

December 27, 2018

## Penthouse Maui ready for the spotlight

By Tovin Lapan



Dave Gilbert believes he's carved out a perfect slice of paradise and, now more than ever, he wants to share it with like-minded travelers.

Gilbert, a Vancouver resident, has been coming to Maui for decades with his family and had always dreamed of having his own property on the Valley Isle.

He purchased what has since been dubbed [The Penthouse Maui](#) in 2011, gutted it and rebuilt it to his family's specifications. Over the years staying there, he says they have put together the ideal vacation home base --with a prime, picturesque location, plenty of amenities and a layout that accommodates a variety of family sizes.

Recently, Gilbert has stepped up the business side of his Maui property, hiring a public relations company and further promoting the property with a new website and other initiatives. The Penthouse Maui rents for \$1,900 to \$3,500 per night depending on the season, and travel agents booking for their clients receive a 10% commission.

# TRAVEL *60 years* WEEKLY

But when Gilbert first spotted the house and tracked down its owner, his initial offer to buy was politely rejected. Gilbert has been coming to Maui for more than two decades, and eventually started casually looking for a vacation home for his family. He homed in on South Kihei, which boasts more sunny days per year than other parts of Maui, Gilbert said.

"We really focused in on the South Kihei area," Gilbert said. "We wanted something on the beach and the ocean with a place for the kids to play that was conveniently located to shopping and commercial areas. North of us didn't have the beaches for the kids to play or a lot of larger homes, and south of us toward Wailea, most places are set back far from the beach. I wanted a place where the parents could come and sit on the lanai and still be able to watch the kids playing in the water."

One day walking on the beach he spotted it: a home perched above the sand with sweeping ocean views. A real estate agent did some investigating for Gilbert only to find the owner at the time lived in West Vancouver, Gilbert's own neighborhood. He looked up the owner and invited him to coffee. The owner wasn't ready to sell, but they hit it off and continued to get together to chat every few months. Then, before the owner passed away, he agreed to sell to Gilbert.

"When I bought it, it was literally still stuck in the '70s," Gilbert said of when he first got into the home in 2011. "The previous owner had done little work on it, and it still had the original seafoam green, thick '70s carpeting. But it was huge and had all the things we wanted."

First Gilbert, his wife and kids lived in the house for a while to get a feel for how they wanted it to work and then embarked on a 22-month renovation process that stripped the structure down to the studs. They added en suite bathrooms, redid the common areas including the kitchen and built a 60-foot-wide deck.

The Penthouse Maui sits three stories above the sand of Kihei's Kamaole Beach II at Hale Pau Hana. The 2,824-square-foot, four-bedroom property accommodates up to 10 guests and features vaulted ceilings with mahogany rafters.

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"Another thing I love about the location is the simplicity of access to amenities," Gilbert said.

"You can go across the street to grab a bite to eat or a bottle of wine. If you are on the beach and don't feel like making lunch, there are half a dozen fabulous spots nearby. It's so simple, and when you're on holiday, simplicity is a beautiful thing."

The home includes roll-away window walls facing the ocean, a deck with barbecue grill, a recently renovated interior and up-to-date appliances such as individual climate controls, wireless internet, Apple Airplay, HD flat-screen TVs, DVD players and in-room safes. It is also stocked with games and equipment for enjoying the tropical setting, including three sets of golf clubs, kayaks, stand-up paddle boards and more. The kitchen is appointed with two full-size refrigerators, a wine fridge, a beverage cooler, a wet bar and a dedicated ice maker in addition to stainless-steel appliances.

Gilbert's love for the property comes through when he describes the various features and his history pursuing it, and when they first renovated the home he did not rent it out when they were away. Over time, as they spent fewer days on the island each year, he started to rent it out to families found through a property manager. As he has opened up the Penthouse Maui to more vacation renters, Gilbert has remained focused on finding individual families or groups that share his passion for the unique space.

"The target market is not volume," Gilbert said. "We're not looking for the price-conscious, we are looking for a family that can appreciate what we have and what we have created."

Arriving guests are greeted by a private concierge who can assist in crafting vacation itineraries, including booking excursions.

"We really tried to think everything through, and it was an extraordinarily extensive renovation," Gilbert said. "We have all the necessary amenities, storage lockers, outdoor shower, beach toys and chairs, insulated bags. All you have to do is show up with your bathing suit and enjoy."