

➤ OCC MEMBER PROFILE

ESTABLISHED 1971

LOCALS

BY LESA GRIFFITH
PHOTOS BY MATT HEIRAKUJI

ONLY

MEMBERS *Alana Kobayashi Pakkala* AND *Jonathan McManus*
HAVE TRANSFORMED AN OUTRIGGER NEIGHBOR.

The Kaimana Beach Hotel opened in 1963, one year before the Outrigger Canoe Club settled into its new home a few doors down.

Designed by Detroit-based architecture firm Laucomer Associates, which had an office in Honolulu, it has long been a refuge from the hustle and bustle of Waikīkī, set on an historic slice of land. Its venerable hau tree, with its branches creating a green canopy, famously shaded a lounging Robert Louis Stevenson (he completed his novel *The Master of Ballantrae* while in the islands), when he was a guest at the modest, ramshackle San Souci Hotel that operated there from 1893 to 1895.

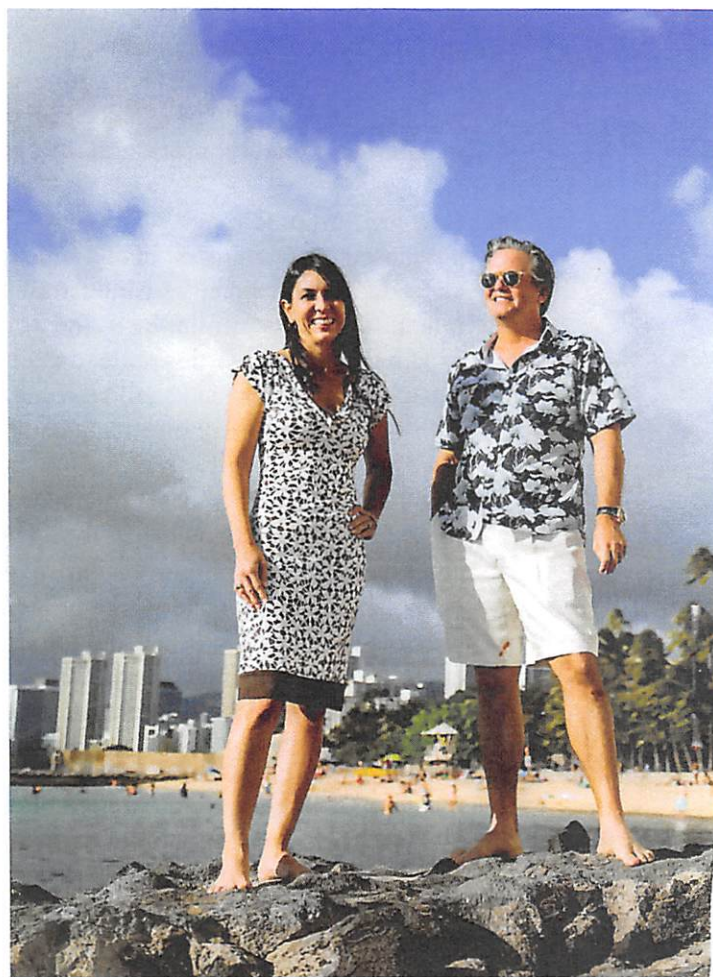
After a recent change in ownership, the hotel reopened as the Kaimana Beach Hotel on Dec. 22, heralding a new era for the Club's iconic neighbor—with an all-local team, including two Club members, behind its rebirth.

Alana Kobayashi Pakkala, COO of real estate development and investment company Kobayashi Group, and Jonathan McManus, founder of hospitality management and development firm Private Label Collection, are long time friends who had been looking for a project to work on together.

"The Outrigger is the only beachfront location that I go to," says Pakkala. "The thing I love about the Club is the community, of course, and also the serene, casual experience—it is second to none." It is a quality she and McManus wanted to echo in the Kaimana Beach Hotel.

Pakkala points out that the entire stretch of Waikīkī is home to only nine oceanfront hotels. Of those, only four are fee simple, and of those, only one is locally owned—the Kaimana Beach Hotel. "We think that's an important change, especially as we are all seeing the effects of the pandemic and as we look to the future of tourism," says Pakkala.

She explains that BlackSand Capital, the real



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estate and private equity firm led by her sibling, B.J. Kobayashi, purchased the hotel's land in 2016 (from the McInerny Foundation) and then the building in 2018 from New Otani Co. BlackSand Capital counts amongst its investors a diverse base of local pension funds, legacy land trusts, and institutional investors.

“It's special to think that the great work Jon and [general manager] Ha'aheo [Zablan] are doing running the hotel is also at the same time benefitting such a large part of our local work force,” says Pakkala. At a time when Hawai'i has been severely impacted by the pandemic, it is a step for economic progress when a major business's dollars flow back into local coffers instead of out of state.

The project joins another member-initiated hotel endeavor in the neighborhood—the MacNaughton Group, led by Duncan, Ian, and Brett MacNaughton and Emily Reber Porter, purchased the Lotus Hotel in 2019.

When McManus was born, his parents lived on Coconut Avenue. And as the son of John McManus, the prolific restaurateur whose venues included the Shorebird Beach Broiler, he grew up in the food-and-beverage business and knows Waikiki well. “The neighborhood is the best part of Waikiki—that's why it's the Gold Coast,” says McManus, who serves on the Club's Food & Beverage Committee and has a son on the volleyball team. And he and Pakkala take the hotel's place in the community seriously.

The reimagined hotel is the result of “a lot of listening” to community stakeholders, says McManus, and now he will be busy stepping back to watch how residents use the property, making adjustments along the way as ownership and management determine the right direction for the future of the hotel.

Part of the community includes the Outrigger Canoe Club. The Kaimana's beach-house chic rooms and suites can be a good option for non-resident members looking to stay near the Club, as well as for members who have visitors in town.



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“What a great thing to be able to walk or swim over to the Outrigger,” says McManus.

Today the Kaimana Beach Hotel’s lobby is an airy space that doubles down on its mid-century history. As with OCC’s iconic Ossipoff-designed club house, you can see clear through the building to the water, creating an ocean connection the minute you mount the steps from your car. The chic-lanai vibe was created by the Henderson Design Group, which successfully translated its residential work for the hotel. Meanwhile the revamped restaurant, now known simply as Hau Tree, is drawing new diners with its beach-friendly, seafood-forward menu.

What McManus calls a salon wall is a mosaic of photos and art by resident creatives such as Yoshi Tanaka, setting an upbeat *Ride the Wild Surf* tone.

“Having largely local artists on the salon wall encapsulates the way Alana and I imagined the Kaimana as reconnecting with the community,” says McManus. “Every artist on that wall feels like they’ve had a hand in doing that. And we’ve included that kind of connection with every department in the hotel. We’ve approached it from a different perspective. On any given night, it’s fantastic to see people living life again. That’s the spirit of Kaimana.”

The team had the building’s frontage repaired, and manager Zablan reached out to the area’s lifeguards and invited them to consider the hotel as an extension of their towers, strengthening the hotel’s bond with the beach.

One of the most impressive aspects of the Kaimana Beach Hotel’s turnaround was that it was done in three weeks.

BlackSand Capital took over the asset on December 1st and the renovation team only had 17 days to



refresh the arrival lobby and transform the Hau Tree dining experience. “We were also able to improve six penthouse suites that foreshadow the future of Kaimana, but there’s more to come,” says Pakkala.

“I’ve been doing this a long time,” says McManus, who is the mastermind behind Maui’s Hotel Wailea, “and to do the amount of work we did in three weeks—I’ve never seen anything like it. Everybody feels good about it.”

Pakkala and McManus, who both have a personal laidback elegance that is reflected in their work, are proud of how Kaimana Beach Hotel keeps the neighborhood’s flavor while at the same time covering new ground.

“When you step back and see the evolution of the Gold Coast, you’re starting to see there’s change in the air,” says McManus. “And there’s more coming. Having the opportunity and responsibility of hearing the community, understanding their interests, it is gratifying to open the doors and see so many people responding positively. We want them to truly feel it’s their Kaimana.” ■



Beach chic: The open-air lobby with its salon wall and signage build on the hotel's mid-century history.

Hotel History

THE LAND WHERE the Kaimana Beach Hotel now stands has a long history of hospitality. In 1893, Greek-American entrepreneur George Lycurgus, who was influential in the early development of Hawai'i tourism, opened the Sans Souci hotel, taking the name of Prussian king Frederick the Great's summer palace near Berlin.

British sculptor Allen Hutchinson, who lived in Hawai'i from 1888 to 1899, described the hotel's main room as a ramshackle wooden structure and the small bungalows were "thatched roof affairs about 10-by-12." It is where Treasure Island writer Robert Louis Stevenson stayed for five weeks in September 1893 and reclined under the famous hau tree that still shades diners today.

Following the overthrow of Queen Lili'uokalani, Lycurgus let counterrevolutionaries meet at the hotel. When their 1895 attempt to restore the queen to her throne failed, Lycurgus was one of the scores of supporters who were imprisoned.

In 1903, the McNerny family, Hawai'i's retail pioneers, built a Victorian home on the property. Then in the late 1940s, despite being detained in an internment camp and having his early businesses disrupted, former plantation laborer Shigeo Shigenaga, and his wife Akino, were able to begin realizing a dream. They leased the property from the McNerny Family Foundation and in 1954 built 12 units of one-bedroom hotel-apartments. The McNerny home was converted into a lobby and dining room and named Hotel Kaimana—suggested by Shigenaga's neighbor Judge Desha Beamer, for its Hawaiian meaning of "power of the ocean" and as the Hawaiian transcription of "diamond."

Targeting the increasing number of business travelers from Japan, Shigenaga soon opened another 12 units. The budding hotelier then set his sights on a bigger project. He secured investments from such Japanese companies as Fuji Bank and Mitsubishi while Dillingham Corp. obtained "\$1.5 million in Mainland mortgage money," according to a 1962 *Honolulu Advertiser* article.

Shigenaga and his investors erected the nine-story, 125-room hotel tower—still called the Hotel Kaimana—in 1964. In 1976, the New Otani Hotel chain bought the property and renamed it the New Otani Kaimana Beach Hotel.—adapted from "Where novelists, sculptors, and isle rebels all roamed" by Bob Sigall, *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* ■