

**pacific'O**  
**505 Front St.**  
**Lahaina, Maui, Hawai'i 96761**  
**(808) 667-4341**  
**FAX (808) 661-8399**  
**www.pacificomaui.com**

OPENED: August 1993

SEATS: 140 open-air dining room and beachside

CUISINE: Contemporary Pacific  
SIGNATURE ITEMS: Prawn & Basil Wontons; "Hapa/Hapa" Tempura; Banana Lumpia

DINNER ENTRÉE PRICE RANGE: \$19 - \$38

HOURS: Lunch daily, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Dinner nightly, 5:30 to 10:00 p.m.  
Live jazz every Thurs. – Sat.

EXECUTIVE CHEF: James McDonald  
CO-OWNERS: Louis Coulombe, Stephan Bel-Robert

AWARDS:

- 2006 *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence
- 2006 HONOLULU magazine Hale 'Aina Gold Award
- 2005 *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence
- 2005 HONOLULU magazine Hale 'Aina Silver Award
- 2004 *The Honolulu Advertiser*  
"Hawai'i's 100 Best Restaurants"
- 2004 HONOLULU magazine Hale 'Aina Silver Award
- 2004 *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence
- 2003 *The Honolulu Advertiser*  
"Hawai'i's 100 Best Restaurants"
- 2003 HONOLULU magazine Hale 'Aina Award
- 2003 *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence
- 2002 *The Honolulu Advertiser*  
"Hawai'i's 100 Best Restaurants"
- 2002 A Taste of Lahaina – Judges' Choice Award
- 2002 HONOLULU magazine Hale 'Aina Award
- 2002 *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence
- 2001 A Taste of Lahaina, - Best Seafood/ Best of Show
- 2001 *The Honolulu Advertiser*  
"O'ahu's 100 Best Restaurants" (N.I. section)
- 2001 HONOLULU magazine Hale 'Aina Award
- 2001 *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence
- 2000 *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence
- 1999 *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence
- 1998 *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence
- 1998 Best Maui Chef –*The Maui News*
- 1997 *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence
- 1997 A Taste of Lahaina – Best Seafood
- 1996 *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence
- 1996 Best Cooked Poke – Sam Choy's Contest
- 1995 A Taste of Lahaina – Best Seafood
- 1994 Best Cooked Poke – Sam Choy's Contest
- 1993 A Taste of Lahaina – Best Seafood

## **The pacific'O Story**

Industry observers – along with lots of local residents and visitors – watched one restaurant after another open and close in the beachside location that appeared to be a surefire winner. But for some reason, or more likely many reasons, nothing ever quite made it in the beautiful oceanfront spot at the 505 Front Street complex in Lahaina. Nothing, that is, until a couple of surfing buddies got their hands on it in August 1993.

“My uncle bought the center,” says restaurant partner Louis Coulombe, “and he asked me to come over and run the restaurant for a little while until it was sold.” He had only a bit of restaurant experience – he had put all the elements together to open Trata, an upscale eatery in the heart of downtown Toronto – but fell in love with Maui and decided to buy the place himself. As luck would have it, he met a chef and an experienced maitre'd...surfing.

That maitre'd, Stephan Bel-Robert, is now a partner who expertly manages the front of the house and also oversees the award-winning wine list. “Stephan is the reason our guests have as great an experience as they do,” says Louis. And although that original chef left after just a short while, his replacement is nothing to sneeze at. “We brought in James McDonald, who, actually, just answered our ad in the paper,” says Louis. Now, years later, pacific'O is most certainly considered cutting edge. And all three men like it just fine that way.

The food, like the wine list, has won numerous awards. Fresh fish prepared in a variety of creative ways dominates the menu. “People don't travel thousands of miles to eat chicken,” says Chef with a smile. And so instead they choose from dishes like the award-winning Prawn and Basil Wontons, Asian Gravlax, and Fresh Ahi and Ono Tempura, and, of course, the fresh catch.

The incredible beachside setting completes the pacific'O experience, along with the jazz, that is. “We want to provide our guests with a complete evening,” says Louis.

i'o  
505 Front St.  
Lahaina, Maui, Hawai'i 96761  
(808) 661-8422  
FAX (808) 661-8399  
www.iomaui.com

OPENED: November 13, 1998  
(It was a Lucky Friday!)

SEATS: 120 in the open-air dining room and beachside

CUISINE: Contemporary Pacific  
SIGNATURE ITEMS: "Daily Crudo Menu;" I'o Trio; Mad Hatter

ENTRÉE PRICE RANGE: \$26 - \$59

HOURS: Dinner nightly, 5:30 to 10:30 p.m.

EXECUTIVE CHEF/CO-OWNER: James McDonald  
CO-OWNERS: Louis Coulombe, Stephan Bel-Robert

AWARDS: **2007 DiRōNA**  
2006 *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence  
2006 HONOLULU magazine Hale 'Aina Gold Award  
2005 *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence  
2005 HONOLULU magazine Hale 'Aina Silver Award  
2004 *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence  
2004 *The Honolulu Advertiser* "Hawai'i's 100 Best Restaurants"  
2003 *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence  
2002 *The Honolulu Advertiser* "Hawai'i's 100 Best Restaurants"  
2002 HONOLULU magazine Hale 'Aina Restaurant of Distinction  
2002 *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence  
2001 A Taste of Lahaina – Best Seafood/Best of Show  
2001 *The Honolulu Advertiser* "O'ahu's 100 Best Restaurants"  
(N. I. section)  
2001 HONOLULU magazine Hale 'Aina Restaurant of Distinction  
2001 *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence  
2000 *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence  
1998 Best Maui Chef – James McDonald – *The Maui News*  
1999 A Taste of Lahaina – Best Vegetarian Dish  
1999 Best New Restaurant – *The Maui News*

## **The i'o Story**

It was sort of a Mt. Everest thing. The location was there. So Pacific'O partners Louis Coulombe, Stephan Bel-Robert and Executive Chef James McDonald transformed the fabulous beachside location that had housed the Old Lāhaina Lū'au Café into one of the most exciting restaurants on Maui. Located directly across the walkway from their successful Pacific'O restaurant in Lahaina's 505 Front St. complex, they joined forces with "one of our artist friends, Dado, and just started to put our ideas onto paper." The result is absolutely eye-popping.

The overall theme is subtly nautical, the details spectacular. The curved bar is hand-formed concrete and had to be poured in place. The lights behind the bar are portholes filled with broken bottle glass. The door that leads behind the bar came from an old walk-in refrigerator and was re-formed to look like a ship's galley door. The light fixtures are comprised of spider leg-looking protrusions which can be individually aimed in any direction. The ceiling fans are high-tech stainless steel. There's a ship's railing along the interior folding glass doors. The rest rooms are reminiscent of an Ian Schrager-style design. And three magnificent etched glass windows are lit to look like living aquariums. The largest of the windows allows patrons to see what's going on in Chef James' Rolls Royce of a kitchen. "We wanted a show kitchen but we didn't want it to be intrusive," says the Chef. "The window was the perfect solution."

In addition to the dining room, there is outdoor patio seating at i'o in a beachside setting fit, literally, for a king. The area is said to have been a favorite recreation spot of many of Hawai'i's ancient ali'i (royalty).

The restaurant provides a setting perfectly suited to the cuisine served. Known for his innovative flavor combinations and presentations, Chef James McDonald now has a place where his vivid imagination can truly soar.

## **EXECUTIVE CHEF JAMES McDONALD**

Pacific'O, I'O, The Feast at Lele

“Arts” is the operative word in Chef James McDonald’s culinary arts degree. His eye-popping presentations of singularly distinctive dishes delight the eyes as much as they do the palate. For more than a decade, night after night diners have been “blown away” by the sensual artistry of dishes like Pacific'O’s signature Prawn and Basil Wontons, Fresh Ahi and Ono Tempura, and Sesame-Seared Fresh Fish, I’o’s signature Silken Purse, Tiger by the Tail, Crispy Ahi, and Foie Gras Crusted Fresh Catch, and The Feast at Lele’s perfect Steamed Moi, Tahitian Fafa, and Samoan Fish in Banana Leaf.

A Philadelphia native, McDonald has called Hawai‘i his home since 1980. He claims he got into the restaurant business “basically, because I love to eat.” In 1976, he enrolled in Upper Bucks County Vocational-Technical School to study data processing because “computers were going to be the next big thing.” (Well, he was right about that!) But what he wasn’t able to predict was 1) that his chosen course of study involved lots of math, with which he was, shall we say, incompatible and 2) that getting a “great big whiff of the school’s bake shop” would forever change his course. As luck would have it, his best friend’s father owned two restaurants on the outskirts of Philadelphia and a future star war born.

After graduating Maui Community College’s Culinary Arts Program – he is one of the school’s most successful graduates ever and is, as he puts it “the program’s poster child” – he worked with an international network of chefs at Ritz-Carlton and Westin hotels and at the five-star Grand Hotel Quellenhof in Bad Ragaz, Switzerland. Today, McDonald is just where he wants to be – overseeing the kitchens at two great, multi-award winning Lahaina restaurants, Pacific'O and I’o, and the premier attraction, The Feast at Lele. He pushes the culinary envelope daily. “We break the rules here,” he says proudly. An example – fishermen are required to bring their catch in through the dining room. “We want our guests to SEE how fresh our fish is,” says McDonald.

In addition to rave reviews throughout Hawai‘i, including being voted “Maui’s Best Chef” of 1998 by *The Maui News* readers, McDonald has received national and international recognition. He has cooked at the Hilton Nagoya (Japan) in 1997 and 1998, on Norwegian Cruise Lines luxury ship *Dynasty* on its voyage to Christmas Island in 1998 and at Selfridge & Co. in London in October 1998. In 1997, millions got a vicarious taste of his signature Prawn

and Basil Wontons as he prepared them during a demonstration on QVC, the Home Shopping Network. First class Hawaiian Airlines passengers found McDonald's dishes on their meal trays during the year 2000. He was chosen to help promote Hawai'i's cuisine – in Miami with star Chef Norman Van Aken and at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas – as part of the Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau's "Chefs of Aloha" program, a tour co-sponsored by Continental Airlines, Starwood Hotels, and *Bon Appetit* magazine.

In December 2001, he achieved another long-time goal – he cooked at the James Beard Foundation in New York City. His creative Hawaiian Christmas Dinner. The food – and the aloha he served up with it – elicited thunderous applause from a packed house.

Perhaps most prestigious of all is his membership in the Center for Culinary Development, a San Francisco-based organization. "It's a real honor," says McDonald, "because I'm the only chef outside of San Francisco ever to be invited to join." He participated in "brainstorming" sessions designed to develop future products for industry giants Eggo Waffles, Uncle Ben's, and Lender's Bagels.

He's trim and good-looking – "I say that thing about not trusting a skinny chef is an old wives' tale." His work clothes look more haute couture than industrial. "It's my color, don't you think?" he asks about his periwinkle chef's coat, one of dozens he owns. Truth be told, as fun and cool and hip as he is, it is his culinary artistry which has catapulted him to the zenith of Hawai'i's food firmament. It's a space he's sure to occupy for a long, long time.

CLIENT: PACIFIC'O and I'O RESTAURANTS

Media Contact: Bonnie Friedman

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 11, 2004

### **EVERYTHING'S COMIN' UP AT O'O FARM IN UPCOUNTRY MAUI**

Spring has sprung at upcountry Maui's "O'o Farm." The 8+-acres, named "O'o" – which means "to mature or ripen, as fruit" in Hawaiian – is the labor of love of Louis Coulombe and Stephan Bel-Robert, owners of two of Hawai'i's most acclaimed restaurants, Pacific'O and I'o in Lahaina. **After just three years, the land produces "100% of the greens for both restaurants and the Feast at Lele (dinner show)," says Coulombe. That equates to 300 – 400 pounds per week of more than a 25 varieties of lettuces, spinach, and other greens.** "It takes two pick-up trucks to bring it all down to the restaurants," he adds happily.

All the herbs for all three venues also come from the fertile upcountry land. And during spring and summer, there are plenty of berries, peas, and beans, too. "We have about 750 asparagus plants in the ground and both orchards – one stone fruit, one citrus – are already producing," says Coulombe.

O'o employs two people full-time and any member of the restaurants' 130+-work force is welcomed at any time to help out. For many who spend all their time in hot, sea-level West Maui, the trip to cool, verdant Kula is more a treat than a chore. The owners and employees often celebrate special occasions at O'o. More than 100 people enjoyed a spectacular Thanksgiving feast last year (2002) and birthday gatherings for staff children are popular occasions as well.

There's a huge dining table made from a felled tree on the property complete with booster seats for the smallest children. There's even a "wine cellar/cave in-progress" being built into the side of Mt. Haleakalä; when completed the climate control will be au natural.

Hawai'i's climate allows for planting – and harvesting – year 'round. In addition to the aforementioned crops there are Maui onions, leeks, red beets, tomatoes, peppers, artichokes, nasturtium, and marigolds – all, at different times of the year, making their way onto diners' plates. The orchards are filled with citrus, apple, and stone fruit trees, cinnamon and curry, exotic hybrids like "pluots" – a cross between plum and apricot – and juicy, blood-red elephant heart plums. These are all taking hold. Strawberries, blueberries, black raspberries, mulberries, and poha berries are beginning to find their ways into the restaurant kitchens. Seriously exciting for the entire group of restaurateurs, chefs and gourmet friends are the grapevines – 50 of them, mostly zinfandel, some cabernet, some merlot.

Coloumbe and Bel-Robert – along with Executive Chef James McDonald – recruited the help of an expert at the start of the project. Robbie Vorfeld, the former manager of Pioneer Mill and holder of a degree in crop science, now heads up the Mill’s diversified agriculture project and is a valuable and knowledgeable asset to O‘o. “Basically, I’m a farmer. And what’s here now is a whole lot better than what it was – a wattle forest,” he says. One hundred percent of the wattle, by the way, was turned into wood chips which are used on the property.

“Kula, and specifically Waipoli, has always been a farming area,” Vorfeld continues, “and I expect most everything to do well. I know for sure the citrus will do well.”

**Coulombe and Bel-Robert are the first and only restaurateurs in the State of Hawai‘i to own and operate their own farm, solely for the purposes of supplying their restaurants and using the island’s precious agricultural land wisely. “It’s a work in progress,” Coulombe.” It’s a long-term commitment to the land and to our business.”**

The long-term goal is for Pacific’O, I’o, and the Feast at Lele to be produce self-sufficient. “Any chef’s dream is to be able to control what comes in the door. To have such a personal connection to it is that much better,” says young McDonald of the farm.

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**CLIENT: I'O (Lahaina)**

Media contact: Bonnie Friedman, 242-8383 (Maui)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 5, 2006

**I'O IS ONLY MAUI RESTAURANT TO WIN DiRōNA RECOGNITION**

Out of the thousands of restaurants across the U.S., Canada and Mexico, **I'O has just been added to the elite roster of restaurants that have earned the Distinguished Restaurants of North America (DiRōNA) distinction – one of the most prestigious acknowledgements in the industry. The popular Lahaina restaurant is one of only 26 being recognized by the Distinguished Restaurants of North America (DiRōNA) in its “Class of 2007.” Of the 26 awards handed out this year, this is the only one being given to a Maui restaurant. There are a total of only NINE restaurants (including I'o) in all of Hawai'i that have earned this distinction.**

The organization conducts independent and anonymous inspections to determine North America's best restaurants. There are fewer than 800 DiRōNA restaurants in all of North America. *Wine Spectator* and the National Restaurant Association consider the DiRōNA distinction to be the benchmark for fine dining. Recipients will be officially presented at a gala ceremony on the last evening of DiRōNA's Annual Conference being held in Atlanta next month (October).

“I am incredibly proud of our Class of 2007 DiRōNA restaurants, and I can guarantee that these restaurants represent only the best fine dining has to offer in the United States, Canada and Mexico,” said Chick Marshall, Chairman of DiRōNA. A great deal of culinary talent resides in our member restaurants, and it is a privilege to celebrate another great year in fine dining with such an esteemed group of professionals,” he adds.

“Having been recognized by the DiRōNA committee as an exceptional restaurant worthy of their award is one of our greatest achievements. We're thrilled at being the only restaurant on Maui that holds such distinction and my staff and I are extremely proud that our efforts are appreciated and recognized. It's absolutely wonderful to be held in such esteem along with the finest restaurants in all of North America,” says I'o Executive Chef/Partner James McDonald.

## **About DiRōNA**

Based in New York, NY, DiRōNA was established in 1990 to promote the fine dining industry and offers the only fine dining guarantee in North America. The DiRōNA distinction is bestowed upon only the most distinguished restaurateurs. To become eligible for the distinction, restaurants must first be in operation under the same ownership and theme for a minimum of three years. An anonymous, independent inspection of the property is conducted to review the quality of the food, wine, service, physical property and décor. The DiRōNA distinction is the only program of its kind, scrutinizing every aspect of the dining experience, from making a reservation to presenting the check. Please visit [www.dirona.org](http://www.dirona.org) for more information and for a list of establishments that have earned this prestigious honor.

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