

29th Annual Na Po'e Pa'ahana

Awards Recognition Luncheon

Hale Koa's Bacigal Named Manager of the Year

HLTA selects Aulani's Kamanao as Outstanding Lodging Employee of the Year

BY DAVID PUTNAM

As director of engineering at the Hale Koa Hotel, Derek Bacigal oversees the property's 818-room twin towers which house eight food and beverage outlets, 13 meeting facilities and two swimming pools.

Additionally, he's tasked to watch over the \$108 million in renovation projects at Hale Koa, an Armed Forces Recreation Center at Ft. DeRussy.

It's a lot of responsibility for the 28-year-old Bacigal, and for his outstanding efforts he has been named Manager of the Year by the Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association. Bacigal will be recognized at the HLTA's 29th annual Na Po'e Pa'ahana Awards on Jan. 10 at the Sheraton Waikiki.

Mika Kamanao of Aulani, a Disney Resort & Spa, has been selected as Outstanding Lodging Employee of the Year. She and Bacigal will join winners in 18 other categories at the HLTA's awards luncheon.

Being nominated and then selected as a finalist, Bacigal says, "shows the value put into the community comes back."

As one of 50 candidates vying for the Manager of the Year honor, he says just being nominated by his hotel was an honor for him. "I was very excited. It's a very prestigious local award," he says.

Asked about the possibility of being chosen as Manager of the Year, he says the award will "empower me to continue what I'm doing" to train and educate the next generation of hotel engineers.

The Hale Koa wrote in its summary of Bacigal: "How this exceptional millennial pursues his profession with such



Derek Bacigal



Mika Kamanao

passion is a lesson to others, young and old, that success comes to those who give it their all. With each renovation, improvement and upgrade led by our director of engineering, the Hale Koa Hotel positions itself to 'Serve those who Serve' for years to come."

Bacigal was promoted to director of engineering at the Hale Koa last January from chief engineer. Previously, he was with Hyatt Hotels in San Francisco and Chicago.

The other two finalists for Manager of the Year are Randi Okuhara of the Sheraton Princess Kaiulani and Tylun Pang of the Fairmont Kea Lani.

Kamanao, who has been in the hospitality sector for 33 years, is Aulani's VIP coordinator. The resort says she works with its "most respected guests," such as celebrities, dignitaries, Make a Wish Families and Disney executives.

The other two finalists for Outstanding Lodging Employee of the Year are Nancy Jones of the Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach Resort and Oralani Koa of The Westin Nanea Ocean Villas.

The HLTA also honored members and allied members for their contributions to the industry and the community. They are:

- **Allied Member of the Year:** Interstate Restoration Hawaii
- **Individual Allied Member of the Year** (new award): Carol Shimomura of Pacific Guardian Life
- **Chef/Restaurateur of the Year:** John Salcedo of Rumfire at Sheraton Waikiki
- **Hospitality Educator of the Year:** Lorelle Peros of UH Maui College

29th Annual Na Po'e Pa'ahana THE 2019 AWARD WINNERS

- **Leader in Sustainability Award:**
Hyatt Hotels Hawaii
- **Na Po'e Pa'ahana Legacy Award:**
Tihati Productions
- **Pulamaia Award** (new award):
Kaanapali Beach Hotel
- **Community Service Award:**
Hanalei Colony Resort
- **Woman of the Year:** Laura Richards,
Hanalei Colony Resort (Women in
Lodging and Tourism, an HLTA affiliate)

Other 2019 Na Po'e Pa'ahana winners, by category:

Bell & Valet

Large Property (450+ rooms): **Dibiano Bontog** is a valet captain at Aulani, A Disney Resort & Spa, and was a part of Aulani's original opening team. Writes the hotel: "With more than 11 years in the tourism industry, he brings a great work ethic, attitude and aloha to his role that contributes to Aulani's high guest satisfaction rating. He is also committed to giving back to his community, volunteering at Hawaii beach cleanups, coaching soccer and softball and acting as a Cub Scout leader for overnight camping events."

Medium Property (200-449 rooms): **Derek Clemente** of The Kahala Hotel & Resort "has seen it all," according to the hotel. "He has worked through multiple ownership changes, assisted more celebrities than he can remember, driven cars from five different decades and continues to remain as one of our 'ambassadors of aloha' at our front drive. Derek serves our guests a daily dose of aloha when he welcomes them 'home' to the resort."

Small Property (under 200 rooms): **Mark Guerrero** of the Maui Beach Hotel "goes over and beyond assisting our house guests in all aspects," according to Front Office Manager Cheryl Diczco. Guerrero serves as front desk guest service and night auditor at the hotel, where he has worked since 2008. "Mark is one of the greatest assets of the Maui Beach Hotel," Diczco writes in her nomination letter.

Engineer & Maintenance

Large Property (450+ rooms): The Royal Hawaiian, A Luxury Collection Resort calls **Susan Iwasa** a "multi-tasker known for her professionalism, thoughtfulness and organization and coordination skills that make her a formidable force behind the scenes in the Engineering Department. . . . For her, the experience of the guest is of the utmost importance and that prioritization of guest needs reflects her commitment to not just the Royal Hawaiian but to promoting tourism in the Islands."

Medium Property (200-449 rooms): **Neal Nitta**, notes the Andaz Maui at Wailea Resort, "truly leads with the spirit of hospitality and aloha every day. His hard work and humble ways are noticed throughout the resort and his designs and carpenter work have gained the respect of many within his 21 years of service."

Small Property (under 200 rooms): The Lawai Beach Resort notes that **Brian Ferreira** completed more work orders than any other engineer at the property. The resort writes that "projects flow his way because he can be trusted to complete them on time with the best of intentions and excellent quality. Housekeepers can be overheard on the radio calling for him specifically to respond to their requests because of his attention to detail."

Food & Beverage

Large Property (450+ rooms): **Patrick Ongjoco**, with 34 years of service at the Sheraton Waikiki as sous chef, "is a great communicator and mediator who brings people together to work as a team, ensuring that the main kitchen's line operations run smoothly and efficiently from the start of each day," according to the hotel. "Giving my time has been my way of giving back," says Ongjoco, who volunteers at Waiialae Elementary where he tends to the school's educational garden and gives cooking demonstrations to the students.

Medium Property (200-449 rooms): Bartender **Keola Lasconia** keeps guests at Embassy Suites by Hilton Waikiki Beach Walk entertained. The property notes that "whether he is pretending to screw a pineapple

onto his soda gun for 'fresh pineapple juice,' singing along with the band into his sink stopper or adding a pineapple wedge to a Bud Light when someone asks for Hawaiian beer, one thing is for certain: You're sure to get a shot of laughter at Keola's bar."

Small Property (under 200 rooms): **Leonardo "Leo" Dasig**, the lead morning cook at The Surfjack Hotel & Swim Club "is such a team player that he will work overtime when needed and is always available to help," notes the hotel.

Front Office

Large Property (450+ rooms): In 2013, **Khrisna Fabian** and her mother moved to Hawaii from the Philippines, and Fabian began working at Aulani, A Disney Resort & Spa, as a front desk agent. In 2017, she was honored as Aulani's "Cast Member of the Year" for her efforts "beyond her role" of welcoming and training new employees, and helping to lead Disney VoluntEAR events with local nonprofits.

Medium Property (200-449 rooms): **Samoa Leilua** has been a guest service manager at The Westin Nanea Ocean Villas since it opened in April 2017. "With her kind demeanor and selfless personality," the hotel writes, "she continues to embody the resort's founding core value of commitment to community, treating all guests and associates like her own *ohana*."

Small Property (under 200 rooms): **Channy-Lyn Motoyama**, notes The Surfjack Hotel & Swim Club, "is a fast-tracker and leader of this generation that has helped shape and established the personality" of the hotel.

Housekeeper

Large Property (450+ rooms): Housekeeper **Adelina Cambe** has been "a dedicated employee" at the Sheraton Waikiki for more than 31 years. For 25 of those years, she has made 500 deep-fried lumpia for the housekeeping department's annual Charity Walk bake sale fundraiser. "People here in my department have helped me a lot, so I help them out," she says.

Continued on Page 43