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DECEMBER - JANUARY 2025

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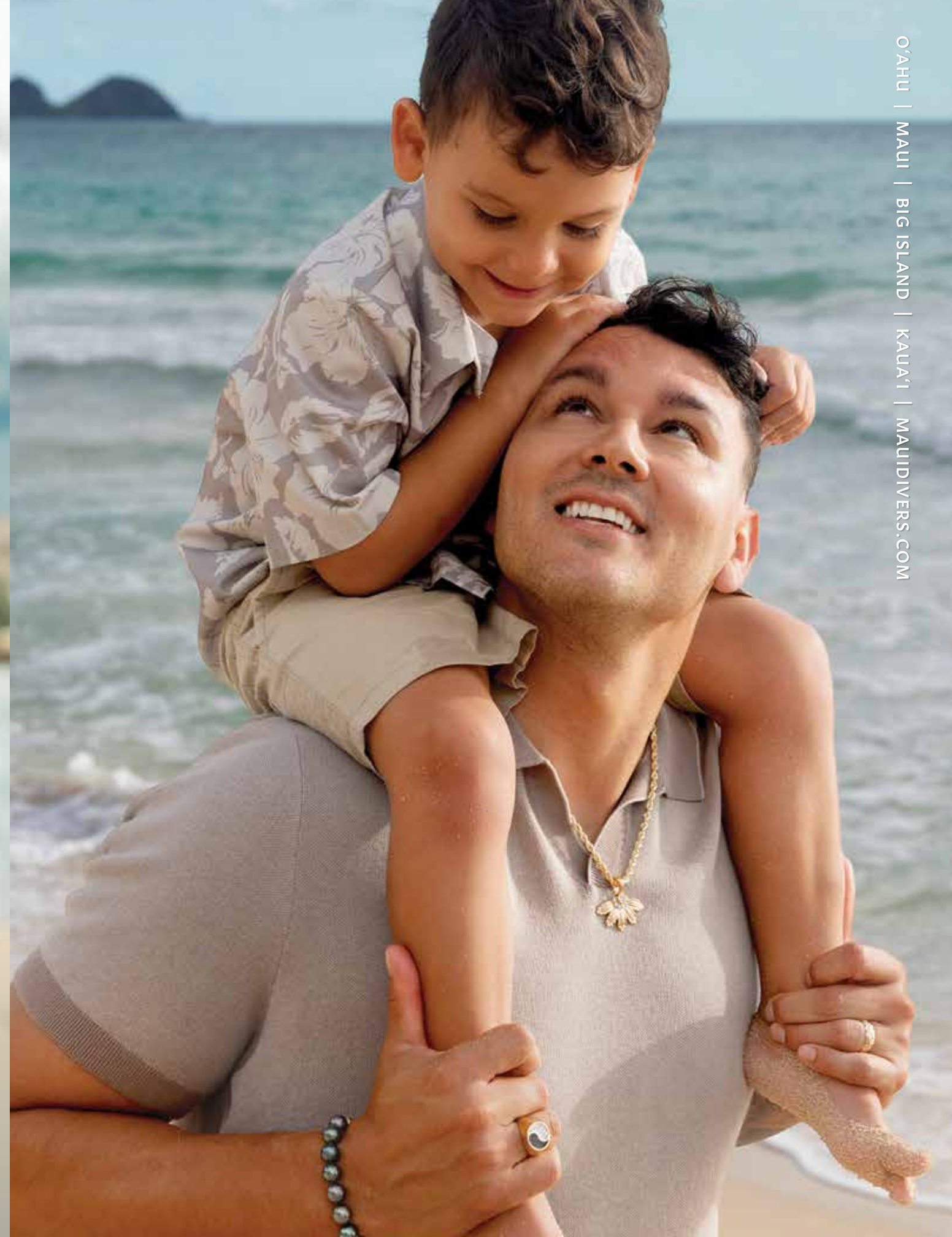


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IMAGE CORRECTION / Using the archaic technology of wet-plate photography, **Kenyatta Kelechi** creates modern images with a nineteenth-century feel. Part of the aim, he says, is to portray Native Hawaiians in a culturally appropriate and accurate way, as a corrective to the kinds of images being produced in the Islands during the latter half of the 1800s. Kelechi elaborates on his process at his exhibit, “Laulima,” on display at the Honolulu Museum of Art through January 12, 2025.

PHOTO COURTESY HONOLULU MUSEUM OF ART

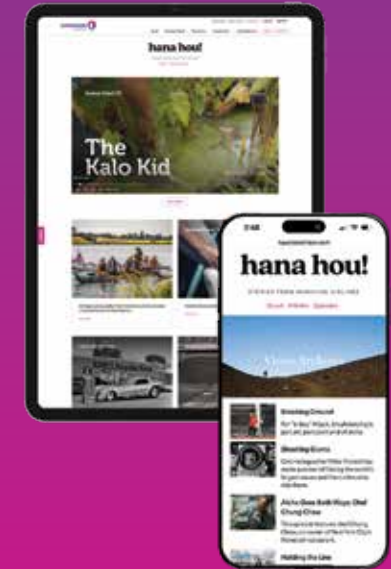


WOMEN OF THE AIR / In 1943, Hawaiian Airlines’ first flight attendants serviced the company’s new DC-3 aircraft. The excitement, adventure and prestige of the job created an esprit de corps among the first women of the air. Almost fifty years later, those former flight attendants formed Koa’e Kea as a way to stay connected and share their stories. Join Koa’e Kea at their annual luncheon, where they reminisce about the early days of interisland travel in the skies over a bygone Hawai’i.

PHOTO COURTESY HAWAIIAN AIRLINES

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ON THE COVER  
Vintage Modern

Left to right: Mihana Aluli Souza, Mahina Souza and Aima Aluli McManus of Hawaiian music ensemble Puamana, shot using wet-plate photography.

PHOTOGRAPH BY  
KENYATTA KELECHI



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Tim Huynh



**Tim Huynh**, whose candid photos of Waikiki are featured in “The Things You See in Wakiki,” grew up in Kapahulu and calls Waikiki his “old stomping grounds.” After getting into street photography in 2010, he found a creative outlet in walking around Waikiki with his camera. “There’s a little bit of everything in Waikiki—the beach, sidewalks, buildings, tourists and locals,” he says. With street photography, “I’m always looking for the best image, finding those right moments, letting the instinct take over,” he says. “It’s about training your eyes to see things that speak to you.” His favorite image is one of a sunburned visitor. “Most traditional street photography focuses on the face, and this one, I just let the sunburn on her back speak for itself.” Huynh’s work has been exhibited internationally, and he was recently named singles finalist in the Pisa Street Photography International Festival. See more of his work on Instagram at @th\_\_street, and his short film, “Fill The Frame” is available on YouTube @wordonthestreetphoto.

Laura La Monaca



“After spending two months in Okinawa a few years ago, I gained a deep appreciation for the island’s culture and people,” says **Laura La Monaca**, who shot “A Tale of Two Islands.” Back in Hawai’i, she especially enjoyed meeting Chokatsu and Tomoko Tamayose, owners of Sunrise Restaurant, because of their hospitality. “They played instruments for me, and Chokatsu sang a song he wrote combining Hawaiian and Okinawan music,” she says. She was a big fan of the restaurant’s *goya chanpurū*, a stir fry dish with bitter melon, pork, tofu and eggs. “Goya is common in Okinawa but also in South East Asia and China,” says La Monaca. “We have a strong Chinese community in Milan, where I was based before moving to Hawai’i, so between my time there and in Okinawa, I had developed a love for bitter melon!” As a member of Diversify Photo and Women Photographs, La Monaca is dedicated to fostering diversity and representation in the photography community. She is also part of the Leica Camera Photographers Network. Find her on Instagram at @lauralamonaca and at lauralamonaca.com.

David Thompson



To get his pedicab operator’s license in the 1980s, **David Thompson** had to memorize all the Waikiki streets. But it wasn’t until the pandemic that he got curious about the street names themselves. “I was stuck at home with the online newspaper archives, and I just started trying to figure out the backstories,” he says. “Turns out there’s a tremendous amount of history behind every single Waikiki street—even the ones that sound boring.” Take Seaside Avenue, for instance, named for the long-forgotten Seaside Hotel, subject of Thompson’s story, “Seaside Reverie,” in this issue. From the Spanish-American War until halfway through the Roaring Twenties, the Seaside was virtually synonymous with Waikiki Beach. “When I try to imagine all the life, drama, happiness and misfortune that went down there—it’s operatic in scope,” says Thompson, a longtime contributor and former *Hana Hou!* editor. “My little story barely scratches the surface.”

Beau Flemister



“Open-ocean endurance swimmers truly are a fascinating, singular kind of athlete, and it was really interesting trying to get at the core of why they do what they do,” says **Beau Flemister**, who wrote “Endurance” for this issue. “All of them have personal causes and issues they swim to advocate for—but doing it for nineteen hours in a row around Rapa Nui or in literally freezing waters off Antarctica is hard for most folks to wrap their heads around. Epic Swim Maui, where twelve swimmers attempted to circumnavigate the island, however, was a special event: Twelve of the world’s best endurance swimmers were all cooperating as a team for a single cause—ocean health.” Flemister is an award-winning writer based on O’ahu and a former editor-at-large at *Surfing* magazine. His work appears in *VICE*, *Outside*, *The Surfer’s Journal*, *Lonely Planet* and more. His debut novel, *In the Seat of a Stranger’s Car*, is available in local bookstores and online.

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# Charting a New Course Together



**Alaska Air Group completed its acquisition of Hawaiian Airlines in September. The combination of Hawaiian Airlines and Alaska Airlines expands our guests' access to domestic and international destinations and offers a remarkable travel experience through two strong brands with long legacies serving local communities.**

The new year has always been a season of transitions. It's an opportunity to reflect on how far we've come and honor the past with gratitude. It's also a moment to recommit to the things we care about, celebrate with the people we love and look forward to new opportunities ahead.

As a loyal guest of Hawaiian Airlines, you might be feeling a similar sense of transition as Hawaiian and Alaska Airlines begin charting a new course together—a combination that is unique in the US airline industry in that it will maintain the look and feel of both individual brands that people know and love.

Our efforts are focused on creating the strongest future for everyone who depends on us—unlocking loyalty benefits and access to new destinations for our guests, long-term job opportunity for employees and continued investment in local communities and environmental stewardship. While integrations like this take time and won't always be easy, here's what you can expect as we move forward together.

### Building on our rich histories

Over the past few months, I've enjoyed spending time with Hawaiian Airlines employees on the ground and in the air, seeing their work up close and hearing their stories. They've made it clear that

Hawaiian Airlines embodies a deep sense of place, a reflection of Hawai'i. I appreciate that this is not just a company, but a culture that is worth preserving and sharing. They've also taught me that while Alaska and Hawaiian Airlines have different origin stories, we share rich histories of connecting communities that are uniquely reliant on air travel, driven by incredible people who are guided by values and passionate about taking care of our guests and the places we serve. That's a strong base to build on.

To give you a sense of where we come from, our airline was born in Alaska before it was a state. Even as we have grown over the years, we remain committed to serving as a lifeline for nineteen communities in Alaska, only three of which are accessible by roads. Working in some of the most unforgiving conditions on the planet, we learned what matters: keeping each other safe. Doing what's right. Being there for everyone who depends on us. This sense of service—and being invested—is the very core of who we are. We carry those values everywhere we fly.

We're maintaining a local leadership team based in Honolulu, led by thirty-five-year industry veteran Joe Sprague, who will serve as CEO of Hawaiian Airlines. Joe will report to me and oversee the airline's operations

BY **BEN MINICUCCI**, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, ALASKA AIR GROUP

in Hawai'i until the major operational integration work is complete and we come together as one airline with two brands. I'm also looking forward to reading Joe's column in our next issue.

### Moving forward together

As I shared with Alaska and Hawaiian Airlines employees during a commemoration event in Honolulu, the future is ours to create. We have a unique, once-in-a-generation opportunity to build a strong foundation with aligned values and a deep commitment to care and hospitality.

As an early testament to this commitment, Alaska Airlines established the Hawai'i Community Advisory Board a year ago to continue developing our authentic understanding of Hawai'i's people and culture and to seek feedback and recommendations for how the combined airlines' business can best serve local communities. I've enjoyed getting to know the board members, and I'm so grateful to them for being generous with their time and sharing their expertise to inform our decisions and actions.

The advisory board has already directly influenced the creation of a loyalty program just for Hawai'i residents. Called Huaka'i by Hawaiian, it will include exclusive benefits when traveling interisland, including 10 percent off one booking per quarter and a free checked bag.

For those of you flying with us, I hope today's journey is an opportunity to connect with something that matters to you—whether that's family and friends, business opportunities, a much-needed vacation or life's important milestones. Here's to a new year and new beginnings.

On behalf of everyone at Hawaiian Airlines and Alaska Airlines, we are grateful to be on this journey with you, and we are so excited about where we can go from here.

*Mahalo and take care.*

*Ben*



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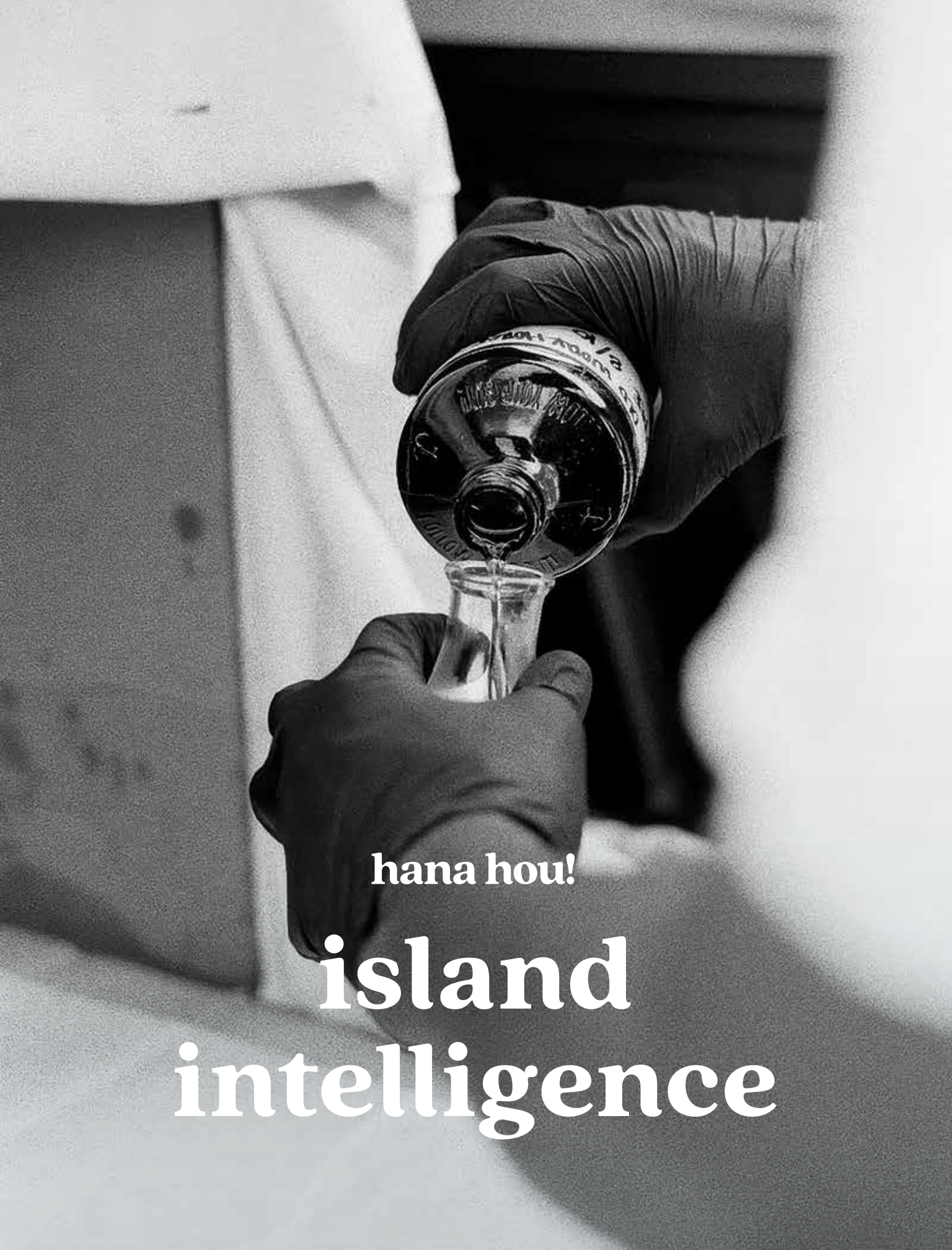


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# Image Correction



**Kenyatta Kelechi (seen on page 22 with musician Mihana Aluli Souza) has revived the art of wet-plate photography to create images of reminiscent of old Hawai'i. Above, the Fukumitsu family in their taro patch in Hakipu'u, O'ahu. On page 23, Kelechi mixing his own photographic chemicals.**

In 1851 a photographer named Frederick Scott Archer figured out that if you coat a glass or aluminum plate in a chemical called collodion and bathe it in silver nitrate, you can slide it into a large-format view camera (essentially a big wooden box with a lens sticking out of one side) and make a picture by opening the lens to expose the plate to light. Despite being all the rage from the 1850s to the 1880s, the

process fizzled out as more advanced and efficient technologies developed. Over a century later, photographers worldwide have revived this antiquated process. One of them is O'ahu-based Kenyatta Kelechi. Born in Kailua, Kelechi didn't grow up knowing much about his Native Hawaiian heritage on his mother's side—she is of Chinese, Native Hawaiian and Caucasian descent. His recent body of work, “Kenyatta Kelechi: Laulima,” on

display at Honolulu Museum of Art until January 12, 2025, was a way for him to learn more about it. He began making wet-plate photographs in 2015 while earning his BFA from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, to challenge himself. One day he found an old book filled with what looked like wet-plate photographs of Hawaiian people. As he dug into the history of wet-plate photography in Hawai'i, he repeatedly found images like a cliché hula girl in a coconut shell bikini top and grass skirt posed in front of a fake backdrop. Kelechi decided to do the opposite, using the process to collaborate with Hawaiians rather than exploit them.

What the subjects wear, where the image is taken and what story the image tells is up to them. “In all these books and in all these old pictures, there's never a name of the person who's in the picture or a story about them, and I felt like it was important that names are used and stories are told,” he says. When Kelechi arrives on-site with his SUV filled with camera equipment and chemicals, he sets up his gear and portable darkroom, slaps on protective glasses and latex gloves and gets to work. He's mixed his own chemical cocktails for eight years now to save money. Once he captures a photograph, he must develop it within about fifteen minutes before the plate dries. Because there are many variables to consider, such as weather, water quality and chemical composition, it can take multiple attempts to get the shot. “It's a really chaotic process,” Kelechi says. “Anything that can go wrong will go wrong. You have to always have a contingency plan.”

But when he does get the shot, the results are striking: sharp, black-and-white portraits that feel at once archaic and contemporary. Kelechi has photographed some of Hawai'i's most renowned Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians), such as singer Raiatea Helm and big-wave surfer Titus Kinimaka, in a style reminiscent of a nineteenth-century history book—only this time with an accurate story.

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# Down by the Dumps



One person’s trash: At Hawai’i Island transfer stations (a.k.a., the dump), discarded items not quite ready for the landfill are up for sale in on-site thrift stores. Above, an abundance of ragged treasures in the Hilo transfer station’s store.



A teddy bear nostalgic for his child leans against a vintage Crock-Pot. Ladders mix with laundry baskets, koa bowls nestle beside fishing poles and random computer cables clutter the counter. Surprises await at secondhand stores—especially on Hawai’i Island, where some of the best thrifting happens at the neighborhood dump.

Retail and rubbish typically don’t mix, but this is Hawai’i, where the trash-to-treasure ethos thrives at transfer station thrift stores. Officially dubbed reuse centers by the Department of Environmental Management, the county agency in charge of solid waste disposal, these chockablock secondhand stores are a sort of local secret. “I furnished my entire home from the ‘mall’—that’s what we call the transfer station store in Waimea,” laughs Elizabeth Rollins. Rollins, who regards thrifting as a form of environmental activism and preaches reuse as survival strategy, should know:

She holds the county contract for the island’s seven transfer station stores.

Hawai’i Island, like its neighbors, faces a real and growing garbage problem, generating over two hundred thousand tons of solid waste every year. To boot, there’s no municipal trash collection—all refuse goes to transfer stations for sorting and processing. Most of that ends up in a single landfill, which is also problematic. “Hawai’i Island’s only landfill will reach capacity in about twenty-five years,” says Jennifer Navarra of Zero Waste Hawai’i Island. “A few years ago, that estimate was eighty years. The more solid waste diversion that happens, the better. These thrift stores contribute to that.”

According to Rollins, these shops divert over five hundred tons of reusable items from the island’s waste stream annually, helping honor the county’s commitment to zero waste, and further the state’s efforts toward meeting

STORY BY CONNER GORRY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREW RICHARD HARA

UN Sustainable Development Goals. William Haas, an avid thrifter who circumnavigates the island searching for bargains, is doing his part. “I go to transfer station stores on the regular. I got a top-of-the-line stove at the one in Kea’au when I was building my house in Kalapana.” Haas also avails himself of free mulch made from wood and green waste from the Hilo transfer station, another service offered at many Hawai’i Island dumps.

Carla Mueller, a self-described thrift hobbit (“it’s part hobby, part habit,” she says), maintains a booth at the Ocean View Swap Meet stocked in part with goods from these stores. “Finding little treasures is such a rush. I just snagged this awesome cobalt blue mixing bowl for six bucks. Not a chip on it!”

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## Like Beef?



Mad jerky scientist Puna Kāneakua applies some heat in the kitchen/laboratory at Jerky Labs in Kāne'ohe. Some of the far-out flavor experiments—like garlic Parmesan—are a hit. Others, like Pumpkin Spice Latte, might require further testing.

**A**t K2—not the world’s second-tallest mountain but a warehouse across from the Dodge dealership in Kāne’ohe—Puna Kāneakua is conducting research. The space is full of dehydrators, industrial refrigerators and plastic bins overflowing with sliced beef marinated in ingredients like kimchi or ranch dressing and dried to leather. And is that a pouch of cookie icing on the spice rack? Nothing is off the table, says

Kāneakua. Hence Jerky Labs’ slogan: Dream it. Dry it. Devour it.

Like many of us doing the Hawai’i hustle, Kāneakua has multiple occupations. He’s a civil engineer, a CrossFit teacher (he’s built like a WWF wrestler), a latte art practitioner (that one’s pro bono) and, in his spare time, a mad beef scientist who co-owns Jerky Labs with two buddies from high school, Jesse Dowsett and Henry Rogers.

Kāneakua’s experiments in jerky started with fishing. He used to dry his catch, which led to the idea of making his own beef jerky, since the snack was delicious but expensive. He bought a dehydrator and meat slicer in 2013 and started making jerky for friends and family, playing with unusual flavors (his first being garlic Parmesan). When people started encouraging him to sell his creations, he expanded his dehydrator fleet to two, then four. Soon he was buying shelves and extension cords going, “Ho! This is getting big!” He started the business when he hit nine dehydrators in 2019, marketing by word of mouth. By the time the world was in pandemic-land he was shipping orders as far away as Kalamazoo, Michigan. Today he sells seven hundred to a thousand bags of jerky a month.

Snacking on jerky has been a Hawai’i tradition since paniolo (cowboys) began making pipi kaula (literally, “rope beef”) in the late nineteenth century. Far from the simple sprinkle of *shoyu* (soy sauce) usually accompanying pipi kaula, Jerky Labs concocts dozens of flavors from Everything but da Bagel (“everything” being the seasoning on an everything bagel) to Pumpkin Spice Latte. Not every flavor has turned out to be a top seller, like the popular lemongrass, garlic Parmesan and Korean BBQ. “I had high hopes for Taki-flavored jerky, but it just tasted like corn chips. Also, candy corn was gross,” Kāneakua laughs. He hopes to have a retail space built out within a year, but for now jerky fans can test the next promising experiment through Jerky Labs’ online store. Turns out the icing was for the Pumpkin Spice Latte flavor, so iced cookie jerky will not be a contender, but a flavor called Pucker Up is. Stay tuned to find out whether jerky seasoned with Sour Patch Kids makes the cut.

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# Going with the Grain



Joshua Bowles, owner of Lyric Woodwork and Snake Road Sawmill, among slabs of tropical hardwoods. The contractor turned fine woodworker uses only salvaged and fallen woods, milled in-house. With its variety of beautiful woods, says Bowles, “Hawai’i is the best place in the world to be a woodworker.”

When Joshua Bowles, owner of Lyric Woodwork and Snake Road Sawmill in Wahiawā, talks about tropical hardwoods, he tends to wax, well, lyrical. “It never gets old when you mill into the log, turn it over and you see the grain for the first time,” he says. “It’s always remarkable.”

On a tour around the mill, Bowles points enthusiastically from one slab to another. Monkeypod, he says, has no grain lines due to its uniform density. Cuban mahogany, he notes, is ideal for carving. “Each species has an ideal use, and it’s our job to describe what that is,” he says.

Bowles also knows the origin of almost every piece of wood in his shop, all of which were salvaged from construction projects or fell during storms. A ruddy piece of koa came from a mudslide on Telephone Road. A brown chunk of camphor, smelling of mint and citrus, came from a tree in Waimānalo. Woods like these, Bowles says, make Hawai’i the best place in the world to be a woodworker. “The woods here are just

very special and integral to the culture and history,” he says.

Bowles moved to O’ahu about ten years ago, bought the Snake Road Sawmill, one of only three sawmills on the island, and launched Lyric Woodworking. Before that he owned a design/build firm in Austin, Texas. While that was satisfying, he says, it was also stressful. Subcontractors, neighbors and permitting requirements meant conflict was always possible if not inevitable. But Bowles did enjoy crafting custom cabinets and other wood projects. While still running his business, he honed his furniture-building skills. He had a woodworking legacy to draw from: His father, a luthier, makes string instruments, and his grandfather and great-grandfather built bridges. Bowles’ father introduced him to Japanese woodworking tools and techniques. He followed that by apprenticing with a shoji (paper screen) maker.

Bowles regularly pores over design books and magazines for inspiration. Japanese furniture maker George

STORY BY MADELEINE HILL  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ARTO SAARI



Nakashima is a major influence. Others include Italian design and classical Greek art. Bowles combines different materials and textures, such as smooth leather and shiny, locally farmed abalone, with the wood. He’s currently developing a line of portable, multifunction pieces similar to furniture once built for military campaigns.

Because Bowles works with the tree fallers, mills the wood in-house and builds the furniture, he has creative control from the beginning—much more fulfilling than building houses ever was, he says. He provides clients with myriad options, whether they’re looking for a credenza, a headboard, a coffee or dining table or a Japanese floor chair.

“We have a huge selection of wood,” Bowles says. “I know every single piece.” When he takes clients through his shop, he scans through the inventory until something clicks, and he will say, “I know the perfect piece for you!”

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O'AHU INTELLIGENCE

STORY BY **MARTHA CHENG**  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ELYSE BUTLER**

## Beginning on a High Note



**Known for his remarkable leo ki'eki'e, or falsetto singing, 15-year-old phenom Kamaha'o Haumea-Thronas is keeping traditional Hawaiian music alive for the next generation.**

The first thing you notice watching 15-year-old Kamaha'o Haumea-Thronas sing "Hawaiian Cowboy" is his leo ki'eki'e, or Hawaiian falsetto, a sound harking to a much older era. Then, as he puts his 'ukulele down and his voice speeds up, he channels the rollicking and flamboyant moves—down to the swinging hips and eye expressions—of Sol K. Bright, who wrote the song in 1932.

That performance, blending musical virtuosity, youthful exuberance and old Hawai'i, at the 2023 Kamehameha Schools song contest essentially launched Kamaha'o's professional music career. It led to invitations, including to the Aloha by the Bay concert in San Francisco, and a self-produced, sold-out Christmas show on Kaua'i, where he was born and raised. His second "Kalikimaka [Christmas] with Kamaha'o" is happening on December 21

at the Outrigger Kaua'i Beach Resort. At Kamehameha Schools Kapālama on O'ahu, where Kamaha'o boards, he works with his music teachers to adjust to his changing voice, as well as expand his range in song and instruments. "But always, traditional Hawaiian music is at the core of it," he says.

Kamaha'o doesn't come from a professional music family—he traces his love for Hawaiian music to attending a Hawaiian-language immersion school from kindergarten through sixth grade. "I grew up with Hawaiian as my first language," he says. "So I think mele Hawai'i [Hawaiian songs] came hand in hand with it." His Hawaiian music playlist has over four thousand songs: "No other music to me is like Hawaiian music," he says, with its abrupt changes in register displayed in leo ki'eki'e, and the kaona, or hidden meanings, in the lyrics.

He tries to apply layers of meaning in his own songwriting (though he says he still needs a few years to perfect his songs before releasing them), and when he was appointed the song contest director for his class soon after the Maui wildfires, he chose "Ka Wai 'o 'Eleile" for its "many mo'olelo [stories] about Maui that you don't hear about anymore," he says. For the performance, he wore fifteen strands of lei strung with lokelani (rose), the island's official flower. "In everything I try to incorporate kaona, especially in my fashion"—he's usually wearing aloha wear from local designers including Manuheali'i, Kaulua'e Hawai'i and Manaola Hawai'i.

He says people ask, "Why don't you sing like Bruno Mars, you can make so much more money?" But to me, Hawaiian music is about the culture, the language and the amount of work that our kūpuna [ancestors] put into it. Not a lot of people sing it, especially in my generation. So I feel it's my responsibility to carry it on and make sure Hawaiian music is there for the generations to come."

**@KAMAHAO.MUSIC**



# Lounging Legacy

STORY BY JACK TRUESDALE  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANA EDMUNDS



Welder and furniture restorer John Reyno with a chair and table designed by Walter Lamb in 1952, made with bronze recovered from ships lost in the attack on Pearl Harbor. Lamb's works are collectors' items today; Reyno owns about seventy.

In his backyard in Kailua, John Reyno sits in a metal lawn chair worth, by his lights, \$12,000. The sea-green patina reveals its age: The designer, Walter Lamb, made it around 1946 for a lounge in the Honolulu airport. It ended up at the Coral Strands Hotel, and Reyno, a mid-century modern furniture collector, bought it from the family that owned the hotel. "Next thing I know, I own this cool

piece of history," he says, elbows resting on the bronze. Reyno owns seventy of Lamb's chairs. When he started collecting Lamb's work around 2007, he couldn't find any information on the man. He started digging. Last year he had a breakthrough, connecting with Lamb's descendants. Lamb was born in "maybe" Kansas in 1901 and grew up in San Francisco.

He came to Hawai'i in 1935 to head up interior design for a store called Gumps. When the war broke out six years later, Lamb found himself out of a job.

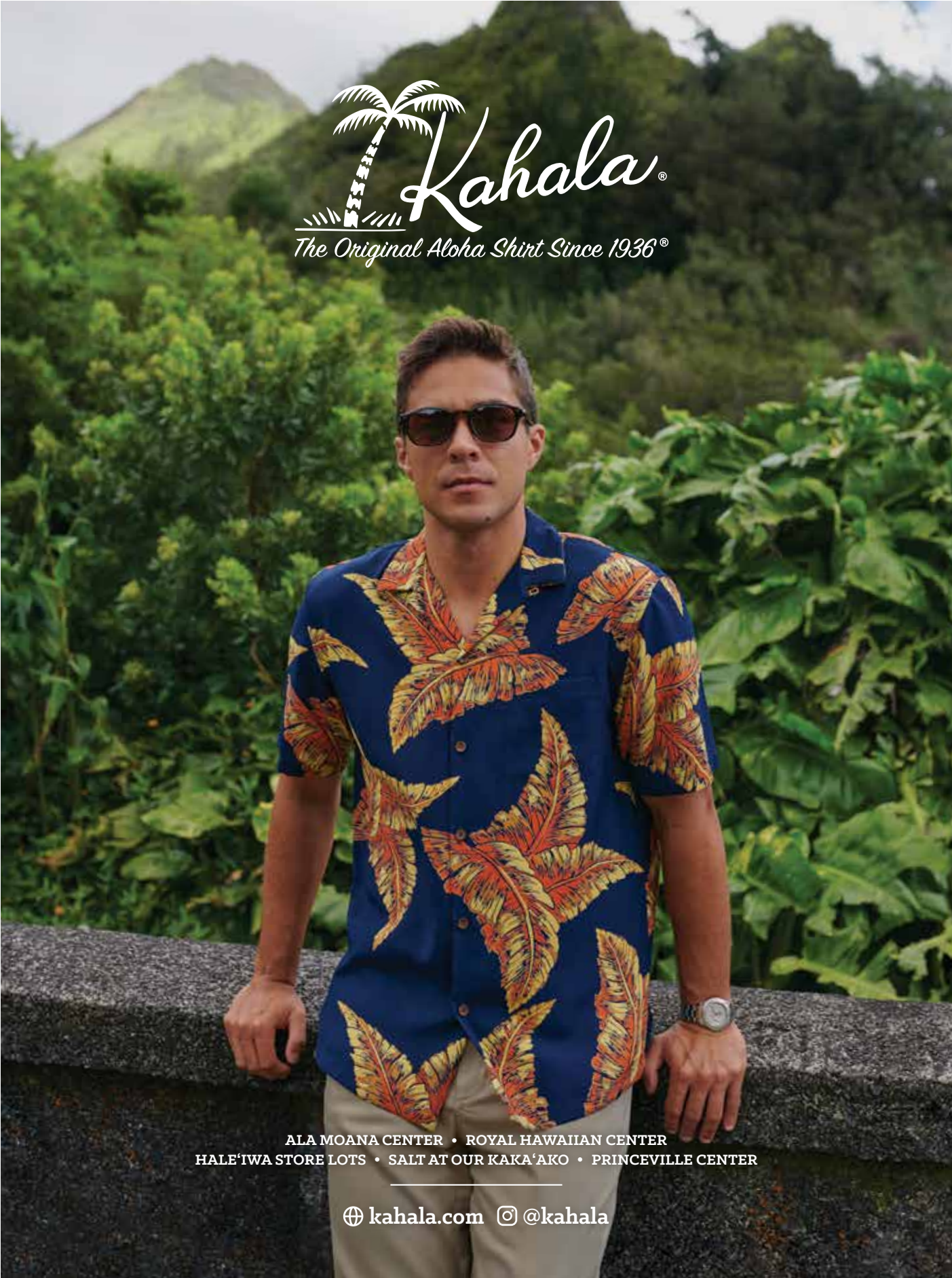
One fateful day Lamb drove to Pearl Harbor, where he had a job designing an officers' club for the Navy. He came across a pile of one-inch-thick bronze tubing from ships lost in the Japanese attack in 1941. The Navy let him take it. "He starts making pretty basic chairs," Reyno says. Lamb tied marine canvas to the frame with clothesline to withstand the salty air.

Reyno eventually found Lamb's former residence on O'ahu, which Lamb's friend Vladimir Ossipoff, a renowned local architect, helped design. Luminaries and celebrities—Walt Disney, the Roosevelts, the Kahanamokus—attended parties there, the story goes. "He didn't have to market himself," Reyno says. "They came to him, and they were sitting in these chairs."

Lamb signed a licensing agreement with Brown Jordan, a company that, after making military cots for the war effort, was pivoting to "outdoor space." Lamb's work would fit right in. Instead of continuing to weld short sections of tubing together, Lamb redesigned the chairs to streamline manufacturing: A machine could bend longer sections of continuous pipe to fashion the frames. "That's when they became a lot more sculptural," Reyno says.

Lamb left Hawai'i in 1952 and died in 1980. Brown Jordan continued to promote the Pearl Harbor association, though the newer chairs no longer had any direct connection to the base. To this day some people erroneously claim their Walter Lamb chair is from Pearl Harbor, Reyno says. One-inch tubing comes from the original pile, he says, but anything else didn't. Moreover, "people always want to rope everything," Reyno says, "but that's not period-correct." He points to one chair he's roped himself that is period-correct. It's for sale, along with about fifty other pieces, at Reyno's studio in Kailua.

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# departments & features





## Dressing the Part

Hawai'i's cosplayers are artists, engineers, performers and mega megafans



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Mark Gamiao (above) creating a Captain Hoshina costume from the manga series *Kaiju No. 8* at a cosplayer workshop night. On the title page, Christy Kohama as the samurai rabbit, Usagi Yojimbo. Kohama once met the character's creator, Stan Sakai, while in costume.

**J**on Minami's first foray into cosplay wasn't exactly successful. A few years after attending his first anime convention, Minami decided he wanted to "suit up." He chose the Engineer from the video game *Team Fortress 2*, a burly protagonist in brown coveralls, red shirt, orange hardhat, kneepads and a tool belt. He bought all the ready-made items he could find—what veteran cosplayers call, a bit derisively, "out of the closet."

"The entire day everyone kept calling me Bob the Builder," he laughs. And it stuck: "Ten years later, everyone's like, 'Hey, Bob.'"

Things have changed for Minami since then. These days he creates elaborate costumes and holds weekly workshop nights with other cosplayers, where they craft, chat, sand 3D models and troubleshoot. Minami, a line

cook and dishwasher, estimates he's created about twenty-four costumes. His favorite so far is a "panzer cop" from the Japanese political thriller anime *Jin-Roh: The Wolf Brigade*. The intimidating getup includes full-body black armor and a helmet with red, glowing eyes.

Wearing such an elaborate suit is a thrill, Minami says. For the most part. "On the one hand, once you put everything on, you're like, 'Wow, I'm this character that I idolize,' but on the other hand, you're like, 'Wow, wearing this suit of armor kind of sucks. It's hot, I can't see, I can't hear anything, I hope I don't run over a small child.'"

Cosplayers typically portray characters from movies, video games, comic books and TV shows, often at conventions, or "cons," with other like-minded megafans. In Hawai'i that's Comic Con Honolulu, which focuses on

comics, movies, sci-fi and video games; Kawaii Kon, which celebrates manga and anime; and Amazing Comic Con Aloha, which emphasizes pop culture, comic books and collectibles. Last year Minami and his friends attended Kawaii Kon as characters from the video game *Halo*, spending months creating and refurbishing armor. In the past they built and wore matching cyberpunk-style outfits for Halloween events in Waikiki and dressed as characters from Pokémon for the 2024 World Championships in Honolulu last August.

**Cosplay devotees spend hundreds,** even thousands a year on costumes, and dozens of hours crafting them. Some purchase portions of their costumes and customize the rest. Others build them entirely by hand, which requires a suite of crafting skills: painting, sewing, sanding, 3D



Ala Moana Center 3rd Floor Center Stage | Moana Surfrider, A Westin Resort & Spa







TOP / Grace Chee defies gravity as Sabrina from Pokémon at Comic Con Honolulu last September.

BOTTOM / Jayson Smetara fits a comic book-accurate, 3D-printed Wolverine mask on his friend Shaughnessy Birgado.

RIGHT / JEDI808 (his Instagram handle) started creating this Boba Fett costume back in 2005.



printing, vacuum forming (plastic thermoforming) and “foamsmithing” (building with EVA foam).

Once an obscure subculture, cosplay has entered the mainstream over the last two decades. Some say it originated with sci-fi fans who attended conventions dressed as favorite characters. Others trace its origins to anime fans in Japan, so it’s not surprising that Hawai’i, with its strong ties to Japanese culture, is home to an extensive cosplay community.

On O’ahu alone there are cosplay groups to suit just about any fan’s

predilections, from the general—the Costumers Guild and Cosplayers of Hawai’i—to the extremely specific—a group that focuses exclusively on *Halo* armor. The Ghost Busters Hawai’i Division is for wanna-be Stay Puft Marshmallow Man slayers. A *Jurassic Park*-themed group often gathers at Kualoa Ranch, where three of the movies were filmed. There’s the Last Outpost for Trekkies and Avengers Mid-Pacific for Marvelheads. At least two for *Star Wars*: the Pacific Outpost of the 501st Legion (the Hawai’i chapter

of the *Star Wars* Imperial costuming organization—the bad guys) and its sister organization, the Hawai’i Outpost of the Rebel Legion (the good guys).

Today, huge companies such as Mattel and Disney sell elaborate, expensive costumes for kids and grown-ups, which has created a “golden age of cosplay,” according to Kalei Kealoha, the commanding officer of the Pacific Outpost of the 501st.

“Now people on the Mainland are dressing up as anime characters, whereas ten to fifteen years ago, only

A poster for Cirque du Soleil's 'Auana' show. It features a silhouette of a person standing on a dark, rocky outcrop, reaching out towards a large, bright yellow and orange sun. The background is black with a pattern of colorful, geometric shapes (triangles and diamonds) in blue, yellow, and red. The text 'CIRQUE DU SOLEIL' is in orange, and 'AUANA' is in large red letters. Below the title, it says 'A NEW SUN RISES'. At the bottom left, it says 'OUTRIGGER' and 'WAIKIKI BEACHCOMBER HOTEL'. At the bottom right, it says 'PERFORMANCES BEGIN LATE 2024' and 'CIRQUEDUSOLEIL.COM/HAWAII'. A QR code is in the bottom right corner with the text 'SCAN FOR TICKETS' above it.





TOP / The Marvel universe is always well represented at Comic Con Honolulu. Left to right: Jon Minami as Gambit, Smetara as Cyclops and Chee as Laura Kinney/X-23.

BOTTOM / Anthony Ragil crafts paladin armor from the game *Final Fantasy IV*.

LEFT / Ragil, as Captain America, has spent up to a decade perfecting some of his costumes.

people here were dressing up as anime characters,” says “Lola Organa” (*Star Wars* fans will guess that is not her real name), also a member of the 501st. “With all that’s out there now—the resources, the community, awareness in general of what cosplay is and all the cool characters—for someone just starting, it is way easier than for someone ten to twenty years ago.”

At a recent workshop night at Minami’s home, Jayson Smetara recalls the first time he went to a convention dressed as a Spartan from *Halo*. “I was so into that video game, and in the back of my mind, I was like, ‘I wish I could just dive into that

video game and be a Spartan,’” he says. Suiting up, he says, was the best feeling of his life.

**Anthony Ragil was still in high school** when he attended his first Comic Con in 2007. Back then his whole universe was his hometown of Mililani, punctuated with occasional trips to Pearl City or Honolulu. “I started realizing there are people from other towns, and as soon as I started diving into the hobby, I was like, ‘Oh my god! It’s a global thing,’” he says. Ragil, who works at the front desk of a community center and is studying to become a personal trainer, identifies with Noctis,

the heir apparent to the Kingdom of Lucis from the video game *Final Fantasy*. Noctis is fair-skinned with a straight mop of ebony hair. He is dressed in black from head to toe, including a short-sleeve military-style jacket and combat boots, and carries a silver sword that is half as long as he is tall.

Cool costume aside, Ragil feels a personal connection to the character: Like the fictional Noctis, Ragil’s own grandfather hopes he will one day become the patriarch of the family. The lines between person and persona get a little blurry, as they sometimes do with cosplay. “While I don’t feel I’m quite there yet, we grow every day,”



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Ragil says. “Maybe someday I’ll feel that I filled my grandfather’s shoes, and that’s a lot of what this character’s journey is about.”

Ten years ago Organa didn’t know what cosplay was. A longtime Marvel fan, she heard that Stan Lee, founder of the franchise, was going to be at Comic Con Honolulu, so she bought a ticket. As Organa and her husband were looking for a parking spot, he asked if she was sure they were in the right place. Seconds later, “Someone

pulled a ginormous sword out of their trunk, like a huge anime sword,” she recalls. “And I was like, ‘Yes, we’re in the right place!’”

Once she entered the convention center, she was completely enchanted. “I just didn’t know that world existed,” she says. Organa, who works in compliance at a bank, attended her next Comic Con as Lara Croft from *Tomb Raider*. Attendees greeted her with, “I love you, Lara Croft! Can I take a picture with you?” And she was hooked.



TOP / Minami, who refers to himself as an “armor head,” displays a template for a breastplate.

BOTTOM / Mason, a ten-year-old padawan, crosses lightsabers with Darth Vader at Comic Con Honolulu.

LEFT / Lola Organa put a “spicy, feminine spin,” as she calls it, on her Praetorian Guard costume from *Star Wars* (seen also on pages 36–37).

Organa gravitates to formidable characters, such as a Praetorian Guard, an Imperial warrior from *The Mandalorian*. That costume is “so cool-looking and so badass,” she says. Organa created her Praetorian Guard with a “spicy,” feminine spin. Instead of a tunic, she wears a shiny red crop top. The final embellishments include over-the-knee red boots in place of leg armor and a paneled skirt that exposes her thighs. Cosplay, Organa says, is “a passion for showing what you love. And

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**HAWAII LIFE** **Forbes**





“This was basically YouTube trial and error,” Christy Kohama says of her take on a Palico, a cat-like character from the video game *Monster Hunter*. Kohama once focused on crafting costumes using foam and 3D printing but now challenges herself—and her wallet—with fur.

there’s the community, too, because no one really cosplays by themselves.”

Like many cosplayers, Organa often dresses up to attend charity events for organizations like Special Olympics and Make-a-Wish. Although she loves the conventions, it’s this labor of love that is most meaningful to her. One especially memorable of those events was for children of military service members whose parents were deployed during holidays. After the end the cosplayers gave each of the kids a letter from their absent parent. “It was so touching,” she says, waving her hand in front of her eyes and tearing up. “I was like, ‘I’m hooked. I want to do this all the time.’”

Cosplay has always been part of Kealoha’s life. As a child, Halloween was far more exciting than his birthday or Christmas. He also doesn’t recall *not* loving *Star Wars*. His latest creation is a blue-and-white X-wing pilot uniform

featured in *Rogue One*. Soon after he started making it, his dad passed away.

“I’m particularly proud of this helmet because I made it in tribute to my dad,” he says, showing off the detailed symbols and precise hand-stenciled and painted line work. The adornments include a modified yin and yang, modeled after one of his father’s surfboards, the years of his birth and death, and his initials, all in Aurabesh, the written language from the *Star Wars* universe.

**During a workshop day at Ragil’s home**, he and his friend Christy Kohama, a systems administrator, are assiduously ironing out costume details. Two mannequins stand in the corner, one draped in chain mail and one sporting a short grayish wig with pink-and-black pointed ears. Prop swords and guns hang on the wall, and three of

Christy’s costume heads are lined up on a shelf to the side.

Their friend Mario Mercado, a produce manager, soon joins, carrying a sewing machine, paper and red faux leather. Mercado is pleased with the bargain he got on the pleather. “Remember when I was paying to get my fur down here for my Jon Snow?” he says, referring to the *Game of Thrones* character. “Dude, the fur costs at least \$60 for shipping.” Mercado is using the pleather to sew a pair of gloves for one of Ragil’s costumes.

Nearby, Kohama trims the fur around the nose of a costume head using a hair clipper. She self-effacingly admits that the fuzzy head currently resembles a capybara. Once she finishes working her magic, though, it will resemble its intended character: Master Splinter, the rat sensei from *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.

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The Pila family as samurai versions of Pokémon characters (left to right: Katie as Gyarados, Dani as Pikachu and Dana as Charizard) at Comic Con Honolulu. The annual con draws thousands of fans of comics, movies, sci-fi and video games and is one of the premier events for cosplayers to wear their creativity.

Kohama often challenges herself by creating difficult costumes. She mastered armor and has now moved on to fur. One of her fluffy creations is a Palico, a cat-like combat companion from the video game *Monster Hunter*. The white-and-gray feline is modeled after her own cats, Dobby and Tonks. The mouth moves, and it will eventually include an animatronic tail that moves by itself.

Another costume is Usagi Yojimbo, a samurai rabbit from a comic book series of the same name created by Stan Sakai, who was born in Japan and grew up in Hawai'i. Usagi wears a vivid blue kimono-style top, and its snow-white ears are tied

in a topknot. "Most people recognized Usagi, but a little girl came running up to me and hugged me and said, 'Bunny!'" Kohama recalls. "As opposed to some other characters that have scared the living daylights out of four-year-olds."

While creating costumes is enjoyable, it's not Kohama's only motivation. She could build the outfit and leave it on a shelf, she notes. Cosplay allows its enthusiasts to bond with others and express enthusiasm for a particular character or genre. At one convention, Kohama and her friends dressed as Spartans from *Halo*. They organized an impromptu photo shoot, catching the attention of other

*Halo* fans, who snapped pictures with their phones. Among the spectators was an 11-year-old boy. He hovered shyly nearby, dressed in an obviously inexpensive, store-bought Spartan costume. Kohama beckoned for the boy to join her group and pose with his fellow Spartans.

The boy gave a "Who, me?" gesture, intimidated by the more elaborately dressed Spartans. Yes, Yokohama told him.

"If you're a Spartan, I don't care if it's a \$20 costume or a \$2,000 costume," she says. "You're doing it because you love the character. That's the whole point of cosplay." **hh**

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## A Tale of Two Islands

Uchinanchu in Hawai‘i owe much of their success to two things: community and food



PHOTO COURTESY GENE KANESHIRO

**S**hari Tamashiro was stunned when she first learned how many Okinawan-owned restaurants there have been in Hawai‘i. Zippy’s, Rainbow Drive-In, Highway Inn, Like Like Drive Inn, Flamingo, Wisteria, Columbia Inn: It’s likely at least one of your favorite Honolulu restaurant institutions, past or present, was opened by an Okinawan. When she realized this, Tamashiro, who has a library science

degree and is a cybrarian at Kapi‘olani Community College, began what she often does: She documented everything.

She collected records on the existing restaurants and food businesses. Some notes are practical, like bringing your own pot to Aloha Tofu’s factory in the early morning for scoops of warm, soft tofu made hours before. And on Mondays, pre-ordering Okuhara Foods’ *gobo* tempura, available

in five-pound bags. (While she’s there, she also picks up Okuhara’s best seller: “Instead of flowers, I bring my mom imitation crab,” she says.) She can tell you that when you ask Jocelyn Kishimoto, owner of Utage restaurant, to notify you when specials like *konbu maki* or ‘ahi nori tempura are available, she will write down your name and phone number in a black-and-white composition book. And after Tamashiro



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The previous generation of Okinawan restaurateurs in Hawai‘i, including Fred “Tosh” Kaneshiro (seen on the title page), once called the “world’s greatest Dodgers fan,” opened places like Columbia Inn in 1941, serving American food. A newer generation, such as Chokatsu Tamayose (seen above playing the *sanshin*), serves Okinawan comfort food at Sunrise Restaurant, which started in 1999.

fielded so many questions about where to get *andagi*, or Okinawan doughnuts, she published an online list of the nine places, with photos “to show how different the andagi looks.” She is also a walking repository of the restaurant families’ histories: that the mother of Roy Yamaguchi, one of Hawai‘i’s most renowned chefs and restaurateurs, is Okinawan. That two of the partners in Beer Lab HI, Kevin Teruya and Nicholas Wong, are part Okinawan, and Teruya is the grandson of the founder of Kapi‘olani Coffee Shop. That the parents of Henry Adaniya of Hank’s Haute Dogs were both of Okinawan heritage and ran a concession stand selling hot dogs where the Waikiki War Memorial Natatorium is now—his counter is a tribute to them.

This January marks 125 years since the first twenty-six men from Okinawa arrived in Hawai‘i as contract

laborers; now it’s estimated that there are fifty thousand Uchinanchu (how Okinawans also identify themselves, as distinct from the Japanese ethnicity) in Hawai‘i, about 3 percent of the state’s population. To help commemorate the 125th anniversary, Tamashiro is part of a project to help Uchinanchu trace their genealogy and share their stories. She quotes the late historian Ronald Takaki, saying, “It’s not the stories of presidents and kings that are crying out to be told, it’s stories of the common man, the farmers and fishermen, thousands and thousands of stories that make up this community of memory.”

**I meet Tamashiro at one of her** favorite Okinawan-owned restaurants, Sunrise Restaurant, which she calls “the gathering place for the Okinawan community.” She helped save it during the pandemic. Chokatsu and Tomoko

Tamayose own the snug spot just off of Kapahulu Avenue in Honolulu, which Chokatsu started with his aunt in 1999. Regulars come for home-style Okinawan dishes like pig’s feet soup and a stir fry of pork and *goya* (bitter melon). They also know that toward the end of the night, Chokatsu will likely pick up his *sanshin*, a three-string instrument that he often plucks using a plastic *saimin* spoon, inspiring diners to their feet for *kachāshi*, an Okinawan folk dance. But in April of 2022, Sunrise was \$13,000 behind in rent and facing closure. Tamashiro set up a GoFundMe and, in less than a day, raised \$15,000. Donations came from the Okinawan community locally and abroad. One couple in Okinawa, grateful to Chokatsu and Tomoko for taking care of their daughter while she was a student at nearby Kapi‘olani Community College, donated \$5,000. In just a



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The first Okinawan Festival (seen above) was held in 1982 at the McCoy Pavilion at Ala Moana Beach Park. It is now considered the largest ethnic festival in Hawai'i—a two-day event attracting about fifty thousand visitors.

week and a half, \$71,000 had poured in. Norman Nakasone, a banker, helped the Tamayoses organize their finances.

To Tamashiro the donations are an example of *yuimaru*, an Okinawan word meaning community support in times of need. She remembers when she was working on an oral history project with Japanese World War II veterans and they asked her, “What are the stories that guide you and your generation?” And I was, like, ‘George Washington cutting down the cherry tree, saying, ‘I cannot lie’?’ She decided to choose another story to live by: the pigs from the sea.

World War II had decimated Okinawa—it’s estimated that a hundred thousand civilians, about a third of the residents at the time, died in the Battle of Okinawa. The pig population, an important food supply, plummeted from more than one hundred thousand to fewer than eight hundred. The Hawai’i Uchinanchu community raised almost

\$50,000 (about \$650,000 in today’s dollars) to purchase 550 pigs from the continental United States, and in 1948 seven men from Hawai’i helped escort the pigs by ship from Portland to Okinawa. Within four years the pig population was restored to prewar numbers.

“The story reminds us we can accomplish amazing things when we work together,” says Tamashiro, whose Instagram handle is @pigsfromthesea. And it’s the spirit of *yuimaru*, she believes, that enabled Okinawans to open so many restaurants—approximately three hundred, primarily in the 1930s to ’50s. According to one essay in *Uchinanchu: A History of Okinawans in Hawaii*, by 1941 approximately 80 percent of Honolulu cafés and eateries were owned by Okinawans. Most, though, are long gone.

In 2021, Kevin Teruya, co-owner of the brewery Beer Lab HI, concocted

a bitter melon beer to coincide with the Okinawan Festival, an annual event over Labor Day weekend that’s billed as Hawai’i’s largest ethnic festival, attracting about fifty thousand attendees. Until then, “I never thought of my Okinawan side,” he says. But when Gene Kaneshiro and Howard Takara, both from restaurant families, learned of Teruya’s involvement with the festival, they connected with him “because back in 1983, my grandma died in a house fire, and they had helped with the service,” Teruya says. “They said it was a shock to the Okinawan community, about how tragic it was. They recalled it quite vividly. They remembered my grandpa”—who opened Kapi’olani Coffee Shop—“and they remembered my grandma, as well as some of my aunties. It opened my eyes as far as the Okinawan side, how much they care about each other. There truly was an Okinawan community of restaurant

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PHOTOS COURTESY JON ITOMURA

**Pigs from the Sea:** During WWII, Okinawa's livestock had been decimated and starvation loomed. Hawai'i's Okinawan community raised \$50,000 to purchase pigs, which were shipped from Portland to Okinawa on a military vessel, escorted by seven men from Hawai'i. A storm damaged the holding pens on the first try, and the ship had to turn back. The second successfully delivered 550 pigs to Okinawa.

owners that was very close-knit. I don't think you see that very often, that kind of support. To be honest, I wasn't a very good Okinawan. That was a wake-up—'Whoa, this is important.'

Kaneshiro and Takara knew it was important—it's why they had started the Hawai'i Okinawan Restaurant Project about twenty years earlier, when Kaneshiro's restaurant, Columbia Inn, which his father and uncle opened the day after Pearl Harbor was bombed, closed after six decades in business. The executive director of the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i had approached Kaneshiro to document Columbia Inn's history. "There's a bigger story to this," he told her. "Look at all of the restaurants that were owned and operated by Okinawan families in Hawai'i." With support from the JCCH and the Hawaii United Okinawa Association, Kaneshiro and Takara spent a decade gathering stories from the restaurants Okinawans opened in the twentieth century, places named American Cafe, Smile Cafe and Frankie's Cafe. The restaurateurs, anticipating a greater appetite for burgers over bitter melon, created menus featuring American food like hamburger steak and grilled calf's liver.

(The restaurants that serve Okinawan food, including Sunrise and Utage, were opened much later, around the turn of the millennium, by a new generation of Okinawan immigrants.)

From Uchinanchu with ties to the village of Oroku alone, from which Kaneshiro's paternal grandparents and Takara's grandparents on both sides emigrated, they documented seventy-five restaurants. They attributed the restaurant boom to Ushi Takara (no relation to Howard), who opened American Cafe in 1923, and Henry Uyehara, who opened Kewalo Inn in 1930—both Oroku-born restaurateurs who hired and mentored other Oroku immigrants and descendants. One of them, Wallace Teruya, waited tables at Kewalo Inn, where the cooks would butcher frogs from the pond nearby for fried frog legs, before opening his own spot, Times Grill, with his brother Albert in 1938. They closed it a few years after their younger brother, part of the 100th Battalion in World War II, was killed in action in Italy. In 1949 the Teruyas opened the first Times Supermarket, inspired in part by their late brother's dream.

Kaneshiro's own uncle had worked at American Cafe, starting as a janitor and eventually learning all the roles in

the restaurant. "Ushi used to recruit all the kids from the plantation to work at his place," Takara says. "Taught them the skills and, when they were ready to go out to do their own, helped them." They borrowed funds through a system called *tanomoshi*—in which the Uchinanchu pooled money and loaned it out to other members, much like the informal savings and credit associations among Japanese and Chinese immigrants, who couldn't get loans from the traditional banks. "The Italians did it the same way when they came over from Europe to New York; the Irish did it the same way. The Chinese did it the same way in San Francisco and everywhere in the US."

They also supported other Okinawan entrepreneurs. "If everything was equal," says Kaneshiro, "we choose a guy who's Okinawan" for their food suppliers: egg producers, hog farmers, fruit and vegetable distributors. Many Okinawans had turned farming side hustles that they started while on the plantations into bigger businesses—some of them, like Armstrong Produce, Eggs Hawaii and 50th State Poultry, are still among the largest today.

"I think the basic conclusion that we can come to is, here you have a whole

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About 130,000 *andagi*, or Okinawan doughnuts, are dropped in oil by hand over the course of the Okinawan Festival. Andagi are also available year-round on Fridays at the Okinawan and Japanese restaurant Utage, as well as at the Aloha Andagi pop-up, which offers them in seasonal flavors like pumpkin spice and strawberry.

bunch of immigrants coming over, and they didn't want to just go and work in a plantation and cut cane and then disappear from life with no history," Kaneshiro says. "I think they came over with the intent of making a living and bringing money and go home as a hero." But finding little money to be made on the plantations, they bet on restaurants as their path to fortune.

**Every conversation in Hawai'i** about Okinawan food seems to begin with pork—like the seven thousand pounds of *shoyu* (soy sauce) pork Chris Iwamura, the third-generation owner of Rainbow Drive-In, oversaw for the most recent Okinawan Festival. Iwamura manages all of the festival's food production, including pig's feet soup; *champurū* (stir fry) of luncheon

meat, tofu and vegetables; Okinawan soba (thick wheat noodles in a dashi broth)—"basically everything but the andagi," he says. (The andagi batter also coats hot dogs for "andadogs.") It can be hard to reconcile this food with what the rest of the country often associates Okinawa with: a so-called "blue zone," with some of the world's longest-living residents, attributed in part to a diet of primarily homegrown vegetables. But transplanted cultures have a way of morphing into something new. Meanwhile, changes back in Okinawa, including the transition from a sweet potato- to rice-based diet, as well as American occupation and a heavy US military presence after the war, have transformed the way Okinawans eat, giving way to Spam in the champuru and the ubiquity of "taco

rice"—in essence, taco fixings, including seasoned ground beef, shredded cheese and lettuce over rice.

The US military also changed what Iwamura's grandfather knew to cook: Seiju Ifuku had served in the famed 100th Battalion during WWII and cooked while on duty, learning recipes that would inform his menu of chili and hamburgers when he opened Rainbow Drive-In in 1961. But if Ifuku collected American recipes for his restaurant, at home he collected Okinawan culture. He had amassed so many antiques—pottery, paintings, scrolls, stamps—that when he donated them to the museum in his hometown of Yaese (formerly known as Gushichan), the prefecture created a new museum just to house a portion of the 1,400-piece collection. Iwamura recently visited

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Since the early twentieth century, there have been more than 350 Okinawan-owned restaurants in Hawai‘i—Rainbow Drive-In, which opened in 1961, is among those that remain, now run by Chris Iwamura (seen above). “My grandpa built this whole thing,” he says. “The things I have in my life are because of him.”

his grandfather’s village for the first time to see the exhibits. (While there, he also saw a memorial dedicated to those killed in WWII, which included his grandfather’s two sisters. “It’s an interesting story of my grandpa, who was over in France and Italy fighting for the US,” Iwamura says, “and part of his family is killed by the US troops on the other side of the world.”)

Okinawan culture “was part of my culture, unknowingly,” Iwamura says. When he was younger, he hadn’t joined Okinawan dance clubs or any of the Hawaii United Okinawa Association’s approximately fifty member clubs, most of them organized around Okinawan towns to which their constituents trace their heritage, but he grew up surrounded by his grandfather’s collection and music. His grandfather had always told Iwamura “to be proud

to be an Okinawan,” but he didn’t know what that really meant. His grandfather had died when he was in high school, and his parents, part of the postwar generation trying to assimilate in America, did not pass along the culture.

It’s only recently that Iwamura has been learning more. “The common misconception is that Okinawans are basically Japanese, but the culture is so much more affected by other cultures in general,” he says. When Okinawa was the independent Ryukyu Kingdom, it traded across Asia, particularly with China and countries including Korea, Siam and Vietnam—influences that can be seen in Okinawa’s arts and architecture.

While Okinawa is often described as the Hawai‘i of Japan, with its warm weather and beaches, the comparison runs deeper. Outside of the Hawaii

Okinawa Center in Waipi’o, built ninety years after the first Okinawan immigrants arrived, a plaque notes some of these similarities: Both are subtropical islands far from their respective mainlands, Japan and the United States; both have “different and unique culture from the mainland”; both “prospered as independent kingdoms” until 1879 for Okinawa and 1898 for Hawai‘i; both have their own languages, the plaque says, Uchinaaguchi for Okinawa and “Pidgin English” for Hawai‘i. But there are also parallels left unsaid. Both kingdoms were forcibly overthrown and the Native cultures were suppressed, so much so that the Hawaiian language had almost disappeared by 1990—to the point that it’s not even acknowledged on the plaque—and only older generations of Okinawans, like Iwamura’s

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The Okinawan Festival, featuring food, dance and music (including this performance by the Ryukyu Sokyoku Koyo Kai Hawaii Shibu), hosted by the Hawaii United Okinawa Association, is one avenue by which Uchinanchu (Okinawans) express their distinct identity and culture. HUOA also participates in the Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival, a gathering of the Uchinanchu diaspora held every five years in Okinawa.

grandmother, speak Uchinaaguchi, a language that UNESCO has designated as officially endangered. But as with Native Hawaiian arts and language, Iwamura is starting to

see a rebirth of Okinawan culture. “It’s something I’m really interested in, the revival recently,” he says. He now serves on the board of the Hawaii United Okinawa Association and sees part of his

role as “trying to help push the younger generation to take some pride, ask questions—Where are we from? What’s the difference between Okinawan and Japanese?—to keep the culture alive.” hh



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The Pen and the Sword

Rachel Kondo’s vision of feudal Japan makes television history



**R**achel Kondo had a reputation for being “extra” at Maui High School: extra sweet, extra smart and extra ambitious. For a tenth-grade assignment on the Middle Ages, she didn’t just write the essay; she sewed medieval clothing, built a castle out of refrigerator boxes—complete with drawbridge—and emerged from her cardboard fortress to deliver her essay in full costume. “I

could see the faces of all my classmates saying, ‘Uhhh, you took that way too far,’” she laughs. “So my nickname became RTM: Rachel-Too-Much.” Kondo lives on a vine-covered road in Ha’ikū, Maui, with her husband, two daughters and a white puffball dog. The bichon frisé’s mod bangs hide its missing eyes. “We rescue old, seriously broken dogs,” Kondo explains. She possesses the same spill-over humor

and eagerness to please of her teen years. You’d never guess that she’s now a big shot—a powerful storyteller and executive producer of *Shōgun*, one of Hollywood’s hottest TV shows. Kondo’s parents married young and raised her and her two siblings within Maui’s tightknit Evangelical Christian community. When Kondo turned 11, her father, a letter carrier at the Kahului Post Office, began training his middle

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PICTURED: KELSEY MALONEY

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Writer Rachel Kondo (seen above) returned to her home island of Maui with her husband, Justin Marks, in 2022. Their house, a refurbished sugar plantation estate surrounded by fruit trees (seen on the title page), includes a special feature: an entertainment room with a screen large enough to bring Hollywood to Ha'ikū.

daughter to play basketball. Practice started at 4 a.m. and included protein shakes and weightlifting. “He was a little bit kolohe [naughty] as a teenager,” says Kondo. “Basketball became a new path for him.”

She dived into books, mainly period romances, and fantasized about life beyond Maui. “I thought that if I could just get to the Mainland, I could go anywhere in the world,” she says. Getting there required money her family didn’t have. “So I made a list of the five points that I had to excel in: academics, athletics, community service, leadership and faith.”

She applied for fifty-two scholarships and won enough of them to catapult her across the Pacific to Point Loma Nazarene University in San

Diego. She spent her junior year studying abroad in Scotland, which was revelatory. “I stepped out of the Evangelical bubble,” she says. She earned a degree in journalism and returned home to Maui to juggle multiple jobs.

As happens, a friend of her mother’s knew a woman with a son in Los Angeles, who had a spare room. “Really it was a kitchen nook,” says Kondo. But it was enough. The City of Angels enthralled her. “The dirt, the grime, the traffic ... I loved it!” She scraped by as a waitress until another friend of a friend introduced her to an agent at CAA, the biggest talent agency in town. The agent agreed to meet Kondo for coffee. “I think she was a little bit worried about me,” says Kondo, “because within five minutes of chatting, she said, ‘I’m going

to get you a job at CAA. And you need to move out of the kitchen nook, so you’re going to live with my mother.’”

The job at CAA didn’t last; by her own admission, Kondo was a lousy assistant. On one occasion she signed something she shouldn’t have, essentially attaching an A-list actor to a movie that he had no intention of doing. Her boss—a screamer—marched her down to legal affairs to confess what she had done. “CAA was brutal,” Kondo says. “The irony is, I’m now a client of theirs.”

The living situation proved more successful. The agent’s mother became a dear friend and served as the wedding officiant a few years later, when Kondo fell in love and married Justin Marks. Unlike Kondo, Marks had been a good

assistant. He’d known since age eight that he wanted to work in film. The week he graduated from Columbia University, he flew to LA and landed his first job as a producer’s assistant when they met.

While Kondo had found love, she was still searching for a place to pour her talents. She enrolled in creative writing classes at UCLA and began writing “Beverly,” a story loosely based on her father and set in Happy Valley on Maui. Impressed, her professors suggested she pursue an MFA. She applied to seven programs and got accepted by five—an astonishing rate of success.

“I had five minutes of basking in shock and awe,” says Kondo. “From that point forward, I was in despair.” She struggled with imposter syndrome, she says. “I was married, 32 years old and

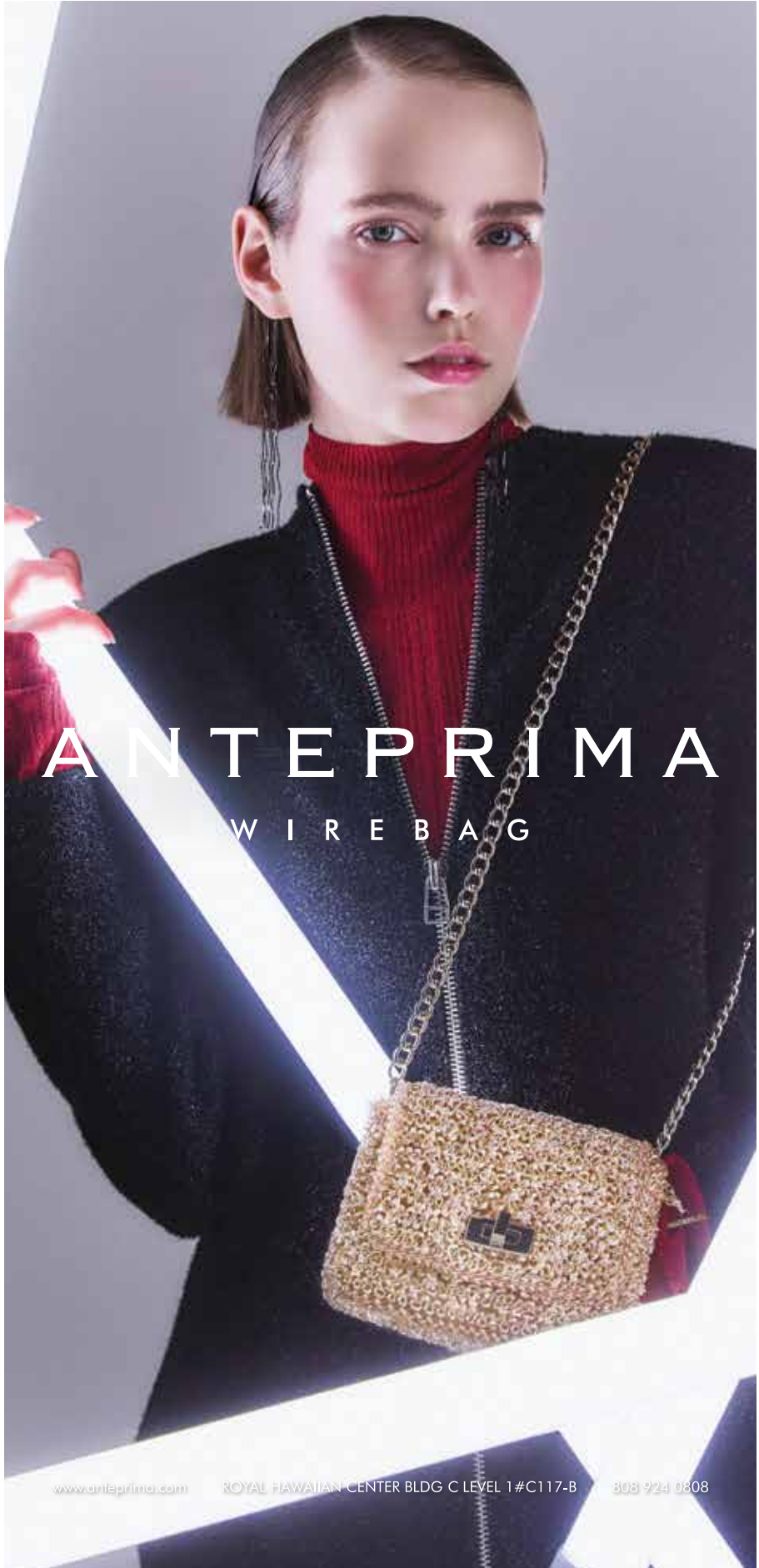






PHOTO COURTESY KATIE YU/FX

Six weeks after Kondo and Marks finished writing *Shōgun*, COVID hit and Japan closed to nonresidents. The film crew relocated to Vancouver, where they re-created seventeenth-century Japanese villages and palaces. They filmed ten episodes over ten months—while masking and testing. “The worst part,” says Kondo, “we didn’t see each other’s faces because we wore masks sixteen hours a day.”

going back to school with people who are Ivy League-educated, very young and very smart.” Still, she packed her laptop and headed out to the Michener Center for Writers at the University of Texas.

**For three years she honed her craft** in the Lone Star State. As a Japanese American, she had felt the sting of racism before, but in Texas she had her first brush with classism. “People were suspicious of me and my intentions because I was a postman’s daughter,” she says. A visiting writer discouraged her from writing in Hawaiian Pidgin—inferring that the creole language that emerged out of Hawai‘i’s sugar plantations was too complicated, too political. This only strengthened Kondo’s resolve to write about her home. She published “Beverly,” her very first short story, and won

\$20,000 as a finalist for the Keene Prize for Literature.

Understandably, she felt dubious when another, more astute professor told her that “Beverly” wasn’t quite complete. “In the softest, gentlest Texan drawl, he urged me to dig deeper,” says Kondo. She reworked the story into “Girl of Few Seasons,” just shy of ten thousand words, but each word shines. Her potent imagery reveals a Hawai‘i landscape both familiar and startlingly fresh—a place where a boy “could guess the size and heft of the gecko that clicked its tongue into the darkness.” The story follows a young man preparing to enlist during the Vietnam War:

For some, the Vietnam War was about moral duty. For others, it was a son grown too fast and gone. But for Ebo, the war was not about anything, not even killing or

dying. He thought Vietnam might be like Maui, a place too quiet for fear. He thought the war might be a nameless river flowing strong after a heavy rain. If he let it, the war would take him away from Happy Valley to places he’d never been.

The literary journal *Ploughshares* published “Girl of Few Seasons,” which was named a finalist for the O. Henry Award and a juror favorite.

By the time Kondo finished grad school, her husband’s film career was in full swing. He’d written the screenplays for *Top Gun: Maverick* and *The Jungle Book*, directed by Jon Favreau, which grossed nearly \$1 billion worldwide. He had started with FX as a showrunner, the person with creative control over a project. The television network hoped he’d take on something they’d been developing for five years: *Shōgun*.



“*Shōgun* has a very modern message,” says Kondo. “How do we encounter other cultures and people?”

The 1975 novel by James Clavell showcases one of the most dramatic periods in Japanese history. The fictional saga starts in the year 1600 and closely parallels the rise of a real-life samurai, Tokugawa Ieyasu, and the shipwrecked British sailor who becomes one of his vassals. *Shōgun* was first adapted for TV in 1980; the award-winning miniseries starred Richard Chamberlain and Toshiro Mifune and sparked a nationwide trend for all things Japanese: sushi, kimono and martial arts.

Marks wanted nothing to do with it. He worried that the “stranger in a strange land” tale was dated and bogged by tropes. Plus, he was hesitant to appropriate someone else’s culture. “What about me?” Kondo countered. “I’m Japanese.” Together, the couple dug into Clavell’s 1,100-page tome and discovered a propulsive and current story. “*Shōgun* has a very modern message,” says Kondo. “How do we encounter other cultures and people? What do we bring to the table? What do we need to set aside? What do we gain? What do we lose?”

She and Marks wrote the first two episodes together. They’d never collaborated before; they had very

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***Shōgun* turned the spotlight on Japan's rich history and modern talent. "This is the most ambitious production in the history of FX," says the network's chairman John Landgraf. "The incredible beauty and attention to detail the producers devoted to re-creating feudal Japan is just breathtaking."**

different work practices; and Kondo was pregnant with their first daughter, Cora. Thus began their five-year journey to bring medieval Japan into Americans' living rooms. "I don't know how we had the audacity to think we could do it," Kondo laughs. They assembled a team of mostly Japanese writers and producers and consultants, including Eriko Miyagawa and Mako Kamitsuna.

"I thought this might be a very good opportunity to remake this project now," Kamitsuna said in the official *Shōgun* podcast. "To put up the mirror for the Western audience and Western people to look at their own history of dominance and colonization."

Lead actor Hiroyuki Sanada plays Yoshii Toranaga, the strategic samurai who aspires to end centuries of civil

war by uniting fractious lords under an all-powerful shōgun. Sanada also assumed the role of producer on the set, coaching fellow cast members how to walk, sit and hold their swords like samurai. He would regularly jump between his horse and a producer's chair customized to accommodate his extravagant costumes. "Every day for an entire year, he was either in front

of the camera or behind it with us," says Kondo.

Filming took place in British Columbia, where set designers meticulously re-created feudal Japanese fishing villages, castles and battlefields. "It felt like the wettest, most difficult winter in Vancouver history," says Kondo.

The *Shōgun* team paid exacting attention to every detail, from the

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Celebrated actor Hiroyuki Sanada (left) was a power player on and off the set of *Shōgun*, in his role as strategic warlord Toranaga and as co-producer ensuring each scene's authenticity. He and co-star Anna Sawai (right) both won Emmys for their roles in the reinterpretation of James Clavell's 1975 novel.

samurai's elaborate helmets to the oil lamps shedding dim light in the palace's inner chambers. Questions of who belongs and what shapes one's *shukumei*, or fate, thread through each of the ten action-packed episodes. The scripts, composed in English, were translated to Japanese in Tokyo, then combed over by an expert in medieval Japanese vernacular. Miyagawa and Sanada then worked with each actor to personalize their lines. The resulting dialog was then painstakingly translated back into the English subtitles.

The result is a collaborative tour de force. *Shōgun* is gorgeous, and Kondo's influence can be felt throughout. While remaining faithful to Clavell's text and to history, she and the other writers illuminated the interior lives of the female characters. "That's probably what I'm most proud of," says Kondo. "Showing the women's agency, without seeming untrue to

the time. They were the most creative characters in that world, because they had to figure out how to wield power."

The courtesans Gin and Kiku exhibit a political savvy that sometimes surpasses that of the samurai they serve. The entire plot hangs on the actions of Lady Ochiba and Mariko, whom Kondo chose to portray as childhood friends. "They probably knew of each other," says Kondo of their real-life counterparts. "It's a very, very exclusive world," she says. "So, what if their choices later in life were motivated by the fact that they cared deeply for each other as girls?"

Mariko's character is based on a noblewoman who converted to Catholicism, Hosokawa Gracia, and throughout the series she recites poetry that Gracia composed. Anna Sawai, who plays Mariko, says she drew inspiration not only from Gracia but from Kondo and Kondo's recollections of her grandmother.

Tucked within *Shōgun*'s palace intrigue is a tribute to Kondo's father: the pigeons Toranaga uses to communicate with his spies. "My dad raised pigeons since he was nine," Kondo says. "In my mind he was the de facto pigeon consultant."

By the time *Shōgun* premiered in February 2024, Kondo had given birth to a second daughter. She and Marks had devoted a significant stretch of their lives to this production. "It was a big gamble," she says. "It's a huge show and it cost so much money. We didn't even know if anybody would watch this."

Not only did people watch *Shōgun*, they filmed TikToks of themselves reacting to each new episode. "It's mesmerizing to watch," says Kondo. "Especially when you know what's going to happen." One character's death

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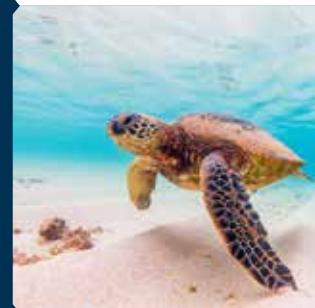
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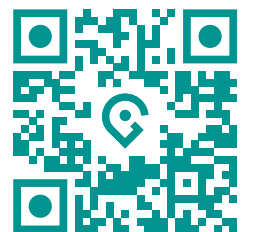






PHOTO COURTESY KATIE YU/FX

For her first foray into television production, Kondo had to rely on intuition. “You get the dailies every day, the first cut of one that’s been edited and whatnot, while you’re filming three and four. You can start to see what you have, but you have to just do a gut check and trust that it’s good.” Sawai (above) credited Kondo as an inspiration for her character, Lady Mariko.

particularly infuriated viewers. “I have never seen people angrier,” she says. Passion pays off in the entertainment biz. *Time* magazine claimed that this new iteration of *Shōgun* “is not a remake so much as a radical reimagining ... a genuine masterpiece.” The series received twenty-five Emmy nominations—more than any other show that year—and won eighteen, the most ever for a single season of a television series. Nearly everyone involved in the production got a nod. Kondo got three—as co-creator of the outstanding drama along with Marks, and as the writer of episodes one and nine. After Marks finished filming episode ten, one of his bosses asked, Could this story continue? Marks shook his head. “The sets are gone. We’d have to build them again from scratch.” Which is exactly what they’re now doing. *Shōgun* proved so popular that FX extended the limited miniseries into a

full-fledged drama with two forthcoming seasons. This time Kondo and Marks don’t have Clavell’s novel as source material—but they do have history. The pair recently returned from a research trip to Japan, which coincided with Kondo’s birthday. The *Shōgun* cast surprised her with a karaoke party. Tokuma Nishioka, who plays beloved general Hiromatsu, performed a song he wrote while the karaoke screen broadcast his face. Next up was Eita Okuno—Toranaga’s treacherous half brother—who danced and played air guitar. Then came Yuko Miyamoto, the courtesan Gin, with a surprise rendition of Japanese opera. “It was incredible,” says Kondo. In 2022 she and Marks moved to Maui to be closer to her family. Her childhood friend Destin Daniel Cretton enlisted her help with a summer film lab for Maui high school students. Remarkably, Cretton and Kondo followed

parallel paths: They both came from Evangelical families, attended Maui High and Point Loma Nazarene University and emerged as major talents in Hollywood. Cretton, an award-winning filmmaker, couldn’t be prouder of Kondo. “I think *Shōgun* is perfect television. What she and Justin pulled off was mind-boggling. It is a bit of an out-of-body experience to watch a piece of art created by somebody that you know quite well and just be genuinely blown away,” he says. “And yet when you speak to Rachel, she’s so grounded and gracious and self-deprecating.” Kondo is now busily writing new episodes of *Shōgun*. She’s got two other projects simmering as well: a collection of short stories exploring the history of the Hāmākua Ditch on Maui and a TV comedy featuring two brothers vying for a seat on the Maui County Council. That’s good news for her growing fan base. Because as it turns out, audiences can’t get enough of Rachel-Too-Much. **hh**

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# Endurance

Twelve of the world's top long-distance swimmers set out to circumnavigate Maui for science, ocean health and just to see if they could



**Off the remote southeast coastline of Maui,** about an hour out of Kihei, our little boat ramps off an open ocean swell, lofted by forty-knot winds. I hold onto the cabin's roof and brace for impact.

"Slow it down a little more, Bozo!" hollers Robby Seeger, founder of Epic Swim Maui. "We can't break all this camera gear on the last day!" We're in an escort boat struggling alongside some of the world's most renowned open-ocean endurance swimmers on the last leg of the first circumnavigation of a Hawaiian Island. The ten remaining swimmers are about to close the 134-mile loop around Maui, tackled in thirteen segments over the past three weeks.

I am certainly under no illusions about the challenges of open-ocean endurance, a.k.a. ultramarathon swimming, but with swells this big and winds fraying the deep blue sea to denim, all I can think is, "They're swimming in *this*?"

That, and, "Is our captain's name really 'Bozo?'"

Seeger hangs onto the cabin and stares at the ocean, frowning. We're nearly at the finish line of an event he's been planning for years, and the conditions couldn't be worse. The swimmers tried to finish yesterday, crawling nearly six straight hours for more than eleven miles, from Pu'uiki to Kaupō, before they were pulled from the water when a tiger shark arrived to scope them out.

"It's like we're pushing a mower through a cane field!" Seeger yells over the roar of the twin outboard motors and gale-force winds. I hear a hint of his German accent, the nation of his youth, before he moved to Maui at 17 and became a two-time world champion windsurfer and big-wave surfer.

Seeger explains over the roar of the engines that this "expedition swim" (his term) is not only the first of its kind anywhere on Earth but also a UNESCO Ocean Decade-sanctioned event that blends endurance swimming with ocean science. Epic Swim Maui describes itself

as "a call to action for ocean health," which they heed by conducting research off this very boat to collaborating with Native Hawaiian elders to community activations ... there's a lot happening around it. Calling it an "expedition" is apt: The swimmers are boldly stroking where (probably) no one has stroked before. And like many expeditions, Epic Swim delves into the unknown, with all its danger and uncertainty.

After negotiating the barrage of swells, we arrive in the waters off Kaupō, where I glimpse the remaining ten swimmers stroking nearly in unison downcurrent, escorted by the world's foremost big-wave safety specialists riding jet skis—watermen like Archie Kalepa, Mark Pukini and Kurtis Chong Kee—who guide the swimmers away from exposed reef and cranky currents. A speargun-wielding Sam Young cruises beneath the swimmers, propelled by military-issue underwater "jet boots" and scanning for apex predators and keeping tabs on unruly currents and eddies.

While the swimmers appear to be in a Zen-like state of slow-mo focus, some of them a mere two feet behind the other, drafting like race car drivers in the lead swimmer's wake, the water safety team is getting lickings, the relentless winds whipping their rescue sleds up onto their backs and heads, "rat-trapping" them as the expression goes.

Captain Bozo slows us down to a near idle while Seeger focuses a RED camera on the group. His partners and Epic Swim co-founders and filmmakers Stefan Schaefer and Rudy Castorina are getting footage for a documentary series about the event, and Seeger knows an added angle always helps. Waves crash cinematically onto cliffs twenty feet from the swimmers, sending spray over their backs, the mist creating rainbows in the mid-morning light. An 'iwa (frigate bird) soars over the pod. Beyond, Haleakalā reaches into the sky, half-hidden in the clouds.

Staring into the viewfinder, Seeger shakes his head and exclaims, "C'mon ... tell me this *isn't* sexy!"



OPENING SPREAD / "Adventure brings people together," says Epic Swim Maui founder Robby Seeger. "And there was definitely no shortage of it during this expedition, swimming off sections of Maui where maybe no one's ever swam."

TOP / A dentist in Egypt and the only endurance swimmer in his nation, Epic Swim Maui participant Mostafa Zaki swam across the Red Sea in 2022 to spotlight the effects of climate change on coral reefs.

BOTTOM / Epic Swim participants celebrate the completion of their circumnavigation of Maui: 134 miles over the course of thirteen days within a period of three weeks.

FACING PAGE / "What was super funny to all of us on the water safety team is that those gnarly, windy days that were the most challenging for us—those were the swimmers' favorite days," laughs Mark Pokini, a water safety specialist who accompanied Epic Swim Maui. "I've never seen people swim like that together in sync. It was a thing to behold."







**Astonishing as the feats of endurance swimmers are,** they are mostly unknown by the non-swimming world. In April 2007 a 52-year-old Slovenian man named Martin Strel completed an astounding 66-day, 3,273-mile journey by swimming the length of the Amazon. Strel had previously swum the length of the Mississippi, Danube and Yangtze rivers, among others. Ever heard of him? Most haven't.

Watching the obscure documentary film about Strel's swim of the Amazon, *Big River Man*, Seeger became fascinated by endurance swimmers. It was a pivotal time in Seeger's life, years after his big-wave exploits at Jaws—followed by more at Nazaré, Portugal, in the mid-2000s—and he was looking for a new adventure. He wondered if it'd be possible to swim around the island of Maui. Seeger felt it'd be a feat that Native Hawaiian swimming legend and father of modern-day surfing Duke Kahanamoku would be proud of, which is why "In Honour of Duke Kahanamoku the Original Waterman" is technically part of Epic Swim Maui's full name.

"What we do," says Ryan Leong, "it will never *not* be fringe," A former triathlete turned endurance swimmer from Kailua, O'ahu, Leong is one of the leading athletes in Epic Swim Maui. "It's tough to identify with open-ocean endurance athletes. A lot of that comes down to having the support necessary for these types of swims. But I do it because I love being in the ocean. From sharks and bottlenose dolphins to eagle rays and monk seals, you never know what you're gonna see out there. It's never boring for me. But for someone watching, it's probably a little like watching paint dry."

He's not wrong. It's slow. Grueling. It's only the crawl, and, I note, they don't kick but keep their legs stationary and buoyant, like a rudder, to conserve energy. With ultramarathon swimming, you're not trying to get there fast; you're just trying to get there.

And much as Seeger finds it sexy, endurance swimming will never have the mass appeal of other high-octane ocean sports like surfing. It's just a different type of human who's willing to swim for eight hours at a time, usually alone, one deliberate stroke at a time. Many of these

swims, like the channel crossings of the Oceans Seven, a premier ultramarathon swimming challenge consisting of seven open-water channel swims around the world (the swimming equivalent of the Seven Summits mountaineering challenge), begin in the pitch black of night. Swimmers don't get back on the boat to eat or drink but remain in the water for "feedings," where the support team will toss them water, energy gels, fruit or hydration packs that can be consumed in the water. The Epic Swim support team conducted these feedings every forty-five minutes for all thirteen swim days of the expedition.

Thus, when the swimmers round the headland into the calm, translucent waters of Nu'u Landing, three weeks and 134 miles after hopping into the seas off Hāna, there is no fanfare or news crews clamoring for interviews, no choppers above nor even many cheering bystanders on land. In the van on our way back to Wailea, where the swimmers are staying, the youngest member of the expedition, John "Kalei" Clark, a great-grandnephew of Duke Kahanamoku, shows me the response from a friend he's just texted about completing a swim around Maui: Liar.

Regardless of whether anyone is paying attention, these are extraordinary athletes. Only thirty-two swimmers have completed the Oceans Seven, and five of them joined Epic Swim. One of them, Andy Donaldson, has multiple world records, two for completing all seven channel crossings in under a year—and faster than anyone before him. Sarah Ferguson swam around Rapa Nui (Easter Island) nonstop for over nineteen hours and has crawled along a decent portion of the South African coastline. Yvette Tete swam the length of the 450-kilometer Volta River in Ghana. Mustafa Zaki swam across the Red Sea. Barbara Hernandez Huerta holds a world record for swimming distances in minus two degrees Celsius waters off Antarctica. Sarah Thomas is the first person to complete a four-lap crossing of the English Channel, fifty-four hours and ten minutes of nonstop swimming—a year after surviving triple-negative breast cancer.

These aren't just different athletes, they are different humans.



ABOVE / **"Some sections were incredibly challenging,"** says Croatian swimmer Dina Levačić, who holds the world record as the youngest woman ever to complete the Oceans Seven challenge. **"But endurance swimming—the challenge is probably 90 percent mental. You have to be mentally tough."**

FACING PAGE / **"The human potential is even greater than I thought,"** says local waterman Sam Young, pictured escorting the swimmers wearing military-issue "jet boots" around his waist. **"When they swam from Nu'u Landing to La Pérouse—that completely blew my mind. I just couldn't believe a human could swim that in one go. The currents, how rough it was—it was inspiring and incredible to witness."**

FOLLOWING PAGE / **"Open-ocean swimming is one of those few places where you can be alone with your thoughts,"** says Scottish swimmer Andy Donaldson, seen here setting the pace off Maui. **"There's no phone, no music—you're fully immersed in the ocean, often in a meditative flow state. And you stay there as long as you can until you reach point B."**

**"I'm not chasing accomplishments,"** Leong says. "I'm looking for experiences." We're talking after the finale on the sun-parched earth at Nu'u while I mingle with the very elated and very relieved swimmers cracking beers and downing the flutes of champagne. Leong, like many of these swimmers, sports a reverse raccoon's mask suntan from his









**“A huge driving factor for me coming on this expedition was that science and sport came together,” says South African endurance swimmer Sarah Ferguson, who advocates for the reduction of single-use plastics. Part of Epic Swim involved data collection for science projects aimed at protecting the oceans. “Hopefully, what’s learned about microplastics through this event can educate and create policy change,” she says.**

swim goggles. “More mainstream sports like Ironman and marathon running ... it’s a sticker on a car. This, however—it’s hard to repeat anything in the ocean because it’s always changing. So, even if you’re the fastest person from here to there, the ocean currents and conditions might not care about that. Some goal-oriented people can’t handle the ocean’s ‘unknown factor.’”

On the eleventh day of swimming, for example, not long after hanging a right out of Hāna, conditions nearly broke the strongest of the pod. Winds whipped and swells rebounded off the sea cliffs, the backwash continually breaking their formation and disorienting the swimmers. Donaldson, the main pacesetter among the athletes, became nauseated and dizzy. They found themselves caught in a relentless current, and after nearly an hour realized they’d barely gone a kilometer.

“That ... was demoralizing,” says Dina Levačić, shaking her head as if to rid it of the memory. The Croatian holds the record as the youngest woman ever to complete the Oceans Seven challenge. The others around her groan at the flashback. “You could see a certain rock beneath us while we were swimming, and it was like, ‘Why can’t we pass this rock!?’”

“Your mind can go to some pretty dark places sometimes if you let it, and endurance swimming is mostly mental,” adds Stefan Reinke, an attorney

from O’ahu and the eldest of the Epic swimmers at 63. Inducted into Hawai’i’s Swimming Hall of Fame in 2021, Reinke has completed fifteen channel crossings in the Islands.

“When your mind starts to wander, it’s like you’re trapped in a cage out in the ocean and you can’t escape it,” laughs Donaldson. “And it happens. I once swam from Ireland to Scotland—about twenty miles—and all I could think was, ‘I’m so bloody cold.’ Nothing was working. But ... you have a big safety team and support, and what I learned then is that you can’t do it alone. The mind will always give out before the body.”

One of the swimmers, young Marion Joffle of France, an indomitable “ice-swimmer” who’s done races in one-degree Celsius waters off Antarctica and in the Arctic, was sunburned so badly the first day of the expedition that she had to sit out a few sections until her blistered first-degree burns healed some.

Others got their first, painful temporary tattoos courtesy of Hawai’i’s ubiquitous, stinging Portuguese man-of-war, a bit of a rite of passage for beachgoers on the eastern shores of all Hawaiian Islands, really.

Of the fifteen swimmers who started Epic Swim (some of whom dropped in and out of the expedition throughout the three weeks due to scheduling), four swimmers—Donaldson, Leong, Clark and Reinke—completed every segment in its entirety.

**Standing among these men and women** from six different continents, all of them slathered in reef-safe zinc oxide to protect their backs from countless hours of sun exposure, I wonder, Why torture yourself?

Beyond their shared love for swimming, they each have a cause for which their swims raise awareness and funds. Donaldson swims for mental health, an issue he dealt with personally when he didn’t make the Olympics, which he’d always thought was his life’s purpose. Teteh swims to end child labor and advocates against the destructive impact of fast fashion in the textile industry. Ferguson swims to end single-use plastics. Levačić swims for children with developmental disabilities. Hernandez swims through melting icebergs to raise awareness of climate change. Clark swims to end resident drowning in the Islands, which claims an unnecessarily high number of children’s lives in Hawai’i.

What makes Epic Swim Maui different from these causes is that the athletes are doing it as a group. This expedition is the first time a group of ultramarathon swimmers have teamed up for the cause of ocean health, a huge problem to tackle but, like long-distance swims, accomplished by degrees. “You don’t just get from here to Moloka’i overnight,” says Ferguson. “You get there one stroke at a time. You also can’t eliminate single-use plastic in one night. But it’s like, every time you reuse a water bottle and fill it up, or take your own coffee cup, you’re cumulatively facilitating a change. A huge driving factor for me being involved in this is the idea of science and sport coming together to create policy change and educate producers and consumers. That’s a lot more valuable to the world than setting records.”

“Really, swimming is just the blunt object for all this,” Leong adds. “It’s using sport to bring interest and people in, but then it’s merely the platform for the science and cultural aspects we explore to help raise awareness for ocean health.”

Scientists and their teams from Europe, North America and the University of Hawai’i followed the swimmers on boats, taking samples and conducting citizen science projects all over the island. The turtle’s pace of swimming afforded the researchers more





time at sea, and at various sites where the swimmers camped, scientists spoke with local fishermen and community elders.

Dimitri Deheyn, research scientist at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, studies microplastics, microfibers and how their proliferation affects us. The swimmers collected and filtered water samples for his study on microfibers found in the ocean and air. “Unfortunately, microplastics unite us,” Deheyn laments. “This is a global contaminant. Countries can’t really point the finger at each other because it’s now everywhere, so showing that wherever we were in Maui we found them—it’s a crazy, but important truth.”

John Starmer, chief scientist for the Maui Nui Marine Resource Council, was on a boat following the swimmers to test water quality. Starmer had the swimmers wear miniature sensors to measure salinity levels in order to study how variations impact marine life and ecosystem health. Torsten Fischer of Helmholtz-Zentrum Hereon in Germany joined the global PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or “forever chemicals”) study, with the swimmers and crew collecting water samples around Maui. It was the first time Hereon team sampled Pacific waters. “This is the way science should be. Not science for science’s sake, but science for the people,” says Fischer. “The Hawaiian people know much more about their own waters than we do right? So to speak with local fishermen and people who live on the water, that’s such a great source of information. It was great to realize our common goal, which is to keep these waters clean.”

“After the fires on Maui, people from the community started to ask about the water. Is it safe, can we swim, can we eat the fish?” says Andrea Kealoha, a Maui native and assistant professor of oceanography at UH Mānoa. Kealoha conducted water quality studies around Lāhainā following the wildfires of 2023, investigating the impact on local water systems, assessing changes in water quality and identifying contaminants.

Epic Swim Maui connected Kealoha with Helmholtz-Zentrum Hereon and Sea & Sun Technology, which loaned the scientists half a million dollars’ worth of

high-precision sensors reprogrammed for stationary deployment along the Lāhainā coastline and trained Epic Swim staff to support their deployment.

I put it to Kealoha bluntly and ask why this matters—what, if anything, a group of athletes swimming around the island could do to help save it. “I think that the collaboration with Epic Swim Maui allowed for these types of international relationships to develop,” she says, “so we could comprehensively understand the water quality along coastal Maui after the Lāhainā wildfires. We brought together scientists, athletes, the community, industry partners, government, nonprofits. ... You don’t see science being done that way, and it’s a beautiful thing. The more we bring in resources and experts from other places to help us learn about our waters, the better it will perpetuate our culture and the longevity of our communities.”

**On a clear summer morning**

drifting out of Mā‘alaea Harbor, I find myself on a boat again, but this time on windless, calm seas in a much larger craft normally reserved for whale-watching tours. Friends, family, remaining scientists and local community members involved in Epic Swim have been invited onto the catamaran to follow and celebrate the swimmers as they do a victory lap around Molokini Crater a couple of miles offshore. Despite the 134 miles they’d done this month, they figure they have another five or so left in the tank.

Beside me the inimitable ‘Anakē Vicky Kaluna-Palafox, or Auntie Vicky to most, allows me into her orbit. A cultural adviser to Epic Swim Maui from Ukumehame by way of Moloka‘i, Auntie Vicky is a warm soul and comic genius. She’s likely to break out with spontaneous oli (chants), songs that seem to bubble up from somewhere beyond, the kind of chants that make time pause and listen.

She holds a Starbucks cup and notices me peering at it longingly. “Hot-grande-sugah-free-vanilla-oat-milk-latte,” she rattles off. “*Every* time, boy.” Her husband quietly peels a ceremonial ti leaf beside her.

At various stops along the way, the group of swimmers—and the scientists following them—met with kūpuna (elders) like Auntie Vicky and other Native Hawaiian figures and advisers within Maui’s twelve different moku (traditional Hawaiian districts), discussing the state of the ocean and coastline off their respective shores, with a healthy dose of Hawaiian history and cultural exchange in the mix.

I ask Auntie Vicky what she thinks about the whole event. She takes a sip, closes her eyes and leans back for emphasis. “What Epic Swim brings is consciousness. They bring awareness to issues like trash around our islands, to microplastics we might breathe. In my eyes they came not only to swim in the ocean, but to do good. You know, I had to explain to the others that they’re not just coming to swim in the ocean fo’ bring tourists. They’re here to mālama and to care for our oceans.

“I wouldn’t be here if I didn’t believe they respected our place,” she shrugs. “It was a big sacrifice. They gave of themselves so unselfishly. Full focus, full discipline ... so that kine respect we see. Put ‘um dis way—if they asked me fo’ do ‘um again, I would hana hou [repeat] dis in a *flash*.”

Then, without warning, Auntie Vicky rises and walks starboard, chanting in Hawaiian over the bodies of the swimmers approaching the gorgeous crescent-shaped rock poking up from the sea in front of us.

“These guys, they’re the unsung heroes,” says Seeger, pointing to the pod of men and women in bright swim caps, slowly making their way through the sea. “The basis of all watermanship is being a good swimmer. Duke Kahanamoku knew it and demonstrated that in multiple Olympics and at home. Inspiration or mentor, when you tell a story about Hawai‘i and the water, there really is no story without him. He’s the basis of why every single water sport here has continued to exist, and honoring the Duke really was an extra motivation for these guys.”

“You can ride a fifty-foot wave,” he says, “but if you’re not a strong swimmer, you’re not a waterman. And these are the strongest swimmers in the world.” **hh**





# The Things You See in Waikīkī

Scenes from the street, sidewalk and sand



**T**im Huynh didn't know anything about street photography in 2010. He was interning as a video editor in Chicago when he came across the work of Vivian Meyers, whose images of New York and Chicago in 1950s and '60s were discovered in a storage locker and posted online. Meyers' "very documentary, candid street photography style was inspiring," says Huynh. "I thought, 'This looks easy. I have my camera, I'm in Chicago ... I can do this.'" Not so easy after all: People don't always take kindly to camera-toting randos, as he discovered the next day. "It was so hard to do photography in public without permission," he says. "I didn't know what I was doing, but I enjoyed the challenge."

Huynh returned home to O'ahu, where he was born and raised, and found that there wasn't much out there in the way of Hawai'i street photography. So he roamed Chinatown and Waikiki, places with high foot traffic and a plethora of weird, where a budding street photographer might blend in well enough to shoot on the downlow. He found both color and cover in Waikiki, where someone snapping away with a camera isn't unusual. "It's a special place—the different characters, the tourists, locals ... there are a lot of options."

Through the quiet of the pandemic, when locals recaptured one of the world's most visited beaches, to the return of tourists with their floaties and radiant sunburns, Huynh has wandered Waikiki's streets and strands for his ongoing street photography project.



















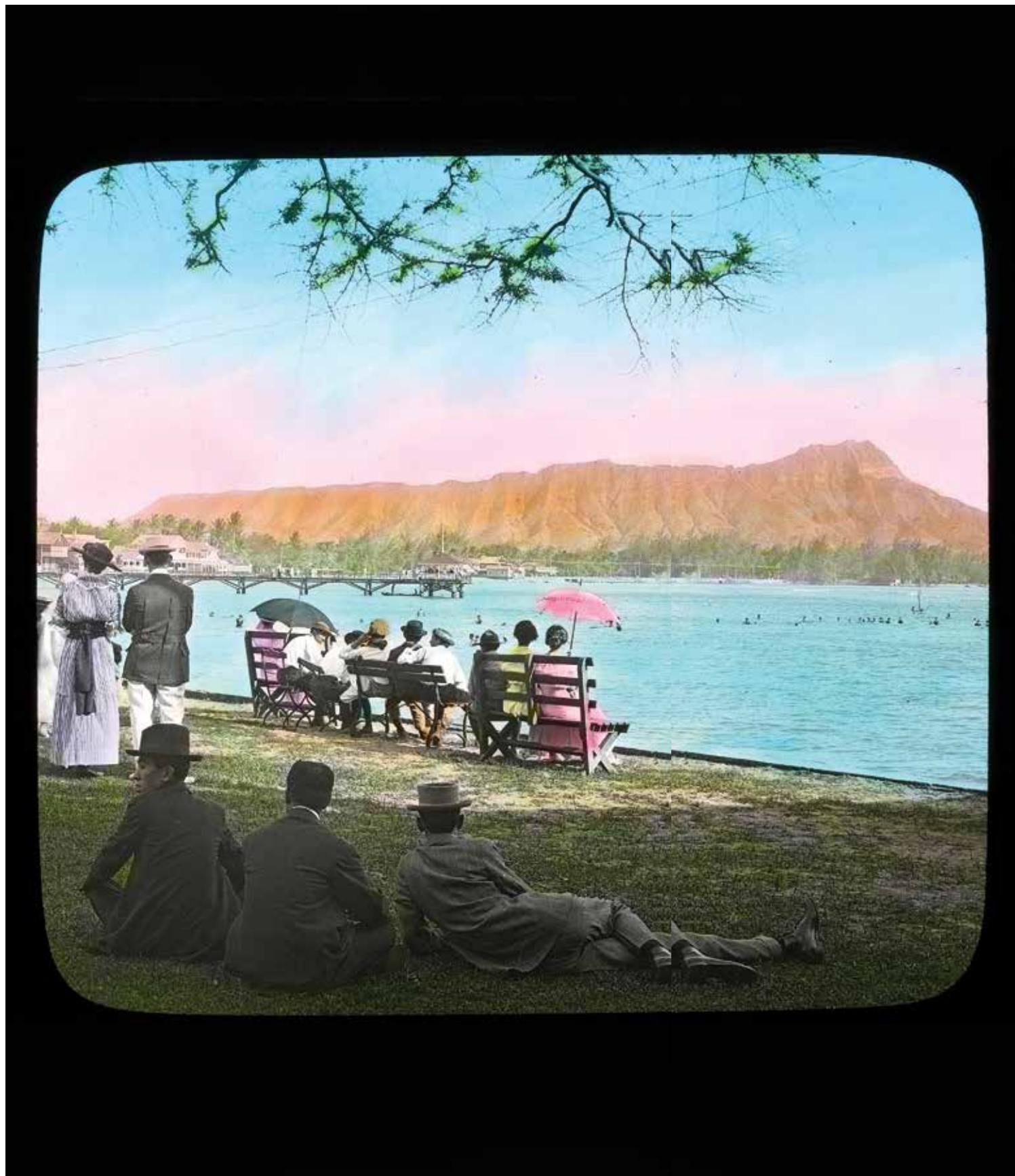


## Seaside Reverie

Revisiting a forgotten Waikīkī landmark a century after its closure

**T**here's a street in Waikīkī named Seaside Avenue, which does its best to keep alive the memory of its namesake, a once-loved Honolulu institution called the Seaside Hotel. A century has passed since the Seaside's last guests checked out and bulldozers rolled in to clear the way for the much grander Royal Hawaiian Hotel. The Royal Hawaiian is going strong, but the Seaside—despite Seaside Avenue's efforts—is long forgotten. In its day, though, the Seaside was a world-renowned resort and a local hot spot where townsfolk flocked for fun.

When the hotel opened in 1899, Waikīkī was still out in the country, with



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KAHALA MALL  
KAILUA VILLAGE SHOPS  
NORTH SHORE MARKETPLACE  
HILTON HAWAIIAN VILLAGE  
KA MAKANA ALI'I  
WAIKIKI BEACH WALK

KAUAI  
THE SHOPS AT KUKUI'ULA  
HAWAII  
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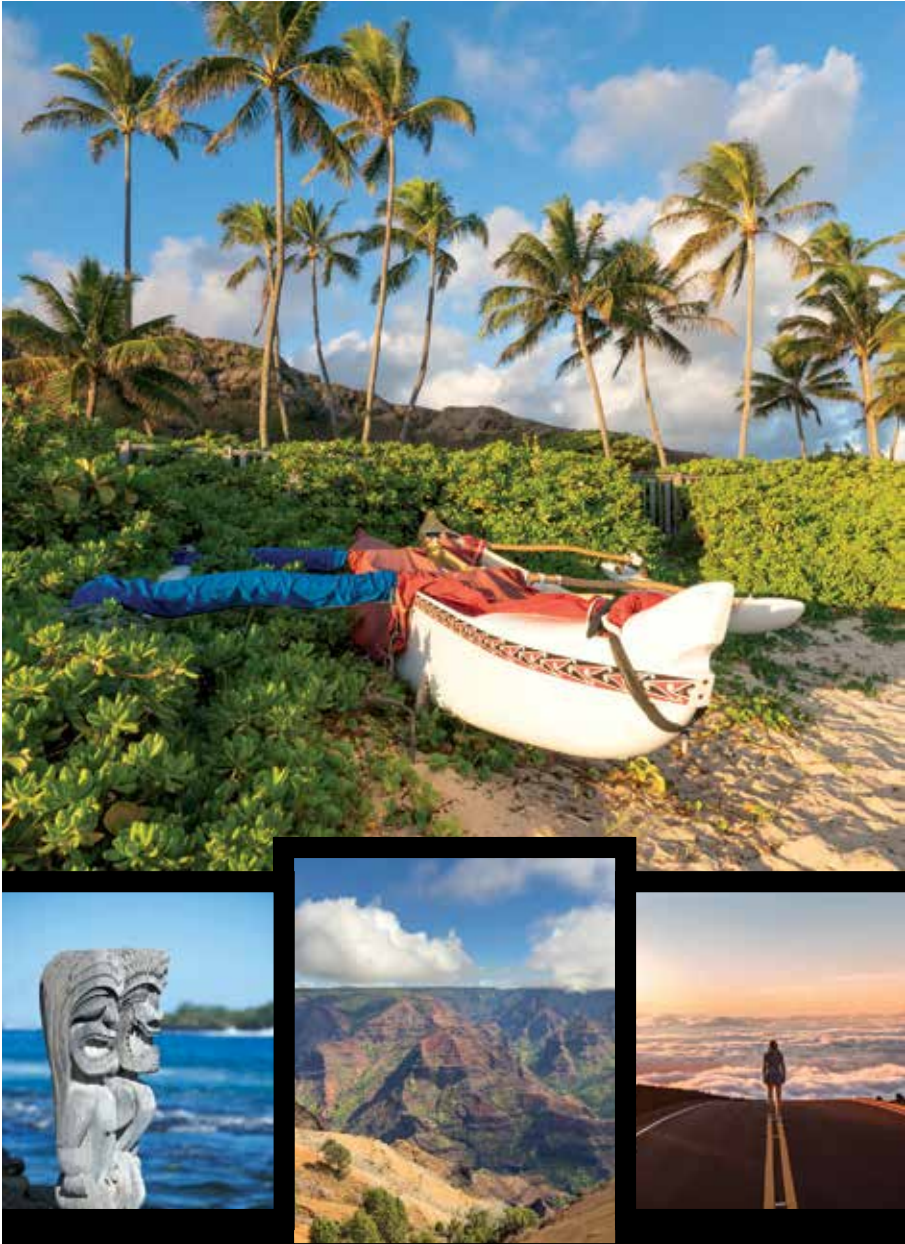
From 1899 until 1925, the Seaside Hotel on Waikiki Beach catered to guests from faraway places and townspeople alike. Above: Beachgoers look seaward beside the hotel's bathhouse, with its two-story lanai extending over the water. Opening page: Dressed in their Sunday best, local kids relax on the hotel's lawn.

more mosquitoes than people and duck ponds everywhere but not a single ABC Store. Farm shacks, rice paddies, lo'i kalo (taro patches) and banana groves abounded inland, while stately beach homes and a few public bathhouses lined the shore. People traveled by horse-drawn vehicle or aboard the electric trolley. The crowing of roosters and the odor of pigs rode on the trade winds. By the time the Seaside's lease expired in 1925, the creation of the Ala Wai Canal had diverted Waikiki's streams, drying up the wetlands and driving off the farmers. Housing tracts were springing up all around, and

automobiles zoomed along newly carved streets. More visitors were coming to Hawai'i than ever, and Waikiki had outgrown what the quaint, turn-of-the-century Seaside could provide. Little has been written about the Seaside since it disappeared from Waikiki Beach one hundred years ago, but a chronicle of its lively quarter-century run can be found in thousands of contemporaneous newspaper items. I went down that rabbit hole while working on a book about the stories behind Waikiki's street names, a project riddled with rabbit holes. I wasn't expecting to find much behind Seaside

Avenue's prosaic name, but boy, was I wrong. And boy, did I spend too much time burrowing into the newspaper archives and poring over historic photos, guest narratives and fire insurance maps. I came away with an image of the Seaside Hotel as an idyllic place unlike anything seen in Waikiki since—a rustic forerunner to the clamorous high-rise hotel district of today, a deep breath before the onrush of modern Hawai'i. Island residents went there for beach access, concerts, "jolly Saturday evening dances" and special occasions of all sorts. Visitors found many of the same things that delight Waikiki's

visitors today: hula, surfing, lū'au, Hawaiian music, outrigger canoe rides, contemplating Diamond Head while lounging beneath a hau tree with a cocktail in hand. The hotel even pioneered Waikiki's fireworks shows—or tried, anyway. In the summer of 1907 the management announced plans to launch Roman candles, "giant rockets" and other pyrotechnic devices from outrigger canoes riding toward shore in the dark. This drew an extra-large crowd to one of the jolly Saturday evening dances. "Unfortunately," as the *Hawaiian Star* reported, "heavy surf



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Accommodations at the Seaside included tent cabins, single rooms for men, weathered shacks from King Kamehameha V's time, and Queen Anne-style cottages built by the hotel. Above: the old beach house that housed the hotel's reception area, office, bar and dining lānai, which doubled as a dance pavilion.

filled the canoes, wetting the fireworks so that the display was not the success that had been hoped. ... Everyone had a thoroughly good time, however."

**The Seaside was a cottage-style hotel**, a patchwork of low buildings spread over nearly ten palm-shaded acres. It started out as the beach addition to a prominent downtown hotel, the original Royal Hawaiian Hotel, and was initially called the Hotel Annex. It was renamed in 1906 after striking out on its own. The owners held a naming contest, expecting someone to suggest Seaside Hotel. But nobody did, so they kept the \$10 prize and went with the name they had in mind all along.

A historic coconut grove covered most of the property, with some massive kiawe (mesquite) trees dappling sunlight across the beachside lawn. Helumoa is the traditional name for the place, and for most of Hawai'i's history it served

as home for the island's ruling ali'i (chiefs). Part of King Kamehameha I's fearsome fleet of war canoes landed there during his conquest of O'ahu, and Kamehameha made his residence there. For his descendants, down to Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, whose estate still owns the land, Helumoa served as a beach retreat.

The Seaside offered a rustic and slightly more affordable alternative to the palatial Moana Hotel, which opened in 1901, a short walk down the beach. Accommodations at the Seaside included some of the weathered shacks where royal retainers once slept, as well as some Victorian-style cottages the hotel built among the palms. At the beach edge of the property, built partly over the water, stood a boxy, two-story bathhouse. Painted red with a green hip roof, it was a conspicuous coastal landmark. The upstairs had rooms for single men; the downstairs had changing rooms, showers, lockers

and bathing suit rentals. A wet early-twentieth-century bathing suit could weigh as much as a soaked blanket, so rentals were the norm.

A rambling one-story building housed the hotel's office, reception hall, kitchen, bar, private dining room and open-air dining lānai. This building had been there long before the hotel's time and was, apparently, the old royal beach house. The hotel added a spacious, semicircular dining lānai. With tables and chairs removed, and wax shavings sprinkled on the floor, the lānai doubled as a dance pavilion. Musicians set up beneath an adjacent hau tree arbor, alternating Hawaiian melodies with waltzes, reels, Tin Pan Alley hits or whatever else pleased the crowd.

The Seaside wasn't the only venue in Waikiki for "beach dances," but its dance pavilion was especially popular. "Open to the sea, swept by cool valley breezes, brilliantly illuminated, and with a perfect floor and entrancing music, no

place in Honolulu can equal the pavilion as a ballroom," wrote the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* in 1906. The contrast between the pavilion's warm glow and the many dark nooks and tête-à-tête corners tucked throughout the grounds added to the allure.

Many of the earliest dances were formal affairs attended by the military officers from the troop transport ships traveling between the West Coast and the Philippines in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War. Honolulu high society turned out in force to mingle with the soldiers, who arrived in their dress whites, often accompanied by their regimental bands.

Dances grew more egalitarian as the century progressed. In the 1920s, when other big hotels announced in the newspapers their prohibitions on certain popular but provocative dances, the Seaside did not. Couples were free there, it seems, to dance cheek to cheek or do the shimmy without getting a tap on the shoulder from the management.

**The Seaside was well suited for crowds.** When townspeople headed en masse to Waikiki for a big event or holiday, they knew the Seaside would have refreshments, bathing suits, lockers to store their valuables and comfortable seating on the front lawn (sometimes called the sward). The *Hawaiian Star* described the moonlit scene of a brass band concert in 1904: "The wide lawns were covered with people of all ages and those who could not find seats on the sward, lined the little sea wall or took even more comfortable poses on the coral sands of the beach. The buildings and trees all sparkled with electric lights and when the moon passed above the threatening clouds the scene was not soon to be forgotten."

During the 1913 Mid-Pacific Carnival, when thousands of people jammed Waikiki Beach to watch a reenactment of the landing of Kamehameha and his warriors, the Seaside reserved the shady seating on its sward for women, offering them respite from the crush of spectators roasting in the sun. When Fort DeRussy test-fired an enormous fourteen-inch gun in 1914, hurling rounds at a target seven miles offshore, the Seaside invited everyone to witness the "spectacular

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With the Seaside’s bathhouse in the background, hula dancers and spear-wielding warriors took part in the 1913 reenactment of King Kamehameha I’s landing at Waikiki, when his armies invaded O’ahu in 1795. Thousands crowded the beach to watch. The Seaside sold refreshments and reserved the seating on its shady lawn for women.

military big-gun drill” from its grounds, free of charge.

When six hundred Shriners and their families swarmed Honolulu in 1911, the Seaside threw a lū’au. Honolulu Mayor Joseph Fern gave one of the opening speeches, addressing the fez-wearing crowd entirely in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i (the Hawaiian language). “He arose and spoke in his most fluent Hawaiian, his mother tongue,” the *Hawaiian Gazette* reported. “The words spilled from his lips like honey and it seemed Mayor ‘Joe’ believed himself in the midst of a political gathering and that it was time to make votes.” The good-natured Shriners couldn’t understand a word, but they appreciated the sentiment and gave Fern a heartfelt round of applause.

The Seaside’s manager then was Cecilia Arnold, who had once been part of Queen Emma Kalanikaumaka’amano Kaleleonālani Na‘ea Rooke’s retinue and was a talented lū’au planner. The Shriners’ lū’au was a small thing compared with

the Seaside’s 1909 lū’au for a visiting congressional delegation. A thousand invitations were issued, yet somehow eighteen hundred people showed up.

The bill of fare included twenty-seven pigs, fifteen hundred mullet, twenty-four large ‘ula’ula (red snapper), three hundred coconuts, thirty-five gallons of taro with coconut milk, twelve gallons of sweet potato and coconut juice, ten gallons of limu (seaweed), five gallons of wana (sea urchin), five gallons of boiled squid, two gallons of raw squid, five gallons of freshwater shrimp, twenty-four chickens, sixty cakes, eighty gallons of beer ... and more. Despite the enormous turnout, there were so many leftovers that hundreds of people returned the next morning to continue eating. “It was assuredly the star luau of local history,” wrote the *Hawaiian Star*.

**Before air travel** put Hawai‘i within a few hours of North America,

the voyage by steamer from San Francisco took nearly a week, and vacations sometimes lasted for months. Newspapers kept tabs on the more illustrious visitors. “The Pillsburys and the Belles of Minneapolis, the great flour manufacturers, have engaged rooms and cottages at the Seaside hotel for six months,” announced the *Evening Bulletin* in 1907, noting that the party was bringing its own “large touring car.”

But some stays at the Seaside were all too brief, like the whirlwind visit of the “Montana Maids” in 1915. As winners of a popularity contest sponsored by the *Butte Miner* newspaper, twenty-one young Montana women embarked on a Western tour, with four days planned in Hawai‘i. Stormy weather put their ship in to Honolulu a day behind schedule, and upon arriving they declared a “strike,” demanding more time in the Islands. “We were promised a six-weeks trip and we want to spend most of it in Hawaii to

learn how to ride the surf boards,” they cabled the newspaper.

But the *Miner* said no, so the women made the most of their abbreviated schedule, attending a ball, touring the Island in automobiles, sipping tea with the mayor and governor and getting lots of ocean time. Olympic swimming champion Duke Kahanamoku—famous then even in Big Sky Country—gave them swimming lessons, and they spent hours canoe surfing with the beach boys. “Talk about riding a cayuse,” one told the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*. “I shall never be content unless my saddle at home is fashioned after an outrigger canoe.”

The Seaside’s guests were forever mingling with members of the Outrigger Canoe Club, separated from the hotel by a picket fence, and Hui Nalu, the club of Hawaiian beach boys, which convened beneath a hau tree at the Moana Hotel. The Outrigger offered visitors temporary memberships for up to three months, and Hui Nalu provided surfing lessons, outrigger canoe surfing and an interface with Hawaiian ways.

Author Jack London stayed at the Seaside in 1907 in a tent cabin—another accommodation option—with his wife, Charmian, and spent two days learning to surf with the beach boys. On the third day he was too sunburned to get out of bed, so he stayed there and wrote his essay on surfing, “A Royal Sport”—“That’s what it is, a royal sport for the natural kings of the earth,” he wrote. Published in the widely circulated *Ladies’ Home Journal*, the piece helped fix surfing in the American mind.

Another celebrity guest at the Seaside in 1907 was Alice Roosevelt Longworth, eldest daughter of President Theodore Roosevelt. For years the American public had been captivated by Alice, whose antics as an attention-starved child in the White House led a family friend to describe her as “a young wild animal that had been put into good clothes.” She had grown into a refined young woman, albeit one whom Charmian London described as “refreshingly unbound by convention.” At a time when women did not use tobacco, for instance, at least not publicly, Alice smoked up a storm wherever she pleased.

“We led a completely indolent existence in Honolulu,” Alice later wrote, “in and out of the ocean all day



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Painted red with a green roof and well lit at night, the Seaside’s bathhouse was a prominent landmark visible far from shore. By the time it was demolished in 1925 to make way for the construction of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, it was about to collapse on its own.

and a good deal of the night.” The two-story, shingled cottage where she stayed with her newlywed husband, the Ohio congressman Nicholas Longworth, henceforth became known as the Alice Roosevelt Longworth Cottage.

Years later, after Nicholas had become speaker of the House and the Seaside was no more, the *Honolulu Mercury* recalled an episode from the honeymoon. One night, as a Hawaiian quintet played beneath the hau arbor, and Alice “sat on the lawn apart from the throng and smoked cigarette after cigarette,” Nicholas “edged within the charmed circle of musicians, smilingly

took the violin from one of the players and at once began to use the bow with veteran skill.” Amazed bystanders were soon on the floor dancing with abandon. “Old timers still ask whether it was Nicholas or the dancers who derived the greater enjoyment out of that unusual night at Waikiki.”

**By the time the Seaside was bulldozed in 1925**, its old bathhouse looked like it might collapse on its own. The opening of the Royal Hawaiian in 1927, which practically doubled the number of hotel rooms in

Waikiki, marked the beginning of a new era. Twelve hundred people attended the opening-night gala—not quite as many as the Seaside’s 1909 mega-lū’au had drawn, but a good turnout. Between dinner and dancing, the crowd turned toward the sea to watch another reenactment of Kamehameha’s landing at Waikiki.

“For a while the curtain of time was drawn back and there was revealed in resplendent color ... a living picture of ancient Hawaii,” wrote the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*. “Then the curtain dropped back into place. From somewhere in the distance came the strains of a fox trot, and, as the spectators moved

toward the ballroom, modern Hawaii returned to claim her own.”

A couple of weeks earlier, the street names for a new subdivision across Kalākaua Avenue from the Royal Hawaiian had been chosen: Royal Hawaiian Avenue and Seaside Avenue, which remain in use today. Some of the old Seaside’s cottages had been hauled across the street to create a new hotel at the corner of Seaside and Kalākaua. It was also called the Seaside Hotel, but it was just a shadow of the original. The curtain of time had dropped on that one, and modern Hawai’i wasn’t looking back. **hh**



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## Words on the Street

Peter Capriotti's signs might be Maui's most recognizable works of art

**A**rt in museums is one thing—you can spend all day gazing at it once you're inside. However, a lot of good art is outside, on the street. There, a viewer driving by at thirty mph catches only a glimpse, and that's all the time a roadside artist gets to make an impression.

Peter Capriotti of Ha'ikū, Maui—his friends call him “Capri”—knows how to tell a story in a glimpse. People say that he makes signs. But the word “sign” is a bit reductive, suggesting little more than stark instructions. Who thinks of “RAISED X-WALK” as art? Capri is surely an artist, one of the most viewed and also probably least recognized artists







“First I carve it,” says Maui sign maker Peter “Capri” Capriotti, seen above and on the title page. “Then three coats of high-quality primer, like painting a car. Then I paint the details. Nobody does the craft anymore. Nobody does gold leaf anymore.” Capri’s signs are some of the most recognizable works of art on the Valley Isle, often outlasting the places for which he created them.

on Maui, but what he makes goes beyond aesthetics. Capri makes symbols.

Take for example his Historic Wailuku sign, standing on a grassy median. Drivers entering Wailuku from (less historic) Kahului see its two-inch-thick clear heart redwood, sand-carved and painted boldly on both sides, against the backdrop of a spreading flame tree and an overhead bridge that suggests a portal into the old Maui capital. The shape is curvaceous (“I try to get away from square signs,” says Capri), and its white and sky-blue colors shine regardless what the weather might be.

The image depicts Wailuku as a row of single-story shops anchored by the antiquated spire of a missionary church. It disregards the actual fortress-like bulk of the county courthouse and the dull tower where the mayor’s office sits, taller than any other structure on the island. In other words, this isn’t just a sign.

“Artist, sculptor, goldsmith, master craftsman,” Capri calls himself. “I started painting signs in grade school. I was

a kid who didn’t do anything but paint things and make things.” He estimates that during his nearly fifty years on Maui, he’s made a thousand wooden signs and worked with ten tons of redwood. He’s also made the most granite signs in the state, he says. “I developed my own techniques. My signs are absolutely the best quality in the world—three-dimensional signs that have personality, that get somebody’s attention.”

That sounds like a boast, but any driver can stop and test Capri’s claim. For the Wailuku sign, as with all his projects in wood, he planed and joined the foot-wide lumber so neatly that the seams are invisible. He works, as always, with quarter-sawn material with straight, visible grain that resists warping. (If the design calls for it, he’ll join planks with contrasting grains.) “You gotta know how to read the wood,” Capri says.

Then he carved between the design elements, sanding and priming repeatedly. Paint? He always uses automotive acrylic enamel, “the most

durable, and most expensive, paint you can buy.” Then, of course, a piece like this has to be installed. That step requires skills even heftier than carpentry and color. Any good sign maker needs to be a wall builder, a mason, a truck driver and sometimes a heavy equipment operator. “Stone, wood, anything—I’ll blast it,” says Capri. Sometimes he carves HDU, high-density urethane foam, which has the texture of balsa wood. He calls himself a “practical artist.” His creations must stand alone night and day, enduring the exhaust of traffic and the blasts of storms. Above all, he says, “I like to do stuff that lasts.”

Capri’s gallery, so to speak, runs from Kaua’i to Hawai’i Island, but the great majority of his pieces are on Maui, where he has lived since 1975. Residents of Upcountry Maui will recognize at a glance the white lettering on Calasa Garage. This well-preserved relic sits at the bottom of Kula’s most treacherous downhill noodle, Copp Road. The current owner pumps gas when he feels like it. Capri’s lettering still looks new.

Most Upcountry residents, though, have likely never seen “The Pinnacle,” Capri’s award-winning emblem for a gated community of multi-million-dollar homes in Kā’anapali Golf Estates. This eye-smacking signature work, done in gold leaf on a huge slice of black granite, won him a top international award in the monument signs category from *Signs of the Times* magazine. He did the Hertz car rental signs for all the islands, in foam then airbrushed. His “Welcome to Kaua’i” signs at the airport in Lihue are still in good shape. For these, he says, “I carved all the Hawaiian Islands in foam, then airbrushed.”

The list goes on: The entry sign for Bailey House Museum, on the way to ‘Āao Valley State Park, with its vivid, two-tone poi pounder, stands out. His graceful Kulamalu sign, which marks the recent extension of Pukalani toward Maui’s Upcountry high school, is affixed to one of Capri’s sturdy stone walls. The Nāpili Point sign includes a three-dimensional turtle cruising under the waves. The Andaz Resort in Wailea is awash with Capri’s signs. He’s particularly proud of the intricately carved koa surfboard hanging above the resort’s Bumbye Beach Bar.


Alas, though. Unlike the Louvre, Capri’s outdoor venues have a habit of disappearing. The economy shifts. Businesses go bust. The photos in Capri’s scrapbook commemorate many super-cool venues that have gone with the economic wind. You see thirty-foot murals that vanished when popular restaurants went under. The most egregious of these disappointments occurred in a single day, August 8, 2023, when Lāhainā burned to the ground. Capri’s works had once helped to define the very image of Front Street.

**Capri, a grizzled, cowboy-hat-wearing Sicilian Italian** whose personal motto seems to be “I never stop evolving,” transplanted himself to Maui in 1975 at the age of 30. He painted a mural at the Happy Valley Tavern, then worked on Front Street casting gold jewelry. He made friends from Upcountry playing soccer in the local league, then decided that was the place for him. And yet, his heartfelt roots are in New Orleans—by way of Ustica.



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**Lāhainā was Capri’s entry-point to Hawai’i, in 1975. Having some training in jewelry design, he worked casting gold rings at 505 Front Street. Although he resettled Upcountry, in Ha’ikū, Lāhainā remained prime location for his signage, which helped define the town’s character.**

Who’s ever heard of Ustica? It’s a rocky island three miles wide, with no natural source of fresh water, located some three dozen miles north of Palermo, Sicily. Only a thousand people live there. But back in the early 1900s the Ustican population grew too large; hundreds of families chose to emigrate, most to New Orleans. This maternal foundation explains why he cooks Cajun, loves the operatic singing of Mario Lanza and admires jazz entertainer Louis Prima, whose mother was Ustican. Capri keeps a photo of his own mother posted prominently in his house. He remembers her telling him as a young child that he is an artist.

Being the son of a career officer in the US Air Force, a recruiter, Capri was thrust into extreme situations. He spent high school years in Wiesbaden, Germany, then was transported to Jackson, Mississippi, for his senior year. This was 1963; he had a mustache, and “there was always a bully wanting to mess with you.” Disgusted by deep-

South racism, he took off, hitchhiking to Washington DC to attend John F. Kennedy’s funeral, then to New York.

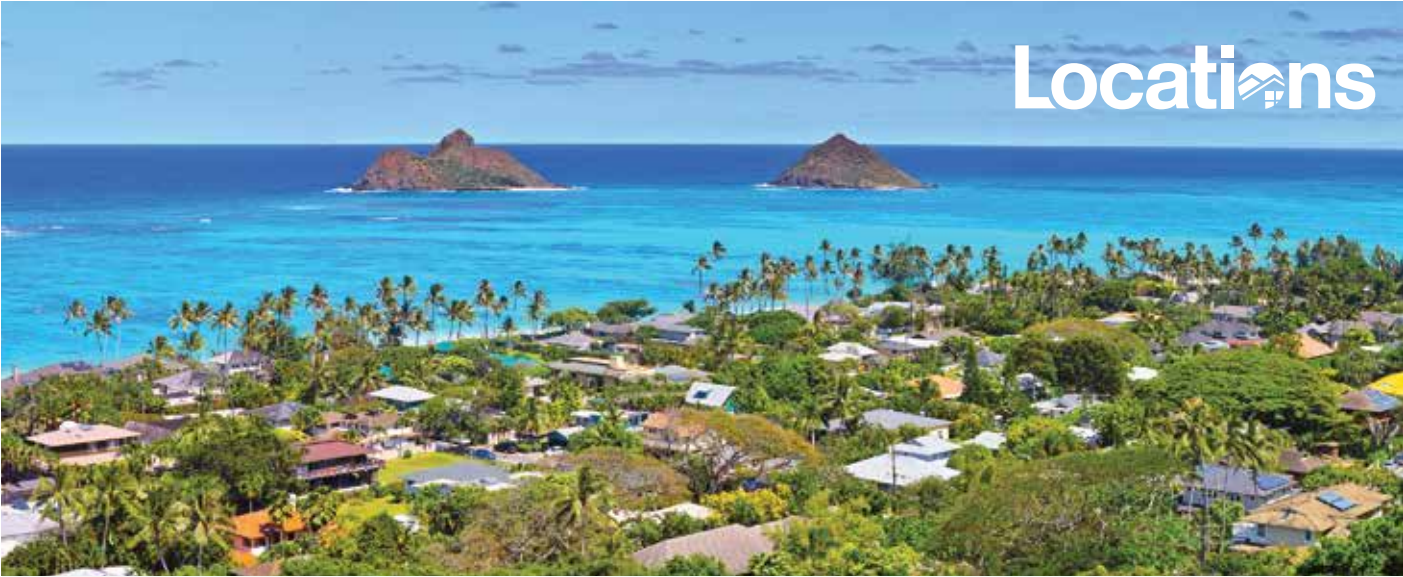
In New York he took on grunt work, took some art classes and saved the money he made working three jobs. By creating some paintings on the tops of blank pizza boxes, he won himself a scholarship to the San Francisco School of Fine Art. So he bought a VW van and drove west. Hey, it was the ‘60s.

One brief anecdote epitomizes his life on the West Coast. When the infamous concert at Altamont Raceway took place in December 1969, Capri worked with San Francisco’s “acid king” Owsley Stanley to put up the Wall of Sound—a massive sound system with speaker cabinets stacked three stories high. “Mick Jagger was scared to death,” he remembers.

Around that same time, as is well known, Maui began to experience a friendly, easygoing emigration of folks from the West Coast, Capri among them. Many of these emigrants

became valuable members of the island community. Capri, for example, has always been a fervent booster of Maui’s welfare. He’s done the St. Jude’s Ride for thirty years, helping to raise funds for the St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Tennessee. He’s been a colorful participant in the annual Makawao Rodeo Parade (often as his alter ego, Zorro), and served as director starting in 1990.

Yet his most enduring achievement as a symbol maker on Maui, as an artist who puts the community’s best intentions in the best light, will be the Hāna Millennium Legacy Trail Marker. A pillar six feet tall, it has stood for twenty-four years now at the zero-mile point on the Hāna Highway. The square figure tapers gently to its flat top, crowned with a stone wrapped in kapa (bark cloth) and standing upright like a flame. The monument is faced with black lava stones brought to the site by Hāna elder Francis Sinenci and a crew of volunteers. The stones represent each of the twenty-two



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The wildfires of August 8, 2023 that destroyed Lāhainā also claimed many of Capri’s iconic signs, like the one Mick Fleetwood is holding for his popular restaurant and nightlife spot, Fleetwood’s on Front Street. The sign barely survived; the restaurant was unfortunately lost.

communities along the famed East Maui route, and Capri, who built the pillar, engraved the stones with the names of each district, from Pā’ia to Kanaio. A sheet of polished granite embedded at the pillar’s summit bears an eye-catching design in patriotic red, white and blue.

The idea of Millennium Trails started in the Clinton White House in the middle of 1999, as the world anticipated the coming drama of the new year. At that point a federal commission selected seventeen historic routes across the continent. But it was only after the turn of the millennium that Capri and others in Hawai’i, including Representative Patsy Mink, sought a designation in the Islands. Aided by many others, particularly the Hāna community and kumu (teacher) Sam Kaai, who blessed the event, Capri took the initiative to get this done.

Twenty years later a second major project was undertaken to link the pillar in Ha’ikū to the other end of the “trail,” to Hāna. The idea was to honor a Native daughter who became, undeniably, one the foremost figures in Hawaiian history:

Ka’ahumanu, who was born in a cave at Hāna Bay.

Capri served as the “producer/director” for the project. Its result is an eight-foot-tall bronze statue of the queen, which stands today on a four-foot stone dais before Ka’uiki Head, the volcanic hill that forms the bay. Although Capri does bronze work, he deferred the actual manufacture to an artist who he knew had the studio and capacity beyond anything in Hawai’i. He went to Thailand.

He’d been visiting Chiang Mai for years. He first went for dental work but ended up enamored of the people and the culture. He says, “I get respect there. They love jazz. Everything is reasonable. The work ethic is incredible.” He discovered the huge but low-tech studio of Pete Santi, where a crew of thirty are constantly producing Buddhist temple figures. “They are so devoted to the craft,” Capri says, and Santi got the commission from the County of Maui. Capri had to make sure the statue looked Hawaiian, not Thai, and that the

figure arrived safely. The people of Hāna provided the appropriate welcome.

He’s now working on a book called *50/50 Fifty Years of Signs in the Fiftieth State* beginning with petroglyphs and scrimshaw, onboard ship signs, Lāhainā storefronts and a sprawling gallery of his own works, including a dozen now-demolished murals. “I want to record my place in the tradition of sign making,” he says. At the same time, that monumental sculpture project at Hāna has fired up his ambitions. “I haven’t made bronze sculptures since 1977. This desire is coming back.” His own kitchen includes scale models of such projects, including a dynamic miniature of Māui the demigod snaring the sun.

“Now, after fifty years of *commercial* art, I want to come back and perfect my *fine* art.” It’s a beautiful circle, he says, to perfect your desires.

“No-brakes Capri, that’s me. No boundaries. I’m motivated. I don’t know why but I’m motivated. What won’t kill me will make me stronger. I’m lucky to be here—me and Mick Jagger.” **hh**



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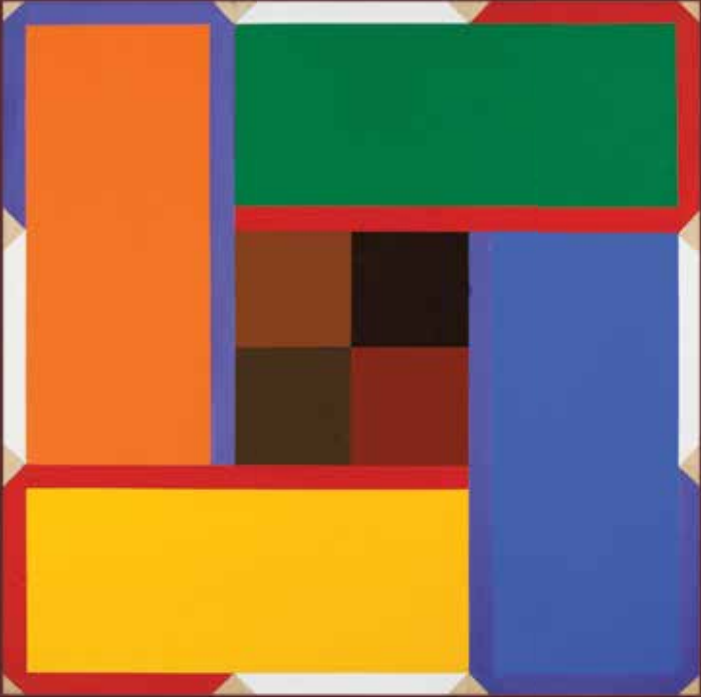
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**HONOLULU CITY LIGHTS**  
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Ka Hanu Aloha  
Ke Kāhili—The Royal Standard

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Booth #229, 236, 243

December 20, 2024 from 2pm–7pm  
December 21, 2024 from 10am–6pm  
December 22, 2024 from 10am–5pm

facebook.com/kekahililc  
facebook.com/kahanualohallc

{808} 306-6022



Ka Hanu Aloha is a Native Hawaiian wahine-owned small business on O’ahu. The brand name, which translates to “the breath of life embraced by love,” encapsulates our vision and infuses every piece with the aloha spirit and is inspired by the lush landscapes, rhythmic waves, and timeless mo’olelo shared by our kūpuna of Kō Hawai’i Pae ‘Āina and crafted using locally sourced materials that mālama ‘āina.



Sustainability and ethical artistic practices are deeply rooted in our cultural values of aloha, hō’ihi, and kuleana. We guarantee that every step of our production process embodies our unwavering commitment and dedication.

Through intentional designs that are aesthetically pleasing and meaningful, we believe in the power of clothing to tell a story. You are not just wearing a piece of clothing; you are embracing a piece of Hawai’i and feeling empowered by your unique style, inspiring confidence and self expression.

Ka Hanu Aloha humbly extends an invitation to you to join us on a journey of aloha. We consider it a privilege to be a part of your story.

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Avis' invitation-only President's Club\*\*





DECEMBER

JOHN CRUZ “ISLAND STYLE” SERIES

First and third Wednesdays  
Nā Hōkū Hanohano Award-winning singer-songwriter John Cruz has built his career telling stories through songs about everyday people and experiences. His ongoing “Island Style” series celebrates the ties that bind. 7 p.m. ProArts Playhouse, proartsmaui.org

KANIKAPILA THURSDAYS

Second and fourth Thursdays  
Maui artists perform live music, and families can participate in giant yard games. 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Queen Ka’ahumanu Center, [808] 877-3369

HĀNA FARMERS MARKET

Fridays  
Locally grown produce and products from East Maui. Free. 65-and-over shopping starts at 2:30, general admission from 3 to 5 p.m. Hāna Town Center, [808] 378-0084

KĪHEI FOURTH FRIDAY

Fourth Fridays  
A monthly community street party with food trucks, entertainment, crafters and kids’ games. 6 to 9 p.m. Free. Azeka Shopping Center, kiheifridays.com

QKC KEIKI CLUB

Third Saturdays  
Monthly crafting and creativity activities for kids presented by Queen Ka’ahumanu Center and Handmade Gifts & Decor. 10 to 11 a.m. Queen Ka’ahumanu Center, [808] 877-3369

MAUI SUNDAY MARKET

Sundays  
An evening marketplace with local food and product vendors and live entertainment. Free. 4 to 8 p.m. Kahului Shopping Center, [888] 948-6382

MAUI IMPROV MONTHLY SHOWCASE

Last Sundays  
Beginner and experienced performers improvise live theater on stage. 6:30 p.m. ProArts Playhouse, proartsmaui.org

SPECTACULAR POLYNESIAN HULA SHOW

Fourth Sundays  
Polynesian dance and hula performed at QKC’s center court. 1 to 2 p.m. Queen Ka’ahumanu Center, [808] 877-3369

HUI HOLIDAYS

Through 12/24  
Local arts organization Hui No’eau’s annual holiday artisan showcase features jewelry, ceramics, prints, fiber art, photography, glasswork and paintings—and it’s all for sale. Hui No’eau Visual Arts Center, [808] 572-6560

PATHS OF INK

Through 12/28  
This exhibition features contemporary artists from Japan and Korea who pursue innovative new movements in calligraphy, amplifying age-old traditions into a contemporary dialog. Maui Arts & Cultural Center (MACC) Schaefer International Gallery, mauiarts.org

WHOSE LIVE ANYWAY?

12/1  
The current cast members of the Emmy-nominated TV show *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* present hilarious improvised comedy and song all based on audience suggestions. MACC, mauiarts.org

TAIMANE CELEBRATES THE SEASON

12/7  
Four-time Nā Hōkū Hanohano Award-winning musician Taimane combines ‘ukulele with elements of dance, theater and cultural storytelling for a concert of holiday favorites presented in her unique, signature style. ProArts Playhouse, proartsmaui.org

HALEAKALĀ WALDORF HOLIDAY FAIRE

12/7  
This long-standing Upcountry tradition has festive crafts from Maui artisans, a silent auction, food vendors, live entertainment and hands-on crafts like wreath and ornament making and beeswax candle dipping. Haleakalā Waldorf School, waldorfmaui.org

NUTCRACKER SWEETS

12/14–22  
This collaboration between Maui OnStage and Momentum Dance Maui is a fresh take on the classic ballet with the Tchaikovsky score. Iao Theater, mauionstage.com

FESTIVUS 5K RUN

12/15  
Valley Isle Road Runners hosts a holiday 5K run and a free half-mile keiki dash. Donations for the Maui Food Bank will be collected. 7:30 to 10 a.m. Kanahā Beach Park, virr.com

TEMPA & NAOR

12/26  
Singer-songwriter couple Tempa & Naor celebrate the launch of their new album, *Moon Fall*, with performances of their unique blend of soul and folk music. ProArts Playhouse, proartsmaui.org

JANUARY

SENTRY TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS

1/2–5  
Only champions from the 2024 PGA Tour season are eligible to compete in the season opening event of the 2025 PGA Tour, held at the Plantation Course. Kapalua Resort, thesentry.com

SCHAEFER PORTRAIT CHALLENGE 2025

1/14–3/22  
Held as a triennial since 2003, this statewide juried exhibition presents the unique diversity of the people of Hawai’i through explorations in portraiture. MACC Schaefer International Gallery, mauiarts.org

2024 HUI NO’EAU ANNUAL JURIED EXHIBITION

1/17–2/21  
Hui No’eau Visual Arts Center presents its Annual Juried Exhibition, sharing ceramics, printmaking, sculpture, photography, painting, drawing, jewelry, digital media, fiber, wood and mixed media. Hui No’eau Visual Arts Center, huinoeau.com



EXPEDITIONS

Mā’alaea Harbor (Maui), Mānele Harbor (Lāna’i)

Explore the enticing beauty of Lāna’i with one of EXPEDITIONS eco-friendly, USCG certified, daily cruises. Snorkel, hike, drive, tour or just Lounge on Lāna’i! Aboard Expeditions, you’ll enjoy spectacular views of Maui County, including the islands of Maui, Lāna’i, Moloka’i and Kaho’olawe. For three decades Expeditions has been providing the most reliable, affordable inter-island travel between Maui and Lāna’i.



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go-lanai.com



HUI NO’EAU VISUAL ARTS CENTER

2841 Baldwin Avenue, Makawao, Maui

Visit the historic Kaluanui Estate to enjoy local artwork, take an art class, explore the 25-acre grounds, or shop the Hui gallery shop. Through December 24th enjoy Hui Holidays, an enhanced holiday shopping experience featuring a curated selection of made-on-Maui artwork, ceramics, jewelry, beauty products, ornaments, and more! Supported in part by the County of Maui.



[808] 572-6560  
huinoeau.com



# E ola ke kai, E ola kākou

As the ocean thrives, so do we.

Maui Ocean Center is more than an aquarium, connecting you with the magic of Maui’s marine life; promoting ocean conservation through authentic cultural experiences, animal encounters & interactive education.

 MAUI OCEAN CENTER

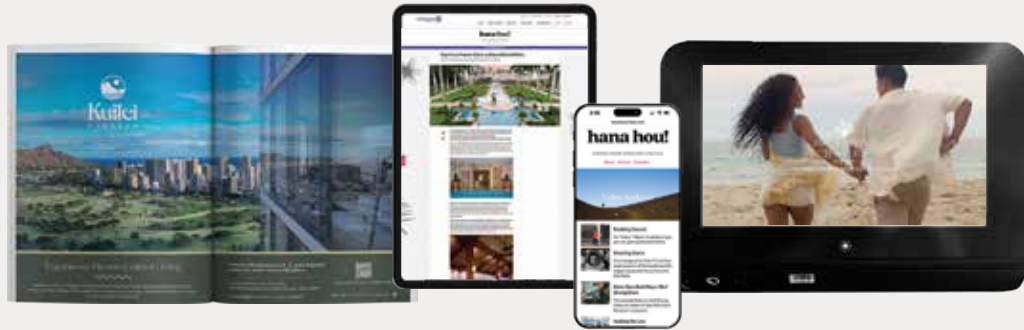
  
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*Baby sea turtle (honu) photo by ©Joel Sartore/ Photo Ark*



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Sales Manager, Dole Hawaii

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**COLE SLATER**  
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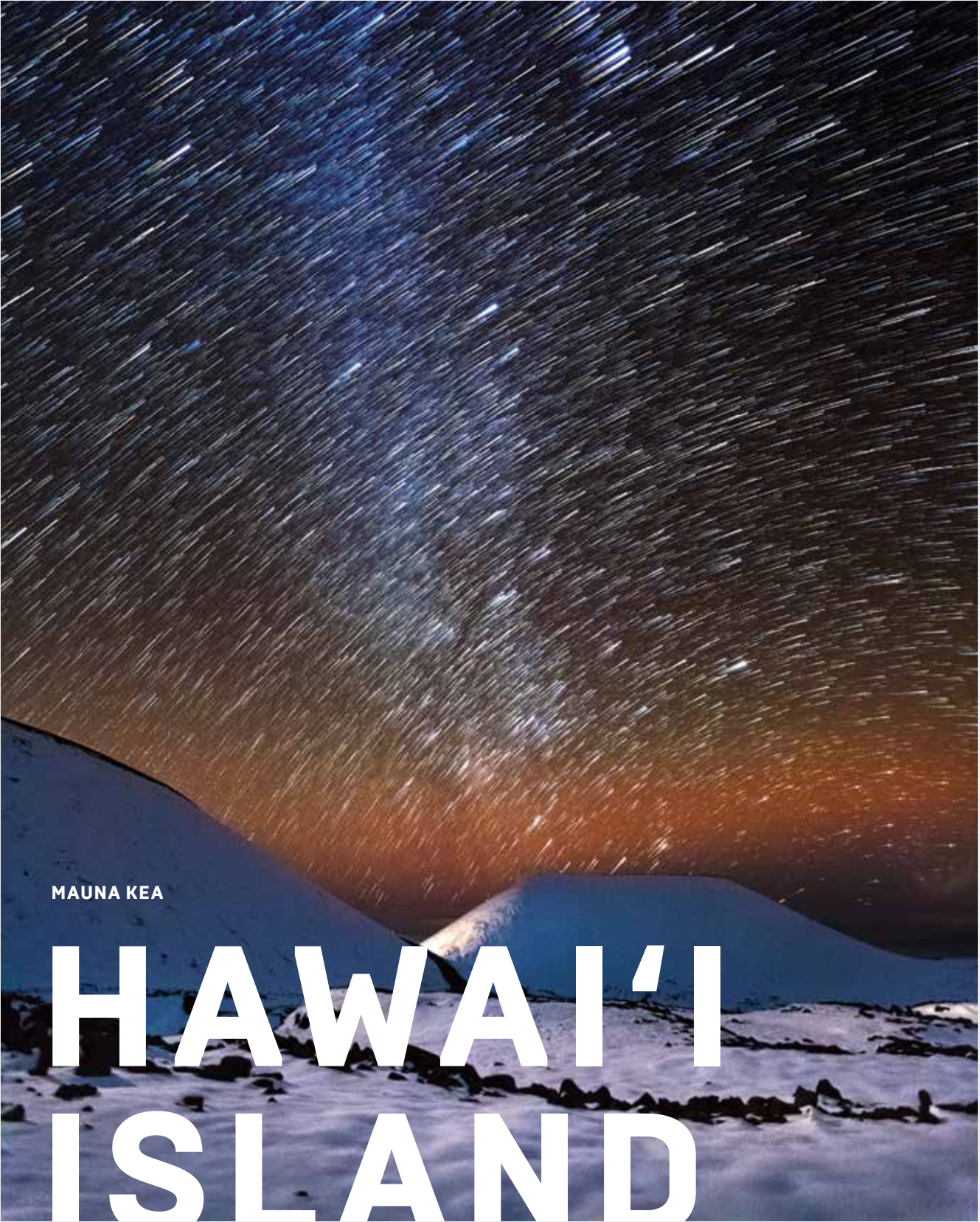


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MAUNA KEA

# HAWAI'I ISLAND



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Niaulani Nature Walk

FEBRUARY

NIAULANI NATURE WALK

Mondays  
A one-hour nature walk through an old-growth Hawai'i rainforest on an easy loop trail. Walkers are introduced to the native plants and birds of Kīlauea volcano. Free. 9:30 a.m. Volcano Art Center's Niaulani Campus, (808) 967-8222

UNDER THE NEW MOON

Last Tuesdays  
An evening of Hawaiian storytelling with Kumu Keala Ching, live Hawaiian music and hula performances. Bring your own beach chair or mat. No coolers. Free. 5 to 6:30 p.m. Outrigger Kona Resort & Spa, [nawaiiwiola.org](http://nawaiiwiola.org)

KOHALA NIGHT MARKET

First Wednesdays  
A monthly community event featuring local products for sale, live entertainment, food trucks and service booths. 4 to 7 p.m. Kohala Village Hub, (808) 889-5471

HO'OUULU FARMERS MARKET & ARTISANS FAIR

Wednesdays and Fridays  
A market featuring 100 percent locally made, grown and created products and live entertainment. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Outrigger Kona Resort and Spa, [bigislandmkt.com](http://bigislandmkt.com)

FRIDAY NIGHT MARKET

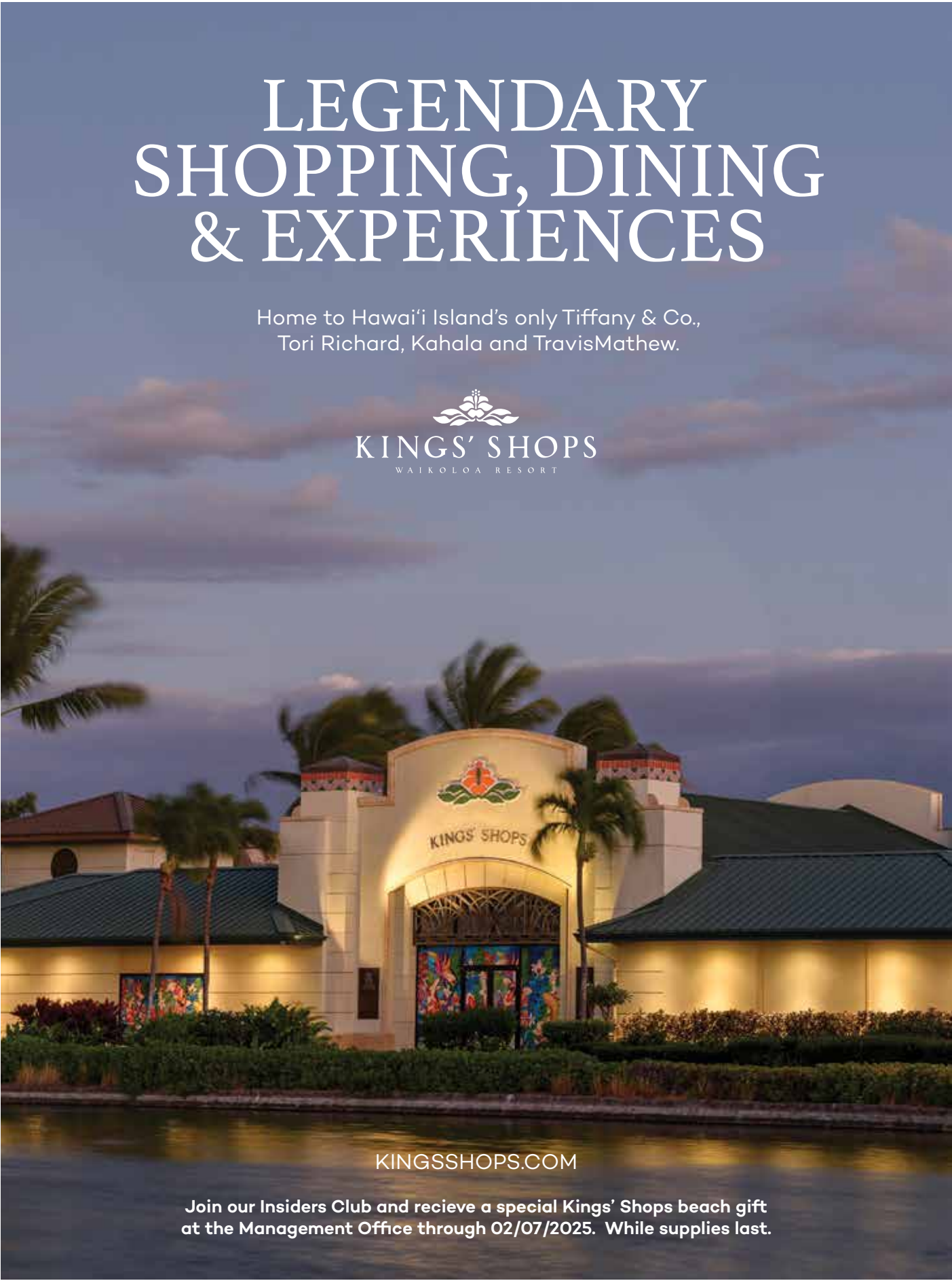
Fridays  
A weekly market in downtown Hilo with live entertainment, local food, unique crafts, gifts, jewelry and more. Hilo Town Market, [hilotownmarket.co](http://hilotownmarket.co)

NIGHT MARKET

Second and fourth Fridays  
Live music, food trucks and dozens of local vendors with Hawai'i Island products, artwork and other artisanal goods. 4 to 8 p.m. Kings' Shops in Waikoloa, (808) 886-8811

# LEGENDARY SHOPPING, DINING & EXPERIENCES

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at the Management Office through 02/07/2025. While supplies last.



**HALEKI'I FARMERS MARKET & CRAFT FAIR**

First Saturdays  
Local crafts and art vendors, keiki entrepreneurs, fresh food, 'ohana-centered outreach, sustainable-living resources and live music. Free. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Kona Grill House, [808] 960-7728

**YOUTH ARTS SATURDAYS**

Second Saturdays  
Keiki of all ages are welcome to join guest artists and local organizations in making a variety of creative projects. Free. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. East Hawai'i Cultural Center, [808] 961-5711

**MADE IN HAWAII ARTISAN MARKET**

Second Saturdays  
Local crafters and makers selling gifts, art, crafts and food. 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Kona Commons Shopping Center, [808] 854-1439

**16TH ANNUAL HAWAI'I NEI**

Through 12/12  
An annual juried art exhibition celebrating the native species and ecosystems of Hawai'i Island. Wailoa Center, wailoacenter.com

**CHRISTMAS IN THE COUNTRY**

Through 12/31  
Special holiday celebrations, including art demonstrations plus a fine selection of handcrafted decorations and gifts offered only during the holiday season. Free. Volcano Art Center, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, volcanoartcenter.org

**HE'E NALU: THE ART & LEGACY OF HAWAIIAN SURFING**

Through 1/4/2025  
A small-scale exhibit spanning 2,000 years of surfing history from the earliest stories of surf deities to contemporary works of art and surfing innovations through the lens of thirteen modern Kānaka 'Ōiwi creatives and cultural practitioners. East Hawai'i Cultural Center, [808] 280-3554

**2024 KAPA INVITATIONAL**

Through 1/5  
Waimea treasure and 2023 National Heritage Fellowship awardee Roen Hufford brings together the work of extraordinary kapa makers. Kahilu Theatre—Simperman & Suli T. Go Galleries, kahilu.org

**PEACE, LIGHT, & LOVE**

12/1  
Waimea Community Chorus presents its 30th Winter Concert with a repertoire representing a variety of genres, including Mozart, Haydn, gospel, spirituals and traditional songs. Kahilu Theatre, kahilu.org

**NĀ MĀKUA INVITATIONAL CHRISTMAS GIFT FAIR**

12/6&7  
Nelson Makua, longtime director of the Merrie Monarch Invitational Hawaiian Arts Fair, curates a Christmas fair with food, entertainment, fine arts and handmade crafts. Edith Kanaka'ole Tennis Stadium, namakua.com



**LIKO LEHUA**

177 Kaumana Drive, Hilo

Liko Lehua gourmet butters are handcrafted in small batches with fresh fruit from our family farm. Visit our café in the bright yellow building above Hilo town for a burger and milkshake drizzled with liliko'i butter. Ask to sample all seven delicious flavors. Gift a jar to your 'Ohana. Liko Lehua is "spreading Aloha across the world" since 1996!



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Volcano, Hawai'i

Volcano Art Center promotes, develops and perpetuates the artistic, cultural and environmental heritage of Hawai'i through art and education. Celebrate the past, present and future of the arts as VAC turns 50 in 2024! Join us for exhibits, classes, and concerts honoring Hawai'i artists and attend free, ongoing programs including Hula Arts At Kīlauea and Guided Forest Tours. Become a member today.



[808] 967-8222  
volcanoartcenter.org



Watch a curated selection of films and series on the in-seat media player or Hawaiian Airlines app.





Makana

**WAIMEA CHRISTMAS TWILIGHT PARADE**

12/7  
In its 64th year, this annual evening parade features Santa and a brigade of lighted trucks. 6 p.m. Waimea, waimeatown.org

**HŌLUALOA MUSIC AND LIGHT FESTIVAL**

12/7  
The town of Hōlualoa celebrates the holidays with an annual lighting of the town Christmas tree, live music, gallery gatherings, art openings, complimentary treats and beverages from shops and an appearance by Santa. 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Hōlualoa, holualoavillage.com

**PARADISE STUDIO ART TOUR**

12/7&8  
This annual art tour invites the public to visit local artists in their home studios. There will be free art demonstrations and music. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Various locations, paradisestudiotour.com

**KŌKUA KAILUA VILLAGE STROLL**

12/8  
Ali'i Drive transforms into a festive, pedestrian-only marketplace filled with music and art. 1 to 6 p.m. Kailua-Kona, historickailuavillage.com

**KĪLAUEA HULA KAHIKO**

12/14  
Hula and chant on a sacred site near the Volcano Art Center with Hope Mana'olana Keawe. Call ahead to confirm the monthly event. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Volcano Art Center Gallery, volcanoartcenter.org

**KAILUA-KONA CHRISTMAS PARADE**

12/14  
Business and community groups, musical and choral groups, and many others take part in this colorful parade, which starts at 5 p.m. Ali'i Drive, paradesinkona.com

**JAZZ IN THE FOREST**

12/14  
This monthly series highlights local musicians at the Dietrich Varez Hall surrounded by native Hawaiian rainforest. December's concert is themed "Holiday Spirit." Volcano Art Center's Niaulani Campus, volcanoartcenter.org

**KALANI PE'A HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

12/20  
Grammy and Nā Hōkū Hanohano award winner Kalani Pe'a performs holiday numbers with special guests Kumu Hula Pōlanimakamae Kahakalau-Kalima, No'eau Kahakalau-Kalima and Hālau Hula Kauluola. Palace Theatre, hilopalace.com

JANUARY

**MAKANA**

1/11  
Singer and composer Makana's music transcends traditional slack key guitar to include folk and cross-cultural blends, as well as bluegrass, blues, Latin, rock and modern forms like hip-hop. Kahilu Theatre, kahilu.org

**MURIEL ANDERSON**

1/11  
Guitarist and singer Muriel Anderson performs at the Dietrich Varez Hall surrounded by native Hawaiian rainforest. Volcano Art Center's Niaulani Campus, volcanoartcenter.org

**LUEDJI LUNA**

1/18  
Singer-songwriter Luedji Luna is one of the most powerful voices in contemporary Brazilian music, mixing the sounds of Bahian and African drums. Kahilu Theatre, kahilu.org

**NĀ PUA PASIFIKA PREMIERE & TALK STORY**

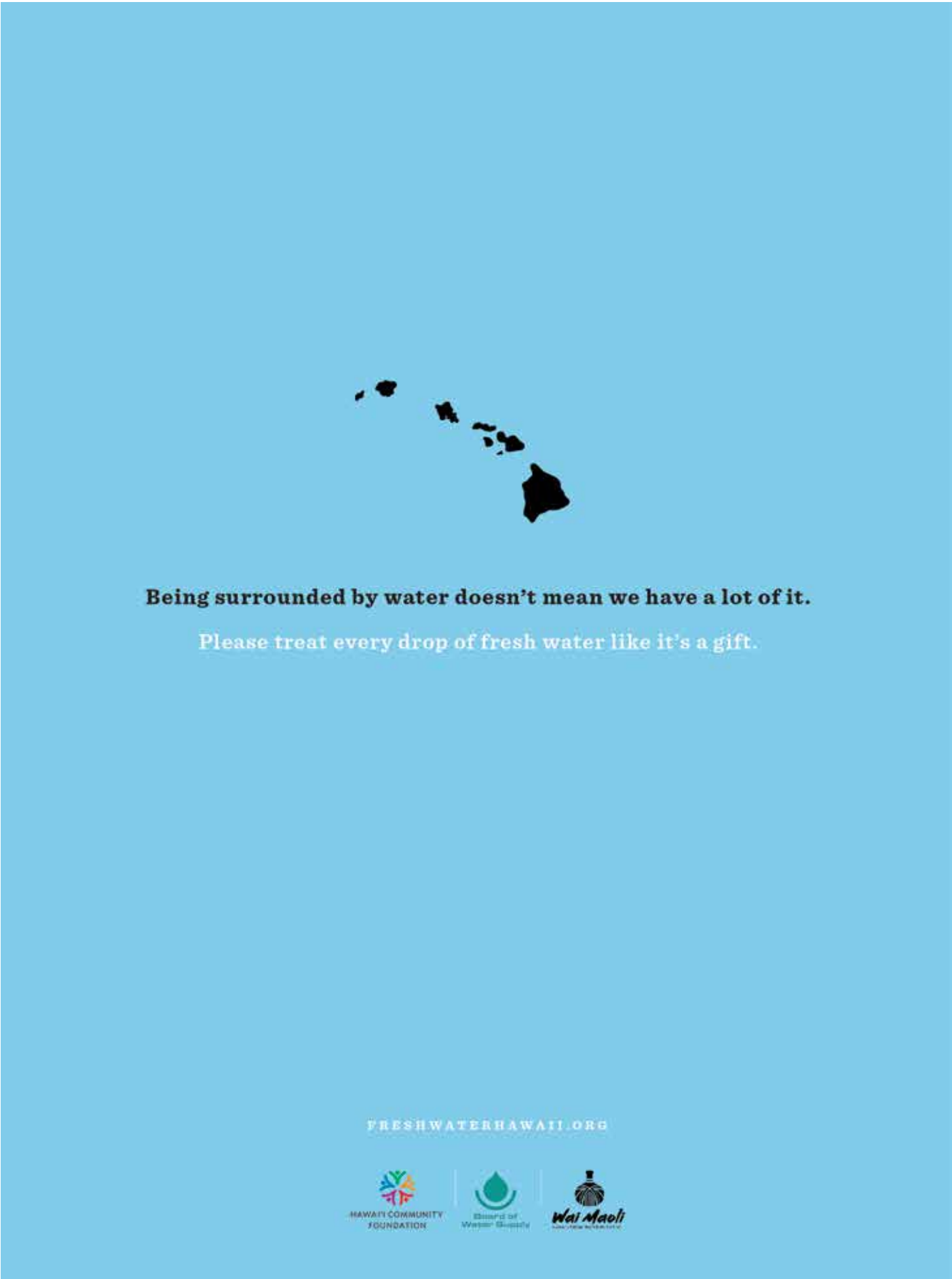
1/19  
A premiere screening of episode two of the Nā Pua Pasifika series featuring the canoe plant uhi (yam). There will be a lobby reception prior to the screening with samples of uhi and tips for growing your own, along with an Q&A after the screening. Kahilu Theatre, kahilu.org

**KŌKUA KAILUA VILLAGE STROLL**

1/19  
Ali'i Drive transforms into a festive, pedestrian-only marketplace filled with music and art. At 4 p.m. there is a free Hawaiian music concert at Hulihe'e Palace. 1 to 6 p.m. Kailua-Kona, (808) 936-9202

**MASTERWORKS II: SHAKESPEARE IN PARADISE**

1/26  
Kamuela Philharmonic Orchestra presents a rich tapestry of music inspired by Shakespeare's works along with performances by Youth Concerto Competition winners. Kahilu Theatre, kahilu.org







DECEMBER

**KAUA‘I CULINARY MARKET**

Wednesdays  
A weekly farmers market featuring fruits, vegetables, flowers and a cooking demonstration. 3:30 to 6 p.m. The Shops at Kukui‘ula, [808] 742-9545

**MAKAI MUSIC & ART FESTIVAL**

Wednesdays  
A weekly gathering with performances by local musicians and an assortment of handmade jewelry, crafts, art and more from local vendors. Free. 1 to 5 p.m. Princeville, Makai Lawn, [808] 318-7338

**ALOHA MARKET**

Thursdays  
Everything from fresh fruits and vegetables to noodles, spices and treats, along with jewelry, clothing, art and more for purchase. Hula performance at 12:30 p.m. every week. Free. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. NTBG South Shore Visitor Center, [808] 742-2623

**ALOHA FRIDAY ART NIGHTS**

Fridays  
Each Friday night, Kress Street fills with live art demonstrations. From music to murals, artists share their craft with the community. Kress Street, Līhu‘e, [808] 652-1442

**HANAPĒPĒ ART NIGHT**

Fridays  
Hanapēpē town comes to life with food trucks, street performers, live music and opportunities to talk story with local artists and gallery owners. Free. 5 to 8 p.m. Hanapēpē, hanapepe.org

**OLD KAPA‘A TOWN  
HO‘OLAULE‘A MULTICULTURAL**

Celebration  
First Saturdays  
Food vendors, crafts and treasures from local artisans and services from local nonprofit organizations along with live multicultural performances. 5 to 9 p.m. Old Kapa‘a Town, kbakauai.org

**ANAHOLA NIGHT MARKET**

Last Saturdays  
Live music, delicious food and handmade products from over twenty local vendors. 4 to 9 p.m. Anahola Marketplace, [808] 320-7846

**PRINCEVILLE FARMERS &  
ARTS MARKET**

Saturdays  
Farm-fresh fruits and veggies, along with local artisans, vintage treasures, live music and more. 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Princeville Community Center, bloomandprosperhawaii.com

**DOWNTOWN LĪHU‘E NIGHT  
MARKET**

Second Saturdays  
Locally made crafts, gifts, food trucks, baked goods, live entertainment and more. Featuring more than fifty vendors each month. Free. 4 to 8 p.m. Kress Street, Līhu‘e, [808] 652-1442

**ALAKOKO PLANT SWAP**

Sundays  
This weekly market offers plant lovers the chance to buy, sell or trade a variety of greenery. Free. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Alakoko Shop, [808] 652-1442

**LOCAL TREASURES MARKET**

First Sundays  
An outdoor market showcasing products from local artisans, crafters, food trucks, bakers and vintage vendors. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Kaua‘i Veterans Center, [808] 635-4314

**WAILUA BAY CREATORS FAIR**

Fourth Sundays  
Artisan goods, clothing, accessories, hand-sewn items, jewelry, photography, wood carvings, home decor and more accompanied by live music and local food vendors. 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Hilton Garden Inn, Kaua‘i, Wailua Bay, [808] 746-2162

**SMALL WORKS SHOW**

Through 1/3  
A show of small works—16 by 16 inches maximum—created by local artists. Presented by the Kaua‘i Society of Artists. Kukui Grove Shopping Center, [808] 228-9624

**LIGHTS ON RICE PARADE**

12/6  
This annual tradition marks the arrival of the holiday season. Līhu‘e community members light up their vehicles and themselves for a parade up Rice Street from Vidinha Stadium to the historic County Building. 6:30 p.m. Free. Līhu‘e, [808] 635-5404

**THE LONELY HEARTS:  
BEATLES AND BEYOND**

12/7  
The Lonely Hearts perform the music of the Beatles and similar artists for a night of groovy tunes and electric vibes. Anaina Hou Porter Pavilion, [808] 828-2118

**PRINCEVILLE NIGHT MARKET**

12/8  
This monthly festival features live music, pottery, paintings, apparel, jewelry and more than forty local artisans. Free. 4 to 8 p.m. Princeville Shopping Center, princevillecenter.com

**TALK STORY PIANO DUO**

12/8  
Pianist Jonathan Korth joins pianist Monica Chung for a two-piano concert with storytelling and performances of Rachmaninoff’s *Fantasie Tableaux Op.5* and a duo arrangement of Marc-Andre Hamelin’s *Circus Galop*. KCC Performing Arts Center, kauai-concert.org

JANUARY

**ON GOLDEN POND**

1/3-1/19  
Kauai Community Players present Ernest Thompson’s 1979 play about aging couple Ethel and Norman Thayer, who spend each summer at their home on a lake called Golden Pond. Puhi Theatrical Warehouse, kauaicomunityplayers.org

**PRINCEVILLE NIGHT MARKET**

1/12  
This monthly festival features live music, pottery, paintings, apparel, jewelry and more than forty local artisans. Free. 4 to 8 p.m. Princeville Shopping Center, [808] 635-2572

**HO‘ALOHA DAY**

1/15  
The public is invited to experience the Formal Gardens at Na ‘Āina Kai Botanical Gardens. Docents will be stationed throughout the gardens to answer questions about plants, sculptures, and the garden’s history alongside slack key and hula performances. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Na ‘Āina Kai Botanical Gardens, Sculpture Park and Hardwood Plantation, naainakai.org





**BANANA PATCH STUDIO**

3865 Iona Rd, Hanapēpē

Discover the charm of Banana Patch Studio, located between Japanese Grandma’s Cafe and Aloha Spice Company in Hanapēpē town. Unique, hand-painted pottery, tiles and artwork inspired by Kauai’s natural beauty. Bring home the island’s vibrant aloha spirit. Explore our back room for Japanese treasures and find your perfect moment.



(808) 335-3803  
[bananapatchstudio.com](http://bananapatchstudio.com)



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(808) 378-2116  
[horsesaregood.com](http://horsesaregood.com)



**KAUAI BAKERY**

3-2600 Kaumualiʻi Hwy, Suite 1526, Līhuʻe

Kauaʻi native-owned and continuing The Garden Island’s Kauai Bakery legacy. Centrally located, minutes from landing at the Līhuʻe Airport. Begin your day with a savory manapua, sweet pastry, cakes, classic malasada or variety of filled malasadas including Ube, Guava, Haupia, Lilikoʻi, Mango, Dobash to name a few. Can’t decide? Try our Kauai Bakery Malasada Flight and sample every flavor!



(808) 320-3434  
[mykauaibakery.com](http://mykauaibakery.com)



**KELA’S GLASS GALLERY**

4-1400 Kūhiō Highway, Kapa’a

At Kela’s Glass Gallery, it’s all about the glass art. See for yourself the stunning Color Changing Jewelry by the owner Mimi. This impressive gallery features the works of over 150 fine glass artists. Apparently the specialization works. Kela’s Glass Gallery won the prestigious Top Retailer Award from NICHE Magazine voted on by over 10,000 American artists.



(808) 822-4527  
[glass-art.com](http://glass-art.com)



**SALTY WAHINE GOURMET HAWAIIAN SEA SALTS**

1-3529 Kaumualiʻi Highway Unit 2B, Hanapēpē

Salty Wahine Gourmet Hawaiian Sea Salts is a family-owned Kauaʻi Made Company that specializes in Kosher Hawaiian Sea salts, seasonings and tropical sugars using fruit infusions like mango, coconut, guava, passionfruit, dragonfruit and pineapple. All products are made by hand with aloha in our Salty Wahine commercial kitchen/factory in Hanapēpē, Kauaʻi.



(808) 378-4089  
[saltywahine.com](http://saltywahine.com)



**TROY CARNEY ART**

3900 Hanapēpē Rd, Hanapēpē

Dive into the vibrant world of Golden Waves, and Waterfalls at the Troy Carney Art Gallery in the Historic Old Hanapēpē Town. Discover the mesmerizing sacred water art of Troy Carney, the 2011 Vans Triple Crown of Surfing Featured Artist. His distinctive unique style he developed on Kauaʻi fuses genuine gold, oil paints, and resin layers to create stunning, multi-dimensional masterpieces.



(808) 652-0493  
[troycarneyart.com](http://troycarneyart.com)



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# Aloha

## Welcome aboard

**E nanea i kā mākou ho'okipa,  
a e luana i ka lele 'ana!**

Please enjoy our hospitality,  
and have a relaxing flight!

In Hawaiian culture, mea ho'okipa means "I am your host." This phrase expresses the spirit of hospitality you'll find on our flights, whether you're traveling to the Neighbor Islands, between Hawai'i and North America or within the Asia-Pacific region. If there is anything that we can do to make your flight more enjoyable, please don't hesitate to let us know.

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# In-Flight Tastes of Hawai‘i

## Delicious Complimentary Meals

It’s true. We’re one of the only airlines left in the country to serve you a complimentary meal at mealtime in the Main Cabin. You’ll find Hawai‘i-inspired meals on select flights to and from Hawai‘i, always served with our unique brand of Hawaiian hospitality.



Above top: Wade Ueoka and Michelle Karr-Ueoka  
Bottom: Chuck Furuya

Left to right: Chef Robynne Mai‘i of Fete Restaurant, Chef Mark Pomaski of Moon and Turtle in Hilo, Executive Chefs Wade Ueoka and Michelle Karr-Ueoka of MW Restaurant, Chef Jason Peel of Namikaze and Chef Keaka Lee of Kapa Hale.

## Hawaiian Airlines Featured Chef Series showcases star chefs

Hawaiian Airlines’ in-flight service shares the sights, sounds and tastes of Hawai‘i, and when it comes to our First Class meal service, that means exciting, varied Pacific Rim cuisine with our Featured Chef Series. This esteemed collaboration showcases some of Hawai‘i’s most dynamic chefs creating menus for meals served in our forward cabin.

The Featured Chef Series is overseen by Hawaiian Airlines Executive Chefs Wade Ueoka and Michelle Karr-Ueoka.

Sit back and enjoy Hawai‘i’s vibrant food culture and our distinct onboard experience.

## A taste of tradition

Executive Chefs Wade Ueoka and Michelle Karr-Ueoka opened MW Restaurant in Honolulu in 2013. Their cuisine combines inspirations from travels around the world with Hawai‘i’s culinary traditions and local bounty. To sample MW’s latest creations visit their new location at 888 Kapi‘olani Boulevard in Honolulu.

MWRestaurant.com

## Wine pairings by our Master Sommelier

Chuck Furuya has a passion for the world’s oldest fermented beverage and holds the distinction of becoming only the tenth person in the United States to pass the rigorous Master Sommelier examination, in 1988. You can find Chuck at Chuck Furuya Uncorked on YouTube.



# In-Flight WiFi and Entertainment on A321neo and A330 Aircraft



## In-Flight WiFi

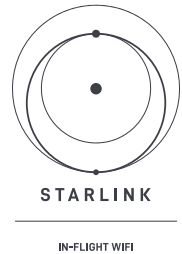
Our A321neo and A330 Aircraft are now equipped with Starlink Internet. It is fast, free internet available for everyone right when you step on board. Switch to Airplane Mode and

- Connect to “**Starlink WiFi on HawaiianAir**”  
Note: Starlink WiFi is not available on our B787 aircraft at this time.

## USAGE GUIDELINES

The following is not permitted with our in-flight internet service:

- No voice or video calls
- No Livestream broadcasting
- No viewing obscene/offensive content



## Streaming Entertainment

Guests on our A321 aircraft are also able to stream complimentary entertainment on their personal electronic devices.

Once onboard:

1. Connect to “**Movies on HawaiianAir**”  
Note: This network does not have internet access and is only for movie streaming.
2. If a landing page pops up, click on the link to view the full list of movies OR open a browser and enter the url: [moviesonhawaiianair.com](http://moviesonhawaiianair.com)

- Supported on IOS 13+ and on Android 8.0+
- Internet Explorer and Edge browsers are not supported at this time

# Mele

## Collections to suit your musical tastes

Hawaiian Airlines offers DJ-hosted, curated audio programming devoted to musical styles from across the globe, ranging from award-winning Hawaiian music to jazz and K-Pop.\*

## FEATURED CHANNELS INCLUDE:

‘Ukulele Wizards

A celebration of Hawai‘i’s iconic instrument and those who use it to make musical magic.

Island Favorites

From the latest songs to all-time classics, Island Favorites presents the best of Hawaiian musicians.

Classic Jawaian Rhythms

The melding of Hawaiian melodies with Jamaican rhythms creates a uniquely Island groove.

Slack Key Serenity

Hawai‘i’s finest kī ho‘alu masters showcase varied interpretations of the Island-born slack-key guitar style.

\*Available only on A330 and A321neo aircraft.



Kolohe Kai (left) and Kimie Miner (right).



In-Flight Snacks and Souvenirs



Made in Hawai’i Snack Sampler



‘Ono Snack Box

Pau Hana Snack Cart

Keepsake blanket, popular local snacks, souvenirs and sundries are available from the Pau Hana Snack Cart. Cabin crew will advise when the cart is heading down the aisle on domestic flights or is open in the galley on Australia and New Zealand flights.

Selections and quantities are limited and may vary. To print receipts of in-flight purchases, visit [HawaiianAirlines.com/receipts](https://www.hawaiianairlines.com/receipts).

Popular Local Snacks

Bottled Water, 22 oz. ``	\$5.50
Hawaiian Chip Company Taro and Sweet Potato Chips	\$8.50
Island Princess Caramel Macadamia Nut Popcorn	\$7.50
Kona Chips Furikake Chips	\$9.50
Samurai Furikake Popcorn	\$8.00

Snack Packs `

Made in Hawai’i Snack Sampler <b>K</b> Choco Caramel Popcorn, Choco Mochi, Lightly Salted and Maui Onion Macadamia Nuts, Mele Mac	\$11.00
Classic Snack Box <b>GF</b> Crackers, Chickpeas, Turkey Stick, Hummus, Gummies, Sweet Treat	\$8.50
Keiki (Child) Snack Box <b>GF</b> Cheese Puffs, Granola Minis, Turkey Stick, Applesauce, Gummies, Sweet Treat	\$8.50
‘Ono Snack Box <b>GF</b> Salami, Cheese Spread, Dried Fruit, Olives, Crackers, Sweet Treat	\$8.50

Cheese Tray with Crackers and Dried Fruit	\$7.00
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Classic Snacks

M & M’s Peanut	\$4.50
Maruchan Cup Ramen Chicken	\$4.50
Pringles <b>K</b>	\$4.50

Sundries

Ear Buds with Hawaiian Airlines Zipper Case``	\$4.00
Hawaiian Airlines Blanket and Pillow Set``	\$11.50

\* Snack box components are subject to availability. Please see snack box for list of included items. **GF** Gluten-Free  
`` Available on select North America flights only. **K** Kosher

In-Flight Beverages

Juices

Passion-Orange-Guava* (POG)
Pineapple Orange Nectar / Apple / Orange
Mott’s Tomato / Mr. & Mrs. T Bloody Mary Mix

Hot beverages

Lion Coffee* / Tea
--------------------

Soft drinks

Coke / Diet Coke / Sprite
Diamond Head Strawberry Soda
Canada Dry Ginger Ale

Milk (Lowfat or Whole)
------------------------

Club Soda / Tonic Water / Flavored Sparkling Water
--

Cocktails

Mai Tai (Kō Hana)	\$10.00
Pineapple Daiquiri** (Kō Hana)	\$10.00
Old Fashioned** (On the Rocks)	\$10.00

Spirits

Rum (Koloa Rum)	\$9.00
Vodka (Ocean)	\$9.00
Scotch (Dewars)	\$9.00
Whiskey (Jack Daniel’s)	\$9.00
Gin (Tanqueray)	\$9.00
Koloa Pineapple Passion*** (Koloa Rum)	\$8.00

Wines & Champagne

Summer Club Pogmosa Sparkling White Wine with Passionfruit, Orange, Guava	\$10.00
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Mionetto Prosecco Sparkling Wine Split	\$10.00
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Woodbridge Cabernet Red Wine Split**	\$9.00
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Woodbridge Chardonnay White Wine Split**	\$9.00
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Red or White Wine Glass***	\$8.00
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Beers

Big Swell IPA (Maui Brewing Co.)	\$9.00
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Bikini Blonde Lager** (Maui Brewing Co.)	\$9.00
--	--------

Da Hawai’i Life Lite Lager (Maui Brewing Co.)	\$9.00
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Hard Seltzer Dragon Fruit** (Maui Brewing Co.)	\$9.00
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Heineken**	\$9.00
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Complimentary beverages provided by **Coca-Cola**  
\*Complimentary on Neighbor Island flights.  
\*\*Available for purchase on Neighbor Island flights.  
\*\*\*Complimentary glass of wine on flights to/from New York, Boston, Austin. Complimentary glass of Koloa Pineapple Passion on flights to/from West Coast North American cities. \$8 per glass thereafter.

All beer, wine, champagne and spirits available for purchase on North American flights. Complimentary in First/Business Class.

**Alcoholic Beverages**  
Only alcoholic beverages provided by Hawaiian Airlines and served by Flight Attendants may be consumed on board the aircraft. No alcoholic beverages will be served to persons who appear intoxicated or to those under 21 years of age.

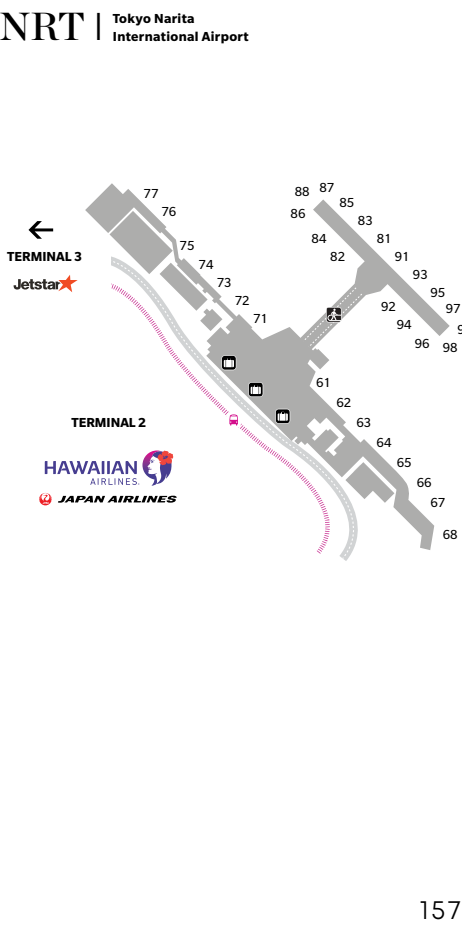
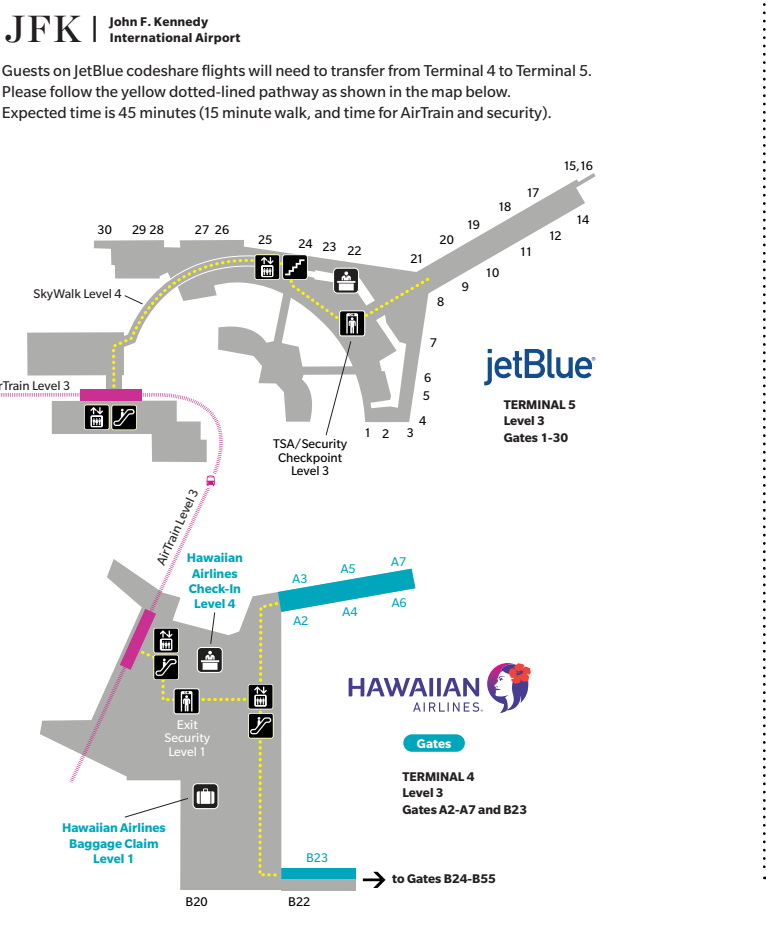
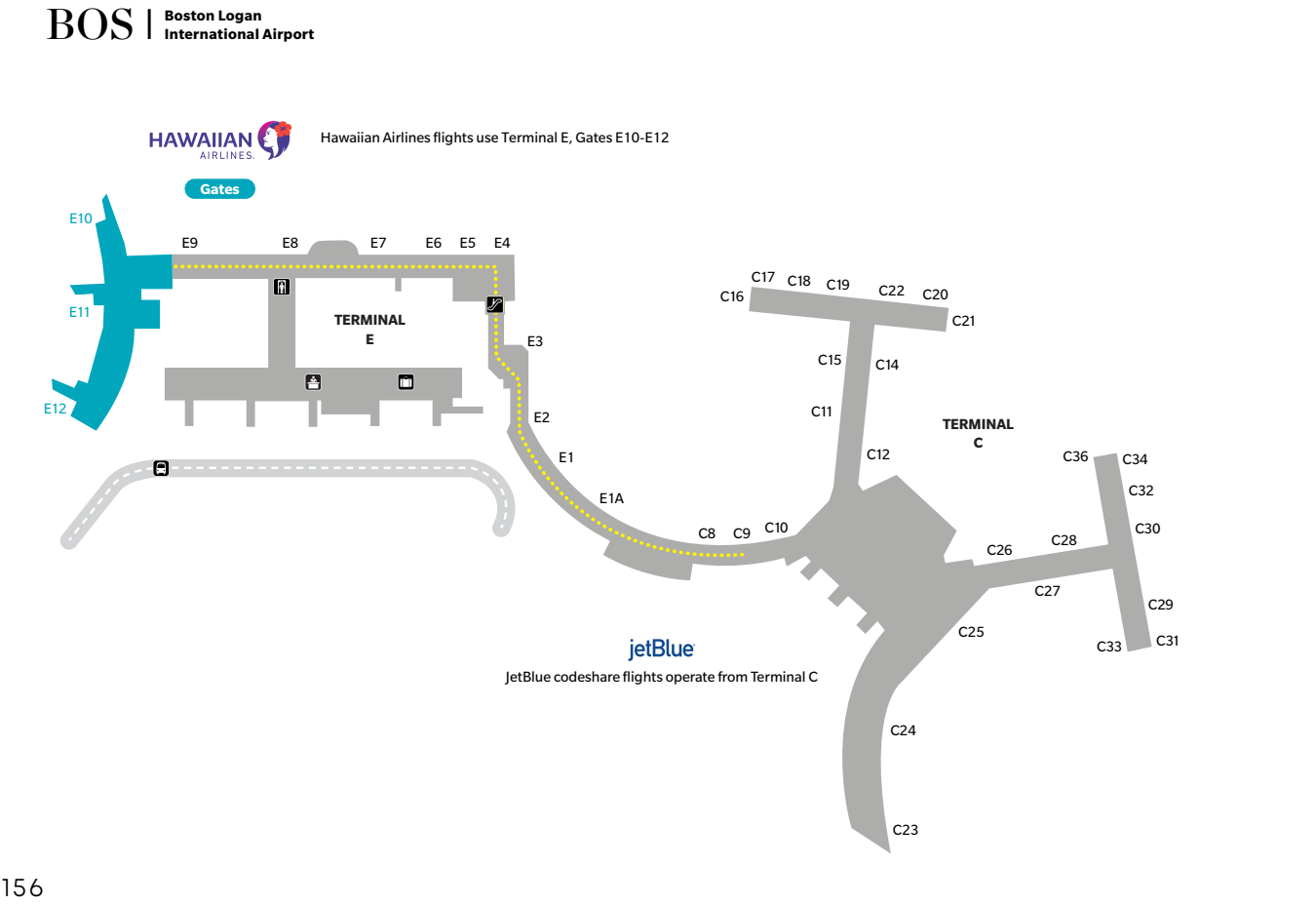
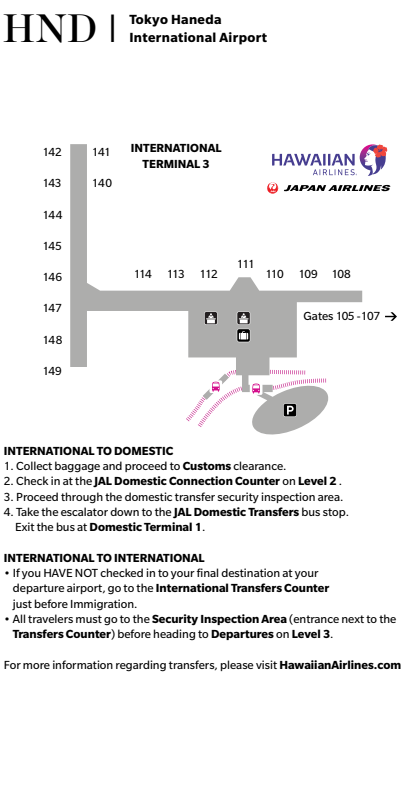
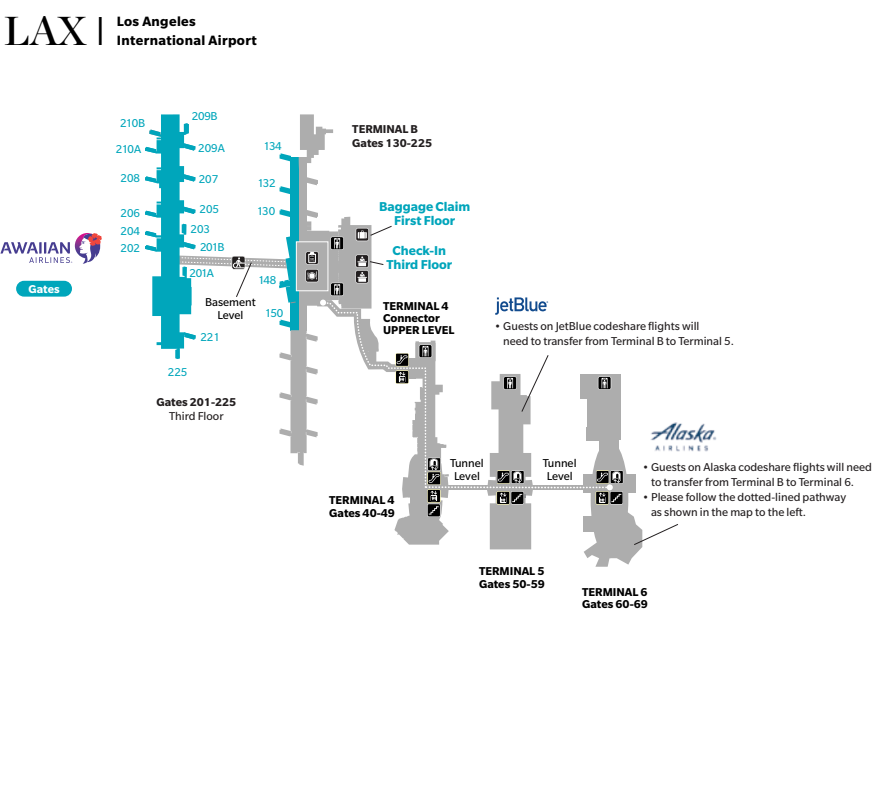
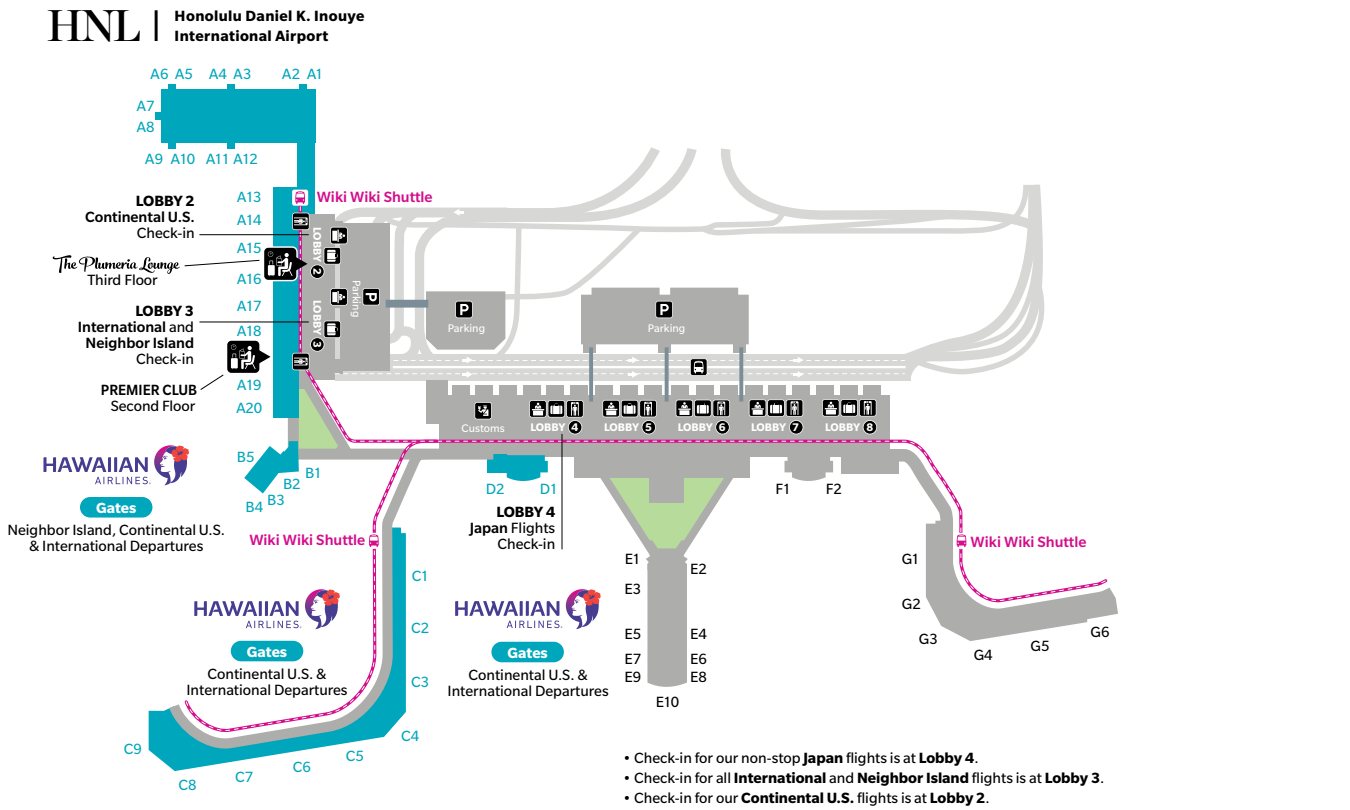
Hawaiian Airlines’ complimentary items may change or vary from time to time, and availability can be affected by aircraft schedule changes.

Beverage menu is subject to change. Some items may not be available on all flights and/or classes of service. Beverage availability is limited. Beers, wines, spirits, snacks and sundries are available for purchase with major credit/debit cards only.

\* Snack box components are subject to availability. Please see snack box for list of included items.  
\*\* Available on select North America flights only.

**GF** Gluten-Free  
**K** Kosher







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## HawaiianMiles



A mile flown is a mile earned. **Join HawaiianMiles for free** and earn miles every time you fly with us or earn miles with our hotel, car rental, and shopping and dining partners. With miles that never expire, the sky is the limit.

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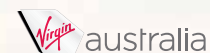


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As an exclusive benefit, all HawaiianMiles Pualani Elite members can status match to Boyd Rewards special All Access tier that includes VIP benefits when you visit any Boyd destination.

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Visit [HawaiianAirlines.com/HawaiianMiles/Partners](https://www.hawaiianairlines.com/hawaiianmiles/partners).

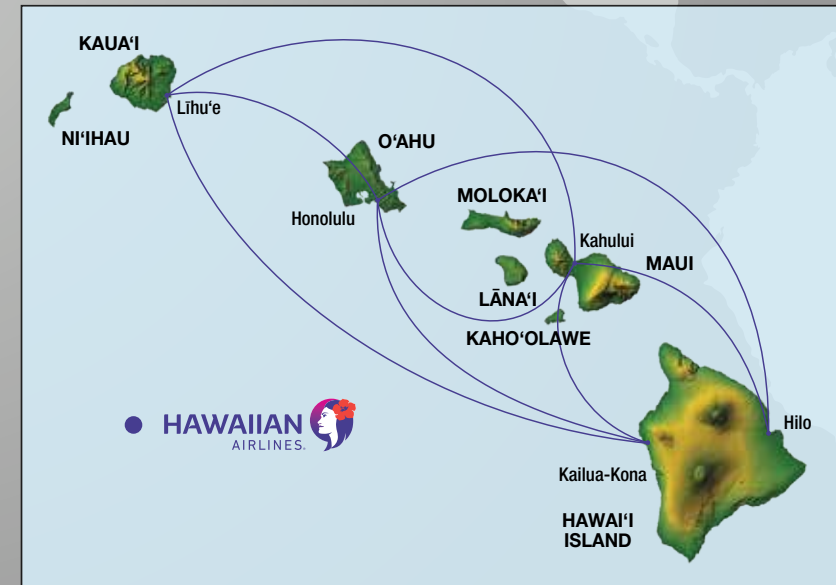


**HAWAIIANMiles.**

To learn more about our partnership programs, please visit [HawaiianAirlines.com/HawaiianMiles](https://www.hawaiianairlines.com/hawaiianmiles).

To join HawaiianMiles, visit [HawaiianAirlines.com/Join/HanaHou](https://www.hawaiianairlines.com/join/hanahou) or call **1-877-HA-MILES (426-4537)**.





Hawaiian Airlines has 59 Interline Partners across the globe.



## The ‘Ohana Pages



Last summer Hawaiian Airlines sponsored a surf contest and beach cleanup at Nishihama Beach. Both events were in celebration of the tenth anniversary of Honolulu's sister-city relationship with Chigasaki, Japan.

### Sister Acts

In 2014, Honolulu established a sister-city relationship with Chigasaki, Japan, known for its thriving surf community and laid-back lifestyle. A year prior, the Japanese city made aloha shirts the official summer wear. Last July, in commemoration of the agreement's tenth anniversary, Hawaiian Airlines proudly sponsored the 2024 Honolulu Mayor's Cup surf contest at Nishihama Beach. The contest was for surfers age 15 and under, representing surf clubs in Chigasaki.

"We're very grateful to take part in this honorable event," said Hawaiian Airlines Country Director Toru Sakaguchi during the opening ceremony. "Although miles apart, the ocean connects our two cities and it's also what connects us here today, and I look forward to continuing our support

of bridging the similar cultures of Chigasaki and Honolulu."

To give young Japanese surfers experience in Hawai'i's waters, three contest winners were each awarded 80,000 HawaiianMiles—equivalent to a round-trip flight between Tokyo and Honolulu. Once the contest concluded, all 120 attendees—including employee volunteers with the airline, city officials and community members—dispersed across the beach for a cleanup effort.

"Caring for our coastlines and promoting sustainable activities is vital, not only to our employees but to the communities we serve," said Keiko Tsukui, Hawaiian's manager of Japan partnerships and promotions. "We've hosted several beach cleanups in Japan, as well as transported Japanese students to Honolulu to assist in a cleanup at Ala Moana Beach Park. We take pride in

educating our youth on the importance of traveling pono (responsibly) through these combined efforts."

### Lights and Diamonds

On December 7 an Electric Light Parade—complete with floats, marching bands and decorated city vehicles—will light up the streets from 'A'ala Park to Honolulu Hale. Once the parade arrives at the city's municipal center, Mayor Rick Blangiardi will flip the switch on the 40th annual Honolulu City Lights, illuminating a towering Christmas tree and a variety of displays. The evening also includes food booths, live music, rides and games.

Hawaiian Airlines is proud to be a long-running sponsor of Honolulu City Lights, which features additional events throughout December. For a complete schedule, visit [honolulucitylights.org](http://honolulucitylights.org).

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ALOHA!

Join us for our new dining and bar experience featuring hand crafted cocktails, freshly farmed ingredients, and familiar & new flavors inspired by the beautiful cultures of this place we call home.

We look forward to serving you!

We invite you to our new location at Velocity Honolulu for distanced dine-in & bar or for take-out.

**MW Restaurant**  
888 Kapiolani Boulevard  
Commercial Unit, Suite 201  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813  
808.955.6505

[mwrestaurant.com](http://mwrestaurant.com)

**Artizen by MW**  
888 Kapiolani Boulevard  
Commercial Unit, Suite 102  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813  
808.524.0499

[artizenbymw.com](http://artizenbymw.com)



Each year the Public Workers' Electric Light Parade launches the month-long Honolulu City Lights. This year's parade is on December 7, with a route that begins downtown and follows King Street to Honolulu Hale, where the first participants arrive at approximately 6:30 p.m.

Also taking place in the holiday season is the 15th annual Hawaiian Airlines Diamond Head Classic, which runs December 22 through 25 at Stan Sheriff Center's SimpliFi Arena, on the campus of UH-Mānoa. The eight-team field for the 2024 Classic will feature Hawai'i, Charlotte, College of Charleston, Loyola Chicago, Murray State, Nebraska, Oakland and Oregon State.

Each team will compete in one game per day, advancing through the bracket over three days for a total of twelve games. The two teams that remain undefeated throughout will face off in the championship game on the final day of the tournament. For tickets and information, visit [espnevents.com/hawaiian-airlines-diamond-head-classic](http://espnevents.com/hawaiian-airlines-diamond-head-classic).

Farm to Air

Sadie Yu began raising animals not long after taking her first steps around the family's spacious four-acre backyard in

rural Hilo. Surrounded by goats, pigs, cows and chickens, Yu's love for farming naturally grew, and last year the ten-year-old founded Sweetheart Farm to expand on her casual egg sales with products ranging from microgreens and chili pepper jelly to baked goods and liliko'i (passion fruit) butter.

Sweetheart Farm is a passion for Sadie, but more importantly it's a way to help cover medical expenses for her three-year-old brother, Ka'ohe, who has a rare genetic condition that requires frequent hospital visits and travel to the continental United States for evaluations.

"Sadie wanted to do her part in supporting her family, which fueled her journey as a young entrepreneur," recalls her mother, Jodi. "She was later given the opportunity to be a part of Keiki Rise, a program for young entrepreneurs. Keiki Rise enabled her to become a legitimate business, and things took off from there."

At the end of a recent TV news interview, Sadie, who is now 11 and

entering sixth grade at Kamehameha Schools in Kea'au, remarked that her career goal was to feature her products on Hawaiian Airlines' snack carts. We got the message, and after a few meetings to discuss product packaging and logistics, Sadie's dream came true in the summer when guests onboard flight HA62 from Kona to Los Angeles were the first to experience her liliko'i butter.

"When we learned about Sadie's amazing drive to help her little brother, we were inspired to find a way to bring her delicious liliko'i butter into our cabin and encourage her business journey," said Alana Gaitley Jones, a manager with Hawaiian's product development team. "We are delighted to finally share her sweet product and heartwarming story with our guests."

"Ka'ohe and I want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all your support," Sadie told HA62 guests prior to joining flight attendants on the carrier's Pau Hana Cart service. The entire supply of nearly 100 liliko'i butter jars sold out





**Big Island entrepreneur Sadie Yu's liliko'i butter was an instant hit when it was introduced on select Hawaiian flights last summer.**

within minutes. "I'm super grateful, I can't express with words," said Sadie. "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

Sweetheart Farm's liliko'i butter was later made available as a surprise-and-delight offering on select Hawaiian flights between Los Angeles and Kona, with all proceeds going to the Yu family. Sweetheart Farm's products are available for purchase at Island Gourmet Market in Waikoloa or via Instagram @sweetheartfarm.

### Cargo Cares

While we take great pride in safely transporting our guests to their destinations, our Cargo team is equally proud of its role in getting goods where they need to be. As a company rooted in Hawai'i, the relationships we form and nurture with local businesses are key to our mutual success.

Kahea Kaaihili, the owner of Mokuwai Piko Poi, is a fourth-generation kalo (taro) farmer from Waipi'o Valley on Hawai'i Island. Her 'ohana has been growing kalo and processing poi for generations through a small commercial kitchen in nearby Honoka'a.

When Kahea agreed to sell her poi pops to Kahumana—a nonprofit organization in Wai'anae, O'ahu, and

a sponsor of the summer nutrition program Kaukau 4 Keiki (K4K)—nervousness set in because it was the company's largest order and shipment to date. Her concerns quickly turned to relief when she arrived at our Hilo cargo facility.

"We have been on both ends of shipping as well as receiving for many years now," says Kaaihili. "But this summer as we partnered with the Kahumana team, the staff at Hawaiian Air Cargo Hilo were even more amazing than they already are! They were the greatest cheer squad ... they were so excited for our keiki of Wai'anae and helped to keep us excited even on the harder days."

The K4K program uses only locally sourced items to provide nutritious meal boxes that make a week's worth of breakfast and lunch meals throughout the period when kids are home for summer school break. The K4K boxes are distributed at no cost to families in rural areas that meet the eligibility requirements for free and reduced meals at Hawai'i's public schools. By the end of the K4K program in late July, Mokuwai Piko Poi had shipped 42,000 poi pops to Kahumana.

"Living in Hawai'i, we use the word aloha so freely," Kaaihili adds.



**Hawaiian's air cargo teams are a critical link in local, national and international supply chains.**

"However, the employees of Hawaiian Air Cargo Hilo practice it. What a blessing it is to know that we have them supporting and encouraging Mokuwai Piko Poi to follow our dreams of providing poi for our people. They transported our poi with so much aloha and made the distance between islands so effortless."

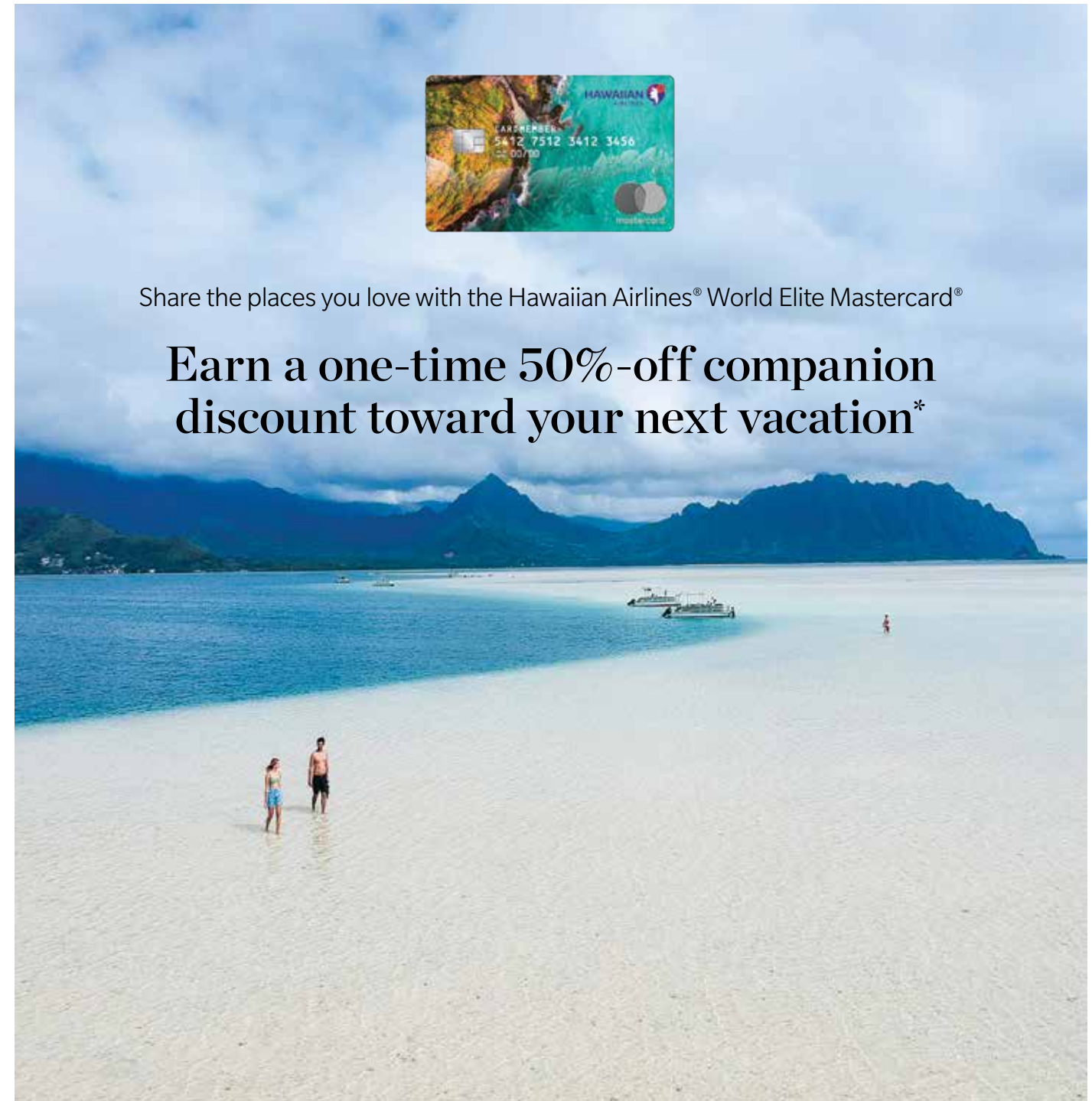
Hawaiian's Hilo Cargo team has also been helping Hula Brothers get lychee, longan and rambutan from its Kea'au farm on Hawai'i Island to markets in the Islands and on the US West Coast for more than five years. "They take care of my product and try to get it on the plane as fast as possible," says Hula Brothers owner Bob Hamilton. "I don't always know all of their names, but they know mine—they've helped us a lot."

These strong working relationships are key to ensuring our Island communities thrive. "It feels really good to support local businesses by helping to get their products to various destinations," says Jennifer Gouveia, chief cargo agent at our Hilo station. "Of course, we're going to support them, no matter what."



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# The Patron Saint of Wi-Fi



St. Jude's Episcopal Church in Ocean View is a source of spiritual and digital connection for the remote Hawai'i Island community.

Thirty miles from the nearest stoplight, a crew of survivalists, scofflaws, veterans, immigrants and farmers are homesteading on lava lots climbing the slopes of Mauna Loa. Ocean View has an iffy rep: If you move here, the Reddit thread recommends getting “a fence, a few loud dogs and a gun.”

All three are well represented in OV, where nearly 30 percent of residents live below the poverty line and stripped cars dot the lava fields. Few are connected to the electrical grid, and water is strictly catchment. It's a hardscrabble place, some might say postapocalyptic. But below the surface you'll discover solidarity, a keen sense of humor and an ascendant community.

At the heart of OV's ecosystem sits St. Jude's Episcopal Church. Dan Garrett, a volunteer with a standout singing voice, explains that St. Jude's embodies Matthew 25:35-37: “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me

something to drink. ... I needed clothes and you clothed me.” As you read this, someone in Ocean View is receiving one or all of these necessities from St. Jude's.

In a stroke of compassionate creativity, St. Jude's modernized this bit of Scripture: For I was alone, and you connected me. In 2010, St. Jude's opened its Wi-Fi network to OV's cadre of characters, irrespective of their religious inclinations—or lack thereof. Suddenly, the neighborhood church was buzzing with people connecting to the internet in what was previously a digital desert, and St. Jude's became known as “the patron saint of Wi-Fi.” From this initiative cascaded free community services based on human kindness. “The main message is to be kind,” Garrett says. “If it's greedy, self-serving, concerned with status or doesn't center on being kind, that ain't Jesus.”

I roll up to St. Jude's, guided by its simple steeple tucked amid exuberant gardens, happy to see the “No Guns Allowed” signs. Like every Saturday, today is Showers and Soup—a blessing for me since a pipe burst where I'm staying. Hungry and a bit grotty, I line up behind a Marshallese woman cooing to a toddler in the sun-flooded chapel/meeting room while a smiling volunteer dispenses bowls of hearty soup. Scanning for a seat, I join a trio of scruffy older men. “I'm not telling you where I live. I don't want visitors!” says one to another, stalking off. I don't know him, but I like how he sets boundaries. I fall into easy conversation with a fellow named Paul about the home he's building using repurposed materials and piles of lava rock; we agree the soup is terrific.

Fortified, I head around back for a shower. Volunteers dispense shampoo, conditioner, body wash and clean towels and disinfect the stalls, grab bars included. Again, St. Jude's signage comforts: “Please do not pee

in the showers.” Singing, however, is allowed, I learn as I wait. I watch as a guy named Dave maneuvers his wheelchair over some 'a'a (rough lava) chunks en route to the stall. A volunteer places a shower bench inside saying, “You're going to feel good after that hot shower, and great after your free haircut!” Food, showers, haircuts, books and, of course, Wi-Fi are available free, with zero judgment or obligation to attend church.

Noble, considering that for years the church had no priest and by 2012 the congregation numbered only a dozen. Extinction loomed. Then, in 2014, the “matriarch of St. Jude's,” bishop committee member Cordelia Burt, struck on the idea of a “visiting priest” program. “Our bishop was skeptical, saying it would never work,” Cordelia says, “asking priests to pay to come to Hawai'i.” She held firm in the conviction that a free car and house in Hawai'i in exchange for a month of Sunday sermons would attract adventurous clergy. Ten years on, St. Jude's visiting priest program is filled through mid-2028, and there's a long waiting list.

“St. Jude's has an amazing group of folks doing wonderful things,” says the Reverend David Hacker, on loan from his congregations in Yakima, Washington, to serve as visiting priest. “It's driven by the laity here. They're moving and shaking this place.” His upbeat sermon about older generations passing the baton to the younger weaves Hawaiian concepts of generational knowledge together with the teachings of St. Francis of Assisi.

Cordelia, who celebrated her eighty-fifth birthday last June, underscores his message. “We love what we do but we're getting old. We need more volunteers and some young blood.” A hard truth delivered with a smile, Cordelia hopes the next generation who comes for the Wi-Fi will stay for the community. **hh**

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