

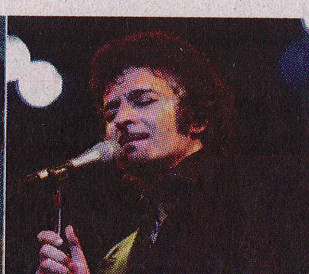
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THURSDAY 5/9/19



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Play

David Bowie band alumni reunite at the Blue Note

FINE TIMES AT DECK

Queen Kapi'olani's upgraded poolside bar and grill hits the spot

By Elizabeth Kieszkowski
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The Queen Kapi'olani Hotel occupies prime property overlooking Diamond Head and Waikiki Beach, just across Kapahulu Avenue from the Waikiki Zoo. Last year, the hotel completed a multimillion-dollar renovation and re-envisioning, which included the complete renovation of its pool-adjacent bar on the third floor terrace, now called Deck.

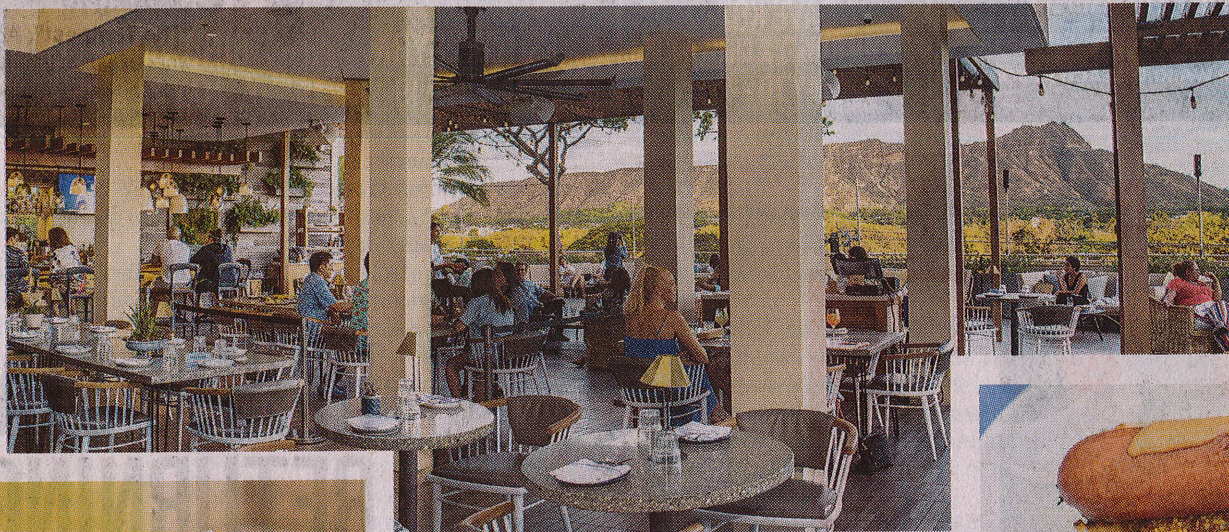
With a food and drinks menu based on quality ingredients and a daily musical lineup, the venue has started to attract local regulars. We stopped in to see what's up.

The experience

Whereas the ground floor of the Queen Kapi'olani comes at you strong, with colorful, cheerful wall-sized murals and multicolored accents, the revamped Deck has a relaxing vibe, with contemporary lines and a cool color scheme of natural tones, with white and slate accents.

There's a bar along the makai wall, with the pool on the other side and an open view toward Diamond Head. The central area includes a mix of tables, lounge chairs and woven furniture with a mid-century modern design.

On the Thursday when I visited, the room got pretty full during pau hana — along the bar, in groups at tables and with several couples kicking back along the edge of the deck, soaking up the



Deck at the Queen Kapi'olani Hotel has a prime view of Diamond Head. The craft cocktail menu includes tiki drinks like the Zombie, pictured above, and fish tacos made with mahi mahi are on the happy hour menu. At top right, Deck's beefed-up hot dog is also a happy hour special.

views of sky and Diamond Head. The beach is perpendicular to this deck, but it looks like higher rooms in the hotel must have great views.

On the last Sunday of each month, the hotel's popular "Sunset Sessions" overlaps happy hour, while also presenting free performances by headlining artists such as Paula Fuga and Kimie Miner. Bonus! (There is a two-drink minimum.)

On May 26, from 4 to 7 p.m., Anuhea appears; the show will benefit Hawaii's Kokua Foundation. Reserve a table in advance at sevenrooms.com/reservations/deckview.

The food

Deck bills its menu as "new American cuisine," based on updating well-known offerings with fresh, locally sourced ingredients. The happy hour menu is limited, but the items are flavorful and successfully executed — tasty enough so

that I want to try out the full menu.

The discovery here is Deck's hot dog, \$9 (regularly \$13). Made with wagyu-style beef, it updates a classic — and tastes so good, beefy and rich, with no additive aftertaste. I tried the hot dog last, after filling up with other tastes — but after biting into it, I was hungry all over again. This comes in a tasty bun, topped with textured horseradish mustard and just a dollop of soft sauerkraut, a slice of pickle on the side. My dining companion, a chef, gave this her enthusiastic seal of approval.

For a complete meal, order the fish tacos, \$12 (regularly \$15). These beer-battered pieces of mahi-mahi are generously sized, and the soft shells are filled out with red cabbage slaw, shaved radish, chipotle mayo and salsa verde. A light eater will be satisfied with this.

If you're sharing bites or hungrier than that, add tangy guacamole, \$7 (regularly \$9), or the luscious Kobe Sliders, made with Snake River Farms beef (from the Northwest U.S.)



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and served with house-made ketchup, \$9 (regularly \$12).

There's also a margherita pizza on the happy hour menu for \$8.50.

The drink

Attention has been paid to all aspects of service at Deck, and this includes the bar menu.

Deck's refreshing House-made Mai Tai, for example, was adapted from Trader Vic's 1940s cocktail, which isn't dark or syrupy, as our server was happy to explain. It's made with three kinds of rum, including Oahu's Kohana label, house curacao and orgeat, and fresh lime juice; \$8.50 during happy hour (regularly \$12.50).

Two other rum-based tiki cocktails, the Tikilada and House Zombie, are offered at happy hour for \$12 (regularly \$14). You can explore

DECK

Queen Kapi'olani Hotel, 150 Kapahulu Ave, third floor.
deckwaikiki.com, 931-4488

HAPPY HOUR:

- >> Fish tacos, \$9
- >> Wagyu beef hot dog, \$9
- >> Sliders, \$9
- >> Deck Mai Tai, \$8.50

different recipes on repeat visits.

Beer is here, too, with plenty of options on the main menu. At happy hour, choose from a craft beer of Deck's choice at \$7 (typically \$9), Heineken at \$5 (regularly \$7), or Pabst Blue Ribbon for \$3.50 (regularly \$4).

Selected wines are \$9 to \$11 by the glass (typically \$11 to \$14).

The verdict

There's no surprise like a pleasant surprise, and I was exceedingly pleased by Deck's flavorful hot dog. That alone would draw me back to the spot — well, that, the refreshing, citrusy mai tai, knowledgeable bartenders and the Diamond Head view. ...

Seems like there are all kinds of reasons to return to Deck.