

Hawaii Gets Consul's Seal Of Approval

Consultants, suppliers and dignitaries converged at Hawaii events in Auckland and Christchurch earlier this week—with agent demand for the destination, reflecting the Kiwi travellers thirst for all things Hawaiian.

United States Consulate General in Auckland Melanie Higgins was among those singing the Rainbow state's praises at the Auckland event.

"Hawaii is a fantastic destination and one that has been popular with New Zealanders for a long time," she says. "There is no better time to visit the Aloha state, with its amazing hospitality, beautiful vistas, gorgeous weather, and great hotels and attractions." Higgins (pictured above in centre with Hawaii Tourism's Megan



Hornblow and Darragh Walshe) says the growing number of Kiwi travellers 'will feel right at home with the Hawaiian culture, be it the awesome surfing or the sunset luaus'.

Buffy Meets Chewbacca



In less than four weeks the island of Hawaii will look like a scene from *Star Wars* as the fourth annual HawaiiCon touches down at Mauna Lani Bay Resort 14-17 Sep. Attendees can expect close encounters with sci-fi stars from *Star Wars*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Babylon 5* as well as writers, costumers and comic artists. And of course there will be everything on sale that the avid collector could possibly want, with over 35 vendors selling items ranging from t-shirts, clothing, comics, art, jewellery and costumes. Workshops, meet and greet opportunities, a costume competition and a gala dinner are also on the programme. See hawaiiicon.com

For The Love Of Coffee

Coffee connoisseurs heading to the Big Island in Nov will be in their element as the 47th annual Kona Coffee Festival takes place 03-12 Nov. Everything from growing the beans, to harvesting, roasting, and tasting as well as detailed accounts of when the first crop was planted almost 190 years will be included in the programme, which takes place in various Kona locations. The Miss Kona Coffee Pageant will also be on at the Sheraton Kona Resort on 04 Nov. Visit konacoffeefest.com



New Eating Options

Four new eateries are open for business at the Waikiki dining, retail, and entertainment complex, International Market Place.

Among them is Baku, which specialises in modern Japanese cuisine prepared on robata and yakitori grills, sushi, sashimi, premium sake, handcrafted cocktails and premium wines.

Meanwhile, The Street serves up a variety of street fare. Other new dining spots are seafood and fresh-farm produce restaurant Her-ringbone Waikiki and Chinese dim sum teahouse Yauatcha (pictured). See shopinternationalmarketplace.com.



Happy Birthday to HGI Waikiki

Hilton Garden Inn Waikiki Beach is celebrating its one-year anniversary with a 20% off rate on its one- and two-bedroom suites.

After undergoing a USD15 million redevelopment in June 2016, the 623-room property reopened as Oahu's First Hilton Garden Inn. It is the largest hotel in the Hilton Garden Inn portfolio.

The hotel is located two blocks from Waikiki Beach and 25 minutes from the Honolulu International Airport. It has a rooftop pool area with poolside bar, cardio and strength training fitness centres, a meeting room for up to 30 people and complimentary wifi.

The anniversary room discount is valid until 22 Dec and can be booked at hgiwaikiki.com. Guests must enter the promotion word Hawaii to qualify.



HA To HNL And Islands

Hawaiian Airlines has inclusive, return Maui airfares priced from \$929, and other Hawaii neighbour islands from \$999, for sales to 22 Aug and travel 07 Oct-09 Dec. Honolulu levels are from \$839. Travel is ex Auckland and bookings are in O class.

Swimmers In Waikiki

Hundreds of competitive swimmers from throughout the world are taking to Hawaii's waters on 04 Sep for the 48th Annual Waikiki Roughwater Swim. The 3.84km open-water swim starts at Sans Souci Beach and ends near the Hilton Hawaiian Village on Waikiki Beach. The event last year attracted 700 swimmers. See waikikiroughwaterswim.com

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