

INSIDE: BIG ISLAND HOSPITALITY * HRA AWARDS * MAUI CANOES

HAWAII *hospitality*

MAY/JUNE 2015

HAWAII'S BAG BAN

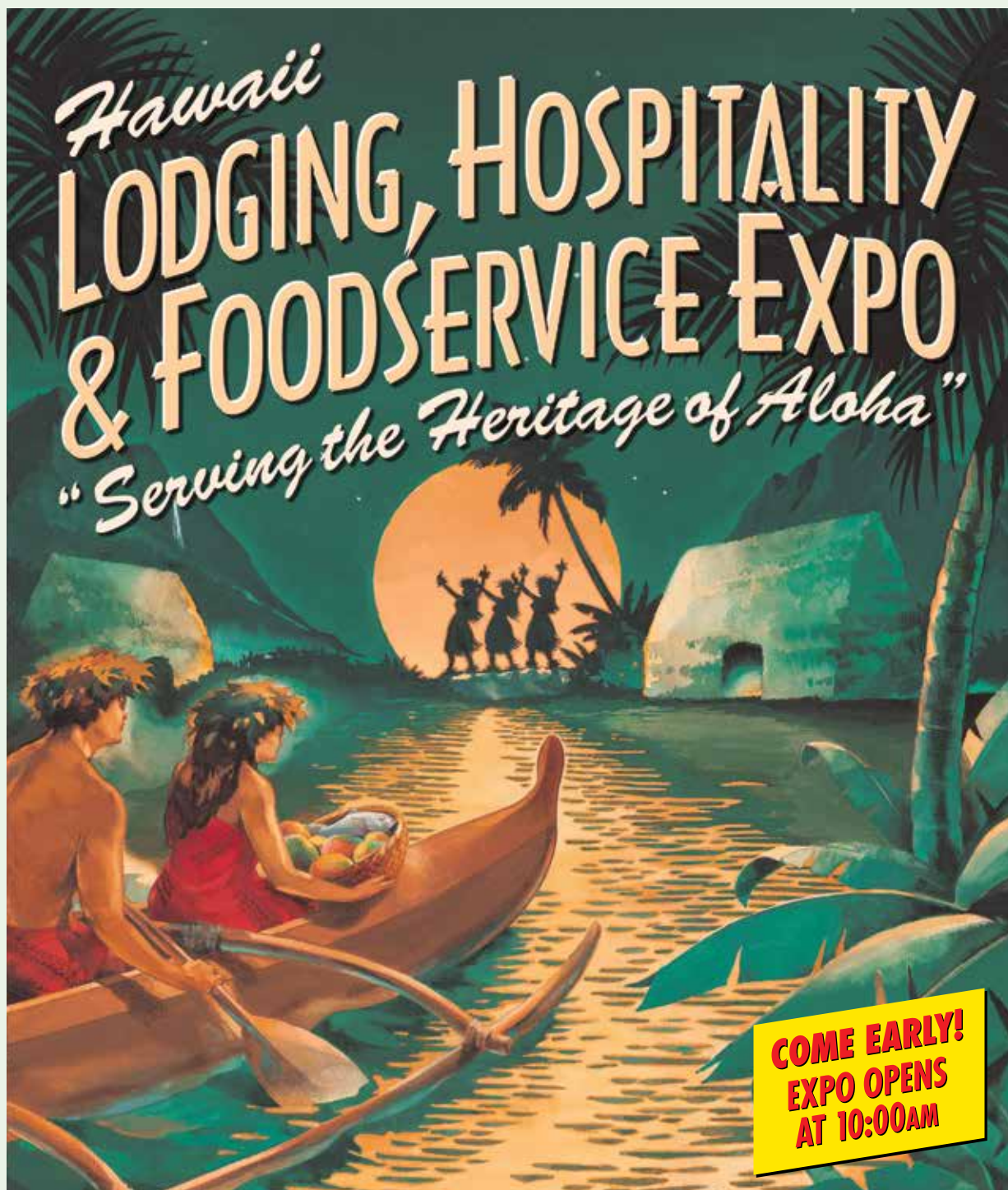
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impact our tourism industry

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Cover photo by Greg Yamamoto



checking in

Along with great food and warm sunshine, also topping the list of things baby boomers want when they visit Hawaii are time with family and friends and, of course, fun and adventure—from skydiving to yoga. Currently there are more than 76 million boomers in the United States alone. As our report in this issue will describe, the Islands' hospitality industry is constantly creating activities to satisfy this target market.

It's all about what our guests want, right? We also take a peek at the activities visitors in all age groups want to do while here, from swimming with sharks to backpacking.

The lava flow from Kilauea Volcano hasn't sent travelers scurrying to safety away from the Big Island. If anything, tourists want to experience the phenomenon which, fortunately, has been downgraded to "watch" level. Local hospitality businesses discuss how they're offering various attractions for visitors drawn to the volcano, from helicopter rides that provide a bird's-eye view of the molten rock's path to mapping out safe routes to access the affected area.

We also take a look at how tourism-related retailers are adjusting to the plastic bag ban that goes into effect on July 1 on Oahu.

Cheers! The Kahala Hotel & Resort is turning the clock back to the 1930s for a tasty revival of cocktails with such names as Boulevardier, Tuxedo II and Hibiscus Fleur.

Aloha,

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HRA Salutes the Best

Photos by Hawkins Biggins

The Hawaii Restaurant Association recognized the best front-of-house and back-of-house workers at its 2015 Employee Appreciation & Excellence Awards event on March 9 at the Hawaii Prince Hotel. *Story, page 27*



1. Alan Wong, Spenser Yamanaka, Jen Alcaraz, Brian Sung.



4. Mike Ostrowski, Donna Hashiro, Shaun Borges, Michael Arita, Ted Interv.

6. Mariano Lalica, Colette Pang, Patrick Faas, Frank Nagamine.



5. Alex Lau, Anna Lisa, Dirk Koeppenkastrop.



7. Holly Crise, Julio Reyes, Mitchell Kalima, Maratethe Cristobal, Philip Ongjoco, Ward Almeida, Aaron Miyakawa.





8

8. Front, from left: Liane Huga, Pua Medina, Guy Maynard, Tara Carver, Sue Maynard. Back, from left: Donna Ventura, Scott Okamoto, Suzie Hong, Lorrin Hong, Bob Maynard.



9

9. Monica Ivey, John Purcell, Shay Sunderland, Matt Johnson.



10

10. Penny Choi, Amando Ricana, Tom Jones, Donna Robinson, Charlie Battiatto. 11. Rachel Kapahua, Brandon Kapahua, Tracie Kobashigawa. 12. Yolana Convento, Yully Yum, Bay Sapanghong, Mang Sisounthone. 13. Jennie Sekimoto, Alex Satokj, Kelly Madraisal, Hisashi Vehara.



11



12



13

14. Kolfin Salle, Anna Hiel, Kunani Blake. 15. William Rodriguis, Tony Buggage, Paula Pruden, Tom Warwick, Yuka Nawano, Harold Watanabe, Michael Skedeleski, Edwin Ohta. 16. Marvin Tang, Valerie Conselva, Derek Conselva.



14



15



16



HILTA Mixer

Photos by Hawkins Biggins

The Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association hosted a Membership Mixer for new members at the Waikiki Sand Villa Hotel on April 9.



1. Matt Kagawa, George Szigeti, Karen Wataru Nakaoka, Earl Cachola. 2. Cory Beall, Linda Yadao, Brian K. Brennan. 3. Susie Fujikawa, Alex Ferrari, Dave Mark. 4. Marie Massengale, Sean Knox, Anne Murata, Matt Gilbertson. 5. Michelle Calanog, Rudy Fao, Destiny Holland. 6. Jennifer Metrose, Jean Tracy, Jamie Lee-Kwai. 7. Jennifer Metrose, Jean Tracy, Jamie Lee-Kwai.





8. Gerald Glennon, Lester Kodama, George Szigeti. 9. Mike Tasaka, Michelle Chun, Doug Okada. 10. Mike Nagao, Jay Takamiya, Marissa Ross. 11. Marisol Revis, David Farmer, Elton Murata. 12. Phil Sammer, Alana Miranda, Captain Joe. 13. Rob Robinson, Sara Leide, Simone Perez. 14. Cara Sawai, Dan Malin, Michael Plunkett, Casey Collado. 15. Jon Takushi, Dean Nakasone, John Howard, Roy Yamamoto, Kirk Nakamoto.

travelBOOM

Hawaii continues to be a prime destination for baby boomers seeking fun, comfort and time with family and friends

BY CATHY CRUZ-GEORGE

As travelers over the age of 60 flock to Hawaii in increasing numbers, the hospitality industry continues to create programs for this target market in subtle ways.

Don't call this group "elderly" or "senior citizens." They are baby boomers, a generation of people born between post-World War II 1946 and the start of the Vietnam War in 1964. There are approximately 76.4 million boomers in the United States alone. The youngest members recently celebrated their 50th birthdays.

The Hawaii Tourism Authority, which tallies domestic and international visitor arrivals, separates older travelers into two age groups:

- **41 to 59: Young baby boomers and older members of Generation X (a small group born after 1965).**

- **60 and older: Members of the Silent Generation (another small group born between the 1920s and 1940s) and older baby boomers.**

This story focuses on the latter demographic (60 and older), which has traveled to Hawaii at a steady, consistent rate over the past decade. In 2013 (the HTA's latest report), boomers over 60 comprised 19.2 percent of the total number of visitors to Hawaii, up from 14.4 percent in 2003. That is not expected to drop anytime soon.

What brings boomers to Hawaii?

What defines this generation?

And how does the industry tug at boomers' heart- and purse strings?

Here's what we found, according to national reports and anecdotes from Hawaii's visitor industry:

Boomers crave adventure

Karen and Andrew Lockwood are owners of Pacific Islands Institute, a custom-tour company for travelers to Hawaii, Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia. They are among three tour groups contracted by the 2015 Lions Clubs International convention in Waikiki. More than 15,000 people of all ages are scheduled to participate in the Lions convention.



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Pacific Islands Institute is very familiar with boomers with its long history with Road Scholar, a nationwide program for older adults (until 2010, Road Scholar was known as Elderhostel).

Karen Lockwood says that based on the company's 25 years of experience, boomers overall "want to be off the beaten path, and not in the thick of crowds." Boomers desire to "learn, have fun and enjoy hands-on activities while interacting with local communities," she says.

The same holds for Japanese visitors age 60 and older, says Kimiko Quan, sales and marketing manager for Hawaii Tourism Japan, a partner of the Hawaii Tourism Authority. Many boomers from Japan have traveled to Hawaii more than once, she says, and are "eager to learn and seek new experiences" with each return trip.

Among their interests: Hawaiian culture, the arts, agricultural farming and the story of early Japanese settlers in Hawaii. One place that Japanese boomers—together with their

adult children and grandkids—like to visit is the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii in Moiliili. The exhibits are rich with history. "Visitors are interested in how Japanese settlers evolved since the plantation days," says Denise Tagamori Park, director of communications and development for the cultural center.

In 2013, Japanese boomers (over age 60) comprised 18.8 percent of the 1.5 million visitors from Japan, an increase of 6.6 percentage points over 2003. In that same period, female travelers over age 60 continued to outnumber men of the same age, a trend that is consistent with Japanese travelers in Hawaii, regardless of age.

Boomers love family

Generally speaking, boomers are a hard-working, family-oriented group who work (or still are working) to save for retirement, travel and pleasure. Some boomers, who can afford it, regularly bring family members on trips.

According to a 2015 travel trends survey by the AARP, more than half

"Baby boomers want to be treated well as they spent their hard-earned money to come here."

of jet-setting boomers plan to travel with their spouse or partner this year, while 15 percent will travel with adult children and grandchildren.

Some hotel brands in Hawaii appeal to that mindset with programs designed for families. Aston Hotels & Resorts—in addition to its family-friendly properties with full kitchens and multiple rooms—has a cleverly named "Hawaii 5-0" discounted rate for guests older than 50.

Here are other programs across the state:

- Through December, the Hyatt Regency Maui Resort & Spa in Kaanapali Beach has the "Ultimate Maui Family Vacation" package, which comes with discounted family activities, SUV rental and more.
- The "Love Your Family" package at Starwood Hotels and Resorts offers connecting rooms, free kids' meals, hotel credit and opportunities to swim with dolphins, among other perks.
- The family-centric amenities at Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach Resort include six pools, a Friday night fireworks show, sunset movie nights and kayaks in the lagoon.
- The "Kahala Family Celebrations" package at the Kahala Hotel & Resort comes with children's gifts, resort credit, waived resort fees and plenty of perks for the family. Both the Hilton and Kahala consistently rank among the top family-friendly resorts, according to national media.

Boomers crave comfort

While older travelers might stray off the beaten path, they still want to return at the end of the day to comfortable accommodations. "Boomers expect great service and friendly locals," Lockwood says. "They want to be treated well as they spent their hard-earned money to come here."

That's in line with the AARP's

survey, which asked boomers their top reasons for travel: 57 percent said they want to “get away from normal, everyday life,” while 54 percent wanted to “relax and rejuvenate.”

Last April, the Royal Hawaiian unveiled its new Mailani Tower (formerly Royal Tower) and lounge, featuring top amenities reflecting the “sophisticated world traveler.” Although the concept is designed for guests of all ages, the personalized services certainly would appeal to some of the boomers traveling to Hawaii.

Another one of Starwood Hawaii’s properties, the Moana Surfrider, offers wellness programs like a superfoods menu; VINO & VINYASA, which is a monthly yoga class and wine tasting; and the Westin Fresh by the Juicery, featuring nutrition-packed smoothies and juices throughout the property.

“Guests want to continue their lifestyle, even on vacation,” says Ryan Loo, executive chef of the Moana Surfrider, a Westin Resort & Spa. “There is a greater awareness more than ever on the quality of foods and the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.” H

Characteristics of the Baby Boomer Traveler

According to AARP 2015 Travel Trends:

- The United States is home to 76.4 million baby boomers.
- Compared to previous years, 48 percent of baby boomers ages 50 and older said they plan to travel in 2015. The majority plans to travel in the spring, summer and fall. Winter is not a favorite time for travel.
- Boomers plan to take between four and five trips in 2015.
- Approximately 56 percent will travel with a spouse or partner, and 15 percent will travel with children and grandkids.
- The top reasons why boomers travel: 57 percent want to escape mundane life; 55 percent want to spend time with friends and family; 54 percent say they want to relax and rejuvenate.
- While on vacation, one-third of boomers stay connected to the office, using personal laptops, hotel business centers and personal mobile devices. But only

half (51 percent) will exhaust or use most of their vacation time for personal trips.

- Domestic travel accounts for 55 percent of traveling boomers, while 42 percent said they plan to travel to both foreign and U.S. destinations.
- Only 3 percent plan to travel internationally. Europe (36 percent) and tropical destinations like the Caribbean (27 percent) top the list.
- Boomers spend an average of \$120 billion annually on leisure travel, however, expenses are the No. 1 reason they might not travel this year.
- All of those in the AARP survey use online resources to make travel decisions.
- Expedia and Travelocity are the most widely used travel-booking sites. TripAdvisor is the most popular review site.

SOURCE: In October 2014, the AARP conducted its 2015 Boomer Travel Trends survey among 1,137 respondents age 45 who had taken at least one trip 50 miles or more away from home, with a two-night stay in the past two years.




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What Do Visitors Want?

Some travelers lust for breath-taking skydives and swims with sharks, while others prefer safe, scenic nature hikes

BY SUZANNE ROIG

Hawaii's appeal as a tropical destination remains strong, but an increasing number of visitors are seeking vacation adventures that take them beyond the traditional beach and Mai-Tai experience. They're hiking to jungle waterfalls or above the rainforests to ridgetop views, swimming with sharks and dolphins and riding ATVs into valleys they've only seen in Hollywood movies.

Even the adrenalin rush of skydiving, an activity that can be done anywhere, comes with an exotic feel when done over Oahu's blue North Shore waters.

Visitors come to Hawaii and want to experience the Islands, not just view them from the window of a bus, says Niko Sibilgia, a Club Wyndham representative who works at the Outrigger Waikiki Beach Resort

"Visitors come to Hawaii and want to experience the Islands, not just view them from the window of a bus."

lobby. Guests regularly stop by his desk across from the registration center and ask for an out-of-the-way gem that isn't on the typical tourist map, he says.

Sibilgia offers his personal favorites but with words of caution. From advice about wave heights to what to wear on a waterfall hike, Sibilgia tries to stir excitement among visitors while also steering them away from places that are closed or dangerous, such as Stairway to Heaven in Kaneohe or Deadman's Catwalk at the top of Kamehame Ridge in East Honolulu.

"We do a lot of warning," Sibilgia

says. "We are all about safety."

About 18 percent of all visitors to Hawaii go backpacking, hiking or camping while they are here, according to the Hawaii Tourism Authority's 2012 Visitor Satisfaction and Activity Report, which is the most recent one available. About 40 percent of the visitors to Hawaii often prepare by reading online blogs and webpages, according to the same report.

"The Hawaii Tourism Authority takes the safety and security of visitors to the Hawaiian Islands seriously," says Ronald Williams, Hawaii Tourism Authority chief

executive officer.

Williams' concerns are very real. In the news of late, hikers have died on some of Oahu's rugged trails or had to be rescued.

Heather Bailey, the Outrigger Waikiki Beach Resort lead concierge, says she wants visitors to have a great experience, but also wants them to understand that some of the state's tropical beauty is too dangerous up close.

"I recommend that guests don't go to off-limit places," Bailey says. "Sometimes I'll get a request for something unique, but mostly we get requests for guided tours that run daily."

There are times when guests will come to her concierge desk and ask about closed hiking trails, and Bailey says she doesn't mince words.

"I sometimes scare them and tell them about the guard that is there, that it's closed and unsafe, and if you get caught you'll be fined," she says. "I also tell them that places like that are sometimes out of cell service range."

The state Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), which operates a website listing state-owned and -maintained hiking trails, is the source of information that many in the travel industry refer to, says Michael Loftin, executive director of 808 Cleanups, and a hiking enthusiast. But the state's website competes with scores of flashy, photo- and video-filled websites that feature Hawaii's extreme destinations.

"The other websites on the Internet can get people in trouble," Loftin says. "The state's website has the most accurate infor-

mation and tells the level of difficulty rating on more realistic standards."

Aaron Lowe, DLNR Oahu Trails and Access specialist, says the state's job is to maintain the trails and accessways statewide.



A website, Na Hele Trails and Access, is designed to show people where to find the trails, where to park and the degree of difficulty, Lowe says.

"We only point people to what we manage and maintain for safe public use," he says. "Even if our site is slightly out of date, it is the only place people should get their information."

Five popular trails—the 1,000 stairs at Koko Crater,

Makapuu Lighthouse, Diamond Head, Kahana Valley and the Aiea Loop—are not included in the Na Hele website, Lowe says.

Expedia's John Rankin says he advises the 75 concierges on Oahu, Maui,

concierges at the various desks make suggestions based on the level of involvement the visitor seeks.

"We first start with discovery," Rankin says. "Rather than just starting with Diamond Head or Manoa Falls, we specifically ask what the visitor is looking for. Is it easy access? Is it nearby the hotel? Is it an adventure that is active?"

Solid training helps the concierges at the hotels Expedia represents, Rankin says. Staff generally learn in training how to address concerns for safety, when injuries happen and what to bring on hikes and nature experiences.

But it's selling tours and the guided experiences that brings home the bacon to the concierge firms offering guided hikes, nature tours and walks along Oahu's North Shore. These kind of companies are generally vetted for safety and insurance, Rankin says. Even companies that offer shark excursions, if the company is properly insured and has an acceptable safety record, become part of the recommended list of activities.

"It's all about what the guest wants," Rankin says. "If the guest wants to go on his or her own, then we give our personal recommendations. But we make sure not to suggest anything that is illegal or dangerous because we have a responsibility to the hotel and our guests."

Where to go for more help

The state Department of Land and Natural Resources has a hiking safety brochure that is available at www.state.hi.us/dlnr/brochures/HikingSafety.pdf. Also the Na Hele Hawaii Trail and Access System provides interactive information on each state-maintained trail on six islands. The site can be found at hawaiiitrails.ehawaii.gov



Hawaii Sets Sail

The Islands celebrate a cultural tradition with a wet and wild canoe ride

BY PRISCILLA PÉREZ BILLIG | PHOTOS BY GLORIA REED

After much ceremony, chants and offerings to the gods, a Polynesian takes his sharpened stone adze and carves out a koa tree trunk to form the hull of a canoe. Women weave strips of Pandanus leaves into a sail. Old men roll coconut-husk fibers into strings and braid them into sennit cord for lashing. Millennia ago the completed single-masted outrigger canoe, or wa'a kiakahi, would

become the common mode of travel and means of fishing.

Today the modern version of this ancient tradition is at the heart of the nonprofit Hawaiian Sailing Canoe Association. Its mission is to learn, revive, educate and practice ancient Hawaiian skills and values as they relate to sailing canoes and the Hawaiian culture.

The annual racing series sets sail

this month as about a dozen six-person single-masted canoes, manned by paddlers ranging in age from 14 to 70, race from island to island, with crews and canoes often blessed by a Hawaiian elder before they set sail. At populated landing sites, crews sponsored by local businesses like Maui Jim, Kona Brewing Company, Olukai, White Orchid Wedding, Hawaiian Ocean Adventures, Hulakai and HawaiiBeachHomes.com, offer lessons about the tradition of Hawaiian canoe sailing, history and culture as well as free canoe rides.

"They are low to the water, they go fast, you're wet, it's exciting," says Kiri Esibill, president of the 28-year-old Hawaiian Sailing Canoe Association. "We are educating the public by showing them the history and culture of Hawaii, not just the beautiful sand beaches and pristine ocean. We're showing them how these islands were populated and what an incredible feat it was for the ancient Hawaiians to set sail on these vessels."

Each crew begins by rigging its canoe and setting off to complete each leg of the race. After completing a race on each island, crews stow their canoes and fly to their home islands



Hawaiian outrigger sailing canoe, Aleinuihaha Challenge 2014, Keokea Big Island to Hana, Maui.



Hawaiian Outrigger Sailing Canoes at the start of the race from Kailua Beach to Haleiwa.

to await the following month's leg, which includes at least two races and ends on the next Neighbor Island, continuing in this manner until the season's end.

Paddlers from throughout the Islands start the season off the rugged shores of North Kohala, racing from Keokea Beach across the Alenuihaha Channel to Hana, Maui, then on to Kahului and Kaanapali. The journey continues with a 30-nautical-mile race to Kaunakakai, Molokai, then across the Kaiwi Channel to beaches at Oahu's Kailua, Kahana Bay and Haleiwa. On the final leg, paddlers cross the Kauai Channel to Kalapaki Beach and end in mid-September on the black sand beach at Kauai's Waimea Bay.

Shelley Kekuna, executive director of the Kaanapali Beach Resorts Association, which sponsors the Maui leg of the race, says one of her favorite moments was watching an 87-year-old man being helped out of a canoe with "such a beautiful look of contentment and saying, 'Thank you, this canoe ride has changed my life,' or seeing a whole family jump in the canoe and have an activity probably only dreamed of when coming to Hawaii. These kinds of moments are what enrich our lives and keep us curious to try new things."



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The Big Island's
hospitality
industry adapts
to tourists eager
to (safely)
experience the
lava flow

BY LESLIE LANG

When lava from Kilauea Volcano started threatening the village of Pahoa on the Big Island last summer, dramatic news coverage, too, started flowing. But information from the area has quieted down lately, so we decided to check in and see what Puna's tourism scene is looking like these days.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the lava—which looked like it was going to divide Pahoa in half and cross Highway 130—is no longer active in the area. It has officially

dropped the Volcano Alert Level there from a “warning” to a “watch.”

The flow hasn't stopped, however. The June 27 flow, which was named for the day it started last summer, is still flowing but only at the upper reaches of Puu Oo. Although the village of Pahoa is no longer in immediate danger, the lava may return in the future.



Wiesenbauer



NA

for Visitors

Petra Wiesenbauer fully understands this. She owns Hale Moana, a bed and breakfast near Pahoa in Leilani Estates. Her B&B was not

just in case). And she would also have had infrastructure problems if there was a nearby lava flow.

Wiesenbauer is prepared. Since

tain her home's electrical supply without having to rely on HELCO. She also purchased and installed a second water pump, and regularly

“You have to accept this as a force of nature. People here learn to live with it. As a visitor, seeing it, I think it’s quite phenomenal.”

in the lava’s path, but it would have been impacted had lava closed the highway (even though other, longer emergency routes were opened up

the lava crisis—and last summer’s Hurricane Iselle, which hit the area just before the lava flow began—she installed a backup generator to main-

keeps extra supplies in stock.

She says her B&B guests are fascinated by the lava. Wiesenbauer shows them recent flows on a map,

tells them what's happened in recent months and lets them know what they can see. There aren't areas set up for lava viewing, but she suggests that when they drive through Pahoa they notice, for instance, the insulated electric poles which the electric company wrapped in heat-resistant materials and surrounded with cinder, an experimental project to protect them from burning.

She tells guests where they can see the now-partially-lava-covered berm one Pahoa resident built to protect his property. And she suggests they check out—of all places—the town's transfer station, where residents dump their garbage. It's an odd place to send visitors, she admits, "but almost half that property is surrounded by lava. Some of it flowed right through the chain link fence and came as close as about 10 feet to the structures."

Wiesenbauer says people sometimes ask why the lava wasn't diverted, perhaps by building a big ditch, but there at the transfer station you can see why not. "When you see the lava, you understand that it's completely impossible," she says. "You can clearly see the volume of the material. It's just massive. It's so surreal to see."

Wiesenbauer says one draw for visitors is seeing how people live near the volcano on a day-to-day basis.

"Just to see that the lava flowed into the transfer station property in November, and it was closed for a little while, but then they just scraped the lava off and it's back to business," she says. "It's this resilience. You have to accept this as a force of nature. People here learn to live with it. As a visitor, seeing it, I think it's quite phenomenal."

She often sends guests wanting to see the lava to Paradise Helicopters,

which takes visitors up in its four-seater models. Each visitor has a window seat, and Paradise can fly with its doors off. "A lot of people really like that," she says.

It's how professional photographer Bruce Omori started taking aerial shots of the lava last July, not long after the flow began. Calvin Dorn, the owner of Paradise Helicopters, invit-

ed Omori to go up with Mick Kalber, a pilot who also takes video, to shoot the lava. They offered to document the flow for Civil Defense but were turned down.

As the flow moved closer to Pahoa village, they began going up more



PHOTO COURTESY
EXTREME EXPOSURE – PARADISE HELICOPTERS

"If you're more of an adventurer-traveler type, who wants to go and see something authentically the way it is, and not dolled up and made cute for your benefit, then this is the place for you."



Bruce Omori

often and documenting the lava's progression, with Dorn donating the flying time and the others donating their services. Omori regularly uploaded the shots to his Facebook wall. Anxious residents and others following the lava saga were wildly appreciative to be able to see the lava's path as it crept closer to their backyards.

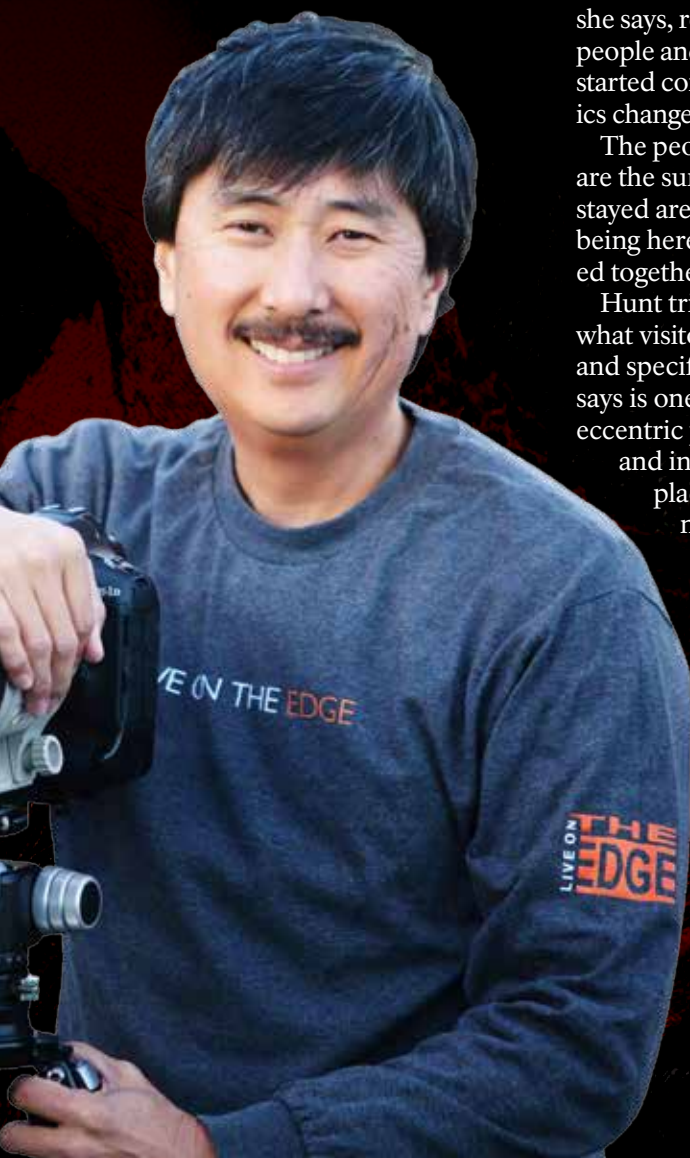
"The volcano is just so very dynamic. The lava's not an immediate threat, but anything could happen. It could be a year, or it may never happen again. There are so many things that could happen. The possibilities are endless," Omori says.

Tiffany Edwards Hunt was one of the people checking out Omori's lava shots on Facebook. She and her husband run Jeff Hunt Surfboards in Pahoa. She also teaches and publishes the Big Island Chronicle.

Hunt says their shop has become more than just a surf shop and is now a gift shop with tourist items. "It's one of the only shops in Pahoa now,"



PHOTO COURTESY
EXTREME EXPOSURE – PARADISE HELICOPTERS



she says, recalling the mass exodus of people and businesses after the lava started coming, and the demographics changed.

The people who are left, she says, are the survivors. "The people who stayed are a little more committed to being here," she says. "We are bonded together as a community, too."

Hunt tries to put her finger on what visitor should come to Puna, and specifically Pahoa, which she says is one of the most unique and eccentric places on Hawaii Island and in the state. "It's more of a place for an adventurer and not really a tourist in the traditional sense," she says. "It's off the beaten path. It's not all clean and neat and tidy, where everything has a little sign denoting where everything is supposed to be.

"It's a place where you're going to happen upon something, rather than having it mapped out for you. To me, it's authentic in that way. We have our hot ponds, and we have our lava walk

and our beautiful coastlines, with the most amazing scenery that you're ever going to see. It's postcard-like, but it's not like we're selling all the postcards in all the gift shops."

She describes it as a place that is accommodating to the traveler but is not focused on catering to the traveler.

"If you're somebody who worries about proper lighting after dark, and all those things that the resort experience will make sure is taken care of, then this is not the place for you," she says. "But if you're more of an adventurer-traveler type, who wants to go and see something authentically the way it is, and not dolled up and made cute for your benefit, then this is the place for you.

"As a merchant and as a resident, sometimes I see people, and I can tell they would be better off in Kona. And I don't want to give anybody the illusion that it's something that it's not. Because that's the reason it works over here.

"It's filled with character," Hunt says, "and it's eccentric. And some people are horrified by it, and some people love it. We need to be really honest about what it is. That's what makes Pahoa its own unique place." ■

HAWAII'S BAG BAN

Honolulu's plastic bag ban goes into effect on July 1. What can the visitor industry expect as Hawaii retailers go 'green' at checkout counters statewide?

BY GAIL MIYASAKI

On a typical day, some 20,000 to 30,000 checkout bags are provided to customers at ABC Stores. With tourists comprising 80 to 90 percent of its customers, the local family-owned convenience store chain, currently with 75 stores statewide and in Las Vegas, is at the forefront of visitor-related retailers adjusting to the new statewide plastic bag ban.

"We've been using paper bags for a while because the Neighbor Island counties banned plastic about two years prior. The costs are three or four times higher," says ABC Stores President and CEO Paul Kosasa. "In Honolulu, we plan to use a combination of paper and reusable bags."

With the state's largest county on board with a ban this summer, Kosasa, son of founder Sidney Kosasa who opened the first ABC store on Waikiki Beach in 1964, expects operating





expenses to increase significantly, in part because each island county ordinance is different, despite legislative efforts so far to pass a uniform statewide ban. But he adds it's also because "visitors, in particular, generally do not bring reusable bags as part of their vacation luggage."

ABC Stores is among the approximately 30 percent of Retail Merchants of Hawaii members that serve the visitor industry. According to RMH President Sheri Sakamoto, among its 3,000 members statewide, those with storefronts on every Island that have already turned to paper bags are finding costs "up to 10 times more expensive than plastic," when increased shipping and ground transportation delivery costs are factored in.

"For every one truck that delivers plastic bags, seven trucks are needed to deliver the same number of paper bags, a volume measure critical for ocean freight," she says of the permissible recyclable paper bags that are not manufactured in bulk locally.

Preventing plastic from ending up in the ocean to be fatally swallowed by marine life is the environmentally motivated hope for the checkout plastic

bag ban. However, Sakamoto points out that production of "paper bags generate 70 percent more air pollutants and 50 times more water pollutants than plastic."

"Hawaii retailers unquestionably support initiatives to preserve and protect our environment," states Sakamoto. The state's lush, natural beauty is a main reason visitors choose to vacation here. She believes, however, that "the solution . . . is neither a total ban nor questionable substitutes, but the wise

management of the resource, i.e. the reduce, reuse and recycle principle."

The economic impact of the plastic bag ban is no small matter for retailers in the state's largest industry, where tourists rank high as customers of the highest purchased items in Hawaii: in order, fashion/clothing, Hawaii food products and souvenirs.

Sakamoto also notes that visitors are spending 8.5 percent less for shopping and 3.8 percent less overall during the same stay period this year vs. 2014. "This means retailers, entertainment, transportation and lodging are all competing for the same (but smaller) spend," she adds.

Adrian Hong is president of his family-owned Island Plastic Bags, which had been the state's largest local manufacturer of the checkout plastic bag, commonly referred to as the T-shirt bag from its shape. Hong flatly asserts that the plastic bag ban will hit hardest on those retailers who rely on tourists.

Taking over as president in January 2015 from his father and company founder, David,



Paul Kosasa, president and CEO of ABC Stores Hawaii

PHOTO BY GREG YAMAMOTO



A compostable bag from Island Plastics Bags

Hong agrees with ABC Stores' Kosa-sa that visitors typically do not pack reusable bags for shopping at vacation destinations, especially those from countries where there are no bans on the T-shirt bags at checkouts. "(A merchant) cannot not provide a bag for purchases," he says.

Currently, Island Plastic Bags is offering local retailers three options to meet the Honolulu ban's permissible use bags: a 40 percent post-consumer (recycled paper, such as newspapers) paper bags; reusable plastic bags at least 2.25 mils (1 mil = 1/1,000ths of an inch); and compostable bags.

The company's switch to biodegradable bags in 2012, in anticipation of the 2015 ban, became moot when Mayor Kirk Caldwell signed an amended plastic bag ban bill in September 2014 to also ban biodegradables because they lack a standard industry definition.

Higher purchase costs for all three options will be the major challenge to retailers, especially for the smaller, single-shop, often family-run operations that cannot afford to buy permissible bags in large bulk purchases to reduce the cost per bag, says Hong. But all three permissible options have additional costly disadvantages to retailers.

The 40 percent post-consumer paper bag is pricey because it has very limited source stock on hand in the Islands, and adding handles for convenience "significantly drives up the cost," says Hong. He expects the cost of the limited stock of post-consumer paper here will skyrocket as paper bag manufacturing competes with other local recycled paper demands.

For multiple Island use, the 3 mil reusable plastic bag may well become



Sakamoto



Hong

All About That Bag

Effective July 1, Hawaii businesses will be banned from providing plastic checkout bags and non-recyclable paper bags to customers for transporting groceries or other merchandise. Acceptable bags include:

Compostable plastic bag: A checkout bag that meets current American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) D6400 Standard Specifications for compostability and is labeled with the Biodegradable Product Institute (BPI) logo and with "Compostable" on both sides of the bag in either green color lettering or within a green color band.

Recyclable paper bag: A paper bag that is 100 percent recyclable, (contains a minimum of 40 percent post-consumer recycled content and displays "Reusable" and "Recyclable" in a highly visible manner on the outside of the bags.

Reusable bag: A bag with handles that is specifically designed and manufactured for multiple reuse and is made of cloth or other washable fabric or durable material suitable for reuse, including plastic that is at least 2.25 mils thick.

Other allowable bags

The term "plastic checkout bag" also does not include:

- Bags used by customers inside a

business to package loose items, such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, ground coffee, grains, candies or small hardware items;

- Bags used to contain or wrap frozen foods, meat or fish, flowers or potted plants or other items to contain dampness;

- Bags used to protect or transport prepared foods, beverages or bakery goods, including takeout bags used at restaurants, fast food restaurants and lunch wagons, to transport prepared foods;

- Bags provided by pharmacists to contain prescription medications;

- Newspaper bags for home newspaper delivery;

- Door-hanger bags;

- Laundry, dry cleaning or garment bags, including bags provided by hotels to guests to contain wet or dirty clothing;

- Bags sold in packages containing multiple bags intended for use as garbage, pet waste or yard waste bags;

- Bags used to contain live animals, such as fish or insects sold in pet stores;

- Bags used to transport chemical pesticides, drain-cleaning chemicals or other caustic chemicals sold at the retail level, provided that this exemption shall be limited to one bag per customer;

- Compostable plastic bags.

the statewide standard acceptable in all counties (Honolulu's ban permits a 2.25 mil bag), but the 3 mil costs 33 percent more than the T-shirt bag. Moreover, no local manufacturer, including Island Plastic Bags, has the machinery to produce this reusable bag here. Importing these bags from the mainland, Asia or Australia will also add to the costs.

Compostable bags are emerging as the most popular retail choice currently on Oahu, says Hong. But it costs 10 to 14 cents per bag, compared to 2 cents for the T-shirt bag. "It is organic, made of starch and starts breaking down from the moment of manufacturing," he points out. Exposure to water or micro-organisms accelerates the breakdown, rendering the bag a poor choice for

reuse, for example, carrying a wet bathing suit when a visitor returns from the beach.

All of this means that "(retail) businesses serving the tourist industry will have the least options," says Hong. With increased costs to retailers expected to multiply at least five times, he expects businesses to pass the expense on to customers. On Maui, some stores charge an additional bag fee, ranging from 10 to 25 cents. Others are adding the expense to the cost of sales, says Hong.

"The plastic bag ban seems like a small cost," says RMH's Sakamoto. But the cumulative effect, together with increases in business fees, licenses or prices, raises the bottom line—an ongoing challenge for all retailers doing business in Hawaii. H

The Prohibition Cocktail Makes a Comeback



Modern mixology takes lessons on bar basics from a 1930s classic

BY PRISCILLA PÉREZ BILLIG

The cocktail culture is back. Todd Oldham, food & beverage director at the Kahala Hotel & Resort, is lifting pages straight out of *The Savoy Cocktail Book*, published in 1930, to meet guests' demands for nostalgic drinks from the Prohibition era.

"Beverage trends are going back to simpler times and we're having fun with that," Oldham says. "2013 and 2014 were the years of the 'Mad Men' drinks, but 2015 is the year of Prohibition cocktails. I think their popularity is due somewhat to the simplicity of the cocktails. Bartenders had to be creative during Prohibition. They had a limited set of ingredients, and the base spirits they worked with were often of poor quality. 'Bathtub gin' is a perfect example of this."

While bringing back the mixes created in a London bar during America's "dry" period, the Kahala Hotel & Resort's signature restaurant Hoku's focuses on quality beverage ingredients. The Boulevardier, based on the Negroni, combines rye whiskey, Campari and sweet vermouth poured over a 3-by-3-inch cube of clear ice and topped with an orange twist. The classic highball mixes bourbon and Bermuda ginger beer over cubed ice. Hoku's Tuxedo

II starts with an absinthe rinse and blends gin, dry vermouth, Luxardo Maraschino liqueur and orange bitters with a lemon twist.

Oldham says a cocktail at Hoku's starts with small-batch, higher-end spirits with careful attention paid to every component, from glassware to the ice. "Bitters and infuses are

into varied-size cubes for drinks.

"Having a \$50 glass of scotch with a single large cube of clear ice is a completely different experience from having the same drink with a scoop of cubes from regular ice," Oldham says.

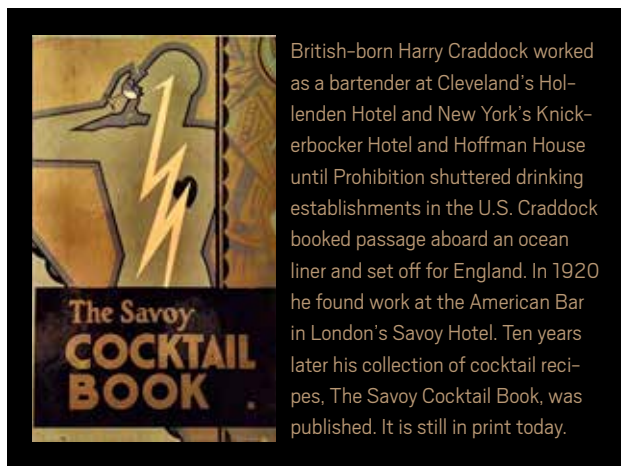
The beauty of having control over the clarity of the ice and the size of the cube comes down to two senses:

sight and taste. Clarity in an ice cube helps maintain the color of the spirit, like the amber hue of whiskey or bourbon, while a slowly melting three-inch-square block cube keeps the drink at a chilled temperature and cuts down the dilution rate, helping to hold its natural taste longer.

In addition to its classic cocktail revival, Hoku's recently rolled out its "Sparkling Breakfast." A new take on the Ladies Who Lunch concept, Hoku's breakfast flight offers the Hibiscus

Fleur made with Fleur elderflower liqueur, marinated red hibiscus, fresh lemon sour and sparkling wine; the Classic Mimosa combines orange-flavored triple sec liqueur, orange juice and sparkling wine; and the Lavender 75 mixes Beefeater gin, house-made Kula lavender syrup, fresh lemon juice and sparkling wine.

"I guess, in order for the morning to feel complete, sometimes a person's palate yearns for a taste of the traditional," Oldman says.



British-born Harry Craddock worked as a bartender at Cleveland's Hollenden Hotel and New York's Knickerbocker Hotel and Hoffman House until Prohibition shuttered drinking establishments in the U.S. Craddock booked passage aboard an ocean liner and set off for England. In 1920 he found work at the American Bar in London's Savoy Hotel. Ten years later his collection of cocktail recipes, *The Savoy Cocktail Book*, was published. It is still in print today.

usually handmade," he says. "An old fashioned may be made from Kau orange bitters and a small-batch bourbon over a hand-cut ice cube."

Bartenders at Hoku's order in a 300-pound block of ice made with a Clinebell block ice machine which produces perfectly clear ice. Once on property the block is tempered, allowed to sit under refrigeration for 24 hours, before cut into smaller blocks using an ice saw. Finally a Chinese cleaver chops the ice blocks



HRA Salutes Top Employees

(Seated, from left) Dirk Koepenka, HRA president, and Gregg Fraser, executive director, with the honorees at the Employee Appreciation and Excellence Awards luncheon.

Top front of house and back of house workers from the Islands' eateries were recognized at the Hawaii Restaurant Association (HRA) 2015 Employee Appreciation & Excellence Awards event.

Auctioneer Joe Teipel served as emcee at the March 9 luncheon at the Hawaii Prince Hotel. Winners, chosen among members and allied members, are:

RESTAURANT FRONT OF HOUSE

Winner: Guy Maynard, Chart House Waikiki

Finalists: Brandon Kapahua, Ruth's Chris Steak House Waikiki; Kelan Morisawa, Alan Wong's Honolulu; Paula Pruden, Eggs 'N Things

RESTAURANT BACK OF HOUSE

Winner: Tom Warwick, Eggs 'N Things

Finalists: Alejandro Bustamente, Oceanarium Restaurant, Pacific Beach Hotel; Amando Ricana, Gytaku Japanese Restaurant; Kenny Aria, The Pineapple Room By Alan Wong

ALLIED FRONT OF HOUSE

Winner: Margarethe Cristobal, Hawaii Prince Hotel

Finalists: Agner Duque, Hawaii Prince Hotel; Sachi Okata, Y. Hata & Company; Holly Crise, Hawaii Prince Hotel; Philip Ongjoco, Hawaii Prince Hotel

ALLIED BACK OF HOUSE

Winner: Lorenzo Aspa, Y. Hata & Company

Finalists: Art Aguinaldo, Hawaii Prince Hotel; Julio Reyes, Hawaii Prince Hotel; Mitchell Kalima, Hawaii Prince Hotel; Chi Keung Cheung, La Gelateria

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Sheraton Maui Adds Four

Sheraton Maui Resort & Spa has promoted **Alexis Eaton** to director of public relations, **Brett Satovsky** to director of security and **Lee Otaguro** to assistant director of human resources and has named **Ann Fitzgerald**



Alexis Eaton



Brett Satovsky



Lee Otaguro



Ann Fitzgerald

Starwood's Management Trainee Program in 2011 at the Sheraton Maui Resort & Spa. He became food & beverage outlet manager then guest services manager. In 2013 he was promoted to security manager.

Otaguro joined Starwood as bus help at the Royal Hawaiian

Hotel in 1998. In 2011 he joined the Sheraton Maui Resort & Spa as human resources manager.

Fitzgerald has served as the director of human resources at several properties including The Ritz Carlton Club Aspen Highlands, The Little Nell, Hotel Jerome, The St. Regis Aspen and several Sheraton hotels.

Grace Takes New Post at Prince Resorts

Naomi Grace has been promoted to regional director of group sales at Prince Resorts Hawaii.

Grace, previously the company's group sales manager, will represent Hawaii Prince Hotel Waikiki, Mauna Kea Beach Hotel and Hapuna Beach Prince Hotel, focused on the Southeast United States and international markets.



Naomi Grace

Plaza Club Promotes 2, Hires 1

The Plaza Club has promoted **Randy Whiteford** to director of food and beverage from executive chef, **Kelli Shintani** to director of membership from



Randy Whiteford executive assistant and hired **Donna Arena** as catering sales manager.



Kelli Shintani



Donna Arena

team and managing day-to-day kitchen operations.

Shintani will handle all member requests and leads membership communications. She also works directly with the food and beverage team to develop programs that enhance the membership experience.

Arena is responsible for securing new catering accounts, while providing unsurpassed service to existing accounts. She previously worked at Formaggio's in Kailua.



Vanessa Lampson

New GM, Sommelier for Maui's Montage

Montage Kapalua Bay welcomes **Robert Comstock** as general manager and **Vanessa Lampson** as sommelier for its signature restaurant Cane & Canoe. The restaurant serves modern Hawaiian cuisine infused with Asian influences.

Comstock is a 19-year vet-

eran of the food and beverage industry, most recently general manager of Pacific'O

in Lahaina. Previously, he was general manager at E&O Trading Company in Lahaina and establishments in Waikiki including Duke's Canoe Club, Ocean House and Lewers Street Fish Co. Comstock is the recipient of Hale Aina awards (statewide) and Aipono awards (Maui).

Most recently, Lampson served as a sommelier at Merriam's Kapalua. She recently rolled out the "Uncorked" Wine Series, leading guests on a vinicultural journey as they experience unique and differential varietals as well as wines from regions around the globe.



Robert Comstock



Douglas Drummond

Drummond is New GM at Lumeria Maui

Lumeria Maui, an holistic educational and well-being retreat, has hired **Douglas Drummond** as its new general manager. Formerly the U.S. regional manager for the Cowshed Spa at SoHo House in New York, Drummond is a practitioner of meditation and yoga. He grew up in New Zealand and graduated in 2005 from Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration with a focus in spa and destination operations.

Lumeria Maui's new own-



More than 15 buses, vans, motorcoaches and ADA-compliant vehicles were on display at the 15th Biennial Pacific Bus Expo for three days in early March. Hosted by Soderholm Sales and Leasing, the event included forums on big and small buses.

ership and management is Filament Hospitality, based in San Francisco, CA. Filament specializes in independent lifestyle properties, alternative experiential destinations and educational retreat centers.

Waimea Plantation Cottages Appoint Alex, Garcia

The Kauai country-style hotel Waimea Plantation Cottages recently named **Tim Alex** as sales manager and **Mary Kagawa Garcia** as event coordinator.



Tim Alex



Mary Kagawa Garcia

condominium divisions to his

new position leading Waimea Plantation Cottages' sales and marketing efforts.

Garcia formerly managed the Westin Kauai Resort's boats division. She was also co-owner of Westin Kauai Lagoon Tours, and owner of NaPali Explorer and Explore Kauai Sport Fishing. Recently, Garcia was restaurant manager of the Cottages' Grove Dining Room.

Hukilau Marketplace Opens at PCC

Capping five years of redevelopment, the new 119,000-square-foot Hukilau Marketplace at the Polynesian Cultural Center in Laie opened for business with a blessing ceremony on Feb. 20.

More than 40 businesses comprise the \$100 million shopping and dining complex, which was built by general contractor Jacobsen Construction. The tenants include Pounders Restaurant, Auntie Emily's Polynesian Bakery, Roulotte Court, Tutu's Sweet Shop, Kawika's Koolers, the Laie General Store, the Hapa Home store and Jaseboards.



The Hukilau Marketplace at the Polynesian Cultural Center

Il Gelato Café Opens in Haleiwa

Il Gelato, an award-winning vendor, opened Il Gelato Café in Haleiwa's North Shore Market Place on March 28.

Il Gelato Café expands the gourmet offerings featured at Il Gelato's two other businesses on Oahu, and stages gelato prep at the new restaurant's door.

"The concept of making the gelato crafting process an integral part of our customers experience is intriguing to locals and visitors," says **Dirk Koeppenkastrop**, Il Gelato Café co-owner and 2016 team captain of Gelato World Cup Team USA.

Il Gelato Café and Il Gelato Hawaii have received numerous local culinary awards, including the Best in Honolulu "Hall of Fame Award" in 2015.



Restaurants are Trending Healthy

Hawaii Restaurant Association research keeps restaurant operators ahead of the curve on nutrition trends that can lead to healthy business. Our Restaurant Industry Forecast confirms that healthful options lead culinary trends—for consumers and restaurants.

The Forecast identified children's nutrition, gluten-free cuisine and health/nutrition as top culinary trends for this year. Other popular menu trends included local sourcing, whole-grains, fruit/vegetable side dishes for kids, lower-sodium food, lower-calorie items and smaller (or half) portions for a lower price.

Our research shows that 71 percent of adults are trying to eat healthier at restaurants than they did two years ago.

To become more skilled at making healthful dining options at your restaurant, log on to www.hawaiirestaurant.org for Healthful Dining Tips to give operators great advice on what ingredients and items to look for when creating new menu dishes.

What's new at HRA?

In March, HRA awarded top industry employees at the HRA Employee Appreciation and Excellence Awards at the Hawaii Prince Hotel. This year we honored staff from both our Allied and Restaurant members. Story on page 27.

The allied member winners were Margarethe Cristobal of the Hawaii Prince Hotel and Lorenzo Aspa from Y. Hata & Company. For the restaurant members, top honors went to Tom Warwick from Eggs 'N Things and Guy Maynard from Chart House Waikiki. Start planning which of your employees to nominate for the March 2016 event.

Next on the calendar is the eighth annual HRA Golf Tournament at the Hawaii Prince Golf Course on June 4. Register your team for a great day on the course and your chance to win great prizes and mingle with other industry professionals.

Check out HRA's new website at www.hawaiirestaurant.org for all upcoming events and visit the money-saving special offers in the members section.

Gregg Fraser is executive director at the Hawaii Restaurant Association. For more information about the HRA call 808-944-9105 or go to www.hawaiirestaurant.org.

Party Season in Hawaii

We are well into the second quarter of the year, meaning 'tis the season for graduations and weddings which help drive additional businesses to our hotels and resorts, restaurants, retail outlets, lei vendors and many others across the Islands.

According to the Department of Education website, more than 10,500 students are expected to graduate from more than 50 public schools across the state in late May and early June, not to mention all of the universities who will be holding ceremonies of their own. The Hawaii Tourism Authority also reported that more than 691,000 visitors came to Hawaii in 2014 to get married or honeymoon, with nearly 135,000 in May and June alone.

We're anticipating another busy graduation and wedding season ahead, so get ready to party like it's 2015.

Looking forward, one of our industry's most anticipated events of the year, the Hawaii Lodging, Hospitality and Food Service Expo, is set for July 8-9 at the Neil Blaisdell Center from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. Now in its 21st year, the expo brings the industry together providing invaluable networking and learning opportunities to move Hawaii's businesses forward. As the largest trade exposition in Hawaii, it is also the only event providing access for industry buyers to a full range of products and services for the state's most important economic sectors.

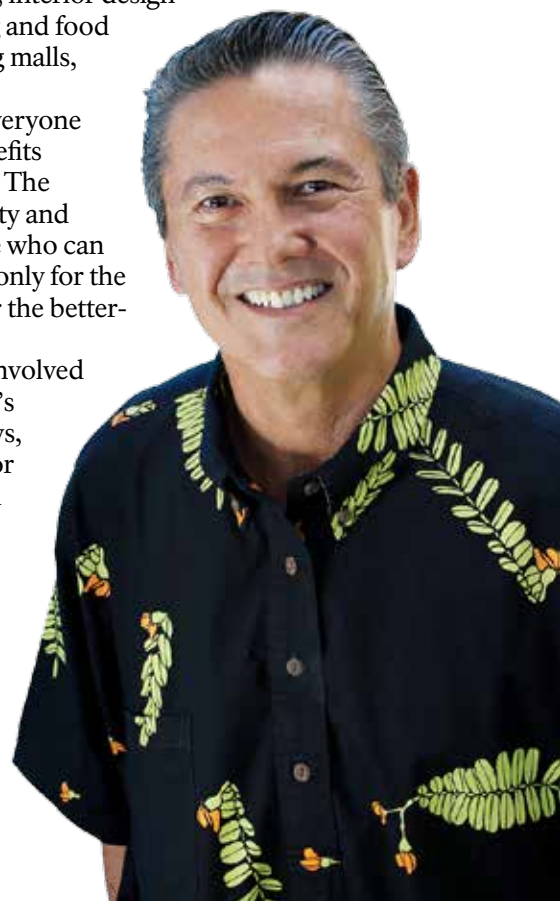
Last year's expo drew more than 4,400 buyers representing the purchasing needs of Hawaii's hotels, restaurants, caterers, attractions, colleges, concessions, convenience stores, country clubs, government agencies, health clubs, hospitals, interior designers, nightclubs, military housing and food service, supermarkets, shopping malls, schools and many others.

It's not always obvious, but everyone throughout the Aloha State benefits from Hawaii's tourism industry. The 2015 Hawaii Lodging, Hospitality and Food Service Expo brings those who can make a difference together, not only for the good of their businesses, but for the betterment of our state as a whole.

A quick mahalo to everyone involved in the expo, especially the show's organizers, Douglas Trade Shows, and the buyers and exhibitors for their continued support after all of these years. Please encourage your colleagues, associates, friends and family who have a stake in the industry to get involved.

I look forward to seeing you at the expo.

George D. Szigeti is president and CEO of the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association (HLTA).



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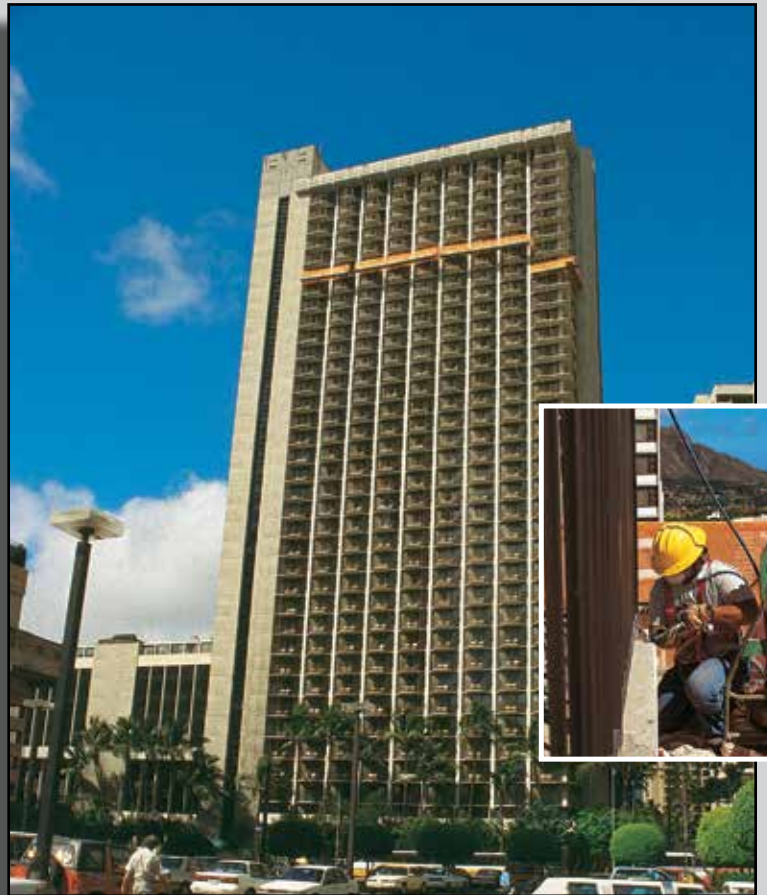
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