

V26 N°4

JUNE - JULY 2023

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ISLAND INTELLIGENCE

17 /
Right Before Your
Very Eyes

STORY BY **LARRY LIEBERMAN**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **TOMMY SHIH**

18 /
For the Love of Limpets

STORY BY **MALANIE MCLELLAN**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **ELYSE BUTLER**

20 /
Barberian Days

STORY BY **YVONNE HUNTER**
PHOTOGRAPH BY **LAURA LA MONACA**

22 /
Artist of the
Vanishing World

STORY BY **VIOLA GASKELL**

24 /
Axis Accessories

STORY BY **LUKE WAIKS**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **HAYDEN RAMLER**

26 /
History in High-Res

STORY BY **RON WILLIAMS JR.**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **MATT MALLAMS**

DEPARTMENTS & FEATURES

30 /
Fire & Flow

Lighting up with Hawai‘i’s
fire dance tribe

STORY BY **BEAU FLEMISTER**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **RYAN SIU**

42 /
Heavy Metal

Lifting a 7,500-ton ship
out of the sea takes skill,
finesse and a state-of-the-
art dry-dock system

STORY BY **LARRY LIEBERMAN**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **DANA EDMUNDS**

54 /
The Last Taro Farmer

At 91, Uncle Nana Gorai
has lived a life of the lo‘i

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **PF BENTLEY**
WORDS BY **CATHARINE LO GRIFFIN**

64 /
Fine Feathered Frenemies

Love them or hate them,
chickens just might be
Hawai‘i’s other state bird

STORY BY **DAVID THOMPSON**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **AKASHA RABUT**

74 /
A Night at the Races

Fast gas and funny cars at
Maui Raceway Park

STORY BY **SHANNON WIANECKI**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **VINCENT BERCASIO**

86 /
Call of the Mountain

A life apart on Pālehua

STORY BY **MARTHA CHENG**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **JOSIAH PATTERSON**

96 /
A Fine Pickle

Island pickleballers are
dinking their way to the
top of America’s fastest-
growing sport

STORY BY **ERIC STINTON**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **IJFKE RIDGLEY**

104 /
The Pen and the Sword

Comic book artist Stan
Sakai has made a life’s
work of drawing from
Japanese history

STORY BY **STU DAWRS**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **EMI FUJII**



114 /
Events Calendar &
Island by Island

143 /
Hawaiian Airlines
Information

160 /
PAU HANA

The Long Return

STORY BY **STU DAWRS**
PHOTOGRAPH BY **MIGUEL CARRASCO BRATTI**



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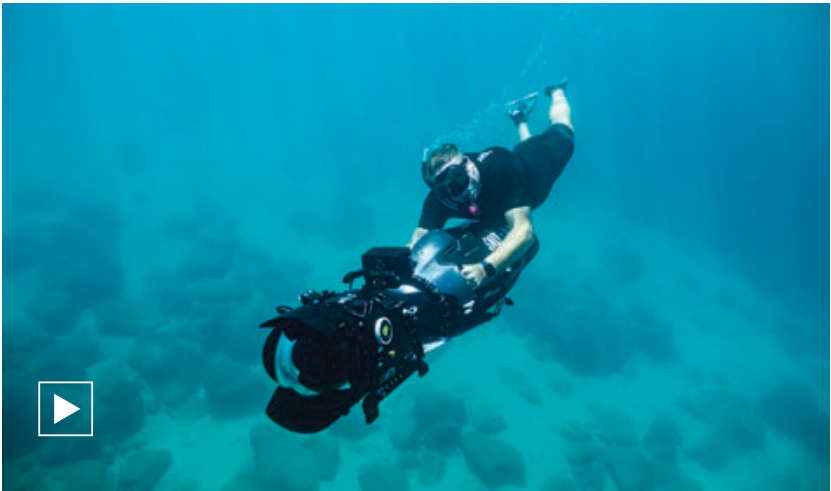
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A NIGHT AT THE RACES / Island life isn’t always laid-back. We join the Saturday night crew at Maui Raceway Park, one of the oldest operating drag strips in the country.

PHOTOGRAPH BY VINCENT BERCASIO



SHOOTING GIANTS / Pioneering cinematographer Mike Prickett has made a career of filming the world’s biggest waves and the surfers who ride them.

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ON THE COVER
Blade Runner

Janson Keomaka takes a break while repairing a propeller on the *MV Carolyn Chouest* at Pacific Shipyards International in Honolulu.

PHOTO BY **DANA EDMUNDS**



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Martha Cheng



“The mountain chooses you,” the residents of Pālehua told **Martha Cheng**, who wrote “The Call of the Mountain,” about the remote O’ahu community. “I kept thinking this when I camped at Camp Pālehua one night, the wind whipping so strong it tore my tent stakes out of the ground and kept me awake all night. Maybe the mountain didn’t want me there, maybe because I was writing about it. The people who lived on Pālehua wanted to tell me about the mountain’s magic, but they were also worried about exposure,” Cheng says. “Matthew Chapman, whose great-grandfather built the first cabin on the slopes, likened the cabin to Brigadoon—the enchanted village that remains unchanged and invisible to the outside world as long as everyone who lives there never leaves. But I think it’s not that Pālehua’s residents want to give up the outside world; they want the world to be more like Pālehua. And that’s partly why they share their stories of the mountain.” Cheng has been writing about Hawai’i’s beloved places for more than a decade.

Larry Lieberman



“I was amazed that such a completely different world exists so close to the busy road traveled by thousands every day,” says **Larry Lieberman**, who wrote “Heavy Metal,” about Pacific Shipyards International. “My tour of Pacific Shipyards held surprise after surprise, from massive ships sitting on tiny blocks, to novel experimental watercraft designs, to the cutting-edge solar power and battery storage technology they use to power the entire operation without a connection to the utility grid. I left with a renewed appreciation of how important shipping is to our Island community, and what a critical role the shipyard plays in keeping it all running smoothly.” Lieberman is a frequent contributor to *Hana Hou!*; when not writing for the magazine he promotes cybersecurity and renewable energy and plays drums with some of Hawai’i’s most talented musicians.

Akasha Rabut



“As a portrait photographer, this was my first time mostly shooting animals,” says **Akasha Rabut**, who shot “Fine Feathered Frenemies.” “Growing up on Kaua’i, there are so many chickens that most people think of them as a nuisance, akin to rats in New York City. They’ve never bothered me, but explaining the assignment to family and friends was kind of embarrassing. Then I started spending time with people who have chickens as pets or who farm them, and seeing their relationships with chickens was really moving. I started to see the beauty in their color variations and look for them now. Even my dad, who despises them, has started sending me photos of chickens in beautiful places. Maybe I’ve changed his perspective, too.” Rabut is a Filipina American photographer and educator based in New Orleans and currently working in Hawai’i. Her work explores multicultural phenomena and traditions rooted in the American South. In 2020, she released her first photo book *Death Magick Abundance*, which documents and celebrates ten years of post-Katrina culture.

Vincent Bercasio



“I wasn’t familiar with drag racing culture before this assignment,” says **Vincent Bercasio**, who shot Maui Raceway Park for “A Night at the Races” in this issue. “I didn’t even know the raceway existed. It was such a visceral experience to be there. You can feel the engines shake the earth, and you feel it in your body. The smell of burnt tires and smoke, the cars whooshing past you, and right after that loud takeoff is this really strange silence that you just sit in with the other spectators. I had to wear a safety vest, and if I wanted to cross the track or go into a more interesting area, I had to announce it and be really cautious. Normally when I’m shooting, the camera is like a barrier between me and the subject. But shooting something as extreme as this, when you feel it hitting your face and your body and your ears and your mind, you’re being forced to confront the subject.” Bercasio is a photographer, film editor and cinematographer based in Pearl City, O’ahu. To see more of his work, visit Instagram @bercasi.

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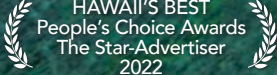
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Building Hawai‘i’s Future Workforce



Martin Fruean (pictured) joined Hawaiian Airlines as a ramp agent in 2006. He is now a lead mechanic, thanks in part to the airline’s workforce development partnership with Honolulu Community College.

This is what the numbers tell us: Hawaiian Airlines has just over 7,200 employees, making us one of the largest employers in Hawai‘i. We generate \$10 billion a year in industry activity, or 11 percent of the state’s gross domestic product. But statistics don’t always tell the whole story.

Consider Martin Fruean. He joined Hawaiian in 2006 as a contract services ramp agent handling flights for other airlines and eventually became part of our mainline team. Five years later, he was promoted to chief ramp agent. As his knowledge of company operations grew, so did his interest in aircraft. He enrolled in Honolulu Community College (HonCC) to prepare for the Airframe & Powerplant Certificate exam, putting him on the track to become an aviation mechanic.

Martin committed to a grueling schedule that included classroom instruction from 7:00 a.m. to 2:15 p.m., followed by the 3:00 p.m.-to-midnight shift on the ramp. “It was hard to juggle work and school and family at the same time,” Martin recalls. He had four children at the time, with a fifth on the way.

Martin stuck with it and in 2016 applied to the Aviation Maintenance

Apprenticeship Program (AMAP), which Hawaiian had just launched with HonCC and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Union to provide on-the-job experience for students enrolled in Federal Aviation Administration-accredited programs. Martin was accepted into AMAP and two years later became one of three apprentices hired as full-time aircraft mechanics at Hawaiian.

“I did it so my kids could look up to me,” he says about his decision to seek advanced learning opportunities. In 2021, Martin was promoted to Aircraft Maintenance Lead Mechanic.

Last year, we welcomed 1,400 new employees to the Hawaiian ‘ohana. They included pilots, flight attendants and more than five hundred teammates to fill positions “above” and “below” the wing at airports in the destinations we serve. As Hawai‘i’s largest and longest-serving airline, our business has a ripple effect across many sectors of the local economy, including tourism and agriculture. All told, Hawaiian supports some 54,000 jobs across the state.

Contributing to the health of Hawai‘i’s workforce is just as important to us as supporting the economic vitality

BY **PETER INGRAM**, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, HAWAIIAN AIRLINES

of the state. Hawaiian has invested in several workforce development initiatives and partnered with the University of Hawai‘i and Arizona State University to create opportunities for Hawai‘i students to pursue rewarding aviation careers. We recently joined Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University’s Aviation Maintenance Technology SkillBridge program, which has successfully transitioned more than 380 servicemen and women into civilian careers since its inception in 2019.

I am particularly proud of the new partnership we launched last year with HonCC to increase the number of students enrolled in its aeronautics maintenance technology (AERO) program, the only one of its kind in the Pacific. The college was faced with a two-year waiting list of students; the program was unable to grow due to a lack of qualified instructors. With our robust in-house aviation maintenance training program, we saw an opportunity to increase the AERO program’s capacity: Two Hawaiian employees stepped in to teach at HonCC’s campus to help AERO students complete their two-year associate degree and prepare for FAA certification testing. With the additional teaching resources, HonCC can double enrollment and increase the local pipeline of qualified aviation technicians.

The apprenticeship program that trained Martin Fruean continues to produce top-notch aircraft mechanics—more than thirty of whom have joined Hawaiian. As for Martin, his family has grown to nine and he continues to inspire others with his ambition to learn. “You can find the answer,” he offers to anyone seeking career advice. “Don’t give up.”

I’m glad Martin didn’t give up. We’re a better airline because of him.

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A man in a white suit stands on a small stage, gesturing with his hands as he speaks to an audience. The room is dimly lit, with warm light from stage lamps and several red lanterns hanging from the ceiling. In the background, a portrait of a man is displayed on an easel, and a poster with the word 'KELLAR' is visible. The audience is seated in the foreground, mostly in shadow.

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island intelligence



Right Before Your Very Eyes



Nothing up his sleeve: Master of legerdemain Shoot Ogawa (seen above, on the facing page and previous spread), performs close-up magic at the **Magical Mystery Show** in Waikiki. The new show is an homage to parlor magic, a popular form of entertainment in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ogawa, a **Magical Mystery Show** regular, is among a rotating lineup of twenty-plus magicians.

Visitors crowd around a glass display case in a small, dark parlor lined with curiosities and antiquities—part fortuneteller's lair and part Victorian anteroom. An eccentric host shares marvels like a two-headed baby chick, a samurai hara kiri knife and vampire-hunting tools used by wannabe Van Helsing of the late nineteenth century. Then, a secret door opens onto a larger but still intimate chamber with ornate sofas and leather armchairs and a small aisle in between. In those few feet the magic happens.

Many people think of magic shows as massive productions, with arena seating that keeps viewers far from the stage lest they observe the inner workings. But the **Magical Mystery Show** at the Hilton Waikiki Beach and the Fairmont Kea Lani on Maui aims for the opposite: In the style and spirit of Victorian-era parlor magic (a popular form of entertainment long

before radio, television and internet), this show puts audience members face to face with a rotating cast of world-class close-up magicians. Wondrous illusions are performed just inches from the audience, letting guests see for themselves that there's nothing up the sleeves.

One of the repeat performers is Shoot Ogawa, the 2022 World Champion of Close-Up Magic. Before you can say “presto,” jaws drop as Ogawa pulls off a string of perplexing prestidigitations, like turning coins into live goldfish mere inches from the audience's wide (and watchful) eyes. Ogawa's sleight of hand leaves onlookers bewildered. Never does he rely on big props to create illusions. It's all about the minutiae: coins, cards, rings, ropes and, most importantly, hands that make them do the seemingly impossible.

“Our shows are dedicated to King David Kalākaua, the last king of

Hawai'i,” says show founder Jonathan Todd. “He was the first reigning monarch to circumnavigate the globe, and in 1881 he met Queen Victoria in London and was treated to a parlor magic show. That Golden Age in the history of magic is the type of experience we're re-creating.” The show also teaches magic through afternoon classes free to Island residents and hotel guests, and a portion of the ticket sales is donated to the Shriners children's hospital in a further nod to Kalākaua, who was head of the Hawai'i Shriners.

For the Love of Limpets



Yellowfoot ‘opihi (*Cellana sandwicensis*), a marine snail that’s a staple at lū‘au and poke bars, are in decline from overharvesting. Graduate student researchers Angel Valdez and Mitch Marabella at the University of Hawai‘i are applying new biochemical approaches to coax ‘opihi to breed in the lab and will eventually transplant them to the Islands’ intertidal zones.

Not everyone loves the sweet, briny flavor of ‘opihi, but those who do are willing to die for it. The native limpet clings to rocks in Hawai‘i’s intertidal zone, and ‘opihi pickers sometimes risk their lives to pry them off in between sets of crashing waves. The mollusk is a staple at lū‘au, and it’s known in Hawaiian lore as Pele’s favorite snack. But as with many delicious living things, it’s becoming scarce. While there are size requirements for legal harvesting, the lack of regulation on the number that can be picked, combined with lax enforcement, has devastated ‘opihi, particularly on O‘ahu.

“You only need one group of people to overpick and ruin an entire area,” says Angel Valdez, one of two graduate student researchers in the Department of Molecular Biosciences and Bioengineering in the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources at the University of Hawai‘i

at Mānoa. “Once they’re wiped out, helmet urchins move in where the ‘opihi once were. It’s supposed to be a balance, but if you wipe out one species, another moves in and doesn’t leave room for the other to come back. It can take years for the ‘opihi to come back.”

Valdez and fellow grad student Mitch Marabella are tackling the complicated endeavor of breeding ‘opihi in the lab—something that’s been tried going back to the 1980s but never achieved. Employing novel biochemical approaches, Valdez and Marabella have gotten closer than most of their predecessors—one of their blackfoot ‘opihi (*Cellana exarata*) survived for thirty-two days (the record—six months—was achieved by a grad student in 1983). “So far, no one has been able to keep them alive long enough to witness a full life cycle, which complicates the ability to find techniques that will enable success,” Angel says. Mitch adds,

“Yet success is arbitrary in science. Even studying methods that haven’t been successful is helpful because it points us in new directions.” Once Valdez and Marabella have coaxed ‘opihi to grow to viability, they will take the next step: transplanting them into the wild.

Valdez and Marabella both graduate in two years and hope that the next generation of students will carry the torch (they managed to keep theirs lit through crowdfunding once the research money ran out). Even if successful, science alone won’t be enough; public awareness and cooperation are critical to ensuring that future lū‘au don’t go lacking. “The best thing people can do is just be mindful,” says Valdez. “Don’t take more than you need. Everything is necessary for each little thing in the environment to thrive.”

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Barberian Days



Golden Hawaii Barbershop’s midcentury vibe—as well as the complimentary beer with every haircut—harks to the Islands’ laid-back 1950s and ’60s surf culture.

In a nod to its low-key surfing vibe, Golden Hawaii Barbershop in Kaimukī serves a complimentary beer with every haircut. In another nod to its nostalgic vibe, the walls are decked with vintage artwork, album covers and Island memorabilia from the 1950s and ’60s. Golden Hawaii is the brainchild of local entrepreneur and style maven Grant Fukuda, who says the concept is

“a play of modernity and tradition, the best of both worlds.” The original Koken chairs, also from the ’50s, are the most coveted in the barbering world, says barber and shop manager Ben Faraon. The men who come in for a coif might also walk out with a midcentury-inspired surfboard shaped by artist Eric Walden. Faraon, who became interested in the art when he accompanied his

STORY BY YVONNE HUNTER
PHOTOGRAPH BY LAURA LA MONACA

grandfather on regular visits to his barber, says that most customers go for the haircut/straight razor/hot towel treatment. (And yes, the proper term for someone specializing in grooming services for men is a “barber,” whereas a “stylist” may serve both male and female clients.) Golden’s customers range from fathers bringing their sons in for a first haircut to NFL players, surfers, doctors, lawyers and kids right out of high school. Surf legend Gerry Lopez is a regular. Pro surfer Alex Pendleton drops in once a month after sessions on O’ahu’s North Shore. (Golden Hawaii is one of his sponsors.) Faraon, he says, can deliver whatever look Pendleton wants, from a buzz cut with a drop fade to a mullet. “I wouldn’t say I got a mullet, I got a ‘modified mohawk,’” Pendleton says. “You can make a mullet look like you’re going to a NASCAR race in Tennessee or the most stylish cut out there,” says Faraon. Whatever the cut, Pendleton says, Faraon “kills it every time.”

Pendleton connected with Golden Hawaii via pro surfer Jun Jo, whom he calls “an ambassador for people with unique lifestyles.” Founder of the clothing brand In4mation, Jo visits the shop every couple of weeks. “Golden is about nostalgia and love of surfing,” he says. “It’s a lifestyle. It’s also a place where collaborations happen.” He likens Golden’s barbers to therapists; they hear everyone’s problems and offer their undivided attention once every two weeks. “We talk about life, kids, issues. I feel comfortable there,” Jo says. “It’s not pretentious. I know all the barbers on a first-name basis.”

It’s a vibe Faraon embraces. “With a lot of people, their guard comes down. When hard times come up, men are grieving together. I count my blessings and try to uplift these people. Some days, a haircut is all we need.”

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Artist of the Vanishing World



Charlot the Youngest: Descended from a line of renowned Hawai'i artists, Saxony Charlot (seen above in the Pu'u Maka'ala Natural Area Reserve on Hawai'i Island with an 'amakahi, a native honeycreeper) is following in her ancestors' footsteps with pieces celebrating the Islands' endemic flora and fauna. Above left, an 'ō'ū on 'ie'ie; right, an extinct O'ahu 'ō'ō perched on 'ōhi'a mamo.

Saxony Charlot recalls hunting for lizards as a kid outside her renowned great-grandfather's home in Kāhala. Had she been tall enough then, she might have seen the bird of paradise and banana tree her great grandfather had painted on a wall high above a glass door, a work of art that revealed him to be a kindred spirit, inspired by the same love for nature.

The 25-year-old University of Hawai'i at Hilo student is the youngest in a family of artists who've taken to walls, canvases, books and film to extol the vibrancy of life in Hawai'i. Her great-grandfather Jean Charlot found fame among the 1920s muralists who emerged from the Mexican Revolution. Alongside heavyweights like Diego Rivera, Charlot painted larger-than-life revolutionary scenes influenced both by Catholicism and indigenous Mexican iconography. After he moved to Hawai'i in 1949, his work veered toward depictions of nature and daily life.

Though Jean Charlot passed away decades before she was born,

as a child Saxony was surrounded by his art and by stories about him and her grandfather Martin, who carried the muralist torch. Saxony creates smaller but similarly purpose-driven works. Whereas her forebears exalted daily life and Hawaiian culture, both ancient and contemporary, Saxony's art celebrates Hawai'i's natural history, particularly the native species she draws in immaculate detail. Though initially an outsider, Jean appreciated Hawaiian culture, and Saxony says it shows in pieces like "Night Hula," her favorite of his murals. "I think both Jean and I try to show the beauty of things that need to be preserved," she says. "Just with different approaches."

Saxony's zeal for protecting native flora and fauna grew while she was working with the State Department of Land and Natural Resources on Hōlanikū (Kure Atoll), one of the most remote Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Seeing a multitude of rare native species thriving on Hōlanikū, Saxony felt compelled to make others

aware of the biodiversity Hawai'i once had, and the need to protect what still exists. "I wake up thinking about conservation, and I go to sleep thinking about it," she says. Saxony attributes the intensity of her interest—something shared by great, enduring artists—at least in part to her autism. "It makes you wonder," she laughs. "They say it runs in the family." People often ask whether Saxony plans to paint a mural of her own one day. Though she likes the concept of "art for the people," she has yet to develop any such ambitions. "Maybe one day," she says.

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Axis Accessories



When life gives you axis deer, make accessories. Rowdy Outdoors is tackling the problem of the destructive, invasive species on Maui by turning their hides into purses, belts, wallets and more. Above left, Rowdy Outdoors’ new Kukui hunting suit, with a Hawai’i-specific camo pattern.

Upcountry Maui paniolo (cowboy) Noah Foti started out by riding sheep when he was a kid and worked his way up to bulls. Now he’s 28, with a degree in business marketing from the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, and is finishing his rookie year on the Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association’s Badlands pro circuit. Using his winnings from Hawai’i and Mainland bull riding competitions, Noah started his clothing and accessories brand, Rowdy Outdoors, named for his first horse. “I helped birth Rowdy when I was seven. We sold him five or six times, but he always found his way back to me,” Noah says, flashing a photo of him as a boy with an amber foal nuzzling his hand. “We didn’t have a lot of money back then, but we had a lot of horses.”

Rowdy Outdoors is a mix of Noah’s personal creations and custom pieces fashioned by his extended family of Upcountry-based crafters. Noah and his fellow hunters harvest beautiful

but invasive and highly destructive axis deer. The hides are tanned by Maui Taxidermy and then head to Lisa Pestana, Noah’s aunt, who turns them into the purses, handbags, rifle slings and wallets that turn so many heads. Noah’s uncle, Patrick deVault, forges Damascus steel hunting knives and crafts sheaths from axis deer leather. Noah sells their creations online and returns the profits to his community of artists. From his office in an old rodeo announcer’s booth in Hai’kū, Noah handles much of the marketing, e-commerce and web design so the crafters can focus on their art.

Noah has designed his own modern hunting apparel in custom camo patterns designed to disappear into Hawai’i country brush. He tests his new Kukui two-piece, water-resistant, vented hunting suit himself on hunting trips, bringing along books on business and design to read in case the deer have taken the day off. He’s currently

designing backpacks, women’s hunting and casual attire. “It’s all about showing the world the high-quality outdoor gear Hawai’i can produce from the land and from our hands,” Noah says.

Rowdy Outdoors is just a year old, but it’s getting noticed. “My rodeo friends Jestyn Woodward and Kaipo Soledade wear my patch on their vests. Torrey Meister, a pro surfer, has the Rowdy logo on his surfboards. I’m thankful that the people I look up to are so supportive.” For now, Rowdy Outdoors gear is available at the Foam Company in Kahului, the Emporium in Makawao and online.

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History in High-Res



The Hawai'i State Archives is digitizing its collection of nineteenth-century glass-plate and lantern-slide photographs, “many of which have not been seen in generations,” says state archivist Adam Jansen. Above left, a lantern slide of Princess Miriam Likelike. Right, archivist Jesse Shiroma scans a glass plate, which preserves images in sharp detail even at high resolution.

In the early 1880s, Honolulu was a growing, cosmopolitan city. Hawai'i's government had signed a trade treaty with the United States, leading to astronomical profits for sugar planters. Jobs were plentiful, land was available and a new king who reveled in modern technology was in power. It was enough to attract a 26-year-old photographer named JJ Williams.

Williams—an Englishman—moved to Honolulu in 1880. Within a few short years, he ran one of the most successful studios in the Islands. Known as the unofficial “photographer of royalty,” Williams counted King Kalākaua, Princess Lili'uokalani, Princess Ka'iulani and other ali'i nui (high chiefs) as clients. The rich and well-connected

living in or passing through Honolulu sat for sessions in Williams' Fort Street studio—among them Ka'iulani's friend, writer Robert Louis Stevenson. Following Williams' death in 1926, the territorial legislature appropriated \$3,500 “for the purchase from the Estate of J. J. Williams ... all negatives of photographs of personages and events of particular historical interest to Hawaii.” That critically important collection of Hawai'i history was transferred to the government archives.

Almost a century later, the Hawai'i State Archives is sharing these extraordinary images of the Islands' past. Over the past three years, a dedicated digitization program has scanned more than thirty-five thousand historic images,

including over twenty-two thousand glass-plate negatives and over ten thousand lantern slides, the majority by Williams but including several other photographers. “Many of these images have not been seen for generations,” says state archivist Adam Jansen. “Of particular interest are ‘outtakes’ of royalty that never made it to print.” And these aren't your average low-resolution web images: The wet-collodion glass-plate technology of the era preserved images with amazing sharpness and clarity. Using a \$75,000 150-megapixel camera, archivists can digitize and upload images with unprecedented detail—a boon for those studying, say, the clothing worn by the subjects or objects they appeared with. High-resolution

scanning also means that large images may be printed without much loss of detail. “What we're probably most excited about,” says Jansen, “is offering these images to the public for free.”

The discovery of glass-plate images of nineteenth-century Hawaiian Kingdom power couple Iosepa and Emma Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u has already inspired a community education project to install prints of these me'e 'Ōiwi (Native heroes) in public buildings throughout Hawai'i.

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departments & features

Fire & Flow

Lighting up with Hawai‘i’s fire dance tribe

It is very dark despite the full moon, hidden behind storm clouds. On a lush private property halfway up O‘ahu’s Windward side, I follow couples and families pulling children in wagons toward the muffled sound of a drumbeat. With no lights or signage, I am unsure why I’m the only one using an iPhone flashlight, but perhaps, as this is the Lunar Vibes gathering, we are meant to be guided by the moon.

Lunar Vibes calls itself “an audio-visual movement meditation community retreat,” but the focus is fire. Specifically, fire dancing. At these quarterly, invitation-only retreats, much of O‘ahu’s fire dance community is here performing. In a grassy clearing surrounded by jungle, ringed by yurts, tents and canopies, with a stage and scaffolding in the back center of the space, giant speakers pump tribal EDM. In front of the stage, an area of the earth is cordoned off by a semicircle of LED tube lights, marking the performers’ zone. Some people wait for the show on blankets and camping chairs; others mill around, hug and reunite with old friends. “I haven’t seen you since FireDrums,” I hear at least three people exclaim. Vendors in





OPENING SPREAD / “Vibemaster” DJ Pair-a-Dice (a.k.a. Cory Rothwell), spins at O’ahu’s Lunar Vibes event, where Hawai’i’s contemporary fire dance and flow arts community gathers to perform.

TOP / Davey Kay burns off excess fuel by spinning his fire staff at Lunar Vibes.

BOTTOM / Zachary Augustin spins “poi balls” to music by ‘ukulele virtuoso Taimane.

AT LEFT / Lunar Vibes organizer and “Flamekeeper” Dhevhan Keith dances with a fire staff at Lunar Vibes.

pop-up tents sell crystal jewelry, festival garb and kombucha.

The playlist ends, and a woman approaches the mic wearing a Virgin Madonna-like crown and witchy Stevie Nicks getup. She strums a soulful, ethereal version of Michael Jackson’s “Thriller” while a handful of people stretch and practice twirling unlit staffs and other instruments. The vibe is very Burning Man—Mother Gaia meets post-apocalyptic steampunk meets nouveau shaman with a harmless dose of cultural appropriation.

Two dancers dip their respective instruments into lighter fluid, flames

ignite and they dance. One man spins a staff with two burning rings on each end—a dragonstaff, it’s called—balancing the shaft on various parts of his body, from shoulders into clavicle, down to biceps, then forearm, undulating beneath the blazing apparatus. A young woman in a leather bikini ignites two large, claw-like instruments—a fire fan—and dances sensually. Their flames burn for about the duration of a song; when they peter out, a new pair of dancers steps up, often with new implements, like a fire sword, swinging “poi” balls and fire knives.

Lunar Vibes has been happening for nearly four years now, organized

by “Flamekeeper” Dhevhan Keith and “Vibemaster” Cory Rothwell (a.k.a. DJ Pair-a-Dice) of Trial by Fire, a community of fire dancers and “flow artists” who gather various times a week near the Waikiki War Memorial Natatorium and at Barefoot Café near Queens Beach.

“This has become a safe place for us,” says Dhevhan. “The point of Lunar Vibes is the fire, but fire dancers gather the other arts. So, we’ll have slam poetry, musicians, DJs, meditation, yoga. It creates an ecosystem, but the main mission is to gather and nurture artists. We connect through the spark, and then

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we build a community based on that, instead of ideologies or doctrines.” Almost on cue, thunder booms at the end of the woman’s set, and rain comes down in torrents, scattering people to their tents, tarp walls whipping in the wind. A man next to me asks a woman if she has an extra hair tie, and I can’t quite tell if that’s a pickup line. She can’t either. The person on my other side asks me if the structure next door is the “Cuddle Tent,” and I shrug. “No, dude,” someone replies, “that’s the Goddess Lounge.” The rain stops, and folks file back onto the squishy ground, lighting up and

spinning flames in the mist, illuminated by the stage lights. The music and fire dancing will continue late into the night, followed by yoga in the morning, aerial hoop-dancing and workshops of all kinds: acupuncture, tea ceremonies, belly dancing, sound healing, kung fu, even a fashion show avec catwalk. While modern fire-and-flow arts communities exist all over the globe, with popular fire-focused festivals happening across the country, the particularly welcoming fire dance community on O’ahu is largely made up of transitory residents and kama’āina. Though various flow arts,



TOP / Keith as spirit animal at Lunar Vibes.

BOTTOM / Darian “Ace” Nieves performs with a fire sword.

AT LEFT / Flexibility and focus are integral to “flow arts” like fire dance. Yaniv Grafi hangs loose in elevated lotus pose.

fire dance circles and jam sessions have been happening around the Islands for decades, Trial by Fire created Lunar Vibes to be a safe and family-friendly alternative, free of alcohol and other intoxicants—as well as any inappropriate or nonconsensual behavior—not unknown to such gatherings. For this crew the focus is more the art than the party. What do people who play with fire do for their day jobs? “You’d be surprised who’s into this,” says Ryan Siu, a photographer who documents much of the modern fire dance community on the island. He points to the guy who



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“Chief Tui,” a.k.a Bryan Hinton, is one of the “crossover” artists bridging the realms of Polynesian with contemporary fire dance. “It’s a good scene with good people, and many of them are very talented,” he says of O’ahu’s Trial by Fire arts community.

was spinning the dragonstaff. “He works in pharmaceuticals. That guy,” he gestures to a man writhing on the ground with a burning staff, “owns an escape room business in town. Those two?” he says, nodding to a couple on deck awaiting their turn, “One of them is in advertising; the other did voice-acting for Netflix and Disney.”

A fire dancer’s “first burn” is a rite of passage. You can become adept at spinning a staff, but once you set it ablaze, everything changes. Now you’re in a relationship with a destructive force, with higher stakes.

Fire dancing “is an accomplishment,” says Srikanta Barefoot, a dancer, choreographer and co-founder of Fusion Arts, an event entertainment agency and contemporary circus company that also offers week-long fire dance retreats out of Montpellier, France. A former Cirque du Soleil performer, Srikanta, along with his wife, Jen, leads fire dancing retreats

around the world, including in Hawai’i, with the help of Trial by Fire. For him, as for many of his students, fire dancing is about more than just learning a performance art. “Often, lighting up for the first time will signify some kind of evolution in a person’s life, and that’s interesting to facilitate,” he says. “It’s transformational.”

When I join his O’ahu retreat with a group of eight women, I am 100 percent certain that Srikanta Barefoot is not a real name. A stage name, perhaps, or a festival name. Maybe one adopted at the denouement of a mushroom trip. But I am wrong. His last name is in fact Barefoot, a common(ish) English surname, and Srikanta (“keeper of knowledge and wisdom”) was given to him at birth by a guru from the commune in the Santa Cruz Mountains, where Srikanta was born and raised. This same guru also taught him how to wield a staff via an ancient Indian martial art, which gave Srikanta a leg up in fire dancing.

A dozen Burning Mans and a stint with Cirque du Soleil later, he met Jen (a trained contemporary dancer and circus performer) in Macau. The two eventually moved back to her home in France and created Fusion Arts.

Srikanta has gathered the group on a lawn behind the tennis courts at the base of Diamond Head, somewhat isolated from other park-goers. Most of the women will endure their trial by fire, their first burns today, and the tension is palpable. Srikanta clears away some dead twigs and dry ironwood leaves and picks up a can of fuel from a Costco bin. Srikanta, Jen and a helper demonstrate some safety protocols including the what-to-do-if-you-set-yourself-on-fire spiel. Then he beckons the first volunteer.

A middle-aged woman from Boston steps forth confidently. She’d just done a wardrobe change into something more ... memorable ... while her partner gets the iPhone angle right. Srikanta plays a moody South Asian-influenced

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“Fire speaks to all of us in a very unique way,” says world-renowned fire dancer Srikanta Barefoot, seen above teaching a fundamentals workshop on O’ahu. “We’ve all found it means something.” Being that this will be the first time some of the students in Barefoot’s class have danced with an active flame, that something could mean a “first burn,” an often painful rite of initiation.

track on the portable speaker. The woman dips each end of her staff into the fire and spins the shaft in her palms carefully, the two growing flames roaring softly against a cool trade wind. Her confidence blossoms, and she shimmies, getting more comfortable with the twin consequences. She twirls and even tosses the burning staff in the air, going off-script it seems, trying a few new moves I hadn’t seen her attempt over the course of the week. She bends forward and rests the staff on her lower back, letting it roll down her spine, catching it in the crook of her neck, nearly burning herself. The ten of us gasp in unison.

But this is her moment, and she’s making a meal of it. I feel as if we’re witnessing some kind of rebirth or out-of-body experience. The roar fades to a whisper, and her flame burns out. She bows solemnly, eyes watering and face beaming while we applaud. It feels like she was one person five minutes ago and someone new now. Srikanta was right.

Technically, Trial by Fire is a registered nonprofit, but clearly, it’s a vibe. On a Sunday evening, beneath the canopy of a banyan tree near the Barefoot Café, a man wearing an animal mask and a Matrix-length duster trench coat is DJing trance music while fire dancers take turns in the LED-lit circle. Passersby from nearby Kapi’olani Park, tourists lathered in sunscreen and confused elderly local couples stop and watch. The crowd thickens as night falls.

This is ground zero for Hawai’i’s modern fire dance scene, where dozens of dancers spin at least twice weekly until around 9 p.m. The adjacent performance space, usually popping off on Wednesdays, is beside the natatorium. Often there are workshops before sunset. I just walked over from one where a woman taught a dozen students (unlit) staff techniques.

Dhevhan, wizard-chic in a body scarf that flutters theatrically with any small gesture, explains that Trial by Fire

started in part as a way to legitimize fire dancing as an art form. Every time they light up, he clears it with HPD and alerts the Fire Department. The Trial by Fire dos and don’ts are posted at every gathering. Alcohol is not permitted, Dhevhan says, because booze and fire don’t mix. Donations for fuel are always appreciated, by the way.

Looking at the crowd, I ask him what I’ve often wondered: What is it about fire? “I definitely feel a very spiritual connection to the fire,” says Dhevhan. “Although I’m no longer religious, fire has always, through humanity’s history, had this power of gathering people. It gathers everybody, no matter who they are, no matter what creed or ideology they have. ... That’s basically the main draw for me: seeing that spark in people’s eyes. They’re united in this.”

Downfield, a splinter group is twirling fire. Outside the circle, a couple juggles while another practices acro-yoga, their two bodies balanced one on



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“I definitely feel a very spiritual connection to the fire,” says Dhevhan Keith, one of the founders of the nonprofit Trial by Fire, which organizes gatherings twice a week near Barefoot Café at Queens Beach in addition to its quarterly Lunar Vibes event (seen above). “Throughout humanity’s history, fire has had this power to gather people. It gathers everybody, no matter who they are, no matter what creed or ideology they have.”

the other, blurred by the night, becoming one amorphous creature that crawls into the circle and spins fire.

All this happening in Polynesia begs an inevitable question: How much of this is connected with traditional fire dancing, specifically Samoan fire knife dancing that’s performed across the Islands? Do those fire swords ever cross?

“I guess I’d be considered ‘the crossover guy,’” says Bryan Hinton, a.k.a. “Chief Tui,” a professional Samoan fire knife dancer and former University of Hawai’i running back. A student of venerated fire knife teacher Fue Maneafaiga and a former student of the Island-based Toa Ole Afi fire knife school, Chief Tui has performed just about everywhere: dozens of hotels around Waikīkī, countless weddings, cruise ships, convention centers, concerts, TV shows and music videos. “I’ve become friends with everybody in Trial by Fire. Before hanging out I thought

they were going to be shocked when they saw how I fire-danced. But then after watching a lot of them, it’s like, hey, they’re pretty good! Coming from a Polynesian fire knife background like myself, I think a lot of them are really impressive.”

So no issue with appropriation? “It’s a good scene with good people, and many of them are very talented,” says Chief Tui. “Why would I have a problem with that?”

Srikanta has led his group over, buzzing from their first burns. He lights up and steps into the circle with a blazing staff. Nimble and seasoned, he moves gracefully, without a hint of improvisation. A well-rehearsed performance, no stutters. Even the most respected members of the community stop to watch, like Taylor Reichle, a talented fire dancer who recently moved here from the Mainland.

“We’re all from all over, we gather at festivals where we share knowledge and we grow together,” she says,

“but I’ve never seen a community like this—that’s this big and so welcoming to everyone.”

I ask her what her specialty is, and she counts on two hands: fire hoop, fire fans, poi balls, dragonstaff, contact staff, double staffs, fire eating, fire breathing and levitation wands.

“That’s all that I own at the moment, but anything that is handed to me—if it lights on fire, I’ll do it.” Naturally. “Oh, and I have a fire whip, but I haven’t lit that one up yet.”

“A fire whip?” I ask. “Like Indiana Jones?”

“Yeah, I know. That one’s a lot. It’s five feet of fire,” she says. “That one scares me.” **hh**

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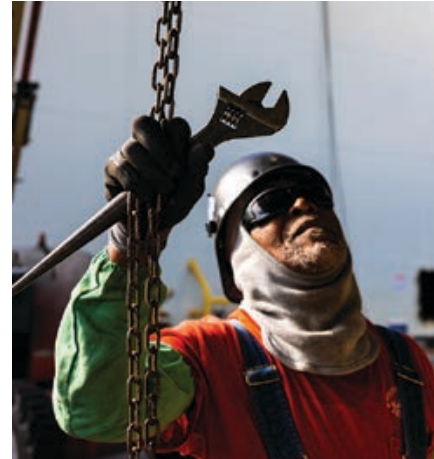
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PAGE 42 / A worker finishes installing a propeller shaft on the MV Carolyn Chouest at Pacific Shipyards International (PSI), which keeps the vessels coming in and out of Hawai'i shipshape.

TOP / Welder Micah Vaughn assists with a chain fall.

BOTTOM / Workers use chain falls to lift objects onto PSI's floating dry dock, one of the largest such facilities in the Pacific.

AT LEFT / A shipyard manager performs a last inspection before MV Carolyn Chouest leaves dry dock.

In the middle of the night, a tugboat pulling a fuel barge bound for Maui loses power. Thrusters grind to a halt. Despite the crew's efforts, the problem can't be fixed at sea. The stranded ship must be towed into Honolulu Harbor for repair. It's at times like these that Iain Wood, CEO of Pacific Shipyards International (PSI), gets an urgent phone call. Shipping disruptions can spell disaster for the Islands, so no matter the time of day or night, PSI is prepared. "We're like an ER for ships," says Wood. "When something needs to get fixed fast,

they're going to call us and we'll get 'em in and get 'em out."

Located at the water's edge among maritime businesses and commercial fishing ports across from Aloha Tower, PSI helps keep critical maritime functions running smoothly for a state that is almost entirely dependent on transpacific shipping and interisland barge traffic for food, fuel and freight.

PSI's operations at Honolulu Harbor include one of the largest floating dry dock facilities in the Pacific. The mobile dock system provides flexibility to lift large ships out of

the water at Pier 24 or to transport the entire dock to another location. Through a clever blend of buoyancy, balance and technical know-how, the mobile dry dock system and its team of engineers and tradesmen can raise ships over 400 feet long and weighing up to 7,500 tons clear out of the water. (By comparison, a Boeing 737 aircraft without fuel weighs about 45 tons).

Whether they're in for emergency repairs or routine maintenance, dry-docked ships are painstakingly balanced on blocks made from concrete and wood to keep them elevated

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Shipyards workers finish reinstalling *MV Carolyn Chouest*’s massive rudders. Repairs are usually carried out at Pier 24 in Honolulu Harbor, but the dry-dock system is mobile and can be towed to where it’s needed.

and stable while the work gets done. “Everybody might have heard the term ‘dry dock,’” Wood says. “But unless you’re familiar with it, it’s kind of a great mystery how it actually works.”

A new coat of thick, blue marine paint has recently been applied to the hull of the *MV Carolyn Chouest*, a massive, 3,311-ton Navy-chartered private offshore supply vessel on the day of my PSI visit. Handing me a hard hat before our tour, Wood emphasizes PSI’s track record of accident-free operations. “Safety’s at the forefront of everything we do,” he says in a tone conveying equal parts pride and warning. Wood is a graduate of the United States Merchant Marine Academy; he arrived in Hawai’i in 1997 with his wife not long after graduating, “with six suitcases, two dogs and no job, no house, no nothing,” he says. He quickly found work within the local maritime community, and after a couple of other stints, including time

as a civilian port engineer for the Navy, Wood landed at PSI in 2001. He rose through the ranks to become CEO in 2016. He’s friendly and knowledgeable, but it’s clear he takes safety seriously. On the day of my visit, PSI had had more than two hundred consecutive injury-free days, and they will not be happy if this landlubber breaks that streak. I promise to be careful, and it’s game on.

Wood is upbeat despite working on a Saturday as we step out of the office, through the security gate (where everyone’s ID is checked, including his), across the lot and onto the huge new dock, which is mostly hidden from the traffic zipping by on nearby Nimitz Highway. We’re joined by PSI’s vice president of programs, Troy Keipper, a naval architect and marine engineer who used to design and race sailboats. Keipper spent seventeen years with PSI’s parent company, Pacific Marine, doing engineering and design work for their research

and development division, PacMar Technologies (formerly Navatek LLC), before coming over to PSI almost three years ago to focus on the critical work of maintenance and repair.

The hum of traffic gives way to the sound of water splashing against steel as we board the enormous floating dock. Despite being just a stone’s throw from the road, it’s an entirely different world. Seeing a large ship in the water up close might be impressive, but standing below that ship when it’s propped up on blocks is nothing short of immersive—it is truly awesome. The freshly painted, bright blue hull stretches overhead for nearly the length of a football field. At the stern, two workmen sit high above us, comfortably situated within the ring of one of the ship’s two colossal propeller enclosures, machining new bearings for the propeller shaft. Rather than order parts and ship them over, it’s faster to make the high-precision components on-site, using equipment

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Pacific Shipyards International's dry-dock system can handle ships over 400 feet long and weighing 7,500 tons; the Navy-chartered private offshore supply vessel *MV Carolyn Chouest*, seen above sporting a fresh coat of paint, weighs in at a mere 3,311 tons.

that can produce bearings accurate to within thousandths of an inch. Nearby, the removed propeller sits safely aside with its shaft wrapped for protection, the eleven-foot-diameter blade towering above us.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the surreal ship-out-of-water scene is the balancing act: The ship is carefully stabilized on a scattering of support blocks, producing the illusion of near-levitation. The blocks seem almost inconsequentially small to my eye, considering the mass they're supporting. But they're placed strategically, aligning with the ship's optimal load-bearing points from bow to stern. Just as an automobile has notches for a jack, a ship must be supported in just the right spots to spread the weight across the blocks.

"We take a drawing that shows the actual ship lines, or shape of the vessel," explains Keipper. "Then the shipyard basically custom-cuts all the blocks to align with the shape of the hull. Those

get placed on the dock according to a blocking plan. Then the dry dock will be lowered down underwater, and we bring the vessel in and position it over the blocks."

"We use different tools like lasers and pointers to line the vessel up," says Wood, who personally oversees each docking event. "Then we send divers down to help guide it and do final checks." Those visual checks can be critical, Keipper says. "Sometimes you have a drawing that says this is the way it's supposed to be built. But then we discover that the drawings weren't really exact, and the divers will have to reposition things underwater."

The process relies on communication, skill and real-world experience, with Wood orchestrating the operation like a maestro. The ship is floated into position, then moored to the dock above water, typically with four lines on each side to help adjust it. "We have to communicate between the divers and our guys on top to control

the exact position," Wood says. "If they tell me we gotta move an inch this way or that, then we'll move an inch this way or that." An inch might not seem like much difference when guiding ships of up to four hundred feet, but for some vessels there's even less wiggle room. Some Coast Guard ships, for example, must be positioned to within half an inch.

Once a ship is in position, the water is pumped out of the sunken dock, and the ship rises along with the entire platform. Above the water, ships can receive anything from a new coat of paint and routine maintenance ("We call the standard scheduled service a 'shave and a haircut,'" Keipper quips), to a complete overhaul, emergency repairs or other work. The ship's crew typically remain in their quarters even when the ship is up on blocks. In many cases, shipboard operations continue even in dry dock, so the crews are busy. "They live on the ship while it's at sea," Keipper explains. "When it's in dry dock

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Mechanic Zach Meyers stands on a telescopic boom during a quality-control check following the reinstallation of MV Carolyn Chouest’s shafts, propellers and rudders. Once repairs are complete, the dry dock’s platform will be lowered and the berth flooded, allowing the ship to float off the support blocks and return to service.

they’re still on the ship, so we’re getting groceries and supplies. They’re living, sleeping, doing their laundry, eating dinner. We deal with getting fresh water, and the waste stream coming off the ship. It’s the whole cycle of life.”


Across the shipyard, more surreal and awesome sights: Multiple vessels in various stages of repair or refurbishment lie on smaller docks, in the water or up on blocks. There’s an experimental “amphibious connector,” a military transport designed to carry tanks from a ship up onto the shore. It sports what look like huge tank treads lined with swiveling paddle-wheel flaps, providing propulsion at sea and traction on land. Another piece of military gear is a Navy torpedo-retrieving vessel pulled out of the water by crane and transported across the lot in stages, moving the vessel about forty feet at a time by lowering it onto new blocks, repositioning the crane and re-blocking for each step. There’s heavy

equipment in every direction, massive chains, hinges the size of bank-safe joints, snatch blocks on steroids. At the end of the pier, giant 747 aircraft tires form a cushion to stop ships from scraping against the concrete. Yes, despite all of this technology, old tires are still the best bumpers around.


PSI’s origins go back to 1944. During World War II, as fighting raged across every continent but Antarctica, America’s Pacific fleet needed maintenance. A local entrepreneur named Fred HM Loui started Pacific Refrigeration Inc. in Honolulu to service the fleet. More than three-quarters of a century later, the family-owned operation now known as Pacific Marine is overseen by the founder’s son, Steven Loui. The firm has grown to encompass several diversified maritime companies that help keep commercial and military vessels operating throughout the Pacific region. Pacific Shipyards

International is one of the crown jewels in this enterprise. Loui has followed in his late father’s footsteps, building a reputation for innovation in Hawai’i, so it might come as no surprise that PSI holds the distinction of being the world’s first and only commercial dry-dock facility operating completely off-grid, with no connection to the electrical utility. There was no commercial power at Pier 24 when PSI moved into its current location in 2017 after operating at Pier 41 since 1984. The company elected to install its own alternative: a renewable energy system with more than 1,700 solar panels forming a roughly one-acre canopy over a large portion of the shipyard, plus battery storage and diesel generators for backup. When a commercial utility connection is eventually completed, it will serve as a backup system rather than the primary power source. Besides managing and powering their own dry docks, PSI personnel

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“Everybody might have heard the term, ‘dry dock,’” says PSI’s CEO Iain Wood. “But unless you’re familiar with it, it’s kind of a mystery how it actually works.”

also make house calls, servicing larger commercial and military ships while still afloat or in other dry docks. In some cases they perform their work in one of the massive graving docks at Pearl Harbor, where they’ve worked on mega-vessels like the Mighty Mo, the USS *Missouri*. In contrast to floating dry docks, graving docks are permanent basins carved into the seafloor, which can be flooded or drained to perform maintenance on ships nearly a thousand feet long. Keeping large Navy vessels shipshape is no small feat. “The jobs can be pretty intense,” says Wood. “We might have a hundred people or more on base at any given time working on the ships, often in two shifts and sometimes even three.”

It’s hard to say whether founder Fred Loui could have known how important his company would eventually become for Hawai’i, but there’s no doubt he would be proud to see how it’s grown. The ability to bring world-class equipment, experienced engineers, mechanics, tradesmen and skilled laborers to fix maritime problems of virtually any scale at any time makes PSI an integral part of Hawai’i’s economic, strategic and military support infrastructure.

Returning to the office building, I hand the hard hat back to Wood, glad to have never put it to the test. Then again, given that the ship above us weighed more than seven million pounds, the protection offered by the hat might have been limited. While the ship hoisted overhead was impressive, the floating dock is the real marvel. “The new dock was named by an employee,” Wood says. “Her winning entry seemed just right.” *Ho’ōla i nā Moku*, he says, translates as “healing the ships.” **hh**



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The Last Taro Farmer

At 91, Uncle Nana Gorai has lived a life of the lo'i

I'm in the bed of an old pickup, talking story with a couple of volunteers as we rattle off road into the wilderness of Kahana.

We're welcomed by towering trees—mighty stands of koa and lauhala. As the road narrows the trees crowd in, and we duck to dodge the branches.

In front of us is 91-year-old Clinton Kanahale Takanana Gorai, driving his blue truck along this access road that he partly constructed. He built it to get to his lo'i, a swath of taro patches that his father began farming a century ago. Today this group of volunteers is helping to clear some of the patches so they can be replanted.


Uncle Nana, as Gorai is affectionately known, was born in Kahana in 1932. The second youngest of eight, his five brothers and two sisters have all passed. They lived in a three-bedroom house with their parents, Li'a Aleka and Tsuneiji Gorai, bunking together in the living room. There was no electricity—they lit kerosene lamps and cooked on a kerosene stove. They boiled hot water to shower.

Tsuneiji Gorai had come from Fukushima, Japan, joining Chinese and Filipino immigrants who came to work the



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“I just wanted to do something, and this is what I could think of. Worthwhile,” says Clinton Kanahale Takanana Gorai, a.k.a. “Uncle Nana,” seen above supervising volunteers who are helping him restore a lo’i (taro patch) in Kahana Valley, O’ahu, which his father once tended. “I cleaned this whole place myself. I dug most of the lo’i all by myself. It’s hard work, but you gotta like what you do.” On page 54, Uncle Nana on the steps of the community center in Kahana.

sugar plantation at Kahana. Many of them lived in Tanaka Camp on the south side of the Kahana River, where Trout Farm Road is today. A train delivered sugarcane from Kahana to the Kahuku Sugar Mill. Uncle Nana says the steam engine always stopped to refill at the same well from which his family drew water. He chuckles when he remembers hopping the cars with his friends in small-kid times. When Tsuneiji’s contract with the plantation was up, he became a taro farmer.

As Uncle Nana’s siblings grew, they moved out of the valley. Nana went to school—at Ka’a’awa Elementary, Hau’ula Elementary and then Kahuku High School—through tenth grade. He preferred to fish—in the bay and in the river. His father taught him how to farm taro, and their lifestyle epitomized that of old Kahana, a thriving fishing and farming community that supported some seven hundred people before Western contact.

“We more or less lived off the land. He had everything over here, what we needed,” Nana says of his father.

“He planted vegetables and ‘uala [sweet potato]. We also had chickens and ducks.” He describes how his father would harvest the taro himself, load a full burlap sack onto a pack board that he made out of lightweight hau branches, and muscle it a couple of miles down the trail to their house. “He would wash the taro, clean it up real good, and then put it in a big tub and cook it. He did that all outside,” Nana remembers. “Once the taro cooked, everyone in the whole family get out there and peel the taro, clean the taro. Then we pound the taro.”

His dad crafted a papa ku’i ‘ai (poi pounding board) out of mango wood that he cut with a Japanese handsaw, and he also made pōhaku (stone) pounders. One time, Nana grabbed his father’s favorite pounder while his father was taking a break: “I put the taro on the board and pound, and the thing shoot out!” he recalls, squinting with laughter. “He get mad at me when he come back—‘How come the taro all dirty?’”

“When my dad was a taro farmer,

he never did sell the taro,” Nana says, explaining that it was for family and neighbors. He glances up as if picturing his father coming down the footpath with eighty pounds of taro on his back. “He do everything by himself. Nobody help him.” We sit on the wooden bench overlooking Nana’s lo’i and take in the panorama—overlapping layers of greenery that stretch from the fields of taro below to the lush ferns in the back of the valley (where the average annual rainfall is three hundred inches) to old-growth ‘ōhia trees that blanket the 2,670-foot summit of Pu’u Pauao along the Ko’olau ridge.

In his early twenties Nana fell in love with a Chinese-Hawaiian woman named Lorraine Aweau. They married and became a family of six, with three sons and a daughter. At the outbreak of World War II, Nana joined the Army; he was stationed in Germany when his mom died and then in Vietnam when his dad died. After twenty years in the service, he retired and returned to O’ahu. He took a few odd jobs—parking cars, dishwasher,

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TOP / Taro huli (shoots) ready for planting.

BOTTOM / “Even when my dad was a taro farmer, he never did sell the taro,” says Nana, seen here working with volunteers. “More or less live off the land. He had everything over here, what we needed.”

AT LEFT / Nana looks out over Kahana, one of Hawai‘i’s few intact ahupua‘a (traditional land divisions).

security guard—before he felt the call to return to his father’s lo‘i in Kahana.

Much had changed while he’d been away. Between 1943 and 1947 the military conducted jungle warfare training in the valley, forcing many families to move, including Nana’s. In 1969 the state acquired 5,249 acres of Kahana Valley, thwarting a proposal to turn it into a resort with a botanical garden, man-made lake and a thousand campsites. Instead, Kahana was to become a “living cultural park” to foster Native Hawaiian traditions. Families were

allowed to stay in exchange for assisting with interpretive programs that promote Hawaiian values. Today Kahana remains one of Hawai‘i’s few intact ahupua‘a—a land division that extends from the mountaintop to the ocean—and is the second-largest state park in the Islands. When Nana first went in search of their old farm lot, it was completely overgrown. “How I found this place was the big mango tree over there. That’s where my dad used to put all of his bottles of sake after they were empty. He cannot throw the bottles any kine place, because he walked barefoot,” Nana explains.

“I found the mango tree, and I said, ‘Oh, this is the place.’” Nana went to work, single-handedly digging up the dirt and planting food. Initially he would make the trek to the lo‘i on foot, wielding a power saw and a machete, accompanied only by his little dog, Puppy. His lo‘i is currently divided into two rows of seven or eight patches. There’s a tool shed where he can take cover from the rain. Water is delivered to each patch through PVC pipes that run downslope. Three of the patches have been recently replanted, but the banks of the others are barely discernible.



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“This was the crown jewel of Kahana,” says former state senator Clayton Hee, whose district included the valley and who supported Nana’s effort to restore some of these once-productive lo’i—at one time, more than twenty were in use. “It gives a visual understanding of Hawaiian people, no explanation required. All over here was kalo [taro].”

“The stream is right down here,” says Nana, pointing to thickets of unkempt bush. “Before, you could sit at this bench and look at the stream. Kahana, always rain. When the river flood, it brings all the dirt and covers all the lo’i. Now all the grass growing because I start not going there all the time. But it was nice and clear.”

We head down to the lo’i—at its peak, more than twenty patches, planted with huli (cuttings) gifted from others—along the narrow trail Nana cut. There are other farmers in the valley, he says, but he’s the last one who’s actually from

Kahana. Nimble in his knee-high waders, he scrambles down the hill, occasionally grabbing a fixed rope for support. At the bottom a volunteer is weed-whacking; others are crouched in the mud, pulling stubborn tufts of weeds.

Besides taro, Uncle Nana also planted trees: ‘ulu (breadfruit), starfruit, mango, star apple, soursop. He planted coconut along the riverbank in the hope that the root system would help mitigate erosion and flooding. “The reason why the water come up so high is because the river plug up. Over the years, nobody clean

the river. When the water goes down and the river is plug up, the water gotta find a way, so it run out through the sides,” he says, explaining that the plantation used to clear the debris because they needed water for sugarcane.

Nana also planted flowers. They are bright and fragrant, adding color to the valley’s muted palette of green: red ginger, pink ginger, red torch, pink torch, gardenia, kukunuokalā and more. But they’re for more than just vibrancy and scent. Every week, someone helps him cut blooms to bring to the cemetery. “I get twelve graves

to put flowers,” he says. All family.”

When Nana was young, he and his friends trekked to the highest point they could reach by following the river. “I went all the way to see where the water coming. It’s coming out from the mountain. Look like somebody dug a tunnel and there’s water coming out—the water just flow over the years,” he says. Seeing the source gave Nana a greater appreciation for the wai (fresh water), how indispensable it is to all the farmers below. “The main thing is water. You gotta have the water,”



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he says. He explains that the Waialua ‘auwai (irrigation channel) that once fed his lo‘i was built by Chinese rice farmers. “That’s how they brought the water from way up mauka all the way down here. They dug it out by hand, no machine.”

The river itself was also a direct source of food—and a playground when Nana was growing up. “I do everything in the river! We used to catch mullet, Samoan crab, ‘o‘opu [gobies], ‘ōpae [shrimp], hihiwai [snails], prawn. Nowadays no more,” he says. Fishing was a special passion he shared with his sons, two of whom are among the family Nana picks flowers for. In the bay, he would fish from his older brother’s boat and lay net at night. “Now when rain, I’m at home, patching my fishnet,” he says. It’s an art he’s practiced for so long that he has lost sensation in two fingers and a thumb. “Every so often I get a group come by, and I teach them how to patch net. That thing is fading away.”

“The truth is Uncle Nana is the clearest and best example in Kahana of ‘Hawaiian culture’ as intended when the state purchased Kahana as a cultural park in 1969,” says former state senator Clayton Hee, whose district included this area. Hee remembers when the approximately twenty lo‘i were planted, and Nana regularly taught school groups how to plant, harvest and cook taro. “This was the crown jewel of Kahana. It gives a visual understanding of Hawaiian people, no explanation required. All over here was kalo,” Hee says, using the Hawaiian word for taro.

In May 2022 the community held its annual hukilau, a community gathering to haul in and share fish caught with a seine net. It was also the celebration of Uncle Nana’s ninetieth birthday, and Hee was there.

“How’s the lo‘i?” Hee asked, expecting Nana to answer, “Aw, you got to come see.” Instead Nana said, “No more water.”

“What you mean?” Hee asked incredulously. “The ‘auwai [irrigation ditch] no more water,” Nana repeated.

A few weeks later, Hee went to see for himself. The ‘auwai was indeed dry, carpeted with dead leaves. The lo‘i was overrun with weeds. In the following months, volunteers helped to clear the brush, dug a ditch to pull water directly

from the stream and began replanting a few lo‘i. The ditch is a temporary fix, says Hee. It can’t handle winter floods, and it won’t flow when rainfall is sparse in the summer.

“Until the ‘auwai is restored, we do the best we can with the help of young people who come when they can,” Hee says. The Waialua ‘auwai, he points out, appears on kuleana maps—lots that were identified following the Kuleana Act of 1850, which gave land tenure to Native Hawaiians. In other words, the ‘auwai is a critical resource that has enabled Hawaiians to farm taro for more than 150 years.

Hawai‘i state senator Jarrett Keohokālole says that Nana has Native rights that are named in the Hawai‘i Constitution. “The state has an obligation to ensure that traditionally existing ‘auwai and traditionally existing taro cultivation are allowed to continue,” he says. “The state needs to take action to fix it.” The State Department of Land and Natural Resources did not respond to requests for comment.

A deficit of water is nothing new to Native taro farmers; large-scale ag operations have diverted the natural flow of streams since the plantation days. Fortunately, there have been proactive efforts—and court decisions—to set mandatory flows in areas of traditionally robust taro cultivation. In terms of food sustainability and cultural preservation, this is essential—especially since, despite a growing demand, taro farming has declined year after year.

Among the trees in Kahana is where Uncle Nana feels at home—in fact his name, Kanahale, means “the forest.” He continues to farm and teach because he loves it. “I just wanted to do something worthwhile. I cleaned this whole place only by myself. I dug most of the lo‘i all by myself,” he says. “I hope it keeps going. I don’t want this place to become a commercial thing for tourists to come up here and look.”

Nana’s hopes have been realized at least for those who come to work in the lo‘i. “When I met Uncle Nana for the first time, he said, ‘I’m Kahana, but you can call me Uncle Nana,’” says Cara Gutierrez, who came to volunteer with Chaminade University’s sustainability council, which she founded during her senior year.



“I hope they keep up with planting the taro,” says Nana of the volunteers and others who’ve helped the now 91-year-old farmer reclaim his father’s lo‘i. “But not for commercial purposes.”

By tending the land, she feels she’s not only giving back but also honoring Uncle Nana. “From the stairs he built to the trees he’s been surrounded by since he was a child, I feel lucky to experience a place that has deeply impacted his life. Being back there listening to the birds, the wind, the water, makes me feel like I’m coming home to myself. I feel like the best version of me when I’m there.”

For Nana, as for his father, growing taro was never a commercial enterprise. It was all for family and community. “I never did sell taro. I never, never did,” he says. “All I did was give it to the people who come and help.” **hh**

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Fine Feathered Frenemies

Love them or hate them,
chickens just might be Hawai‘i’s
other state bird



Once you get a chicken, your whole life changes,” says Kekaikahe’elani Oliver, who learned this fifteen years ago when she brought home her first hen. She bought it at a farm fair to help her five-year-old son learn to care for animals. As he grew, she bought a few more. Then a few more. She gave them names, called them “her girls” and regarded them as pets that sometimes provide breakfast. “They say a dog is a man’s best friend,” says Kekai, “but why can’t a chicken be man’s best friend, too?”

She came to appreciate her chickens’ intelligence, their personalities and the contentment they take in their simple lives. She granted them indoor privileges, letting them come and go freely through the screen door of her house on the family homestead at Anahola, Kaua’i. One of the girls took to roosting in her son’s closet, refusing to lay eggs anywhere except on a particular t-shirt from a local surf shop. Having the girls led Kekai to rethink her diet. She went vegan for a while, then vegetarian, then pescatarian. Now she’s back to eating meat, even chicken, but never her own. “Too personal,” she says.

Kekai’s son is now a backyard egg farmer, and when I visit the homestead, Kekai is tending his flock. She opens the door to a neatly kept chicken coop, and out stream forty-six Rhode Island Reds for one of their five daily feedings. The girls are around somewhere, but they make themselves scarce when the farm chickens are in the yard. The coop dwellers are jealous of the house chickens and will beat them up if given the chance.

All of the chickens eat well. “They get breakfast, second breakfast, lunch, dinner and whatever scraps are left over from our table,” Kekai says. Most of their eggs are sold at Wainiha Country Market or at a farmstand the family sometimes sets up along their road. Kekai is pleased that her offbeat pastime has spun off into a source of protein for her community. “You know

how there are crazy cat people? We are crazy chicken people,” she says. “We just evolved into egg farmers.”

People have been crazy about chickens since time immemorial. Early humans who spread around the globe carried them practically everywhere. They were the only bird the great ocean voyagers who settled the Pacific brought with them. In the Disney movie *Moana*, one of the characters on the Polynesian sailing canoe is the cockeyed rooster Heihei. He pecks at rocks and falls overboard a lot, but he isn’t there just for laughs: Heihei is historically accurate.

The trade and migration routes of the earliest Pacific navigators are marked by chickens. Researchers have gotten a clearer picture of these routes by analyzing DNA in fossilized chicken bones at archaeological digs throughout the Pacific. One of them, Makauwahi Cave, is an enormous sinkhole and cave complex on the south shore of Kaua’i that contains perhaps the richest fossil bed in the Pacific. The excavation pits there offer a glimpse into Hawai’i’s ecological past stretching back ten thousand years. Chicken bones first appear at the same point in the timeline that human artifacts do, about nine hundred years ago. Some of the artifacts themselves, such as picks used to eat shellfish, were fashioned from chicken bones.

Chickens still live and die around there today. They’re feral, and one of them nearly killed the paleoecologist David Burney, leader of the excavation at Makauwahi. Burney recounts the incident in his book, *Back to the Future in the Caves of Kaua’i*. It happened in 1997 while he was working late in the day at the bottom of the sinkhole. A flock of feral chickens, which at night roosted in trees growing in the sinkhole, had gathered topside, waiting for the people below to leave. “The dominant rooster of this clan was standing on the rim of the sinkhole, roughly sixty-five feet



OPENING SPREAD LEFT / Just one of the flock: Tihirah Parbo in repose among her mother Jeth’s chickens in Waimea, Kaua’i.

OPENING SPREAD RIGHT / Feral chickens, like this rooster near the Wailua River on Kaua’i, are common throughout Hawai’i but nowhere more so than on Kaua’i, partly because the island is free of introduced mongoose, and partly because hurricanes in the 1980s and ’90s blew backyard coops apart.

TOP / Backyard egg farmer Kekaikahe’elani Oliver’s nephews help sell her hens’ bounty from her roadside farmstand in Anahola, Kaua’i.

BOTTOM / Oliver’s Rhode Island Reds peck at one of their five daily feasts.

FACING PAGE / “You know how there are crazy cat people? We are crazy chicken people,” says Oliver, seen here with one of her “girls.”





TOP / Jeth Parbo, along with daughter Tihirah and granddaughter, tend their flock, which Jeth has turned into a business. “I want to work for myself and have fun doing it,” says Jeth. “I’ve found that in chickens.”

BOTTOM / Anni Caporuschio, program manager for Mālama Kauaʻi’s Poultry Egg Education Project, a.k.a. PEEP, hand-feeds her Silkie mix. “She has a lot more personality than the production layer hens,” she says.

FACING PAGE / Visitors on Kauaʻi commune with feral fowl at Wailua River lookout. The flock here is hundreds strong due to residents relocating pesky birds to the area.

directly above me,” Burney writes. “He was scratching his feet, displaying his impatience for the changing of the guard.” The bird apparently loosened a small rock, which struck the top of Burney’s head. Fortunately, he was wearing a helmet and escaped serious injury. Otherwise his own bones might have been entered briefly into the fossil record at Makauwahi.

The red jungle fowl from the forests of South and Southeast Asia is the primary progenitor of the multitude of domesticated chicken breeds running around the world today. It is the chicken that the Polynesian voyagers carried with them. In Hawaiian the bird is called moa, which is similar to the word for cooked, mo’a, hinting at a relationship with the imu, the underground oven. These chickens were smaller, scrawnier and more skittish—like Heihei—than today’s big-breasted Chicken McNugget-era birds. But they still went well with poi.

Moa were part of daily life in early Hawaiian society. They roamed the villages. They served as offerings to the gods and as currency to pay taxes. Their plumage contributed to fashion, adding reds, browns, golds, grays, greens, blues, whites and blacks to the palette of the haku hulu, the feather workers. ‘Ahu ‘ula, the exquisite feathered capes and cloaks worn by chiefs, were sometimes made with moa feathers. New Zealand’s national museum, Te Papa Tongarewa, has an ancient Hawaiian ‘ahu ‘ula made from the black tail feathers of roosters. It’s more than five feet long and eight feet wide, and its iridescent feathers glint with green and blue.

A replica of this elegant garment hangs in a display case at the Embassy Suites hotel in Waikiki. It’s the work of Rick San Nicolas, a modern haku hulu. A cape like this, he says, would have been worn in battle, the sturdy layers of eight- or nine-inch-long black feathers and their netted backing offering a measure of protection from flying rocks

and swinging shark-tooth clubs. It would have also made a clear fashion statement on the battlefield. “It told everyone you were a badass,” San Nicolas says.

Chickens sometimes appear in Hawaiian myths and legends. “Lepe-a-moa, the Chicken-Girl of Palama” appears in *Legends of Old Honolulu*, WD Westervelt’s 1915 collection of folklore translated from Hawaiian-language newspapers. In one scene the benevolent O’ahu chief Kakuhihewa loses a series of cockfights to Maui-nui, an underhanded Maui chief who isn’t playing fair. Maui-nui has a supernatural rooster, which tears Kakuhihewa’s ordinary roosters to shreds.

In the final match Kakuhihewa is forced to wager his life. Luckily for him, a beautiful girl named Lepeamoa, who can transform herself into a gorgeous chicken with super powers, arrives to help. Lepeamoa clashes with the rooster in “a cloud of flying feathers.” An epic battle full of surprise twists worthy of a Hollywood action movie climaxes with Lepeamoa on the verge of delivering the coup de grace—but pausing to disrespect the cheating king, dashing into his hair and tearing at it with her claws. “This polluted and disgraced Maui-nui,” Westervelt writes.

Insults and gambling went hand-in-hand with cockfighting, as the “Chicken-Girl of Palama” demonstrates. Native historian David Malo, in his 1838 book, *Hawaiian Antiquities*, dedicates a short chapter to the sport of ho’ohākā moa, chicken fighting. “The day having been set for the match, a multitude of people assembled to witness it, and bet on the result,” Malo writes. “The winners always reviled those who lost with insulting and offensive language, saying ‘You’ll have to eat chicken-dung after this,’ repeating it over and over.”

Christian missionaries in Hawai’i tried to stamp out chicken fighting. It looked just as inhumane to them as it does to mainstream society today. It was outlawed in Hawai’i long before it was entirely abolished on the Mainland

(the last holdout, Louisiana, didn’t ban it until 2008). Nevertheless, it thrived in the Islands during the plantation era. Despite the threat of police raids, chicken fighting served as a major form of entertainment for the workers who toiled in Hawai‘i’s cane fields and sugar mills. “The risk-taking and the excitement of the fights broke the monotony of the tedious hours in the hot sun,” writes University of Hawai‘i social scientist Robert Anderson in his 1984 study, *Filipinos in Rural Hawaii*. Gambling and talking trash were all part of the fun, or in Anderson’s words, “In an important match, the winners occasionally deride the losers unmercifully in an attempt to take further glory from their win.”

Hawai‘i’s golden age of backyard chicken farming

came in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was a time when every egg came from a nearby coop and frozen chicken wasn’t even a thing. It was also a time when chicken theft was a leading property crime. Chickens were as tempting to thieves then as catalytic converters are today. Honolulu newspapers regularly reported on purloined poultry. “Chicken thieves are rampant again,” warned a typical item from the *Hawaiian Gazette* in 1894. “Within the last few days several henroosts in Nuuanu Valley have been visited with disastrous results.”

In a stupendous heist from the University of Hawai‘i in 1927, one hundred chickens vanished overnight from the campus poultry farm. Neighbors who ordinarily heard the slightest disturbance among the college chickens hadn’t heard a peep. “Fowls Disappear Thursday Night Without a Single Cackle,” the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* reported. Authorities concluded this must have been the work of a well-organized gang of experienced chicken thieves.

The public’s interest in chickens was so great at the time that the *Star-Bulletin* employed a poultry columnist. For more than a decade in the 1920s and 1930s, University of Hawai‘i agronomist HL Chung wrote the spirited weekly “chicken gossip, pigeon news” column. He offered tips:

“When growing chicks ... need a little laxative, use one-half pound of Epsom salts to one gallon of water for every hundred birds.” He answered readers’ questions, such as: “Inclosed in tissue paper you will find parts of a small worm. Is this a tapeworm?” Answer: “The dried specimen is a tapeworm.” He shared genuine chicken gossip: “Information has just reached the writer that the wonderful collection of Tancred White Leghorns at the Kewalo farm will be dispersed.” These were award-winning egg layers, Chung noted, and anyone aspiring to the egg business “would do well to think about getting a start from the Kewalo flock.”

The federal census counted nearly three thousand chicken farms in the Islands in the early 1930s. While the number of farms dwindled with time, the output of the remaining operations grew. Twenty farms in the 1980s produced more than 80 percent of the eggs sold in the Islands. But rising shipping costs for feed eventually drove most local chicken farmers out of business. By 2011 the industry was so diminished that the National Agricultural Statistics Service simply stopped publishing poultry data from Hawai‘i. Most of the chicken and eggs sold in the Islands today come from the Mainland.

A turning point for Hawai‘i’s egg industry came quietly

in 2021, when grocers put out the first cartons of Waialua Fresh eggs. This new brand is the product of an off-the-grid, cage-free, state-of-the-art egg farm near the North Shore named Villa Rose, a collaboration between two Mainland agribusinesses. Its chickens roam and roost as they please inside vast aviary barns. Open on two sides like giant screened-in carports, each barn can hold fifty thousand chickens. The farm generates its own electricity, pumps its own groundwater and feeds miles of manure into a biochar reactor to make fertilizer. “We have some of the most modern and sophisticated equipment known to the egg industry,” says Mike Sencer, executive vice president of Hidden Villa, one of the businesses collaborating on Villa Rose.

The farm currently has the capacity for two hundred thousand laying hens.



ABOVE / Kekai Oliver with a couple of the three to four dozen eggs her fifty hens lay daily.

FACING PAGE / Caporuscio with her Silkie and her dog Wilson, who protects the flock from wild boar that roam the property.

Long-range plans call for potentially growing the flock to a million birds. That would be enough to replace half of Mainland egg imports, Sencer says. But first Villa Rose hopes to jump-start a local feed industry, encouraging farmers to plant former cane fields planted with corn and soy. “Then we will really come full circle, producing the eggs and giving the manure to the farmers to produce the feed,” Sencer says.

Meanwhile, backyard poultry has caught on with a new generation of chicken farmers in Hawai‘i, like Anni Caporuscio, who has a way with chickens that she lacks with vegetables. “I always feel like plants are trying to die when I’m taking care of them, whereas chickens have a vested interest in their own survival,” she says. Caporuscio refers to the hundred egg layers in the backyard of her Keālia home as her “side hustle.” Her regular job is with Mālama Kaua‘i, a nonprofit that runs farming programs and a food hub. She manages the Poultry Egg Education Project (PEEP), which aims to increase the number of chicken farmers on Kaua‘i through training, a guaranteed market (the food hub) and a starter flock



of fifty chickens. “The backyard Hawai’i farmer will never get rich on the backs of chickens and will never be competitive price-wise with large-scale Mainland poultry and egg producers,” Caporuscio says. “But the backyard Hawai’i farmer can fill the farm-fresh niche.”

Jeth Parbo, a hard-working grandmother from Waimea, Kaua’i, is one of those farmers filling the farm-fresh niche. Parbo had already learned a lot about chickens through homesteading websites before doing the PEEP training. She started raising chickens as a way to unwind when not working as a housekeeper at a nearby resort, and she’s turned that hobby into a small business. “I want to work for myself and have fun doing it,” she says. “I’ve found that in chickens.”

Each week, Parbo sells about forty dozen eggs to restaurants and farmers market shoppers. She also sells about thirty broilers (meat chickens) a week to a sports restaurant in Kōloa called Friendly Waves. The chef would gladly take more if Parbo could supply them, but she’s already pushing her limits. When I visit she’s got 160 chickens scratching up the red dust in her small, coop-filled backyard, and she’s expecting a shipment of 250 more. Parbo dreams of leasing enough acreage to keep three thousand layers at a time and twenty thousand broilers per year. She’s written a business plan and met with landowners, and she has a clear vision for her pasture-raised chicken farm, which she would call Mama Jeth’s Farmstead. “It would be a whole new ballgame if Hawai’i could have more of this kind of poultry farming,” she says.

As for wild chickens, they’ve become a nuisance all over Hawai’i, but nowhere more so than on Kaua’i. You find them everywhere, from the airport rental car office to the lookout four thousand feet above Kalalau Valley. You see them at every beach park, waterfall, golf course, shopping mall, outdoor dining area and resort hotel. They strut around the grounds of the Kaua’i Humane Society and run through the office of the Kaua’i Invasive Species Committee, neither of which deals in chickens. They even peck around in the parking lot of KFC in Līhu’e. Chickens

are known for occasionally turning cannibal—apparently even chickens like chicken—but in this case they probably just don’t realize where they are.

Some Kaua’i residents regard them as pests, vermin, rats with wings. One rancher fed up with chickens damaging his orchard brings in hunters with night-vision goggles to shoot them out of trees at night as they roost. But it seems most residents accept them, and some regard them fondly, like rascally children. Visitors get a kick out of them, and gift shops are filled with chicken souvenirs. As the Kaua’i Travel Blog puts it, “The chickens steal our fries, but they also stole our hearts.”

It’s a different story in densely populated Honolulu, where a single rooster crowing at 3 a.m. can drive hundreds of high-rise dwellers mad all at once. Some exasperated McCully residents formed a vigilante band to capture and relocate roosters disturbing the peace in their neighborhood. Government has struggled with a response. Last year Honolulu County spent \$7,000 to trap just sixty-seven chickens—a whopping \$104 per feathered head. The state Legislature’s boldest response to the wild chicken problem—a controversial 2022 bill that would have deployed a feed-based contraceptive—went nowhere.

Kaua’i’s staggering wild chicken population is widely attributed to a combination of bad luck with hurricanes and the absence of mongooses. Unlike their neighbor-island counterparts, Kaua’i’s sugar planters did not attempt to control rats by importing mongooses to the island, and birds fare better without those egg-devouring predators on the loose. Kaua’i did take direct hits from hurricanes, in 1982 and 1992, which broke open coops and freed thousands of chickens. They mated with the remnant Hawaiian jungle fowl living wild in the mongoose-free forests. Now the average chicken on the street in Līhu’e has the proud blood of the jungle fowl coursing through its veins.

But what explains the wild chicken booms on other islands, which have mongooses and didn’t get slammed by hurricanes? I ask Sheila Conant, professor emerita at the University of Hawai’i and an authority on



ABOVE / Jeth feeds her flock of 185 egg-layers, 125 chicks and 200 meat chickens. One of Hawai’i’s many backyard farmers who caught chicken fever, Jeth went through PEEP training and plans to grow the Islands’ local poultry industry by leasing enough acreage for thousands of birds. “It would be a whole new ballgame if Hawai’i could have more of this kind of poultry farming,” she says.

FACING PAGE / For poultry farmers like Jeth, the intelligent and personable chicken is part produce, part pet. “I like to help my mom take care of the chickens by feeding them, letting them out on the grass to graze,” says Tihirah, seen here with one of Jeth’s hens. “Sometimes I like to run around with them or sit with them.”

Hawaiian birds. “It’s a mystery,” she says. “Possibly, there’s more to eat, and either they’ve gotten better at avoiding predators or there aren’t as many predators as there used to be in places where they’re abundant,” she says. Nobody really knows. But the one thing that’s for sure is that it’s our fault. “People are a really big factor in ecological change of any kind,” Conant says. “If you don’t like chickens, there’s nobody to blame but us.” **hh**



A Night at the Races

Fast gas and funny cars at Maui Raceway Park

Corey Yamashita rolls up to the starting line at Maui Raceway Park in his wasp-like dragster. He revs the engine, and the fat back tires spin in place, sending clouds of nostril-singeing smoke into the twilight sky. Once the tires are hot and sticky enough to grab the pavement, Corey slows to an idle and waits. The starting lights flash amber, then green. The dragster leaps forward, disappearing down the track to cross the finish line at 191 miles per hour in 6.96 seconds. The announcer crows: “Corey Yamashita breaks the six-second barrier!”

A parachute deploys from the dragster’s tail, slowing it to a stop. Any driver who clocks over 150 mph here must pack a parachute. Racers who exceed 200 mph—as Corey nearly did—need two. “This track is top-notch,” says Ryan Pepple, the O’ahu-based announcer who regularly flies among islands to call races. “This is where people run their personal best.”

Maui Raceway is the shortest official track in Hawai’i, occupying the old Pu’unēnē airstrip. In the no-man’s-land off of Mokulele Highway, the motorsports park has a whiff of *Mad Max: Fury Road*. The only indicator of its existence is a stock car hoisted midair alongside the highway with



today’s date and “cash only” signs duct-taped to the stand. But the view from the starting line is pure *Pole Position* fantasy: Puffball clouds float above a flat basin bordered by two hulking volcanoes, Haleakalā to the east and Mauna Kahālāwai to the west. For those who crave the thrill of pedal-to-the-metal driving, this is the place for a fix.

On the third Friday of each month, anywhere from 90 to 120 vehicles line up to race head-to-head down the quarter-mile straightaway. Around a thousand spectators come to watch. Tailgating is its own sport here, with miniature camps set up along the length of the track—competitors on the east side, spectators on the west. Starting at 4 p.m., a caravan of trucks arrives with beds and trailers packed full of lawn chairs, tarps, barbecues and—most critically—earplugs.

At this isolated track, motorheads indulge in the cathartic thrill of roaring engines, squealing tires and smoky burnouts. Speed is the primary goal but style is a close second. Tonight’s lineup runs the gamut from dune buggies to immaculately restored muscle cars of every vintage and color. *Guava Jam 2*, a Volkswagen Bug painted the exact color of the tropical fruit, pulls up beside *Nite Mare*, a boxy blue ’79 Mustang with a shadowy horse galloping across the driver’s door. The alien hovercraft parked nearby is actually a highly modified Porsche—sans roof, windshield and headlights and covered in silver paint with rainbow sparkles. Then there are the sleek dragsters: aerodynamic road rockets with bicycle-sized front tires, fat rear “slicks,” or treadless tires, and cockpits so tiny drivers have to remove the steering wheel to climb in and out.

Accommodating this diversity of vehicles is no easy task for the Valley Isle Timing Association, the host of this monthly motor pageant. Competitors fall into various National Hot Rod Association-sanctioned classes: motorcycles, sportsman (full-bodied cars), grocery getters (four-door sedans) and fast gas (vehicles that boost their fuel with nitrous oxide). Because there

are so few vehicles in each class, race organizers created a bracket system that allows cars of varying weight and horsepower to compete against one another. Drivers establish their speed in a qualifying round, then race against vehicles of similar rank in elimination rounds. Most racers are here to beat their own best times—and to simply feel the rush. “There’s a handful of guys who are really competitive,” Ryan says. “Everyone else just comes for fun.”

Corey cruises past the long row of tailgaters, food trucks and the small grandstand back to the competitors’ side of the track. His 19-year-old daughter, Kayla Yamashita, helps guide him between the family’s two trailers. Part of the pit crew tonight, Kayla started racing at 9 years old—alongside her dad, older sister Kylee Yamashita and grandpa Ricky Kametani. “We’re adrenaline junkies,” she shrugs. She wears the family’s unofficial uniform: a black T-shirt with “Mountain Man Racing” emblazoned across the back. “That’s my papa Ricky,” she says, referring to Mountain Man. “For a few years he was the fastest man on Maui.”

Ricky exits one of the trailers looking a little like an astronaut in his fireproof racing suit and hair disheveled from his helmet. The semi-retired Kula onion farmer has been a Maui Raceway regular since 1974. “Cars were always my passion,” he says, popping a mouthful of M&M’s. “My community college friends, we all had hot rods.” His first race car is now a cult classic: a W-31 Oldsmobile Cutlass—gold with black stripes and factory-designed for speed. “Racing can be expensive,” he says. “But it’s not that hard to get started if you have some mechanical skills. I started out slow, low to mid-thirteens.”

Drag races are measured in seconds. Ricky shaved his runs from thirteen seconds down to ten in his second car, a 1971 Z28 Camaro. “Then,” he says, “we started getting more serious.” He began modifying his vehicles’ chasses and



OPENING SPREAD / **Kyle Shimizu, one of the fastest drag racers in Hawai’i, burns rubber at Maui Raceway Park in Pu’unēnē last October.**

TOP & BOTTOM / **“It’s a small community. Everybody knows each other,” says driver Corey Yamashita. “Plenty of tourists come and don’t think we race.”**

FACING PAGE / **Motorcyclist David Debutiaco revs at the starting line. Because the community is so small, different types of vehicles often compete against each other using a system of handicaps.**

FOLLOWING SPREAD / **Sunset silhouettes the park’s starting line team, including starter Glenn Hanzawa and track specialist Mark Caires.**





improving their traction. At his peak he invested in a super-charged car and punched up to 229 mph: six seconds flat. “That was fast,” he says.

That was sixteen years ago. By then Corey was catching up to him, and his granddaughters were almost big enough to reach the pedals of a junior dragster—a smaller, slower version of the adult race car. The Mountain Man hung up his helmet to coach the girls. When they were toddlers, he pushed them around the driveway to acclimate them to the brakes. “They caught on quick. They loved it,” he says. “There were a lot of girls racing at that time. They outnumbered the boys because all the racing families had girls.”

Kylee had to talk her younger sister into competing, but once she did, they both racked up wins: first and second place, Rookie of the Year. When they progressed from the junior to adult division, they crossed out “Mountain Man” on the family logo and wrote in “Mountain Girls.” “People were kind of shocked to hear that we raced,” says Kayla. “Especially when we were so young. It catches people off guard.” Their performance impressed their dad. “I think girls are better drivers,” Corey says. “Their reaction time is better. My girls win a lot.”

After the Mountain Girls left for college, Corey encouraged Ricky to strap back into the driver’s seat. The family’s racing fleet currently consists of two flamboyantly painted dragsters: a red one with swirling purple-and-white flames, which Corey just returned in, and an orange-and-black striped tiger, which Ricky is driving.

Dragsters aren’t street legal, so the family transports them in two trailers. The twenty-four- and forty-foot-long mobile garages are outfitted with cabinets full of gear, tools and snacks. The setup takes tailgating to the next level. Tonight there’s even a shave ice station. A family friend brought a portable machine along to serve icy, syrupy treats to sweaty competitors.

“Racing is good for me because all

my family and friends come,” says Corey. “Everybody enjoys it. It’s our chance to get together.” It’s their chance to get together—or leave one another in the dust. Corey just learned that he’ll race Ricky head-to-head in the next round.

Drag racing is nearly as old as the automobile.

Not long after the first Fords rolled off the assembly line, thrill seekers sought to push their limits. By the 1930s, Wally Parks was converting Model T’s to stripped-down, souped-up hot rods in his high school auto-shop class. Known as the grandfather of drag racing, he and his buddies timed one another zooming full throttle across Southern California’s dry lake beds. In the 1940s, scores of servicemen returning home from WWII with a need for speed joined them. This growing gang of gearheads commandeered abandoned airstrips and empty highways. By the 1950s the San Fernando Valley was the scene of infamous rallies à la *Grease* and “Thunder Road.”

Parks wanted to legitimize his lifelong passion and in 1951 founded the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA). But safe places to race weren’t always easy to find. Illegal street racing was an issue in Hawai’i in 1956, when Honolulu county prosecutor George St. Sure recommended jail time for teens caught rocketing down Island roads. “For a boy to want to work a car over and learn about it is perfectly natural and healthy,” St. Sure told the *Honolulu Record*. “Only he must learn that such a car is to be used in its proper place. That isn’t public roads.”

A half-dozen racetracks popped up around the Islands, mostly on old military runways. Only three remain: in Hilo on Hawai’i Island, Kekaha on Kaua’i and Pu’unēnē on Maui. Maui’s dragstrip is one of the five oldest in the country, in use since the early ’50s. In 1963 Maui racers made it official and launched the Valley Isle Timing Association, a nonprofit devoted to



TOP / **A pair of motorcyclists in the Pro Bike division wait at the starting line, with Haleakalā in the background.**

BOTTOM / **Nelson deRego (left) and Lourdes Palpallatoc watch from the bleachers. Races will continue well after dark.**

FACING PAGE / **Ricky “the Mountain Man” Kametani, the “fastest man on Maui,” at least according his granddaughter Kylee, who also races along with her sister Kayla.**

FOLLOWING SPREAD / **Dueling Novas: Cam Ichiki’s Chevy Nova (at right) lines up against Christian Motonaga’s in the Pro Sportsman division.**





promoting safe motorsports. In days past, shipping cars was less expensive and drag racers traveled among islands. Nowadays racers from O’ahu store their vehicles on Maui and fly over to compete. It’s a small but lively community.

“When the *Fast and Furious* craze was going, we had well over three hundred members,” says association president Kaleo Freitas. “Participation is wide—every age group, male and female,” adds the group’s treasurer, Mark Caires. He serves as the race starter—when he isn’t behind the wheel of his ’63 Corvette. “That’s a nice thing about motorsports: As long as you can drive a car, you can race. You don’t have to be big and strong. It’s all about skills. It’s not who spends the most money, either. We’ve got people who drive their everyday work car and they’re super competitive.”

Drag racing’s transformation from renegade rallies to family-friendly sport hasn’t impacted its cool quotient. Sarah Dildine watches spectators ogle her husband’s snazzy ’34 Ford Coupe. “It’s his first love,” she says, “but I hold the pink slip.” The firecracker-red hot rod is a throwback to the bootleggers of old, with an exposed big-block Chevy engine and old-timey hand-painted advertisements. “It’s fun,” Rich Dildine confesses with a big grin. “It’s like a time capsule.”

Rich developed a drag-racing addiction as a teen—a fact he failed to disclose to Sarah on their first date. “He didn’t tell me when I met him that his idea of a family weekend was to roll up and act as a pit crew,” she says, feigning annoyance. “We’ve been coming since I was pregnant with Ryker. Now she’s twelve and she loves it. We’ve got pictures of her as a baby climbing up the fence to get in wearing headphones.” Ryker nods. She knows her mom is proud of her mechanical skills. She might be the only ‘lao Intermediate student who knows how to swap street tires for slicks and can identify a Mopar eight and three-quarter—that’s the prized rear axle her dad added to the Coupe. “Every detail

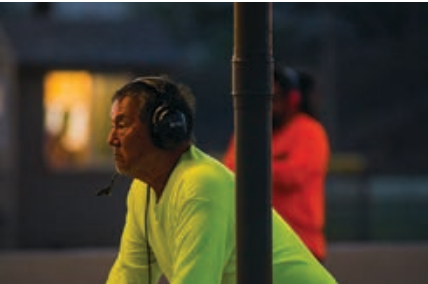
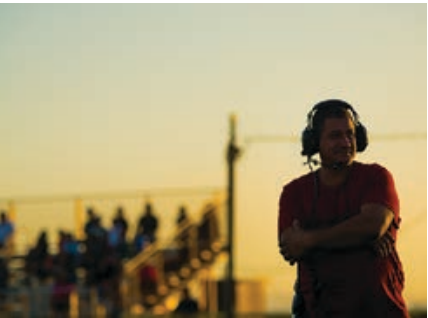
matters,” says Rich. “So much goes into racing. Then you go out and lose by three thousandths of a second!”

As the last bit of daylight disappears, pit crews tweak and tighten; temperature and humidity affect engine performance. The cars will go faster at night. “Tune-ups aren’t done with wrenches anymore. It’s all high-tech,” says Freitas. “Drivers get computerized data on their whole run and can make adjustments.” Corey gives his dragster more horsepower by adding nitrous oxide to the gas. “But the more you push it,” he says, “the closer you get to the edge.”

He and Ricky take their places at the starting line in their twin dragsters. Ricky’s tiger is a fraction of a second slower, so he takes off first. Both drivers accelerate with such velocity their front tires lift off the ground. They shoot like comets down the track. Just before the finish line, Corey passes Ricky, clocking 6.97 seconds. The crowd hoots and hollers out their names as they wheel back to their trailers.

Kayla is on the phone with her sister, who can’t believe that Dad beat Papa. But Corey’s luck runs out in his next match. He loses to *Wild Ride*, a blue-and-silver Chevy Vega driven by Scott Hirata. By the final round, most of the pit crews have packed up and gone home. The winners head to the observation tower to collect their small cash prizes and trophies. Kyle Shimizu from O’ahu holds up his second-place sportsman trophy for a photo. “I had a lot of fun,” he grins. “I’ll be back next month.”

Kayla helps her dad carefully stuff his parachute back into its case. “Taking off at the starting line feels like the initial drop on a roller coaster,” she says. “Your whole body—everything tingles.” Corey thinks for a minute. “It’s almost like controlling something out of control,” he says. “As soon as you get ma’a [accustomed] to it—you don’t think, you just do.” Papa Ricky, who’s been at it for fifty years, adds his two cents. “It’s just the power. Once you feel the power, it’s hard to describe.” **hh**



TOP / **Valley Isle Timing Association president Kaleo Freitas**

BOTTOM / **VITA vice president and stager Ray Orikasa**

FACING PAGE / **The night’s first-place winner in the Pro Sportsman category, Petro Palad, with his spoils**



The Call of the Mountain

A life apart on Pālehua



Growing up in Nānākuli, Thomas Anuheali'i could look up toward the Wai'anae Mountains and see Pālehua, but “no one we knew could come up here,” he says. You had to know someone to get past the two gates leading up the mountain. Now Anuheali'i, once cut off from the mountain, is one of its caretakers, helping to maintain

its roads and grant access. Or, as he says, “caregiver. I care to give of myself because this place has cared to give to me. And I would classify a caregiver of Pālehua as anybody that actually lives here. Because they give something of themselves to exist in the space.” Anuheali'i lives in a cabin with an open-air, screened-in living room overlooking the pā, a stone enclosure about four hundred years old. Anuheali'i

was a member of a Kapolei Hawaiian Civic Club that was invited to help uncover the ancient cultural site in 2000. “It was 100 percent amazing ... to realize that it was right here, in the uplands above,” he says. They cleared the shrubs and trees, “and with the assistance of about forty horses from a nearby rancher, we were able to get all the grass down” to expose the stacked stones. At the time, “we called it a heiau



[temple] for lack of a better term,” he says. But more recent archaeological findings point to the pā as a gathering place for the rituals, celebrations and sporting matches during the Makahiki season, a period dedicated to Lono, a Hawaiian god of fertility, agriculture and rainfall. The four-month season begins with the rising of Makaliʻi (the Pleiades star cluster), which the enclosure is aligned to.

Anuhealiʻi returned regularly to the pā to “mālama ʻāina [care for the land] and practice our Hawaiian culture with consistency, routine and discipline. It was nice because [these places] weren’t something that you easily could find down below back then. It allowed me to grow, to engage with the ancestors that left remnants of their existence in this space. What can we learn from them to make ourselves better now and going forward, and give us the ability to do at least what they did for us?”

Still, when he was offered the job to be one of Pālehua’s caretakers in 2010, he hesitated. At the time, he was working as a bus driver, “a dream job because you got to see the breadth of the people,” he says. But ultimately, he decided to commit to Pālehua. He says, “The mountain chooses you.”

Though the private preserve is just ten minutes from the Costco in Kapolei, Pālehua has long had a mystical air. Late one night in the early ’90s, in a simple cabin on its slope, Israel Kamakawiwoʻole and producer Jon de Mello watched the city lights below, all the way to Diamond Head, fade in and out of the clouds. Nearing midnight, they crafted the haunting version of “Hawaiʻi ’78,” which would become one of the musician’s most powerful songs. Amy Hānaialiʻi recorded “Pālehua” on the mountain—you can even hear the birds in the background. “E kahea mai ana/ʻO Pālehua ē/wahi lani haʻupu iaʻu” (Calling to me/is Pālehua/a heavenly place), she sings.

And at the very top, at almost 2,800 feet, is Mauna Kapu, or sacred mountain. On a clear day it’s the only place in Hawaiʻi from which you can see all the main Hawaiian islands.

Lately, Pālehua has been popping up on Instagram feeds, thanks to the recent restoration of a cabin that famed Hawaiʻi architect Vladimir Ossipoff built on its ridge in 1949, positioned for the best views of the Waiʻanae range and the Leeward coastline. But the mountain is more than the Ossipoff cabin. About a dozen families live on Pālehua, relying on rainwater and each other. “For us it’s a way of life, it’s a village,” says Manu Aluli Meyer. “We help each other build things, we help each other plant things, harvest things. It’s not for everybody but it’s for everybody.”

A professor in indigenous philosophy, Meyer invites students and people from the University of Hawaiʻi up to her home, named Waolama, or place of illumination. The name “came in a moe ʻuhane, gifted in my dreams,” she says. “Lama’ is the word for knowledge, wisdom, illumination, and it used to be abundant in such spaces.” On the eight acres that she rents, she’s cleared invasive ironwoods and even the “beloved eucalyptus—it doesn’t collaborate well,” and planted native trees and shrubs like kukui, kou, milo, wiliwili, ʻōhiʻa lehua, lama, hinahina and ʻākia. “I want to expose the kids to this kind of lifestyle,” Meyer says, “and to what the forest might have looked like two hundred years ago. It’s a spacious place to understand ike kūpuna, the knowledge of our elders.” But she, like many of Pālehua’s residents, worry about balancing accessibility with preserving what makes Pālehua special. “Pālehua is filled with cultural life and filled with history and filled with beyond beauty,” she says. “Pālehua is more than a place of recreation. It’s a village, a cultural space for rejuvenation and renewed rituals. It’s a place where we know each other, where we care for each other.”

The first time I tried to get a hold of McD Philpotts, he was dealing with the aftermath of a storm, clearing the roads of downed trees and rocks. The second time, a power pole fire, which caused a blackout on the entire mountain for the whole day. Living on Pālehua is wild and difficult. Philpotts says that even in pre-contact times,



OPENING SPREAD / **Thomas Anuhealiʻi (left), one of the caretakers of Pālehua, a mountain in Oʻahu’s Waiʻanae range that remains mostly untouched by commerce and development. Right, a view of the Leeward coast from Pālehua.**

ABOVE / **The pā, a four-hundred-year-old stone enclosure discovered on Pālehua in 2000, might have been used in ancient times as a gathering place for rituals, celebrations and sporting matches.**

it was unusual for Hawaiians to reside at this elevation. They lived closer to the shoreline, where resources like food and fresh water were more abundant—Pālehua is relatively dry and wildfires are a constant threat. But the mountain provided a strategic position: From Mauna Kapu you could see anyone coming from miles. It’s the reason that immediately after Pearl Harbor was bombed in 1941, the military occupied the mountain. Its abandoned remnants still exist on Pālehua—pillboxes, an old bunkhouse and mess hall, underground fuel tanks (with fuel remaining)—and the Coast Guard continues to operate a tower at the top. In addition, telecommunication companies plant their towers here and help to keep the road paved. But Mauna Kapu is more than strategic; it’s also spiritual, as its name implies. Philpotts theorizes that the Hawaiians who once lived up here were “more on the kahuna side than the ‘let’s build a big army and



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Lava’s on Poipu Beach, located within the Sheraton Kauai Resort, is a must visit destination for those seeking all-day dining with breathtaking views. The restaurant’s open-air design allows diners to fully immerse themselves in the laidback, tropical atmosphere of Kauaʻi.

“Lava's on Poipu Beach is the best bar on the south shore! The food, drink, and staff are fantastic but what I will always remember is the sunset over the ocean. I'll be back!”

LOCAL CUISINE

The menu at Lava’s features a variety of delicious Hawaiian-inspired dishes. From fresh seafood caught right off the coast of Kauaʻi to locally grown produce, the flavors of the island are prominent in every bite. The restaurant also offers a selection of handcrafted cocktails made with locally sourced spirits and tropical fruits, perfect for sipping on while taking in the stunning sunset views.



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McD Philpotts (seen above and on the facing page) grew up on Pālehua and along with Anuheali'i is the mountain's caretaker. As a child he'd explore the slopes, which rise to 2,800 feet, and in his wanderings would come across evidence of an ancient past. "I'd be hiking through the grass down to the lowlands, and I get this feeling," he says. "Where's it coming from? And then I'd go that way and push the grass aside, and there'd be a cultural landscape."

be warriors' side," he says. "They're living here because they're connected to the things from before."

You could say the same of Philpotts. He is a descendant of wealthy landowner James Campbell and a Native Hawaiian woman of chiefly lineage named Kuaihelani. The unofficial historian of Pālehua has lived here for most of the past fifty years. "This place raised me; this place made me who I am, how I think, what I value," he says. When he was 12 his parents moved from Lanikūhonua, at the ocean's edge, up to the slopes of Pālehua. His cabin is

one of the military surplus houses on the mountain, hauled up there after the war when the military had a few extra on hand.

As a child, whenever he got the chance, "I would take a dog or a horse or just water and boots and go overnight. That's how I found a lot of things up here. I'd be hiking through the grass down to the lowlands, and I get this feeling—where's it coming from? And then I'd go that way and push the grass aside, and there'd be a cultural landscape." When he was younger he thought he found these places on his own, but now he feels

that his ancestors were guiding him.

Today, in addition to his work managing a herd of about seventy cattle and as an artist—his woodwork accents many of the resorts along the coast below Pālehua—he is also the caretaker for half of the mountain. Anuheali'i cares for the other half. In 2009 the Gill family and Edmund Olson bought Pālehua from the Campbell Estate, and each owns half, from Mauna Kapu to the top of Makakilo, divided by Pālehua Road. James Campbell once owned almost the entire ahupua'a of Honouliuli,



O'ahu's largest, which included Pālehua. He had come to Hawai'i from Ireland in 1850 and became one of Hawai'i's largest landowners. He started a sugar plantation in Lāhainā, but Pālehua, in particular the upper slopes, never supported much agriculture, and as in the rest of Hawai'i, feral pigs, goats and other invasives quickly destroyed its native ecosystem.

The two owners of Pālehua share a vision of restoration and preservation. The Edmund C. Olson Trust's holdings include conservation and ag lands on O'ahu and Hawai'i Island. Olson, now 90, built his wealth with businesses in concrete and self-storage primarily on the Mainland. "Back then I was out making money, trying to make my way in the world, spraying concrete all over the place. That's all I knew," Olson told Ko Olina's publication Hale in 2018. "Later, I was able to softly look at the world in a different way, and I said, 'Gee, I don't really want to spray concrete. I've sprayed enough.'"

The other owner, the Gill family, has been active in politics and environmental advocacy for generations. In the 1960s, Lorin Gill was among the founders of the Hawai'i chapter of the Sierra Club. He is considered by many the father of environmental education in Hawai'i. Gary Gill, his nephew and one of the family's leads on purchasing Pālehua, has a "planning horizon that's two hundred years" for the mountain. "From an environmental standpoint, this land has been abused and

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After 125 years, the first cabin built on Pālehua in 1897 (seen above as it was circa 1948) remains largely unchanged. Built by Harry Martens von Holt (seen on the facing page), whose work included prospecting for water on Pālehua, the cabin still has some of its original shingles and windows. – PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY MATTHEW PS CHAPMAN

neglected for two hundred years, and it’s going to take multiple generations to restore it,” he says. “Honestly, you can never restore something to how it was. ... It’ll never be back to what it was exactly.” But they will try, removing invasives and reforesting with natives.

The Mālama Learning Center, which engages communities in West O’ahu through culture and caring for the land, works with both landowners in its current projects. But founder Pauline Sato’s ties to Pālehua go even further back, when she was mentored by Lorin Gill in the mid-1980s and brought to the mountain on a ridge hike. The Mālama Learning Center partners with Camp Pālehua—formerly known as

Camp Timberline starting in the early 1960s—where schoolchildren bunk in former horse stables. They used to bond on ropes courses, but under the Gills’ ownership, the camp is moving toward more environmental and cultural programs. Higher up the slope, the nonprofit operates a nursery on Olson property, growing thousands of native plants acclimated to the dry-mesic forest of the Wai’anae Mountains and outplanting them across Pālehua “to help heal and restore the land,” Sato says. In some ways these programs have made the mountain more accessible, inviting youth and teachers to learn more about the Wai’anae ecosystem and the cultural history of Pālehua—and to join

in the work. For Gary Gill it’s a balance between throwing Pālehua’s gates wide open and, “in the words of my dear uncle, to lead people into the forest so they will learn to love it and work to protect it.”

If the yellow lehua stump goes, Pālehua cabin will vanish. So Matthew Chapman thinks. In the family’s legends, when his great-grandfather built the cabin in 1897, “a yellow lehua sprung up at the northeast corner of the cabin, indicating to the Hawaiians who knew him that he had mana,” Chapman says. And when he died, so did the tree. But the stump remained. “And in the 1980s and ’90s, it started to lean over, and this koa tree



sprung up and caught it in the crook of its arm. Until seven years ago that tree was holding it up. And then somebody was concerned it was a threat to the cabin if it came down in the wind, and they lopped off the koa tree and killed it. But that tree is still there and that stump is still there. ... If you pull that yellow lehua stump out of the ground, this will all unravel. Poof! Like Brigadoon, it will just go. It’s like spiritually that yellow lehua stump is the reason that 125 years later we still have this cabin, and it’s somehow holding the fabric together.”

Life on the mountain can feel tenuous, a combination of its wildness, the threat to that wildness and exposure in a modern world—and the short-term leases that all of its tenants hold. When the Campbell Estate Trust dissolved and Pālehua was put up for sale in 2008, Chapman was unsure of the fate of the cabin. His great-grandfather Harry Martens von Holt managed the ranch for O’ahu Railway & Land Company, which had built and operated a railroad that went around three-quarters of O’ahu, from Kahuku to Ka’ena. The rail took von Holt to the base of the mountain—the rest of the way up was by horse. He had constructed the first cabin, which he named Pālehua, on the mountain. (It’s likely that Pālehua—which may mean “enclosure of the lehua”—got its name from von Holt’s retreat, for the name doesn’t exist in records previous to the cabin’s existence.) And upon seeing the denuded landscape, he planted thousands of acacia and eucalyptus trees, hiring people to water them by hand.



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Restoration efforts on Pālehua aim to reverse centuries of ecological damage by removing invasive species such as ironwood trees (and using the wood for fence posts and houses around O’ahu), reforesting with native Hawaiian plants, improving ‘elepaio (native flycatcher) sanctuaries and maintaining “snail jails,” which protect endangered tree snails.

Pālehua cabin’s lease was passed down through von Holt’s descendants. Chapman’s father loved the place and brought his sons up on weekends—when he passed away, Chapman “preserved it like a museum,” he says. His father’s typewritten arrival and departure checklist for the cabin, nailed to the inside front door in 1975, remains there, though bugs have chewed away the edges. Chapman still has the cabin’s original guestbook, dating back to 1930. “It’s a real heart space for me,” he says. “This is the reason I kept a hold of [the

cabin]. It’s half museum. It’s preserving something that matters.” But it’s more than the structure itself. A decade ago, when Chapman’s daughters were around six years old, they’d play in the forest. “We’d call them in for dinner, and it’d be pitch-black dark.” One of his daughters “came in with red dirt feet and twigs in her hair and said, ‘It’s not dark yet.’ When she got inside and looked outside, she realized they’d been out there so long, their eyes had adjusted. And that was the gift of Pālehua: being able to play

in the forest at night safely, to be in the wind and the trees. That’s magic.” Chapman hesitated to change anything about the cabin, partly for the past and partly for the uncertain future that accompanies three-year leases. But recently he finally painted it, updated the wiring and put in new furniture and beds—what was essentially a wooden box, unimproved for decades, had been on the verge of uninhabitable. It was his way, like many of the residents on Pālehua, of caring for the mountain by remembering

and reviving what once was. Their devotion reminded me of something Philpotts had said as he led me up Mauna Kapu to show me the cultural importance of the peak. I asked whether he thought it was the most sacred place in Hawai’i. “No, because that’s a dangerous perspective,” he replied. “This is one of the most sacred places to me. Does it matter if [one place] is more sacred or less sacred? It doesn’t. It just matters that there are people caring for all of them.” **hh**



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A Fine Pickle

Island pickleballers are dinking their way to the top of America's fastest-growing sport



On Sunday afternoons, small crowds gather around two pickleball courts at Mother Waldron Park in Kaka'ako. The popping sound of hard plastic echoes off nearby buildings adorned with street-art murals. A dozen or so paddles lean on the chain link fence between the courts in neat groups of four, ready for

the next doubles match. Most belong to casual pickleball players, regular people just trying to have fun, be outside and stay active. But one of them belongs to Keven Wong.

Even in casual play, Wong seems to know where the ball will be before it gets there. He's measured and balanced, but also free and fluid enough to go for difficult, unorthodox shots: behind the back, between the legs, around the sides

of the net. It's textbook form with back-of-the-class playfulness.

"I've always loved doing trick shots and fancy shots," he says. "If it goes in and I win the point, it's an awesome thing for people to see. It's not always the smartest shot, but sometimes it's the only shot I have." His willingness to go for high-risk shots belies his patience on the court. He weathers opponents' barrages with maddening composure,

An aerial view of the Kauanoe o Kōloa residential development, showing a cluster of modern houses with light-colored roofs and walls, surrounded by lush greenery and palm trees. The development is situated on a hillside overlooking the ocean.

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Wong, 33, is Hawai'i's top local player, ranked seventh overall in the Western region—the only one in the top fifty not from California. He's won every major doubles tournament in Hawai'i, and when he isn't sharing the court with top-five pickleball pro Riley Newman or tennis Hall-of-Famer Michael Chang, he can be found in parks and gymnasiums across O'ahu, trading volleys with whoever happens to be there.

Like most of the best pickleball players in Hawai'i and in general, Wong came to the game after a lifetime of tennis. Following a successful college career in California, he returned home with little interest in the game he'd played since he was seven years old. "I just got tired of it," he says. "I maybe played one more local tournament after college, but I was burned out. It wasn't something I wanted to keep doing."

He kept himself busy with other sports: basketball, volleyball, even spikeball. Then in 2017, friends invited him to play a new game with a goofy name. It was love at first serve. "Everything in pickleball is what I loved in tennis," says Wong. "Everything quick, everything with control, everything at the net. And I don't have to serve overhand anymore."

It's not hard to see how tennis skills transfer to pickleball, but there are also some key differences. As Wong says, pickleball serves take place at waist level, making them less of a weapon than in tennis. The court is smaller—you can fit four pickleball courts in one tennis court—and since pickleballs have holes in them, the game is slower, making it less of a physical grind than tennis.

Perhaps the biggest difference, however, is the "kitchen," a non-volley zone stretching seven feet on either side of the net. You can enter the kitchen only after the ball has bounced in it. The kitchen dictates the overall strategy of the game. In tennis, most rallies consist of full-court groundstrokes with

lots of spin and pace on the ball, but the goal of pickleball is to drop the ball into the opponent's kitchen and get to your own kitchen line. From there, opponents trade light volleys called dinks into each other's kitchens until an opportunity to smash it arises. Tennis rewards pace and power; pickleball prioritizes placement and patience. "I don't have any intention of playing tennis again at this point," Wong says.

The sentiment is surprising given how many tennis players there are in pickleball, but it's also exceedingly common. Pickleball has the tendency to crowd out other interests. Once people start pickling, they're often unable to keep a lid on their enthusiasm. "I didn't think I'd fall in love with pickleball the way I did," says Xiao Yi Wang-Beckvall. "I wasn't expecting to be so passionate about it. It's an addicting sport."

Wang-Beckvall, 23, has been playing pickleball for less than a year, but she's already one of Hawai'i's top up-and-coming female talents. That's saying something: Whereas Wong is the only regionally ranked player from Hawai'i on the men's side, there are three Hawai'i players in the women's top fifty in the West region. Wang-Beckvall is expected to join them sooner than later. No pressure.

She started playing tennis when she was four years old. After a promising high school career at 'Iolani School, she received a full-ride academic scholarship to Hawai'i Pacific University, and although the school has a strong tennis program, she opted instead to focus on the thing that paid her tuition. When she graduated in 2022, however, a familiar drive stirred.

"I missed playing sports, missed being competitive," she says. "I heard the buzz about pickleball and that tennis players were having good results when they switched over. I figured, why not give it a shot? The first time I played, it was humbling but also incentivizing. I felt like, 'I know I can do so much better than this.'" She was right. After playing for only a month, she entered the Hawai'i State Pickleball Championships, one



OPENING SPREAD LEFT / **Racquet man:** Keven Wong, Hawai'i's top pickleball player, fields a backhand at Mother Waldron Park in Honolulu, one of the only city parks with dedicated pickleball courts.

TOP / **13-year-old pickleball phenom Kona Bee smashes a shot.** Bee is among the new generation of players who's a pickleball native; he didn't come to it, like most older players, from tennis.

BOTTOM / **If you can't find a city court, then build your own.** The backyard of Bee's family home is dedicated to the sport—as is his entire family, who host tournaments on their home court.

KULEANA

n. right, privilege, concern, or responsibility

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There aren't many courts dedicated to pickleball, plenty of players are. Most games are played using portable nets like the ones seen above at Kāneʻohe District Park on Oʻahu. The Honolulu Department of Parks and Recreation has announced plans to add sixty-seven more courts.

of the biggest tournaments in the state. The tournament is divided by skill level divisions, with 2.5 at the low end and 5.0 at the high end, with different divisions at 0.5 intervals. Wang-Beckvall went home with gold medals in 3.5 singles, another gold in 4.0 women's doubles and a bronze medal in 5.0 mixed doubles—against the best male and female players in the state.

Talk of tournaments and rankings and medals—it's all

pretty new. Pickleball is in the middle of a commercial and professional transformation, and players like Wong and Wang-Beckvall are dinking on the edge of a revolution. Up until recently, pickleball was seen as a frivolity, a game better suited for elementary school PE classes and elderly workout sessions, more akin to tai chi than tennis.

Created by a trio of families in 1965 on Bainbridge Island in Washington state, pickleball was

originally meant to give bored, mopey kids something to do. The game was cobbled together using a badminton net, table tennis paddles and a perforated plastic wiffle ball. The name is a reference to that jerry-rigged quality; in rowing the term "pickle boat" is a last-minute crew assembled from whatever rowers are available.

It slowly spread from the Pacific Northwest the same way it continues to spread now: through the force of

enthusiasm. Hawai'i was one of the first states to catch pickle fever when, just a few years after it was invented, a family from Bainbridge Island brought the game with them on a Maui vacation. Pickleball was then lobbed from one island to the next, and it's been here ever since. By 1990, pickleball was being played in all fifty states, despite almost no media coverage or advertising behind it. Coconut wireless with nationwide coverage.



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Now the game that was little more than a regional novelty not long ago is undergoing a big money makeover, fueled by billionaires, celebrities and celebrity billionaires. A list of pickleball investors would make an enviable guest list for a presidential campaign fundraiser: Steve Kuhn, Thomas Dundon, Mark Cuban, LeBron James, Tom Brady, Heidi Klum, Michael Phelps and Patrick Mahomes, among dozens more. There are hundreds of paddle manufacturers—including once-reluctant tennis companies—and multiple competing professional tours. Prize money has also ballooned: The first national championship tournament in 2009 offered a total of \$7,000 in prize money. This year it's \$150,000.

Where money flows, possibility abounds. The professionalization of pickleball means it's no longer just a hobby for the unathletic. It can be a legitimate livelihood. As Wong began to cement his position in the Islands, sponsorship opportunities came, from gear and apparel company Engage Pickleball as well as Day One, a CBD-infused water drink. He made the decision to leave his job as a speech pathologist and rehab director at a geriatric care facility to commit to pickleball full time—while his wife was pregnant with their second child. She had some reservations.

“There were a lot of hard conversations with my wife,” he says. “Pickleball is still pretty new, and it's difficult living in Hawai'i and raising two young kids.” She ultimately acquiesced, and so far it's been working out. Because she also works part-time, the logistics of raising two infant children means Wong hasn't yet been able to compete in Mainland tournaments, where the competition is tougher and the prize money is bigger. “It's something I hope to do in the future,” he says, “but right now I've been leaning into teaching.” Wong teaches classes at the Nu'uaniu YMCA and the O'ahu Pickleball Association, and recently he was hired at the Waialae Country Club as its resident pickle pro. He also offers private lessons, his most notable pupil being tennis champion Michael Chang, whom he helped prepare for an ESPN

showcase tournament that also features Andre Agassi, Andy Roddick and John McEnroe.

Wang-Beckvall is a little more ambivalent about going pro, but she hasn't ruled it out. “It would be fun to play in Major League Pickleball,” she says, “and I'm a competitive person, so I want to see how far I can take it. I want to be the best player that I can be, but if it becomes something that is giving me more frustration and stress than enjoyment, I need to step back and reevaluate. At the end of the day, I want to keep playing for a long time, and I want it to be something fun.”

Pickleball's mainstream emergence also spells change for the game itself. The current best players are all former tennis players, but a new generation of pickleball natives is on the rise. Kona Bee is one of Hawai'i's most dynamic young players. The 13 year old has been playing for two years, mostly against adults. And he isn't just playing against them. He's beating them. “I like playing against adults,” he says. “It's challenging. They hit hard and they're taller. I don't want them to go easy on me. Then I don't improve and they won't know my skill.”

One of his weapons is his ambidexterity, making every shot a potential forehand, which is almost always a stronger shot than a backhand. “I was playing around and using my left hand instead of my backhand,” he says, noting that he normally writes left-handed. “I noticed that it helped a lot to get balls that were farther away.” Bee has medaled in tournaments on Maui and O'ahu, including one run by his family, who constructed a pickleball court in their backyard. He also plays for his school team at King Intermediate, one of the first middle school teams in the state. If his creativity and tenacity are at all representative of his peers, the future of pickleball in Hawai'i will be as exciting as it will be surprising.

Despite the real-time evolution of pickleball, it is still, at its essence, the same joyful game that brings people together. You'll see kids playing with adults, men with women, gym rats with dad-bods. That dynamic isn't just possible, it's normal. Pickleball is a



Much of the appeal of pickleball is the way it brings people together; it's common for men and women, boys and girls of all ages to play with and against each other. After the games at Kāne'ohe District Park (above), it's time for a kani ka pila (jam).

game of radical inclusivity. Now the challenge isn't getting the word out about the game so much as finding a place to play. There are only ten dedicated pickleball courts on O'ahu. That's set to change soon: The Honolulu Department of Parks and Recreation has announced plans to add another sixty-seven, with permanent nets.

Though there aren't many courts dedicated to pickleball, there are more than enough players who are, and the pickleball community has thrived even if they depend on portable nets. More than anything, community is what keeps people coming back. “You can improve your lifestyle, meet new friends, make better relationships with people, just by coming together and playing pickleball,” Bee says. “It's a very rewarding sport to play,” says Wang-Beckvall, “and if you've never picked up a racket or a paddle before, you'll still have a good time. You can't say that about many sports.” **hh**



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The Pen and the Sword

Comic book artist Stan Sakai has made a life's work of drawing from Japanese history.



Stan Sakai finds quite a few things to be amazing. As in: “If you have never had fresh pineapple right off the stalk, it’s just amazing.” And also: “My stepdaughter Emi just bought me an amazing book on the fine art of Japanese mud-ball making. There are craftsmen that make these mud spheres—I’d never heard of it, but as soon as I saw it, I thought, ‘I have to do a story about that.’”

Sakai is genuine in both his wonder and wide-ranging interest, which in part explains his success: He is arguably the most prolific cartoonist to come out of Hawai‘i. His best-known work, *Usagi Yojimbo*—which recounts the exploits of an anthropomorphized rabbit/samurai in seventeenth-century Japan—began publishing as a solo comic series in 1986, and these days it comes out at a rate of nine to ten issues per year, with

at least one full-length graphic novel also published most years (he estimates there are forty volumes in the *Usagi* novel series so far, though he’s lost count). His work has been translated into at least eighteen languages, and he has won every major award there is in the comic publishing industry, multiple times. He worked for twenty-five years with the late Stan Lee (of Marvel Comics fame) and still does lettering for



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Sergio Aragonés’ *Groo the Wanderer*—Aragonés rose to prominence at *Mad* magazine. A Netflix series, *Samurai Rabbit: The Usagi Chronicles*, began airing last year and is into its second season. Sakai created a new graphic novel series with his wife, Julie, who is herself a skilled artist working in the *chibi* style common to Japanese *anime* (animation) and *manga* (comics and graphic novels), in which certain aspects of characters are highly exaggerated. (Chibi is also sometimes referred to as “super deformation.”) The first installment in the new series, *Chibi Usagi: Attack of the Heebie Chibis*, won the 2022 Eisner Award—often referred to as the “Oscars of the comic world”—as the Best New Publication for Younger Children. The previous year, Sakai was inducted into the Eisner Hall of Fame, after winning awards over the years for everything from “Talent Deserving of Wider Recognition” to “Best Letterer” and “Best Serialized Story.” There is a profusion of original art, plush toys, figurines, socks, mugs and more for sale online, and a new line of Chibi Usagi designs selling exclusively at Uniqlo in Ala Moana Center.

Sakai’s world wasn’t always this expansive. He grew up in Kapahulu in the 1950s, attending Waikiki Elementary (where he met his future first wife, Sharon), then Kaimuki Intermediate and High before going off to college a mile or so farther uphill at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. And while he says he had some great mentors—including high school art teacher Lorraine Kawahara (to whom he would later dedicate a book) and, while at UH, Dave Thorne, whom Sakai refers to as “the cartoon guru of Hawai‘i”—being a comic book artist seemed to be out of reach. “I’ve always been interested in art, as was my older brother, Ed, and I loved comic books,” he says, speaking from his home studio in Arizona. “I knew I wanted to do something in art, but this was way before computers, FedEx and everything. You pretty much had to live in New York to be in comic books, so I figured maybe I’d go into advertising or something.”

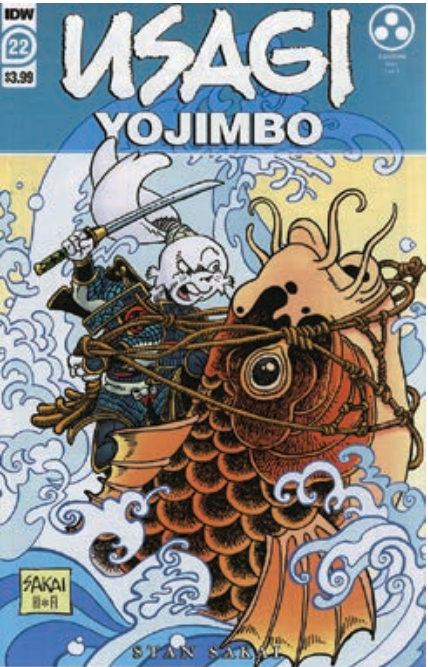
In hindsight, Sakai’s early life laid the groundwork for his later success. His grandfather settled on Kaua‘i in the nineteenth century as part of the early

wave of Japanese migration to the Islands, and his father, Akio, was born on that island. Akio met Sakai’s mother, Teruko, while serving in the US military in post-WWII Japan—theirs was one of the first military-civilian marriages authorized by the occupation forces—and Stan and Ed were both born in Japan (Stan in Kyoto in 1953). The family returned to Kaua‘i when Stan was two, and then ultimately moved to O‘ahu. Younger brother Kenneth was born in the Islands.

“I grew up right at the base of Diamond Head, and that was great,” he recalls. “It was a fifteen-minute walk to the beach.” Also nearby was the now-defunct Kapahulu Theater. “Every weekend they would show *chanbara*, samurai action movies, and every weekend I’d be there. I grew up watching those movies—the *Samurai Trilogy* by Hiroshi Inagaki was one of my favorites. My mom was also a great resource: She would tell me all these stories, and I was reading manga before they were called manga—they were just Japanese comics, and she would read them aloud and explain them to me.”

While at UH, Sakai was among the founders of the House of Cartoons, a group of Hawai‘i artists mentored by Thorne. He married high school sweetheart Sharon in 1977, and together they moved to California and plugged into the art scene. It was there that Miyamoto Usagi, the rabbit-warrior hero of *Usagi Yojimbo*, came into being, synthesizing Sakai’s early influences: Usagi, or rabbits, are prominent in Japanese folklore, some of which was passed on from his mother; meanwhile, the life of the warrior/philosopher/artist Miyamoto Musashi (who lived circa 1584–1645) was fictionalized in Inagaki’s *Samurai Trilogy*. (Inagaki’s film was released in three installments from 1954 to 1956, but there was also Akira Kurosawa’s 1961 *Yojimbo*: Like Toshiro Mifuni’s character in that film, Miyamoto Usagi is a *rōnin*—a samurai of the Edo Period with no lord or master. The term *yojimbo* translates simply as bodyguard.)

Usagi Yojimbo has other subtle nods to Sakai’s past. One supporting character, Inspector Shida, is modeled loosely on Chang Apana, the early twentieth-century Honolulu detective who himself was the model for author Earl Derr Biggers’



OPENING PAGE / Eisner Hall of Fame inductee Stan Sakai, seen in his studio in Arizona, is one of the most prolific and successful comic book artists to have come out of Hawai‘i.

ABOVE / *Usagi Yojimbo*, Sakai’s best known work, follows the adventures of a samurai rabbit in feudal Japan and has been translated into eighteen languages.

fictional Charlie Chan. “Chang Apana was just a name I had heard in passing when I was growing up, but then I did a bit more research and thought, ‘He’s just amazing—I mean, short little man, but he carried bullwhips. At first my character designs for Inspector Shida were for one of those big, heroic types, but after reading more about Apana, I thought that would actually be a neat dichotomy, having a smaller, quiet guy as a hero.”

And then there are the pineapples. A few years back while visiting Hawai‘i, he harvested a pineapple that older brother Ed had planted in their parents’ front yard. “That got me to thinking, ‘Did they have pineapple in Usagi’s time?’ I found it was unknown in feudal Japan, so I figured it would be a nice thing, like hiding an Easter egg in the story—and also to honor my connection to Hawai‘i and to my dad—to put a pineapple in every issue. So ever since a story called *The Hidden*, which is about the persecution of Christians in feudal Japan,



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“The fact that he does everything by hand—comes up with the story, does the writing, does the penciling, does the inking, does the lettering,” says fellow Hawai‘i comic artist Jon J. Murakami, “that’s just phenomenal!” Above, Sakai draws a page for *Usagi Yojimbo* vol. 5 no. 1.

there’s been one hidden somewhere in every story, in this person’s clothing or a snowball that’s shaped like a pineapple. ... I think I’ve only missed a few in the past seven or eight years.”

Sakai’s casual mention of the subject of *The Hidden* hints at one of the things he’s known for: the level of historical detail in his narratives. “I do as much research as I can, but within reason,” he says, though “within reason” appears to be a slippery slope. “I read a lot and watch documentaries,” he says. “There’s often something, some weird aspect of Japanese culture or history, that makes me think, ‘What can I do with that?’ For instance, my parents went to Japan once, and they brought back pictures of a seaweed farm. Then I heard there was a museum in Salem, Massachusetts, that had an exhibit on Japanese seaweed farming. So I went there and did research, and that became a story. Another story I did, *Grasscutter*, took about five years to finish—that’s

probably the most research-intensive story I’ve done, but then it won the Eisner Award for best serialized story and ended up being used as a textbook in Japanese history classes, which just astounds me.”

Sakai is also one of a dwindling breed of artists who still does everything by hand: He plots out the story in notebooks and sketches everything in pencil, then fills in each panel using ink he imports from Japan. He then turns things over to stepdaughter Emi, who serves as his colorist. “The computer is mainly used for research,” he says. “I have a huge library, but I don’t go to it as often as I once did, because the internet is so accessible. ... It’s also great for keeping in touch with friends.”

When Sakai was starting out, it was common for artists to sign over ownership of their characters to publishers, but he followed friend Sergio Aragonés’ lead in holding onto all of his intellectual property rights, which give him complete control over where

and how Usagi appears—for instance, making possible several collaborations with the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. It also gives him complete control over his creative output. “Usually you send a story to the publisher or the editor, and the editor assigns a colorist in New York for the book, whereas Emi is right here and we work closely together. She will ask things like, ‘What do you think the mood for this should be?’ And because I own the character, I can do whatever is right for it. The contracts with all my publishers have always stipulated that whatever I send in, they publish. They don’t get to see anything about the story until I send it in. That freedom is almost unheard of in the industry.”

Jon J. Murakami is one of the busiest cartoonists in Hawai‘i these days. “Calabash,” which began its run in 2007, is still published every other Sunday in the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, and he recently released his third book-length compilation of



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the strips. His *Gordon Rider* comic book, which debuted in 2005, marked issue 15 at this year’s Kawaii Kon, which is Honolulu’s version of Comicon, albeit devoted to anime and manga. If Thorne and Corky Trinidad—an editorial cartoonist for the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* from 1969 through his passing in 2009—were among the first generation of local cartoonists and Sakai the second, Murakami says he’s somewhere between the third and fourth. He first came to know of Sakai through *Usagi Yojimbo*, then was introduced to him by Thorne, and they are now close friends.

“With anything in Hawai‘i, we’re always proud of people who take that leap to do things, whether they’re an artist or an actor or anybody, really,” he says. “But even more so as an artist: Back when *Usagi Yojimbo* was first published, we were so remote from everyone else—there really wasn’t a way to show your work aside from whoever saw your portfolio, or word of mouth. And here was a person from Hawai‘i who did it, who was making his own comic—that was very inspirational for local cartoonists. Most of us use the computer now because we can’t stand our own handwriting,” he laughs. “The fact that he does everything by hand—comes up with the story, does the writing, does the penciling, does the inking, does the lettering—that’s just phenomenal. Even I wonder, ‘How do you have enough time for all this? How do you keep coming up with this stuff?’ I do comic strips but they’re just snippets, little episodes, you know? Stan works on a grand scale.”

But never mind the artist, what about Stan Sakai the man? “He’s a dear, dear friend,” says Murakami. “He’s very humble, and he hasn’t forgotten where he’s come from. There was a fundraiser when his wife, Sharon, was battling cancer, called the *Sakai Project*”—a book of *Usagi Yojimbo*-inspired art, released in 2014—“and all these really big-name artists came to contribute. The turnout was amazing, and you

realized that everybody did this because they just love Stan. ... He’s just such a great guy in the industry.”

Sharon passed away in 2014, and Sakai married Julie a year later. Usagi Studios is now a family business. Stan and Julie publish *Chibi Usagi* under the shared pseudonym JUST Sakai (for Julie and STan). Emi, Julie’s daughter and Stan’s colorist, is a professional photographer and also heads up Usagi Studios’ merchandising department. Julie’s son Daniel serves as their licensing agent. As for how Stan remains so productive, it’s not too complicated: He works seven days a week, for six to seven hours per day. “I used to do more, but the kids kind of put a curfew on us,” he chuckles. “They bought us a TV and subscriptions to all these streaming services and said, ‘You can’t work, you have to just sit and watch.’ So in the evenings, after dinner, it’s usually Korean dramas.”

And while the life of a samurai holds few guarantees, there appears to be no end in sight for Miyamoto Usagi. “I’m past the age of retirement, but I’m not retiring anytime soon. ... Actually, I’m busier than ever,” says Sakai. “It seems like every story I do becomes a springboard for another, and right now I’ve got stories that I want to do that probably won’t see print for another ten years. In the meantime I have gotten to meet my heroes. I worked for all those years with Stan Lee; I knew Jack Kirby [also of Marvel Comics] and Moebius in Europe. I met Osamu Tezuka in Japan—he was like the god of manga. ... It’s just amazing.” **hh**



ABOVE TOP & BOTTOM / **The reference library and drawing table of an artist still in process. “I’m past retirement age, but I’m not retiring anytime soon,” says Sakai. “I’m busier than ever. It seems like every story I do becomes a springboard for another, and right now I’ve got stories I want to do that won’t see print for another ten years.”**



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CATS

6/13–18
Andrew Lloyd Webber’s award-winning musical based on the 1939 poetry collection *Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats* by TS Eliot. Blaisdell Concert Hall, (808) 768-5252

HARRY MACK: ODYSSEY TOUR 2023

6/15
Musical artist, rapper and YouTube personality Harry Mack performs. The Republik, (808) 941-7469

NEIL SIMON’S: THE SUNSHINE BOYS

6/15–25
Old rivalry and vintage hilarity abound in this classic comedy of showbiz and friendship starring Joe Moore and Pat Sajak. Hawai’i Theatre Center, (808) 528-0506

THE SPINNERS

6/16–18
The iconic and enduring R&B group performs their hits along with songs from their latest album. Blue Note Hawaii, (808) 777-4890

FAMILY SUNDAYS

6/18
HoMA offers creative activities for keiki of all ages, community-focused programming and entertainment. Free museum admission for local residents. 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Honolulu Museum of Art, (808) 532-8700

ALI WONG

6/23&24
Stand-up comedian and actress Ali Wong performs her latest material. Blaisdell Concert Hall, (808) 768-5252

AIR SUPPLY

6/27–7/2
The Australian soft rock duo famous for hits including “I’m All Out of Love” and “Here I Am” performs live. Blue Note Hawaii, (808) 777-4890

JULY

MŌ’ILI’ILI SUMMER FEST

7/1
Honolulu’s largest bon dance, with food trucks, pop-up shops, keiki games, cultural activities and more. Mō’ili’ili, moililisummerfesthi.com

FOURTH OF JULY AT ALA MOANA CENTER

7/4
An annual celebration at Ala Moana Center with live entertainment, discounts and promotions. Ala Moana Center, (808) 955-9517

MAOLI

7/8&9
Award-winning “country reggae” group Maoli performs with special guests. Tom Moffatt Waikiki Shell, (808) 768-5252

WAIKĪKĪ STEEL GUITAR WEEK

7/10–15
A week-long event celebrating Hawaiian music and the steel guitar with evening concerts. The event culminates with a festival on Friday and Saturday evenings featuring popular Hawai’i and Japan steel guitar masters. Royal Hawaiian Center, (808) 922-2299



Mō’ili’ili Summer Fest

BISHOP MUSEUM AFTER HOURS

7/14
Museum exhibits are open from 5:30 to 9 p.m., along with cultural demonstrations, keiki activities and a night market with food trucks and local vendors. Bishop Museum, (808) 847-3511

WOMEN ROCK

7/15
Hawai’i Symphony Orchestra’s 2023 Starlight Festival kicks off with a concert celebrating the music of Carole King, Tina Turner, Janis Joplin, Aretha Franklin, Pat Benatar, Carly Simon and more. Tom Moffatt Waikiki Shell, (808) 768-5252

46TH PRINCE LOT HULA FESTIVAL

7/15
The storied hula festival returns with twelve hālau, local food and refreshments, crafters and cultural demonstrations. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Frank F. Fasi Civic Grounds, moanalua gardens foundation.org

FAMILY SUNDAYS

7/16
HoMA offers creative activities for keiki of all ages, community-focused programming and entertainment. Free admission for residents. 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Honolulu Museum of Art, (808) 532-8700

FIA

7/19
One of the biggest breakout artists to come out of Hawai’i in recent years. Fia’s hits include “Love Me” and “Fly Away.” Blue Note Hawaii, (808) 777-4890

SYMPHONIC DANCES

7/22
Hawai’i’s own Sarah Hicks returns to lead the Hawai’i Symphony Orchestra in a fusion of dance and orchestra. Tom Moffatt Waikiki Shell, (808) 768-5252

HALE’IWA ARTS FESTIVAL


7/24&25
This annual festival features artists, musicians, dancers, storytellers, demonstrations and children’s art activities. Hale’iwa Beach Park, (808) 637-2277

FOUREVER FAB & SIXTIESMANIA


7/29&30
Two distinguished tribute bands join together for a concert full of hits from the ’60s. Hawaii Theatre Center, (808) 528-0506

MOLOKA’I 2 O’AHU PADDLEBOARD WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

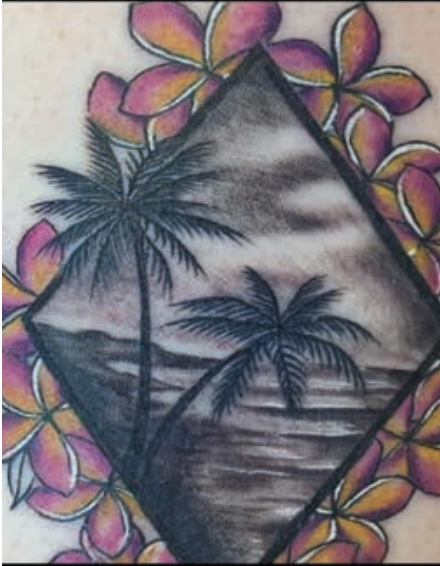
7/30
The world’s premier open-ocean paddleboarding race features a 32-mile course across some of the state’s roughest water. Maunalua Bay, (760) 944-3854





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A collage of three images: the exterior of the Bishop Museum, the interior of the museum showing a large whale skeleton, and a colorful, abstract graphic of a traditional Hawaiian canoe (wa'a) on a blue and yellow background.

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Kapolei Commons, 4480 Kapolei Parkway, City Square, 1286 Kalani St, Honolulu youngsfishmarket.com (808) 841-4885

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Maui Ag Fest & 4-H Livestock Fair

PHOTO BY ELYSE BUTLER

JUNE

WILDLIFE WEDNESDAYS

Wednesdays
Learn about humpback whales, monk seals and more Maui wildlife with naturalists from the Hawai'i Wildlife Discovery Center. 10 a.m. to noon. Whalers Village, (808) 661-4567

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

KAMA'ĀINA NIGHTS

Third Fridays
A free monthly concert highlighting Hawai'i's homegrown talent. Queen Ka'ahumanu Center, (808) 877-3369

UPCOUNTRY FARMERS MARKET

Saturdays
Locally grown produce, fish, prepared food and products. Free. 7 to 11 a.m. Kula Malu Town Center, (808) 572-8122

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 AG FEST & 4-H LIVESTOCK FAIR

6/3
Highlights include a livestock auction, educational booths, keiki zone, a farmers market and giveaways throughout the day. 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. War Memorial Complex, (808) 385-3530

KAPALUA WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL

6/8-11
World-famous winemakers, master sommeliers, celebrated chefs and industry insiders come together for a series of tastings, festivities and gourmet meals. Kapalua Resort, kapaluawineandfoodfestival.com

NĀ KAMEHAMEHA COMMEMORATIVE PĀ'Ū PARADE & HO'OLAULE'A

6/17&18
Maui honors the Kamehameha lineage with a parade on Saturday at 9:45 a.m. on Front Street; the ho'olaule'a takes place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days with music, dance, food and cultural displays. Lahaina Banyan Court Park, (808) 264-8779

QKC KEIKI CLUB

6/17
Monthly keiki activities focused on Hawaiian language and culture with Luana Kawa'a of Morning Mana'o at the QKC keiki play area. Enter to win giveaways and enjoy family-friendly festivities. 10 to 11 a.m. Queen Ka'ahumanu Center, (808) 877-3369

ALI WONG

6/19&20
Stand-up comedian and actress Ali Wong performs her latest material. Maui Arts and Cultural Center (MACC) Castle Theater, (808) 242-7469

KĪHEI FOURTH FRIDAY

6/23
A free monthly community street party at Azeka Shopping Center with food trucks, entertainment, crafters and kids' games. 6 to 9 p.m. Kīhei, (808) 870-0423

MAUI FILM FESTIVAL

6/28-7/2
A celebration of compassionate cinematic vision and storytelling, presenting the best of studio and independent releases. Various locations, (808) 579-9244

JULY

MACC BIENNIAL

7/5-8/26
A statewide juried exhibit for artists living in Hawai'i to enter their strongest, most innovative and thought-provoking work. MACC Schaefer International Gallery, (808) 242-2787

MOLOKA'I HOLOKAI

7/14&15
An 8.5-mile downwind race that includes SUP, OC-1, OC-2, OC-6, prone and ski paddlers with festivities to welcome in the paddlers. Various locations, (808) 336-0946

QKC KEIKI CLUB

7/15
Monthly keiki activities focused on Hawaiian language and culture with Luana Kawa'a of Morning Mana'o at the QKC keiki play area. Win giveaways and enjoy family friendly festivities. 10 to 11 a.m. Queen Ka'ahumanu Center, (808) 877-3369

PADDLE IMUA

7/23
Paddle Imua is an annual multi-discipline paddle race in support of Camp Imua, a week-long recreational experience for children with special needs. Maliko Gulch to Kanahā Beach Park, paddleimua.com

KĪHEI FOURTH FRIDAY

7/28
A free monthly community street party at Azeka Shopping Center with food trucks, entertainment, crafters and kids' games. 6 to 9 p.m. Kīhei, (808) 870-0423

YOUTH ART EXHIBITION

7/28-8/25
An exhibition showcasing works by more than 200 keiki artists participating in Hui No'eau Visual Arts Center's summer arts program. Hui No'eau Visual Arts Center, (808) 572-6560

MOLOKA'I 2 O'AHU PADDLEBOARD WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

7/30
The world's premier open-ocean paddleboarding race features a 32-mile course acrosssome of the state's roughest seas. Starts at Kaluako'i beach on Moloka'i and finishes at O'ahu's Maunalua Bay, molokai2oahu.com

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HAWAI'I ISLAND



The Mākaha Sons

JUNE

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

PORTUGUESE BREAD BAKING

Thursdays
Observe the traditional art of baking Portuguese bread in a large wood-fired stone oven, or *forno*. Program begins at 10 a.m., bread sales begin at 1 p.m. Kona Historical Society, [808] 323-3222

A WALK INTO THE PAST

Fridays
Take a walk back in time to 1912 and meet the founder of the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory, Thomas A. Jaggar, at the edge of Kīlauea Volcano. Free. 10 a.m. to noon. Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, [808] 985-6000

NIGHT MARKET

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

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 a variety of creative projects. Free. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. East Hawai'i Cultural Center, [808] 961-5711

IRONMAN 70.3 HAWAI'I

6/3
The 70.3 triathlon covers half the based distance of the IRONMAN World Championship, which is held in Kona later in the year. Kohala Coast, [808] 329-0063

S. TOKUNAGA ULUA CHALLENGE

6/8–11
The largest shoreline fishing tournament in the state includes both barbed and barbless hook categories. Afook-Chinen Civic Auditorium, [808] 935-6965

HAWAII KUAULI PACIFIC & ASIA CULTURAL FESTIVAL

6/9
This three-day event will be packed with food, fashion, cultural expressions, keiki hula, cultural workshops and the island's only fire knife competition. King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Resort, hikuauli.com

KING KAMEHAMEHA DAY PARADE

6/10
A floral parade through the heart of Kailua-Kona, with pā'ū riders representing each of the Hawaiian Islands. The parade starts at 9 a.m. Kailua Village, konaparade.org

KŌKUA KAILUA VILLAGE STROLL

6/11
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

THE MĀKAHA SONS

6/17
A performance from the renowned Hawaiian music trio to benefit Hilo's landmark theater. Palace Theater, [808] 934-7010

HILO ORCHID SOCIETY ANNUAL SHOW

6/28–30
The largest orchid show and sale in Hawai'i features thousands of orchids, food, Hawaiian music, seminars, a silent auction and a fashion show. Edith Kanaka'ole Stadium, hiloorchidsociety.org

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Baumkuchen is a traditional German cake baked on a stick and cut into rings and resembles a tree stump. German couple Markus & Marie moved to Hawaii a few years ago and started Baumkuchen Farm. Surrounded by a tropical garden, Markus & Marie created new baumkuchen flavors such as pineapple, mango, macadamia nut and Hawaiian coffee. These new flavors have brought them national recognition, receiving the American Food Award in 2022.



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Artist Aaron Hammer

JULY

HILO BAY BLAST

7/4

An annual celebration with games, cook-offs, music by the Hawai'i County Band and a fireworks display. Hilo Bayfront, (808) 961-8706

WONDROUS WORKS IN WOOD

7/15-8/21

Artist Aaron Hammer's solo art exhibition of lathe-turned, Hawai'i-grown wood. Volcano Art Center, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, 808-967-7565

KŌKUA KAILUA VILLAGE STROLL

7/16

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

MAC FEST 2023

7/29

Kick off of the macadamia harvest season at Hawai'i's oldest mac nut farm with live music, games, a dessert contest and more. Ahualoa Farms, (808) 775-9777

EXPERIENCE VOLCANO FESTIVAL

7/29&30

A celebration of the Volcano community featuring artists in action, tours, kids and family activities, food trucks and more. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Volcano Village, experiencevolcano.com

PROMOTIONAL



ĀHUALOA FAMILY FARMS

45-3279 Mamane Street, Honoka'a
ahualoafamilyfarms.com
(808) 775-1821



Stop by "The Nuthouse" and see what's crackin'! Āhualoa Family Farms grows, processes, and produces delicious 100% Hawaiian macadamia nuts and 100% Hāmākua coffee in Historic Honoka'a town, the gateway to Waipi'o Valley. Come in for free samples, relax on the lānai, enjoy a cup of coffee and take home your favorite macadamia nut flavor. See you at The Nuthouse!



KONA GOLD TRADING COMPANY

81-6592 Mamalahoa Hwy, Kealahakua, HI 96750
konagoldhawaii.com
(808) 769-4322



Kona Gold Trading Company is a family-owned and operated bakery, established in 2002. All of our baked goods are made fresh daily in small batches right here on Hawaii Island. Our bakery, retail store and tasting room serves samples of our delicious cakes and coffee. Stop in and try our Macadamia Nut Rum Cakes in four flavors from around the Islands and our award-winning 100% Kona Coffee!



BUDDHA'S SANCTUARY

78-1377 Bishop Rd, Holualoa, Hawaii 96725
buddhascup.com
(808) 322-6712



Buddha's Sanctuary is committed to a healthy bio-diverse ecosystem from seed to cup. We represent five Estate coffee labels, each with a unique flavor and roast. Experience award winning 100% Kona coffee, farm tours and tea tastings! Buddha's Cup Sanctuary hosts tastings and tours by appointment only Monday through Friday from 10 a.m –3 p.m. Special requests can be made.



'IMILOA ASTRONOMY CENTER

University of Hawai'i at Hilo
600 'Imiloa Place, Hilo
imiloahawaii.org
(808) 932-8901



Visit 'Imiloa in Hilo, Hawai'i, and explore the science of Hawai'i! Immerse yourself in our Planetarium and interactive Exhibit Hall and take a walk through our native Hawaiian garden landscape. We are an ideal venue for group tours, educational field trips and event hosting. Don't forget to ask about membership discounts too!

**KAUA'I**



Waimea Plantation Lifestyle Tour

JUNE

WAIMEA PLANTATION LIFESTYLE TOUR
Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays
Walking tours through the Waimea Plantation Cottages and the Waimea Sugar Company "camp" houses, which date from the turn of the 20th century. Waimea Town, (808) 337-1005

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 p.m. to 5 p.m. Princeville–Makai Lawn, (818) 318-7338

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

ALOHA FRIDAY ART NIGHTS
Fridays
Kress Street fills with live art demonstrations, from music to murals. Līhu’e - Kress Street, (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 artists and gallery owners. Free. 5 to 8 p.m. Hanapēpē, hanapepe.org

HANAIEI FARMERS MARKET
Saturdays
Locally grown fruits and vegetables along with fresh-squeezed juices, local honey, fresh-baked goods and arts and crafts. 9 a.m. for seniors, 9:30 a.m. to noon for general admission. Hale Halawai ‘Ohana O Hanalei, (808) 826-1011

ALAKOKO PLANT SWAP
Sundays
This weekly market offers plant lovers the chance to buy, sell or trade a wide variety of greenery. Free. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Alakoko Shop, (808) 652-1442

KAUAI POKE FEST
6/3
Featuring live entertainment, twenty professional and amateur chefs creating unique and delicious dishes, and more than 500 pounds of ‘ahi poke. Koloa Landing Resort, kuaipokefest.com

PRINCEVILLE ARTIST AND FLEA MARKET
6/4
Vintage apparel, accessories and home goods as well as locally made food and health products, a keiki zone and live music. Free. 3 to 7 p.m. Princeville Community Center, (808) 826-6687

DOWNTOWN LĪHU’E NIGHT MARKET
6/10
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

THE KING’S PARADE & HO’OLAULE’A
6/10
Take in the floral adornments of pā’ū riders and their horses, followed by live entertainment, crafters and food vendors. Parade runs from Vidinha Stadium along Rice Street to the Historic County Building. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free. Līhu’e, (808) 586-0333

PRINCEVILLE NIGHT MARKET
6/11
Live music, pottery, paintings, apparel, jewelry and more than forty local artisans. Free. 4 to 8 p.m. Princeville Shopping Center, (808) 635-2572

JULY

PRINCEVILLE ARTIST AND FLEA MARKET
7/2
Vintage apparel, accessories and home goods also features locally made food and health products, a keiki zone and live music. Free. 3 to 7 p.m. Princeville Community Center, (808) 826-6687

DOWNTOWN LĪHU’E NIGHT MARKET
7/8
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

PRINCEVILLE NIGHT MARKET
7/9
Live music, pottery, paintings, apparel, jewelry and more than forty local artisans. Free. 4 to 8 p.m. Princeville Shopping Center, (808) 635-2572

KŌLOA PLANTATION DAYS
7/21–30
More than 25 events celebrate the plantation heritage and modern-day vitality of Kōloa and Po’ipū during this multi-day, family-oriented festival. Kōloa, koloaplantationdays.com



ELE KAUA’I

Kaua’i, O’ahu, Maui, Hawai’i Island
elekauai.com
(808) 346-6020
@elekauai



TIKI TOES ALOHA STICKERS

tikitoes.com
info@tikitoes.com
Kaua’i, O’ahu, Maui, Hawai’i Island
Available at ABC Stores



Transport yourself to the gorgeous islands of Hawai’i, all without leaving the comfort of your home! Ele Kaua’i is passionate about creating high-quality candles, air mists, body scents and bath salts that will fill your space with the aroma of the Hawaiian Islands. Made by hand with aloha on the North Shore of Kaua’i, visit their web site for more information.

“Eh, sticks on whatevahs!”



KIKO

4-1316 Kūhiō Hwy
Kapa’a, Kaua’i
kikokauai.com
(808) 822-5096
@kikokauai

A celebration of the simple, the beautiful, the unique. KIKO honors the handmade over the mass-produced, natural over glitzy, useful over useless, fair trade over exploited, one-of-a-kind over you’ve-seen-it-everywhere. Clothing, art, jewelry, books, housewares & art supplies in the heart of old Kapa’a Town. A little bit of everything.



SALTY WAHINE GOURMET HAWAIIAN SEA SALTS

1-3529 Kaumuali’i Highway
Unit 2B
Hanapēpē
saltywahine.com
(808) 378-4089



Salty Wahine Gourmet Hawaiian Sea Salts is a family-owned Kaua’i 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, Kaua’i. Salty Wahine’s goal is “making eating healthy and fun.”



Aloha

Welcome aboard

**E luana i ka lele ‘ana.
E lawelawe mākou iā ‘oe me ka ha‘aha‘a.**

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.

- 144 / In-Flight Meals
- 145 / Streaming Entertainment on A321neo Aircraft
- 146 / In-Flight Snacks, Souvenirs and Beverages
- 148 / Terminal Maps
- 150 / HawaiianMiles Partners
- 152 / Route Map
- 154 / The ‘Ohana Pages



WE ARE HAWAI‘I’S GIFT TO THE WORLD.

Hawaiian Host has crafted the ultimate treat.
Indulge in our heavenly combination of premium chocolate
and its perfect partner, irresistibly crunchy macadamia nuts.
Made to perfection for over 95 years, this exquisite treat from
Hawai‘i is an unforgettable gift guaranteed to make you shine.

HawaiianHost.com

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 Eric Oto of Hoku’s at the Kahala Resort and Spa, Chef Robynne Maii of Fete Hawaii, Chef Dell Valdez of vein at Kaka’ako, Executive Chefs Wade Ueoka and Michelle Karr-Ueoka of MW Restaurant, Chef Chris Kajioka of Miro Kaimuki and Chef Jason Yamaguchi of Mugen Waikiki.

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 Entertainment on A321neo Aircraft

Streaming Entertainment to Personal Devices

Guests on our new A321neo aircraft are able to stream complimentary in-flight entertainment on their personal electronic devices. We offer a wide selection of movies, TV shows and music as well as Hawaiian Airlines’ own exclusive programming.

Viewing on a Personal Device



IN THE HAWAIIAN AIRLINES APP

1. Once onboard:
 - Switch to Airplane Mode
 - Connect to “Movies on HawaiianAir” WiFi network
2. Open the Hawaiian Airlines app:
 - Select “More” » Select “In-Flight Entertainment”

Supported on IOS 13+, and on Android 8.0+

IN A BROWSER

1. Connect to “Movies on HawaiianAir” WiFi network
2. Open browser and type in URL: HawaiianAirlinesWifi.com
3. Choose from the menu and enjoy!

Please note: Internet Explorer and Edge browsers are not supported at this time.

Having trouble accessing the entertainment?

TRY THESE GENERAL TROUBLESHOOTING STEPS:

1. Double-check device settings to ensure airplane mode and WiFi are both enabled.
2. Ensure you are connected to the “Movies on HawaiianAir” WiFi network.
3. Make sure you are using the latest version of the Hawaiian Airlines app.
4. Close and relaunch the Hawaiian Airlines app after connecting to WiFi network.

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:

Island Favorites
.....

From the latest award-winning songs to all-time classics, Island Favorites features the best of Hawaiian music, including Henry Kapono and Owana Salazar.

‘Ukulele Wizards
.....

Andrew Molina and Abe Lagrimas are among the virtuoso musicians gathered in this celebration of Hawai‘i’s iconic instrument.

Paradise Lounge
.....

Happy hour music with an island twist, served up by local luminaries Don Tiki, Teresa Bright and others.

Wings of Jazz
.....

New York-born and Honolulu-based saxophonist, pianist and composer Reggie Padilla is highlighted in this exploration of Hawai‘i’s jazz scene.

*Available only on A330 and A321neo aircraft.



Andrew Molina (left) and Henry Kapono (right).

In-Flight Snacks and Souvenirs



Made in Hawai‘i Snack Sampler



‘Ono Snack Box



Wahi Hawai‘i Reusable Bamboo Cutlery Set

Pau Hana Snack Cart

Blanket and pillow set, 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.

Popular Local Snacks

Mananalua Water in Aluminum Bottle, 16 oz.**	\$3.50
Hawaiian Chip Company Taro and Sweet Potato Chips	\$8.00
Island Princess Caramel Macadamia Nut Popcorn	\$6.50
Kona Chips Furikake Chips	\$8.50
Samurai Furikake Popcorn	\$7.50

Snack Packs*

Made in Hawai‘i Snack Sampler K Choco Caramel Popcorn, Choco Mochi, Lightly Salted and Maui Onion Macadamia Nuts, Mele Mac	\$10.50
Classic Snack Box GF Crackers, Cookie, Chickpeas, Turkey Stick, Hummus, Gummies	\$8.00
Keiki (Child) Snack Box GF Cheese Puffs, Granola Minis, Turkey Stick, Applesauce, Gummies, Cookie	\$8.00
‘Ono Snack Box GF Salami, Cheese Spread, Dried Fruit, Olives, Crackers, Cookie	\$8.00
Cheese Tray with Crackers and Dried Fruit	\$7.00

Classic Snacks

M & M’s Peanut	\$3.50
Maruchan Cup Ramen Chicken	\$4.50
Pringles K	\$4.00

Sundries

Wahi Hawai‘i Reusable Bamboo Cutlery Set 100% all natural bamboo fork, knife, spoon, chopsticks, straw and cleaning brush in keepsake natural canvas travel pouch	\$11.00
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 I Sprite /
Sprite Zero

Canada Dry Ginger Ale

Milk (Lowfat or Whole)

Club Soda / Tonic Water /
Flavored Sparkling Water

Cocktails

Pineapple Daiquiri** (Kō Hana)	\$8.00
Aviation** (On the Rocks)	\$8.00
Old Fashioned** (On the Rocks)	\$8.00
Signature Mai Tai**	\$8.00

Spirits

Rum (Koloa Rum)	\$8.00
Vodka (Ocean)	\$8.50
Scotch (Dewars)	\$8.00
Bourbon (Jack Daniel’s)	\$8.50
Gin (Tanqueray)	\$8.50
Hard Seltzer Dragon Fruit** (Maui Brewing Co.)	\$8.50
Koloa Pineapple Passion*** (Koloa Rum)	\$6.00



Wines & Champagne

Sparkling Wine Split	\$9.50
Red Wine Split**	\$8.00
Red Wine Half Bottle	\$16.00
White Wine Split**	\$8.00
White Wine Half Bottle	\$16.00

Beers

Heineken**	\$8.50
Bikini Blonde Lager** (Maui Brewing Co.)	\$8.50

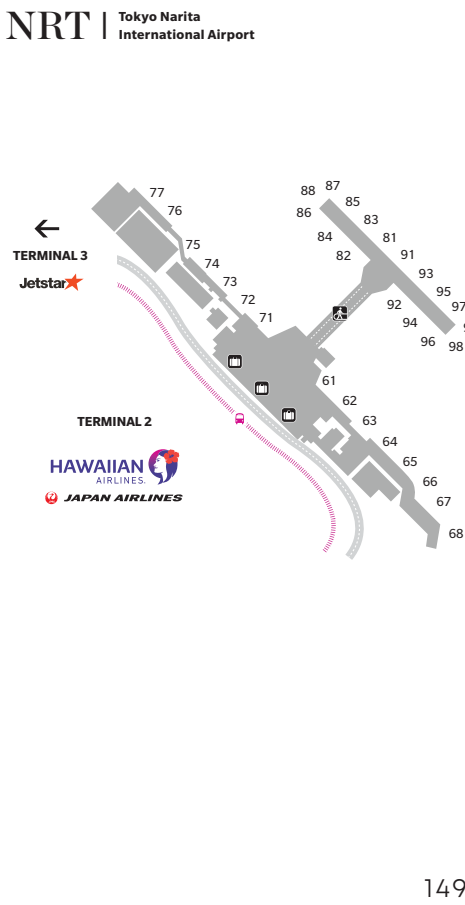
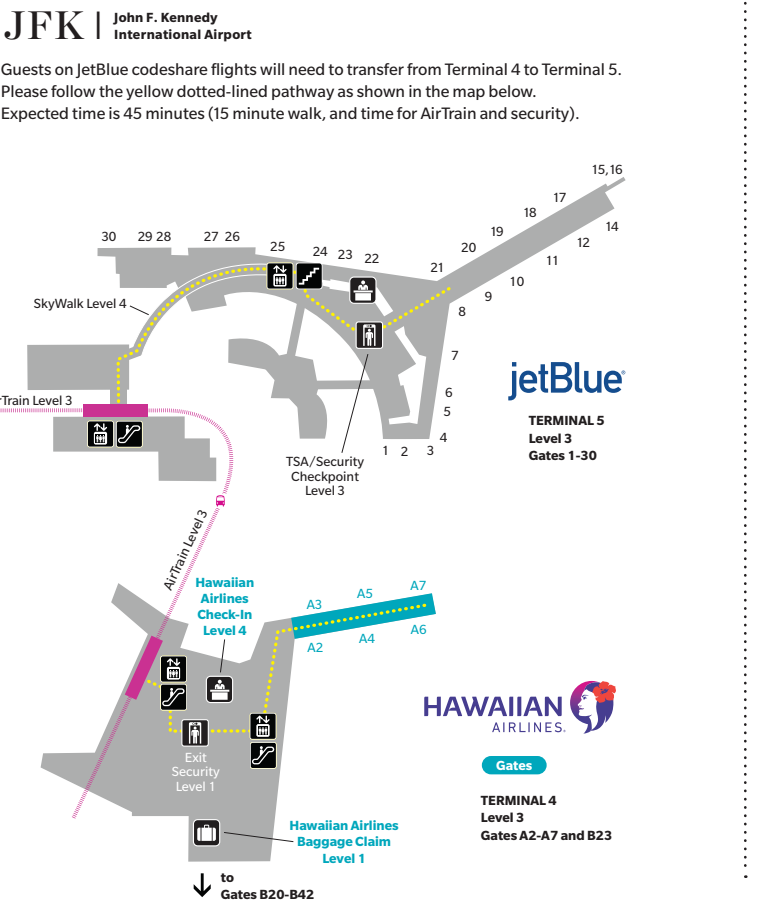
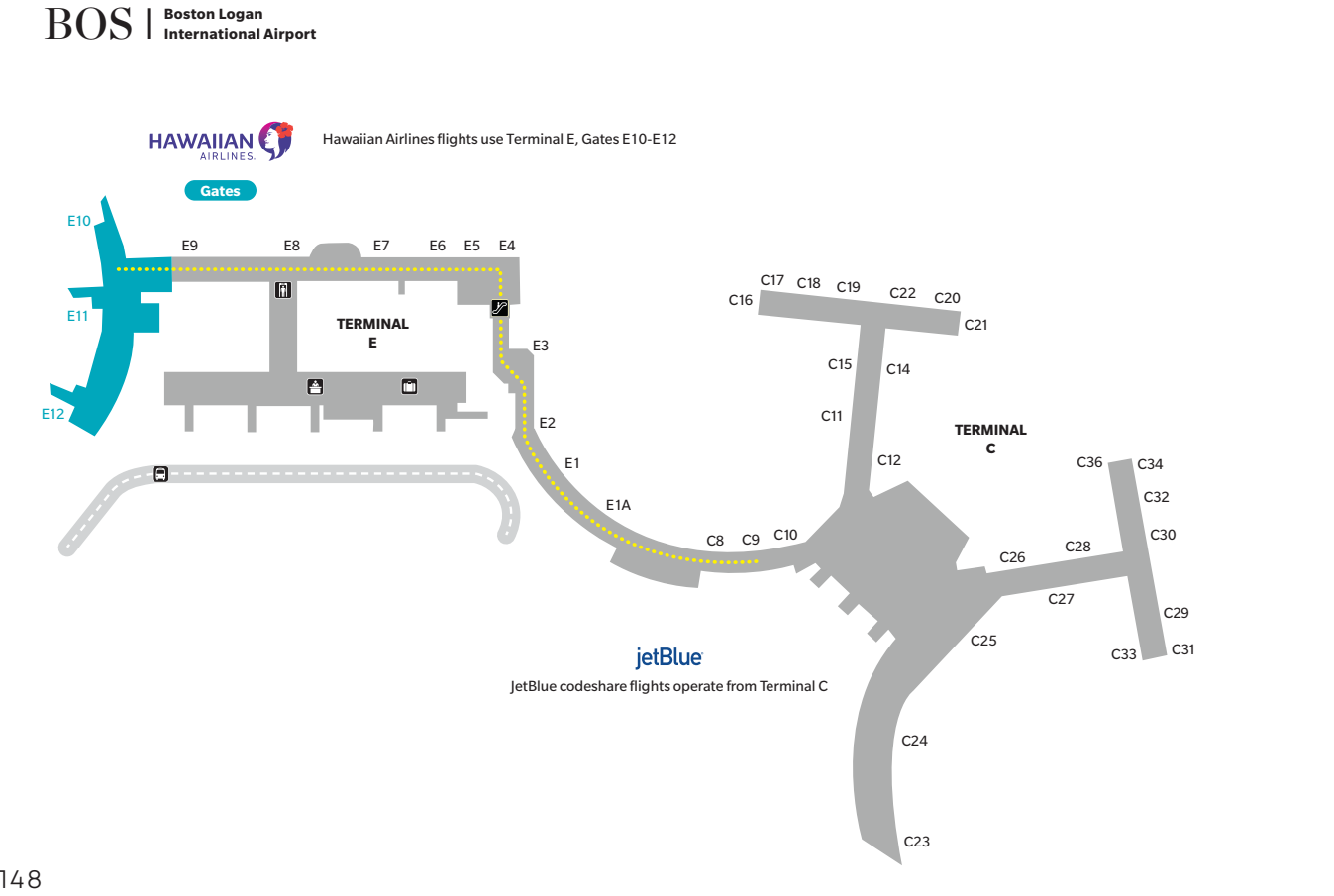
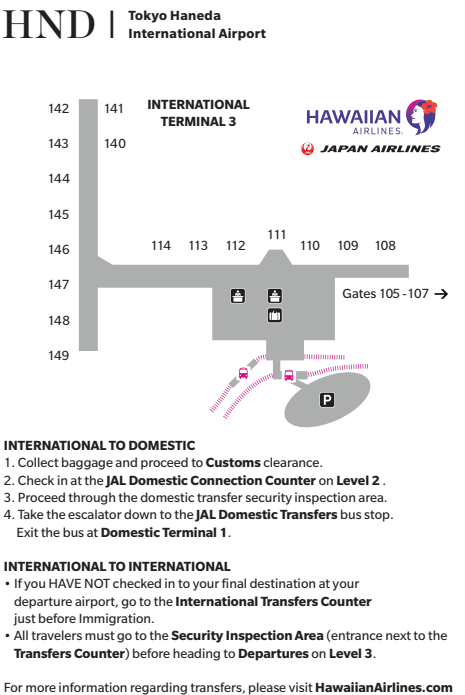
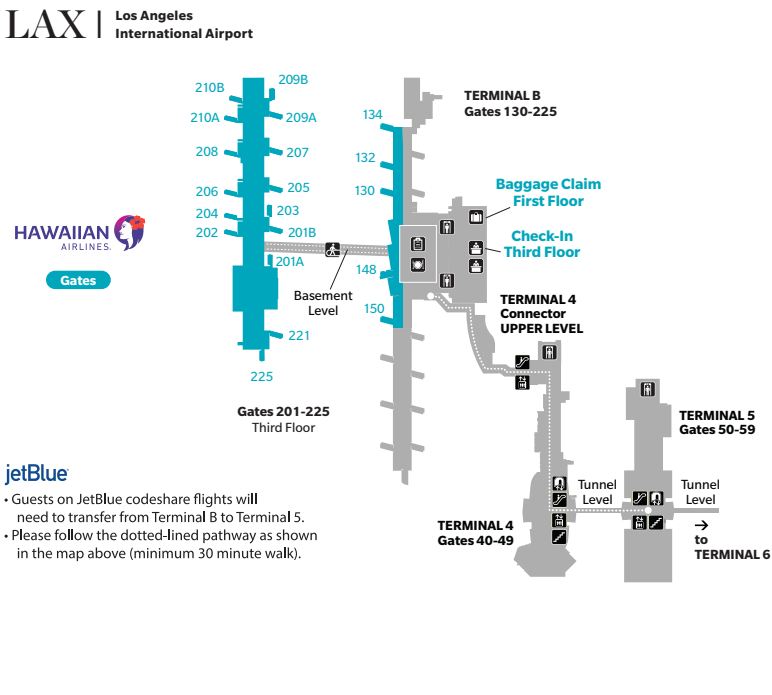
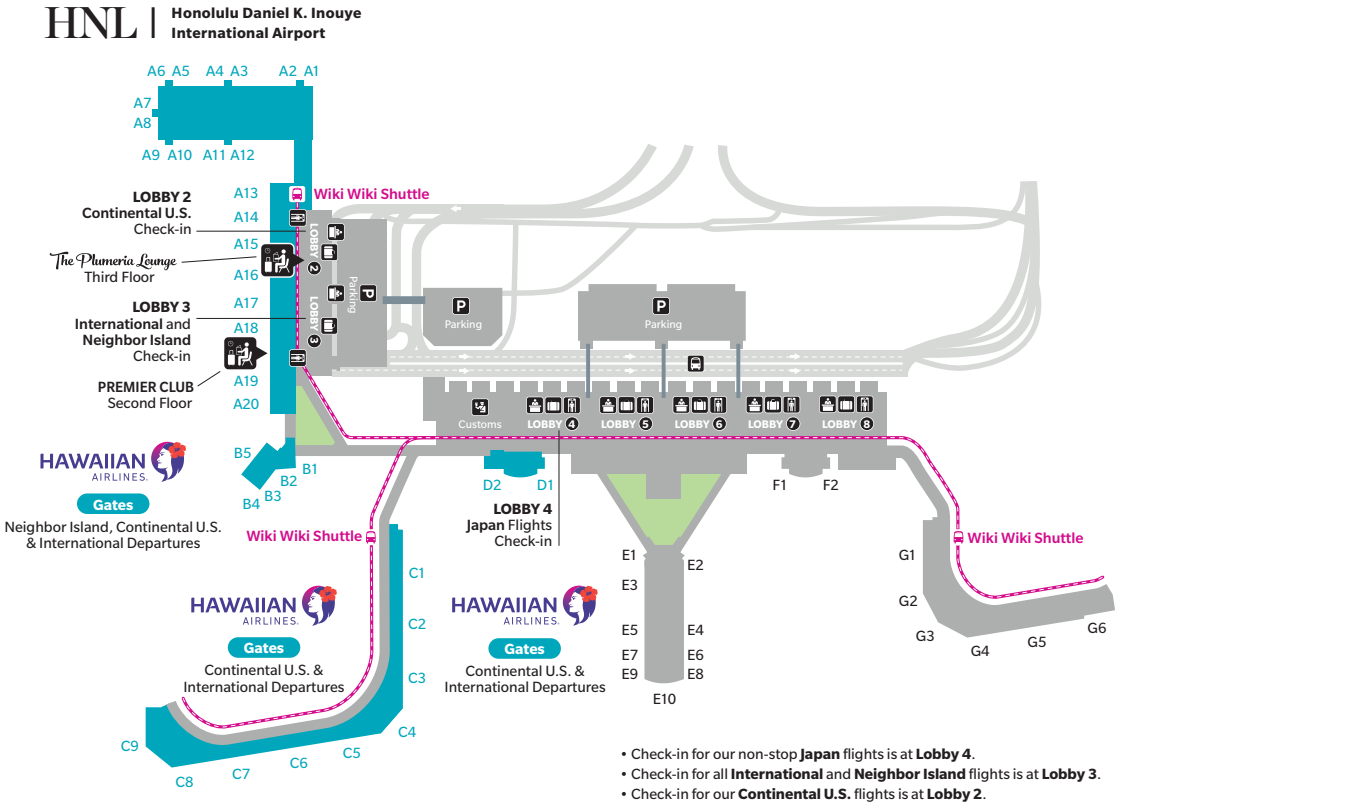
Complimentary beverages provided by [Coca-Cola](#)
*Complimentary on Neighbor Island flights.
**Available for purchase on Neighbor Island flights.
***Complimentary glass on flights to/from Hawai‘i and West Coast North American cities. \$6 per glass thereafter.

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.



Earn bonus HawaiianMiles® and bring your next adventure closer



TORI RICHARD®

Tori Richard

Resort wear inspired by the colors and beauty of the Islands. Earn 3 bonus miles per \$1 spent when using your Hawaiian Airlines® Mastercard® or Bankoh Hawaiian Airlines® Visa® Debit Card.¹



la tour café

La Tour Café

Enjoy fresh-baked bread, sandwiches and amazing macarons. Earn 2 bonus miles per \$1 spent when using your Hawaiian Airlines® Mastercard® or Bankoh Hawaiian Airlines® Visa® Debit Card.¹



LANIKAI JUICE

Lanikai Juice Hawaii

Fresh, healthy, delicious. Earn 2 bonus miles per \$1 spent when using your Hawaiian Airlines® Mastercard® or Bankoh Hawaiian Airlines® Visa® Debit Card.¹



HELE

HELE

Fuel up at Hele and earn 3 bonus miles per gallon filled when using your Hawaiian Airlines® Mastercard® or Bankoh Hawaiian Airlines® Visa® Debit Card.^{1,2}



Koa Pancake House

Traditional breakfast and lunch plates with Island flair. Earn 2 bonus miles per \$1 spent when using your Hawaiian Airlines® Mastercard® or Bankoh Hawaiian Airlines® Visa® Debit Card.¹



Atlantis
ADVENTURES

Atlantis Adventures

Explore Hawaii's waters by ship or submarine. Earn 5 bonus miles per \$1 spent when using your Hawaiian Airlines® Mastercard® or Bankoh Hawaiian Airlines® Visa® Debit Card.¹



Hawaiian
PIE co.

Hawaiian Pie Company

This family-owned bakery specializes in melt-in-your-mouth goodness. Earn 2 bonus miles per \$1 spent when using your Hawaiian Airlines® Mastercard® or Bankoh Hawaiian Airlines® Visa® Debit Card.¹



House of **M^NA UP**

House of Mana Up

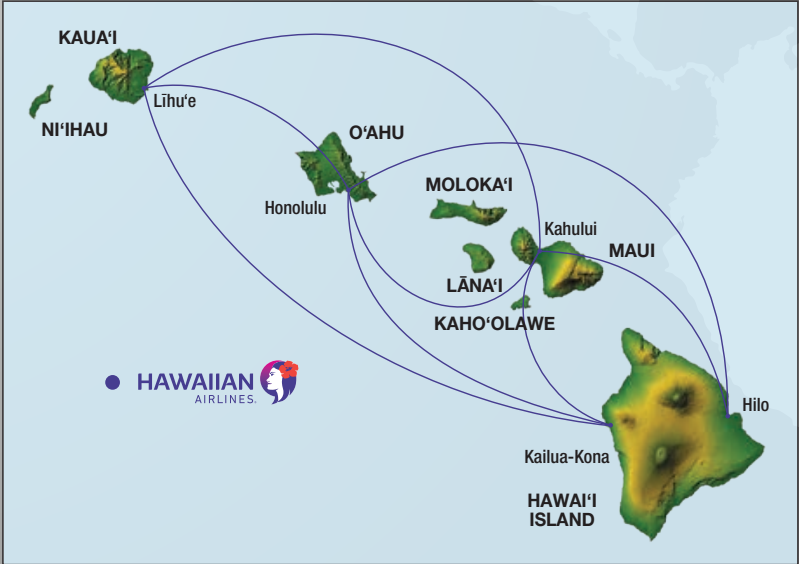
Your one-stop shop for products and gifts from Hawai'i entrepreneurs. Earn 2 bonus miles per \$1 spent when using your Hawaiian Airlines® Mastercard® or Bankoh Hawaiian Airlines® Visa® Debit Card.¹

¹ Hawaiian Airlines® Mastercard® includes Hawaiian Airlines® World Elite Mastercard® and Hawaiian Airlines® Business Mastercard®. Partner bonus miles earned through this offer are in addition to standard miles earned using Hawaiian Airlines® Mastercard® or Bankoh Hawaiian Airlines Visa Debit Card. Partner bonus miles are not awarded on debit card PIN transactions. No miles are awarded on cash back transactions. Please allow 4-6 weeks for miles to post to your HawaiianMiles account. HawaiianMiles standard terms and conditions apply. Additional restrictions may apply, see partner for details. Barclays Bank Delaware and Bank of Hawaii are not affiliated with the merchants participating in the HawaiianMiles Marketplace. The Hawaiian Airlines Mastercard is issued by Barclays Bank Delaware (Barclays) pursuant to a license by Mastercard International Incorporated. Mastercard, World Mastercard, and World Elite Mastercard are registered trademarks, and the circles design is a trademark of Mastercard International Incorporated. The Bankoh Hawaiian Airlines Visa Debit Card is used by Bank of Hawaii. VISA is a registered trademark of Visa International Service Association and used under license.

² Number of miles per gallon based on current average fuel price of \$5.00 per gallon. Average fuel prices are subject to change, amount of HawaiianMiles awarded will vary based on average fuel price.

Visit **Partners.HawaiianAirlines.com** to learn more about earning bonus miles at thousands of locations nationwide.

HAWAIIANMiles.



Codeshare Partners:



Not all routes operate year-round.

Interline Partners:



Hawaiian Airlines has 65 Interline Partners across the globe.
Some international routes behind and beyond Japan pending receipt of government operating authority.

The ‘Ohana Pages



Our employee ‘ohana brings the true spirit of ho‘okipa (hospitality) to every aspect of travel, creating an experience for guests that is not unlike the feel of a Sunday afternoon, backyard pā‘ina (party).

Island Style

Hawai‘i residents can spot their friends, neighbors and family members in a new commercial for Hawaiian Airlines that showcases twenty-two airline employees and their extended ‘ohana going about their day in and out of work—all while humming and singing along to John Cruz’s iconic song, “Island Style.” Jeremy Althof, Hawaiian’s director of global advertising, said his team was deliberate about telling a story that would resonate with the people of Hawai‘i.

“In the preliminary phase of this campaign, we went to the community for their feedback, and one thing we asked was, ‘What makes Hawaiian Airlines different from the rest?’ Over and over again, people told us it’s our employees,”

he said. “Our people are of this place; they’re the only ones who can deliver that authentic, memorable Hawai‘i experience, so honoring them the right way was important to us.”

Employees cast for the campaign ranged from flight attendants and a family of pilots to teammates in our headquarters and airport operations. Each was given the opportunity to suggest activities and locations that meant the most to them. Featured scenes spanned across the Islands and include gathering for beers at Maui Brewing Company in Kihei, Maui; making lei at The Pua Bar at Kilohana Plantation, Kaua‘i; riding horses at a family ranch in Kohala, on Hawai‘i Island; performing hula in the backyard of a family hale (house) on Windward O‘ahu and

attending an afterschool baseball practice at O‘ahu’s Kilauea Community Park—home of the 2022 Little League World Series champions.

“I think what I love most about this ad is that we don’t label the people and places we show, but if you know, you know,” said Alisa Onishi, senior director of brand and community at Hawaiian. “For example, we don’t explicitly say that the baseball team shown is the Little League World Series Champion team, but if you live in Hawai‘i, you know. This is our home, these are our extended family members, and we’re all a part of this amazing community.”

Aloha Aotearoa

Despite a geographical divide that spans nearly 4,600 miles, Hawai‘i and Aotearoa



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DUARTE STUDIOS

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

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

artizenbymw.com

OFFICIAL CRAFT BEER
OF HAWAIIAN AIRLINES



MAUI
BREWING CO

MAUIBREWING.COM
@MAUIBREWINGCO

KIHEI
BREWERY & RESTAURANT
605 Lipoa Parkway
Maui, Hawai'i
808.201.BEER

LAHAINA
KAHANA GATEWAY CENTER
4405 Honoapiilani Highway
Maui, Hawai'i
808.669.3474

KAILUA
LAU HALA SHOPS
573 Kailua Road
O'ahu, Hawai'i
808.518.BREW

WAIKIKI
WAIKIKI BEACHCOMBER
2300 Kalakaua Avenue
O'ahu, Hawai'i
808.843.BREW



Enjoy Maui
in-flight now!





Although they are separated by nearly 4,600 miles of ocean, Hawai'i and Aotearoa/New Zealand share strong cultural ties. Last March, we celebrated another strong tie: the tenth anniversary of our Honolulu-Auckland route.

(New Zealand) are often thought to be bonded by a shared commitment to their culture, language and Pacific Island heritage. For ten years, Hawaiian Airlines' nonstop flights have served as another bridge between the two countries. Since the route's launch on March 13, 2013, Hawaiian has carried approximately 144,000 people between Auckland and Honolulu.

Last March, we commemorated the route's anniversary in the spirit of mālama (to care), with Honolulu- and Auckland-based employees giving back to two Kiwi nonprofits: The Rising Foundation, which places South Auckland youth on a long-term pathway toward university, postsecondary education, trades training and employment, and the Sea Cleaners, which cleans and cares for New Zealand's shorelines and has partnered with Hawai'i Tourism Oceania and Hawaiian Airlines since 2019. Each of the two nonprofits

was gifted a \$5,000 donation and received help from Team Kōkua, Hawaiian's employee giving program.

Manakō Tanaka, a senior community and cultural relations specialist at Hawaiian Airlines, was among the group that traveled to Auckland to celebrate the route's anniversary. "As I sit at my desk in Honolulu this morning, I find myself reflecting on the impact we had—not just on the organizations, but on one another. I'm feeling pretty #PualaniProud," he said.

Leading South Korea Operations

The rich history between Hawai'i and South Korea dates back 120 years to January 13, 1903, when the first Korean immigrants entered the United States by steamship on the shores of Honolulu. Today, more than 50,000 Hawai'i residents identify as Korean, and it's because of this deep-rooted relationship

that Soojin Yu, Hawaiian's South Korea country director, was determined to keep our Honolulu-Incheon service operating throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We thought it would be easy to resume passenger service since we had maintained cargo service throughout the pandemic and we were the only carrier connecting Hawai'i and Korea at the time," Yu said. "I knew how important it was to provide essential connectivity for travelers, but it took tremendous effort and teamwork to welcome guests back onboard."

Yu's persistence and strong relationships with government officials paid off, and Hawaiian was eventually able to add passengers to its cargo flights under a special non-scheduled flight agreement similar to charter operations. This meant submitting approval for every flight for nearly six months.

"This was the only option, and sometimes we wouldn't get approval

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until the day of the flight,” Yu said. “It was the biggest challenge of my career with Hawaiian.”

Yu’s career began more than seven years ago. Today she leads an all-female sales and marketing team—a rare occurrence in Korea’s airline industry. She feels a responsibility to set an example for her team as a woman leader. “I try to show them that success for women in this industry is possible, and I want them to feel comfortable being able to talk to me about anything. We have a small team, but we are extremely close, and I’m proud of that,” Yu says.

Streamlining Travel in Honolulu

Thousands of Hawaiian Airlines guests departing from Honolulu each day will now enjoy a more efficient and convenient airport experience thanks to our investment in a new TSA security checkpoint. The facility, in lobby 3 of Daniel K. Inouye International Airport, adds 1,000 square feet for passenger queuing and 3,000 square feet of screening area.

“This expanded screening capacity will alleviate congestion and make check-in easier for our guests whether

they are taking a short trip to another island or boarding a transpacific flight,” Hawaiian Airlines President and CEO Peter Ingram said during a recent blessing ceremony for the new facility. “We appreciate the support of our partners including the State of Hawai‘i Department of Transportation and the TSA in helping us create a better travel experience for our guests.”

Hawaiian, which offers more than ninety daily flights from HNL, invested \$14 million to build the new TSA checkpoint. Guests can now use TSA checkpoint 1A in lobby 2 that exits at the Mauka Concourse—where Hawaiian boards most of its transpacific flights—or the new checkpoint 1B in lobby 3, which leads directly to gates primarily used for Hawaiian’s interisland departures.

Honolulu-Fukuoka Returns

In April, Hawaiian Airlines resumed three-times-weekly service between Honolulu and Fukuoka. The route was originally inaugurated in November 2019, but then suspended the following March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. “We’re delighted to be returning to Fukuoka as we lead the way in reconnecting travel between Hawai‘i and Japan,” said Theo Panagiotoulis, senior vice president of global sales and alliances for Hawaiian Airlines. “We look forward to welcoming travelers from Fukuoka to the Hawaiian Islands and making it easy for U.S. residents to enjoy Kyushu’s famous food scene and rich culture.”

In addition to the Fukuoka route, Hawaiian now offers daily service between Honolulu and Tokyo’s Haneda and Narita Airports and Osaka’s Kansai Airport.

2022 in Review

Last year was focused on building a robust base for the future of our ninety-three-year-old airline. In his annual year-end message, President and CEO Peter Ingram praised employees for overcoming challenges and seizing opportunities: “The reduced flying through the pandemic gave us the opportunity to think through what building back better would look like, for you and for our guests,” said Ingram.

“Last year was about putting that thinking into motion and building a foundation. This year, we start to fly.”

In 2022 our guests continued to rate Hawaiian among the best of the best, including us in *Conde Nast’s* Top 10 U.S. Airlines, awarding us *Travel + Leisure’s* Best Domestic Airline and *TripSavvy’s* Editor’s Choice as an Industry Leader. We also continued to invest in our growth, entering an agreement to operate a fleet of 10 Airbus A330-300 freighters for Amazon as part of our ongoing commitment to reliability and excellence in carrying cargo. To meet the expanding needs of our airline, we welcomed 1,370 new teammates last year across all areas of our business, bringing our total workforce to 7,089 by the end of 2022.

The word kuleana is usually translated as “responsibility,” but it stands for a Hawaiian value that encompasses a broader meaning. When we say we have a kuleana to Hawai‘i, we affirm our commitment to care for and respect the land and culture and acknowledge the value Hawai‘i brings to us. Among other initiatives, last August the Hawaiian Airlines Foundation awarded a \$100,000 grant to Kāko‘o ‘Ōiwi, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the cultural, spiritual and traditional practices of the Native Hawaiian community.

Meanwhile, more than 1,255 employees (and their ‘ohana) volunteered 6,795 hours to Hawai‘i-based organizations through our Team Kōkua employee giving program, including teammates from Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and Australia. In addition to sweat equity, Team Kōkua organized the equivalent of \$833,852 in employee-sponsored donations, ranging from travel and HawaiianMiles to cash contributions, to benefit hundreds of nonprofits in Hawai‘i and abroad.

These are just a few of the many positive developments at Hawaiian in 2022. You can find much more online at hawaiianairlines.com/About-Us/Corporate-Responsibility



Soojin Yu, Hawaiian’s South Korea country director, sees our core values of mālama (to care for), ho’okipa, lōkahi (unity) and po’okela (excellence) as essential. “This is how we can be strong in Korea,” she says.



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The Long Return



Hawai'i paddler Landon Opunui, seen at center, celebrates with fellow crew members after finishing the Hoki Mai Challenge, a grueling, three hundred-mile nonstop outrigger canoe paddle from Rapa Nui (Easter Island) to Motu Motiro Hiva.

Last December, seventeen men and one woman set out on an unprecedented journey: to paddle a six-seat outrigger canoe nonstop from Rapa Nui (Easter Island) to Motu Motiro Hiva, an uninhabited islet roughly three hundred miles to the northeast. Rapa Nui islanders consider the islet a waypoint to Hiva, the legendary homeland of all Polynesians. Its full name, Manu Motu Motiro Hiva, translates as “bird’s islet on the way to Hiva.”

To grasp the scope of this challenge, consider that the world’s longest and toughest outrigger race—Tahiti’s annual Hawaiki Nui Va’a—covers roughly eighty miles over three consecutive days. The longest leg is thirty-six miles, from Taha’a to Bora Bora, and takes a crew of six top-level paddlers just over four hours. December’s Hoki Mai Challenge went nonstop for nearly two days, with each paddler being on for four hours, then off for four hours, then on for another four before a twelve-hour break. A Chilean naval ship served as escort, while a smaller launch shuttled paddlers to and from the canoe.

The original plan included paddlers from throughout Polynesia, but owing to travel challenges, seventeen

members came from either Rapa Nui or Chile. One paddler, Landon Opunui, came from Hawai’i. Being the sole representative of one’s homeland is a heavy kuleana (responsibility), but the 37 year old was an excellent choice: He took up paddling at 14, rowed in college, competed in several Ironman triathlons and started paddling again in 2013 after returning to the Islands to begin his residency as a naturopathic doctor. For the past six years he’s paddled with Kailua Canoe Club.

The Hoki Mai had three goals: to use a feat that had not been undertaken in modern history to demonstrate paddling’s place as an elite sport; to highlight Polynesia’s (and the world’s) responsibility for the sea and land; and to honor key women in Rapa Nui’s cultural revitalization movement. “The balance of a canoe, the rhythm of the stroke, the timing of six people paddling together as one, provides us with the connection between ourselves as paddlers, the ocean, the elements, the wa’a [canoe] and our cultural tradition,” Landon says. “This is what cultivates mana [spiritual energy].”

Training meant many hours before dawn and after dusk around his job as a

primary care physician and health care administrator. This turned out to be fortuitous: His three four-hour Hoki Mai shifts all fell within either 2 to 6 a.m. or 6 to 10 p.m. “One of the amazing parts of the journey was being in the canoe for both sunrise and sunset, but they were hard shifts,” Landon says. “You’re in the middle of the ocean, and you can’t see anything other than the glow stick hanging from the seat in front of you. The moon, the stars and the clouds were reflecting off the water, and at 3 a.m. bioluminescent plankton came out, so every stroke glowed as we stirred the ocean in front of us. In the delirium of sleep deprivation and pushing our bodies to the limit, it became almost a dream state. ... There was a palpable connection with those who came before us, who were guiding our way.”

The paddlers reached Motu Motiro Hiva in just under forty-four hours, twelve hours ahead of schedule. “The conditions were very gentle. They were very nurturing, and I don’t think that was a coincidence,” Landon says. “‘Hoki mai’ means ‘to return,’ and we were returning to a very important place in Rapa Nui culture. I found a lot of similarity between that and the Hawaiian philosophy of kūkulu hou, which means to reestablish, to reclaim, to rebuild, to reimagine. It was such an empowering experience to see my brothers and sisters from the Southeast Pacific living this concept. It reminded me that incredible feats can be accomplished when we come together with our collective strengths and a shared commitment while being guided by our kūpuna [ancestors].” **hh**

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