

A WINNING FORMULA FOR SUCCESS, MAUI-STYLE: THE PINEAPPLE GRILL AT KAPALUA RESORT

KAPALUA, Maui, Hawaii – Start with a highly skilled management team that's rooted in Maui's fertile restaurant industry. Add Maui's hottest new chef, and give him the keys to the kitchen. Create a theatrical dining environment full of intimate mini-rooms. Then, without lowering the standards of fine dining, stay affordable for locals and visitors alike. That's the plan behind Maui's newest standard-setter for innovative Pacific Island Cuisine, the Pineapple Grill at Kapalua Resort.

One more thing – add a dreamy hilltop location in Kapalua resort, with panoramic views of lush greenery and the shimmering waters of the West Maui channel. The Pineapple Grill is located at the Kapalua Bay Golf Course, right next to the resort's tennis club.

“This is a great story,” says Chris Kaiwi, vice president and managing partner. “This is a dream come true!” After 28 years of on-the-job experience in restaurant management, he has finally grabbed the opportunity to create his ideal vision of a Maui fine-dining experience: “A local's favorite stop,” he predicts. “Casual yet upscale. A place that gives the experience of dress-up without prohibitively high prices.”

Born and raised in Kailua, O'ahu, Kaiwi spent thirteen years in California learning management skills with Chart House Restaurants, later with TS Restaurants. He came to Maui to work as assistant general manager of the former TS' Kapalua Bar & Grill. Then in 1991 as managing partner, he opened The Plantation House Restaurant in Kapalua, working closely with executive chef Alex Stanislav. For 14 years he guided the success of that crown of Maui culinary experience, using his extensive knowledge of wines to develop The Plantation House's popular winemaker dinners as well as many community benefit events.

During his years in San Diego, it was inevitable that Kaiwi would meet up with David Cohn, whose Cohn Restaurant Group is one of the great success stories of the California dining scene. The Cohn group includes The Prado Restaurant at Balboa Park and an eclectic mixture of venues with award-winning menus, including the Corvette Diner, Dakota Grill & Spirits, Kemo Sabe, Blue Point Coastal Cuisine, Indigo Grill, Gaslamp Strip Club, Mister Tiki Mai Tai Lounge, and Island Prime.

A hard-working entrepreneur, graduate of University of Colorado, David Cohn opened his first restaurant in San Diego in 1983. His restaurants are widely recognized in two areas. First, their excellent cuisine has garnered numerous awards, including the San Diego Gold Medallion Award and the Lamplighter Award of the Gaslamp Quarter Association. Second, the Cohn Restaurant Group is often honored for its commitment to community and industry service. These honors have included the San Diego Downtown Partnership "Alonzo Award," the Gaslamp Association's "Trailblazer Award," the Hillcrest Association's "Hillcrest Hero" Award, the District 3 Community "Spirit Award," the Gaslamp Quarter Historic Association's "Vision Award," and the San Diego Restaurant Association's "Restaurateur of the Year" Award. The California Restaurant Association Education Foundation proclaimed the Cohn group to be its "Restaurateurs of 2002."

Partners David Cohn and Chris Kaiwi have spent years searching for the perfect venue that would merge Cohn's formidable business skills with Kaiwi's up-front Pineapple Grill Formula For Success knowledge of Maui's unique restaurant industry. The Pineapple Grill at Kapalua is that place. The partners share the same vision: a relaxed dining experience, upbeat and fun, operated by a highly professional and knowledgeable crew. Speaking for himself, Kaiwi sees this as a return to the excitement of the old Kapalua Grill & Bar that he operated for TS Restaurants. "That was a very popular place, a fun atmosphere. People are looking for that."

A great restaurant needs a great cuisine. For that, Cohn and Kaiwi are thrilled to have handpicked born and raised Maui Chef Ryan Luckey. The Pineapple Grill will be the stage on which Chef Ryan will take his place as the rising star of new-generation Pacific Island Cuisine.

A protégé ofNow, at The Pineapple Grill at Kapalua, Ryan Luckey is taking his first full command of a kitchen that's all his own.

The Pineapple Grill menu is built almost entirely out of fresh local ingredients, from Kula raspberries and goat cheese to Moloka'i asparagus; from the Maui Cattle Company's all-natural beef to farm-raised Kona lobster. Every item on the menu is a true original work of culinary art, developed and perfected by Chef Ryan with the help of his culinary team. Guests can expect to see Chef Ryan working shoulder-to-shoulder "in the action zone" of his display kitchen. Often times, Chef Ryan is seen at guests', talking story, and sharing his passion for his creations and how it all comes together.

The Pineapple Grill's ambience is just as theatrical as Chef Joey's menu. Guests enter between the sizzling exhibition kitchen and the enormous, four-sided bar capped with black marble. Then they descend into the dining area on a ramped walkway of antique teak. The xx square foot dining room is subdivided for intimacy into themed mini-rooms – for example, the Honu Room with sea turtle mosaics, and the Aloha Room with one large koa table that seats up to 14 for dining parties and small wine dinners. Tropical murals on walls and ceilings are the work of Maui artist Fred Lorenzo. They exemplify Chris Kaiwi's philosophy

of “local details by local people.” The comfort of all interior spaces is regulated by air conditioning.

Outside, a large open lanai can seat up to 160 guests. The restaurant also offers several private dining areas both outside and in, ideal for cocktail parties and special groups of up to 50 people. By the way, four plasma-screen televisions in the bar area make this a wonderful place to watch the latest championship golf tournament in air-conditioned comfort while overlooking the greens themselves. While the Pineapple Grill is not a sports bar, its big screens contribute to the “casual but elegant” atmosphere that is its signature.

One feature of the restaurant interior is its large glass-walled wine room. Aiming for “exciting wines at reasonable prices,” Kaiwi emphasizes carefully select varietals from a truly global range of wineries. Keen on the complementary pairing of wine and food, he will be recommending specific combinations and offering wine specials keyed to the menu.

As part of its truly local character, the Pineapple Grill at Kapalua will stick with the Cohn Restaurant Group’s tradition of community involvement. The new restaurant has plans to support numerous Maui nonprofit organizations, including schools such as the Maui Preparatory Academy and Maui Community College’s Culinary Arts Program, also the Hale Makua nursing care project and various adult day care centers.

The best of the best – homegrown Maui style – is the trademark of the new Pineapple Grill at Kapalua, introducing the next generation of fine Pacific Island Cuisine. Overlooking the golf greens of The Bay Course at Kapalua Resort and conveniently close to the resort’s tennis club, The Pineapple Grill is now open daily for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. For reservations, call (808) 669-9600 or visit www.pineapplekapalua.com.

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