

need one). Fishermen sometimes use it on weekends, but it's usually vacant during the week.

To get there, drive about 1½ miles from the end of the pavement (or 2¾ miles from the corner of Hwys 132 and 137—see map on page 113). The beautiful jungle-side road (which looks more like a tunnel drilled through hau bush) is easy to find: It's the first road on the right at the bottom of a short paved segment on the otherwise unpaved main road. It's 1,500 feet to the shoreline, and the pool is another 100 yards to the left.

Return to Hwys 132 and 137 when you're done.

Heading south on Hwy 137 leads past Kapoho-Kai Road. This road goes to one of the more unusual locations on the Big Island. Dozens and dozens of spring-fed, brackish pools and tide-pools, some volcanically heated, are strewn throughout the area known as the **Kapoho Tide-pools**. Many of the land-locked pools

have been incorporated into people's front and back yards as swimming pools. The large pools adjacent to the ocean (called **Wai'opae Ponds**) are on public property and contain some of the most fascinating snorkeling around. If you wish to snorkel here, take Kapoho-Kai Road (just before the 9 mile marker). When it seems to dead end (on Waiopae), turn left to the parking lot. (If it's full, there's an access at the end of Kapoho-Kai Road.) Snorkel exploration is possible even for novice snorkelers. The largest pool snakes its way to the ocean and rises and falls each day with the tide. This creates slight currents that are fun to ride if the surf's not high. These pools are usually (but not always) very calm and protected. Closer to the reef edge brings more fish, but sometimes there's a current. We've spent many hours here and counted eight kinds of coral. Toward the back (west) a couple of pools are slightly heated by the volcano. The weather is sometimes snot-

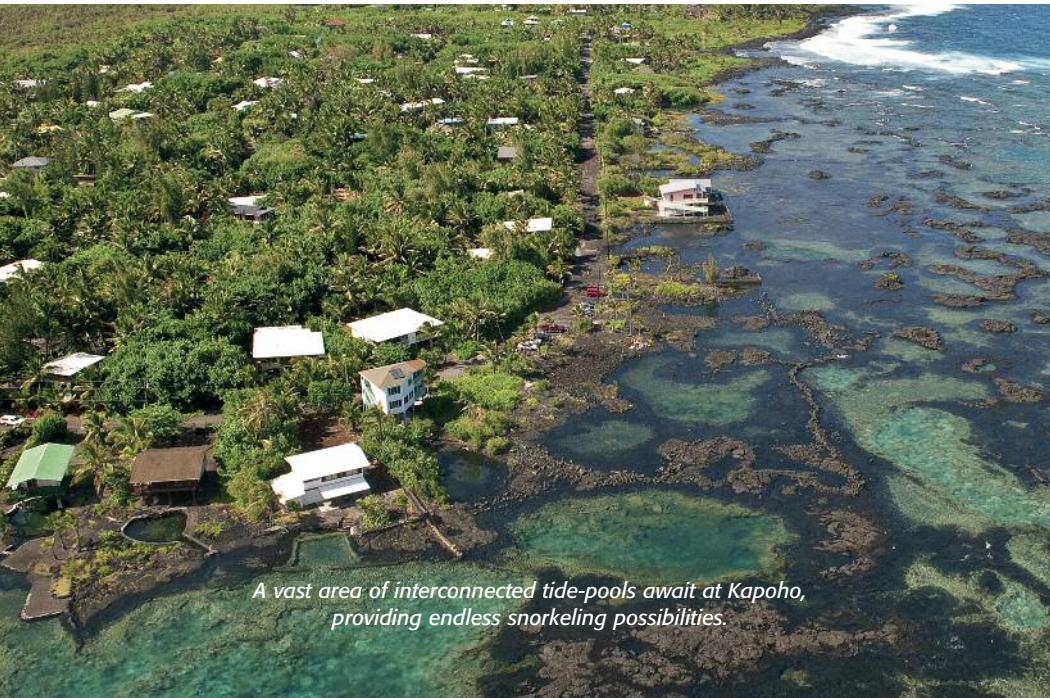
ty in the morning but usually clears up in the afternoon.

Note that the tide-pools are best visited during the week. Weekends are crowded since Puna residents have comparatively few beaches to choose from. A couple hours *before high tide* is our favorite time. The water is deeper and usually very clear. It also coincides with local residents' belief that at *low tide*, septic systems from nearby houses could leach into the tide-pools, causing higher bacterial counts at *low tide*.

There are lots of vacation rentals available here (called Vacationland) and next door in the gated community of Kapoho Beach Community. *Make sure* you see what you're getting beforehand because there are a number of charming-sounding dumps there alongside wonderful vacation rentals.

Farther down Hwy 137 past the 10 mile marker is **Ahalanui**. (Formerly called Pu'ala'a, the state discovered that they had accidentally misnamed it for decades—*oops.*) This delightful gem is definitely worth stopping for. It's a spring- and ocean-fed pool with a man-made wall and an inlet separating it from

Though it looks like an ordinary swimming pool, Ahalanui boasts a natural heating system powered by Kilauea Volcano.



A vast area of interconnected tide-pools await at Kapoho, providing endless snorkeling possibilities.

the ocean. Although the original builders created this spot when the water was *ice cold*, the Kapoho eruptions of 1955 and 1960 reworked the lava plumbing here so that now, instead of coming out cold, this pool is *volcanically heated* to a toasty 91–95 degrees. The temperature is influenced by several factors, including tide. At high tide the ocean floods the pond with cooler seawater, making the pond more brisk. At these times, if you were to grope your way through the jungle to the left for 50 yards, you'd find the heater for Ahalanui in the form of a small, shallow warm pond in the lava where freshwater heated by underground rocks seeps to the surface.

With palm trees all around and the sound of the surf over the seawall, you may have trouble hauling yourself out once you've experienced this genuine Pele bath, and it's easier to access than Champagne Pond, though it's more crowded, as well. *On occasion* we've noticed a slight sulphur smell on the skin when we've gotten out, but even then it's worth it. Plus there's a shower there. Closed Wednesdays.

As mapmakers we couldn't help but notice that this area called Puna, which



A REAL GEM