



Bluegrass in the Kō'olāus

Acoustic jam sessions with
gorgeous views of mountains

BY KRISTEN NEMOTO

CALL IT COUNTRY, Folk or Hillbilly music—Bluegrass Hawaii will strum its own tunes in the heart of the Kō'olāus.

Imagine falling asleep to strumming banjo strings on a calm night along the Kō'olāu Range. Gentle callused fingers take turns as the velvet black sky blankets around those who drift away to the soothing lullabies. The die-hards remain awake and easily carry on the constant melody. Without the cool tropical weather and heavy smell of sea salt, the drifters may mistake their dream of deserted tumbleweeds and endless campfires for a reality.

You're thousands of miles away from the toe-tapping state of Kentucky, where the music genre has evolved and grown since the 1940s, yet here it is along the shores of Chinaman's Hat. Take any stringed instrument while

huddled around in a knee-filled circle, and you've got some good 'ol fashioned Bluegrass music.

"I'm not very good at guitar," says retired Navy veteran Mike Spengel, the unofficial official promoter for the non-profit Bluegrass Hawaii. "But I can sure sit there and strum along like I know how to play." Spengel, along with many Bluegrass Hawaii members, are modestly proficient musicians all born with a pensive ear and great sense of humor. "We just love the music and the company and that's all Bluegrass music is about."

Founded in May 2003 by bluegrass music journalist Caroline Wright, Bluegrass Hawaii has grown into a popular word-of-mouth weekly jam session on the islands of Oahu, Maui, Kauai and the Big Island. Twice

a year, for the past four years, Bluegrass Hawaii has conducted a weekendlong event called Bluegrass in the Ko'olaus. Corraling visitors from all over the island and many parts of the world, the fun, musician-bonding event brings pickers and strummers together to revel with new and familiar faces.

"It has all the right elements to inspire a lifelong love for this music... Great jams, super workshops, excellent company and the most beautiful location ever seen," says Wright, who's an experienced fan of "many many" Mainland bluegrass festivals. "At this event, none of the little things that keep people from connecting seem to exist. Differ-

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ences seem to melt away when there is bluegrass to be enjoyed."

Free and open to the public, Bluegrass in the Ko'olaus will take place in the Ho'omaluhia Botanical Gardens from Friday, April 26 to Monday, April 29. Bring your own instrument and a team of passionate musicians will be available and eager to teach, no matter what time of the day or night.

"I lasted until 2:30 in the morning," says Andy Char, a mandolin player and Chairman of the Bluegrass in the Ko'olaus event, who recalls last year's up-all-night marathon with a boyish smile. "Before I knew it, everyone's up and someone's playing while coffee is being made and we do it all over again. It's just a wonderful time."

For more information on Bluegrass in the Ko'olaus go to www.bluegrasshawaii.com.

The Legend That Inspires.

The Kahala Hotel & Resort congratulates our own Executive Chef Wayne Hirabayashi on being named Manager of the Year by the Hawaii Hotel & Lodging Association



For the past 14 years, Wayne Hirabayashi has been the moving force behind The Kahala's pre-eminence as Honolulu's premier dining experience. From the world famous buffet breakfast at Plumeria Beach House, to the award winning Hoku's, to a wedding banquet, to the Julia Child 100th Birthday celebration last August, the culinary skills of Chef Wayne is the stuff of legends.

Chef Wayne is the heart and soul of The Kahala. He inspires young apprentices to dig deep into their training and their Hawaii roots to excel in their art. He inspires by setting high standards in the kitchen and out. He inspires by sharing the credit and the limelight. He inspires by his dedication and his hard work to give it his best, each and every dish.

Chef Wayne, like The Kahala, is a legend that inspires. We thank all our patrons for their appreciation of his culinary style and know that you join us in congratulating Wayne on this well deserved recognition. Hana Hou, Wayne!



The Legend Inspires. The Promise Continues.



For dining reservations please call 739.8760 or email restaurants@kahalaresort.com. www.kahalaresort.com
 Tweet Chef Wayne your congratulations #hanaHouChefWayne@kahalaresort