

INSIDE: HLTA LEADERSHIP \* HRA'S ANNUAL MEETING

# HAWAII *hospitality*

JULY/AUGUST 2015



## INTERVIEW **TOM JONES**

The gifted restaurateur  
behind the top-ranked,  
growing Gytaku chain  
of Japanese restaurants

## Is Hawaii Going to the Dogs?

A proposed bill would give eateries  
discretion to admit or ban canines

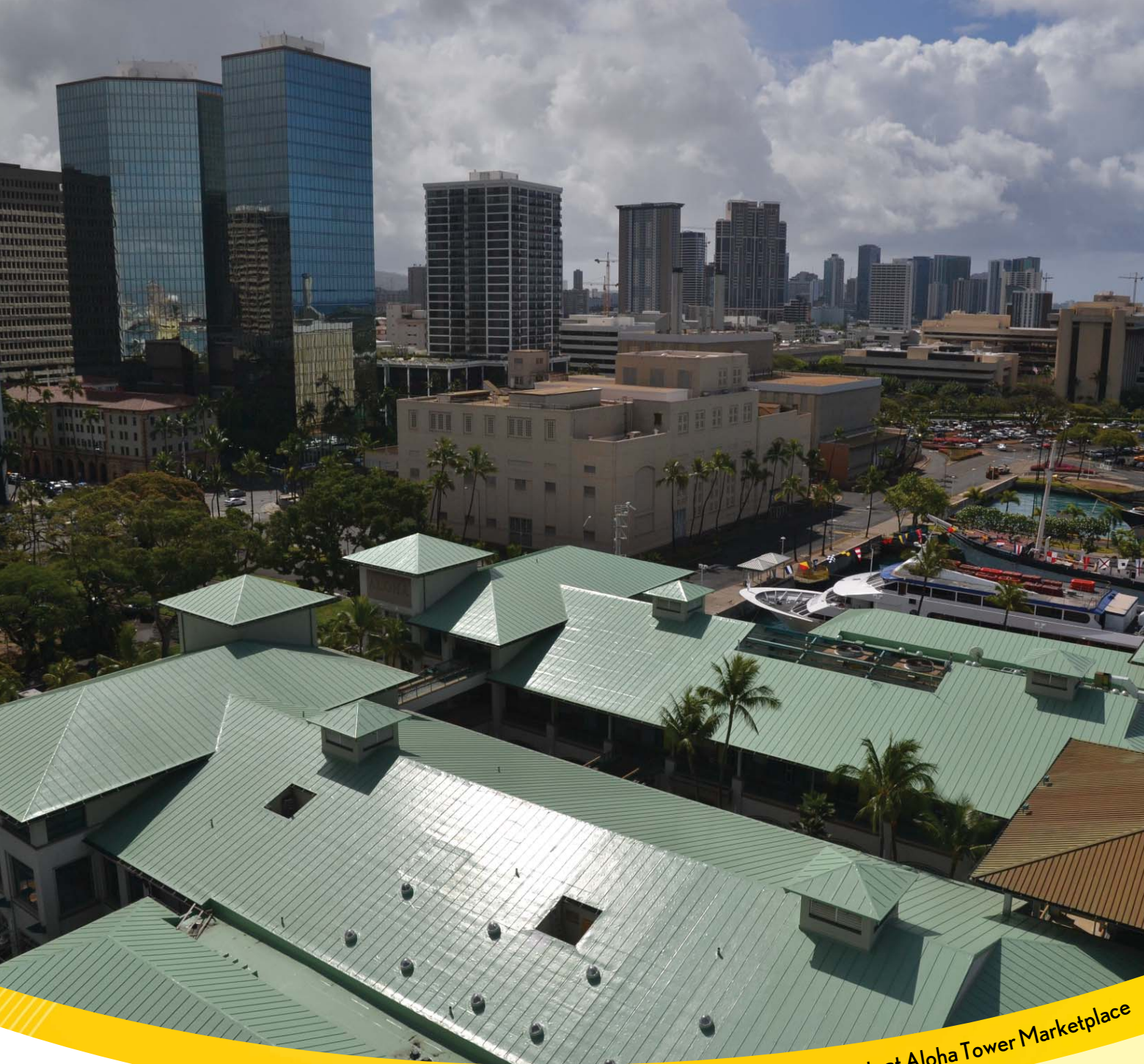
## MARKETING ALOHA

Driving Visitor Counts

## HOSPITALITY EXPO

Good Reasons to Go





Hawaii Pacific University Apartments at Aloha Tower Marketplace

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- Iconic Landmark
- Demo existing tile roofing
- New Sika Sarnafil PVC Décor System (metal roofing profile)
- Met university's performance and aesthetics criteria
- Logistically Challenging

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Kualoa Ranch on Oahu was a key location for "Jurassic World."

PHOTO COURTESY KUALOA RANCH/ KAAAWA VALLEY



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Cover design by Ursula A. Silva

## checking in

Hawaii legislators are weighing whether to legalize a dog's right to join its owner in restaurants. It's not a new idea. In fact, for years some eateries have been allowing our furry friends to sit beside their masters at outdoor tables. But a new proposed law would open the door (literally) to all canine companions, not just service animals protected under the ADA. In this issue we probe into the measure's good, bad and messy sides.

Who are Hawaii's Ambassadors of Aloha, and what do they do? The answers are not so easy to define: An ambassador of aloha might be a pageant winner or could be a scholarship winner, or both. Festive events often serve as venues for spreading the Islands' aloha. Look inside for our report.

Hawaii's Tom Jones, not to be confused with Vegas' Tom Jones, has come a long way since serving cheeseburgers on the New Jersey boardwalk to being co-owner of the popular Gyotaku Japanese Restaurants. The entrepreneur took a few minutes out of his hectic schedule to talk about the Islands' culinary tastes and other topics.

The 21st annual Hawaii Lodging, Hospitality & Foodservice Expo in early July will include more than 40 new exhibitors at the Blaisdell Center. We spoke to four of them about the value of the Expo to their businesses as they got ready to unveil new products and services.

Aloha,

David Putnam, Editor  
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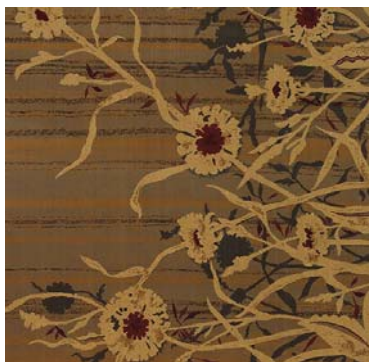
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**Dianne Vicheinrut, Pat Kashani, Eron Read, Dirk Koeppenkastrop, Michael Miller, Tom Jones**

**Photos by Hawkins Biggins**

The Hawaii Restaurant Association (HRA) held its annual Membership and Board of Directors Meeting at the Pagoda Restaurant in late May.

# HRA Meeting



**David Muldoon, Donna Robinson, Garriann Ho**



**Michael Leslie, Cam Hagihara, Bobby Lee**



**Esmond Kilaulani, Melvin Takemoto, Alan Swanson**



**Carrie Walker, Eric Waddell, Naomi Azama**





**Tom Stewart, Brian Arkle, Kawai Cooper Jr., Gregg Fraser**



**Jason Hiyakumoto, Doug Harris, Len Delekta**



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# Ambassadors



# of Aloha

## Visitor industry and cultural envoys help Hawaii reap the benefits of new ventures and social action

BY BRETT ALEXANDER-ESTES

As the *plink-plink-plink* of hundreds of ukuleles sweetens the summer breeze during the Ukulele Festival in Waikiki on July 19, countless people will beam the show via tweets and other media to their friends and families around the globe.

Through the Ukulele Festival and many other annual celebrations of Island culture in visitor industry venues, Hawaii performers fulfill their role as some of the state's many "Ambassadors of Aloha." They are joined in this endeavor by a host of other advocates—Hawaii Convention Center marketing teams, fraternal and visitor industry organizations, Hawaii hotels and Pacific Ocean navigators.

Like their national counterparts who ferry diplomatic messages to promote their nation's interests, Hawaii's Ambassadors of Aloha promote the state's economic interests and the promise of one magical word: *aloha*.

Its precise definition may be unclear, but people everywhere respond to this word as to no other. It carries warmth, light, scent—an irresistible pull much stronger than surfboards and mai tais.

Here in Hawaii, it also evokes a culture's sacred obligations—to *ohana* and *aina*, to *keiki* and *kuleana*.

Which may be why "Aloha," a new Hawaii-based epic by Sony Pictures with a largely non-Hawaiian cast, has incensed local audiences and sparked renewed criticism for *aloha* appearing on everything from landmark buildings (Aloha Tower) to table condiments (Aloha Shoyu).

And why it serves as a reminder to the Islands' Ambassadors of Aloha that as they advance the interests of the state, their position carries the obligation of mutual respect, generosity and the preservation of Hawaii's heritage as they pursue their missions here at home and around the world.

Ukulele Festival Hawaii performers at the 2011 concert  
© TINA MAHINA/COURTESY UKULELE FESTIVAL HAWAII



## HLTA

"If you noticed a vibrant and energetic atmosphere and hundreds of members of your community walking with food in hand during the first three weeks of May, have no fear," says Karen Wataru-Nakaoka, Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association (HLTA) executive director. "It was the annual Visitor Industry Charity Walk!"

Wataru-Nakaoka says the Walk is HLTA's signature charity event, and is held across the state during the month of May.

"Having represented the hospitality industry for nearly 70 years, the HLTA serves as a shining example of a goodwill ambassador," she says. "The reach of HLTA and its members extends far into the community. Each of the Island chapters works to identify



**Karen Wataru-Nakaoka**

its respective needs and garners support to provide services through various programs and events."

HLTA's mission is to provide education and advocacy for the hospitality industry. The association has over 700 members, largely comprised of lodging properties, businesses, industry leaders, educators and students. The primary focus of HLTA is legislative advocacy,

working to protect the business interests of tourism, the number-one economic driver of the state.

Now in its 37th year, the Walk has raised more than \$29 million and has helped thousands of local residents by providing funding to a multitude of charitable

programs across the state, says Wataru-Nakaoka.

Ben Rafter, HTLA's 2015 statewide Charity Walk chairperson and Jonoro managing director, says: "We are very proud of the deep aloha spirit shown supporting our local community."



**George Szigeti, Shawnee Hammer and Ben Rafter at McCoy Pavilion, Ala Moana Beach Park**

PHOTO COURTESY HLTA



## Outrigger Hotels

Days after the recent acquisition of a new Thailand resort, Outrigger Hotels instituted "The Outrigger Way" on the property.

The Outrigger Way, says Nancy Daniels, Outrigger Enterprises Group director of public relations, is the company's philosophy of service that is designed to transform lives through authentic, localized experiences.

The Outrigger Way, she says, "incorporates traditional Hawaiian values, such as the concept

of aloha, and adapts this globally at every Outrigger property—embracing cultural programs and amenities that underscore Outrigger's commitment to its guests and local communities. So whether in Hawaii, Fiji, Thailand, the Maldives or Mauritius, an Outrigger guest will

feel the welcoming aloha spirit woven into the host culture."

This June, Outrigger Resorts launched OZONE (Outrigger ZONE), a reef preservation program. The love of the ocean and its creatures felt by Bitsy Kelley, Outrigger's vice president of corporate communications and granddaughter of Outrigger Resorts' founders Roy and Estelle Kelley, will be put into practice at all of Outrigger's beachside properties. Through the replanting of coral reefs and other conservation measures, Outrigger Resorts will leave a legacy of aloha in oceans around the world.



**Nancy Daniels**

**"The Outrigger Way" at an international Outrigger Resort**

PHOTO COURTESY OUTRIGGER ENTERPRISES GROUP





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## Meet Hawaii

Honolulu has stellar attractions, but so do other convention-friendly cities like San Francisco, San Diego and Anaheim.

Meet Hawaii, a collaborative effort by the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau (HVCB) and the Hawaii Convention Center (HCC), works with the state's hospitality venues and professional groups to ensure that Honolulu tops the list.

In 2015, Meet Hawaii booking goals include 202,550 for citywide and convention center business and 180,700 in bookings at single Hawaii hospitality properties.



Brian Lynx

One new Meet Hawaii and HCC partnership program supports local hotels that lack adequate on-site meeting space. Through the program, hotel partners can

maximize occupancy by hosting group room blocks at their sites and utilizing HCC for meeting space as needed.

Meet Hawaii encourages clients to view the agency as their own staff in the Islands, and provides start-to-finish convention services including lodging and transportation coordination, site research, event promotion, set-up and more.

In 2014, Anschutz Entertainment Group (AEG) Facilities, a worldwide event presentation firm, assumed management of the HCC, and the Convention Center's attendee count exceeded that year's target by 30 percent. The Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) oversees Meet Hawaii marketing initiatives.

Meet Hawaii also participates in the Elele Program, which enlists the support of any Hawaii professional with ties to international or national corporations or associations that host meetings and conventions.

## BUILDING ALOHA

### Meet Hawaii 2015 Booking Goals

- 383,250 room nights (North America/Canada combined) for single property and citywide: 180,700 (single hospitality properties); 202,550 (citywide/Hawaii Convention Center).

### Meet Hawaii New 2015 Initiatives

- Partnering with Hawaii Convention Center and local hotels to boost occupancy by utilizing HCC meeting space as needed. Contact Vickie Omura at vomura@hccaeg.com.

### Meet Hawaii 2015 Elele Program

- Working closely with University of Hawaii deans from the colleges of engineering, medicine and tropical agriculture.
- Pac Rim Strategy to increase international scientific meetings in Hawaii.

"Through Meet Hawaii's Elele Program, we've been able to leverage the ties of our community leaders with national and international professional organizations to help pursue meetings and conventions for the Hawaiian Islands," says Brian Lynx, HTA vice president for meetings, conventions and incentives.

"These leaders have become our ambassadors,

an extension of the Meet Hawaii team, graciously extending their aloha spirit to convince key decision makers of the advantages of hosting their event in Hawaii. The success of the program is a nod to the ability of our tourism industry and local community to work together for the benefit of the entire state."

## Lions International

During the recent Lions International 98th Global Convention, nearly 30,000 members and their families filled approximately 4,900 hotel rooms in Waikiki and stayed for an average of six or more nights.

"These Lions will generate about \$100 million in total revenue and about \$10 million in tax revenue for the state and county," says Robert Lee, Lions Club District 50 (Hawaii) president.

"For the Lions of Hawaii, aloha is more than a word of greeting," Lee says. "It's a philosophy of mutual

regard and caring for the people of Hawaii and the world, exemplified by our motto, 'We Serve.'"

For almost 90 years, he says, Hawaii Lions have been actively involved in the state's communities and schools, identifying and serving those in need through numerous service projects performed by 1,700 men and women in 60 Lions clubs throughout the Islands.

Lions are perhaps best known as being "Knights of the Blind."

"The Lions have owned and operated the only eye

bank facility in Hawaii and the Pacific Islands for the past 35 years," says Lee. "Since its inception, the Hawaii Lions Eye Bank and Makana Foundation (HLEBMK) have been responsible for helping restore the sight of approximately 5,000 patients in Hawaii and thousands more around the world." The organization currently averages 250 corneas a year for transplants.

Additionally, "each year, thousands of preschool and elementary school students are screened by the Lions for vision and hearing loss,



Lions Club vision screening in Hawaii  
COURTESY HAWAII LIONS

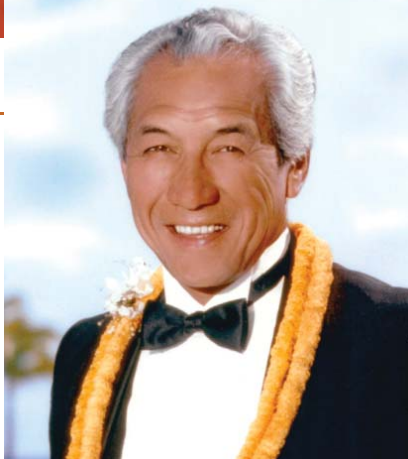
with approximately 17 percent of the children being referred for additional care," says Lee. "The Lions of Hawaii collect tens of thousands of used eyeglasses annually, cleaning and sorting them before shipping them to our fellow Lions in developing countries such as Afghanistan and the Philippines."



## Danny Kaleikini

Designated the state's Ambassador of Aloha by Gov. John Waihee, Danny Kaleikini has enjoyed a legendary singing career in Hawaii, Las Vegas and Japan.

Often recognized for his efforts to help establish Hawaii as Japan's premier vacation destination, Kaleikini's rapport with audiences, even in Japan's straight-laced society, is a



**Danny Kaleikini**

phenomena he attributes to the power of *aloha*.

*Aloha*, he says, is basically treating everyone like family. *Aloha* doesn't break down barriers, he says: It dissolves them, and effortlessly draws people together.

These days, Kaleikini is still singing—recently, his vocal and Hawaiian nose flute perfor-

mance graced the wedding of Hawaii U.S. Rep. Tulsi Gabbard.

Kaleikini also regularly serenades and serves as master of ceremonies at the World of Aloha chapel and wedding park near Kahaluu. Celebrating new family unions fits right into his original job description, he says, and makes him feel “blessed—well and truly blessed.”

## Malama Honua Worldwide Voyage

“For the Polynesian Voyaging Society, *aloha* is the love, support and generosity of our community that keeps wind in *Hokulea*'s sails,” says Clyde Namuo, Polynesian Voyaging Society CEO.

*Hokulea*, currently on the Indian Ocean leg of its Malama Honua (“Care for the Earth”) Worldwide Voyage, shares Hawaiian ancestral technologies and practices with the residents and indigenous people at its ports of call.

“When *Hokulea* sights new land as she travels around the world, she is able to share our aloha with people and communities by building meaningful relationships, educating the next generation, and leaving a legacy that will last lifetimes,” Namuo says.

During their recent stay in New Zealand, *Hokulea*'s crew conducted a Malama Honua Community Event at the New Zealand Maritime Museum. The event featured science and

outreach experiments and instruction in reading the star compass from a map. In return, Maori leaders demonstrated the

in Hawaii's hospitality industry have “shown tremendous aloha for the Malama Honua Worldwide Voyage.” Donors include

culture to all (*Hokulea*) encounters,” he says.

Here in Hawaii, Malama Honua is the featured theme at the Maui Sheraton



**Clyde Namuo**



***Hokulea* approaching landfall.**

© 2014 POLYNESIAN VOYAGING SOCIETY / COURTESY NAALEHU ANTHONY

use of a 3-D star compass on Maori craft.

This summer, *Hokulea* will visit Bali, and stops at Mauritius, Madagascar, Mozambique and South Africa are scheduled through the end of 2015.

Namuo says donors

Hawaiian Airlines, Outrigger Hotels and Resorts, Starwood Hotels and Resorts Hawaii, and the Hawaii Tourism Authority. “This voyage has brought together our community to support a common goal to share our story and our

Resort & Spa's third annual Maui Craft Session on Aug. 8. *Hokulea* and Malama Honua are supported by Outrigger Hotels and Maui Divers through the sale of a gold, diamond and mother-of-pearl pendant shaped like an outrigger canoe.



# The True Cost of Losing Customers

**When you do the math, the loss of even one loyal patron can be great**

BY NATALIE PETITTO

**S**mart restaurant owners know that satisfying each and every customer is critical to long-term success. When you break down the numbers, the cost of losing a single customer is greater than you might expect.

To get a better idea of how much each customer is really worth, let's take a look at customer lifetime value (CLV). A customer's lifetime value is defined as the amount of money a customer will spend at your business over their lifetime. A single customer can account for thousands in revenue per year, but that customer is even more valuable than his or her own CLV reveals.

According to Gartner Group, loyal customers represent about 20 percent of your total customer base, but loyal customers also drive an additional 80 percent of business. Most businesses mistakenly focus on generating new business rather than retaining their current customer base. This is a costly mistake when you fail to consider just how detrimental losing one customer can be.

## The Social Cost

We know that unhappy customers tell friends and coworkers about

their bad dining experiences, but they also share details about their good dining experiences. This tells us that one loyal customer sends business your way on a monthly basis, driving up their total CLV even higher. This brings us to the social cost associated with losing a customer. A customer who has had a bad dining experience will tell an average of 16 people about their experience. That makes 17 people who will never visit your restaurant. To put that into perspective, imagine the customer you lost was worth \$1,000 in annual revenue. Multiply that by 17 for a total of \$17,000—the social costs are catastrophic.

Social media has been both a blessing and a curse to the restaurant business. Websites like OpenTable revolutionized the way we make dinner reservations, and social media sites like Facebook allow restaurants to create free advertising campaigns and connect with customers on a personal level. On the negative side, social media sites like Yelp and Facebook are a breeding ground for bad reviews that go viral and hurt business.

The social costs of a single customer complaining on social media has implications far greater than that of a single customer complaining to

friends and coworkers. A single bad review on Yelp has the potential to reach thousands of Internet users. In fact, one doesn't need to be a Yelp user to read a bad restaurant review. If a bad review is viewed enough times on the Internet, it could appear on page one of search engine results when a potential customer searches for your business. Online reviews have exceptional influence over consumers, with 88 percent of consumers trusting online reviews as much as they trust reviews from friends. Unhappy customers tend to vent on social media within 48 hours of having a bad dining experience, making it critical for you to recover that customer before time runs out.

## The Monetary Costs

Let's take a look at the impact of the direct and social costs of losing a single customer:

**Direct and Friends Costs:** If a single guest spends an average of \$30 at your restaurant and visits three times per year, the guest's total CLV for the year is \$90. This seems like a small amount until you consider the





social costs involved. Let's say your customer with a \$90 yearly CLV tells 16 of his or her friends about their bad experience, and one-fourth of their friends decide not to visit your restaurant, the total social cost is \$360 (\$90 x 4).

**Social Costs:** The impact of social media is more difficult to quantify, because there's no way of knowing how many people might read a bad review about your restaurant. It's safe to say, however, that the impact will be far greater than that of a customer telling 16 of his or her friends and coworkers. If only 100 people read a bad review about your restaurant, the social cost is \$3,000 (\$30 x 100).

**Yearly Costs:** These above numbers related to the social costs represent only one visit per customer. If 100 prospective customers visited your restaurant one day per month on average, the cost would reach \$36,000 annually.

Casual restaurant chains receive an average of 200 negative pieces of feedback per location annually. Using the numbers from the Direct section above, that comes out to \$450 annually per bad experience (\$90 + \$360). Multiply this by 200, and the result is a staggering \$90,000 in annual losses (\$450 x 200).

## Recovery Methods

Recovering customers is just as critical as retaining current customers and gaining new ones. Based on the casual restaurant chain numbers above, if casual restaurant chains recover only 20 percent of the 200 customers they lost, they could save \$18,000 in annual revenue. To gain that 20 percent, your establishment only has to recover 20 extra customers per year, or less than two per month.

Customer recovery methods vary

by location, scope and size, but all recovery methods should include a customer feedback system. By listening to customer feedback and acting quickly to correct issues in your restaurant, your ability to recover your customers increases and the potential of losing more customers decreases.

A few adjustments can go a long way. They should include:

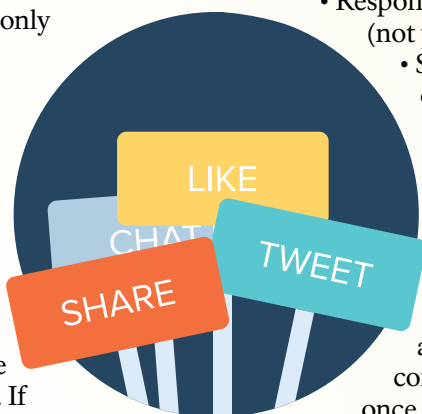
- React quicker to feedback
- Establish consistent responses for all staff members
- Respond to all complaints (not just the big ones)
- Spend money on recovery methods
- Communicate with staff on a consistent basis

Gathering feedback, however, isn't enough. You'll need to track and evaluate all the data you've compiled. Additionally, once you've analyzed your

feedback, you should have a system in place to track all your engagements with your customers. For example, maybe you've determined that it was slow service during peak dining hours that caused a customer to leave a negative review. What will be your response? Do you have an action plan in place? Who will make the call to the customer? What was the customer's response? Did the manager follow up?

With a centralized feedback system, restaurants can track both feedback and engagements, greatly simplifying the recovery process and also retaining customers and even catching instances of customer fraud. With the proper tools in place, you can stop the domino effect of losing one customer and watching hundreds of others follow.

*This article was originally published at blog.pedanco.com and is being reprinted with permission. Pedanco is a guest engagement and recovery platform for the service industry, including hospitality, restaurants and other multi-unit service-based businesses.*



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Thomas

# Culinary Entrepreneur

**Thanks to talents in and out of the kitchen, he's elbow-deep in multiple Hawaii ventures**

BY CATHY CRUZ-GEORGE  
PHOTOS BY GREG YAMAMOTO

**I**n the early 1970s, Thomas Jones was a high school kid serving cheeseburgers to tourists on the New Jersey boardwalk. Today, he's a noted entrepreneur in Hawaii and co-owner of a top-ranked chain, Gyotaku Japanese Restaurants.

It wasn't by chance that Jones landed in his current position. He is tenacious, friendly and strategic. Over four decades, Jones earned a degree from the prestigious Culinary Institute of America; then, to prove skeptics wrong, labored in fish factories and five-star kitchens in Tokyo and Washington, D.C. Soon after, he oversaw the expansion of a Japanese corporation in Hawaii and partnered with other restaurateurs to launch culinary concepts in Hawaii.

Of course, Jones' innate grasp of the Japanese language and penchant for raw fish didn't hurt.

It is no wonder Jones is elbow-deep lately in multiple ventures. His roles include:

- President and co-owner of REI Food Service LLC (dba Gyotaku Japanese Restaurants) with co-owner and executive vice president, Nobutaka "Tony" Sato and other local partners.
- Executive vice president and chief financial officer for Dale Carnegie Training of Hawaii & Guam with partner and president, Jan Kaeo.
- And more recently, co-owner of AGU A Ramen Bistro with chef Hisashi "Teddy" Uehara and other local partners. In May, the ramen team introduced its second AGU restaurant at Ward Villages Shops, with more locations in Hawaii scheduled for this year.

Immediately after the ramen bistro's May opening, *Hawaii Hospitality* caught up with Jones to chat about Hawaii's culinary environment, career highlights and sushi. Read on:







## **Congratulations on the opening of AGU A Ramen Bistro at Ward Centre. How's that going?**

The format is doing well. Executive chef Hisashi “Teddy” Uehara joined our team at REI Food Service LLC as a manager a few years ago and now he’s senior vice president and the brainchild of the AGU format. He does crazy twists with the concept, for example: Parmesan cheese, garlic butter and accents with bistro tapas. AGU serves high-end gourmet ramen. We don’t cut any corners when it comes to making ramen, and we don’t cut any corners when it comes to pricing either, but it’s authentic. And that’s why people come. It’s amazing.

## **What is REI Food Service’s relationship with AGU?**

REI Food Service does the payroll, business accounting and legal operations for AGU. (REI Food Service is a partner in Bizunkus LLC, parent company of AGU.) We’re looking to grow more business and more restaurants, as well. We have a couple of ideas for at least one more AGU and another Japanese format this year.

## **Let’s backtrack to the beginning. How did REI Food Service evolve?**

Nobutaka “Tony” Sato, whose family was in the restaurant business, went to work for Kyotaru Corp. after graduating from Senshu University in Japan. [In the late 1980s and 1990s, Sato and Jones were responsible for Kyotaru’s operations in Hawaii.] When Kyotaru divested its operations in Hawaii, Tony and I started REI Food Service (dba Gyotaku Japanese Restaurants) in 2001. We purchased the Pearl City restaurant from Kyotaru, acquired the former Suehiro Japanese Restaurant on King Street restaurant in 2002, opened the third Gyotaku restaurant in Niu Valley in April 2008, and the Kailua location in March 2014. We’d like to continue to grow the business, but I’m not sure how many Gyotaku restaurants we can put on this island given Hawaii’s labor market and expenses.

## **With Gyotaku’s initial launch, what did you bring to the table?**

When computers first came out, I was really interested. I’m lazy by nature, if you will, so I looked to computers to do some of the hard, repetitive work. Calculating food costs and how much food to make every day is really a challenge. The restaurant business is hard because the product is perishable, and computers help to manage food production in terms of how much to produce, when and where to produce it. I started working with computers way back when. We now have our own custom software to help calculate production levels for every sublevel of

recipe in the company, every single day. The chef doesn’t have to worry how much he has to make—just calculate and execute. It helps to keep the food fresh, reduces waste and reduces wasted labor costs.

## **What was your creative involvement in the restaurants?**

On the Gyotaku menu, most of the hybrid fusion dishes are mine. The lettuce wraps, Okinawan sweet potato pie, ginger iced tea, “Nattochos” (wonton chips with spicy ahi, fermented natto, avocado and other toppings). I do product and recipe development, but I also do a lot of general management, back-office legal issues and human resources. My boss at Kyotaru in Hawaii was an accountant, so I learned a lot about restaurant accounting from him, and that served us very well.

## **Did you grow up in the food business like Tony Sato?**

No, my mother was a nurse, and my father was a real estate insurance broker. The history of cooking is my grandmother and mother enjoying good family meals and cooking together.

## **You were just a teenager when you first worked in a restaurant. Tell us about that.**

My first paid job was in the summer working at a hamburger place on the boardwalk in New Jersey. Back then in the 1970s, it was very common for high school kids

## **Thomas Jones Snippets**

**TITLE:** President and Co-Owner, REI Food Service LLC (dba Gyotaku Japanese Restaurants); Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, I'MProving LLC – Dale Carnegie Training of Hawaii & Guam.

**FAMILY:** Son, Clifford, and daughter, Tina, who was named after the person who introduced Jones to sushi. In June, Tina graduated from the University of California San Diego.

**FAVORITE FOOD AT GYOTAKU:** Negi Hamachi Uramaki, an inside-out hamachi roll with green onions and shaved bonito.

**MENTOR:** Masao Kawasaki, chef of Takezushi in Washington, D.C. in the 1980s. “After I arrived in Japan, he went there on a business trip and took me to Tsukiji fish market and out to lunch in a seedy area of Ginza. He really helped me.”

**FAVORITE FOOD NETWORK STAR:** Jamie Oliver. “I’m not big on the competition shows although they are interesting. I also like Anthony Bourdain. He came into the Culinary Institute of America when I was graduating. I love watching Anthony on TV. He has a great mind for the culture and asks a lot of big questions.”

**ADVICE TO ASPIRING RESTAURANT OWNERS:** “Make sure you have a true interest in what you’re doing. To be successful, you have to apply yourself, follow your passion, work hard and be excited about what you do. In the restaurant business, practice with other people’s money. Work in a restaurant and treat the business like it’s your own to fully understand the operation. Financially, restaurants are very unforgiving. You’ve got to learn the financial side, in addition to being a good executive. It’s easy to make tasty food, but it’s difficult to make tasty food and make a profit.”





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to have summer jobs revolving around the Jersey shore, especially between Memorial Day and Labor Day. After that summer, I worked for a year in the kitchen of a senior residence, doing a variety of kitchen duties, cleaning up and light food prep.

### **After the burger stint in high school, how did you end up at the Culinary Institute of America?**

When I was 16, my father showed me the Culinary Institute's brochure and suggested I go. I looked at the chefs, who were stodgy-looking European guys with handlebar moustaches and big tall hats, and I didn't see myself looking like that. But when I met this other younger chef in my senior year of high school—he was from the Culinary Institute—I said, "I could do this." I enrolled at the Institute, which had moved from New Haven, Connecticut, to Hyde Park, New York. I started the summer semester right after high school graduation, did four semesters straight and graduated in 1974, the same month I turned 19.

### **What was your career path after graduating from the Institute?**

I worked at seafood restaurants in Washington, D.C. and (later) a hotel, where I received a lot of European experience. I worked at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill when it first opened, did well and was promoted to chef. I stayed at the Hyatt for four years and moved to a country club (Tantallon Country Club) in the Washington, D.C. area as executive chef. I was 25 years old. .

### **It was in Washington, D.C., more than 30 years ago, when you first tasted sushi. Tell us about that experience.**

While I was working at the country club, a friend of mine married a gal who was half-Japanese. I made them a wedding cake as their present. A few weeks later, the bride's mother invited me over for dinner. The mother made a variety of Japanese foods, which I really enjoyed. She even picked and cooked her own warabi (fern sprouts). I was impressed. She asked me if I had ever eaten sushi. I didn't know what she was talking about. So she took me to a sushi bar in Washington, D.C., and I fell in love with sushi at the first bite.

### **What was your first impression of sushi?**

What I remembered the most was the smell of rice vinegar. It was in one of those authentically Japanese restaurants, where the women wore kimonos and the staff said, "Hai! Irashaimasen!" When they brought us the food, I was just blown away by how different each fish looked and tasted raw. It occurred to me at that point that cooked fish looked the same—they turn kind of gray. But raw fish was so beautiful; the colors, the flavors and the textures were so different.

### **And that began your fascination with Japanese food?**

I started eating everything. I ate sushi every week. When I get involved in something, I overdo it. I started taking my chef friends with me to try sushi. The sushi

boom was just starting, and pretty quickly, I found the top sushi bars in D.C., where you would find Japanese diplomats dining.

### **How did your raw-fish obsession eventually take you to Japan?**

A year and half later, I decided I wanted to go to Japan and train as a sushi chef. A lot of my friends had gone to Europe—Austrian, French or German apprenticeship programs. I wanted to go to Tokyo and train as a sushi chef and work at the counter.

### **What were your friends' reactions?**

My favorite sushi chef Masao Kawasaki-san said, "That's impossible." I said, "Why?" He said, "You don't speak Japanese. They don't speak English in the kitchen in Japan." So I went to the University of Maryland bookstore, bought Japanese cassette tapes and listened to my Walkman to work on my Japanese. He was still skeptical. Years later, I worked at (sushi chain) Kyotaru Corp. in Hawaii.

### **Let's backtrack. You moved to Japan in 1984 and lived there until 1986. When did Kyotaru Corp. come into the picture?**

I had a couple part-time jobs when I first moved to Japan, but after about three months, I was lucky that Kyotaru hired me. It was the largest sushi company in Japan, with 800 sushi bars, take-out and full-service restaurants. They wanted me to manage restaurants in America, and I wanted to learn sushi, so it was a perfect combination. My first assignment with Kyotaru was at a factory in Saitama, a suburb north of Tokyo. They started me cutting frozen fish. I cut thousands of pounds of frozen salmon, which they used to make musubi. I would cut and cut and cut.

### **Let's talk about Hawaii's culinary scene. What are some trends you're seeing?**

One of the things you'll see is increasing food costs. The prices and the costs to make food will increase. Mandatory employee benefits and the rising cost of labor will drive overall costs higher. With the expansion of so many restaurants, employment opportunities are boundless. That means we will always struggle to find good employees. I'm hopeful that Hawaii's sustainability improves, and we'll start to have more local food, more fresh vegetables, great seafood and aquaculture. We have great agriculture potential here, but the problem is, land is expensive.

### **What's your view of social media's effect on restaurants? Yelp, in particular.**

I think it's OK for people to critique restaurants or business. That's fine, but I don't think they should be able to do it anonymously. Every restaurant should be sharpening its saw on that, making sure they watch what's going on. Word of mouth is the currency of the restaurant business. We really need to be able to deliver.



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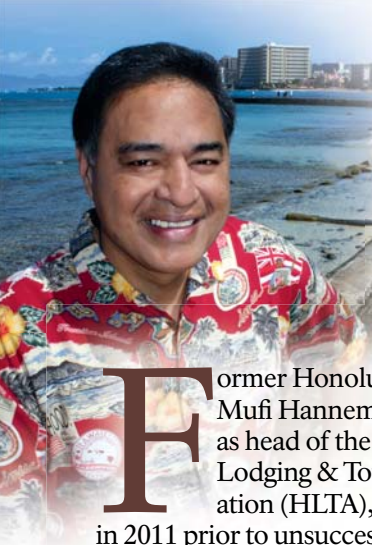
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# Hannemann Returns to HLTA

**F**ormer Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann returns as head of the Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association (HLTA), a job he held in 2011 prior to unsuccessful campaigns for Congress and governor.

"I'm overjoyed to again be leading HLTA and will work collaboratively with our tourism, government and community leaders to resolve the challenges facing Hawaii's visitor industry," says Hannemann.

"I have been an unequivocal champion of tourism throughout my career in the private and public sectors. HLTA is vital in supporting the interests of lodging, tourism's largest economic sector and employer. Our efforts and commitment will

be focused on effecting the kind of meaningful change that will contribute to the betterment of Hawaii's tourism industry and, consequently, to the state's economy as a whole."

Hannemann replaces George Szigeti as president and CEO of the HLTA, effective July 20. Szigeti left to become president and CEO of the Hawaii Tourism Association. During his previous role at the nonprofit organization, Hannemann led the effort to change its name from the Hawaii Hotel & Lodging Association to the HLTA.

The selection of Hannemann was announced by Kelly Hoen, chairwoman of the HLTA's board of directors, in a June 28 email to board members.

"We had excellent candidates come forward wanting to lead HLTA, but

the search committee felt that Mufi was the best choice considering his superb record of leadership, experience and drive in supporting tourism's best interests," Hoen says. "Mufi did a stellar job in leading HLTA previously and we are thrilled to welcome him back to advance initiatives that build on our success for Hawaii's lodging industry and its thousands of employees statewide."

Hannemann served as mayor in 2005 and again in 2009 before leaving office to run for governor, where he lost to Neil Abercrombie in 2010. He then joined the HLTA and sought to become U.S. Representative for the 2nd District of Hawaii in 2013, losing to Tulsi Gabbard. In 2014 he ran for governor in a race won by David Ige.



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# HLTA's new executive director creates energy and momentum

**Member engagement keeps the industry alive and healthy, says Wataru-Nakaoka**

BY PRISCILLA PÉREZ BILLIG

**K**aren Wataru-Nakaoka loves her job. Ask the executive director of the Hawaii Tourism and Lodging Association why and she will wax effusively about its members and all they do to keep the industry robust.

"It is such a fantastic group of people that really care about the industry and give their time, talent and resources to make everything we do valuable for everyone else," Wataru-Nakaoka says. "One of the things I love about the association is that it is so far-reaching: legislative advocacy, education and community service."

Born in Chicago and moving to Hawaii at age 12 with her family, 50-year-old Wataru-Nakaoka was introduced to HLTA while at Kaiser High School. Her mother was executive secretary to the chairperson of the then-called Hawaii Hotel Association and brought in Wataru-Nakaoka to help with the Visitor Industry Charity Walk.

While attending the University of Hawaii-West Oahu, studying public administration, Wataru-Nakaoka went to work for HHA. But it was at Aloha Airlines as a flight attendant and later as vice president of the Association of Flight Attendants that she honed her leadership skills.

She met Heather Healy, director of the Washington, D.C.-based Association of Flight Attendants' Employee Assistance Program. Aloha Airlines tasked Wataru-Nakaoka with creating the same program that deals with substance abuse, workplace stress

and conflict, life balance and grief counseling.

"Heather Healy really believes in empowering others and helping people identify their strengths by motivating and inspiring," Wataru-Nakaoka says. "I think she really embodies so many of the qualities that I believe a good leader should have."

The experience inspired Wataru-Nakaoka to become certified as an employee assistance professional and to obtain state, national and international certification in substance abuse counseling. She worked with adolescents at Hina Mauka, an addiction prevention, treatment and recovery center, as a substance abuse counselor for three years and is still on call there.

Wataru-Nakaoka returned to HLTA as director of member relations and operations in 2011 and has served as its executive director since January. She says she is proud to have helped launch Women in Lodging & Tourism-Hawaii Chapter, a program that promotes the professional development of women in the hospitality industry.

"We've really brought out a lot of new energy within the organization," Wataru-Nakaoka says. "There's a lot of member engagement. A lot of what we've done in the last year is new and so we're working to build that momentum and to keep that going. Our goal at HLTA is to help keep the industry healthy and advocate for the best interest of businesses and be



Karen Wataru-Nakaoka

involved in community programs and education."

She cites May's Visitor Industry Charity Walk that, with the Hawaii for Hawaii concert at the Hilton Hawaiian Village, raised \$2.2 million statewide. HLTA's Scholarship Golf Tournament, set for Aug. 6 at the Hawaii Prince, helps raise about \$40,000 in college scholarships each year. Additionally, HLTA gives more than \$50,000 annually to public high school seniors in the form of citizenship awards.

Community service projects include the Pani ka Puka campaign to restore the Heeia fishpond's wall to make it viable for aquaculture after a 50-year hiatus.

"I always surround myself with people who live with integrity both in their personal and professional lives, who think positively and who try to motivate and inspire others," Wataru-Nakaoka says. "I think if you surround yourself with those kinds of people then everyone is helping people all the time. Living in that positive frame of mind really helps me to succeed."



# Is Hawaii Going to the Dogs?

**A proposed bill would give eateries discretion to admit or ban canines**

BY BRETT ALEXANDER-ESTES



Coming soon: Kibble of the Day? Perhaps restaurant menus in Hawaii will offer such items if House Bill 389 becomes law. Introduced during the legislative session earlier this year, HB 389 would allow dogs to enter Island eateries at the discretion of restaurant owners. Though the session ended before it was heard, the bill is still alive and may be reintroduced during the next session.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), dogs formally trained and certified as service animals are allowed in any of the nation's restaurants. In Hawaii, however, others are banned by the state's administrative rules.

HB 389, supported by the Hawaiian Humane Society, would allow all dogs—not only service dogs—to enter Hawaii eateries and remain with owners throughout their meals.

Barking, biting and other doggie misbehavior would be prohibited.

Restaurants admitting dogs would be required to post a sign stating that dogs are welcome, and to





**Mary Steiner of the Hawaiian Humane Society**

have enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices in place.

“We’re fortunate to have a lanai area where our customers can bring four-legged family members,” says Marcy Uyehara, owner-manager of Kakaako Kitchen. Other customers have not complained about the Ward Centre restaurant’s policy, she says.

But Uyehara understands both sides of the issue, noting that dogs in enclosed restaurant sections could aggravate patrons with allergies and annoy others who are not “animal fans.”

HB 389 stipulates that owners must completely restrain and limit the movement of a dog while in a restaurant, and abide by any other conditions imposed by the owner or manager of the restaurant. But the bill has drawn opposition from at least one agency at the state’s Department of Health.

HB 389 “gives the authority to the owner or manager of a restaurant to allow pet dogs into a restaurant and describes conditions for the owner to control the dogs but does not address some important public health concerns,” says Peter Oshiro, manager of the Environmental Health Program and Sanitation Department.

Topping his list is the “cleaning and disinfection protocol by the restaurant due to animal waste products, and placing the responsibility for ensuring that animal waste does not get tracked back into the food preparation area of the restaurant.”

If this happens, says Oshiro, the risk of introducing pathogens into a restaurant’s food supplies or deposited on equipment is greatly increased.

“Aerosolizing of bacteria or viruses may readily occur in the food preparation areas during normal food service operations,” he says. “If the Council of Food Protection approves conditions in which dogs

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can safely be allowed in dining areas, the Department of Health would consider amending the food rules, or implement policies to make the practice acceptable.”



Kakaako Kitchen at Ward Centre  
COURTESY CHERYL TSUTSUMI/KAKA'AKO KITCHEN

But HB 389 already recognizes the health issues involved, notes the Hawaiian Humane Society's policy advocate, Mary Steiner, affording adequate protection to human restaurant patrons. "Hawaii's pet owners ... take their pets to the beach, travel together and would like to bring them to restaurants," she says.

## Etiquette tips for dining with dogs

If House Bill 389 (or something like it) ever becomes law in Hawaii, pet owners will need to follow some polite rules. Here are a few dog-friendly tips:

- Make sure your pooch is well-behaved around other people, and especially children.
- Leash your four-legged friend and keep him or her from socializing with other diners or employees, unless welcomed.
- Try to keep your dog close to your table or chair so he or she is not in the waiter's path. Dogs are not allowed on the chairs or tables.
- Bring your own doggie bowl or ask the waiter for a paper or plastic bowl or cup for water if necessary. Pets are not permitted to eat or drink out of restaurant glasses or dishes, unless they are disposable.
- Remember to tie your dog to your chair and not a table. A dog tied to a table can result in spilled drinks or food if he or she is strong enough to make the table move.
- Always call ahead or ask first to make sure an establishment allows dogs at their outdoor tables.

SOURCE: dogfriendly.com



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Kelly Zeek is a puzzle solver who loves his job.

"In plumbing, there is always a surprise," says the owner of Wahiawa-based Clean Sewer Lines Hawaii, Inc. "You have to be able to adapt to potentially serious problems at any given moment—bursting pipes, cracked water heaters, failing pumps."

But the best moments come when a job is completed, he adds, when "the customer shakes your hand and thanks you for your quality service."

With highly trained technicians and a fleet of vehicles stocked with parts and equipment to handle almost any problem, Zeek's 27-year-old family business provides 24-hour emergency service

statewide for both commercial and residential customers.

The corporate name, Clean Sewer Lines Hawaii, Inc., belies the fact Zeek's firm offers all types of plumbing services including renovations and installations, and specializes in bathroom facelifts. "We are a full service company," he says. "If we need to open a wall, remove cabinetry, or go through a floor to repair plumbing, we'll fix the problem and ensure quality restoration."

Most emergencies arise from clogged drains, failed pipes and leaking valves, says Zeek, but the firm's specialties also include backflow prevention, water heater replacement, clean outs, valve replacements, and repiping for water, sewer and gas lines.

His company's success, Zeek says, stems largely from the dedication of employees and the company-wide determination to provide the highest level of customer satisfaction. Using superior grade materials and relying on new technologies, the company has worked with many of Hawaii's leading general contractors.

"Working in rural areas of neighbor islands can be a challenge," Zeek notes. "There are limited supplies, and sometimes parts are not available. Before a job is finished on Molokai, it can be necessary to wait for an inspector to arrive from Maui."

Located at 207 N. Cane St., Clean Sewer Lines Hawaii, Inc. can be reached by calling 808-621-4851.



# Trending New at the HLHF Expo

Dozens of exhibitors will show their products at the two-day event for the first time

BY JACKIE M. YOUNG

**WHAT:** 21st annual Hawaii Lodging, Hospitality & Foodservice Expo

**WHEN:** July 8-9

**WHERE:** Neal S. Blaisdell Center

**ADMISSION:** Free to industry members

**F**orty-two new exhibitors will be showing their wares at the 21st annual Hawaii Lodging, Hospitality & Foodservice Expo in July at the Blaisdell Center, so attendees will have a wide array of state-of-the-art products and devices to consider for their businesses.

“We’re anticipating approximately 350 exhibiting companies, occupying 520 booths, with approximately 5,000 Hawaii business professionals from the hotel and restaurant industries attending during the two days of the Expo,” says Ken Kanter, exposition director.

“Trade shows and expositions still serve as the fastest and most effective way for businesses to get their new products quickly into the marketplace,” he adds. “For the visitors, it serves as a convenient one-stop shopping opportunity to gain hands-on knowledge of the latest products, meet the people behind the products and taste new food items before making substantive purchases.

“Those are still things you can’t do on the Internet.”

Here’s a look at four exhibitors you’ll see showing new products at the Expo.

## Guest-friendly Software

Among the new exhibitors is InnSpire (innspire.com), a Swedish guest services software/hardware company. Founded in 2012 by Mathias Adolfsson and Martin Chevalley, it won a 2013 HTNG (Hotel Technology Next Generation) award for Most Innovative Hospitality Technology.

“In this digital age, hotels are looking for new and better ways to engage their guests using the latest technol-



**InnSpire's customizable menus allow easy access to room service, along with photos and customized messaging. It also suggests pairings, upsells and allows for customer requests.**

PHOTO COURTESY INNPIRE



**Dominic Locascio**

ogy to truly personalize their guests' stay," says Dominic Locascio, InnSpire vice president for the Americas, based in Dallas. "InnSpire allows the guest to put the hotel in the palm of their hands by offering access to all hotel services, local information and events over their in-room TV, smartphone, tablet or laptop.

"This drives new revenue to the hotel and improves the guest experience all at the same time."

InnSpire is customizable to each location, boasts 80-plus features in its system and consists of a main server for the management office and connection boxes, charging stations and chargeable remotes for each room.

Locascio says with InnSpire, hotels will be able to sell

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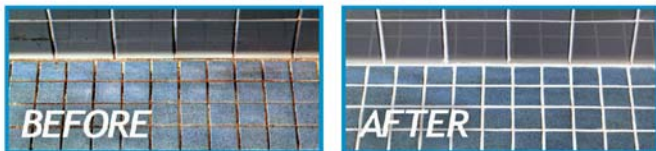
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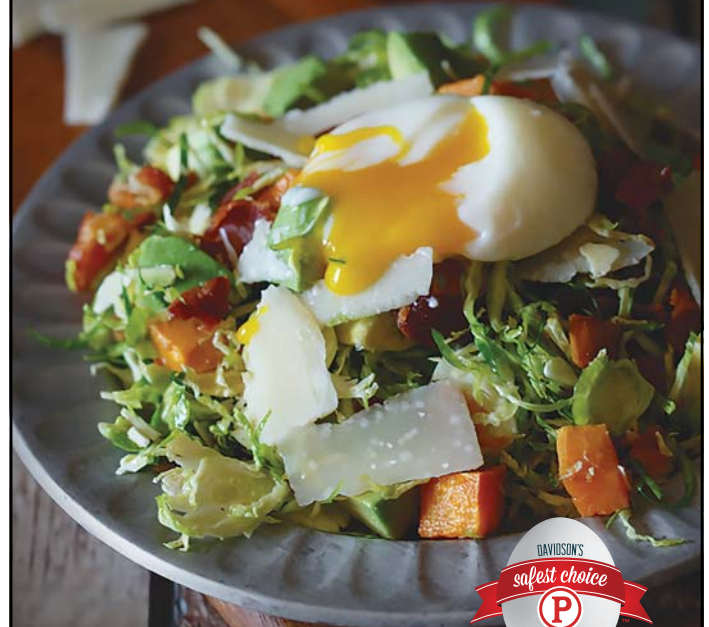
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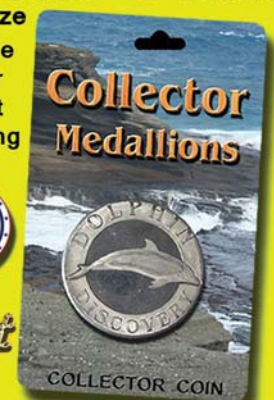
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"Our earliest markets were the luxury hotels in the Middle East with a strong base of customers in Dubai," says Locascio. "We have just entered the U.S. market and have made Hawaii one of our focuses due to its large concentration of luxury and international hotels."

## Gourmet Products

ANZCO Foods ([anzcofoods.com](http://anzcofoods.com)), based in New Zealand with offices in Northbrook, Ill., is another new Expo exhibitor. Its owners are Itoham Foods, Suisan Kaisha and the management of ANZCO. The company's Angel Bay partially cooked, gourmet food service line was established in 1996 due to demand from the Japanese market for all-natural, grass-fed, non-GMO and hormone-free beef and lamb products. Angel Bay is exported to 20 countries.



Franklin de la Torre

Franklin de la Torre, sales executive, points out that the company's meat products are "halal," or approved under Islamic law, and that being partially cooked not only offers food safety benefits, but also an added convenience for busy chefs who can cook the meats from frozen to prepared within minutes.

"The home-style appearance appeals to those who don't like the entirely uniform look of something that has been mass-produced by a factory," de la Torre says. "Angel Bay patties look like they've been lovingly made in your own kitchen—so much so that many chefs are claiming Angel Bay burgers as their own—yet their quality is consistent."

According to de la Torre, Angel Bay offers lamb, beef and Angus beef patties—in the form of burgers, meat balls, bites, filled rissoles and chevaps (minced meat).

## Custom Shades

Though not new to the Expo, Tropical J's ([tropicaljs.com](http://tropicaljs.com)), a local custom manufacturer of awnings, umbrellas and other shade products, will be showing two new creations and an extremely popular standby.

Owners Gary Barnes, a retired Navy

intelligence officer, and his wife, Jeri, started Tropical J's (named after their three sons, Justin, Jonathan and Jordan) from their home at the time in Mililani in 1989. They originally worked to provide colorful, hand-held umbrellas, but soon branched out to larger, market umbrellas, awnings and other shade products such as cabanas.

"All our products, whether residential or commercial, are made of commercial-grade materials for durability," says Gary Barnes. "Most of them see at least a 10- to 15-year lifespan."

"They're manufactured, maintained and designed for Hawaii, especially to protect against Hawaii's wind, sun, salt and chlorine."

The beach chair that provides the frame for Tropical J's new Koko Chaise Cabana is imported from France, and



Angel Bay meat products are manufactured by ANZCO Foods in New Zealand, and consist of partially cooked hamburgers, meat balls, bites, filled rissoles and chevaps (minced meat). All the meats are from free-range beef and lamb that are hormone-free and GMO-free.

PHOTO COURTESY ANZCO FOODS

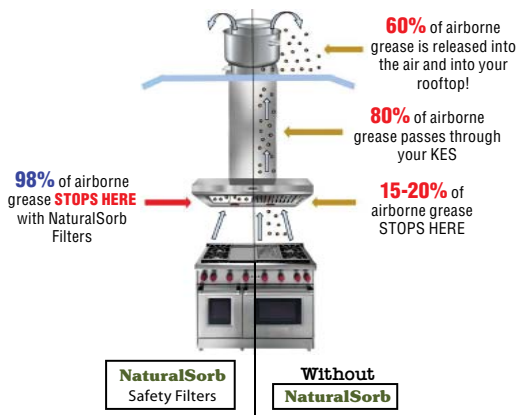


Tropical J's' Alii Umbrellas carry a 10-year warranty on their commercial-grade Sunbrella brand fabric, with a 96 percent UV shade factor. They're made in Hawaii for Hawaii's weather conditions, with a solid American oak frame and a two-inch diameter, solid tri-laminate pole for strength.

PHOTO BY DWIGHT OKUMOTO



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References: [www.pacifickms.com](http://www.pacifickms.com); [www.pureforce.com](http://www.pureforce.com); [www.kiwi-eagle.com](http://www.kiwi-eagle.com); [www.live-safe.org](http://www.live-safe.org)

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is made of a lightweight, proprietary blend of metal and resin to resist corrosion. The canopy frame is made of awning-grade fabric with a 10-year warranty, and attached via custom aluminum brackets. "We don't use any plastic in our products," Jeri says.

Similarly, the new Maluhia Four-Posted Cabana is constructed with a combination welded and sleeved heavy gauge steel frame for strength, with a marine-grade topcoat and a special catenary tensioning system for the awning-grade tent instead of awkward buckles and straps.

And the commercial-grade Alii Umbrella comes with a two-inch-diameter tri-laminate pole for strength, and both awning- and marine-grade fabric. Its fasteners are all stainless steel, and the frame finish is the same as is used on the U.S. space shuttle.

"I think the reason we've been able to stay in business this long," says Jeri, "is because we've listened to our customers and we've tried to service their needs."



**Owners Gary and Jeri Barnes and sons Justin (left) and Jordan (right) with Tropical J's mascot Jackson.**

PHOTO BY DWIGHT OKUMOTO.



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## Cleaning Line

A newcomer to the Expo from the Garden Isle, ChemCo Inc. (chem-cokauai.com), believes everyone in the hospitality industry needs a good cleaning product. The mostly family-run company is the exclusive statewide distributor for its new "Bring It On!" line of cleaners and protectants developed by Vickie Lewis of Livus Marketing in California.

Eric Hashimura, owner and president, started ChemCo Inc. in 1990 to address the specific cleaning needs of Hawaii, especially against all the corrosive minerals, red dirt, salts and chlorine found on Kauai.



**Eric Hashimura**





"I've always been interested in finding out what will make a better cleaning product," says the Eleele-born Hashimura, "so I've been working with chemists and others to create my own cleaners, and to find those made by others that work well in Hawaii's special environment."

"When I discovered Vickie's products about five years ago, I was hooked! Like its motto says, 'It really works!'"



According to Hashimura, Bring It On! Cleaner is the only one on the market formulated with oxygen bleach, and can remove water stains, mineral deposits, mildew, and even rust. It has more than 30 applications, and is distributed in Australia and South America.

"I've been in this business for 35 years," says Hashimura, "and I've never seen a product that works so well."

Both Hashimura and Lewis will be available both days to advise customers and to distribute free samples of the Bring It On! Cleaner, Glass-Mirror & Hard Surface Cleaner & Polish and Pro-Tect Shield.

The Hawaii Lodging, Hospitality & Foodservice Expo, says Kanter, is not to be missed.

"Not only does it serve Hawaii's largest economic engine (hospitality)," he says, "but there are constantly new products and services being introduced into the market."

**Bring It On! Cleaner has more than 30 cleaning/removal applications, among them: hard water stains, mineral deposits, rust, volcanic VOG and crusty build-up. Bring It On! Glass-Mirror & Hard Surface Cleaner & Polish can be used on objects from eyeglasses to mirrors. Bring It On! Pro-Tect Shield is a molecular formula that fills pores to form a durable, high-gloss shield so that minerals don't build up.**

PHOTO BY KRIS WHITE

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# Lighten Your Bills with Lighting Retrofits

**Switching to LEDs eases the strain on a business' operating budget while saving energy**

BY DAVID PUTNAM

**C**onverting to energy-efficient lighting is a common first step the myriad 24/7 businesses that make up Hawaii's hospitality industry take as they look to lighten their operating budgets.

"With the switch to LED lighting, both Hapuna Beach Prince Hotel and Mauna Kea Beach Hotel have been able to keep energy costs down, while still maintaining the same exceptional guest experience," says Clyde Takayama, director of engineering at Mauna Kea Resort.

The lighting installation is estimated to be saving the Mauna Kea 585,564 kWh of energy each year. "We have saved an estimated \$170,000 since making this switch," Takayama adds, "and plan to continue energy and environmentally efficient practices at both hotels."

Hotels spend more than \$7.5 billion on energy each year, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Faced with that staggering expense, hotels are seeking energy-saving and cost-cutting measures. Among the chief methods is retrofitting with LEDs or CFLs everywhere they need lights—lobbies, hallways, meeting rooms, guest rooms, parking garages and lots and signage.

The conversion makes sense: A conventional light bulb converts about 20 percent of its electricity to actual light while losing 80 percent as heat. In contrast, an LED bulb

converts roughly 80 percent of the electricity it uses to light.

Global management consulting firm McKinsey & Company has predicted that the use of LEDs in the hospitality sector would surge from 9 percent in 2012 to 45 percent by 2016 and to 80 percent by 2020.

"Every hotel renovation project we have done in the past several years have all gone to some type of retrofit LED fixtures or lamps," says Ron Yee of Wasa Electrical Services, Inc. "Many of the existing hotels have relamped with their own maintenance crew utilizing LED replacement lamps."

Wasa has performed various electrical work over the years for such clients as Starwood, Marriott, Ritz Carlton and other hotels and resorts across the Islands.

"I'm not sure what the initial cost is, but surely with lamp-life in the 40,000 to 50,000 hours range, just the labor saved from future relamping alone—not counting reduced energy consumption—makes the LED option an easy choice to make," Yee says.

An LED retrofit, however, is not the only cost- and energy-saving measure. Marriott International, with more than 4,000 locations, in one year replaced 450,000 older bulbs with CFL lighting, along with implementing low-flow plumbing fixtures into guest rooms. The Alliance to Save Energy claims Marriott International's actions saved more than

\$6 million in energy costs and cut greenhouse gases by 70,000 tons.

Along with the lighting retrofits, many hotels are asking guests to turn off the lights when they leave their room. And, according to a report by the Alliance to Save Energy, hotels that display signs in rooms asking guests to reuse their towels and sheets can save up to 5 percent on their monthly utility bill.

In February, Hawaii Energy transitioned its Exterior LED Lighting Retrofit incentive from the "prescriptive" (standard) program to the Customized Lighting program. Under this program, incentives for exterior LED lighting projects for business ratepayers include:

- \$0.10 per kilowatt hour (kWh), plus \$125 per kilowatt (kW) during peak demand times from 5-9 p.m., for projects with a useful life of five years or less.
- \$0.15 per kWh, plus \$125 per kW during peak demand times from 5-9 p.m., for projects with a useful life of more than five years.

With lighting draining 20 percent to 50 percent of a business' electric bill, the payback period for retrofits can be as little as three years.

"We are constantly striving to provide as much value as possible for businesses," says Larry Newman, director of business operations for Hawaii Energy. "The technologies for LEDs just keep getting better and we want to encourage people to install the most energy-efficient products available on the market."



Clyde Takayama



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## Hilton Garden Inn Slated for Kauai

Hilton Worldwide will open Hawaii's first Hilton Garden Inn next to Kauai's Wailua River in 2016. Hilton will operate the 216-room beachfront property, owned by a partnership led by DiNapoli Capital Partners and managed by Aston Hotels & Resorts. The new Hilton Garden Inn Kauai/Wailua Bay will be Kauai's only Hilton branded hotel.

"Hilton Garden Inn is the ideal mid-market brand for developers and consumers alike, and we look forward to bringing the brand to life in Kauai, a key market with potential for development," says Bill Fortier, senior vice president for development, Hilton Worldwide – Americas.

The ownership partners will renovate the existing hospitality property located on Kuhio Highway, including complete room, lobby, meeting space and exterior renovations. The new Hilton Garden Inn Kauai/Wailua Bay will feature 5,000 square feet of flexible meeting space and the brand's signature amenities, including custom beds, ergonomic desk chairs, LCD flat-screen TVs, in-room "hospitality centers" and complimentary Internet access.

## Young Joins Starwood Waikiki

Dara Young has been named public relations manager at Starwood Hotels & Resorts in Waikiki.

Young will assist Director of Public Relations Scott



**Dara Young**

Kawasaki with media and public relations efforts for Starwood's four Waikiki properties: Sheraton Waikiki; The Royal Hawaiian, a Luxury Collection Resort; Moana Surfrider, A Westin Resort & Spa and the Sheraton Princess Kaiulani.

Previously, Young served as communications specialist for Hawaii's Department of Education, as public relations manager for the Hilton Hawaiian Village Beach Resort & Spa and worked at public relations firms Stryker Weiner & Yokota, Inc. and Communications Pacific.

## HRA Plans Hall of Fame Inductions

The Hawaii Restaurant Association (HRA) will hold its ninth annual Hall of Fame Induction and "Chefs of Aloha" Dine-Around on Sept. 21 at the Pomaikai Ballrooms at Dole Cannery-Iwilei.

The event will begin with registration at 5:30 p.m. followed by the Dine-Around at 6 and the Hall of Fame inductions at 7:30.

For more information, contact Gregg Fraser, HRA executive director, at [gregg.fraser@hawaiirestaurant.org](mailto:gregg.fraser@hawaiirestaurant.org) or 808-944-9105.

## Hilton Hires New Director of Banquets

Jason Sliman is the new director of banquets at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach Resort. The 20-year veteran of the



**Jason Sliman**

hotel and food & beverage industry was formerly the director of banquets at the Hilton Anatole Hotel in Dallas.

After starting his culinary career at the Hilton Atlanta Airport as the restaurant and room service

manager, Sliman moved to the Hilton Atlanta Downtown where he held positions as executive steward and beverage director. He was director of banquets at the Hilton Orlando Resort and later the Hilton San Diego Bayfront hotel.

Sliman earned his bachelor's degree in hospitality management and was the valedictorian at Florida International University in Miami. He also earned an associate's degree in culinary arts at the Community College of Allegheny County in Pittsburgh.

## Hikida Wins Regional Leadership Award

Al Hikida, assistant human resources director at the Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort and Spa, has been selected as the winner of the 2015 Hyatt Human Resources Leader-



**Al Hikida**

ship Award for the Americas. The annual award is given to a Hyatt manager who exemplifies the corporation's human resource standards in the Americas region.

"Al Hikida is one of those truly special colleagues that instinctively connects our organizational goals to personal

values and leads by example. His recognition as a leader among the Hyatt Americas is a reflection of his drive to succeed and make our property a preferred employer within the community," says David Nadelman, area vice president and general manager.

Hikida has worked at the Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort and Spa for 36 years.

## Mauna Kea Resort Welcomes Anderson

The Big Island's Mauna Kea Resort has appointed **Craig Anderson** as vice president of operations. He oversees day-to-day operations of



**Craig Anderson**

Mauna Kea Beach Hotel and Hapuna Beach Prince Hotel, as well as its golf courses. He also serves as liaison between the hotels and Mauna Kea Resort homeowners.

"An outstanding leader in Hawaii's visitor industry and respected member of the community, Craig is the ideal person to take the helm of Mauna Kea Resort," says Donn Takahashi, president of Prince Resorts Hawaii. "As we celebrate Mauna Kea Beach Hotel's 50th anniversary, Craig's valuable experience will be critical in leading our resort forward."

With 31 years in the hospitality industry, Anderson has spent the last 16 years leading resort teams on Kauai, Maui and Oahu. Anderson has served as general manager at Moana Surfrider, a Westin Resort & Spa for more than three years and as general manager of The Westin Maui Resort & Spa and The Westin Princeville on Kauai. Prior to moving to Hawaii in 1999, Anderson was

the director of operations for The Westin La Paloma Resort in Tucson, Arizona.

Anderson attended the Culinary Institute of America where he graduated with honors and began his career at Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts. He is a board member of the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau, and serves as a member on the government affairs committee for the Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association.

## Pahk Back at Mauna Kea Beach Hotel



**Peter Pahk**

Mauna Kea Beach Hotel welcomes back former Executive Chef **Peter Pahk** to lead the property's culinary team. He held the position previously from 2012 to 2014 and returns to the hotel from Woosong University in Daejeon, South Korea where he was a culinary professor.

"We are very excited to welcome Chef Peter back home to Mauna Kea Beach Hotel to continue strengthening the hotel's culinary team with his broadened global perspective," said Craig Anderson, vice president of operations. "The homecoming is particularly special as we continue to celebrate the hotel's 50th anniversary this year."

Pahk began his career in Hawaii after training in French cuisine at Michel's and JB's. He worked at local restaurants including Nick's Fishmarket and Rex and Eric's, where he added gourmet seafood and refined continental cuisine to the menu.

Born on Oahu, Pahk attended Syracuse University and the Culinary Institute of America in New York. He is a member of the American Culinary Federation, James Beard Foundation and the Chef's Collaborative. He serves as a board member of the Resort Food Executive Committee and spokes-

person for Common Vision, an organization devoted to preserving sustainable oceans.

## MacIlwraith New GM at Travaasa Hana

**David MacIlwraith** has been named general manager at Travaasa Hana by Travaasa Experiential Resorts. Travaasa Hana, located at the end of the famous Road to Hana, was opened in 1946.

MacIlwraith was most recently general manager at the Volcano House in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park near Hilo, where he oversaw lodging, dining, retail operations, campgrounds and cabins. Previously he was general manager at Death Valley National Park.



**David MacIlwraith**

## ProspectHill Buys Queen Kapiolani Hotel

ProspectHill Group, through its affiliate DiamondHead Land, has acquired the Queen Kapiolani Hotel in Waikiki. The 312-room Queen Kapiolani has sweeping views of Diamond Head State Monument and the ocean, is one block off Waikiki Beach and adjacent to Kapiolani Park. DiamondHead Land has retained Kokua Hospitality to operate the hotel and plans to invest substantial capital into a repositioning program for the asset.

## Aguinaldo Grows Mahalo Burger

Honolulu native **Jesse Aguinaldo** has opened a second location for Mahalo Burger, home of the original loco moco burger, in Kailua. Premiering in 2011 at Waikiki's Royal Hawaiian Center food court,

Mahalo Burger uses 100 percent free-range premium home-grown Big Island beef and locally sourced ingredients.

Aguinaldo says he believes a successful business is based on providing a quality product, price value and giving exceptional customer service. "You must work smart, value relationships, exceed expectations and provide the utmost integrity," he says.

The McKinley High School grad began his culinary career at Kenny's Restaurant in Kalihi. He earned a degree in business management at the University of Nevada Las Vegas while working for The Boyd Group as sous chef at the California Hotel & Casino.



**Jesse Aguinaldo**

## Queen Kapiolani Hotel



In 1992 Aguinaldo became food and beverage director and was tapped to oversee 10 restaurants and 12 bars at Sam's Town Hotel & Gambling Hall, which began a \$150 million renovation and became the largest food and beverage operation in The Boyd Group. The following year his team





### Mahaloha Loco Moco Burger

generated more than \$35 million in revenue for his department.

Aguinaldo opened restaurants in six major cities across the U.S., including the Borgata Resort and Spa, a \$1.5 billion project in Atlantic City. He plans to expand Mahalo Loco Burger nationally and internationally, starting with Japan.

### Four Seasons Lanai Appoints Simonsen

Four Seasons Resorts Lanai has appointed **Ludvig Simonsen** as director of human



**Ludvig Simonsen**

resources for Manele Bay and The Lodge at Koele. He previously served as regional director, human resources, Pacific area at the Mandara Spa, and was in charge of human resources for 11 spas in key resort markets across Hawaii and Guam.

Simonsen brings over 20 years of experience in the hospitality industry including senior positions with Hilton Grand Vacations on Oahu and Shutters on the Beach. He is a member of the Hawaii and national Society for Human Resources Management and sits on their Hawaii Board of Directors. He also is president emeritus of the Los Angeles Hotel Human Resources Association.

### Visitor Industry Raises \$2.2M for Charities

The 37th annual Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association's Visitor Industry Charity Walk, together with the Hawaii for Hawaii concert, raised a record-breaking \$2.2 million statewide this year.

A total of 11,277 walkers on Kauai, Oahu, Molokai, Lanai, Maui and Hawaii participated in this year's Charity Walk that donates funds to hundreds of local charities. For the fifth consecutive year, Maui raised the largest amount of funds with \$800,000, a record for the Island.

"We are so thankful for the generous kokua of the participants, volunteers and organizations that helped rally for this year's walk," says George Szigeti, formerly the president of the HLTA and now CEO of the Hawaii Tourism Authority. "As one of the largest fundraisers in the state, the tourism com-

munity takes great pride in putting together a fun and successful Charity Walk, so we're pleased that hundreds of charities will get the support that they need to serve people across the state."

The *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* and SummitMedia LLC sponsored the event.

### Starwood Taps Logsdon as Sales & Marketing Director

**Brad Logsdon** is the new complex director of sales and marketing for Sheraton Waikiki and Starwood Hotels & Resorts in Waikiki. The four Starwood properties include the Sheraton Waikiki, The Royal Hawaiian, Moana Surfrider and Sheraton Princess Kaiulani.



**Brad Logsdon**

Logsdon worked at the Moana Surfrider as director of sales and

marketing since August 2014. He brings 28 years of sales and marketing experience with Hilton Worldwide, including the Hilton Hawaiian Village Resort & Spa.

"Brad's expertise in helping us drive business and find opportunities for growth will be valuable as we reinforce our position as one of the leaders in accommodations in Waikiki," says Kelly Sanders, area managing director.

Logsdon has been a Rotarian for 12 years and most recently served as club president in his native Southern California. He has been puppy raiser for Canine Companions for Independence (CCI). Logsdon serves on the board of the Arthritis Foundation-Hawaii and is involved with Kapiolani Community College's Hospitality and Tourism Program.



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