

TRAVELAGE WEST

EXPLORING TRAVEL FAVORITES AND FRONTIERS

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aqua heads to the park Company tapped to manage Park Shore Waikiki Hotel

By Dawna L. Robertson

Aqua Hotels & Resorts continues to spread its wings along Waikiki's Kalakaua Avenue. On July 1, the full-service management company took over responsibilities of the 226-room Park Shore Waikiki Hotel, a 40-year fixture that holds an enviable location at the Diamond Head end of Waikiki.



The Park Shore will soon be managed by the growing Aqua Hotels brand.

WEB EXCLUSIVE

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Park Shore is the third addition to Aqua's growing portfolio in 2008, increasing its chain-wide inventory to 13 properties located exclusively in Waikiki. The announcement was made by Masanori Sasada, Chairman of Sasada International. Since purchasing the Park Shore from the Blackstone Group in 2007, Sasada has focused on repositioning the hotel and reinvigorating its prime corner position.

Aqua appears a worthy management choice, especially with its impressive track record for converting under-performers into unique boutique

hotels with high-caliber service. While specific investment levels have yet to be finalized, a multi-million-dollar renovation is currently set to launch in April 2009 and be completed in June 2010. The property will remain open during the process.

"The addition of Park Shore to the Aqua portfolio has provided us with a solid foundation for expansion along Kalakaua Avenue," said Elizabeth Churchill, Aqua's vice president of sales and marketing. "Aqua primarily manages off-beach properties, with the Aqua Waikiki Beachside as our first on Kalakaua Avenue. By adding this much larger property with its many amenities, we're firmly planted along Waikiki's oceanfront route."

Churchill added that in the past, Park Shore has been considered a "B" level property.

"Our job is to bring it to the 'A' list," she said. "Prior to the renovation, we'll focus on upgrading the service in order to bring its ranking up on TripAdvisor."

While Aqua will benefit by having an oceanfront property in its portfolio, Park Shore will leave behind the limitations of independent status.

"Agents who have already been booking the Park Shore will now have the bonuses that come with Aqua's Lifestyle Specialist Program," Churchill said.

Details on the program that rewards agents with complimentary room nights for booking loyalty can be found online.

Despite turbulent times in the travel industry and with the U.S. economy as a whole, Churchill views this as an excellent time to welcome Park Shore to the Aqua family. She said that Aqua owner Mike Paulin often comments that during his 40 years in the industry, he's always experienced expansion and growth in down periods.

"It's an especially great time to expand and add our brand to independent hotels that haven't

had our brand in the past," said Churchill. "We'll continue to look for opportunities in Waikiki, on the neighbor islands and even on the mainland."

The Park Shore currently offers guestrooms with 27-inch cable television, clock radio, mini-refrigerator, coffeemaker, hair dryer, telephone with dataport and private lanai with ocean and/or Diamond Head views. With the renovation, Park Shore will either fit into Aqua's Boutique category, which is moderate, or its Elite product, which is luxury, said Churchill.

"That will all be determined from the final design and what amenities will be offered," she said.

Throughout the renovation, Aqua will extend special Best Available Rates to keep bookings active. These rates and renovation updates will be posted on the company's Web site and through GDS channels. As refurbished rooms become available, Aqua will offer these at discounted rates as incentive for enjoying the property while the renovation is ongoing.

THE DETAILS

Park Shore Waikiki Hotel
(Managed by Aqua Hotels & Resorts)
2586 Kalakaua Ave.
Honolulu, HI 96815
866-406-2782
www.aquaresorts.com

Stay Free in Waikiki: Receive the fifth night free with bookings of four consecutive nights. Nightly rates from \$88.

Snooze-n-Crooze: Includes compact rental car use with complimentary parking. Nightly rates from \$109.

Agent Special: \$79 fam rate prior to beginning the renovations

Commission: 10 percent

Agent Web Site:

www.aquaresorts.com/travel_consultants.htm