

SUNDAY STAR-TIMES ■ SEPTEMBER 30, 2012

Escape

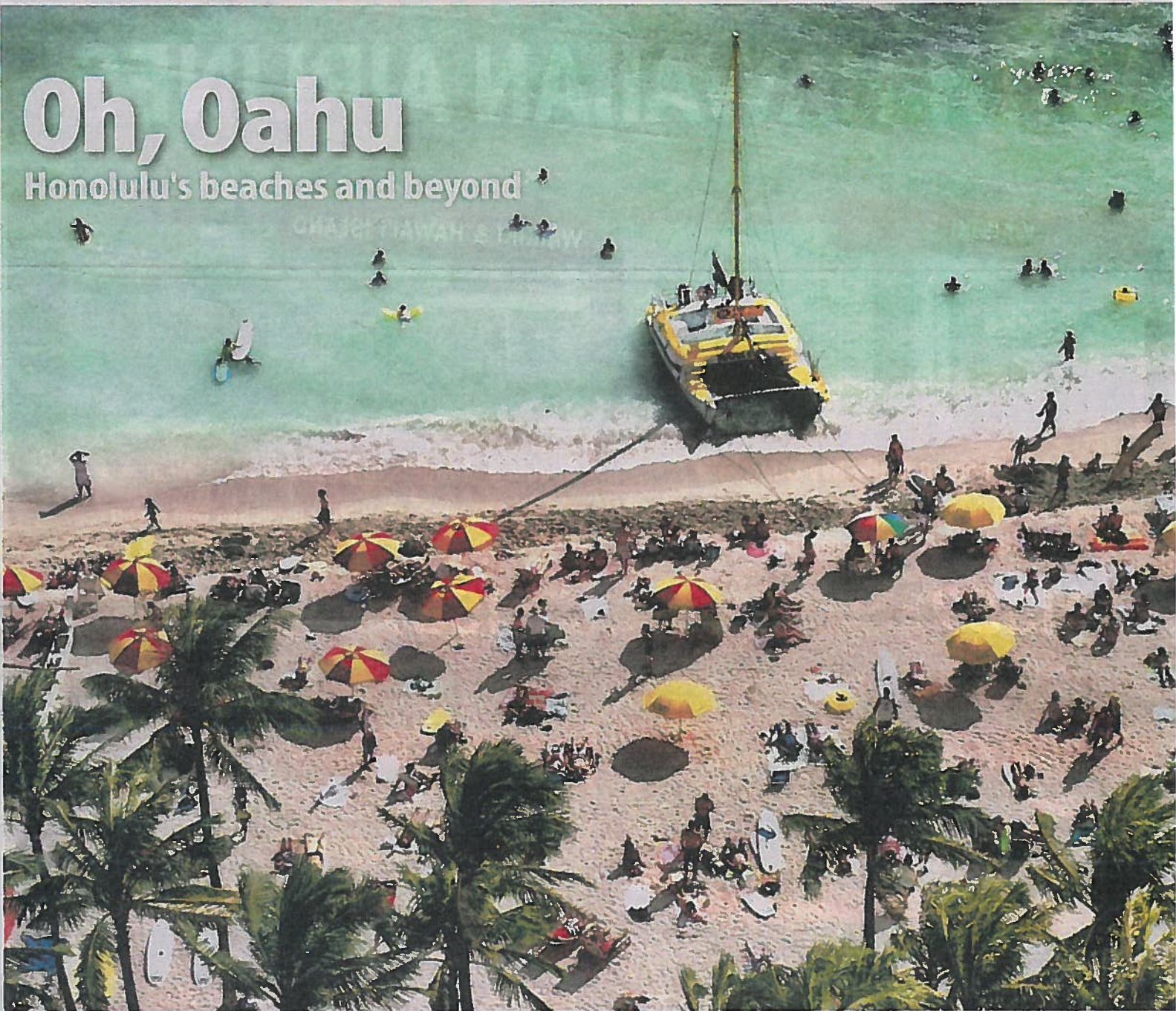


INSIDE CULTURE:
Hugh Bonneville
The Downton
star Down Under

Oh, Oahu

Honolulu's beaches and beyond

CHASCI TIAWAH & PHILIP W...



ESCAPE

WELLBEING

Dietary stress-busters.



CULTURE

CAITLIN MORAN

Is this Britain's funniest woman?



GRANT SMITHIES

It should've been me.



Editor's note

I'm the first to admit I'm a slow-learner when it comes to technology. I'll also admit that's been quite a deliberate choice. But this week I'll go as far as saying you should really check out our whizz-bang new app Link+, which the *Sunday Star-Times* launched last week. What does it do? It opens up a whole new world of interactive content, such as picture galleries, audio and video. How does it work? I won't even try to explain – you'll find that information

on page 2 of our news section.

So in *Escape* and *Culture* this week, you'll find Link+ content on our cover feature on the Hawaiian island of Oahu (there's much more than Waikiki, really!) and *Downton Abbey* star Hugh Bonneville offers an exclusive reveal of what's coming up in the hugely anticipated third series of the hit show.

There's no denying Hawaii is a hot destination right now – in all senses. There is great food and shopping, the

urban buzz of Honolulu and the laidback country feel of the outer islands and Oahu's North Shore. Most importantly for a holiday destination, it manages to be energising and relaxing all at once. I fell for its charms 15 years ago, while sitting under the Banyan tree at Waikiki's Moana Surfrider hotel drinking mai tais with my mum. Every time I go back I love it just a little bit more.

Angela Walker

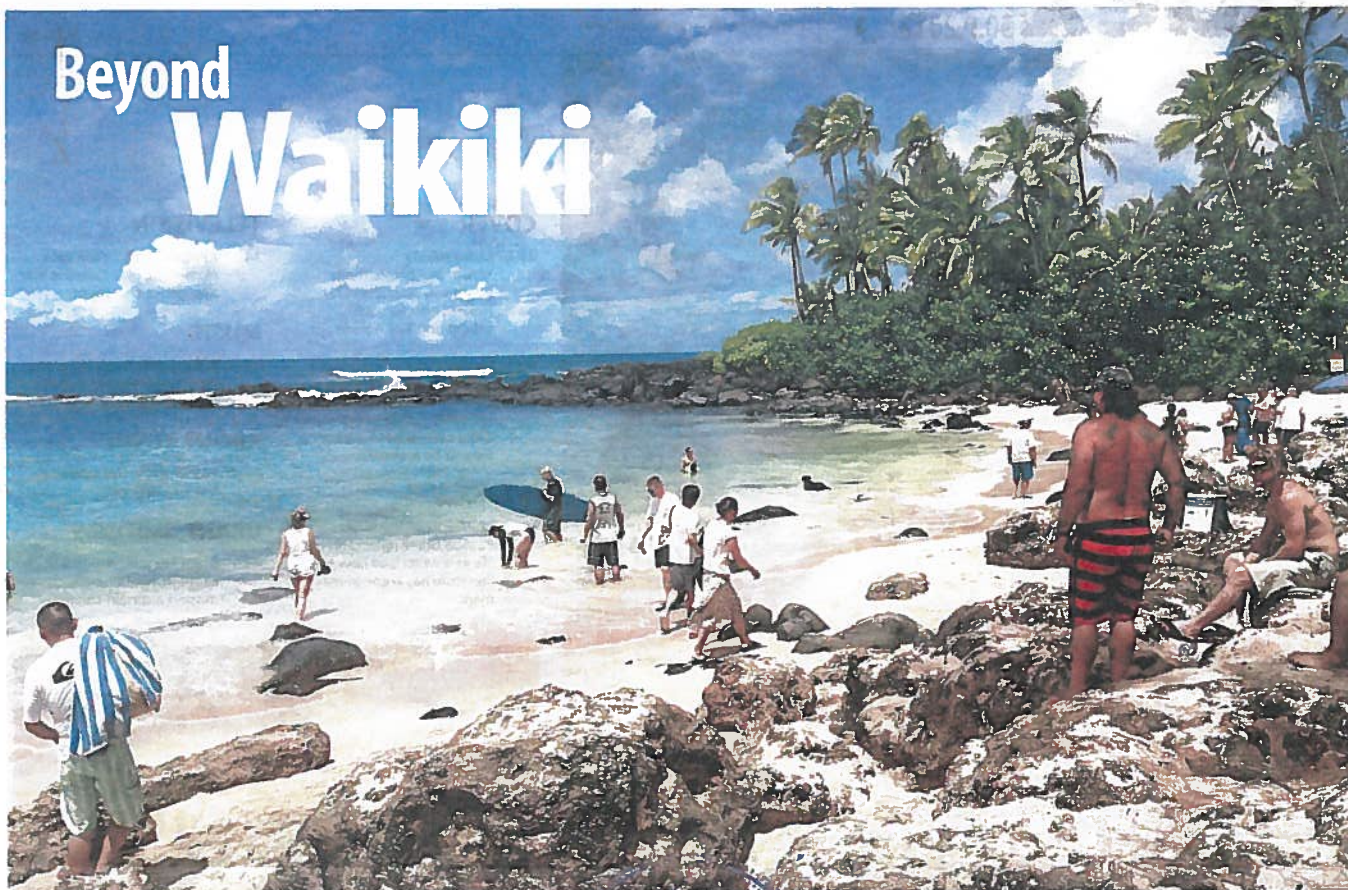


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Waikiki Beach, Honolulu.
Photo: Angela Walker

Beyond Waikiki



Away from Honolulu's tourists and tepid waves, **Angela Walker** finds plenty more to offer in Hawaii's main island of Oahu.

WAIKIKI – it's still one of the world's most sought-after destinations. It's where, with Diamond Head on one side and the pink confection that is the Royal Hawaiian Hotel on the other, you're guaranteed to feel like a million dollars while bobbing in its mellow, tepid waves, even if you're down to your last \$10. Trust me on that one. But beyond the tourists, the shops and the surfers, there's plenty more worth seeking out in Honolulu and the rest of the island of Oahu. Just make sure there are always a few grains of Waikiki's golden sand between your toes while you're doing it.

Shangri La
Just 10 minutes beyond Waikiki and in the shadow of Diamond Head sits the former home of

Doris Duke, the American heiress once dubbed the richest girl in the world. After their honeymoon, Duke and husband washed up in Honolulu in 1935 and in a way, she never really left. (The husband, however, very quickly became an afterthought). She bought this piece of prime coastal real estate and, over nearly 60 years, gathered what is now a stunningly beautiful and culturally significant repository of Islamic art and decoration, including priceless furniture, carpets, panels, ceilings, tiles and mosaics; even whole rooms. Her legacy is also most poignantly seen in what's not there: an empty hole on a wall featuring a collection of decorative tiles. Duke liked to regularly change the tiles but died on the mainland before choosing a tile for the hole. It's



been left empty ever since.

Shangri La is open to the public for guided, small group tours. Because of high demand, tickets may need to be reserved several months in advance. For bookings contact the Honolulu Museum of Art, honoluluuseum.org.

The North Shore
There's a collective sigh on our bus as we come through the tunnel to Oahu's northern coast. With a view of jagged mountains edged by a beautiful coast, it's hard to believe I'd left my 18th floor hotel room on Waikiki only 25 minutes earlier. Here roadside vendors sell pineapples, bananas and nuts; primrose yellow wild hibiscus – Hawaii's state flower – and monkey paw trees fringe the road. This is the coast surfers



Hidden Hawaii: Laniakea Beach, top, and shrimps from Romy's, above.
Photos: Angela Walker

travel the world to visit in winter, when huge swells ripple down the Pacific from the north, causing the kind of waves that sort out the surfing men from the boys. It's also where turtles head in summer to take up residence at Laniakea Beach. Further along the coast you'll find Haleiwa town, notable for the world-famous-in-Hawaii snow cones from Matsumoto Shave Ice. There's usually a queue stretching down the road for one of these incredibly sweet confections of powder soft shaved ice and syrups in dozens of flavours. Haleiwa is also about three minutes from where the plane crashed in the television series *Lost*. Yes indeed, in the words of every tour bus driver in this area, if only they'd kept walking. It'd be worth hiring a car for the day to take in the North Shore in your own time and fit in stops for some rock jumping at Waimea Beach and shrimp and prawns at Romy's Kahuku Prawns & Shrimp. You'll smell the garlic in the air before you see this bright red roadside shack and the line of cars parked outside. You'll

A taste of Honolulu

Masaharu Morimoto, star of the long-running TV series *Iron Chef* and guest star at this month's Honolulu Food and Wine Festival, recently opened his own Honolulu outpost at The Modern, a swish new hotel near Ala Moana mall, making it a great place to stop before an afternoon's shopping. Overlooking the marina, the restaurant is cool and airy, with a fresh white and wasabi green interior. It's worth getting a table on the deck – or "lanai" – where the views over the marina and sea

breezes are worth sacrificing air-conditioning for. Best bets are the lunch sets – there's a choice of pork, cod, wagyu beef, pork belly and, my pick, the sashimi/sushi combi – the freshest fish I've ever tasted. Burgers, sandwiches and steaks are also available along with an arm's length list of sushi.

► Morimoto Waikiki, 1775 Ala Moana Boulevard, morimotowaikiki.com

Ed Kenney's dish of Maui pork with

local kale and lima beans, served at the From Farm to Table: A Makahiki Festival event held during the Hawaii Food and Wine Festival, was all the evidence I needed to believe the talk that Kenney is one of Hawaii's most exciting chefs, thanks to his focus on local, sustainable and organic food. Check it out at his restaurant Town in the hillside suburb of Kaimuki. And if Thai food is your passion, head for **Chai's Island Bistro**. Chef **Chai Chaowasaree** served one of the standout dishes – baby abalone with

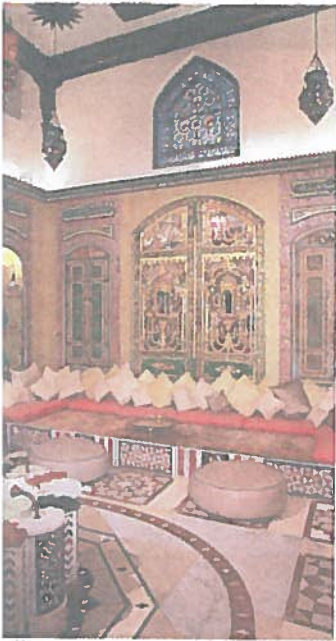
mushrooms in a curry sauce – at the festival's opening event, The Modern Dragon, which also featured culinary luminaries Masaharu Morimoto, Ming Tsai and king of the LA food truck scene, Roy Choi.

► Town, 3435 Wai'ale'ale Ave, townkaimuki.com
► Chai's Island Bistro, One Aloha Tower Drive, chaislandbistro.com

Check out: **Cafe Julia**, in the historic YWCA building in downtown Honolulu.

Gorgeous surroundings in the city's historic precinct. 1040 Richards St, cafejuliahawaii.com

Honolulu Museum of Art Pavilion Cafe. With an engaging mix of lively exhibitions and historic artefacts, the museum is well worth a visit. Its open-air cafe is surrounded by gardens, a waterfall and sculptures. Fresh Island ingredients are used in casual and contemporary dishes such as pastas, sandwiches and salads – the Nicoise is a knockout. 900 South Beretania St, honoluluuseum.org.



A world apart: The Turkish Room at Shangri-La.

©David Franzen, courtesy of Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art



Scan the main image with your smart phone for a photo gallery of Angela Walker's trip to Hawaii. For details on how to download the Link+ app see News, page 2.

find several shrimp trucks along this coast but at Romy's, they don't just cook prawns, they farm them too in ponds on surrounding land. This family-run business has been in operation for about 15 years and daily there are queues of people lined up for a meal: the house favourite is the butter and garlic saute prawns served with rice and dipping sauce, though the steamed prawns have their devoted followers too. Two "dining rooms" bookend the building: wooden tables and benches with a large awning overhead and sinks with running water to wash your inevitably sticky hands afterwards. It might not be flash but it's a fantastic experience. It's worth noting that it doesn't pay to rush a visit to Romy's. As the sign on the wall says: "This is not fast food. It is good food, as fast as we can make it." For dessert, pop across the road to Kahuku Farms for an ultra refreshing Plantation ice tea with a scoop of Lilikoi sorbet. If you have time, hop on their wagon train for a tour of their fruit farm, one of the oldest and most beautiful on the island.

Romy's Kahuku Prawns & Shrimp, 56-781 Kamehameha Highway, Kahuku, romyskahukuprawns.org
Kahuku Farms, 56-800 Kamehameha Hwy, kahukufarms.com

Wild Side Specialty Tours

Off Oahu's remote west coast, about an hour's drive from Honolulu, we are playing hide and seek with a pod of spinner dolphins, which have been leaping and pirouetting in the air alongside the catamaran Island Spirit. We're masked and flipped up, waiting for Captain Downing Braley to give us the sign to waddle down the steps and into the water and as soon as we have, they're off. Teasers. But third time lucky, two pods of dolphins stay close and let us swim above them, from a safe distance. Turns out each pod is protecting a baby, which is one of the reasons the dolphins will let us get only so close and certainly not alongside; the other reason being they're in their resting state. Crew members Kim and Mallory, two post-grad students in marine biology, have already educated us in dolphin behaviour and "wet-iquette" –

how to swim with wild dolphins – but it turns out not all operators are so considerate. A story in the local newspaper the next day detailed how increasing numbers of eco-tourists are driving dolphins out of safe habitats by disturbing their natural resting time. But as the only cruise company on Oahu run and founded by a marine biologist, Wild Side has an emphasis on protection, not exploitation. Just as appealing is their limit on passenger numbers – a maximum of 20 per cruise, usually fewer – and the number of cruises they do each day. Closer to shore we snorkel and at last I spot a Moorish Idol; on our return to shore a turtle mooches alongside. At other times of the year we could expect to see whales. As mornings go, it's been magic.

Wild Side Specialty Tours, 87-1286 Farrington Highway, Waiānae, sailhawaii.com. Tours are also available from Waikiki.

Angela Walker visited Oahu courtesy of Oahu Visitor Bureau and Air New Zealand.



Fact file

Where to stay: Hyatt Regency Waikiki: Location, location. With Waikiki beach just across the road and plenty of great shopping and eating in walking distance, this is a prime spot for a Honolulu stay. You're also right across the road from the trolley bus stops, ideal for sight-seeing on the cheap or an open-air ride to Ala Moana for a day's shopping.
How to get there: Air New Zealand flies non-stop to Honolulu from Auckland, with three return flights per week. Connections are available from Air New Zealand's other domestic ports. Air New Zealand offers four different in-flight economy product choices including; Seat, Seat + Bag, The Works and Works Deluxe. Business Class is also available from Auckland. For the airline's best airfares and holidays visit airnewzealand.co.nz. Fares from \$665: Seat one way ex Auckland.