



BY LAURA PATTERSON

Photographs provided by: Mokani Olu Ranch





# The Gift

A simple gift of Longhorns presented to King Kamehameha I, the founder and first ruler of the Kingdom of Hawaii, became the introduction of cattle to the Hawaiian Islands in 1793. George Vancouver carried half a dozen of what was then called California Longhorns as a way to begin expanding the commercial opportunities of the island. In order to help the cattle, a Kapu – a law carrying the death penalty for anyone who killed the cattle – was placed. While nobody thought the wild cattle would last in the new environment, the Longhorns roamed the lava fields and beautiful landscapes and flourished.

Over the next 20 years, the wild cattle became more of a nuisance than anything by destroying natives' crops, damaging thatch roofs, and harming humans. Something had to be done, and King Kamehameha III lifted the Kapu in 1830. At first, the cattle were hunted and shot by adventurers like John Palmer Parker, a sailor from Massachusetts. But King Kam III wanted a better way to handle the cattle, so he sent for vaqueros to teach Hawaiians how to work cattle properly. The Spanish cowboys led from horseback and showed the paniolo (cowboys) the tools of their trade – saddles, lariats, spurs, etc. Eventually, herds were corralled, and ranchers began processing the meat and selling the hides.

Since the cattle became highly inbred feral cattle, by 1859, ranchers sought to bring





Ranch manager, Yod Neal



seed stock from around the world. Cattle were shipped to Honolulu even though the voyage was extremely difficult. The cattle were driven through downtown to slaughterhouses. When it became cheaper to import lesser quality of meat, the cattle industry took a hit.

Several ranches, including Parker Ranch which is known as Hawaii's oldest working cattle ranch, maintained a stock of cattle, however Longhorns were a thing of the past. Today, ranching and farming is an integral part of Hawaiian culture; however, the majority of locals focus on crop raising. Only a few strive to keep the cattle legacy alive.

## The Vision

On the slopes of the West Maui Mountains, known to native Hawaiians as Mauna Kahalawai, an eroded shield volcano facing the Pacific Ocean makes up the landscape. One paniolo, Avery B. Chumbley, knew that historical cattle would be a perfect addition to those mountains. So in 2002, he began his quest to own and operate a fully functional cattle enterprise.

"Even though they have a historical significance to the Hawaiian Islands, Longhorns are not quite an animal that fits in here," says Avery. "Most are focused on beef breeding rather than a true cow/calf operation. But to me, they are more unique and such a beautiful animal."

Avery is originally from East Central Illinois, but in attempts to escape the cold, he took a huge gamble and moved to Maui in 1983. He quickly acclimated to the Aloha Spirit, attending the University of Hawaii Agricultural Leadership Foundation and becoming involved with the local government. He held several appointed positions and elected offices – State of Hawaii Board of Agriculture, Hawaii House of Representatives, and Hawaii State Senate. He now serves an important role as president of Wailuku Water Company, a company that brings surface water off the Forest Reserve Watershed lands for Ag use.



When the parent corporation of Wailuku was going through a dissolution and liquidated over 70,000 acres of land throughout Hawaii, Avery took full advantage and purchased more than 300 acres. He immediately set work on the Makani Olu Ranch, Hawaiian for "Cool-Breeze."

"The plan was to acquire various livestock," says Avery. "We stocked horses, mules, donkeys, sheep, and goats. When it came time to select a cattle breed, we originally considered Angus, which is the common breed for ranchers here in Hawaii. However, I knew the first cattle in Hawaii were Texas Longhorns, and I knew they would be an interesting breed to have on Maui."

Interesting indeed, but a huge challenge. Avery's friend, Pete Boyce of Almendra Longhorns in Manteca, California, was the first step in trying to ship Longhorns to Maui. Pete agreed to ship 14 head of Texas Longhorns to start the breeding program. The process, once all the required forms were filled out, took six days of just ocean travel and required a tender to go along with the shipment. The cattle had to be placed into quarantine for two days after arrival and vet checked.

"When the shipping container arrived at the quarantine facility and we opened the doors and the cattle were standing in deep manure and urine, they were a mess," Avery says. "It was so hard on them. The day after the cattle arrived at the ranch, one of the cows gave birth to a new bull calf, had that happened in transit most likely the calf would not have survived."

The initial stock, including two herd sires, arrived in 2007. By 2012 and after another shipment, Avery had acquired more than 100 head of registered Texas Longhorns.

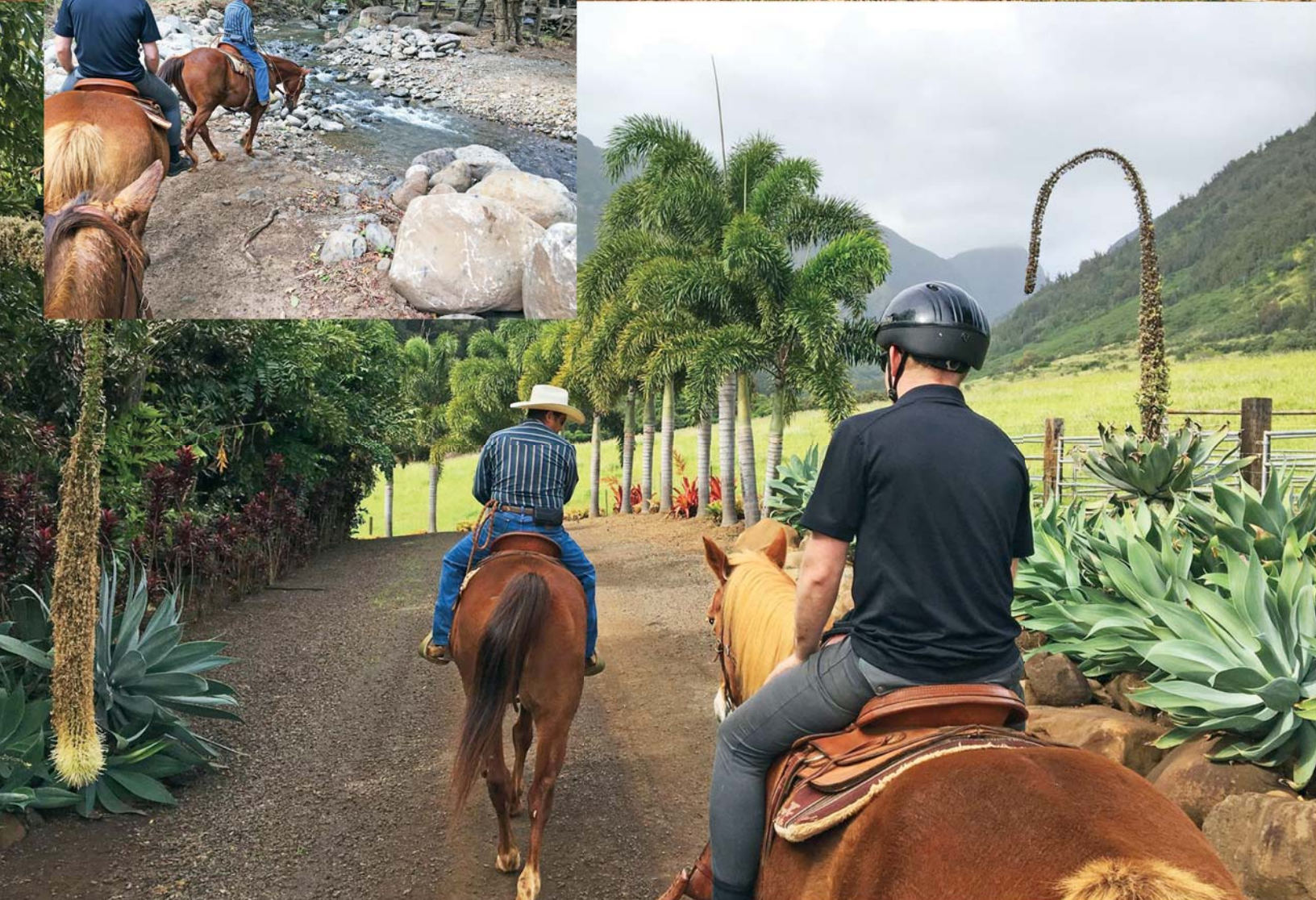
"It's an interesting thing, but over the last 15 years, we have only lost two calves during that time," says Avery. "So, it's accurate and true that they are the easiest cattle to handle and don't have any calving problems."

Avery sells a lot of his cattle to be used for beef, since Hawaii is a more health-



*Avery Chumbley outside his  
Makani Olu Ranch*









conscious state. He markets the benefits, like that of his cattle being grass-finished, to consumers. The challenge still remains of some not knowing how to cook Longhorn meat, but he educates buyers and chefs. It is also difficult for processing, since there is only one processing facility in Maui that handles Longhorns. The facility charges extra, since more is involved with a Longhorn, but Avery believes it is worth the price when being able to provide the public with a healthier option of beef. Avery also sells stock for roping and stock building to other ranchers.

"They are quite an attraction," Avery says. "People are amazed at the horns and the sizes and large Tip To Tips. It would be nice to see other ranchers stock Texas Longhorns. They have a long history in Hawaii and are an enjoyable breed to share on exhibit to our communities. People are surprised when they visit our ranch and see these magnificent cattle. I take my two 10-year-old steers to Island fairs and exhibits, and they quickly become stars of the show having pictures taken of them constantly."

Besides being the largest purebred Texas Longhorn ranch in Hawaii, Avery's ranch is considered Maui's best Equine facility. Mokani Olu Ranch offers trail ride training and horsemanship, private riding lessons, and even youth camps for the horses. It has been the feature of many articles of equine magazines and the location of some movies. Even with all of the success his family-oriented ranch has achieved because of Avery's vision, there is still one thing he desires, "I only wish I had a trained steer that could be ridden by saddle in the local parades!"

To learn more about **Avery and the Mokani Olu Ranch**, visit: [mokanioluranch.com](http://mokanioluranch.com), or check them out on Facebook.

