



CASE STUDY

A NEW Sustainable Outdoor Grill MAKES LANDFALL ON THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS



Faced with expensive propane, a lack of natural gas infrastructure and new safety regulations, a Maui resort turned to RH Peterson for an efficient outdoor grilling alternative.

Grilling on the island of Maui, as well as anywhere in Hawaii, is much more challenging than it is on the U.S. mainland, especially when you're trying to meet the outdoor cooking needs of a large resort.

The Wailea Ekahi Resort is a 294-unit property with 54 individual buildings over 34 acres. As the resort began to address grilling needs, new building codes, and the need for sustainable alternatives, several challenges stood out.

A resort on the mainland would likely fuel its grills with underground natural gas lines, providing a steady feed with no lapses and economical fuel. Without natural gas infrastructure, propane becomes the gas alternative. Because it must be shipped to the islands from nearly halfway around the world, propane is at least twice the cost. And keeping up with replacing tanks throughout the property can be a bit of a maintenance nightmare.

Also, as a result of code and policy changes, outdoor grills were removed from all individual unit lanais at the Wailea Ekahi. The resort decided to upgrade and consolidate outdoor cooking into five grilling areas that meet new building code conditions. These areas would need to meet the grilling needs of all 294-units on the property.

While upgrading the areas, a committee also began to investigate other sustainable grill options, including electric. They quickly discovered that most electric grills lack the performance and aesthetic standards that would be required in a resort's heavily-used common cooking area.

Fortunately, their search for a robust electric alternative had a substantial head start. One of the resort's homeowners who is part of the committee charged with creating the new grilling sites, had previous experience with an electric grill as part of his professional career.

That homeowner, Steve Easley, is a building and sustainability consultant who had worked on a Vision House with Green Builder Magazine where all the house's appliances were converted to electric, including its outdoor grill. He turned to RH Peterson and its high-performance Fire Magic electric grill. "I put in the EL500" Easley said, "So I had experience with it before I ever decided to try it in Maui."

At the Wailea Ekahi Village, the committee worked with Fire Magic as the company was developing its luxury EL 500 Analog Electric Grill. They provided a prototype as a way for the resort residents to try an electric grill and for the company to receive real-world testing and incorporate feedback into its production model.

“What we love about the electric grills is the cleanliness, avoiding propane and the environmental aspects, as well as not running out of propane in the middle of cooking,” Easley said. “A lot of Maui’s electricity is from solar and wind, which is nice because you’re using a renewable resource.”

Overall, feedback was also positive with many residents who expressed a desire to add a Fire Magic electric grill on their own lanai if permitted in the future. Here’s why:

Once residents began using the grill, any initial misconceptions that gas cooking somehow enhances flavor more than electric were quickly overcome. There were also concerns that an electric grill would not deliver performance in terms of power and heat. However, with less than a 15-minute preheat time, Fire Magic electric grills can deliver temperature ranges up to 650 degrees F for perfect searing to seal in food flavor.

The EL 500 also impressed users with its aesthetic design and other performance features, including:

- Thermostatic control with easy-to-use knobs for precise cooking control.
- Double-walled 304 stainless steel lid with the option of a large Magic View® glass window in the cover so that food can be seen cooking without opening the grill.
- Patented Diamond Sear cooking grids.
- 480 square inches of grilling space.
- Easy to clean drip tray and removable warming rack.



Currently, the Wailea Ekahi has five electric grills operating alongside gas grills in its grilling stations with more possible in the future. With their demonstrated performance and style, they’re proving their worth by reducing the need for propane shipped from the mainland and continual maintenance from the resort staff. And the residents are on board, too.

“I am so impressed with the Fire Magic electric,” said one. “My food barbecued as well as any gas barbecue I’ve used. The flavor was great and the grill marks looked beautiful. I took friends with me (to use it) and they were completely pleased with the results. I will definitely buy one for my lanai at Ekahi when permissible. Overall, it completely exceeded my expectations.”