

**Ep #135: Where to Stay in Maui:
Are Timeshare Presentations Worth It?**



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Hosts

Alex Payne, Jess Field, and Pam Lorg

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Ep #135: Where to Stay in Maui: Are Timeshare Presentations Worth It?

Alex: Have you ever wondered what it's like to attend a timeshare presentation for a discounted stay? Keep listening to hear how I did just that to save on a vacation to Maui, plus how I used points to extend the trip.

Welcome to *Points Talk with the Travel Mom Squad*. We are three moms who've discovered how to leverage credit card welcome offers to get hundreds of thousands of dollars of travel expenses for nearly free. We've used credit card points and miles to take vacations to places like Hawaii, Paris, Greece, Maldives, Japan, and so much more. And the best part? We each still have 800 plus credit scores. Imagine being able to take the vacation of your dreams for nearly free. It's totally possible, and we're here to show you how.

Hey, I'm Alex.

Pam: And I'm Pam, Alex's mom.

Jess: And I'm Jess. Let's talk points.

Alex and Pam just returned from the Westin Nanea Ocean Villas and the Andaz Maui. They are here to tell us all about their stay. Alex actually got a discounted stay at the Westin by attending a timeshare presentation. So excited to see whether she bought a timeshare or not.

Alex: Spoiler, I did not.

Jess: And they used Hyatt points for their stay at the Andaz and points for their flights. So Alex, tell us how this all came about because I know that you and your family just went to Maui earlier this year. So this makes for the second Maui trip since late December.

Alex: Yeah, so we were in Maui right after Christmas. We came home January 2nd, so technically we've been to Maui twice in 2025 already. Clearly never would have happened without points.

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So basically, what happened was, it was at least a year ago, well over a year ago, I got a letter in the mail from Marriott. I actually have the letter with me today. It was from actually from Westin Vacation Club. So years ago, I had, okay, so I've done one of these timeshare presentations before where you go, you get a discounted stay, you listen to their spiel, and it was fine. We did it in like fall of 2019 at the Newport Coast Villas in California. I think we got three nights for super cheap. And it was fine. It was like, it was very early, well, we were like pretty new in the points and miles. We've probably been doing it for a couple of years. And at that stage, I was still like, "Ooh, I don't want to use all my points." Like, this was like a \$200 stay. So I was like, "Oh, we'll try this and we'll go to." I think we did it, we added some points and, you know, or stayed some more nights somewhere else in the area using points.

So I've done this before. I've seen people go to Hawaii on these timeshare presentations. I'm like, "Well, that's way better than going to Newport for two nights or three nights or whatever it was." And so I had gone on to the website, like Westin Vacation Club or Marriott Vacation Club. Marriott owns Westin, so it's all the same, but they Westin still has like their name, even though it's all under Marriott Vacation Club. So I went on their website and filled out a form where, and any you anybody can do this, like you can just go to, like you can still do it now, go to like Marriott Vacation Club or Westin Vacation Club, look for learn more or something about ownership and there should be a form where you can fill it out to get information. So I did that and then eventually I started getting emails from them and letters in the mail.

And so I got this letter in the mail, and it was inviting me to try the famed, this is their words. Experience a bit a beach to fit your mood. Enjoy a stay on famed North Ka'anapali Beach. So my invitation was for 6 days, 5 nights in a studio at the Ka'anapali Ocean Resort Villas, plus I could get 15,000 Marriott Bonvoy points or a \$75 resort credit. And the cost was \$999, so like \$1,000. So I was like, "Okay, well, that's nice. Like, okay, cool, \$1,000." But I don't want a studio. And I have been to this area of Maui. My mom and I actually think we stayed at this exact property they sent me one to, and we used points for like two nights or

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something. Now it is very, you can still book these properties on points, but it is hard to find availability.

But anyway, I had heard that you can call and request a different location. And so I called the number on the letter that they sent me and I just said, "Hey, I'm interested in doing this, but I have a family. We a studio is not going to work for us. Are there any other destinations?" I actually already had my eyes on the Westin Nanea because I've had a friend that has stayed there. I mean, they pay for it, but they've stayed there a couple of times. And I was like, "All right, if it's good enough for she and she's kind of bougie." I'm like, "If this is good enough for her name is Janelle. If this is good enough for Janelle, this is good enough for me."

And so, I was like, "Okay, can I go and stay at the Westin Nanea in a two-bedroom unit?" And they said, "Yeah, you can do that, but it's going to be \$1,999." So \$400 a night. Instead, you know, so it was a lot, you know, double the price, but it's about \$1,000 a night to stay here. And so we've saved like \$3,000 by doing this presentation. And I say save loosely because I wouldn't have paid their price to stay here. I just wouldn't have done it. And so, anyway, for the deal, you do have to attend a 90-minute timeshare presentation.

So what I did is I paid \$100 down when I called the guy to like ask if I could switch. I said, "Okay, yes, I'll I want to do this." And then I had a year that I could then call them back and let them, like to book it. So it was good for a year, and you can book 10 months out. Now, I think I had already planned our, knew we were going for Christmas when I bought this. And I was like, "Well, I guess we'll go back because I really wanted to try it, see what the timeshare experience was like here and try out this property.

Now, let me just say too, I would not do one of these timeshare package deals with just anybody. I would only do them with Marriott, Hilton, or Hyatt because I those are reputable companies that I trust. There is a lot of scammy timeshare stuff out there. So I just want to put that out there that you want to do this with a reputable company. Now, because we had two bedrooms, I invited my parents

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to come along. It does say they sleep six, but the timeshare properties don't really care. I even talked to a girl there and I said like, "Hey, these, these ones only sleep four, but I have a family of six." She's like, "They don't care." With the timeshare packages, like you can bring who you want. It's just the hotels that are a lot more strict. So she's like, "But you're you're fine." So just putting that out there. We had eight people in our room that was meant for six. So there was two bedrooms. We each had a king bed. There was two bathrooms, and then a living area with a sofa bed and a full kitchen, washer and dryer.

So basically, I decided to do it because I wanted to see what it was like. We almost always stay in hotel rooms. Well, like 99.9% of the time we stay in hotel rooms. And it was really nice to have so much space and to save on points. You know, I have plenty of points, but if I can stay somewhere really nice like this, obviously it's not something I can do all the time, but it was a pretty cool thing to get to try out. So my mom, that's how I got the deal. Now, mom's my mom's going to share about the hotel itself and like what we thought about it.

Pam: Well, I thought one of the things that we really liked was having that kitchen. I mean, we said multiple times, this is really nice not having to get come back from the beach and pool day and having to get all dressed up and change to go out to dinner and find reservations for dinner and to take eight of us. It was just really nice to be able to cook and to have just simple dinners. I mean, we really liked that aspect of it.

I'd say the hotel is really nice. It's about 8 years old. It's on Ka'anapali Beach, which is the same beach that the Hyatt Regency Maui is on, but it's on the other side, you know, clear down on the other end, on the other side of Black Rock Beach. And so it is a little bit different that we couldn't walk to Whalers in like we usually have, but it was still it was still a great location, walking distance to Dukes, which is a really popular restaurant on the island. The Westin Ocean Villas North and South are right by there as well, and you can use the pools at all of them. In fact, didn't they have some sort of a pirate's?

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Alex: Yeah, they had like a pirate ship between the West and North and South. And Noah loved it. Actually, Cruz who was with us too. He's my 11-year-old and he loved it too. Like him and Noah were playing around. It's like a little splash pad with this big pirate ship and they have slides on the pirate ship. It was really fun.

Pam: Yeah, they had a lot of fun. And the really funny thing is we were there in Maui, and as I'm getting off my flight, I noticed my brother has posted something about getting some cinnamon rolls at a place in Maui. So I texted him. I said, "Are you in Maui?" He goes, "Yes, we're in Maui." We're at the Ritz Carlton, but we're going to Westin Ocean Villas. I think he was at the north one, right next door to us. So he, I had no idea, but my brother was right next door to us. So we spent some time with them and that was really fun and such a pleasant surprise. And so we went, it was it was fun to be able to use the different pools.

Now, the pools at this particular hotel, there's a really large pool that has a small slide, but it's really fast and the kids had so much fun going down on it. They loved it. They also have a zero-entry gravel or rock pool for kids, a splash pad. the kids really had a great time on it. There were a lot of chairs. I mean, we would, I like to be out of the sun. I like to be in the shade. So I had a little bit of trouble finding that type of a place to sit. Other than that, if you're not interested in being in a shaded area, I don't think there was any trouble finding seating ever.

Alex: No, and the first day, we got out at like 8:00 a.m. There was nobody out there. Like we had our pick of where we wanted to sit. And it was like, "Wow, this is really refreshing coming from last time being at the Hyatt Regency where it's like, if you're not out by 7:00 a.m., good luck."

Pam: Yeah, it was really nice. There are 1, 2, and three-bedroom villas on this property. The two-bedroom villa was very comfortable, I thought for our group of eight.

Alex: Oh yeah, we had plenty of room for the eight of us.

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Pam: Yeah, I think that you know, Alex's three boys were on a sofa bed, but the sofa bed also besides the part that pulled out, also had another little side sofa. So it was more than enough for three kids. And then you had Noah in your room. It was really funny because they someone had they just left this porta crib in the in our in our room. And so he joked to Noah. He said, "Hey Noah, this is where you're going to sleep." That's where he decided to sleep.

Alex: He was so excited.

Pam: Yes, he loved it. So you didn't even have to share your bed with Noah.

Alex: So and what was really funny is he hasn't slept in a crib since he was probably 18 months old. He started climbing out of his crib when he was really little. And so he's he's going to be five in September. So it was hilarious. He thought it was so cool having his own his crib.

Pam: I think he thought it was like a little fort or something, but it was so funny. He just climbed in and climbed out himself when he was ready for bed.

Alex: I thought that was going to happen for one night and then you were going to have him in your bed, but nope.

Pam: He loved it. Yeah, he did.

Alex: Yeah.

Pam: One of the things that I really liked about it is having a washer and dryer there. In fact, I way overpacked and if I had thought about it, I would have packed much less because having that washer and dryer was incredible. And then we just had so much space to spread out. We would play games around this huge table in the kitchen every night, and I really enjoyed it. Another thing that we really liked is they have one of the best places to get shaved ice right there on property. Your boys fell in love with that place. They were all about it

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and it was really, really good. They're, I'm starting to starting to laugh because one of the things that they have is they have this shuttle that will take you to Lahaina Cannery and Whalers Village and also, tell us, Alex, how Mitch became a shuttle driver one day.

Alex: Yeah, so we were taking the shuttle over one night to Whaler's Village and it was really, we had to wait a little while. Like it runs about every 20 minutes. They do take a break, but every 20 minutes, they'll take you over and bring you back. You do need to have like your room card with you to prove that like, "Hey, yeah, like that's the hotel I'm at." Just, you know, keep being it probably for safety reasons and such. But anyway, we were going and Mitch and Kai, my second youngest, they missed the shuttle. And so they're like, "We'll just get the next one."

So me, my dad, and my other boys, we were all there walking around Whaler's Village, and it's taking a while for Mitch to get there. He's like, "Man, this shuttle's running like way behind." And so finally, he's like, "We're just going to drive over." So they do have self-parking or valet. I think the parking was like \$30 a day, but what's really nice is the parking, it's a garage. It's right next to the property. So it's very convenient to just get your car in and out. So I was like, "Well, just drive down." So Mitch drove down. But it was really funny cause he like went to go get the car keys cause he's like, "I'll just go get the car keys and see if, you know, if it hasn't come, then we'll just drive."

And so he gets back there and there've been another family waiting for the shuttle and he's like, "They were getting a little frustrated." Like, "Where is this shuttle? It's taken so long." And Mitch was like, "Hey, are you guys going to Whalers you're just going to Whalers Village too, right?" And they're like, "Yeah, that's what we're going." He's like, "Well, this is really probably really weird, but if you guys want to ride, like I'm going there and we have this van and it's just me and my son. Like you're welcome to get a ride with us." And they're like, "Oh, yeah, that'd be great." So they hopped in the van with Mitch and he drove them to Whaler's Village. So then we were just joking like, "Hey, Mitch, you should just

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like get a side job and just park the van here and drive people around back and forth between the Westin and Whaler's Village." So that was pretty funny.

Jess: I hope they gave him a five-star review.

Alex: I, you know what? I don't even think he got a tip. I'm just kidding.

Pam: But you know that does go to show, Alex's husband, Mitch, is one of the nicest guys. He's one of those guys that would definitely do that.

Alex: He also, if you're, he's a he's an Enneagram two. So if you know the Enneagram, that explains it. It's the helper.

Pam: if you need a picture taken and you're trying to take a selfie, he will run to you to see if he could take the picture for you. Just a generally nice guy. So anyway, you know, if Mitch ever loses his job, he can, you know, you guys can move to Hawaii, become a shuttle driver. All in all, we really enjoyed our stay, you know, here.

Alex: One thing too, I think we forgot is the beach access is really good too. Like, it's the kids were snorkeling right off the beach. They were boogie boarding right off the beach, right in front of our hotel. And that is something we love about when we've used points in Maui as well and staying here is when you're with a family, it is so convenient to not have to hop in the car all the time and you just have everything you need right there.

Pam: Yeah, that was really nice. And you can book this resort on points sometimes. Now, availability is pretty sporadic. I think I looked, you know, when I was writing up a post for this that'll be coming out, and I did see some for 126,000 points a night. I think Alex saw some for the month of September for 100k points a night. But that's pretty gone. The only thing I saw was literally just the month of September. The whole rest of the year, there was nothing. And so it's very sporadic.

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Pam: Yeah. So, as Alex said, she took one for the team for this and went to a timeshare presentation. I've gone to a million of these in my life before I got into points and miles. So I was feeling kind of bad for her. So give us the deets all about the timeshare presentation and whether it was worth it or not.

Alex: Okay. So they emailed me, you know, a couple weeks before the trip just to confirm and said, "Hey, this is when your timeshare presentation is going to take place. This is where you'll meet." It was the second to last day of our trip at 11:00 a.m. Not the time I would have chosen. I would have been like, "Can we meet at 8:00 a.m.?" But that wasn't what we were given. So they shuttled us from, we met in the lobby of our hotel, so the Nanea, and then they shuttled us over to the Ocean Villas. We met the girl who was going to be doing the presentation. She spent a minute like getting to know us and I'm like, "Can we just get to the presentation? We got a vacation to get back to." But she walked around with us and just showed us some pictures of different properties, explained the size and all the perks of being within Marriott's program.

There was like this globe that they had in there where it would like have lights of all the different places you could go around the whole world through Marriott Vacation Club. Then we went into her office. She walked us through ownership. And so how it works is typically with a timeshare, you purchase the timeshare and you have like a week that you get to use it. And it's this dedicated week every year, maybe every other year. With Marriott Vacation Club, it's different. You are purchasing points and you have this allotment of points. And depending on how many points you buy, that's how much you're going to have to spend with Marriott Vacation Club.

And then you can use them in any Marriott Vacation Club property. You're not just like, "I'm buying a timeshare at Westin Ocean Villas." You're buying points that you can use at any Marriott Vacation Club. So after she walks us through it, like I explained to her from the get-go like, "I use points." my husband's like, "Yeah, she actually has a business teaching people how to do this." Like, it's pretty hardcore into points and miles. And so a little bit later, she's like, "So

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you're like, what's your interest level?" I'm like, "We're not going to buy a timeshare. Like, we can travel for free."

And she kept saying to me like, "You know, I'm not trying to, you keep doing what you're doing." She said this so many times, like a broken record. You keep doing what you're doing. Like obviously what you're doing is great and it's working for you, but we can fill in some gaps here with the condo properties, you know, with having a kitchen and this and that. And it was just really funny because she kept saying, "You can keep doing what you're doing." And I'm like, "I don't need your permission, lady. I'm going to be doing this whether you're telling me to or not" you know. So that was just kind of funny.

Um, it was pretty high pressure, I will tell you that. So she explains how it all works. Another guy comes in and he breaks down the pricing. So she just explained, this is how Marriott Vacation Club works, and then he comes in with like the actual numbers. Now, when they first tell you the offer, it's like some astronomical number, which this the real offer is astronomical too. But the first offer is like, I don't know, \$60,000 to buy 3,000 points a year or something like that. But then he comes in and tells me like with these, these are the discounts that you'll get. Like if you buy today, you'll get this and this and this.

And one thing he did say is he's like, sometimes, you know, there'll be different offers for different people with different things out, you know, out there. But with Marriott Vacation Club, like everybody's getting the same offer. If you go out to the pool and you say, oh, we bought our timeshare package, we bought 3,000 points a year, the next person's going to pay the same price. So I there is like some transparency there, which is which I appreciate. But so this was our offer. Our offer was \$39,000. So that's after all these discounts of like buying today and paying this much or I don't even know what all the discounts were. But \$39,000 to buy 3,000 points a year.

So to put that into perspective, 3,000 points a year, it's going to cost you around 2,500 to 2,800 points for a two-bedroom mountain or resort view at one of their properties in Hawaii. So I told them, if I ever was going to do this, like I don't

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want a studio. I don't want to go stay in these, you know, I want to go to Hawaii and stay in two bedrooms. And those are going to be their more expensive points-wise. So that's where that number kind of came from. But then they're like, well, and if you buy right now, we have a triple points offer. So for the first year, you'd get 9,000 points. And then they roll over, but what they didn't tell me, which my uncle told me later because he actually has he joined Marriott Vacation Club a while ago. He said that the points expire after 18 months. So you're like, yeah, I have 9,000 points, but I've got to use those pretty quickly. Like that's three weeks of vacation right there.

So I yeah, I think those were for seven nights. It's either five or seven nights. I think it's seven, but don't quote me on that. But what they don't really, they do tell you this, but this is where it makes nothing makes sense to me is when they tell you that you have a yearly maintenance fee. So on top of paying your \$39,000, which you can make payments on or whatever, you can finance it, you're going to be paying from for my example, for the 3,000 points, the maintenance fee would have been \$2,400. So every year, I'm going to pay \$2,400 in addition to the flat rate that I paid.

Jess: Which begs the question, can't you just go for on vacation for a week for \$2,400 and save the hassle of not paying for a timeshare?

Alex: Yes. And so, but then what's really interesting is she broke down before, she wrote on a thing, "So let's say you spend, you know, you spent \$2,000 on this timeshare. Let's say you do that for 25 years and with inflation, you'll have spent \$65,000. And what do you have for it? You don't own anything." And then on the next side, it's like, "Or you could spend \$65,000 on Marriott Vacation Club and you will have a deed and you will own your vacation." I'm like, first of all, I'm not spending that much. Secondly, you're not including the \$2,400 maintenance fee. That is not being included in her like run down of and all of it. And so it's they I just don't...

Jess: I can't imagine like also wanting to go to the same place every year.

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Alex: Well, that's what's nice thing with Marriott Vacation Club is you don't have to go. Like they have them all over the world. Like they have, you can go to Europe, you can go in the States, you can go wherever, really. Like I do think that if there was a timeshare program and you wanted to do something like this, I do think Marriott Vacation Club is probably one of the better options because you have more choices. I think that this makes sense for people who don't, who have one, a lot of money. Two, they really value having the space. And three, they don't, they just want something easy. They don't want to have to think about it. They're willing to pay extra to not deal with all of that. So needless to say, we passed.

Jess: Is there a price that she could have given you and you would have said yes?

Alex: Not at this stage of my life. And that's what I told them. Like we were like, "Hey, we're not saying we would never ever, ever do this." Like I could see the benefit of being grandparents and you just are like, "Hey, we're retired and we just want things easy and we want to bring our grandkids, you know, on these vacations with us." And I can see the value of it there a little bit. But they were pushing really hard.

This is kind of the what I thought was, I mean it was annoying but kind of funny. They're like, "Well, what happens like you're going to run out of points. You're not going to be able to do this forever." And I'm like, "Well, I've been doing this for 8 years and I haven't run out yet." And they're like, "Well, you know, but how do you just keep getting, how do you keep earning points?" I'm like, "Well, I can some cards I can cancel and I can get the bonuses again. And there's always new cards coming out and I earn over a million points a year." And so I'm able to replicate this. They're like, "Well, you're going to need space as your kids get older." I'm like, "Well, yeah, we can get two rooms. Like, I am sitting on a lot of points right now. Like I can pay for two rooms."

Jess: You should have given them the link to our webinar.

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Alex: I know. And then they were like, yeah, that's nice, but you know, and I was just like, yeah, I get that. Like having two rooms is really or having the kitchen, having all that stuff. I'm not going to lie and say that's not better than sitting in a hotel room with, you know, a crowded hotel room. I'm like, it's really nice. But it's not worth \$39,000 and a maintenance fee every year. Like that's just not going to happen. And so then, I told them, "You know, the other thing is, we've stayed at the Hyatt Vacation Club just down the road and I can book the two bedroom on points there for 53,000 points per night at peak pricing." And he's like, "Well, where did you see that?" I was like, "I looked it up last night."

Like I literally looked it up so I could because I was like preparing for this episode and I was thinking like, "Oh, is there availability?" because the Hyatt Vacation Club, it does availability is can be tricky to find, but it does happen. Like we've stayed there. I looked again and I saw availability there. So anyway, they were just like every argument they had, I was able to come back and be like, "Well, no, I can do this." They're like, "Okay, well, I mean, I guess if it works for you now, keep doing it." And it was really funny cause afterwards, Mitch was like, they looked so deflated after that. Like they really, I think they thought we they were going to be able to convince us. They're like, "You guys are our prime audience. Like you guys are traveling, you're doing all of the things. You're just missing the timeshare aspect. That's all that you're missing in your plan. This can fill that need for you." And you know, they have their good arguments, but it was pretty funny.

Pam: Alex, didn't you say some lady actually cracked?

Alex: Yeah, yeah, I'm going to I'm going to get to that. So at the end of the presentation and they did this last time when we were in Newport as well. At the end of the presentation, somebody else comes out and they offer an encore presentation. And so they're like, "Hey, if you want to come back and do another timeshare package for a discounted stay, we would love to have you come back. You can come back anytime in the next 2 years and here's all the properties you can choose from. It's \$1,395" is what it starts at, and then it can get up to, you know, the same price I paid \$2,000 for 5 nights.

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There's, you know, different locations. And you have 2 years to use it if you, you know, you got to pay \$100 down today, and then I think they'll like take like \$129 out of my account each month to pay the 1395. And so I was on the fence about it at first and I was like, this was actually pretty cool getting to stay in this location right on the beach with kitchen, two bedrooms. So I purchased the encore package. And what's funny too is cause they're like, you know, if you want to come back, you know, if you spend \$2,000 and I'm like, you know, all this money you're going to be spending over time and you could just get the timeshare. I'm like, or I could just keep doing these encore packages for a fraction of the price, for less than the maintenance fee I'd be paying every year.

So we did do the time we did do the encore. We have 2 years to use it. I am eyeing the Westin Princeville on Kauai. Now this time they I can only go to a one bedroom. So my mom and dad won't be able to come stay in a room with us, but they can of course come and get do their own timeshare package. But I'm eyeing the Westin Princeville or so we'd have a one bedroom. So a separate bedroom, kitchen, all that stuff still, or the Ko Olina Beach Club on Oahu, which is actually, I think it's really close to Aulani, the Disney Resort. So we haven't taken our kids there and that would be really fun to do too.

So, anyway, here's my, so I'll keep you all posted of where we stay. And they did say the same offer we gave you today is what the offer would be whenever you come. So and the points price, the points price doesn't go up, but like the cost per point that you pay to buy in does go up. So in 2 years, it would be more expensive and we would still have the price that they offered us when we were just there, but anyway, here's the my parting thoughts on the timeshare presentation. Maintenance fee's the killer. Like that's where they get you. It's like, "Oh, I'm going to be paying \$2,400 forever for the rest of owning this property." Like with \$2,400, I can do a lot. Like, I'm pretty travel savvy. I think I can figure out some cheap stays for \$2,400 that are pretty good without paying the \$39,000 to get started in Marriott Vacation Club.

Pam: Alex, didn't they say that the that maintenance fee would stay the same?

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Alex: Yeah.

Pam: Okay. Because I do have to, you know I have timeshares and our maintenance fee continues to go up each year. I don't even use my timeshares now that I've gotten into this. We use one timeshare that we take our grandchildren to. I gave a timeshare to my brother just to get rid of the maintenance fee. Um, the other one we have, I'm going to try to sell for almost nothing just to get rid of the maintenance fee. So I haven't found it to be very valuable. We will keep the one just because we do take the grandchildren to, but yeah.

Alex: You know, don't quote me on that. I'll have to ask them when I go back in 2 years and have to do this presentation again.

Jess: Maybe over the next 2 years, you could save up \$39,000.

Alex: Yeah. Uh, no.

Jess: And buy yourself a time share.

Alex: So here are some things that I would do instead of buying a timeshare through Marriott Vacation Club. First of all, do the timeshare presentation. That's like we're doing that. We're going to be doing that again. Another option is to rent through Red Week. So it's Red Week is like a timeshare, you can either buy timeshares or rent them from other people who list their timeshares. What's interesting to me is when they're giving these numbers, they're giving like, this is how much it would stay here if you book directly through Marriott. Well, I'm not going to book directly through Marriott because I know that I can save. And so you can go to Red Week. It is so much cheaper than booking directly via Marriott.

I was looking and I found two bedroom units. I mean, they're set weeks. It's for seven nights and it was like \$500 a night. Two bedrooms at the Westin Nanea

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for \$500 a night is a really good price because of the resort amenities, the beach access, it's really nice. And so I could then I was thinking, "Dang, why did I do the timeshare package? I could have paid just another \$100 a night and bought a package off Red Week and not have to do the timeshare presentation." I mean, it's more expensive. I would have been spending, you know, an extra \$500 or no, it would have been a little more because those were for a week-long stays. Usually if you're renting through Red Week, it's not 5 nights. You're going to be purchasing a whole week.

So that's something to keep in mind if you did want to purchase a Marriott Vacation Club, you can buy them through somebody selling theirs and you can get it for so much cheaper. You won't get all the perks like the triple points or whatever. I think there was also an option where they'd give me a bunch of Marriott Bonvoy points and I'm like, well, what will that get me a night at a like the most one night at the most basic thing because Marriott points don't go very far. You can just use points. Like if you're like, hey, I could have gone and those date if those dates work in September, you can go and stay there and just use your Marriott Bonvoy points.

My favorite option is if I was going to go to Hawaii and I wanted a condo unit, I would look for availability at Hyatt Vacation Club Ka'anapali Beach. It's a category seven. The one bedroom, they have one bedrooms and two bedrooms that you can book on points. The one bedroom is standard award pricing. So it's 30,000 points a night. The two bedroom is standard suite pricing, so it's 48,000 standard and 53 at peak pricing. I didn't ever I didn't see any off-peak dates when I was looking. So availability can be tricky to find here, but if you use Max My Point, you can like I looked and I was finding availability. You're more likely to have or find availability if you're willing to go like the next month or two or three. So when I was looking in the, you know, the beginning of June, I was seeing dates scattered through from the beginning of June through September.

And so, you know, not it depends like the I think the 48,000, like the two bedrooms are a little harder to find, but I was still seeing availability in those. And what's nice is if you saw like, "Oh, there's three nights available in the

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standard suite, the two bedroom, I could stay there for three nights and then move next door to the Hyatt Regency for the other nights." And this was the best part. Like he literally did not believe me when I told them that you can book this for 53,000 points a night. And I said to him, "Oh, well, do you I can show you if you want. Like I just pulled I just, he's like, oh, no, no, no, it's fine. You don't need to show me." But it was really, really funny.

So anyway, that's what I would do. We've stayed there. We loved it because the nice thing is the rooms have these really big lanais, like where you, you know, the outdoor porch area where you can just look out and see the ocean views. When you do the timeshare presentation with Marriott, a lot of times they put the timeshare people in not very good view rooms. Like we were on the bottom floor looking out to a road. And so that's like, you know, don't expect some really great room if you do a timeshare package, but that was really nice about the Hyatt Vacation Club was having the two-bedroom with the ocean view. So that would be my recommendation. Like, okay, am I going to spend \$39,000 or I could just go spend \$0 and 53,000 points for a two-bedroom at the vacation club. So it just doesn't make sense to do, you know, at this when we can do stuff on points. Oh, I forgot to say the thing, Mom, that you were like about the lady.

So the lady that came in and did the closing who offered us to do the encore presentation, she was like, "Oh yeah, they were saying that you do points. I've actually been just starting to get into that. What's your website called?" So I'm like, "Oh, it's called Travel Mom Squad." And then I handed her my Sapphire preferred cause that's what I had with me and I paid put the \$100 down payment on that. And I'm like, "And this is the best card if you're just getting started off, like this is the card you should be getting." Like she'd opened a Delta card or something. I was like, "Oh, this one's great because you can use it for all different sorts of things" and so she's like writing notes of like, okay, Travel Mom Squad, Sapphire preferred.

So Marriott Vacation Club might not have gotten a new timeshare owner, but we might have got a new follower. So it was pretty hilarious, but I mean, like I overall, like I'm doing it again. I don't know when we're going to do it. We have 2

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years, but not something that I would do all the time. It is a little painful, but it's kind of fun to I mean, it's not fun. It's fun after the fact. During it, you're like, "Oh my gosh, is this over yet? This is like really annoying." But getting the discounted stay was cool and getting to stay in a nice, bigger place was really, really great. So that's it for the timeshare part. Mom, tell us tell them about the Andaz Maui, just where we headed afterwards. We were there for two nights.

Pam: Yeah. So the Andaz Maui is a place that I had, I've never stayed at. Friends stayed at and we were staying someplace else. We went over to visited them and I loved it and I was so excited about this day. I know Jess really likes it. It is a category eight, so it runs from 35,000 to 45,000 points a night. It's located in Wailea. This is kind of an upscale bougie area, so really, really excited about this. Now, I'll tell you, I was disappointed in a few things here.

First of all, we got no upgrade. We got no, um, there were no Queen Ocean View rooms available or standard suites available. And actually, we've heard that the property isn't super generous with upgrades. Um, the kids were given leis and sunglasses on arrival. We got some lavender lemonade. We got there early. We got there because we had to be out of the timeshare. So we got there about 12. We were able to get into our rooms around two and check-in is usually 4:00 p.m. So that was pretty nice. And they let us use the pools before, um, we could get into our rooms. We played some bingo while we waited. They have really nice pools. They have three infinity pools, one lagoon pool, and an adults only pool. And that is really nice.

Where it fell down for me really was when we got to the room. And there were a couple of things. They were nice. I like the brightness. I liked, um, I mean, we had a garden view and actually, it was, you know, outside our room, it was just very green and pretty. It's a bathroom. I didn't like the bathroom at all. It is really narrow, very small, and awkward. It's just strange. I mean, if you can't, if you're taking a shower, someone else can't come in the bathroom and use the toilet like if they're just someone that you're traveling with without seeing you in the shower, naked. You know, so that's a little bit awkward, opening up the...

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Alex: I don't remember. They you can see through it? On the other side? I thought it was just on the bedroom side they could see through.

Pam: No, they could through the bedroom if you open up the slats, but if you close the slats, you can't though. But yes, no, in the bathroom. So I kept having, so Alex's youngest, um, not youngest but Kai who always stays our roommate, was staying with us and I'd say, "Okay, Kai, Grandma's going to take a shower. So don't come in the bathroom for a while. I didn't want to freak him out." So you know, so that's just a little awkward, I feel like. Um, wasn't just a huge fan of it. It's not really ideal for a group of four or a family. I feel like. I feel like for a couple, it's great. It's, um, yeah, it's I don't know. I had huge, huge expectations. And sometimes you go into something with huge expectations and it just didn't do it for me. I was just kind of disappointed in it. I think I just set my expectations too high. I don't know, Alex, what did you think about it?

Alex: The property is beautiful. Like the entrance as soon as you get there, like you walk through this like walkway and it's so pretty and you get to the lobby and then there's the ocean and you can see down in the pools. It's really, really pretty. The service was fine. I wouldn't say like it was nothing to write home about, but it was nothing to complain about either. It was just like they it was fine. The rooms 100%, like if we were there for more than three nights, we were there for two nights. I could have done one more night, but anything more than that, I would have been going a little crazy cause the rooms are small.

And so I think even if you went with like friends and like girlfriends or you went with any group of four in the standard room is going to be tight. Like it's just kind of small and the bathrooms are, like my mom said, the bathrooms are very narrow. And I think because everything is flush, so it's like the closet doors are flushed with the walls and they all look the same. The bathroom door looks the same. And so it just kind of feels very constrictive and a little claustrophobic. And you don't really realize, it's not super obvious that the door is, but once you open it, you're like, oh, the closet and there's room, and oh, there's the toilet and there's room.

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And then in the shower, it's like the shower mirrors the bathroom, like where the counter and the sink is, it's like that same size but on the other side of it, on the room side. And it's very narrow. And I felt like when I was showering, I'm under the shower head and I feel like I was really close to the glass, like that the glass was right in front of my face. And it was just it was just strange, a strange layout. So I didn't like that. I actually have a friend of mine here who just took her family there. They, so they went with their kids and they loved, like she's like, "It was super nice, but I they were going a little crazy with how small the rooms were." They had previously stayed at the Hyatt Regency with their family and that they fit great there.

And so I just feel like the room setup is not ideal for families. And so if I was going for families, instead of paying 40,000 points per night to stay at the Andaz with the young with young family, I would stay at the Hyatt Regency Maui for 25,000 points a night. And you have room in your, you just have more room. You're going to be more comfortable. I wouldn't say, like, I think the place is kid friendly, kid friendly. Like, the lagoon pool's really nice. They walk around and they're different times of the day, like they're walking around handing out mochi ice cream sounds like little ice creams. They are handing out, um, what else were they doing? They like have bingo by the pool. Like, there it was good.

It's just I think the rooms make it tricky with the family. And there is a beach like right off the right outside, there's a beach and you can get snorkel gear is included, boogie boards are included. That was really great. They we were able to snorkel and boogie board right off. Like the location is incredible. I love Wailea. Like I it's probably my favorite area in Maui. It's more green. It's so pretty. It's so nice. I absolutely love it there. And I was actually really bummed when we left. I was like, "I wish we had a couple more days here," because we were only there for 2 days.

But I have to say, like, we've stayed at the Marriott Wailea Beach Resort. I've been there three times now. We haven't taken the kids and I was wishing, "Oh, I wish we had, I could book two nights cause I have Marriott points and we could just go there for two nights." They have a huge, like the two huge water slides. I

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think they're like the biggest water slides on the island is from what I've heard. And they have Wailea Beach right there, which is really, really nice as well. They have multiple pools. It's just spread out differently. And so I personally would rather stay at Marriott Wailea Beach Resort and just cause it's more of a standard hotel room. It's like you've got your two beds, you've got a normal bathroom instead of these narrow bathrooms.

The other thing, which was and this is not the hotel's fault at all. Let me just say that. Like it was just unfortunate timing for us is there was an accident in the lagoon pool and we were only there for 2 days. And so the lagoon pool was closed all morning until 5:00 p.m. that night. And so then we had to go to the three infinity pools and there was, we couldn't find seating barely because there was, you know, their whole other pool was unusable. And so we had to go up there and I just was like, "Well, it'd be really nice if they offered up the cabanas at a discounted price or something so we could have a place to sit." And it was just kind of unfortunate.

And then like my son jumped in the pool and he got, he I mean, he's a little sensitive to this kind of stuff. He felt like he got in trouble because they said, "Oh, you can't, oh, if you jump in the pool, you're we're going to have to kick you out of the pool." And he's like, my mom, mom, you were right there, right? And she's like,

Pam: Right. I went up, I went up and asked them afterwards. I says, "I don't see any signs that say that they're not kids are supposed to jump in the pool." He says, "No, there aren't, but we're supposed to enforce it." So yeah, he was he it kind of ruined his day. He's a funny thing.

Alex: Yeah.

Pam: Yeah. So, but there were some things, like Globalist breakfast was amazing there. I mean, as Globalist, you get it for free. It's a buffet. It was really good. But if you're not Globalist, it's \$49. I would never pay that. Or it's \$24.50 for kids. It's good, but it's not that good. And so that's just really a lot of money. I

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think they also, right from the get-go, I was so disappointed in the amenities that they offered for Globalist. The just when just had gone there, she had shown pictures of she had a table full of stuff. We get there and we had this little, tiny box of some gummy, um, candy that wasn't very good. No, these were not good ones. And then some little, um, chocolate kind of bars like they leave on your bed, you know, at night. And some Hawaiian cookies. It was just this little, tiny offering. And I was just like-

Jess: Did you send your, did you send your template, Pam?

Pam: I did. I had even sent the template. I swear the template works for everybody, all of our listeners and readers way better than it works for me. It did jack. But I think they say that this hotel just is not as generous with that type of stuff. Although they were to you. And I know that Jess is sitting here. Jess needs to be the devil's advocate. Jess loves this property. And so this is where you're going to see that sometimes it's just when you go, it's, you know, just how it happens. But Jess be the devil's advocate.

Alex: I want to say one more thing. I feel like if I was going with just Mitch, it'd be great. If I was going like Jess just went with Molly. Like they've plenty of room in that hotel room. If you had a standard suite, like if you could do the suite upgrade award, they go very fast here and they hardly have any standard suites. And so I didn't have that option. I'd hope to use one. I booked close to a year in advance and I wasn't able to get a standard suite. But, you know, that's just, yeah, I just I feel like it, I feel like it could be really good for some people, for sure.

Pam: A lot of people love it. And your dad and I did have one day there, you know, just us. I still didn't like it. I really think a lot of it has to do with the layout of the bathroom. I do too.

Alex: And you know what Eli, he's my oldest, he said, "You know, this just doesn't really feel like a category eight to me." That's what he said.

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Jess: I will play devil's advocate because I if I never stay at the Hyatt Regency Maui again, that would be perfect.

Alex: I would say you're out of that phase of life. Do you know what I mean? If you have a bunch of little kids, Hyatt Regency Maui is going to be way better. And you have to take into account the price difference. It's almost double the price.

Pam: Yes.

Jess: I will say I feel like Alex, I feel like Alex influences you with like her opinion of things. Like I feel like if Alex had been like, "This is amazing, I love it." you'd be like, "Oh my God, this is amazing." Okay.

Alex: You also haven't stayed at Marriott Wailea Beach Resort.

Jess: And I never will because I don't have 100,000 Marriott points a night to spend.

Pam: We need to talk about that later in after this, and I'll tell you what, that's my number one.

Jess: So, I think obviously the Andaz Maui should be better than the Hyatt Regency Maui because the Hyatt Regency is 25,000 points a night standard. Andaz is 40,000 points a night standard. Huge difference. I do think it should be a category seven. I think a category eight is too high. I think it's probably a category eight because it's in Wailea. and you're by the Four Seasons and you're by the Grand Wailea. Like you're next to all these...

So, in my opinion, if I had young kids, I agree with Alex that the like I'm saying like seven and under, I would say the Hyatt Regency is a better choice. As a mom of older kids, Molly's going to be 12 in August, I think 100% Andaz is better. The beach is better. The location is better. I love Wailea. And so to me, like the location is more important than the bathroom. But that could just, I don't

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remember like, granted, maybe it's just because Molly and I were alone. I don't remember having a problem with the bathroom, but I can, I definitely think the rooms at Hyatt Regency are bigger and like more updated. And so I would say the rooms are nicer at the Hyatt Regency Maui.

I think the rest just depends on like how much you value the room over the beach and the location. And like, obviously, the Andaz is way more points. But I think the food at the Andaz was way better than the food at the Hyatt Regency.

Alex: Oh, yeah, the food is better at the Andaz, for sure.

Pam: Definitely.

Jess: I just can't believe that Pam. So Pam, if you and Lee were going to Maui by yourselves, you would stay at the Hyatt Regency over the Andaz.

Pam: No, I wouldn't. I'd be staying at my next hotel that I'm going to talk about.

Jess: No, if you had to pick a Hyatt.

Pam: Oh, I don't know. You know what really?

Jess: You can't even find a seat at the pool at the Regency.

Pam: What really gets me is the price point. If it was a category six, I'd probably feel fine about it. That is a lot of points and I expect when I use that kind of points. It's like staying, I can use those points to stay at a Park Hyatt and a Park Hyatt is so much more luxurious that, you know, I just can't relate.

Jess: Okay, all I'll say, the last thing I'll say is Alex posted like a teaser video of the Andaz Maui on Instagram stories, and every single person who replied said, "Oh my gosh, I love the Andaz. That's my favorite property on Maui." So if you have a stay booked there, I would not cancel it based on Alex and Pam's experience because everyone I have heard from absolutely loves it.

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Alex: No, loves it. But if you're going with four kids, I would not. You need two rooms.

Jess: Yeah, for sure.

Alex: It's a good couples retreat. It's a, you know, and I would stay there again with Mitch for sure. I would stay there again with you three. If us three were going there, I'd say, let's stay there. If I'm taking my family of six, we're not going to stay there. We're going to be driving each other insane in the baby-sized room. Yeah.

Pam: And I think honestly, it's just because we did have more people. I mean, Lee and I were sharing a queen-sized bed. I don't do that with him. That's just too small. He's breathes loud. I snore. You know, if we'd started it off in by ourselves in the two queen beds, I probably would have felt a lot differently. So I think I was a little jaded by the time we got to it. It just felt so cramped to me. So but I 100%, I talked to a someone who listened to us that was staying there. She was loving it. So 100%, do not go by, you know, my bad review of this. But I, you know, I don't want to be like Pollyannas, you know, everybody thinking that, "Oh, every place is wonderful." This particular stay wasn't wonderful for me, but it doesn't mean that it won't be wonderful for you.

Jess: All right. So tell us about your favorite.

Pam: Okay, so, like Alex said, the Marriott Wailea Beach Resort, it's right next almost to the, um, Andaz Maui. I've stayed there before. Loved it, loved it. Didn't know. Alex, in fact, Alex's, tell me what you think when you go back. Is it as good as we thought we...

Alex: Yeah, because sometimes you're like, "Oh, is it just because it's the one I've been to the most and I went there on before, you know, like am I being biased?"

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Pam: Yeah. Honestly, after this day, I was in heaven. I loved it. It was, it is definitely my number one Hawaiian hotel in my personal opinion. We used 85k free night certificates from Marriott. I actually keep, will always keep my Marriott Bonvoy Brilliant card and I have the Ritz Carlton card, which is only available as a product upgrade now. Both of those get those 85k free night certificates. I will always keep those cards just because they provide a huge discount coupon for me to stay at these resorts. This is why I love this hotel so much. It is the most serene and relaxing place I can stay in Hawaii. I mean, it is just, you there's kids there, there's fam there's tons of families, but you hardly notice the children. It's not loud and crazy. It's just got the chilliest vibe. And I think part of this is because it's spread out, it's big, there's tons of really nice sitting areas. There's games for people to do. There's lawns. It's just, you know, it's got lots of pools. Right now, it's got, um, a brand new pool that's adults only. It does cost \$150 a person to use. I would consider doing that possibly. Um, that \$150...

Alex: Doesn't it come with like you, it does have a cabana and stuff. It's like...

Pam: It does, and it has like some special drinks, a spa experience type. So I would consider that.

Alex: Jess, you would love that. That's up your alley.

Jess: I would do that. I just need someone to donate an 85k certificate to me or send me some Marriott points.

Alex: Do you know what? We should probably just figure it out sometime to like, I have some Marriott points or we just maybe need to upgrade our cards like get a Chase Bonvoy card, upgrade it to the Ritz Carlton card eventually, and then we can plan a TMS retreat here. Or at least go for a few nights and do the Andaz first and then end here.

Pam: Yeah.

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Jess: I can go to the Andaz, y'all can go to the Regency and then I'll meet you at the...

Alex: No, not the Regency.

Jess: Why the beach resort.

Alex: No, we're going to go to the Andaz for like two for a couple of nights and then we'll hop over to the Wailea Beach Resort for a TMS retreat.

Jess: I'm actually surprised you can even use an 85k night. They must be less than I would imagine.

Pam: Actually, I think mine was, it was about 80,000 and I looked just recently and I found some nights for 70,000. There are some times you can't, but there are a lot of times that you can. I've always been able to and that's what I save them for. I used a nightly upgrade award that I get as, um, staying so many nights Platinum Elite. And so we had a suite, which made it even nicer. I mean, I've stayed, I've never stayed in a suite there. Huge suite, two terraces, ocean view. It was heaven. Besides this new pool, they have an adults only pool. That's where I usually always hang out. They've got then this pool that, um, just kind of a, you know, a rectangular pool that anybody can go to. And then they have that kids area with the slides and the water parks that Alex was talking about. And that's really, really cool.

So, you know, you've got four areas of people. So you never feel completely crowded. There are lots of places for staying on the beach too, lots of loungers there. I just, you know, I think one of the things I love about it so much is that it doesn't have the pop music, the crazy music that you usually, it's all Hawaiian music. And I think that really lends to that serene vibe. It was just heaven. It's next door to the Shops at Wailea. We went over to Ruth Chris one night and had dinner there. We went when, um, we actually walked over there too from the Andaz Maui with Alex and the kids and...

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Alex: We didn't, we drove there. We didn't walk.

Pam: We drove there. Okay.

Alex: You maybe walked from your hotel. The Andaz is a little further.

Pam: Yeah, we did walk from our hotel. We actually, I think, walked there from the Andaz when you guys were gone, but you guys were, you know, so it has some food trucks. It's got this Mo Betta, uh, food truck. It's got a pizza truck. Jess, it has Starbucks.

Jess: Sold.

Pam: It has a couple of really good restaurants, and I don't know, number one in my opinion. I've forgotten how much I loved it. Now, it's not the value of a Hyatt. You're paying 85k to stay there. You're not paying 45k, which is what I think it would be worth if it was a Hyatt hotel. But it's a free night certificate.

Jess: And you're paying the you're paying resort fees and taxes, I assume.

Pam: Yep. You do. You pay a \$57 a night resort fee. Um, and that includes, you know, some special things, nothing that I really took that advantage of. Some, um, different classes and exercise classes and stuff and some different things. And I think we paid \$45 a night to self-park. So, you know, they you do have to pay that, but I don't know. I'm willing to do it. Going for it there.

So, anyway, we love visiting Hawaii again and again. I mean, as you can tell, Alex and I have been there twice already this year. Jess has been there. You know, but it's only possible by using points and finding other creative ways to save. I can't even imagine having to pay regular prices to go to Hawaii. It's already expensive just for food, excursions, other things that you're going to do. But we love it and it is amazing to us that we're able to do it with points and miles. If you enjoyed this episode, make sure to share it with your friends and families. Aloha.

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