

EXPLORING KAPOLEI

Originally dubbed the “Second City,” Kapolei has grown steadily over the past few decades. Residents and townies alike have witnessed the construction of a new highway offramp, as well as sprouting neighborhoods and even a Target and Costco. Makakilo, Campbell Industrial Park, Ko Olina and Kalaeloa—or Barbers Point, as many still call it—carry the 96707 Kapolei zip code. We discovered 27 reasons to head out west.

By JENNIFER CHING, TIFFANY HILL, CHRISTINE HITT, SHEILA SARHANGI AND JENNY QUILL



En Fuego Grill & Poke

» **WHILE ITS NAME IS SPANISH** for “on fire,” En Fuego Grill & Poke’s cuisine is definitely local: garlic chicken, grilled poke, short ribs and beer-battered fish are among the eatery’s most popular items. “We sell a lot of fish and chips, garlic ‘ahi and pork chops,” says owner Ross Okuhara, who opened En Fuego in 2003. For baby’s first birthday or graduation parties, the restaurant also caters, with à la carte pans of everything from kâlua pig to mahimahi.

590 Farrington Highway, Suite 534, 674-8805, enfuegogrill.com.

PHOTO: DAVID CROXFORD

TOKYO NOODLE SHOP

» **DINERS AT TOKYO NOODLE HOUSE** don’t seem to mind the restaurant’s no-frills ambience. The tables at this small eatery are almost always packed with customers slurping down seafood ramen, digging into shrimp-fried rice or biting into pork-fried noodles. Perhaps the best deal on the already budget-friendly menu (almost everything costs less than \$8) is the not-so-mini mini ramen set, which comes with a

steaming bowl of ramen, a side of rice and four meat-and-vegetable gyoza for about \$7. 590 Farrington Highway, Suite 510, 692-9888.

PHOTO: DAVID CROXFORD



PHOTO: ELYSE BUTLER AND MATT MALLAMS

Kazoku Sushi

» **“We wanted to offer** a more traditional, sit-down sushi experience, with conveyor-belt pricing,” says owner Melody Chin.

“Customers can have the variety right in front of them, plus it’s fast.” On a recent visit, the place was hopping, as customers helped themselves to dozens of plates circling the double-looped conveyor belt—cold tofu, gyoza, edamame, chicken teriyaki and specialty sushi rolls were among the day’s selections. The combination bento, which comes with two choices of entrées, salad, rice and miso soup for \$15, was the lunch of choice for several of our fellow diners. 338 Kamokila Blvd., Suite 102, 674-8844.

Why I ♥ Kapolei



MAEDA TIMSON

Chair, Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board

ITS UNIQUENESS

“There is no place in Hawai‘i where a city was built with the community involved. Yeah, we have growing pains, but that comes with building a new city. There’s a lot of jobs, there’s a lot of opportunities. Our future is so bright in Kapolei, I wear sunglasses every day!”

THE NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD

“The neighborhood board gets to see projects before they happen and is able to comment.” Those comments, she explains, can help solidify or make the developer think twice about project plans.

THE LATEST PROJECT

Kroc Center: “It’s a huge community center: activities from swimming, daycare, seniors activities, cultural events. It’s an opportunity physically, culturally and spiritually.”



HANA SUSHI

» **HANA SUSHI IS ONE OF THE FEW** Kapolei eateries where you might feel underdressed in board shorts and a T-shirt; the place is popular with local business people looking for a relaxed, non-fast-food lunch. The day we dropped by, everyone was digging into piles of golden, crunchy shrimp tempura, while we opted for sushi, including a spicy salmon, shrimp tempura and avocado maki. The menu is huge, with a page of appetizers that includes spicy calamari and *age* shumai; salads; and entrées such as chicken katsu, teriyaki beef, miso butterfish and *tonkatsu*. 590 Farrington Highway, 674-9777.

THE MEANING BEHIND THE NAME

Kapolei takes its name from a volcanic cone, Pu‘u O Kapolei. The military later built Fort Barrette there, and today it is an archery range (see page 53). In Hawaiian, Kapolei means “beloved Kapo.” Kapo was a sister of Pele.

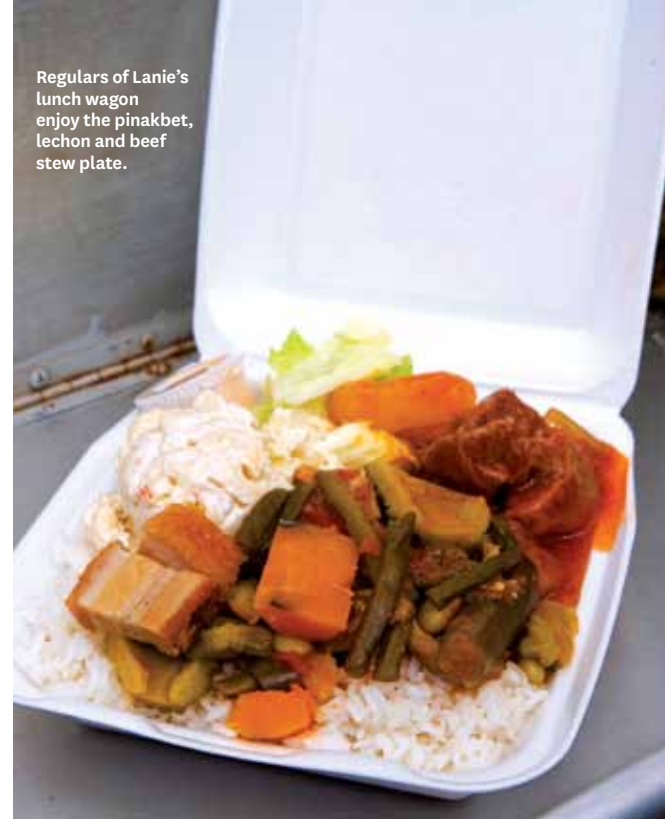
Hapa Grill

» **It’s a family affair** at Hapa Grill: Owner Shannon Putnam purchased the five-year-old restaurant, formerly Jurison’s Westside Café, from her uncle and runs it with the help of her parents, Richard and Ellen Tangonan, the retired owners of Sassy Kassy’s lunch wagon. “My mom makes her homemade brownies for the restaurant,” says Putnam. “My father makes his teriyaki sauce for us. We have certain elements of our menu that really draw on their experience and specialties.” The diverse selections include such breakfast staples as Belgian waffles and eggs Benedict; pastas; salads; Sassy Kassy’s teriyaki; and local favorites like mo-chiko chicken. 590 Farrington Highway, Suite 539, 674-8400, hapagrill.net.

PHOTO: ELYSE BUTLER AND MATT MALLAMS



Norma Dileon, owner and chef of Norma 2, serves up plate lunches to hard working customers.



Regulars of Lanie’s lunch wagon enjoy the pinakbet, lechon and beef stew plate.

Grindz on the Go

» **Campbell Industrial Park’s** lunch wagons cater to area workers hungry for heaping portions of cheap, ‘ono grindz. BY JENNY QUILL



MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, Kalaeloa Boulevard, the main artery bisecting Campbell Industrial Park, is humming with the sounds of industry—the rat-a-tat-tat of heavy machinery, the roar of semis rumbling down the road and the sizzle of meat on the grill. What’s that you say? Meat? Sizzling? Yup, steak, ribs, pork chops and just about anything else you can think of—from fried noodles to fried-rice omelets—is being cooked up at the dozen or so lunch wagons lining the bustling boulevard.

Campbell’s lunch-wagon scene has flourished in recent years, growing from a handful of trucks—**Elena’s**, **Rose’s** and **Lanie’s** lunch wagons have all operated here for 20-plus years—to some 15 to 20 chow carts. “We’ve been in business for about 25 years, and at this location for about 10,” says Norma Dileon, the chef and owner of Norma 2, which serves such Filipino specialties as pork *guisantes* (pork and peas) and *dimiguan* (pork blood stew). “When we started out here, there were about three wagons.”

From 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., hordes of workers wearing oil-stained coveralls and scuffed work boots pour out of the surrounding buildings and descend upon the wagons. “People in this area are looking for quality and quantity,” says Robin Ganir, the owner of **Ganir Catering & Da Red Lunch Wagon**, which is popular for its broke da mout’ daily specials, like teriyaki beef and grilled shrimp. “The boys around here can

put away a lunch plate, easy.”

With Kapolei Commons and its still-limited dining options a five- to 10-minute drive from Campbell, the lunch wagons have the upper hand in terms of expediency. “Most guys only have 30 minutes for their lunch breaks. The lunch trucks are convenient for them,” says Junior, the grill master at **Samantha’s Lunch Wagon**, which is known for its flavorful steak-and-onion plate. There’s the added bonus of ample street parking: Semi-truck drivers literally pull over next to their favorite lunch wagons, hop out, order and are back on the road in less than 10 minutes.

While there’s definitely a sense of competition among the wagon owners, these are friendly rivalries, and everyone I chat with is happy to recommend another truck’s food, as soon as they’re done telling you why theirs is the best. Fortunately, there’s enough business to go around, and each wagon has its own rabidly loyal following. “People have their favorites,” says an employee of Precision Truss. “I only go to Samantha’s.”

At **Rose’s Lunchwagon**, which sells Chinese food, owner Rose Ha greets one of her regulars, a city sanitation worker, by asking him if he wants his usual—chicken and mushrooms. “He comes here every day,” says Ha. It’s also a reminder that the food is good. “The food is what makes the lunch wagons popular,” says Ada, of **Kristen’s lunch wagon**. “Our prices are good, too.”



PHOTOS: DAVID CROXFORD

Chun Wah Kam Noodle Factory

» **THE KAPOLEI LOCATION** is big on style, with oversize, custom-made pendant lights and dark-wood and red accents. “Kapolei is a growing city and it’s a beautiful city, and it fit in with the type of architecture we were looking to put up,” says manager Elliott Chun, whose father, Nelson, founded the company. The restaurant is known for its hits-the-spot Chinese food, including perennial favorites such as garlic chicken, fried saimin and Hong Kong chow mein. Diners should also try the manapua, which are available in such inventive flavors as Thai curry chicken and sweet potato. 885 Kamokila Blvd., 693-8838, chunwahkam.com.

PHOTOS: ELYSE BUTLER AND MATT MALLAMS, DAVID CROXFORD





Pho & Company

» **The first sign that this place** would live up to the hype (several friends had recommended it) was the six-top of Honolulu Police Department's finest, all gobbling up steaming bowls of pho. The second sign was the heavenly aroma that greeted us at the door. The third sign was the prompt service—we were seated and given menus in under a minute. Then there was the food: The round eye steak pho came with a generous portion of rice noodles and several cuts of tender steak, and the broth, which tasted divinely of beefy, spicy goodness, was quickly spooned up. 890 Kamokila Blvd., 692-9833.

PHOTO: ELYSE BUTLER AND MATT MALLAMS

PLACES: UH WEST O'AHU

After more than 30 years in the making, the new UH West O'ahu (UHWO) campus will finally be built in Kapolei beginning next month. Its first five buildings—all meeting LEED standards—include classrooms, a campus center, a library and an administrative building, to open in fall 2012. Developers also hope to start building a 250-room dormitory. "We want to fill a niche in [higher] education in Hawai'i," says Chancellor Gene Awakuni. "UHWO will be a regional leader." The four-year-degree campus will offer majors that complement those available at UH Mānoa, such as culinary management, healthcare and elementary education.

AZUL

» **LOCATED AT THE JW MARRIOTT Ihilani Resort & Spa**, Azul is a special-occasion heavy hitter.

The interior smartly takes advantage of its resort surroundings, with dining spaces that open up to lagoons, tropical gardens and a cozy lānai brightened by tiki torches. The focus here is on using fresh, locally grown ingredients—the Hāmākua heirloom tomato stack with Nalo Farms' fresh sweet basil is one example, as is a Hawaiian 'ahi tartare with black truffle and taro chips. The hits of the evening included a ridiculously tender eight-ounce cut of Wagyu beef, and the Taste of Azul menu—a choice of antipasti, an entrée and a dessert for \$45. 92-1001 Olani St., 679-0079, ihilani.com.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF AZUL



MOMENTUM TATTOO

» **WHEN WE WALKED INTO MOMENTUM TATTOO**, we had to make sure that it was, in fact, a place to get inked. The walls are white, the floor is wood and the place is spotless. Now that's our kind of tattoo parlor. Self-taught artist and owner James Hoffman has been tattooing for 13 years, and says most of his clients request local designs. "We do a lot of tribal tattoos and Polynesian sleeves," he explains. The shop also offers piercings, if metal is more your thing. 590 Farrington Highway, Suite 511, 674-9851, momentumtattoohawaii.com.

PHOTO: ELYSE BUTLER AND MATT MALLAMS



Simply Organized

» **WHETHER YOU'RE A NEAT FREAK** or Martha Stewart's worst nightmare, Simply Organized is *the* place to go when clutter is your nemesis. Too many shoes? A floor-to-ceiling "shoe tree" holds 30 pairs in one foot of space. Can't see all the food in your pantry? The store boasts an entire wall of see-through food containers, from fat to skinny, glass to plastic. "In Hawai'i, our living spaces are so small," says buyer Michelle Suzuki. "The owners saw a need for a store that offers solutions for our tight spaces." (They also own City Mill; in-store déjà vu explained.) 889 Kamokila Blvd., 693-8888, simplyorganized.net.

PLACES: FAMILY COURT COMPLEX

This February, the state judicial system introduced its newest facility—the family court building in Kapolei. Judges heard the court's first hearing in March. The \$133-million building features art glass windows, stone sculptures and the latest technology, allowing for video conferencing. For more than 20 years, family court was located in the Circuit Court building in Honolulu.

WESTSIDE DIVE & TACKLE

PHOTOS: SHEILA SARHANGI

» **"I GREW UP NEXT TO THE OCEAN**—fishing, diving, surfing," says Kris Tyler (pictured), who was raised in Florida, but spent summers with family on Maui. "Ten years ago I wanted a change, so I decided to move to O'ahu." In April 2008, Tyler opened Westside Dive & Tackle, which offers scuba and snorkel equipment, but specializes in all things spearfishing, from gear to repairs. A large cooler near the register also holds frozen bait—tako, squid and small fish—for on-the-go fishermen. Interested in spearfishing? This summer, Tyler debuts a two-day group class for beginners aptly called, "Spectator to Spearo." 590 Farrington Highway, Suite 504, 228-2295, westsidespearfishing.com.



HIC Outlet

» **At the HIC Outlet**, it's typical to see new hats, clothes and backpacks at a fraction of the retail price. "About 60 percent of the store is all marked-down items, either because the regular-priced stores didn't sell them, or our vendors like Hurley and Roxy wanted to bring in special items at a discount," says store manager Lehua Aiu. On a recent visit, we found colorful beach dresses and men's T-shirts between 25 percent to 75 percent off. Did someone say tax refund? 590 Farrington Highway, Suite 529, 674-4001, hicsurf.com.