

Hunting for a Slice of Paradise

**MAUI'S NAPILI SUNSET RESORT OFFERS PREMIERE
ACCESS TO TOP-NOTCH SNORKELING AT A
SEMI-PRIVATE COVE...FOR A PRICE.**

By Tyson Heyn



There are two ways to tour Hawaii: the cheap way and the expensive way. The cheap way truly is a path less traveled, and for good reason: tourists are packed on chartered flights like cattle; hotel rooms overlook parking lots; and rental cars near the dimensions of refrigerators.

The expensive way of visiting Hawaii is really more of the default for mainlanders: a standard airline, a decent hotel room, a rental car with four doors, and a couple of activities here and there. Because of the law of supply and demand—plus the fact that nearly everything consumed in Hawaii has to be shipped or flown from the mainland—costs are predictably steep. The all-inclusive total for a week in paradise for a family of four can easily exceed \$5,000, so hunting for a good value is certainly top of mind.

Being the largest chunk of the vacation bill, lodging is where many travelers look to save. The predominant question is how to end up in a room that adds to the Hawaiian experience without breaking the bank? Napili Sunset Resort attempts to answer that question and succeeds...to an extent.

WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME

The most obvious difference between Napili Sunset Resort and a standard hotel room is that visitors each enjoy their own highly condensed home. Falling somewhere



between a suite and an apartment, the rooms measure around 600-700 square feet and include a small kitchen, family room, bathroom, and bedroom.

These features are particularly attractive to younger families looking to avoid three restaurant meals per day and also enjoy distinct sleeping quarters for parent and child.

The kitchen furnishings are fair in quality and numerous: microwave, dishwasher, oven, stove, and complete dish and silverware sets. The bathroom is pretty typical from what you'd expect in a hotel room aside from the bathtub. Because of the state's water conservation efforts, Hawaiian hotel rooms traditionally don't include standard-size tubs...instead, the units look more like shower stalls with a small basin installed at the bottom. Such a unit is what's found here.

Furniture and amenities are also fair: comfortable, but not luxurious. Our chief complaint: the rooms are not child-safe; several pieces of top-heavy furniture can easily topple.

ENJOYING THE PROPERTY

While the furniture may not dazzle you, the view will. Aside from the \$99/night suites, every room stares out at the Pacific Ocean, which rolls onto the sand approximately 50 feet away. The more impressive upside is that rooms stand at the foot of Napili Bay, one of the best snorkeling locales in Maui.

The beach spreading out between the resort and the ocean isn't huge, but a common terrace on a bluff above the sand allows for sunning, as does the poolside area. The pool is very clean, heated, and typically not crowded.

There are no restaurants nor food service at Napili Sunset Resort, but several nearby dining options and supermarkets are within a 5-10 minute drive. Room cleaning is provided daily and is quite thorough, particularly when it comes to vacuuming up the daily sand deposits in the carpets.

FINAL WORD: A QUESTION OF VALUE

There's no doubt that Napili Sunset Resort provides a great vacation experience for the right person. A young family looking to enjoy the beach along one of the less crowded and 'touristy' stretches of Maui is sure to do well. Calm waves and winds plus sunsets pouring straight over the water and into the hotel room certainly add to the charm, as well.

The question that has to be asked is whether Napili Sunset Resort is a good value. One-bedroom units cost around \$245 a night at a facility that couldn't charge more than \$95 if it were landlocked. A standard Maui hotel room with a further walk to the beach and significantly fewer in-room amenities (but more modern styling and on-site services) costs about the same. In a nutshell, if you're looking to leave the beaten path for a more rustic Hawaiian experience, this may be for you.

PRODUCT SNAPSHOT

HIGHS: Fantastic location, views, and beach access. Nearby snorkeling and ocean swimming among the best.

LOWS: Worn styling and amenities. Low number of on-site services. Not for the full service crowd.

IN BRIEF: A great spot for young families ready to relax away from the hustle and bustle of more touristy locales.

RATING: ★★★★★ (out of 5 stars)

FOR MORE INFO: www.napilisunset.com. Studios, one- and two-bedroom units available. Room rates range by season from \$99 (studio, summer) to \$340 (two bedrooms, winter.) ■