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Renovated and Ready to Impress

The Sheraton Waikiki strives to regain its hip status

By Marty Wentzel

When the Sheraton Waikiki opened in 1971, it turned heads with its sleek design and aura of excitement. But that was 38 years ago. Now, as it wraps up a two-year, \$187 million top-to-bottom renovation, the 1,636-room hotel is looking to regain its status as a vibrant Waikiki vacation address.

"We're targeting clients who expect multifaceted experiences, whether they are traveling with family, for romance or business," said Revell Newton, sales and marketing director for the hotel's parent company, Starwood Hotels & Resorts. "We're offering them a product that will excite their senses, restore their bodies, stimulate

a multimillion-dollar renovation and repositioned to Starwood's Luxury Collection brand. When the Sheraton Waikiki project finishes at the end of December 2009, Starwood will turn its focus to a major redevelopment of the Sheraton Princess Kaiulani.

"The transformation of our Waikiki portfolio goes beyond physical renovations and upgrades," said Starwood regional vice president of sales and marketing Cheryl Williams. "We are repositioning our properties, products and programs to attract a younger, more affluent visitor to Oahu."

Changes Inside and Out

Prior to the renovation, the Sheraton Waikiki didn't take advantage of its premier beachfront location, but that's



accommodations with everything new, from Sheraton Sweet Sleeper beds and flat-screen televisions to a signature line of bath amenities.

Above: The Sheraton sports Waikiki's first Infinity Edge pool. Right: Kai Market opened in September.



The renovation has impacted the hotel's food and beverage outlets as well. In December 2007, it debuted RumFire, a lively oceanfront restaurant and lounge with the largest selection of vintage rum in the U.S. At Ingredients, a counter-style outlet open since January 2008, guests can buy made-to-order or pre-packaged meals created from scratch every day. In October of 2008, a 30th-floor restaurant called Twist at Hanohano opened with farm-to-table cuisine drawing inspiration from local products. September 2009 saw the opening of Kai Market, an eatery showcasing Hawaii's diverse culinary traditions.

Sheraton Waikiki's changes extend outside as well. The \$8 million Helumoa Playground opened in December 2008 with two freshwa-

ter swimming pools, a 70-foot-long water slide, an outdoor function area, two whirlpools and an interactive fountain. This October, the hotel unveiled its Infinity Edge pool, the first of its kind in Waikiki. The \$6 million adults-only venue offers guests access to free DVD players with movies, cold mists and towels, pineapple wedges, fruit popsicles and mp3 players with Hawaiian music.

STARWOOD HOTELS & RESORTS HAWAII

Ultimately, all of these changes will help the Sheraton reclaim its position as Waikiki's undeniable hot spot.

their minds and allow them to reconnect with themselves and those who are important to them."

The Sheraton reinvention represents just one part of Starwood's overall plan for its Waikiki hotels. The Moana Surfrider completed a major renovation and rebranding to a Westin resort in 2007. The Royal Hawaiian Hotel reopened in January 2009 after

not the case now. The lobby, once dark and cavernous, now opens up to ocean vistas. It provides an immediate sense of place, from the original Hawaiian art and artifacts in the reception area to the views of the great outdoors.

Gone are the guestrooms filled with bulky rattan furniture, big televisions, floral bedspreads and patterned wallpaper and, in their place, are stylish

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Left: Twist at Honolulu is located on the 30th floor and offers incredible views of Waikiki.

Fitness-minded guests can visit the new fourth-floor Core Performance facility, where they can work out with a trainer or tackle the cardio and strength-training equipment on their own. For clients looking to unwind, Spa Khakara — open since November 2008 — is the hotel's 6,000-square-foot full-service health-and-wellness center.

Keeping Connected

Recognizing the importance of connectivity during travel, the hotel opened Link@Sheraton Waikiki in August 2009. Located in a large, cozy part of the lobby with seating areas for intimate meetings, board games and reading, the round-the-clock multimedia communications hub also features computers with free Internet access. Plans call for a cafe to be added next year, lending a coffeehouse vibe to the setting.

For groups, Sheraton Waikiki reopened its second-floor convention center in September 2008, with 45,000 square feet of meeting and function space and Waikiki's largest indoor ballroom. Complementing the hardware enhancements are conceptual changes to the

THE DETAILS
Sheraton Waikiki
 866-718-8109; www.sheraton-waikiki.com

Room Rates for 2010: From \$425-\$1,500 per night

Packages for 2010: Sensational Savings, with daily breakfast for two, the third night free and one room category upgrade, from \$360-\$420 per night.

Commission: 10 percent

WEB EXCLUSIVE

For an on-site look at renovations at The Royal Hawaiian Hotel, visit TravelAgeWest.com/RoyalHawaiian



food and beverage menus, which now emphasize fresh, local ingredients. Ultimately, all of these changes will help the Sheraton "reclaim its position as Waikiki's undeniable hot spot," said general manager Kelly Sanders.

"Guests of the reinvigorated Sheraton Waikiki will experience a Hawaiian vacation unlike any other," Sanders said. "The hotel is poised to entice, excite and truly reinvent the Hawaiian vacation."

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