

The Inn Thing

Easy interior design ideas from some of Hawai'i's chicest hotels

BY RACHEL NG

Ever checked in to a hotel room and wished you lived there? As in love at first sight—especially when you sank into super-soft bed linens or a deep soaking tub, or threw open the lānai doors to an epic view?

Hawai'i hotels excel at making guests from around the globe feel relaxed and welcome. Chic decor, quirky artwork, and thoughtful nods to tradition elevate the experience. Here are 6 stylish hotels in the Islands with design inspiration you'll want to bring home.



O'ahu Kaimana Beach Hotel

Waikiki's Kaimana Beach Hotel's sunny, exuberant furnishings bring to mind Jonathan Adler's cheery interior designs. Built in 1963 and unveiling a major refresh in February 2021, the 122-room boutique hotel boasts an eye-catching lobby filled floor to ceiling with artwork (pictured).

"Creating an Instagram-worthy gallery similar to the wall we created at Kaimana Beach Hotel requires design thinking, planning, and a little bit of magic to bring it all together," says Joanna Staniszewski, lead senior designer of Kailua-Kona-based Henderson Design Group. Rates start at \$254.



Design Tip

Go bold and go fun with the art on your walls. "Source a variety of **artwork**. Choose different sizes, textures, framing, and art styles—such as painting, photography, sculpture, colors, and vintage versus contemporary pieces," Staniszewski says. "The more variety in the mix, the more eclectic the final result will be. Choose a primary color scheme or a palette of 3 to 5 colors to focus on, and let these colors dictate the majority of the gallery wall. Blend in a few additional accent colors to keep it interesting."

COURTESY KAIMANA BEACH HOTEL



O'ahu The Laylow, Autograph Collection

The Laylow, Autograph Collection in Waikiki offers up sleek and simple decor and a healthy dose of millennial pink for a vibe that's young at heart. Each room comes with an 'ukulele, a welcome basket with snacks, 2 pairs of rubber slippahs, and an Insta-worthy accent wall printed with monstera leaves, the hotel's signature design motif.

"We tasked our team to make something that was unique to the brand, felt fresh and modern, and was inspired by midcentury modern-era Hawaiian bark cloth patterns," says Fritz Mesenbrink, executive creative director of the design firm behind the project. "We ended up with something that makes it clear you're at The Laylow in every guest room photo on Instagram or TikTok, and also looks great on a hat." Rates start at \$341; special rates for Hawai'i residents.



Design Tip

You can source **wallpaper designs** similar to The Laylow's from O'ahu-based company Surface Mode of Operation.

Maui Kā'anapali Beach Hotel

Known as "Hawai'i's Most Hawaiian Hotel," Kā'anapali Beach Hotel has long attracted guests who are charmed by the resort's old-school vibe of ceiling fans, wicker headboards, and Hawai'iian-patterned bedspreads.

In June 2022, the hotel unveiled its \$80 million refurbishment that updated more than 60% of its 432 guest rooms. New Premium rooms still feature Hawai'i-themed artwork and furniture, but they're decidedly more modern, with muted palettes and clean-lined furniture.

For a personal touch, each Premium room displays a makamae (precious gifts) shadowbox of objects ranging from lūhe'e (octopus lures) to mea kaula (weapons), all handcrafted by hotel employees. Rates start at \$278 (\$437 for Premium).



Design Tip

Consider making your own makamae **shadowbox** encapsulating a special memento. At Kā'anapali Beach Hotel, treasured items on display include an 'ulī'ulī (pictured), a preserved wedding lei, and a canoe paddle.



FROM FAR LEFT: COURTESY THE LAYLOW; AUTOGRAPH COLLECTION; COURTESY KĀANAPALI BEACH HOTEL; COURTESY SURF-JACK HOTEL & SWIM CLUB

O'ahu Surfjack Hotel & Swim Club

With its leave-your-slippahs-at-the-front-door vibe, the Surfjack Hotel & Swim Club in Waikiki is the kind of place where kama'āina would want to hang out. Many locals frequent the boutique hotel to dine at Mahina & Sun's restaurant (Executive Chef Erik Leong helms the menu), shop at its über-hip store, and listen to live music while sipping craft cocktails by the pool.

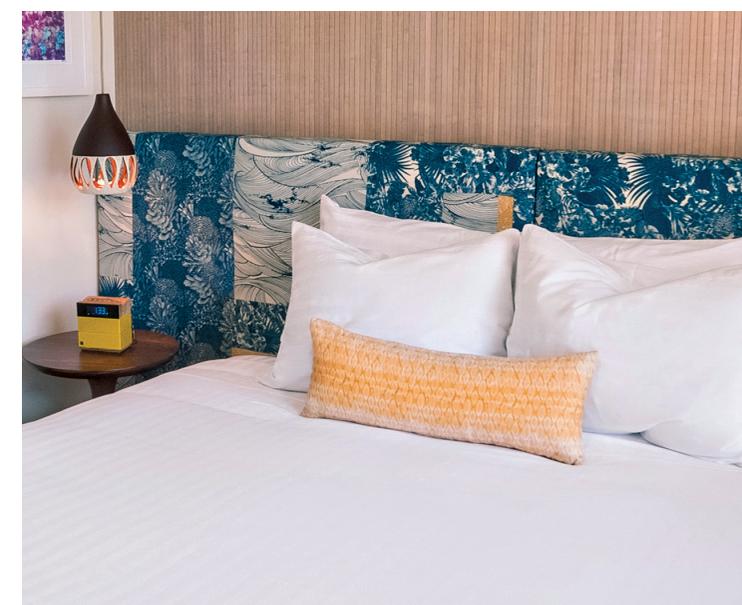
If you're lucky, you might get to rub the belly of Sir Jack, the Surfjack's French bulldog mascot. In 2016, Honolulu-based The Vanguard Theory designed midcentury-inspired interiors and spaces for the hotel, with curated artwork from more than 2 dozen Island artists.

Rates start at \$235. Hawai'i residents receive a special rate for a 1-room bungalow or 1-bedroom suite with private lānai, pay no amenity fees (including for dog stays), and get free parking.



Design Tip

Craft a **focal point** for the bedroom. At Surfjack Hotel & Swim Club, the focal points are headboards upholstered in vintage Tori Richard fabrics that span a wall's length. "We worked with an iconic local fashion brand to procure prints that were no longer in production," says Christian Schulz, partner and design director at Studio Collective. "With the help of The Vanguard Theory, we played with these prints until we had the perfect mix that would make an impact yet mold into the Surfjack's overall serene aesthetic."





O'ahu Espacio, The Jewel of Waikiki

The AAA Five Diamond Espacio is the first ultra-luxury property in Waikiki from Aqua-Aston Hospitality. Espacio's 9 residential suites average 2,250 square feet and include the amenities of a 2- or 3-bedroom home. Each suite spans an entire hotel floor. Bathrooms feature Toto Washlet electronic toilets, a deep soaking tub, and a dry sauna. Private balconies have outdoor daybeds and a hot tub. And chef-grade kitchens come with Thermador and Miele appliances, a wine cellar, and a rice cooker. Rates start at \$3,500 and include private transport within Waikiki and daily continental breakfast.



Design Tip

Emanate cool sophistication with marble countertops and neutral-toned cabinets in your kitchen. A touch of color in **an unexpected hue**—such as Espacio's rose- or emerald-colored glass cabinet doors—energizes a space that's often the heart of a home.



Kaua'i Sheraton Kauai Coconut Beach Resort

Mere steps from the beach, Sheraton Kauai Coconut Beach Resort brings the ocean vibe indoors. Large blue waves crest and crash on the wallpaper in the resort's 314 guest rooms and suites. Wooden shutters on doors and windows hark back to Kaua'i's plantation days, and jewel-toned bedside sconces illuminate the space. Rates start at \$411.



Design Tip

Designate a **cozy reading nook** with comfy chairs and a funky light fixture that's also a showpiece.

A frequent AAA Explorer contributor, **RACHEL NG** is a Hawai'i-based food and travel writer whose work has been published in *National Geographic*, *Outside*, and *Fodors.com*.

FROM LEFT: COURTESY ESPACIO, THE JEWEL OF WAIKIKI; COURTESY SHERATON KAUAI COCONUT BEACH RESORT