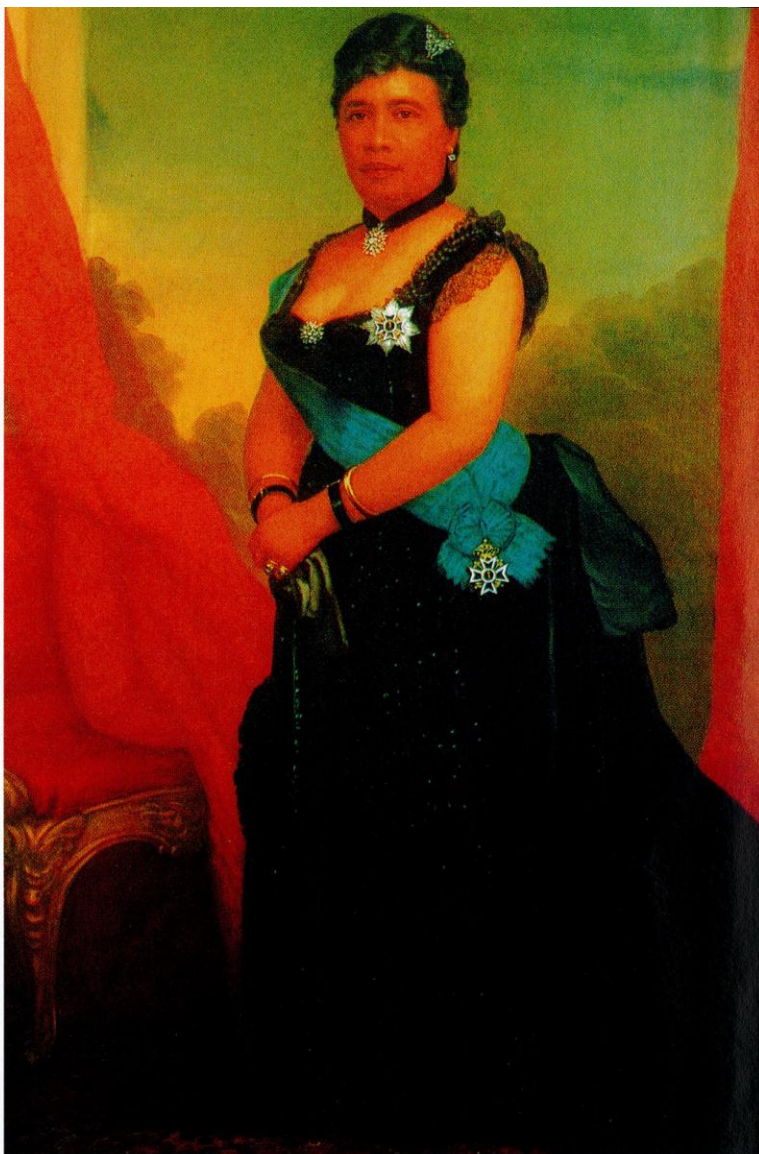


# Island Treasures



Heritage, art  
and culture star  
at Hawai'i's  
museums

By Catherine E. Toth

ALASKA AIRLINES MAGAZINE JUNE 2014

**M**ore than 1,500 people are gathered at the entrance to the **Bishop Museum** in Honolulu, casually dressed and carrying coolers and lawn chairs.

It's 8 P.M. on a Monday night. In about an hour, the earth's shadow will start to cover the full moon, shining brightly over the museum's planetarium. Right above it hangs Mars. By 9:06 P.M. the moon will be

completely within the Earth's dark inner shadow and burning orange in the night sky. About a dozen members of the Hawaiian Astronomical Society are here, too, their reflector and refractor telescopes set up on the lawn for visitors to use.

"Shall I give you a discount since you can only see half the moon?" jokes a bearded Jim MacDonald, a longtime hobbyist who brought his Dobsonian reflector telescope to

135

The Bishop Museum's Pacific Hall exemplifies the Honolulu facility's broad compass of the people and places around the world's largest ocean.



ED MORITA / BISHOP MUSEUM

## • MUSEUM TREASURES

**Grove Farm**  
Homestead and Sugar Plantation Museum depicts the 19th century heyday of sugar cane in the Islands.

**Bishop Museum** is the world's premier facility devoted to Polynesia.

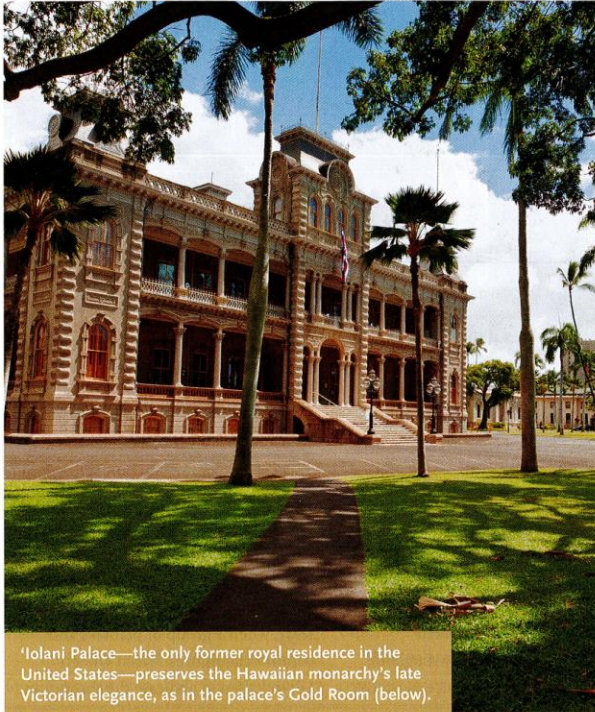
**Honolulu Museum of Art** encompasses art and sculpture from many lands.

**Bailey House** is both a historic home and a venue exhibiting Maui's heritage.

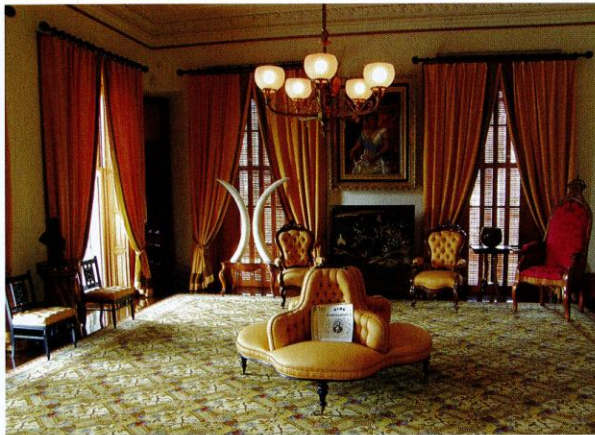
**Anna Ranch** celebrates the Big Island's cattle ranching heritage.

**Jaggar Museum** explains the geology of the volcano it overlooks.

the event, to a sweater-clad young boy, who smiles cautiously, then peers carefully into the eyepiece. "Dad, you can see the moon!" the boy exclaims, his smile now a wide grin. "That's so cool!" In one way, this is not a typical night at the Bishop Museum, the state's official museum on culture and natural history in Hawai'i, which most people consider a vast facility filled with indoor exhibits of artifacts, documents and displays illustrating the Pacific world. On the other hand, it typifies what museums across the state offer in terms of original programming and unique experiences for visitors, many of whom may know only the Islands' balmy weather and sandy beaches. "It's always been part of the mission here to be involved with the community," explains Mike



'Iolani Palace—the only former royal residence in the United States—preserves the Hawaiian monarchy's late Victorian elegance, as in the palace's Gold Room (below).



IMAGES FROM LEFT: WANDA HILL/TOURISM AUTHORITY / ALAMY; THE FRIENDS OF 'IOLANI PALACE

Shanahan, Bishop Museum director of visitor experience, about the lunar eclipse event, which has brought more than 1,500 eager sky-watchers to the museum grounds. "There are couples on dates, people with an affinity for sky phenomena, families, visitors and *kama'āina* (Island residents). Nothing else draws crowds like this."

Hawai'i may be best known for its world-class surf and Instagram-worthy beaches, but the state also boasts a rich history and culture that are showcased in the roughly 100 museums, learning centers, historic residences and cultural sites spread across the island chain. There are museums devoted to just about everything, from historic World War II sites to restored missionary homes to premier art galleries. There are even small museums dedicated to niche subjects such as surfing in Hawai'i, Japanese immigrants who worked on coffee

**'Our museums are unique. ... There's a very compelling history here that people won't encounter elsewhere.'**

plantations, and the Honolulu Police Department.

"Our museums are unique in that they tell the distinctive history of Hawai'i," says Heather Diamond, president of the nonprofit Hawai'i Museums Association and curator at 'Iolani Palace in Honolulu, the former residence of the Hawaiian monarchy. "There's a very compelling history here that people won't encounter elsewhere."

While the Bishop and 'Iolani embrace the entire Island chain—even further, across the entire Pacific, at the Bishop—each island and town has its own history, too. Lahaina on Maui is linked with commercial whaling. Kailua-Kona on Hawai'i Island boasts a

## BY THE NUMBERS

• **78%** of U.S. leisure travelers participated in cultural and/or heritage activities in 2010.

• **8.2 million** Hawai'i visitors in 2013.

• **86%** of Hawai'i visitors participated in cultural and heritage activities in 2012.

• **19%** of those visited a museum or an art gallery.

• **1.75 million** visitors to the USS Arizona Memorial in 2012.

• **1.5 million** Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park visitors in 2012.

—C.E.T.

Sources: Historic Hawai'i Foundation, Hawai'i Tourism Authority



rich coffee heritage. O'ahu's Pearl Harbor tells the dramatic history of the island's key role in World War II.

"As a curator and a museum advocate, my hope is that people come away with a thirst for knowledge and a basic understanding that this was and is a very important place," Diamond says. "It's not peripheral; Hawai'i is central in the Pacific Basin and central in a lot of different histories. The Native Hawaiians themselves are

alive and well; they're not something from the past. And there's a vibrant culture here that's constantly evolving and changing. That's what I hope people will discover."

**B**arely three decades after Kamehameha conquered most of the Hawaiian archipelago and unified the Islands as the Kingdom of Hawai'i in 1795, Christian missionaries arrived from New England, intending to spread their culture to Native



Mau'i's 1833 Bailey House has been a missionary home and a seminary. Now it's a museum with a large collection of historic artifacts.

The steam train at Kaua'i's Grove Farm Homestead once hauled sugar cane to local mills.

Hawaiians. They set up schools and churches and transcribed the Hawaiian language into written form.

The kingdom came to an end in 1893, when a group of planters and commercial figures forced Queen Lili'uokalani to abdicate the throne, and

set up a provisional government that led, five years later, to the U.S. annexation of the eight main Islands.

Their histories are intertwined in the most compelling fashion, and this part of Hawai'i's fascinating past is told in various ways throughout the Islands in many heritage sites.

**Iolani Palace**, the official residence of Hawai'i's monarchs and the only royal palace in the United States, is both a marvel of 19th century opulence and a haunting reminder of the fate of Hawai'i's last monarch, Lili'uokalani. Despite the meticulously restored rooms on the first and second floors, including the State Dining Room with its carved sliding doors and massive portraits of European leaders, or the crimson-and-gold Throne Room where monarch David Kalākaua entertained royalty and diplomats, it's a small, 400-square-foot bedroom upstairs that most makes visitors pause.

This is where the queen was confined for eight months in 1895. It's the only

room in the palace that hasn't been restored to its late-1880s grandeur. Here, the quilt she stitched during those long months in captivity is on display.

"The palace is an icon to the Hawaiian community and it represents both the high

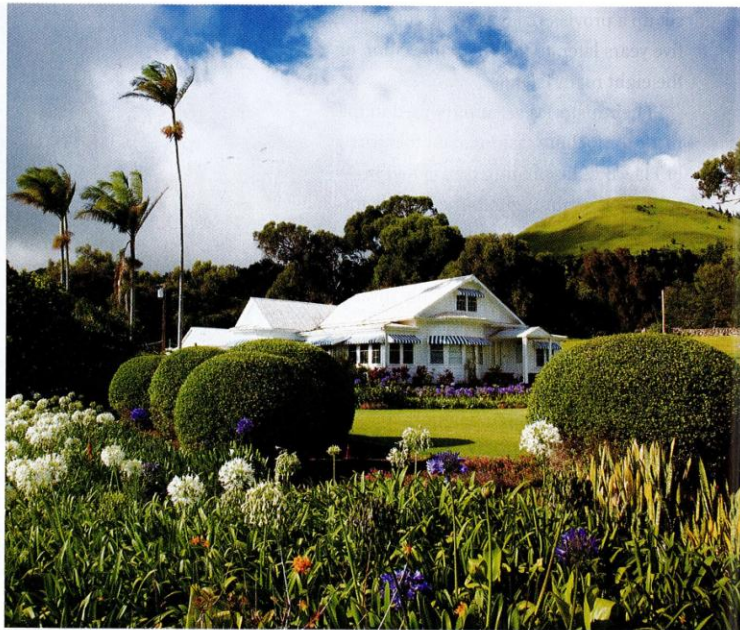
point and low point of the Hawaiian kingdom," Diamond says. "I think the overthrow is symbolized through that room."

The palace has about 110,000 visitors a year, drawn by the unique story this National Historic Landmark tells about the



### ART DECO IN THE ISLANDS

Eugene Savage's 1940 canvas, *Festival of the Sea*, exemplifies the dynamic interpretation painters brought to the Art Deco movement before World War II. A new Honolulu Museum of Art exhibition, "Art Deco Hawai'i," depicts the enthusiastic embrace of this famous artistic movement in the Islands; July 3–January 11.



Islands. Several decades ago, the palace underwent a multimillion-dollar restoration and repair of its wrought-iron work, plaster work and floors. Just recently, historic reproductions of the carpet, drapery and upholstery were added to various rooms, further enhancing the palace's depiction of the Hawaiian kingdom's glory days in the late 1880s.

"Any time people can learn from history it's a good thing," says Pohai Ryan, executive director of the nonprofit Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association. "In Hawai'i, there have been both acceptance and objection to museums storing and archiving things we consider sacred, but it

has also brought many people, including Native Hawaiians, to understand the ancient Hawaiians and the social, political and economic history of the Islands."

Hawaiian artifacts can also be found at the various homes of missionaries across the state, many of them converted into museum and gallery spaces. The **Bailey House Museum** in Wailuku, Maui is a 19th century former seminary and missionary home that holds an impressive collection of ancient Hawaiian artifacts including weapons, *kapa* (Hawaiian fabric), koa furniture, fishhooks and quilts.

The two-story Western-style stone home built in 1833 on the royal compound

IMAGES FROM LEFT: ALVIE UPTIS; ANNA RANCH HERITAGE CENTER ARCHIVES

## OTHER MUSEUMS TO ENJOY

### ● Monarchs and Missionaries

**Baldwin Home Museum,**  
120 Dickenson St., Lahaina, Maui. 808-661-3262, [www.lahainarestoration.org/baldwin.html](http://www.lahainarestoration.org/baldwin.html)

**Hulihe'e Palace,**  
75-5718 Ali'i Dr., Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i Island. 808-329-1877, [www.huliheepalace.net](http://www.huliheepalace.net)

**Lyman Museum and Mission House,**  
276 Haili St., Hilo, Hawai'i Island. 808-925-5021, [lymanmuseum.org](http://lymanmuseum.org)

**Mission Houses Historic Site,**  
553 S. King St., Honolulu, O'ahu. 808-447-3910, [www.missionhouses.org](http://www.missionhouses.org)

**Queen Emma Summer Palace,**  
2913 Pali Highway, Nu'uuanu, O'ahu. 808-595-3167, [www.daughter-sofhawaii.org](http://www.daughter-sofhawaii.org)

**Waioli Mission House Museum,**  
Kuhio Highway, Hanalei, Kaua'i. 808-245-3202, [grovefarm.org/waiolimissionhouse/](http://grovefarm.org/waiolimissionhouse/)



Anna Leialoha Lindsey Perry-Fiske oversaw one of Hawai'i Island's biggest cattle ranches, and brought Charolais and Brahma to Waimea.

Anna's home, built in 1910, now reflects her dream of a museum dedicated to Hawai'i's ranch heritage.

of Kahekili, the last ruling chief of Maui, is set at the end of a long driveway off Main Street, which leads to the emerald peaks of 'Iao Valley State Monument. Most visitors venturing into Wailuku are heading to this lush 4,000-acre park—not searching for a mission house.

"Plenty of local people and visitors have no idea we exist," says Sissy Lake-Farm, executive director and *kumu hula* (hula teacher), whose father hails from this area. "They go up and down to 'Iao and they

don't even know we're here. We're set back, not right on the road, and if you don't come down our driveway, you'll miss us. But once you get here, it's 'Wow.'"

The afternoon I stop by, I am the only person in the house, save for a writer doing research in the archival resource center in the basement of the home and a volunteer who shows me photos of a friend's recent hike into Kaupō Gap on the slopes of Haleakalā.

"This place is a diamond in the rough," says Lake-Farm, leading me through one of the galleries in the historic home of Edward Bailey and his family, who lived here until 1888. "It's really a hidden gem."

The house is divided into rooms that each share a piece of Maui history. On the first level, there's an old cookhouse with the fireplace and oven dating back to the 19th century and a collection of rare shells from the endangered *kāhuli*, or land snails. In another room there's a gallery of Bailey's oil paintings of scenes around Maui including Māliko Gulch, the old Ha'ikū Sugar Mill, and Wailuku Valley circa 1885. In yet another, there's a mini-museum of Hawaiian artifacts such as spears, fishhooks made from stone and shells, wooden calabash bowls, a big *papa ku'i 'ai* (poi-pounding board) and a lei made from dog teeth.

And that's just the first floor.

On the second floor are rooms furnished as they would have been in the early 19th century in Hawai'i. There's an old pump organ, a chest drawer made

**Kaua'i Museum,**

4428 Rice St., Lihue,  
Kaua'i. 808-245-6931,  
[www.kauaimuseum.org](http://www.kauaimuseum.org)

● **Paniolos and  
Plantation Life**

**Japanese Cultural Center  
of Hawai'i,** 2454 S.  
Beretania St., Mō'ili'ili,  
O'ahu. 808-945-7633,  
[www.jcch.com](http://www.jcch.com)

**Kona Coffee Living  
History Farm,**

Hwy 11, Captain Cook,  
Hawai'i Island. 808-323-  
2006, [konahistorical.org](http://konahistorical.org)

**Wo Hing Museum,**

858 Front St., Lahaina,  
Maui. 808-661-5553  
[www.lahainarestitution.org/wohing.html](http://www.lahainarestitution.org/wohing.html)

● **Nature and  
Science**

**Astronaut Ellison S.**

**Onizuka Space Center,**  
1 Keāhole Airport Road,  
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i  
Island. 808-329-3441

**Harold L. Lyon  
Arboretum,**

3860 Manoa Road,  
Manoa, O'ahu. 808-988-  
0456, [www.hawaii.edu/lyonarboretum/](http://www.hawaii.edu/lyonarboretum/)

**'Imiloa Astronomy Center**, 600 'Imiloa Pl., Hilo, Hawai'i Island. 808-969-9703, [www.imiloahawaii.org](http://www.imiloahawaii.org)

**Kilauea Point Natural History Association**, Kilauea Light Station, Kilauea, Kaua'i. 808-828-0383, [www.kilaueapoint.org](http://www.kilaueapoint.org)

**Pacific Aviation Museum**, 319 Lexington Blvd., Honolulu, O'ahu. 808-441-1000, [www.pacificaviationmuseum.org](http://www.pacificaviationmuseum.org)

**Pacific Tsunami Museum**, 130 Kamehameha Ave., Hilo, Hawai'i Island. 808-935-0926, [www.tsunami.org](http://www.tsunami.org)

#### • Arts

**The ARTS at Marks Garage**, 1159 Nu'uuanu Ave., Downtown Honolulu, O'ahu. 808-521-2903, [www.artsatmarks.com](http://www.artsatmarks.com)

**Hawai'i State Art Museum**, 250 S. Hotel St., Downtown Honolulu, O'ahu. 808-586-0900, [sfca.hawaii.gov](http://sfca.hawaii.gov)

**The Honolulu Museum of Art Spalding House**, 2411 Makiki Heights Dr., Makiki, O'ahu. 808-526-1322, [honolulu-museum.org](http://honolulu-museum.org)

**John Young Museum of Art**, University of Hawai'i—Mānoa, 2500 Dole St., Mānoa, O'ahu. 808-956-7198, [www.outreach.hawaii.edu/jymuseum/](http://www.outreach.hawaii.edu/jymuseum/)

#### • Special Interests

**Honolulu Police Department Law Enforcement Museum**, 801 S. Beretania St., Downtown Honolulu, O'ahu. 808-529-3111, [www.honolulu-pd.org](http://www.honolulu-pd.org)

**Honolulu Surf Museum**, 2300 Kalākaua Ave., Waikīkī, O'ahu. 808-791-1201, [www.honolulusurfmuseum.com](http://www.honolulusurfmuseum.com)

**King Kamehameha V Judiciary History Center**, 417 S. King St., Downtown Honolulu, O'ahu. 808-539-4999, [jhchawaii.net](http://jhchawaii.net)

**Whalers Village Museum**, 2435 Kāanapali Parkway, Lahaina, Maui. 808-661-5992, [www.whalersvillage.com/museum.htm](http://www.whalersvillage.com/museum.htm)

from koa, a baby cradle, a lap desk, a spinning wheel and other artifacts. In the basement, the Maui Historical Society keeps its 2,000-piece collection of maps, writings, rare books, weapons, quilts, fabrics and walking sticks. There are also more than 8,000 historic photographs stored in the vault, making this a valuable resource center for those interested in Maui's heritage.

"It's our little slice of history down here," Lake-Farm says.

The house is surrounded by a plethora of native plants including *laua'e* and *hāpu'u pulu*, the long leaves and the blue berries of the 'uki'uki plant, the native palm tree *loulu*, and the Polynesian-introduced 'ape, which closely resembles taro. In the back of the home is a grassy stage under a huge *pū hala* tree which hosts monthly nighttime Hawaiian music concerts that easily draw about 50 people to the museum.

"I'm here to fight to preserve the things of our *kūpuna* (elders)," Lake-Farm declares. "It's exciting and I feel it's my *kuleana* (responsibility)."

**T**he upcountry lands in Waimea and North Kohala on Hawai'i Island have a rich ranching history and cowboy culture that's more than a century old.

It all started when, in 1793, Captain George Vancouver gave King Kamehameha five black longhorn cattle. Horses arrived 10 years later. Then, in 1816, John Palmer Parker, a Western advisor to Kamehameha, married Kipikane, a royal granddaughter, and was awarded 2 acres of land for \$10. He wrangled the cows that had been allowed to range freely—the cattle now numbered in the thousands—and ran a successful beef, tallow and hide business. In 1832, Mexican vaqueros arrived, complete with boots and saddles, who taught local workers how to expertly rope and ride. These Hawaiian cowboys were called *paniolo*, and their culture still flourishes across the Islands. Parker Ranch remains a working cattle ranch—one of the oldest and biggest in the United States, now operated by a private

foundation—spreading across about 130,000 acres of the island, no longer offering public tours. But it's not the only Big Island historic ranch.

Here, in the lush-grass uplands high above the Kohala Coast, you can experience early 20th-century cattle ranching history at **Anna Ranch** in Waimea, a 45-minute drive from Kailua-Kona. Many of the buildings—ranch house, slaughterhouse, barn and garage—have been restored to their 1939 condition. It's named after Anna Leialoha Lindsey Perry-Fiske, nicknamed the First

**'We want people to think a little differently about art. We're trying to help them connect the dots.'**

Lady of Ranching. During her lifetime, she was a cowgirl, a rancher, a licensed butcher, a pā'ū (long skirts) rider, and a jockey. The ranch was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2008.

Like Maui's Bailey House, Anna Ranch

features its own collection of ancient Hawaiian artifacts and family possessions including tools, saddles, koa furniture, pā'ū costumes, hats and boots, fine china, photographs and artwork. The house itself is a charming white Victorian that evokes simpler times.

While ranching was a growing industry in the Islands, pineapple and sugar were the heavyweights of Hawai'i's agricultural industries and employed thousands of immigrant workers, starting in the mid-1800s.

The first sugar plantation was in Kōloa on Kaua'i's south shore. The sugar mill opened in 1835 and set the tone for commercial sugar production across the Islands. In its first year, 8,000 pounds of sugar and molasses were shipped to the United States.

The mix of immigrant workers—hailing mostly from China, Japan, Korea and the Philippines—helped create the multicultural social landscape still prevalent today.

Preserving an estate founded in 1864, the **Grove Farm Homestead & Sugar Plantation Museum** in Līhu'e on the southeastern coast of Kaua'i is one of the earlier sugar plantations and the former home of George N. Wilcox and his family. It's now a 100-acre historic site that shows what life was like during Kaua'i's booming plantation era. An unhurried two-hour tour takes you through poultry pens, banana patches, the humble cottage of the plantation laundress, a washroom built in the 1920s with the original wood-burning laundry boiler and wooden linen press, and an old 19th-century plantation storage shed that houses ox yokes and an ox cart, a plough, an 1898 wooden washing machine, and an antique lawn mower.

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has been offering free rides on one of its original steam locomotives along a quarter-mile section of the original Lihue Plantation railroad right-of-way adjacent to the historic sugar mill. This free ride is the only authentic sugar plantation steam train experience in the state.

**J**ust off the main lobby of the **Honolulu Museum of Art** is a large room with seven video projections on the walls. This installation, "The Empty City," was created by contemporary Chinese artist Chen Qiulin—a symbol that this museum, which was founded in 1927 by Anna Rice Cooke at the site of her former home on Beretania Street with about 500 works, continues to grow and evolve. Today, the museum boasts more than 50,000 pieces of art spanning 5,000 years. Its collection includes Japanese woodblock prints, European paintings, traditional works from Oceania, and Island art, traditional and modern.

A recent renovation and rebranding of the museum resulted in a more dynamic space that mixes genres and media, challenging the idea that there's only one way to display art.

For example, in a gallery with European art between 1400 and 1700, there's a still-life painting of fruits in a blue-and-white porcelain bowl by a Dutch artist circa 1655. Displayed next to it is a similar bowl taken from the museum's collection from the Ming Dynasty in China made during the same era. The similarities are striking and you feel like you're looking at the same bowl the Dutch artist was painting.

Even in the museum's portraiture room, the paintings are varied. On one wall, there's an oil painting by Boston's John Singleton Copley of Nathaniel Allen, a successful merchant in Massachusetts, done in 1763. On another wall is a pair of oil paintings by Robert Dampier—one depicting Kauikeaouli, who would later become King Kamehameha III, as a preteen, and another of his sister, Nāhi'ena'ena, both wearing traditional feather garments—done in 1825. Two separate and vastly different

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worlds collide in one gallery.

"We want people to think a little differently about art," explains Lesa Griffith, the art museum's director of communications. "We're trying to help people connect the dots."

At the Maui Arts & Cultural Center in Kahului, the blurring of lines between art and entertainment is never more evident—or appreciated by the community, which had long awaited this venue.

Opened in 1994, this space features a 5,000-seat outdoor amphitheater; a 1,200-

seat, three-tier indoor theater with premium sound quality; a smaller, 300-seat multipurpose theater; an outdoor platform for hula; a 4,000-square-foot museum-quality gallery space; and a glass-capped outdoor pavilion where Sir Elton John once played for a sold-out crowd.

More than 260,000 people a year visit this space, which has hosted about 1,800 events, ranging from *taiko* (Japanese drumming) to acrobatics to storytelling and, of course, Hawaiian music. And its Schaefer International Gallery has showcased pho-

tography, ceramics, and work by artists-in-residence, making this Maui's premier spot for art and culture.

When you're standing at the overlook outside the Jaggar Museum in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, you are in the presence of one of the world's most active volcanoes.

Kilauea, which appropriately means "spewing" in Hawaiian, has been erupting continuously since January 1983, and the Jaggar Museum is the closest that park visitors can get to the current eruption from Halema'uma'u Crater at the volcano's summit. Every day rangers offer a 20-minute talk, named "Life on the Edge," to explain the significance of what you're looking at.

"At night, the evening glow from Halema'uma'u is spectacular," reports Jessica Ferracane, public affairs specialist for the national park, who never gets tired of the natural phenomenon just outside her office.

While the panoramic views of the rugged, otherworldly landscape may be distracting, the museum itself holds lava rock displays, equipment used by volcanologists, and a working seismograph that measures the impact of people jumping around on the floor in front of the device.

"The kids love to get into a group and watch the needle gyrate up and down," Ferracane says.

Hawai'i spurs visitors and residents to embrace topics they might not otherwise notice. During the Bishop Museum's lunar eclipse evening, a group of friends manages to find prime seats on the lawn to watch the eclipse.

"I didn't know about this event until 10 minutes ago," jokes Zeshan Chisty, an epidemiologist. "I'm an astronomy buff, so I think it's awesome the museum has a planetarium and events like this. It appeals to a broader audience." Chisty had only been here twice before—and still hadn't explored the entire museum. After this event, he plans to come back.

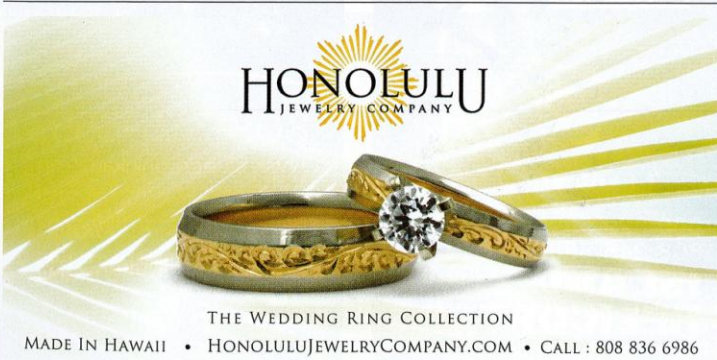
Founded in 1889, Bishop Museum



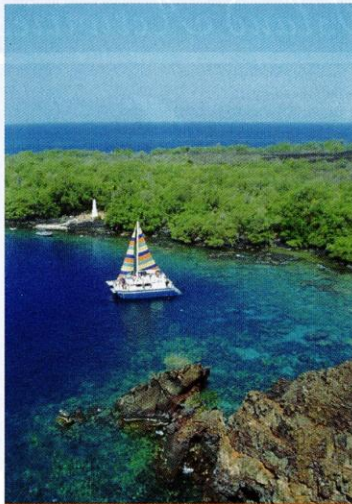
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combines natural history, science and Hawaiian culture like no other place.

The museum holds more than 2.4 million Pacific and Hawaiian cultural objects, 230,000 zoological specimens, and 1 million historical photographs, artworks and other archival material. Its insect collection—more than 14 million specimens—is third largest in the United States. It also boasts the ninth largest mollusk collection, 6 million shells; and the world's largest Hawaiian plants collection.

“For anyone who truly wants to see the heart of Hawai'i and understand the history of a very proud people, Bishop Museum is the only place on the planet which can deliver that experience,” says Blair D. Collis, the museum's president and chief executive officer. “We are recognized throughout the world for our scientific research, educational programs and extensive collections, which give a voice to the stories of Hawai'i and the broader Pacific.”

And while most of the people who pass through the turnstiles the evening of the eclipse come to see the natural phenomena occurring in the night sky, many of them also stroll the museum halls, admiring the Ni'ihau shell displays or peering in wonder at the weapons and garments ancient Hawaiians used in battle. The fact they are drawn here by an astronomy event is, in many ways, entirely appropriate—the ancient Hawaiians studied, revered and relied on the night skies in innumerable ways. That modern Hawaiians can do so at such a wide-ranging institution honors past, present and future in this special place. ▲

*Catherine E. Toth is based in Honolulu.*

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