

DOWNWINDER

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The captains of Global Ocean Club set a course for ocean adventure with pono values. The premier service provider for yacht owners and discerning guests looks for unique adventures of discovery in the islands.



“There is complete generosity in ho‘okipa: We call it lokomaika‘i, ‘the generosity of good heart.’

— from the book, Managing with Aloha: Bringing Hawaii’s Universal Values to the Art of Business



First discovered by Polynesian settlers who ventured the vast and daunting Pacific in outrigger canoes, the Hawaiian Islands are arguably best explored from the perspective of the seafarer. Our shorelines are punctuated by emerald-hued cliffs and lush, verdant valleys that open to intimate coves. From this vantage, the majestic slopes of volcanoes give way to stark black lava fields and soft green inclines, and finally, to some of the world’s most iconic and stunning beaches—in hues of white, red, sparkling green, and black sand.

With 750 miles of dramatic coastline to explore, Hawai‘i’s archipelago of eight islands and numerous atolls spans some 1,500 miles. Many of Hawai‘i’s shores remain undeveloped and timeless.

A true and passionate waterman, Chad Allenbaugh is a most enthusiastic advocate of experiencing Hawai‘i from the sea. He is the owner of Global Ocean Club (GOC), a modern yacht club that creates bespoke experiences for a global clientele. Comprised of a fleet of performance motor and sailing yachts located around the world, all of them custom-built, GOC operates along some of the most memorable coastal waters of the world; in Hawai‘i, in Northern and Southern Europe, the Galapagos, French Polynesia, and throughout Asia, Mexico, the Caribbean and the Mediterranean.

A Hawai‘i-based company, GOC began as Hawaii Yachts, a premier service provider for yacht owners and discerning guests looking for unique adventures. In addition to providing fully managed itineraries at sea for their guests, they build air and land experiences, connecting their clients with a collection of curated luxury accommodations, and chartering luxury private jets to deliver guests to desirable latitudes.

Highly celebrated, GOC has received accolades from USA Today, as one of the “above and beyond” ways to ring in the New Year. They’ve hosted programs on the Travel Channel and over their two decades of operation, GOC has received coverage from the Hollywood Reporter, on NBC, on CBS and on the Oprah Winfrey Network. In 2017, one of their custom-built boats won three “Boat of the Year” awards, from Sail Magazine, Cruising World, and Boot Düsseldorf.

Charting Seas

Hawai‘i’s challenging topography ensures that much of its landmass is nearly impossible to develop, thus preserving vast swaths of natural and spectacular beauty to enjoy. There aren’t always roads that lead to the most incredible island locales, due to impassable mountain ranges and cliffsides by land.

The lush Hālawa Valley on Moloka‘i, for example, was first settled as early as 650 A.D. and is considered by Native Hawaiians to be a sacred and cherished place. This nature-made cathedral isn’t home to a single resort or business of any kind. At the right season, when the swells are low, the Nā Pali Coast on Kaua‘i’s north shore is a magical string of perfectly secluded beaches set against a jaw-dropping backdrop of towering cliffs, accessible only by boat. The entire island of Lāna‘i and its beauty are the exclusive domain of the island’s 3,100 residents and the guests at



the island's singular, exclusive resort. In short, some of the most select destinations in Hawai'i can be accessed from the beautiful turquoise waters that caress her shores.

Allenbaugh and his team design itineraries for an impressive list of clients, including Hollywood celebrities, Grammy Award winners, royal family members, sports legends, politicians, and even former U.S. Presidents. Two of GOC's yachts have been designated Presidential by the U.S. Secret Service.

After college, Allenbaugh himself worked for the Air Force as a civilian. His brother served as a Navy pilot and his grandfather was killed at the Battle of the Bulge. His father is a also a veteran. Drafted into the American conflict in Vietnam, he found his way to Hawai'i. For Allenbaugh, it would have been easy to follow in the military footsteps of his forebears, but when he was offered a scholarship to the Air Force, his father rightly told him, "I think you have a higher calling."

His father wasn't wrong. Throughout his career in business, Allenbaugh successfully exited to publicly traded companies no less than three times. His first foray into the NASDAQ was with a travel company called Cheap Tickets. He joined the Honolulu-based company in 2000, but when the company was acquired that same year, they moved him to Manhattan. Turning down quadruple the salary to work in Silicon Valley, he opted for stock options instead. When CheapTickets went public in late 2003 (as part of Orbitz), his bet paid off. What followed were two more public offerings, before Allenbaugh returned to Honolulu, where his parents met more than 50 years ago.

An islander herself, Allenbaugh's Greek mother met Allenbaugh's father at a lounge in Waikīkī during the Vietnam War, where his father was enjoying a bit of R&R and his mother was about to depart the islands for her home in Europe. It was in the age of aloha hospitality that their family story began, and this made an imprint on Allenbaugh. He's based his business operations on the Hawaiian values of aloha, kuleana, and ohana.

All Aboard with Allenbaugh

Allenbaugh's love for the water and passion for sailing began with a boat called *Zoe*. In something he lovingly refers to as one of many "Chad-Dad" projects, he and his father refurbished *Zoe,* sparking his lifelong passion and pursuit. Growing up on a bluff overlooking the rough, shallow surf of Lake Erie, Allenbaugh purchased his own first boat at age 12 with money he'd earned mowing lawns. It was a Sunfish. "As kids, we liked to test the laws of physics on sailboats, in order to learn about strength of materials and just how far could we push it," Allenbaugh said. Next came a 17-foot Douglass & McLeod Thistle.

Both boats came with Allenbaugh to college, where he raced competitively and graduated with a degree in English and Communications. He proudly recounts beating Navy at Annapolis while wearing foul-weather gear held together with duct-tape. It was at college that he was able to sail around the world for a Semester at Sea, working closely under a Master at Sea.

After graduation, Allenbaugh went on to work in the business world, but always pursued his passion as a sailing instructor. He spent four years in the waters around Maine while he pursued a graduate degree in Integrated Marketing at Northwestern. He did a three-year stint in Japan working for the CEO of Mitsubishi. There he learned, "In Japan, I learned that words, deeds and actions really matter," he said. "This Japanese influence is seen in the way that we do business, and in our design and in how we treat our guests. The Japanese are experts at executing a structure." Japan was an impressionable experience before settling in Hawai'i, where he had visited for years.

These days, he uses his lifetime of experience reading the ocean and operating every imaginable type of vessel to create unique experiences for GOC's guests. Itineraries are tailor-made for the client, with services from private chefs, local musicians, spa treatments, and custom menus. The destination and duration are





entirely up to the guests, limited only by seasonality and the tradewinds.

GOC commissions thoughtfully designed equipment to contend with the various weather and wave conditions here in Hawai‘i, and in every port of call from which they operate. Recently, Allenbaugh was most excited about a brand new, carbon-fiber, 60-foot performance Solaris sailing vessel that will round out his Hawai‘i fleet to eight yachts which conveniently operate out of Honolulu’s Kewalo Basin Harbor. The smallest of these is 42-feet from bow to stern, the largest is 138-feet in length. All of them are super luxury.

The Pono Adventure

“While we are always excited to deliver an above and beyond experience to our guests, our motto is always safety first,” Allenbaug says. “We believe that safety and stewardship are our ultimate kuleana, and so we never push boats or passengers harder than they need to go.”

Allenbaugh’s military bent applies to his practice as a yachtman, with an acute focus on training, procedures, and protocols in everything they do. “Plotting the weather window is key, whether you are crossing the entire ocean, or taking an inter-island trip,” Allenbaugh notes. “Here in Hawai‘i, everything relies on the trades and the direction the vessel is moving in relation to them. We’re still able to offer something distinctive and touch all the islands in really unique ways, but protocols are key to pulling that off.”

Like an avid fisherman or surfer, Allenbaugh is inclined to protect his list of the most fabulous destinations in Hawaii, but instead he implores that if you “come aboard, then we’ll share them with you.”

Once on board, guests can enjoy intimate surf, fishing, snorkelling, and diving adventures, away from the press of tourists. His favorite island destinations are often decided by the weather and the season. Destinations like Waimea Bay and the Nā Pali Coast are best seen in summer, when the swells are relatively calm. He points out that some locales are challenging year-round, particularly on the leeward coasts. “Hāna is impossible if the trades are up,” he says.

The corollary to safety is stewardship. GOC approaches their favorite spots with respect and thoughtfulness, often using local guides to share cultural aspects of areas like Ka‘ena Point on O‘ahu. “We treat each trip as though we are visitors ourselves,” Allenbaugh says, noting that there are maritime preserves like Captain Cook where it’s forbidden to drop anchor.

As part of a menu of on board services, local musicians are frequent fixtures aboard GOC’s vessels. “Music is a big part of what we do. Local musicians provide a cultural aspect, an island vibe, and lots of comfort to both the guests and team. There’s an experience being shaped every day, and local music is definitely part of that,” he says. Musicians Jeff Peterson and John Valentine (Bruno Mars’ uncle) are repeat performers. For guests looking to unwind, and for Allenbaugh, who runs a global business, the sound of slack-key or ‘ukulele makes the stresses of the day simply melt away.

GOC’s captains are highly trained and experienced. They lead the voyage in every way, always mindful of their clients’ needs. Allenbaugh takes what he calls a “good captain” mindset. “Driving a boat is just one aspect of the job,” he says. “The expectation of most guests is to be comfortable, safe and have a great time and then hana hou,” he says. Captains are expected to attend to every aspect of the guest experience, often leading them on dives below the water’s surface. “Attention to detail is one of our values. Joining the guests is one of the most spectacular things we get to do. Often they’re surreal experiences, given our client list.”

The company's culinary talents include French-born and French-trained chef Philippe Padovani, one of the original 12 founding fathers of Hawaii Regional Cuisine, an esteemed lineup of Hawai'i's very best restauranteurs that include Roy Yamaguchi, Alan Wong, Beverly Gannon, and Peter Merriman. Beginning in the mid-1980s, Padovani worked as Executive Chef at La Mer at Waikīkī's celebrated Halekulani, at the Big Island's Ritz-Carlton, and at The Mānele Bay Hotel on Lāna'i. He made an indelible contribution to the emerging Hawai'i culinary movement that showcased the state's many ethnic flavors, using fresh, local ingredients, which transformed the state into a culinary hotspot.

GOC's culinary team is led by executive chef Grant McPherson, formerly a trusted staffer of Steve Wynn. He oversees the menu design around the globe and manages GOC's team of professional chefs. Also working on GOC's Hawai'i yachts is chef Salvatore Coppola, of Trieste, Italy, who served as private chef to the Royal Family of Monaco for 25 years.

For those looking for a new private vessel, GOC provides assessment, design and build services for their global clientele, delivering bespoke yachts designed for the coastlines in which the vessel will spend most of its time. Management also offers a comprehensive range of vessel management services including risk management, asset value protection, cost control, and crew management. Their services also extend to hosting privately-owned visiting mega-yachts. In recent years, they helped welcome an iconic Philippe Starck-designed 400-foot mega-yacht on its visit to Hawaiian waters.

Unlike many sought after ports of call, Hawaii enjoys a 365-day season for yachting. While the yachting infrastructure isn't as developed as it may be in other locales, the state is working on better harbors and support systems. Allenbaugh has thrived in a market with few competitors, in large measure due to his very evident passion for his work. Part instructor, tinkerer, tester, explorer, sailor and businessperson, his enthusiasm and easy laugh are infectious. "I default to happy," he claims. He remains optimistic about increased investment from the state, recognizing that private entities are already aboard, helping to bring Hawaii's infrastructure up to speed with the state's thriving boating industry.

In 2012, signalling a growing market, specialty boating retailer West Marine doubled the size of it's Honolulu footprint with a new flagship store located near Kewalo Basin, enhancing the company's 300+ retail locations nationwide. In 2015, Howard Hughes Corporation won a bid to conduct a $20 million revitalization of Honolulu's Kewalo Harbor area, to keep pace with their enormous real estate investments at Ward Village, along Honolulu's coastline. Their master plan will connect Kewalo Harbor more seamlessly to Ala Moana Beach Park, and includes renovations to the dock, boat slips and harbor facilities, as well as added services for area residents.

With North American distribution rights multiple European and domestic yacht builders, including Solaris, x, y and z, GOC is well positioned to benefit from industry expansion. Currently, his Hawaii yachts are booked for holidays periods at least six months, and often as far as one year in advance. "In some ways, we are in the customer prevention business," he laughs. Nonetheless, he's turned around Christmas Day charters that were requested on Christmas Eve. "We are always looking to deliver the dream. It's an intimate experience and I always say, 'The magic is real.' Our commitment to service is always about alignment with the client's needs and desires. They're the best ambassadors of what we do."

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