



## **Maui, a Center for the Arts in the Pacific**

While it's known for its natural beauty, Maui is also a cultural center of the Islands, a place where music, art, and a spirited international film festival complement the casual Maui lifestyle. With its two theater companies, magnificent arts and cultural center, and its own symphony orchestra, Maui provides world-class offerings in both the visual and performing arts.

There are more than 50 art galleries and a thriving community of artists on Maui, many of them world-renowned. The island's commitment to the arts is most vividly demonstrated in the Maui Arts & Cultural Center that opened in Kahului in 1994. The MACC houses a 1,200-seat main theater, a smaller theater for experimental performances, a visual arts gallery, outdoor amphitheater, offices, and rehearsal space. In both its state-of-the-art indoor facilities and its grand lawn under the stars, the MACC has hosted countless entertainers of local, national and international fame. The center's popular "Hawai'i Maoli Series" has set the standard with its commitment to showcase top-notch Hawaiian music and hula entertainers in the center's superb facilities.

The MACC also hosts regular "First Light" screenings and café theater events for the Maui film community, which goes into rapturous celebration of the film arts with the annual summer Maui Film Festival at Wailea. Committed to compassionate and life-affirming storytelling, the festival is highly regarded nationally, drawing luminaries such as Clint Eastwood, Geena Davis, and many other Hollywood celebrities. Festival-goers bring their blankets and lawn chairs to the Wailea Golf Club for the Celestial Cinema screening under the stars or for late night silent movies on Wailea Beach.

The Maui Pops! Orchestra is an active contributor to the cultural life of the island, performing regularly at the MACC with excellent musicians from the community. Performers tout the MACC as the finest acoustic venue in Hawai'i and a dream venue for classical musicians. Classical performances by visiting musicians are also featured in the MACC's robust and diverse year-round entertainment programs.

Maui has been a focal point for learning and the arts from the earliest times. Lāhaina was the first capital of the Hawaiian kingdom, and with the patronage and encouragement of the royal court, the arts flourished.

Maui's first art league was formed by missionary descendant Ethel Baldwin and her circle of friends. Called Hui No'eau ("Club of Skills"), the group grew to become a prestigious visual arts organization bringing the world's leading artists to Maui for exhibits, classes, lectures and workshops. Hui No'eau is now housed



in the gracious old Baldwin estate, Kaluanui, in Makawao, where it hosts some of the island's most prestigious shows.

Even the lusty whalers of Lāhaina left their mark on the arts. Lāhaina is one of the largest markets for scrimshaw in the world, specializing in both antique and contemporary pieces. Many scrimshanders also produce extraordinary works of art in other media, successfully transferring their finely honed talents from ivory to new canvases.

Artists aboard the first European ships to visit the Islands left a vast collection of prized sketches and engravings depicting life in Hawai'i at the time of contact with the outside world. Art has become so associated with Lāhaina that every Friday is Art Night, when gallery browsers are offered music, complimentary wine and hors d'oeuvres. The Lāhaina Arts Society, an active association of artists, sponsors year-round programs and the weekend Art Mart under the banyan tree in Lāhaina, near the old courthouse.

Free art tours are offered at several resort hotels with extensive collections of traditional and contemporary European, Asian and Hawaiian art. Major art pieces are scattered about the hotels, in public spaces, gardens and along the shore. Weekly and nightly musical performances in open-air lobbies and shopping malls demonstrate the vast repertoire of talent on the island, ranging from traditional Hawaiian melodies to jazz, classical music and opera.

Native Hawaiians maintain that Maui has mana, or a spiritual presence, that inspires art and cultural appreciation. An artist perhaps said it best: "Maui is art. It is its own canvas."