

Rugby carnival adding to Hawaii's reputation for active adventures

Next year's World Vintage Rugby Carnival is expected to boost visitor numbers as well as raise the profile of Hawaii's islands, which are increasingly becoming known for active adventures, rather than just beautiful beaches and retail therapy.



Image credit: www.photolibrary.com

By Lee Mylne

SUN, sea, sand and scrums are alluring prospects for rugby aficionados, as Hawaii prepares to host the 2012 World Vintage Rugby Carnival next year.

The seven-day event, to be held in Honolulu in September 2012, is the first of its kind to be held in the United States and is expected to bring more than 1500 veteran players and supporters to the islands.

"We look forward to hosting this event that will increase Hawaii's sporting presence on a global level and assist in boosting our tourism economy," said Hawaii Tourism Oceania country manager for Australia, Helen Williams.

"Sporting events such as this not

only have a positive economic impact on tourism for Hawaii but also increase exposure of the destination within key markets.

"With large numbers of participants originating from Australia/New Zealand, HTO will be actively promoting this event in this market," she said.

More than 60 teams from countries including Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, England, France, Spain, Germany, South America, Australia, and South Africa are expected to participate in the 2012 Rugby Carnival. There will be two categories for participation, men ages 35-45 years and men ages 46 years and over. Previous carnivals have been held in Ireland (2004), Argentina (2006), New Zealand (2008), and South Africa (2010).



Image credit: HTA/Tor Johnson

Entries from Australia include the Southern Downs Raging Rodents, Burleigh Bodgies, Bundaburg Rumruckers, Condamine Codgers, Sunnybank Puffin Dragons, Bustard Eagles and the Manly Steamers.

The carnival includes three playing days, two major functions, an optional midweek trip and a comprehensive sightseeing and activity program which is unique to Hawaii. Games in Hawaii will be played at the famous Queen Kapiolani Park under Diamond Head, just a stone's throw from the beaches of Waikiki.

As well as sporting events such as this, Hawaii is also building on a growing reputation for adventure tourism. Hiking on live volcanoes, zip-lining, kayaking, skydiving, and horse-riding are just some of the many activities that show visitors there's

much more to do in Hawaii than lying on the beach or shopping.

Williams says these are the kinds of activities that are increasingly attracting visitors to the Aloha State.

Long renowned for its surfing, the long list of activities on offer throughout the islands also extends to such things as golf, hiking, snorkelling and diving, and mountain biking – all popular with the younger "Gen Y" market.

All the islands offer different levels of activities – with Kauai and the Big Island having the reputation for offering the most adventurous activities, such as zip-lining, kayaking and hiking.

Adrenaline seekers can test their nerve by zip-lining on Kauai or on Maui, where you can combine a short hike with up to five zipline crossings on the Haleakala volcano. Hiking on the lava fields of the Volcano National Park on the Big Island is also an accessible adventure for most people. Other Big Island adventures include diving with manta rays.

On Maui, windsurfing and parasailing are also popular activities. Maui's Hōkūkū Beach is famous among windsurfers, who have made the charming town of Pā'ia their capital. Rentals and instruction are available in Pā'ia and other locations around the island.

Maui and Ohau also offer a range less strenuous activities such as golf, and many activities are suitable for all ages and levels of fitness.



Couple watch magma stream into the ocean on Hawaii's Big Island (credit: HTA / Tor Johnson)

selling *Hawaii*

‘Lots of adventurous options’ for Hawaii

IN FOUR days on the island of Kauai, Andrew Young managed to fit in plenty of action – kayaking, mountain tubing, biking and sailing.

It was an experience that Andrew, a travel advisor at STA Travel in Melbourne’s Swanston Street, says makes it much easier to recommend activities to his clients.

“Our clients are mostly young people and they are not the market to go and relax on the beach,” he says. “It is all about doing something for an adrenaline rush or that they can tell their friends about when they get back.

“And having been there, when someone wants to go to a destination you have experienced – and they know you haven’t just read about it in a brochure or guide book – it makes it so much easier to talk to them about it and to sell it to them.”

Andrew says Kauai, where only three per cent of the island is developed, has a lot of natural beauty and is the perfect place for active adventures like hiking, or kayaking on the Wailua or Hanalei rivers.

His own adventures included a three-hour bike ride down the Waimea Canyon – after being driven to the top – and sailing on a catamaran off the Napali Coast on the north shore of Kauai, where pods of spinner dolphins rode the wake of the boat.

The group also went mountain tubing on Kauai’s historic man-made

canals and tunnels, built as irrigation systems for the sugar cane fields and now used as an adventurous way to access the island’s tropical interior around Lihue.

Andrew says there are still many other adventurous ways to explore Hawaii. “With the Australian dollar the way it is at the moment, Hawaii is such a good value destination. For anyone looking for adventure, there are lots of other options, like horse-riding, motorbike or ATV rides, and zip-lining.

“My parents have just come back from Hawaii, too, and they had a helicopter ride over the whole island and said it was just amazing,” he says.

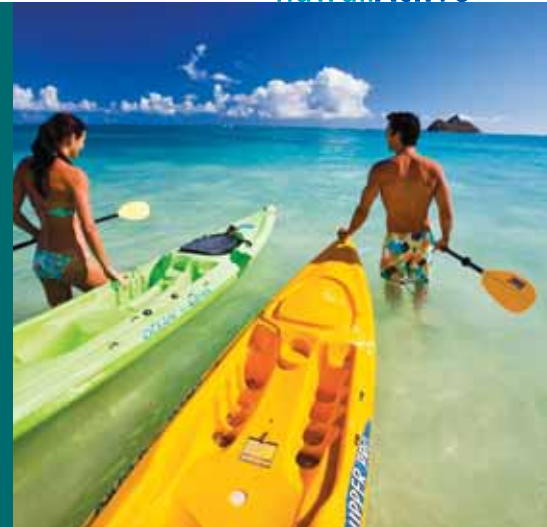


Image credit: HTA/Tor Johnson



Embassy Suites’ package adds boogie boards

BOOGIE boards and inflatable rafts are just some of the activities on offer at Embassy Suites Waikiki Beach Walk – perfect for the kids while their parents can either join in the action or relax on the beach.

Embassy Suites-Waikiki Beach Walk is “suite” on family fun – its newest offering a four-night package priced from \$US289 per night.

“The new ‘Family-Fun’ package is a parent’s dream; all they need to do is make it here and we provide the rest,” said the resort’s director of sales and marketing, Susan Koehler. “As Oahu’s only-all suite resort, we already present our guests with free full cooked-to-order breakfast and manager’s reception daily – add on a pizza dinner and movie, beach chairs, boogie boards and trolley rides – it’s as close to all-inclusive as you can get in Waikiki.”

The package also includes two days of unlimited rides on three lines of the Waikiki Trolley for two adults and two children. Ride the Pink Line for access to hot shopping spots in Waikiki and Ala Moana Centre, learn about Honolulu’s roots on the historic sightseeing tour on the Red Line, or take in the beauty of the islands with a scenic tour along Diamond Head. A manager’s reception is held each night, with drinks, appetisers, and – on select evenings – live Hawaiian entertainment.

A four-night minimum stay applies for this package. Rates are per suite, per night and taxes are not included.



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HAWAII



This month Creative Holidays shares some tips & recommendations to make the most of a Hawaiian getaway!

Recommendations:

- Hire a convertible and explore the islands in style
- Spend a few nights on the North Shore of Oahu at Turtle Bay Resort
- Save a few hours for outlet shopping in Waikiki
- Add a side trip to Maui, The Big Island or Kauai or take a cruise and see all the islands in 1 trip!

For something different:

- Take a whale watching cruise & see these magnificent creatures just off Waikiki
- Enjoy a Hawaiian Luau and "Ha: Breath of Life" show at the Polynesian Cultural Center
- Stay with the celebrities & swim with a dolphin at The Kahala Hotel & Resort just 10 minutes from Waikiki

Packages can be booked via *i-CREATE* or by calling 131 222



Surf with Outrigger's 'Ocean Promotion'

SPLASH is the word to kick off Outrigger Reef on the Beach's "Ocean Promotion" package.

Starting at \$US309 for two guests, water babies can hang 10 with stand-up surfing lessons as part of their holiday.

"We wanted to provide our guests with a real feel for the Pacific and the activities that the ocean has to offer," said director of sales and marketing Patsy Narimatsu. "The ocean has always been an important part of Hawaiian culture, whether for food or work, but especially for play.

"By connecting with the waves on a surf board, visitors will discover their own personal connection with the sea with this water-whimsical package."

For guests looking for a more active ocean adventure, stand-up paddle



Image credit: HTA/Tor Johnson

surfing, or "SUP," is another option. Waikiki is the ideal place to learn how to stand-up paddle surf, an emerging

global water sport with a deep Hawaiian history. Using an oversized surfboard for stability and a long paddle for propulsion and steering, no previous experience is required and it is a great activity for families to enjoy together. All instructors are certified and trained in ocean and surf safety.

"With the stand-up surf lessons valued at \$100 each, our 'Ocean Promotion' package offers great fun and great value to our guests," said Narimatsu.

Guests pay no resort fees. Instead the "Fee Free Escape" program offers a range of free amenities including free high-speed Internet access, use of the 24-hour fitness centre and various cultural activities.

The "Ocean Promotion" package is valid until December 21.

Yacht safari focuses on 'exclusive authentic experiences'

CLOSE relationships developed with local families on Molokai give guests aboard American Safari Cruises' yacht *Safari Explorer* (pictured) exclusive authentic experiences while sailing the Hawaiian Islands.

From guided hikes to learning how to "listen to the land" to joining a local family repairing ancient taro terraces, shore-side tours offer passengers a unique opportunity to experience Hawaiian culture.

The 36-passenger yacht runs seven and 10-night active, adventure "un-cruises" between Maui and the Big Island from November 2011 to May 2012, visiting Molokai, Lanai and Molokini.

"Our guests like to immerse themselves in the destination, learn about local culture and history from the people who live there, and actively explore the environment," says executive vice president of sales and marketing, Tim Jacox. "We've connected with the community on Molokai to help create an authentic experience with opportunities to visit residents on their land and in their homes."

As the only overnight yacht or passenger ship currently visiting Molokai, guests aboard the *Safari Explorer* can choose from exclusive included tours highlighting the local culture created especially for their visit.

During the two-day visit to Molokai, guests can also hike the switchbacks of the Kalaupapa Trail, enjoy a mule ride, bike ride, or join a guided hike to the rainforest.

Flexible itineraries focus on the leeward side of the eastern-most



Hawaiian islands. Guests can be as active as they like and explore secluded coves and isolated beaches by foot, kayak, paddle board, sailboat, mountain bike and motorised skiff excursions.

Fares start at \$US4995 per person (twin share) for the seven-night cruise and \$US6495 for the 10-night cruise.

Australian agents can book through wholesalers Adventure World or Alaska Bound, or direct with American Safari Cruises, www.americansafaricruises.com.

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Creative Holidays' Maui Mini-Stay combines adventure and sightseeing

CREATIVE Holidays is offering a two-night "Introduction to Maui" package, combining the best of Maui's adventure and sightseeing options, until March 31, 2012.

The Maui Mini-Stay is priced from \$392 per person, twin share (land only) and includes accommodation at the Outrigger Aina Nalu, Lahaina, in a garden view room, and a day trip on the Hana Adventure Tour, travelling along Maui's eastern coast to several state parks, lookouts and natural pools.

"Hawaii is traditionally known as a holiday destination which caters for travellers after a relaxing break, however, it is also the ideal location for clients who want to get adventurous and get their adrenalin pumping while on holidays," says Creative Holidays managing director Paul McGrath.

"From testing their skill at surfing, snorkelling, windsurfing, hiking or horse riding, or even experiencing first-hand a live active volcano, Hawaii is the perfect destination for clients wishing to try something outside of their comfort zone.

"Creative Holidays offers clients fantastic adventurous sightseeing day tours, which are a great way for consultants to increase commission on packages. Clients have the chance to experience the natural swimming pools and waterfalls of Maui, take part in an educational hike to the summit of Diamond Head, or venture on a day trip to The Big Islands Volcano National Park, where they will be able to walk over the rough terrain of a lava field and experience the power of nature first-hand."

Creative's Alamo car hire option, starting from \$67 a day, also makes a road trip worth considering. "Half the fun of going on an adventure is the road trip itself, and car hire in Hawaii gives clients the flexibility to stop off and explore the national parks and breathtaking beaches each of the islands have to offer," says McGrath.



Credit: HTA/Ron Dahlquist

Windsurfing Maui's north shore

HA marks seven years on Sydney-Honolulu route

HAWAIIAN Airlines is celebrating seven years of services between Sydney and Honolulu.

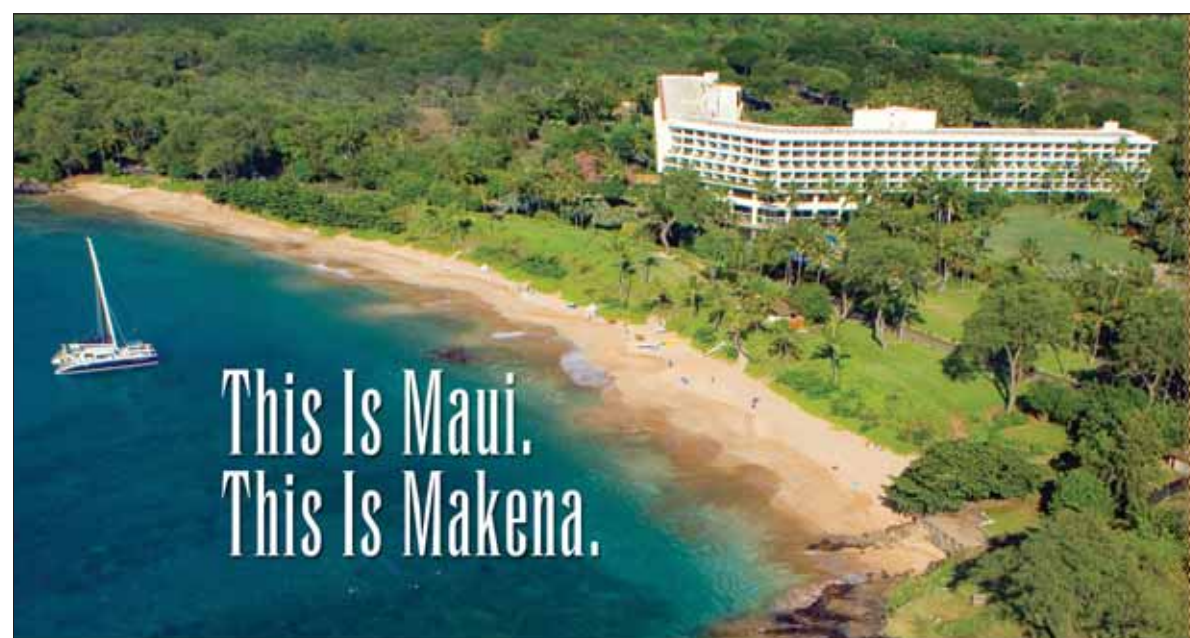
The airline's general manager sales and marketing Australia, Sherilyn Robinson, says the airline's arrival in the market in mid-2004 reignited Australian interest in Hawaii as a holiday destination and was the catalyst for a resurgence in travel to the islands.

"Hawaii is now one of the hottest international holiday destinations for Australians," Robinson says.

"The price of accommodation and holiday packages in the islands is the most competitive it has been for many years."

Hawaiian operates the Sydney-Honolulu route with full-service Boeing 767-300ERs.

A partnership with Virgin Australia allows it to offer fares from 18 destinations around Australia, with same day connections in Sydney.



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Be 'spa-ntaneous' with Kapalua Villas flexible package

THE Kapalua Villas is offering a new package that allows travellers to Maui to be "spa-ntaneous". The "Golf and Spa" package, priced from \$US499 a night, allows The Kapalua Villas guests to choose between the fairway and a facial.

Located at the Kapalua Resort in West Maui, the package allows guests to select their own activity each day – a great option for guests with different interests.

"The Kapalua Villas' 'Golf and Spa' package is a great opportunity for travellers who want to experience some of the best activities and amenities that Kapalua Resort has to offer," said The Kapalua Villas general manager TJ Oesterling.

Valid until December 19, the package includes a daily choice of golf or spa treatments.

Makena resort, more than just golf

WHETHER a golfer or not, Makena Beach and Golf Resort on Maui offers all guests a chance to take part in activities of all kinds.

While the 18-hole Robert Trent Jones Jr-designed golf course – rated in the top 75 courses in North America by *Golf Digest* magazine – is the star attraction, there's plenty to keep others happy too.

As well as the golf course, driving range and putting greens, the resort has a six-court tennis club, two swimming pools, a fitness centre, and activities centre with kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding, outrigger canoe rides, snorkelling, scuba diving, volleyball, and croquet.

For the less active, there's a day spa with both indoor and oceanfront massages and beauty treatment cabanas, and the long white sand Malauka Beach.

Makena Golf Course is the only resort course on south Maui. It is one of the last courses on Maui to remain in its original, natural state, offering panoramic views of rugged native kiawe and wili wili trees, ancient Hawaiian rock walls, natural streams and gullies, and abundant wildlife. It's as much a nature walk as it is a challenging golf outing. The course is a rugged, natural test of golf – winding up, down, over and around the verdant foothills of Maui's 3057 metre-high dormant volcano, Mt Haleakala.



A new fleet of Precedent Club Cars is available, with on-board GPS systems to assist with golfing strategies and personal food and beverage ordering capabilities to help avoid delays for snacks and beverages while you play.

Rates start at \$US399 (plus taxes) per night twin share, including accommodation, use of a new state-of-the-art golf car with GPS, and free same day replay. Non-golfers get a \$50

daily credit to use toward other resort activities.

Every guest room and suite at the Makena Beach and Golf Resort has ocean views and furnished private lanais. The A-shaped hotel is built around an acre-large, open-air atrium that harbours a traditional Japanese garden with waterfall and stream features, and a large koi pond that meanders under bridges and along walkways.

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Get active at Keauhou Beach Resort

SNORKELLING or hitting the tennis courts or fitness centre are just some of the many activities on offer at Keauhou Beach Resort, on the Big Island of Hawaii.

Guests can snorkel at Kahluu Bay Beach Park, right next door to the resort, which is the best snorkelling beach on the Big Island. With easy beach access from the resort, guests can swim with tropical fishes all day long with snorkel gear rented from a nearby shop.

For those who want to stay active and healthy during their holiday, the resort has tennis racquets and balls for rent, and the fitness centre is free to all guests. And after a long active day of activities or exploring the island, there's a pool to cool off in.

Many of the resort's activities are free, including cultural games and activities such as Makahiki (ancient Hawaiian games), ukulele lessons, lauhala weaving, and Hawaiian language lessons. Families with young children will enjoy spotting the honu (Hawaiian Green Sea Turtle) that swim in the tide pools and sunbathe on the rocks.

Rates start from \$US139 per night. Guests who book a minimum three-night stay are eligible for a free cultural tour (valued at \$US40



per person) held every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 10.30am and 2pm. The Huaka'i Ali'i Tour is a 90 minute tour of significant cultural sites found within the resort grounds, which includes a replica of King Kalakaua's Summer Cottage and three sacred heiau (stone structures that once served as ancient Hawaiian temples), two of which have recently been restored.