



Spa Luana Lures Visitors North

By Jenny Peters

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If the beach at Waikiki is all you know about the Hawaiian island of Oahu, there's much for you to learn. There's a whole different world awaiting there, far from the madding crowd and teeming masses that make Waikiki feel like a bad version of a Disney theme park.

It's the North Shore, a place where there is no overpriced Prada or Gucci for sale, where buff surfers, swimmers, and laid-back islanders live in an environment that actually feels like a typical tropical paradise, a far cry from the excess and seriously crass commercialism of Honolulu's main drag.

Tucked away at the very tip of the northernmost point of the island is Spa Luana, a luxury spa nestled inside the recently renovated Turtle Bay Resort. With welcoming hues of bamboo tan and deep-sea blues, the spa creates a feeling of relaxation and well being from the moment one steps inside. Naturally, you're greeted with bathrobes and spa slippers, and escorted into a well-appointed locker room.

Then, depending on what treatment you have chosen, you're taken to one of the spa's massage, facial, or wet rooms; or, for the best experience of all, outside to a gazebo that looks out over the sunny expanse of Turtle Bay's crashing waves (and the experienced surfers who ride them). Having a traditional Lomi Lomi massage, the long stroking, stretching massage that was created for the Hawaiian royals to enjoy is one choice, or the Pohaku (hot stone) massage is another, to soothe even the most worn-out North Shore adventurers.

Inside, the spa's friendly staff offer a variety of especially Hawaiian treatments, like the Hawaiian Ti-Leaf Body Wrap, specifically created to calm the sunburned skin that tourists often sport, the ones who forget that the island sun isn't the same as the one back home, especially if sunscreen is neglected. One of Spa Luana's signature treatments, the wrap uses kukui nut oil, coconut milk, and large ti-leaf fronds in a soothing combination that leaves skin soft and supple. The neck and shoulder massage that goes along with the wrap is divine, too.

Other "Na Ho'ola"; "ancient healing"; indigenous Hawaiian treatments include the Kona Coffee Bean and Macadamia Nut Scrub, a body scrub made of those native elements, which is followed by a warm Vichy shower and an application of aloe vera gel and pineapple juice; and the Pineapple Pedicure, what some might call the ultimate pedicure, indulged in outside in the sea air while sitting in a throne-like pedi-chair. It includes a series of unbelievable elements including a warm coconut milk footbath followed by a crushed pineapple and honey foot wrap. By the time the foot massage is happening, there's little doubt that the Hawaiians up on the North Shore have got the whole idea of spa luxury down to a fine art.

Along with the extensive menu of massage and body treatments, Spa Luana also offers a complete menu of facials and salon services for hair and nails. It's a true oasis in a beautiful, unhurried tropical setting, the kind of place you'd expect to find on one of the less populated islands like Kauai or Lanai, a real surprise to anyone that thinks all of Oahu is as crass and crowded as Waikiki.

For more information, go to www.turtlebayresort.com and click on "Spa Luana."