

NEWS FLASH

CLIENT: Hawai'i Tourism Oceania

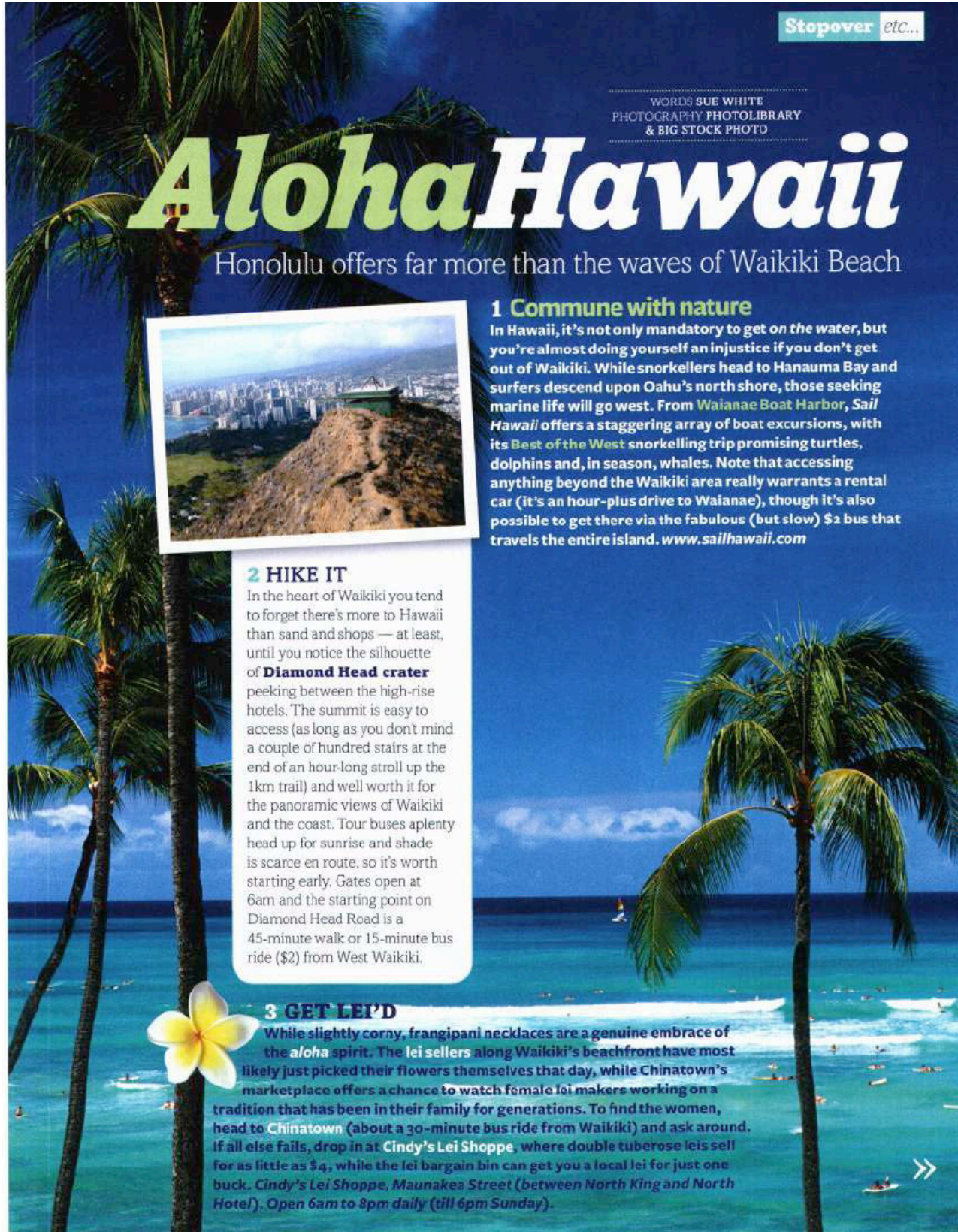
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Aloha Hawaii

Honolulu offers far more than the waves of Waikiki Beach



1 Commune with nature

In Hawaii, it's not only mandatory to get *on the water*, but you're almost doing yourself an injustice if you don't get out of Waikiki. While snorkellers head to Hanauma Bay and surfers descend upon Oahu's north shore, those seeking marine life will go west. From **Waianae Boat Harbor**, *Sail Hawaii* offers a staggering array of boat excursions, with its **Best of the West** snorkelling trip promising turtles, dolphins and, in season, whales. Note that accessing anything beyond the Waikiki area really warrants a rental car (it's an hour-plus drive to Waianae), though it's also possible to get there via the fabulous (but slow) \$2 bus that travels the entire island. www.sailhawaii.com

2 HIKE IT

In the heart of Waikiki you tend to forget there's more to Hawaii than sand and shops — at least, until you notice the silhouette of **Diamond Head crater** peeking between the high-rise hotels. The summit is easy to access (as long as you don't mind a couple of hundred stairs at the end of an hour-long stroll up the 1km trail) and well worth it for the panoramic views of Waikiki and the coast. Tour buses aplenty head up for sunrise and shade is scarce en route, so it's worth starting early. Gates open at 6am and the starting point on Diamond Head Road is a 45-minute walk or 15-minute bus ride (\$2) from West Waikiki.

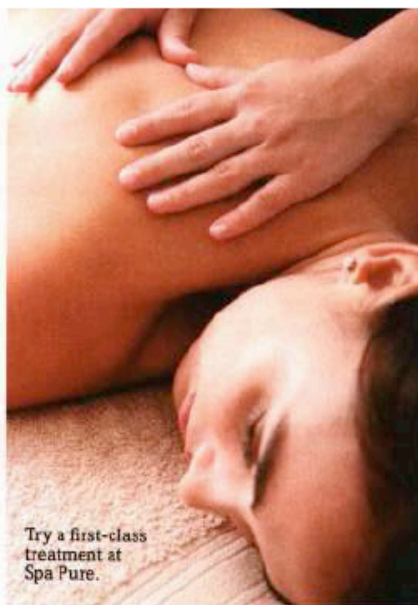
3 GET LEI'D

While slightly corny, frangipani necklaces are a genuine embrace of the *aloha* spirit. The lei sellers along Waikiki's beachfront have most likely just picked their flowers themselves that day, while Chinatown's marketplace offers a chance to watch female lei makers working on a tradition that has been in their family for generations. To find the women, head to **Chinatown** (about a 30-minute bus ride from Waikiki) and ask around. If all else fails, drop in at **Cindy's Lei Shoppe**, where double tuberose leis sell for as little as \$4, while the lei bargain bin can get you a local lei for just one buck. **Cindy's Lei Shoppe**, Maunakea Street (between North King and North Hotel). Open 6am to 8pm daily (till 6pm Sunday).

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4 Ride and shop

Just a short trolley car ride from Waikiki (\$2 each way), the gigantic **Ala Moana Center** is the mothership of malls. With 290-plus stores from Armani to Macy's, it's shopping heaven for those into brand names. Options slightly gentler on the wallet lie further out of town. **Waikole Premium Outlets**, 25km drive west of Honolulu along Highway 1, offers labels for less, while **Aloha Stadium's swapmeet** (Wed, Sat, Sun) has more Hawaiian shirts than you'd ever dreamed of seeing — or indeed, wanting — all at rock-bottom prices.



Try a first-class treatment at Spa Pure.

5 OIL UP

The perfect antidote to the 10-hour flight from Australia's east coast, **lomi lomi** is Hawaii's traditional massage technique and is practised on many local islands. Though the execution varies between therapists, its rhythmic strokes are almost guaranteed to lull you into a lomi lomi stupor. In the soothing environs of **Heaven on Earth** in downtown Honolulu, skilled practitioners use Aveda products and help any pre-holiday tensions fade away within minutes (80 minutes US\$118). 1050 Alakea Street; visit website for additional locations. www.heavenonearthhawaii.com

6 Eat regional

After years of importing 80 per cent of its food, Hawaiian regional cuisine has changed the long-held view that the best meal you'd get in Hawaii was on the plane over. The food is often delivered with a multicultural twist by chefs who buy local, know their farmers and are held

in great esteem by global foodies and critics. At **Alan Wong's Restaurant** downtown, the office-block exterior belies the delights within. Choose a seat at the counter to watch the chefs in action and book at least a week in advance. Nearby, **Chef Mavro** also receives rave reviews. This much-

awarded eatery is favoured by locals for anniversaries and visitors for their last-night big splash. Many make the most of the experience by taking up the sampler menu, which offers tasters of most of the menu. 1857 S. King Street, www.alanwongs.com or 1950 S. King Street, www.chefmavro.com

7 Ocean baths

According to the owner of **Spa Pure**, when it comes to water-based therapies there are two types of people: "potatoes or calligraphy". In the Wyland Waikiki's private pool, calligraphers (those happy with being wrapped in the arms of a bikini-clad therapist) swoosh, swirl and melt their way through the salt water in an attempt to stretch the body and sooth the mind. Meat-and-potato types are rested on a pair of pool noodles and given a water-based foot, hand and scalp massage. Choose the 90-minute Around the World package (\$120) which adds a land-based massage and 30-minute steam to the mix. 400 Royal Hawaiian Avenue, Waikiki www.spapurewaikiki.com



8 SLEEP GREEN

Among the seemingly endless high-rise hotels, Honolulu's first designer boutique property, **Hotel Renew**, oozes serenity. The 80-room hotel is a joy for both its diminutive size and its attitude. In the rooms, the hotel strives for a sense of freshness, so the windows actually open, the fruit on offer is changed daily and in-room recycling bins are just the most visible step in a move towards planet-friendly accommodation. www.hotelrenew.com

9 First Friday

Nightlife around Waikiki typically revolves around hotel bars, but the more discerning will be ecstatic if their visit coincides with the first Friday of a month. From 5 to 9pm, **art galleries** in Honolulu's Chinatown district open their doors for late-night viewings and crowds wander happily enjoying wine, art and free entertainment en route. Start at Nuuanu between South Beretania and South Hotel.

10 HAWAIIAN STORY

For history buffs, it's **Pearl Harbor** that draws the crowds, almost every tour operator in town offers trips to the memorial site (www.pearlharborhq.com is one of dozens of options). But for a look pre-1941 Hawaii, the tranquil **Bishop Museum** offers a glimpse into Hawaiian and Polynesian culture. With artifacts dating back to 1889, the museum houses an extensive natural history collection, boasting over 24 million artifacts on site, and often hosts afternoons and evenings of local dance or music. 1525 Bernice Street, 9am-5pm daily www.bishopmuseum.org

The writer flew Jetstar Star Class and was a guest of Hawaii Tourism, O'ahu Visitors Bureau and various local operators.