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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 15, 2015

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

There's always something new in the Hawaiian Islands to keep meetings, conventions and incentives fresh and inspiring for groups. Find out how you can enhance your next program with these impressive renovations, activities, and transportation updates from across the state.

### **MEET HAWAII HIGHLIGHTS**

#### ***Meet Hawai'i Hosts 2015 Collaborate Hawaii Summit***

Meet Hawai'i hosted 42 corporate and incentive planners on Hawai'i Island at the **2015 Collaborate Hawaii Summit**, Jan. 4-6, in an effort to secure new group business for the state. The invitation-only event produced by Collinson Media & Events in partnership with Meet Hawai'i featured two days of educational sessions, networking events, and one-on-one appointments with local suppliers at the Hapuna Beach Prince Hotel. Attendees enjoyed whale watching, stargazing, and dinner at Kahua Ranch in Waimea, activities that highlight the value of the Hawai'i meeting experience.

"No matter how many new destinations I visit, Hawai'i always will be one of my favorites. Our attendees are in for a wonderful experience. They can escape the mainland winter and enjoy some tropical fun while getting work done," said Chris Collinson, president of Collinson Media & Events.

#### ***Hawai'i Convention Center Slurps Up Kawaii Kon with pop-up Noodle Shop***

The food and beverage team at the **Hawai'i Convention Center** led by executive sous chef Paul Matsumoto converted the coffee café into a pop-up Noodle Shop during Kawaii Kon, March 27-29. The event, which is considered Hawai'i's biggest anime convention, attracts a large Asian attendance and other Japanese culture art and animation fans. Catering to their tastes, Chef Matsumoto created three different noodle dishes, including Tonokatsu Ramen with slow cooked pork, green onions, roasted sesame seeds, and *menma* (seasoned sliced bamboo shoots) in a pork broth, Kim Chee Ramen with slow cooked pork, green onions, roasted sesame seeds and house made kim chee in a pork broth, and Hiyashi Chuka, cold ramen noodles with ham, cucumbers, tomatoes, shredded egg and a Hiyashi Chuka tsuyu. The Convention Center is home to one of the largest production kitchens in the state with 20,000 square feet of space; so all food is prepared on site. The in-house catering team can work with groups in advance to design specialized menus. [MeetHawaii.com](http://MeetHawaii.com)

## CREATIVE PROGRAMS

Groups staying at the **Moana Surfrider, A Westin Resort & Spa** on O'ahu can book a **Spaception** at the **Moana Lani Spa** for a truly rejuvenating experience. The spa's Renewal Lounge offers an intimate setting and the resort's catering and banquets team will transform the location into an escape where mind, body, and soul is rejuvenated.

[Moana-Surfrider.com](http://Moana-Surfrider.com)

**The Royal Hawaiian, A Luxury Collection Resort** is setting new industry standards in culinary experiences with the introduction of **Ethnic Epicurean Journey**. The Ethnic Epicurean Journey event welcomes attendees to partake in a remarkable dining experience featuring The Royal Hawaiian's chefs and their very own ethnic cuisines that have pleased the likes of the Sultan of Brunei, Her Royal Highness, Princess of Thailand and the Japanese Minister of Defense. [Royal-Hawaiian.com](http://Royal-Hawaiian.com)

**Gourmet Events Hawaii** brings together cuisine, camaraderie, and competition with its **Culinary Challenge Hawai'i**. Fire up meeting attendees with a fun culinary experience involving hands-on instruction, high-intensity timed tasks, and delectable cuisine. Groups will receive a "how-to" cooking demonstration from a professional chef before splitting into teams to duplicate the chef's masterpiece in a timed setting. Judges will rate each team's efforts in terms of presentation, taste, and speed of completion. After the competition, the group will regroup to enjoy the recipe as prepared by the chef's team.

Enjoy a feast fit for a king with **Gourmet Events Hawaii's** special **Dinner Inspired By King Kalākaua** at 'Iolani Palace on O'ahu. Considered the only official residence of royalty on U.S. soil, 'Iolani Palace was built during the rule of King David Kalākaua, the last reigning king of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Guests will enjoy a feast fit for a king, featuring food, drink, décor and entertainment reminiscent of Kalākaua's time, which includes decorations of roses and ferns, a fashion show with the fashions of that era, the singing of Hawai'i Pono'i, the former national anthem of the Hawaiian Kingdom and now the state song, and a memorable hula performance. [GourmetEventsHawaii.com](http://GourmetEventsHawaii.com)

## ACCOMMODATIONS & MEETING VENUES

With a flair for creating personalized experiences, **Sheraton Waikiki Hotel & Resort** on O'ahu recently opened **GIFT**, Hawai'i's first amenity store offering meeting planners a creative way to personalize welcome gifts to VIPs and meeting attendees. Guests have the opportunity to fill up "GIFT" bags by choosing from an array of items including local snacks, gourmet popcorns, candies, fresh fruits, local beers, juices, sodas, wines, sparkling wines, and Hawai'i collectibles upon arrival or at their leisure. Three "GIFT" bag size options are available and planners have the option to customize the amenity items offered in-store to add an extra special touch for their guests.

**Sheraton Waikiki** has also partnered with Incentient to install customized iPads in each hotel room of the 1,636-room resort. Each iPad is equipped to display messages to a specific group checked into the property. This system provides meeting planners and group leaders an efficient way to communicate with attendees without having to call each room. [Sheraton-Waikiki.com](http://Sheraton-Waikiki.com)

The **Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa** has been revitalized from inside and out. Key renovations start with the hallways, which received a fresh coat of paint and elegant custom designed carpet for a chic, open feel. Guestrooms have been furnished with new Hyatt Grand Beds™. Anara Spa's fitness center received new rubber mat flooring, Precor cardio and weight training equipment, and free weights. After a full day of activity, guests can enjoy a cozy evening under the stars at the new fire pits located on a grassy terrace rooftop overlooking the Pacific Ocean and the resort's renowned pools. [Kauai.Hyatt.com](http://Kauai.Hyatt.com)

The all-suite and villa **Fairmont Kea Lani** on Maui recently announced the completion of an extensive resort-wide \$70-million renovation project. Improvements have touched every corner of the 22-acre Wailea property over the past three years, resulting in a luxurious experience for guests. Highlights include the \$5.1 million rebuild of Kō restaurant, which showcases sugarcane-era inspired cuisine made with island sourced ingredients. The \$9 million Willow Stream Spa, which opened in 2014, offers Hawaiian-inspired services and treatments. Each of the resort's luxury one-bedroom suites and two- and three-bedroom villas have also been completely renovated with contemporary island décor. In addition, all corridors, landscaping, elevators and public areas have been refurbished, including the new poolside restaurant and swim-up bar, Ama. [Fairmont.com/Kea-Lani-Maui](http://Fairmont.com/Kea-Lani-Maui)

**Destination Resorts Hawai'i** recently remodeled the penthouses at **Wailea Beach Villas** (Maui) to offer guests the benefits of ultimate comfort and modern convenience. From new furnishings, soft goods and fabrics to wall colors, the upgrades create an inviting and functional experience. The addition of complementing accessories infused with art created and inspired by the Hawaiian Islands is incorporated throughout the penthouses. [DRHMaui.com](http://DRHMaui.com)

**Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach Resort** on O'ahu finalized a \$7 million renovation of its **Tapa Ballroom**. Seating up to 1,900 people, the top-to-bottom transformation of the 16,536 square foot ballroom includes new chandeliers, a large 3-dimensional sculpture commissioned by local artists, and tapa patterns throughout the ballroom and meeting rooms. The redesign reflects balance between Hawaiian cultural art forms and the modern built environment. The ballroom invites guests into a Hawaiian experience that is celebrated through the color, images, textures and patterns of Hawaiian tapa or kapa cloth. [HawaiianVillage.Hilton.com](http://HawaiianVillage.Hilton.com)

**Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort & Spa** (O'ahu) is putting the finishing touches on a \$100 million renovation of their 1,230 guestrooms. Updates include pillow-top bedding, bidet-style toilets, furniture with clean, modern lines, and technical considerations such as outlet pods and dimmer-equipped light fixtures. [Waikiki.Hyatt.com](http://Waikiki.Hyatt.com)

Enhancements to the guest arrival experience at the **Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort & Spa** on O'ahu are underway. The \$18 million project will include upgrades to the porte cochère, hotel lobby, guest registration desk area, meeting spaces, and the Kuhio Beach Grill, which will feature an intimate cocktail lounge. The renovation project is scheduled for completion in Fall 2015. [MarriottWaikiki.com](http://MarriottWaikiki.com)

**The Royal Hawaiian, a Luxury Collection Resort** on O'ahu unveiled the newly transformed Mailani Beach Tower. All 179-guest spaces will offer a re-imagined private *lanai* (balcony terrace) setting and stunning ocean or pool views. Guest floor hallways and elevator landing areas will also be redone to offer smooth and efficient service. Additionally, the Mailani experience will include an exclusive Mailani-only reception area for check-in and dedicated areas for guests, including the newly constructed Mailani Lounge.

**The Royal Hawaiian** also appointed a new chef de cuisine at **Azure Restaurant**, Shaymus Alwin. Chef Alwin is designing an Azure Banquets Menu for larger groups to enjoy the award-winning restaurant's signature dishes. Featuring fresh ingredients blended with locally sourced produce and seafood, the new menu from Azure Restaurant will have groups meeting at The Royal Hawaiian salivating for more. [Royal-Hawaiian.com](http://Royal-Hawaiian.com)

With its oceanfront location overlooking a living reef in Waikiki, a beautifully manicured lawn, a built-in stage, and spectacular sunset views, the **Waikiki Aquarium** on O'ahu is one of Hawai'i's best-kept secret locations for cocktail receptions, sit-down dinners, and other private group functions. The Waikiki Aquarium can accommodate groups of 450 to 500 people for stand-up cocktail functions with food stations and 300 to 350 people for sit-down functions. Groups can opt to have their functions under the stars on the Aquarium lawn or they may choose to tent the lawn area. On-site functions include admission to the Waikiki Aquarium's exhibits and galleries, featuring endangered Hawaiian monk seals, reef sharks, living corals, graceful jellyfish, and a plethora of native fishes. Rental of the Waikiki Aquarium is available for groups in the morning or afternoon on Saturdays and Sundays, and nightly (except Wednesdays) from 5:15-10:30 p.m. including set-up and clean-up time. [WaikikiAquarium.org](http://WaikikiAquarium.org)

**Mauna Kea Beach Hotel** on Hawai'i Island announced a new marketing agreement with **Marriott International's Autograph Collection**, which will allow the hotel to participate in the Marriott Rewards loyalty program and present itself to millions of high valued Rewards Members. Mauna Kea Beach Hotel is the first Hawai'i resort to join this elite portfolio of high style, high personality, independent hotels. [MaunaKeaBeachHotel.com](http://MaunaKeaBeachHotel.com) or [AutographHotels.com](http://AutographHotels.com)

## ACTIVITIES & ATTRACTIONS

**The St. Regis Princeville Resort** on Kaua'i in collaboration with **Limahuli Garden and Preserve**, a National Tropical Botanical Garden, is offering guests the opportunity to participate in the reforestation of Kaua'i's North Shore. Through the exclusive partnership, guests can sponsor the planting of a rare native canopy tree to celebrate a honeymoon, anniversary, destination wedding, or birthday. Limahuli Garden staff members will select the tree to be planted and provide the sponsor with a personalized certificate in the honoree's name. [StRegisPrinceville.com](http://StRegisPrinceville.com)

Take the **Hawaiian Dundee** challenge with **Island Adventures** and experience Kaua'i's newest extreme adventure, waterfall rappelling. A once in a lifetime experience, the five and a half hour tour starts with a detailed rappelling and safety lesson before guests dive into action, descending down two secluded private waterfalls: the 30-foot Bamboo Falls and the 60-foot Papakole'a Falls. A gourmet picnic lunch from Don's Bread and Deli Connection is included in the tour. [IslandAdventuresKauai.com](http://IslandAdventuresKauai.com)

**Trade-Winds Management Group (TMG)** can help groups take team building to a new level by planning CSR events that are meaningful to both participants and the recipients. Activities such as building bikes for the Boys and Girls Club of America, assembling wheelchairs to help American veterans, or repairing and painting local classrooms can bring out the best in team spirit and cooperation, and at the same time, help those in need. [TMGHawaiiLtd.com](http://TMGHawaiiLtd.com)

Invite **Kōloa Rum** to your next event on Kaua'i and treat attendees to a rum tasting or dinner. The Kaua'i-made spirit and related products make for unique welcome, turn-down, or departure amenities for groups. [KoloaRum.com](http://KoloaRum.com)

**Tasting Kaua'i** introduced a new food tour that explores the cuisine of Kaua'i's Royal Coconut Coast. The **Royal Coconut Coast Kaua'i Food Tour** begins at a family-owned farm where guests will sample traditional Hawaiian food while learning about taro farming as well as the plantation history and culture of the Keālia area. Guests then move on to sample the island's street food scene, getting a taste of some of the East Side's best farm-to-table restaurants. This is the fourth food tour the company offers, all of which are an educational feast for the senses. [TastingKauai.com](http://TastingKauai.com)

**Sheraton Maui Resort & Spa** offers groups the opportunity to paddle in a six-man outrigger canoe off world-famous Kā'anapali Beach. As the official team sport for the state of Hawai'i, outrigger canoe paddling is a unique and fun way to experience Maui, learn about the Hawaiian culture as well as motivate and build camaraderie amongst meeting attendees. [Sheraton-Maui.com](http://Sheraton-Maui.com)

Teambuilding at the **Sheraton Kona Resort & Spa at Keauhou Bay** on Hawai'i Island could include "**Brand your own hoe (Hawaiian canoe paddle).**" Ready-cut but unfinished paddles are provided to attendees, who are then able to customize their paddle, choosing from a selection of Polynesian symbols and designs to emblazon into

the wood. A cultural expert will share the traditions and legends of the *hoe* as well as the deeper, cultural meanings of each symbol as attendees craft their paddles to tell their own stories. The results are deep connections to Keauhou and the Hawaiian culture – and an unexpected educational, teambuilding experience that attendees will carry with them far into the future. The finished paddles can be shipped home upon request.

Meeting planners may choose to motivate their group for a day of meetings at the **Sheraton Kona Resort & Spa** with a CrossFit session, led by general manager Matthew Grauso. Grauso, a fitness enthusiast, regularly leads morning CrossFit workouts at the ocean's edge. Guests, team members, and resort managers are invited to join him for a workout that is guaranteed to get heart rates pumping in a beautiful and inspiring setting. Grauso will personalize sessions for groups based on their schedules and fitness levels. [SheratonKona.com](http://SheratonKona.com)

Plan a **Beach Blast** with **Ocean Sports** for the ultimate Hawai'i corporate group activity. Ocean Sports can help meeting planners build a customized program from a wide variety of ocean activities, games, and team building events at beautiful Anaeho'omalu Bay on Hawai'i Island. [HawaiiOceanSports.com](http://HawaiiOceanSports.com)

**Home Tours Hawai'i**, Hawai'i Island's only culinary home tour company, has introduced weekly tours to **Kokoleka Lani Farm**, a working cacao and coffee farm in Kona. The two-hour experience includes an intimate tour of the estate, where guests can learn about the cacao industry in Hawai'i, sample tropical fruits grown on the farm, and observe the demonstration of cacao-to-cocoa transformation. The tour concludes at the Kona Natural Soap Company, a working soap factory located on the farm that uses the beans' chaff to make soap. [HomeToursHawaii](http://HomeToursHawaii)

**Paradise Helicopters** has partnered with **Kohala Zipline** to offer a new **Fly & Zip** tour on Hawai'i Island. The combo adventure takes guests over beautiful landscapes and natural wonders via helicopter before touching down in Kohala, where Kohala Zipline will outfit guests to zip through the rainforest and enjoy elevated suspension bridges, tree platforms, and thrilling lines. [ParadiseCopters.com](http://ParadiseCopters.com)

## **TRANSPORTATION**

**Virgin America** announced it will start flying daily, nonstop flights from **San Francisco** to **Honolulu, O'ahu** from Nov. 2, 2015, and **Kahului, Maui** from Dec. 3, 2015. The airline will operate using its new Airbus A320 aircraft. [VirginAmerica.com](http://VirginAmerica.com)

**AirAsia X**, the low-cost, long-haul airline of the AirAsia Group, plans to start four weekly flights between **Kuala Lumpur** to **Honolulu International Airport**, with a refueling stop in Osaka, Japan this November. The airline will operate using Airbus A330-300 aircraft. [AirAsia.com](http://AirAsia.com)

Starting in July, **Air Nippon Airways** will double its number of flights from seven to 14 per week from **Narita International Airport** in Tokyo to **Honolulu International Airport**. The flight will operate using a Boeing 767-300ER. [ANA.co.jp](http://ANA.co.jp)

**Qantas** is boosting its Sydney-Honolulu route with the introduction of a fifth weekly flight and a permanent upgrade to newer Airbus A330 aircraft from the Boeing 767s. The new service will operate on Mondays during peak seasons between Sept. 7-Oct. 19, 2015 and Nov. 30-Jan. 25, 2016. [Qantas.com.au](http://Qantas.com.au)

**Delta Air Lines** is adding one daily flight from **Seattle-Tacoma International Airport** to **Kona International Airport** beginning Dec. 19, 2015. Service to Kona will be operated using a Boeing 757-200 aircraft. [Delta.com](http://Delta.com)

**Hawaiian Airlines** is adding seasonal flights from Hilo and Kona on Hawai'i Island to Honolulu from March to May. One flight will be added between **Hilo** and **Honolulu**, for a total of 15 daily flights, and one flight will be added between **Kona** and **Honolulu**, bringing its total to 18 daily flights. Additionally, from June to August, four flights will be added from **Kona** to **Honolulu** for a total of 22 daily flights, and one flight will be added from **Kona** to **Kahului, Maui** for a total of five daily flights.

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

**Hawaiian Airlines** completed renovations to its premier club lounges at **Honolulu International Airport** and Maui's **Kahului Airport** as part of a multi-million dollar effort to revitalize a total of six premier club lounges across Hawai'i to include free WiFi, cable TV, a widely accessible collection of power outlets, and complimentary snacks and refreshments. A second phase of construction will include the reopening of the lounges at Hilo, Hawai'i Island and Lihu'e, Kaua'i, slated for completion in summer 2015.

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

**Royal Star Hawaii** continues to expand its transportation offerings to meet the evolving needs of travelers with the addition of two new Gold Temsa 30 Series Mini Buses. The new motorcoaches are perfectly suited for medium-sized groups of up to 34 passengers and feature adjustable footrests, reclining chairs with designer upholstery, and individual lighting and air conditioning controls. Large tinted windows offer passengers with wide panoramic views, while air ride suspension provides a comfortable ride. The mini bus also includes an advance audio/DVD video system with microphone and flat screens. The kneeling feature allows for easy access boarding.

### SPECIAL OFFERS

Groups can earn up to one million Marriott Rewards Points when confirming a booking at any of the **Marriott Resorts** on Kaua'i for 2015 through June 2016. Groups can choose from the Kauai Marriott Resort, Marriott's Kauai Beach Club, Marriott's Waiohai Beach Club, Marriott's Kauai Lagoons, and the Courtyard Marriott Kauai Coconut Beach. Individual group attendees will also receive complimentary round trip shuttle transportation to and from the airport. A three-night minimum is required.

25 - 100 Peak Room Nights per Night = 250,000 Marriott Reward Points  
101 - 150 Peak Room Nights per Night = 450,000 Marriott Reward Points  
151 - 200 Peak Room Nights per Night = 650,000 Marriott Reward Points  
201 - 300 Peak Room Nights per Night = 1,000,000 Marriott Reward Points

### **AWARDS & ACCOLADES**

**Forbes Travel Guide** announced its Global Star Ratings for 2015 awarding three Hawai'i hotels and one O'ahu restaurant with **Five Star Ratings**. The hotels include the Four Seasons Resort Hualālai at Historic Ka'ūpūlehu on Hawai'i Island, Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea, and Trump International Hotel Waikiki Beach Walk on O'ahu. La Mer at Halekulani was the isles lone five-star earning restaurant. [ForbesTravelGuide.com](http://ForbesTravelGuide.com)

**U.S. News & World Report** identified the "2015 Best Hotels in the USA" which included seven Hawai'i properties on five islands. The list was compiled using a comprehensive methodology centered on three components: reputation among professional travel experts, guest reviews, and hotel class ratings. Hawai'i hotels and resorts named to the list include: Four Seasons Resort Hualālai at Historic Ka'ūpūlehu (No. 12), Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea (No. 14), Halekulani (No. 69), The Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua (No. 131), Four Seasons Resort Lāna'i at Mānele Bay (No. 138), The St. Regis Princeville Resort (No. 163), and Mauna Kea Beach Hotel (No. 165). [USNews.com](http://USNews.com).

**AAA** selected three Hawai'i resorts and two restaurants to receive the organization's **Five Diamond Rating** for 2014. The resorts include the Four Seasons Resort Hualālai at Historic Ka'ūpūlehu on Hawai'i Island and the Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea and The Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua on Maui. The two O'ahu restaurants to receive AAA's highest rating include Chef Mavro and La Mer at Halekulani. [AAA.com](http://AAA.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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