

“...Times, they are a’changing...”

“Tear down Paradise, put up a parking lot...”

Standard Kauai Car (in Years Past)

Well, not quite, but close. Once upon a time, we saw perhaps five cars unroute to Kapa’a, 20 miles away. Today, we had to wait through more than 20 cars to pass just to pull out onto the road!



We then drove to a local bakery we have visited over the years – it was not a particularly good bakery, but it was close and it had a few chairs outside, on the grass and under the trees. Today, it serves Espresso, and outside there are tables on a concrete patio! The damn place is a boutique coffee shop!

What’s next? A Starbucks in Kilauea?

The southern part of the island already has Burger King, Macdonalds, Sears, hell...even a Borders! But, please not the North Shore!

Already the signs are ominous. What was the post office in Kilauea as late as 1998, became a Subway Sandwich. Subway is the only name that exists north of Kapa’a, but it is just the vanguard. Some day we will see a Baskin Robbins, and we may even see a stop light!

Now that is fine for those effete tourists in Lehui, because they stay at places like the Marriott. What can you expect from people who come over, go immediately from the airport to a Marriott, and there they buy a Tommy Bahamma Aloha shirt, rent a new red Mustang to drive to the canyon, and think they understand Kauai?

But the North Shore is filled with, well, to tell the truth it is it is filled with BoBos. (Bourgeois Bohemians). Just today, I saw a long bearded, matted hair, terribly thin

Vegetable Shopping on Kauai



guy...driving a new Land Rover! (The term I heard on the Whistler slopes “Trustafarians”. Trust Fund supported Rastafarians. That is also very descriptive.)

EVERY place is ALWAYS in transition. Jean and I remember when only cows were in Mission Valley, so we, like you, are accustomed to change. There are times, however, when change is evolutionary and times

when...well, the North Coast of Kauai is in the middle of revolution. Of course, it was so far in time from the real world that it had a very long way to go. It is still decades behind, but closing fast.

All of Kauai was nearly a century behind the world in 1982 when we first arrived at the all-metal airport building. We spent our first visit – immediately after Hurricane Iwa – marveling at the few vehicles on the island and the terrible condition those vehicles were in. Rusted hulks is putting a most favorable light on the description!

Over the years we have noted as we saw our first Explorer, then a Mercedes, then a Jaguar, and finally our first Porsche. Now, we no longer remark about the quality of the cars. It is still a shock, but only because there is only one two lane road around the island and any car that sees 60 MPH must feel something akin to a Formula 1 machine! There is no greater waste of fine machinery than a performance car on Kauai, yet there are many!

Any convertible automobile is automatically a tourist car – in fact any new car is immediately suspect, with a 95% confidence factor, and if the new car is red or white, the suspicion is confirmed. For years, I drove the old 1988 Jeep truck just to avoid any suspicion I might be a tourist. No one wants to be seen as a tourist on this island.

Kauai has always had both the Bourgeois and the Bohemians, The Bourgeois stayed in the compounds of the Marriott and Princeville, while the Bohemians surfed the beaches and caressed their bongos, often in communes that still exist.

The hippies are here in numbers not seen anywhere else in the country, because you can't starve (food grows on trees beside the road) and you can't freeze. That leaves little need for money and modern conveniences are taboo in the hippie culture. Some "sell out" to bicycle or even, heaven forefend, ride a really old moped or scooter.

But now the West and the East shall meet in the BoBos (Bourgeois Bohemians). Hippies dressed from Lands' End. Unconventionals driving Land Rovers. Granola eaters playing the Price Course at Princeville!

So, you want to lose \$200,000 a year? Open a Starbucks in Hanalai this year. Want to make \$200,000 a month in four years? Open a Starbucks in Hanalai next year!

But, just for a second, we should place "change" in perspective. There is ALMOST nothing in Kauai, indeed in the Hawaiian chain, that is truly "native." There are virtually no trees that were of the type that was here before the First South Sea Islanders arrived in the boats about a thousand years ago. Those boatmen brought almost every animal and vegetable on the island. A recent examination of the very remote rainforest showed only 17% of native plants in this unreachable area where humans have never tread -- the result of encroaching plantings from other areas.

The natives almost denuded the islands 130 years ago to sell the great forests, and a queen sent her horticulturists around the world to find plants that would grow well here. Hence, the recent arrival of orchids, and hibiscus, plumeria, and almost every other flower you now attribute to Hawaii. Sugar, pineapple, mango, papaya are all imports. There were no songbirds until just a hundred years ago, and almost none of the bugs that inhabit the islands. The mosquito arrived in the spoiled water barrels of a 19th century ship. There are no snakes, but only because everyone guards against their introduction.

One of the banes of Kauai is the "jungle fowl." It started as a South Sea type of chicken, brought by the South Sea Islanders, and running free for decades.



Hibiscus --not a native plant

Over the years it mated with escaped fighting cocks, brought by Filipino sugar can workers. Then the two recent hurricanes of 1982 and 1992 destroyed the chicken coops of chicken raisers, loosing a hoard of chickens into the mix and now Kauai is plagued with this awful bird. And, to add insult to misery, somehow the mongoose, a natural chicken predator, is throughout Hawaii except on Kauai!

So, without the changes that humans have brought to this island, both good and bad, the islands would be very different – and not nearly as interesting. So change is not good or bad, it simply is. We deal with the hand we are dealt – beauty and hurricanes, warmth and traffic, the sounds of crashing surf and crowing jungle fowl.

We have the last bastion of 60s here, worshipping “nature.” The nature they worship is almost wholly manmade. Each of us has only the opportunity to see everything as it is today, but each of us worships the virginal past and fears the threatening future.

Jean and I are just enjoying today.

The Rare Ne’ne Bird -- also known as a Damn Chicken!

