

GOOD LIFE CONNOISSEUR

DESTINATION WEDDING

Kaua'i - The Garden Island

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KAUA'I

*Yes, Yes & Yes!
I Do, Just for Two...*

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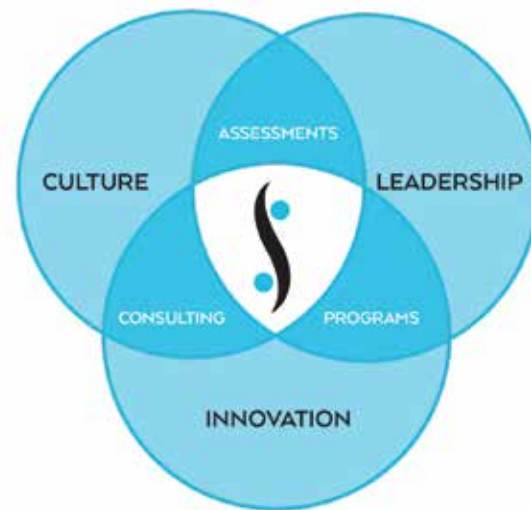
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GOOD LIFE CONNOISSEUR

Good Life Connoisseur
Volume 15 | Issue 1 2017
www.GoodLifeConnoisseur.com

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PUBLISHERS STATEMENT

After a hiatus, we are thrilled to be back and opening with our special Travel Edition featuring a Destination Wedding on Kaua'i, 'The Garden Island'. But this was much more than just a regular travel story you've come expect from Good Life Connoisseur... This is in fact our own wedding!

What a great way to elope and celebrate in a luxurious and adventurous manner! It was an action-packed trip that will leave you wanting to do some of these amazing activities for yourself... and we lay it all out for you, so that you can!

Eloping, Second Marriages, Anniversaries or Renewing Vows, we've got you covered.

Next up on the agenda is Scottsdale's Boulders Resort & Spa, for a Girls Get-Away. We spend some serious quality R & R time exploring the dramatic setting of the 1,300 acres of the Sonoran Desert foothills with panoramic views of 12-million-year-old boulder formations.

Be sure to visit our Social Media sites where you can see the full story, pictures and videos.

As always comments and suggestions are welcome.

Aloha!

Connie Ekelund





*Yes, Yes & Yes!
I Do, Just for Two...*

Eloping, Second Marriages,
Anniversaries or Renewing Vows.

By Scott Farnham
Photos By Connie Ekelund

The
Good
Life!



Yes, Yes & Yes - I Do Just for Two!

Eloping, Second Marriages, Anniversaries, or Renewing Vows

By Scott Farnham

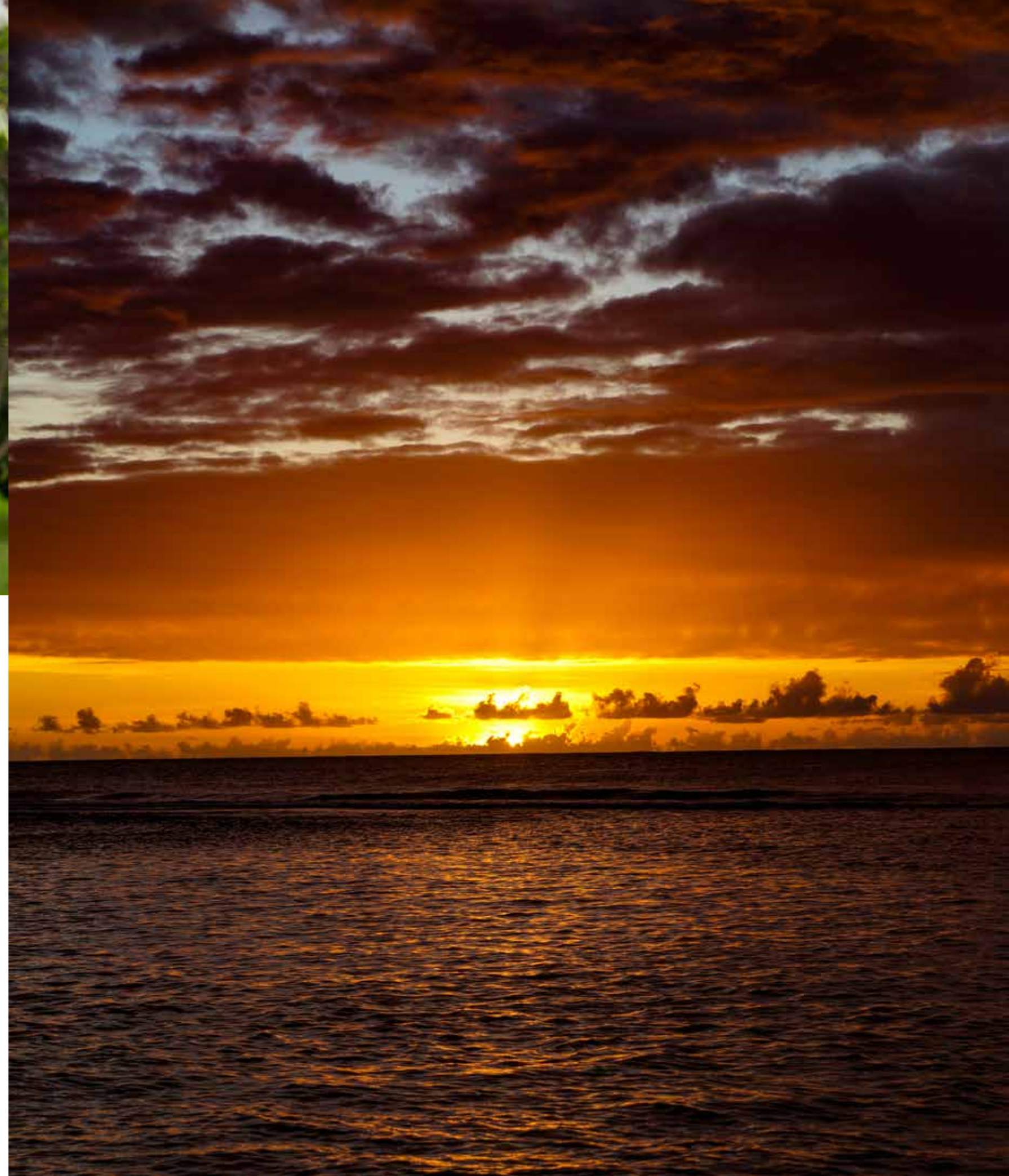
Photography By Connie Ekelund

Looking to plan a romantic event or special wedding? Consider the garden island, Kauaʻi. It may just be the ticket to all your dreams come true.

As we discovered, Kauaʻi has a super easy and slow pace, making it a jewel of a find for folks wishing to have a no-stress, relaxing time instead of fretting about finding enough space to lay down your beach towel. No hustle and bustle, no traffic jams and no fast food chain restaurants on every street corner.

On Kauaʻi we learned the natural beauty is still unspoiled, and no wonder its moniker is “The Garden Island.” We experienced towering waterfalls, lush vegetation, and pristine rivers. The classic golden sand beaches and palm fronds that frolicked in the ever-present trade winds were imprinted in our minds, as was the pounding surf that lulled us to sleep each night. Dolphins cavorted off the bow of our catamaran, and sea turtles gazed at us with as much curiosity as we had for them. Caves suitable for any pirate to bury their treasure in were found at each beach stop along our journey. And on this fantastic journey, we went to all corners and sampled Kauaʻi bountiful charms.

Perhaps this isn’t your first marriage or you’re just old enough to know what’s truly important is spending a carefree time and focusing on the here and now. You don’t want to worry about planning for masses of other people, bridesmaid gowns, dinner menus, flower arrangements and hotel reservations. In today’s busy times, it feels great to be able to drop out of the rat race and stop to smell the hibiscus growing outside your door. All you Gen X’ers, Baby Boomers, and type A personality people deserve to be able to get away from it all. Kauaʻi fits that bill.



The friendliness of the local people is one of the island's biggest assets. Throughout our travels there, we met with people who took great pride in telling us about their island, the history and special places to go. We learned that "Aloha" means hello and goodbye, and when one part of our journey finished, another immediately began.

After having landed in Honolulu, we took a short island hop flight to Kaua'i. The difference was dramatic, from a commercialized and congested main island to the lush and laid-back island that we welcomed us.

Kaua'i also offers up enough thrilling adventures to satisfy any adrenaline junkie's appetite. We took part in many exciting activities, along with our romantic agenda, of course!

Our journey started at the **Hanalei Colony Resort**, which is nestled on a secluded stretch of golden beach, set against the magnificent mountains of Kaua'i's North Shore. We wanted a place to recharge our batteries and get away from busy times, and found it here. It really is a special place for a romantic interlude, in the most postcard-beautiful surroundings. The Hanalei Colony resort is in a land of rainbows and shimmering moonlight skies. Virtually at the end of the island highway, one has to travel over many one lane bridges and through remarkable terrain to find this gem, and it is well worth the time to do so. The sound of the surf sent us off to dreamland each night, and the cool tradewinds kept us from overheating in the daytime, while lounging on the property's amazing beaches. We had a remarkable dinner at their Mediterranean restaurant to cap off the experience.

*We learned that "Aloha" means hello and goodbye,
and when one part of our journey finished, another immediately began.*





We wanted to discover all Kaua'i's charms and what better way than a private helicopter charter to view the garden island? We selected **Safari Helicopter Tours** as our guides and were rewarded with a once in a lifetime experience to access places island-wide and especially on the Na Pali Coast, seemingly unchanged since the formation of this beautiful island.

In the expert hands of pilot Julia, we toured in safety and comfort in a modern A Star helicopter, and were afforded close views in canyons with towering waterfalls and impossibly steep, lush green mountains shooting up from the deep blue sea. Safari Helicopter owner, Preston Myers has operated the first-class operation from Lihue airport since 1984, and is a true pioneer in aviation tourism on the island.





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To get up close and personal with this amazing countryside, we enlisted **Kaua'i Backcountry Adventures** to take us lazy river tubing through the canals and hills of a former sugarcane plantation. These manmade canals offer a refreshingly cool dip of mountain fed water on a hot day as they wind their way through tunnels and past amazing scenery, all under the watchful eye of their experienced guides. A delicious lunch served afterwards filled us with energy again.



We would need that energy because our next activity was to go horseback riding with **Princeville Ranch Adventures** to a secluded private waterfall. How perfect was this you ask? Imagine your own secret waterfall cascading down on you in an idyllic setting of exotic flowers and vegetation. Our guide Kalowna was very knowledgeable about the 2500-acre ranch we were on, and the horses were very well trained and behaved.



Princeville Ranch also offers ziplining adventures, so we just couldn't pass up the opportunity to give it a try. Our guides Aaron and Miguel made sure everyone was safe always and started us out slowly to get the hang of things. We progressed up to the finale named King Kong, a 1200' side by side thrill ride that still makes me giggle when I think of it.

Nights while we were on the North Shore consisted of sampling from fine dining to food trucks, and opportunities to shop in the quaint village for treasures to bring back home to family.





We said aloha to the North Shore and headed south to **Koloa Landing Resort** in Poipu. The luxury of this resort is evident on arrival. Newly opened, Koloa Landing is sure to establish itself as a favorite among Kaua'i visitors. The rooms are exquisite in design and materials, and in no time at all, we found this a place to really feel at home. On the grounds, there are simply amazing areas with multiple pools, a water slide, grotto, hot tub, waterfall, and a handy restaurant. Koloa Landing Resort would become our base camp to launch our wedding day and other sporting activities while in the south side of the island.





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Experiences of
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To say we had a special elopement wedding day would be an understatement... we had a spectacular wedding experience in paradise! Credit goes to our wedding planner, **Diana Gardner from Alohana Weddings**. She is a wonder woman and miracle worker all in one. Our job was easy, all we had to do is show up, Diana had the heavy lifting of organizing the 101 details, and let me tell you that she did a simply amazing job.





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Imagine a wedding at **National Tropical Botanical Garden**, a veritable botanical ark of tropical flora. Located on the South Shore of Kaua'i, McBryde garden is nestled in the picturesque and historical Lawa'i Valley. This made a perfect backdrop for our ceremony, photo session and candlelight dinner.

Diana did a masterful job of not only selecting the best wedding experience vendors, but organizing the timetable and making sure the whole event ran seamlessly from start to finish. We highly recommend her if you are looking for an unforgettable experience.

My lovely bride, Connie, had her hair and makeup done by **Meghan Dahl of Kaua'i Wedding Hair & Make-up**. Megan arrived at our hotel a couple of hours prior to the ceremony and she had amazing ideas and attention to detail. The bride emerged looking beautiful and ready to go. Megan specializes in both small and large wedding parties and once did a 12 bridesmaids event!

Speaking of beautiful, the stunning and fragrant flowers and bouquet, hair clip, leis, centerpiece, garlands, aisle petals & loose flowers all were simply perfect and were provided by **Arlene from Blue Orchid Florist**. **Neil from Orchid Alley** provided orchid plants, a large arrangement, white orchid plants and cut stems that were incorporated into the décor. We have never seen so many orchids and petals, and the ceremony was something out of a dream or movie. And what movie would be complete without music? We were serenaded with *Over the Rainbow* by **Lenny Breeze** on ukulele.

The ceremony was presided over by **Minister Tommy Togioka** from Royal T Entertainment who blew the conch shell and led the event. Wonderful local vows, a traditional Hawaiian Lei exchange, and meaningful personal commitment dialogue followed. It was all a whirlwind of emotions and activity, even a bit surreal being set in such a beautiful location. As my beautiful bride walked through an archway festooned with orchids, over the grass sprinkled with flower petals, I thought myself the luckiest man on earth. This will be a memory to cherish for all time.





To remember these magical moments, photographer extraordinaire **Brian Finch from Love Bliss Imaging** captured our memories in digital. Brian knows just how to suggest a pose, a look and use the gorgeous island light to create photos that are stunning. Several people have asked me if our photos were photoshopped because they could not believe such a sunset could be captured. Brian shuttled us around to various locations at just the right times to take advantage of the light.

Our videographer **Michelle Rundbaken from Zest Kaua'i** also did a wonderful job of creating a story line video of our whole wedding. She takes great pride in putting the pieces and events together to make a memorable video that we can cherish and share with family.

After the ceremony and photos, everyone was, of course, hungry and dinner was served, but not just any dinner. Just when we thought the wow factor could not be greater, Diana had arranged a chandelier and candlelight dinner for the two of us in the garden, under the stars. **Chef Leo Antunez** prepared a five-course meal featuring his summer rolls, rack of lamb, flower salad, fresh caught Ono, and blueberry strawberry cake in chocolate sauce, yummy X 3!

Tommy T serenaded us with traditional Hawaiian songs while we wine and dined and Marissa provided the accompanying hula dancing. It was such a perfect ending event to a magical day. The setting, the garden, the sunset, the beaches, the food, the wine were all beyond compare.



 [CLICK HERE TO SEE OUR FAVORITE KAUAI SPOTS](#)



Our honeymoon still was not over, though. The next day we visited the spa at **Kukuiʻula** for a couple's massage and dinner, both of which were equally amazing and satisfying. Chef Ben created a special menu that features the best of island cuisine and wine pairing. The architecture and grounds of this resort are a sight to behold with views that go for miles.



After the wedding and relaxing days, it was time to get sporty again. We still had a thrilling night time zipline jumping into the unknown under starry skies that was really, really fun, and an ATV tour that we got incredibly muddy on, both activities by **Koloa Zipline/ATV tours**.





On our last day, we took a fast catamaran cruise along the Na Pali coast with **HoloHolo Charters** for some sightseeing and snorkeling. It was nice to get another perspective of the garden island from the ocean and we sailed past many famous movie locations, caves and beaches, all the while having catered food and drinks. While snorkeling, we saw sea turtles and seals and it was a tremendous experience to round out our honeymoon.

We did so much, saw so many things, met such wonderful people in Kaua'i and had such an incredible time.

It is on the top of our list to return and do it all over again. Aloha!

We cleaned up the next two days by kayaking with **Outfitters Kaua'i**. Our destination was a 10 story waterfall right out of a movie scene. After an hour's paddle up river and a short hike, the sight of this was breathtaking. Our guide, whose name was Elvis (how great is that!) was a storehouse of knowledge and very professional.





Chef Leo Kauai

Private Chef
Catering and Events

Chef Leo creates and spreads joy by preparing beautiful, delicious meals sourced from the finest local, organic, and sustainable ingredients. Since 2003, Leo has dedicated himself to bringing the best culinary experience to private homes and events on the island of Kauai. Originally from Uruguay, Leo has traveled to over 20 countries and fuses the diversity of his experience into his dishes. Leo works 365 days a year to prepare and execute menus individual to you - customized to your tastes, requests and dietary needs. Having a close relationship with local farmers and artisanal food purveyors allows Leo to bring the vibrance of what is in season on island to you. His dishes are fresh, innovative and always prepared with love and aloha.

Chef Leonardo Antunez

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Connoisseurs Choice in Kaua'i

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DESTINATION WEDDING

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Location

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Minister

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Ceremony Musician

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Chef Leo Medina

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