

# THE MAUNA LANI BAY

*Hotel and Bungalows · Hawaii*

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## MAUNA LANI RESTORES HISTORIC KOA CANOE

*E lauhoe mai nā wa'a*  
**“Everyone paddle the canoe together”**

**KOHALA COAST, Hawaii** – Mauna Lani Resort at Kalāhuipua'a is a location rich in history and *mana* (power), providing a spiritual and tangible connection to both ancient and modern Hawai'i. Drawing from its unparalleled spirit of place, Mauna Lani demonstrates its dedication to historic preservation through its presentation of koa outrigger canoes, both old and new.

Housed in the hotel atrium is a *halau wa'a*, (canoe shed) that was completed in 2006. The *halau wa'a* protects an ancient Hawaiian koa canoe carved more than 100 years ago by Hawaiian fisherman in South Kona. Hand-made from prized koa wood, the canoe was carved out of a single carefully chosen tree, as ancient Hawaiians believed that each possessed a special energy. The canoe now serves as a highlight on Mauna Lani's historic tours, educating those who visit about Hawai'i's rich cultural heritage.

During a tour, Danny "Kaniela" Akaka, Mauna Lani's cultural director, explains that this canoe was used to gather and transport food and carried up to 2,000 pounds of *opelu* (a type of mackerel). In addition to a means of gathering food and for fishing, the *wa'a* was also used for transportation between the islands, sporting, for battles and even as a way of conveying spirits to the next world.

The canoe is a cultural icon for Hawaii, as it symbolizes not only the past but moving forward into the future. Today, Mauna Lani's display not only brings awareness to the beauty and the art of the canoe, but also to the spirit of working together (all paddlers must unite together to move the canoe forward) and appreciating things of the past.

Having these canoes on display provides a deeper understanding of Hawaiian history, legends, beliefs and the Hawaiian language, which translates into a deeper appreciation and respect for the people of Hawai'i, traditional values and the Hawaiian culture.

Mauna Lani is currently building a new canoe in a *halau wa'a* near its ancient fishponds once used by *ali'i* (royalty).

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The log was obtained from the slopes of Mauna Kea at a location called Waipunalei, and is being turned into a four-person canoe, which will be approximately 27 feet long when completed. Mauna Lani chose to construct the canoe in the same time-honored way Hawaiian ancestors once did, using traditional tools and allowing the log to dry naturally. Blessing ceremonies have been performed on the log and the *halau wa'a*, taking place around noon, which Hawaiians believed was the most sacred time of the day.

The unfinished canoe represents living culture and a way of continuing Hawaii's heritage as it moves into the future. Visitors can witness first-hand an ancient Hawaiian ritual occurring in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Kama'aina and guests alike can help in the building of the canoe, a powerful connection, Akaka says, "as each contributor's personal mana is marked upon the canoe." A journal identifies all those who have contributed, and when the process is completed (targeted for 2009), more than a thousand people will have imbued the canoe with their *mana*.

Mauna Lani's new canoe will be used for cultural purposes (fishing, education), rather than being exhibited in a museum, and in doing so will be immortalized as a living reminder of Hawaii's past. The presentation of these canoes, old and new, reflects Mauna Lani's continuous efforts to educate and preserve the Hawaiian culture

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## **About Mauna Lani**

Mauna Lani Resort sits oceanfront on the finest stretch of shoreline on the Kohala Coast of the Big Island of Hawai'i. Located 23 miles north of the Kona International Airport. The resort features the luxurious Mauna Lani Bay Hotel & Bungalows, Mauna Lani Spa and the Francis H. I'i Brown North and South Golf Courses. For reservations call 800-367-2323 or visit [www.maunalani.com](http://www.maunalani.com).

### **MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Susan C. Bredo  
Communications Manager  
Mauna Lani Resort  
[sbredo@maunalani.com](mailto:sbred@maunalani.com)  
808.885.1473

Printed: 050109

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