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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **WHAT'S NEW IN HAWAII FOR MEETINGS, CONVENTIONS & INCENTIVES**

Inspire and rejuvenate your next meeting, convention or incentive program with experiences from around the Hawaiian Islands. Discover the best that Hawai'i has to offer your attendees with the latest news, offerings and openings from across the state.

#### **MEET HAWAII HIGHLIGHTS**

##### ***Hawai'i Convention Center Debuts "Sunset Mele on the Rooftop" Event Series***

In July, the Hawai'i Convention Center (HCC) on O'ahu launched "Sunset Mele on the Rooftop," a new monthly event featuring free entertainment, activities and family fun for locals and visitors. Each month's event features a new entertainment lineup with live performances by up-and-coming Hawai'i musicians, *keiki* (kid) activities, food prepared by HCC's in-house culinary team, and a Sunset Mele Market Place with Hawaiian arts, crafts and more. "Sunset Mele on the Rooftop" will continue on Sun., Sept. 6 and Sat., Oct. 31. Admission is free and parking at HCC is \$5 per vehicle. For more info, call (808) 943-3025 or visit the Hawai'i Convention Center on [Facebook](#).

##### ***Meet Hawai'i Shares Aloha with Slipper Donation in Orlando***

While in Orlando, Florida, attending Collaborate Marketplace from June 11 to 13, the Meet Hawai'i team took some time to share the Aloha Spirit with 57 meeting professionals during a special Hawai'i-inspired dinner, themed "A Perfect Pairing Island Style." Meeting planners were treated with the Hawaiian Islands' signature hospitality, including its music, food, drinks and artisans. More importantly, they also experienced the true feeling of aloha by donating slippers to Meet Hawai'i's "Share Aloha" campaign for two local charities. Over 150 pairs of slippers were collected and donated to AMVETS and the Children's Home Society of Florida: Central Florida Division. In turn, the meeting planners each received a pair of slippers from Hawai'i for themselves.

#### **CREATIVE PROGRAMS**

**Gourmet Events Hawai'i** sends groups swinging back into the 1940s with themed parties at historic sites, including the Battleship Missouri Memorial and the Pacific Aviation Museum at Pearl Harbor on O'ahu. Meeting attendees will unwind as they enjoy an evening in post-war 1940s Hawai'i dancing to big band swing tunes and marveling at the era's fashions, culture and décor. Packages include custom-designed retro menus, signature cocktails, professional greeters, wait staff and entertainers dressed for the occasion. [GourmetEventsHawaii.com](http://GourmetEventsHawaii.com)

## ACCOMMODATIONS & MEETING VENUES

The newest hotel on O'ahu's North Shore, the **Courtyard Oahu North Shore by Marriott**, is welcoming residents and visitors to book accommodations. Located in Lā'ie, the three-story hotel, which opened in July, features 144 large standard rooms with local island-style furnishings, a swimming pool with a waterfall, *keiki* (kids) pool and hot tub, as well as a bistro, 24-hour fitness center and meeting facilities. [Courtyard.Marriott.com](http://Courtyard.Marriott.com)

An \$18 million dollar renovation of the beachfront **Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort & Spa** on O'ahu is currently underway. Upon completion of renovations in October 2015, guests will notice a dynamic redesign of the resort's porte cochere, main lobby and front desk area. In addition, the grand Kona Moku Ballroom's new design concept will include new wall covering, lighting, carpeting, doors, wood paneling, painting and new signage. A great venue for meetings, conferences and special events, the ballroom will offer 6,993 square feet of event space and seating for up to 800 guests theater-style, and 600 guests banquet-style.

**Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort & Spa** now offers real-time connectivity for meeting planners with its **Meeting Services App**. The app is available in 20 languages and offers a wide range of functions, including a chat facility to connect MCI organizers with Marriott's event team throughout the planning and execution process. Another key feature allows Marriott to respond immediately to any guest issues or requests, and to inform the planner of how the request is being handled. [MarriottWaikiki.com](http://MarriottWaikiki.com)

**Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach Resort** on O'ahu recently completed a \$21 million renovation of its 17-story Diamond Head Tower. The tower underwent a top-to-bottom transformation, which included the refurbishment of 380 guest rooms, eight suites, 48 junior suites, tower corridors and a refreshed lobby. The rooms in the Diamond Head Tower now incorporate Hawai'i-inspired décor, and new amenities include a *lānai* (balcony) and bar area. [HiltonHawaiianVillage.com](http://HiltonHawaiianVillage.com)

**Outrigger Hotels and Resorts** is partnering with **Blue Note Entertainment Group** to bring world-class music performances to Hawai'i, aiming to create the state's premier live venue for world-renowned artists spanning music genres from jazz and blues to Hawaiian. Located in the former Society of Seven showroom inside the Outrigger Waikiki Beach Resort on O'ahu, the performance venue will undergo an extensive, multimillion-dollar revitalization and is expected to reopen in early 2016. [Outrigger.com](http://Outrigger.com)

To celebrate its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, the **Sheraton Princess Kaiulani Hotel** on O'ahu will unveil and rededicate a near life-size painting of Princess Ka'iulani by Lloyd Sexton. The painting is being fully restored at a cost of more than \$10,000 in a new museum glass frame to commemorate the life and legacy of the hotel's namesake. Additionally, the Sheraton Princess Kaiulani will undergo a \$5 million soft-goods refresh of its guest rooms and some public spaces.

The **Sheraton Princess Kaiulani Hotel** recently welcomed Chris Kirksey as its new executive sous chef. Kirksey oversees culinary operations for the hotel, which include its signature Pikake Terrace restaurant, Splash Bar & Bento, and in-room dining. Kirksey's background includes culinary experience with the Salish Lodge & Spa, the Westin Bellevue and the W Seattle, all in Washington state. [Princess-Kaiulani.com](http://Princess-Kaiulani.com)

Business travelers can save time, money and unnecessary paperwork by using new technologies offered at the **Equus Hotel** in Waikīkī on O'ahu. Guests can now digitally check-in, check-out and browse a room compendium from their mobile device on Equus Hotel's network, which offers the fastest free Wi-Fi in Waikīkī. The family-owned and operated hotel also holds the distinction of being the first hotel in Hawai'i to join Green Hotels International. [EquusHotel.com](http://EquusHotel.com)

The **Hilton Waikiki Beach** on O'ahu recently unveiled improvements and other new enhancements to the hotel. Newly constructed restrooms and shower facilities on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor pool deck vastly improve the functionality, comfort and aesthetics of the entire guest experience. In addition, the beautifully hand-tiled pool includes a retiled deck and the installation of ADA-approved access. The main lobby, the lobby bar LBLE and HHonors lounge also received new furniture. [HiltonWaikikiBeach.com](http://HiltonWaikikiBeach.com)

**Travaasa Hāna, Maui** has begun an extensive \$12 million guest room restoration that will provide an enhanced experience for guests. The resort's generously sized Ocean Bungalows (formerly known as Sea Ranch Cottages) will receive new décor reflecting a sophisticated tropical palette, a restored lanai with new relaxing chaise lounges, and panoramic sliding glass doors maximizing Hāna's cooling trade winds. Interiors will feature custom-made furnishings crafted with sustainable materials and *kapa* (Hawaiian bark cloth). A clean redesign and eco-friendly bath accessories will be among the highlights of the bungalows' newly imagined bathroom areas. Renovations to all 70 bungalows and suites at the East Maui resort are scheduled to be complete by the end of 2015. [Travaasa.com/Hana](http://Travaasa.com/Hana)

Hilton Worldwide has announced a franchise license agreement to open **DoubleTree by Hilton Hilo-Naniloa**, previously branded the Hilo Naniloa Hotel and Golf Club, following an \$18.5 million makeover. Key upgrades to the 12-story, three-tower, 388-room oceanfront property include the addition of 20 spacious suites, a farm-to-table restaurant, health club, golf course and outdoor pool. Completion is scheduled for the end of 2015. [DoubleTree.com](http://DoubleTree.com)

Hawai'i Island's **Hilton Waikoloa Village** now offers a boutique hotel VIP experience with personalized service at the newly renovated MAKAI at Lagoon Tower. Guests who upgrade to MAKAI rooms will enjoy exclusive benefits, such as a dedicated check-in, preferred reservations and private cabana. In-room amenities include customized robes, a beach bag, cultural turndown, private concierge and much more. [HiltonWaikoloaVillage.com](http://HiltonWaikoloaVillage.com)

Reopening in 2016, the **Aston Aloha Beach Hotel** will be rebranded as **Hilton Garden Inn Kauai/Wailua Bay**. In addition to gaining a new name, the property will undergo a renovation to include the complete refurbishment of all meeting spaces, guest rooms, lobbies and exteriors. Once completed, the renovated property will be the only Hilton branded hotel on Kaua'i and the second Hilton Garden Inn in Hawai'i.

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

Each of the 602 guestrooms at the **Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa** now features its own spacious lānai, one of several exciting renovations at the resort. Guests can also enjoy an upgraded workout facility, improved amenities at the resort's award-winning Anara Spa, and renewed dining spaces at Stevenson's Library, Ilima Terrace, Poipu Bay Clubhouse, The Dock and Hale Nalu. [GrandHyattKauai.com](http://GrandHyattKauai.com)

### ACTIVITIES & ATTRACTIONS

Groups meeting on Kaua'i can bring Hawaiian culture into their programs by participating in a lei-making class and "**Lei Aloha**" ceremony at **The Westin Princeville Ocean Resort Villas**. In Hawai'i, lei are bestowed upon others as a token of respect and honor, and as a symbol of friendship and aloha. The resort's lei-making class is held Tuesdays at 10 a.m., followed by a complimentary Hawaiian cultural lei ceremony at 11 a.m. The ceremony begins with a *pū* (conch shell) blowing, a lei exchange and *honi* Hawaiian greeting, and concludes with a Kaua'i *mele* (song). [WestinPrinceville.com](http://WestinPrinceville.com)

**Pacific Historic Parks** is now offering deluxe group tour packages to Pearl Harbor and Lē'ahi (aka Diamond Head), two of O'ahu's most popular attractions. The **Pearl Harbor deluxe package** includes the National Park Services' USS *Arizona* Memorial narrated tour, Pearl Harbor tote bags for each delegate, gift vouchers for the USS *Arizona* Memorial retail store, turndown in-room Pearl Harbor gift sets and/or group photos taken at the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center. The **Diamond Head deluxe package** includes official State of Hawai'i "I Hiked Diamond Head" certificates, gift vouchers for the Diamond Head retail store and/or group photos taken at Diamond Head.

[PacificHistoricParks.org](http://PacificHistoricParks.org)

**CLIMB Works Keana Farms** recently opened its final and longest zipline. At almost a half-mile in length, the new line is also the longest on the island of O'ahu. In addition to the new line, CLIMB Works has added three more sky bridges and a smoothie stop on its tour to enhance guests' experience. Groups will enjoy the adventure of an ATV ride to a ridge top followed by a three-hour guided zipline tour offering panoramic views of the ocean, mountains and farms of O'ahu's famous North Shore.

[ClimbWorks.com/Keana\\_Farms](http://ClimbWorks.com/Keana_Farms)

**Hawaiian Surfing Adventures** now offers 90-minute stand up paddleboard yoga classes on the Hanalei River on Kaua'i. All classes are taught by Yoga Alliance-certified instructors who have trained at Yoga Hanalei under the well-renowned teacher Bhavani Maki. [HawaiianSurfingAdventures.com](http://HawaiianSurfingAdventures.com)

**Tasting Kaua'i** has introduced four newly created food tours featuring the best bites on the island's north shore, east side and south shore. All tours allow time for interaction with Kaua'i farmers, chefs and artisans. In addition, the new Farmers Market Tour teaches visitors about picking the best fruits and introduces them to the market's growers. A portion of the proceeds from all tours benefits the Hawai'i Foodbank Kaua'i Branch. [TastingKauai.com](http://TastingKauai.com)

**Limahuli Garden and Preserve**, part of the National Tropical Botanical Garden on Kaua'i, recently unveiled a brand new tour exploring issues of sustainability on the Garden Isle. The **Sustainability Tour** explores the garden and its treasured plants through the lens of modern environmental challenges. [NTBG.org/Gardens/Limahuli](http://NTBG.org/Gardens/Limahuli)

**ActivityKauai.com**, with the help of the **Kaua'i Humane Society** (KHS), is giving back to make a difference in the lives of the island's animals. A locally owned and operated e-commerce website, ActivityKauai.com provides visitors and residents with easy access to some of the Kaua'i's best tours, activities and local products, and donates a percentage of its proceeds to support KHS. [ActivityKauai.com](http://ActivityKauai.com)

## DINING

**Japengo** at the **Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort and Spa** will unveil a brand-new outdoor dining area in the fourth quarter of 2015. Perfect for dinner meetings or a break between presentations, diners will enjoy Japengo's award-winning menu, prepared by chef de cuisine Jon Matsubara, with beautiful island weather and Waikiki scenery. [Waikiki.Hyatt.com](http://Waikiki.Hyatt.com)

**Ocean Pool Bar & Grill** at the **Westin Kā'anapali Ocean Resort Villas** on Maui has introduced a new weekly farm-to-fork series to its existing schedule of themed dining nights. Happening every Friday, the farm-to-fork series features local ingredient-infused dishes sourced from Maui farms. The eatery's "Duo Menu" includes a salad and chef-inspired main entrée for \$32. [WestinKaanapali.com](http://WestinKaanapali.com)

Chef Ed Kenney recently opened his third restaurant, **Mud Hen Water**, in O'ahu's Kaimukī neighborhood. The restaurant's name was inspired by its Wai'alaie Avenue location, which translates to "waters frequented by the Hawaiian 'alae, or mudhen.'" Celebrating Hawai'i's ethnic diversity, Mud Hen Water's menu features locally sourced meat, fish or produce in every farm-to-table dish. [MudHenWater.com](http://MudHenWater.com)

Chef Roy Yamaguchi recently opened the doors of his newest restaurant, **Eating House 1849**, at the Shops at Kukui'ula on Kaua'i's south shore. Eating House 1849 offers signature dishes made famous at Roy's restaurants' 30 locations, as well as new dishes, flavors and ingredients inspired by Portuguese, Filipino and Spanish influences. [EatingHouse1849.com](http://EatingHouse1849.com)

Waikiki's hottest gathering spot, **RumFire at the Sheraton Waikiki**, recently debuted a new "**Paired by RumFire**" menu, featuring beers, wine and other cocktails perfectly paired with a selection of savory small plates. Among the menu selections are Bikini

Blond and Coconut Porter craft beers from Maui Brewing Co., Fire Rock Ale and Longboard Lager from Kona Brewing Co., red and white wines, and champagne, paired with “street food chic” crunchy Thai tacos, Kahuku shrimp bao and kung pao Brussel sprouts. [RumFireWaikiki.com](http://RumFireWaikiki.com)

**Relish Oceanside Restaurant** at the **Westin Maui Resort and Spa** is pleased to unveil a refreshed menu combining signature favorites, such as *'ahi* tostadas, with innovative new specials, including macadamia nut *mahimahi* with Polynesian fried rice, *pūlehu* (broiled) rib-eye steak with house-crafted smoked salt, and chicken curry Maui Gold pineapple flatbread.

**Relish Burger Bistro**, also at the **Westin Maui Resort and Spa**, recently added a Hawaii Bento Box to its menu. A gourmet twist on a local favorite, the Hawaii Bento Box will be offered as a monthly special in the Relish Burger Bistro's courtyard garden, a comfortable open-air setting for a casual lunch meeting. [WestinMaui.com](http://WestinMaui.com)

### TRANSPORTATION

Honolulu-based **Makani Kai Air** has expanded its interisland service to include flights between Moloka'i and Maui. Established in 2009, Makani Kai Air recently acquired its third Cessna Grand Caravan. Six daily roundtrip flights are scheduled between Kahului, Maui and Ho'olehua, Moloka'i, as well as twice-a-week flights between Kapalua, Maui and Kalaupapa, Moloka'i. [MakaniKaiAir.com](http://MakaniKaiAir.com)

**Hawaiian Airlines** recently launched its **Featured Chef Series**, an in-flight culinary program highlighting creations from Hawai'i's top emerging chefs, in partnership with Executive Chef Chai Chaowasaree. Featured local chefs include Jon Matsubara of Japengo Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort and Spa, Lee Anne Wong of Koko Head Cafe, Wade Ueoka of MW Restaurant, Andrew Le of The Pig & The Lady, and Sheldon Simeon of Mala Wailea and MiGRANT. Through 2017, all Hawaiian Airlines flights from Hawai'i to the U.S. mainland will showcase dishes by one of the featured chefs, rotating in six-month intervals. Meals designed by Chef Chai will be offered on all U.S. mainland flights returning to the Islands. [HawaiianAirlines.com](http://HawaiianAirlines.com)

### AWARDS & ACCOLADES

**Hawaiian Airlines**, the largest air service provider from New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and eight other markets to Hawai'i, has led U.S. carriers in on-time performance for the past 11 years. The **International Air Transport Association** recently announced that the airline was the first U.S. carrier to attain Platinum status for fast travel implementation, which recognizes airlines offering compliant solutions to at least 80 percent of passengers. [HawaiianAirlines.com](http://HawaiianAirlines.com)

**Waimānalo Bay Beach Park**, located on O'ahu's east side, was named “**America's Best Beach 2015**” by Dr. Beach for his annual top 10 list. Dr. Beach — aka Stephen P. Leatherman, a professor and director of the Laboratory for Coastal Research at Florida

International University — compiles the list by evaluating and scoring U.S. beaches according to physical factors on a 50-category criterion. [DrBeach.org](http://DrBeach.org)

**Travel + Leisure** magazine released 2015 rankings for its annual **World's Best Awards**, which rank the greatest islands, cities, hotels, cruise lines, airports and more, determined by reader vote. The islands of Hawai'i were spotlighted for a total of 23 awards this year. The list includes:

**Top 100 World's Best Hotels:**

- No. 83 – Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea, Maui
- No. 89 – Four Seasons Resort Hualalai at Historic Ka'upulehu, Hawai'i Island

**Top 10 Overall World's Best Islands:**

- No. 7 – Maui
- No. 8 – Kaua'i

**Worlds Best Domestic Airlines:**

- No. 3 of 5 - Hawaiian Airlines

For more information, please visit [TravelAndLeisure.com](http://TravelAndLeisure.com).

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**About Meet Hawai'i**

Meet Hawai'i is a collaboration of the Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau (HVCB) and Hawai'i Convention Center (HCC) to reinforce the brand of the Hawaiian Islands as a world-class destination for business meetings, conventions, and incentive programs. The marketing efforts of the Meet Hawai'i team are overseen by the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA), the state of Hawai'i's tourism agency. HTA was established in 1998 to ensure a successful visitor industry well into the future. Its mission is to strategically manage Hawai'i tourism in a sustainable manner consistent with the state of Hawai'i's economic goals, cultural values, preservation of natural resources, community desires, and visitor industry needs. For information about Meet Hawai'i and the hosting of meetings, conventions and incentives, please visit [MeetHawaii.com](http://MeetHawaii.com).

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