

IN-STORE

## Waldorf Astoria attracts families with survival-themed fun

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By JOE MCCARTHY

Waldorf Astoria's Grand Wailea resort in Maui, HI, is tapping into the fervor surrounding the "Hunger Games" and other survivalist popular culture by immersing children and teens in the Hawaiian landscape.

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The "Wilderness Survival Program" can be adapted for children ages 5 and up and teaches guests how to food source, build endurance, practice archery and other skills. Packages that align with popular trends are likely to maximize guest engagement because children may see the activities as having relevance outside of the vacation.

"With the pop culture excitement these days around media that focuses on wilderness survival skills and the fact that the second 'Hunger Games' movie due out this fall was filmed in Hawaii, Grand Wailea was inspired to put forth a creative program for children and teens for an experience they can't get elsewhere on Maui," said Matt Bailey, managing director at **Waldorf Astoria's Grand Wailea**, Maui, HI.

### Survival's bright side

All the areas of the package tie back to the Hawaiian environment in one way or another.

The Fishpipe activity takes up to three participants on a rotating barrel ride to test

endurance. 90 seconds in the Fishpipe equates to a mile long water slide.



### *Fishpipe*

Also, children can practice archery without risking injury at the art electronic archery set video game.

When food sourcing, teens will learn the history and health benefits of coconuts, edible and non-edible plants on the resort and how to catch a'ama crabs.

In addition, camouflaging skills will be imparted to teens through Camp Grande's Pa'u painting class, Henna Body Art and tie dye shirt making that incorporates the colors that blend in with the island's environment.

To round out the survival program, participants will work on their swimming abilities at the Wailea Canyon Activity Pool. The Wailea Canyon has four waterslides, a whitewater rapids slide, a Tarzan pool with rope swing and a water elevator at the center of a multilevel volcano.



### *Grand Wailea pool*

Throughout the adventure children will be accompanied by a sponsor and will learn about the Hawaiian culture.

A full day of fun at Camp Grande is \$125 per child, half-day morning session \$75 per

child, half-day afternoon session \$65 per child and an evening session costs \$95 per child. All afternoon activities include swimming at the activity pool, lazy river, slides, Tarzan swing, water elevator and Fish Pipe.

Just one more a'ama crab

Other luxury hotels have developed offers to attract families by keeping children entertained.

For example, Fairmont Mayakoba, Riviera Maya, Mexico, is courting families with a new Teens Room by Playstation that aims to give teens a fun escape and parents a little freedom.

The new room continues the property's quest to create environments geared toward the interests of children and teenagers. Due to the abundance of family accommodations, the property may see a spike in the amount of visiting families ([see story](#)).

Waldorf's Grand Wailea new survival program is just one level of their approach to engage children.

"It's important to provide new and engaging problems to all our guests at every age level but more so to children and teens because they are still learning, growing and developing," said Christina Yumul, director of public relations and marketing communications at Grand Wailea, Maui, HI.

"Some teens also have a tendency to withdraw, especially on family vacations where they don't want to get-away from the parents so creating programs that may be of interest by leveraging pop-culture is a great way to engage them," she said.

Final Take

*Joe McCarthy, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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