Outrigger Mauritius Resort and Spa
Opens in Style with Grand Party
By David Carey

Readers of Saturday Briefing may recall that we welcomed our first guests to the Outrigger Mauritius Resort and Spa on January 29, after purchasing the property last May and putting it through an extensive nine-month, multi-million dollar transformational renovation. It looks wonderful. This past Wednesday, April 16, with 350 VIP guests in attendance, we celebrated the grand opening of the resort in style with a spectacular opening party.

I flew in for the occasion with Drs. Chuck and Jenny Kelley, Bitsy Kelley and Greg Shaw, and Connor Carey, and welcomed guests from China, Australia, South Africa, France and the United Kingdom.

The guest of honor was Mauritius Minister of Tourism and Leisure Michael Sik Yuen, who welcomed Outrigger and wished us well.

Kaipo Ho, our manager of cultural experiences, had been on island acquainting himself with our newest property, our Mauritian hosts and the culture of this multi-ethnic island nation – and discussing Ke ‘Ano Wa’a, The Outrigger Way or Ensame (as we call it in the Mauritian context) with the newest members of the Outrigger ‘ohana (family). I am very impressed at how The Outrigger Way is being translated into Mauritian culture.

One of the many highlights of the evening was Kaipo’s Hawaiian oli (chant) and blessing given to show our gratitude to our hosts for the inclusion of Mauritius in our ‘ohana. Together with Bitsy, he presented General Manager Frédéric Chrétien with a koa paddle, symbolizing the partnership between ocean islands, strength, unity of purpose and the start of a journey together.

I presented Minister Sik Yuen with a beautiful koa box from Hawai‘i. Addressing the guests, the Minister said...
that he is “very proud to see Outrigger Mauritius Resort and Spa joining the league of the best hotels in Mauritius. There is no doubt that Outrigger will bring a new dimension to the tourism industry here.” He noted that Mauritius is a multi-award-winning destination, especially in the honeymoon and romance sectors of the industry. “We hope to see Outrigger Mauritius winning many new awards in the near future,” he said.

Dr. Chuck welcomed the guests and gave a brief overview of Outrigger’s history, beginning with the arrival of his grandparents, Roy and Estelle, in Hawai‘i in 1929. Now in 2014, he said, “The third generation has expanded the business … and today, everywhere we go, we supply genuine, authentic hospitality with a local cultural experience.”

The evening, unlike anything seen before in Mauritius, was characterized by a chic mix of Mauritian, Hawaiian and international sensations with Kelley family members as well as Darren Edmonstone from our Asia Pacific corporate office playing a key role in the celebrations. The party on the resort’s spectacular beachfront featured acrobats, dancers, live music, mimes, a sumptuous variety of cuisines, a spectacular fireworks display over the sea, and guests happily dancing barefoot on the beach. There were more than a few “chicken skin” (goose bumps) moments.

The emotional connections between Mauritius and Hawai‘i are very evident. Kaipo’s chants, our family presence and ‘Ensame’ all bode well for our bold new journey in the Indian Ocean.

Mahalo, merci and thank you to the many hands that created and took part in this spectacular event. We are excited to be in Mauritius and know we can bring our own special brand of hospitality where the culture, the employees and the place are celebrated and valued as one. All this translates into a special experience for our guests.

The Outrigger Mauritius Resort and Spa is the first for us in the Indian Ocean and our 46th property now open or under development in eight countries.