kauai during the autumnal equinox, when the earth is in balance with the sun, I find myself transported by the otherworldly tones of a sound therapy session that reminds me of the final scene in “Close Encounters of the Third Kind.”

My trip had begun with an ocean-front Thai Lomi massage on this same picturesque bluff overlooking Kauai’s North Shore at The Cliffs at Princeville. Surrounded by the exotic calls of tropical birds, and soothed by the surf — not a sound machine, but actual waves — a massage therapist, who I swear could read my mind, worked out the tension in my body. This was followed by an all-natural Hawaiian botanical facial that made my skin radiant.

My stay could have ended here, and I would have been happy, but there was much more to come.

The Hawaiian islands have long been known as a vacation destination to relax and rejuvenate. A place to lie on the beach and drink fruity drinks with pineapple and little umbrellas. For many people, myself included, a few well-spent days on the islands does wonders for their mental health. But if you're looking for a side of Hawaii that you might not have experienced before, look no further.

Through Akamu Wellness, a holistic wellness center dedicated to nurturing mind, body and spirit, guests at The Cliffs at Princeville can choose a curated experience that prioritizes well-being and encourages transformative lifestyle choices. My girlfriends and I semi-jokingly deemed our trip the “farm-to-facial” vacation.

With the tension of the mainland eased from our bodies, we set out to explore two local farms. The first stop was Kauai Farmacy, a thriving botanical garden that features more than 80 species of medicinal plants from which the founders craft herbal teas, healing tinctures, and culinary spices. The tour included a guided walk through the gardens and a visit to the tea house, where farm-grown plants are alchemized into healing medicines.

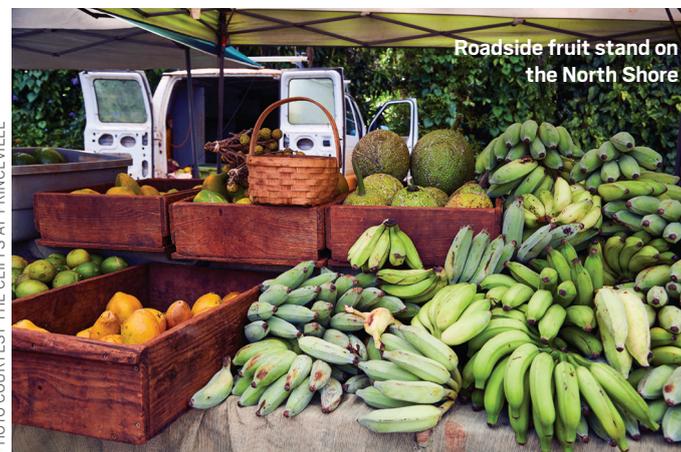
Elevated by curative teas, next we headed to dinner at Common Ground Kauai. Currently, more than 85 percent of Hawaii's food is imported. Part of Common Ground's mission is to introduce visitors to the bounty that grows on Kauai through farm tours and food-based experiences, hoping to educate and reduce reliance on food sourced off-island.

From the first bite of harvest salad featuring papaya, star fruit, mamaki berries and a guava-marigold



Morning yoga at The Cliffs at Princeville

PHOTO BY ZACK HARRIS/AKAMU WELLNESS



Roadside fruit stand on the North Shore

PHOTO COURTESY THE CLIFFS AT PRINCEVILLE

vinaigrette, to the Breadfruit Encrusted Ono Fish Cakes, followed by Slow-Braised, Grass-fed Wailua Beef, to the final bite of POG (Hawaiian shorthand for passion fruit, orange and guava) sorbet, topped with dragon fruit and vanilla infused honey, the meal was not only fully island-sourced, but as visually stunning as it was satisfying to the palate.

There are numerous ways to explore the iconic Hanalei region including on foot, horseback, helicopter, and boat. We chose to spend our day kayaking the Hanalei River and snorkeling in the scenic Hanalei Bay.

What wasn't on my bingo card was painting ink on a red snapper during a private gyotaku lesson with artist Desmond Thain. Gyotaku

is the traditional Japanese method of printing fish that originated as a way for fishermen to record their catches. Today, it is a skill and an artform in itself.

My resulting fish print will not win awards, but is the perfect souvenir of a memorable in-suite dining experience with personal chef Miguel Magaña. Cleaned of ink and scales, Magaña magically transformed our fish and a host of other local Hawaiian ingredients into a five-course, Michelin-quality meal without having to leave the comfort of our home.

Our last night, as I lay on the moonlit bluff staring into the vastness of the Milky Way, the reverberations of singing bowls, gongs and drums deeply resonating through my body, being guided through a yoga nidra, it is not only the earth and the sun that are in balance on this equinox, but my body and spirit as well.