



# Hawai'i

THE MAGAZINE FOR AAA MEMBERS

## A Chef's Secrets

Maui's gardens of delights provide daily inspiration

Behind the scenes of  
DreamWorks' Turbo

HOLOHOLA: Waimea Canyon

July/August 2013





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Chef Wesley Holder selects the best of Maui's bounty. See page 18 for more about how he prepares before entering the kitchen. PHOTOGRAPH BY RON DAHLQUIST

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# A Cook's TOUR OF MAUI

## A chef makes the rounds in search of the island's best bounty

BY BONNIE FRIEDMAN  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY RON DAHLQUIST

It's the modern culinary mantra: Buy the best, freshest ingredients available—local, when possible—and keep the preparations simple. Every chef chants it. Chef Wesley Holder does it. The executive sous chef at Pulehu, an Italian Grill, at the AAA Four Diamond Westin Kā'anapali Ocean Resort Villas has cultivated relationships with West Maui farmers and other trusted vendors to get the best of the fresh. "Classic Italian ideas with modern twists" is how he describes his food. And he's proved that Italian plays well in paradise, serving more than 4,000 dinners a month at his sleek, modern 130-seat restaurant.

Like many Maui chefs, Holder works directly with large-scale purveyors—his ingredients come to him. He agreed to take AAA Hawai'i on a shopping trip for restaurant-quality ingredients at his local farmers market, a specialty store, and Maui's "island-size" local warehouse store.



Ho'opono Farms owner David Horsman (left) with Chef Wesley Holder in a field of sunn hemp.

Want to try Chef Wesley Holder's signature Bolognese? Check out his recipe at [AAA.com/hawaiimagazine](http://AAA.com/hawaiimagazine).

## NĀPILI FARMERS MARKET

Open Wednesdays, 8–11 a.m.  
Honoapi'ilani Highway and Nāpilihau Street, Lahaina.  
[facebook.com/napilifarmersmarket](https://facebook.com/napilifarmersmarket)



Opened for business just a year and a half ago, this small market—a few tables with goods from independent vendors put together by operator Steve Phillips—packs a powerful punch for its size. At the Ho'opono Farms table, Holder examines an Heirloom Noire, a small black-and-green tomato, chosen from a box of small rainbow-hued orbs. "The part that faces the sun is black," Holder explains. "When the tomato

ripens, the green part turns bright red—the part that doesn't face the sun. Amazing!" He then carefully cuts open the tomato to reveal a membrane surrounding what looks like caviar. "It has that full-on solid mouthfeel like uni [sea urchin]," he says excitedly.

Ho'opono supplies a few West Maui restaurant chefs with carrots, peas, eggplant, arugula, and, of course, tomatoes. The farm, located above the Kā'anapali Beach Resort area, is also a living, hands-on laboratory for schoolchildren to learn where their food comes from and about sustainable agriculture. Ho'opono is closed to the public, but its produce is often available at the Nāpili and Launiupoko farmers markets.

Next, Holder stops by Phillips' tables, which are brimming with kale, bok choy, collard greens, herbs, papaya, even duck eggs. Holder's chef's attire, big personality, and awesome handlebar mustache attract a small following at the farmers market. Several folks seek his advice. "How do you tell if this is ripe?" asks a tourist holding an avocado. "It should be slightly soft to the touch," Holder answers. "How do you know when this is ripe?" inquires another, holding up a green pineapple. Holder takes the green fruit from him and, in his other hand, holds out a golden yellow one. "Nature pretty much tells you." He has another suggestion: "Talk to the farmers. They grow it. They pick it. They've got the inside track." And then there's common sense: "If it smells like it should taste, if its color is the color it's supposed to be, that's pretty solid evidence."

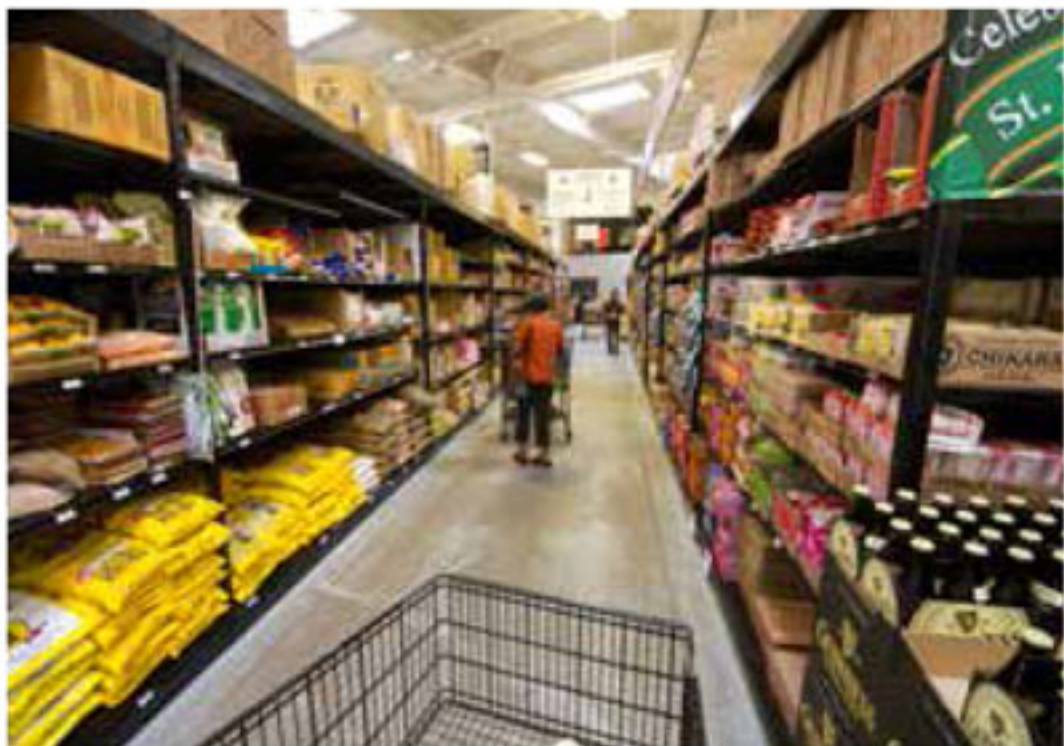
## MAUI PRIME FINE FOODS

142 Kupuohi Street, #F-7, Lahaina. (808) 661-4912; [mauprime.com](http://mauprime.com)

A small, well-appointed store filled with fish, shellfish, imported meats, poultry, cheese, dressings, sauces, pasta, and wine, all in home-cook sizes, it's as retail "gourmet" as it gets on Maui. Attentive, knowledgeable service is also a hallmark. William Hawkins, the director of operations, welcomes Holder with a sample of bright green Castelvetro olives. "I use them in one of my mahimahi preparations," Holder says. "I get my chickens and ducks here, too, and mussels, clams, oysters, and all kinds of specialty food items like quail, bison, and pork cheeks. You could also make a fine antipasto or charcuterie platter from what they sell here."







## CASH N' CARRY WAREHOUSE

90 Amala Place, Kahului. (808) 871-2535;  
vipfoodservice.com/cash.htm

Cash n' Carry is the place for anyone who wants to shop like a chef. It's the retail division of VIP Foodservice, which has been Maui's purveyor to the chefs for more than 60 years. A small section of the wholesale store that opened in 1986 is now a bright, clean, easy-to-navigate, 13,000-square-foot facility. Committed to local farmers and producers, Cash n' Carry has an array of food service-quality goods in every category, including several basil varieties from Evonuk Farms, beef from Maui and Hawai'i Island, and wines. Dashing through the aisles, Holder loads up two carts with local ground beef, tomato paste, Maui onions, carrots, celery, and Evonuk Farms herbs. He circles back to the meat cooler and picks up a package of Hawai'i Island short ribs. "You could definitely use these for the Bolognese sauce, instead of ground beef," Holder says. "Delicious!"



## IN THE KITCHEN

Back in the Pulehu kitchen, Holder assembles fresh *burrata* cheese from Rimfire Imports with halves and wedges of Ho'opono Farms heirloom tomatoes, paper-thin slices of Maui onion, micro opal basil from Nāpili FLO (Fresh, Local, Organic) Farm, and a sprinkle of 'alaea salt. ■

Certified pastry cook Bonnie Friedman recently wrote about Maui's Hui No'eau Visual Arts Center for AAA Hawai'i.

## Side Dishes

HERE ARE THREE OTHER PLACES CHEFS FREQUENT

**RIMFIRE IMPORTS** is Maui's original gourmet food purveyor. Some quantities are large (perfect to split with friends); many aren't. Chef Wesley Holder gets most of his Italian cheeses (including the *burrata* for his Caprese salad), pancetta, Italian sausage, and San Marzano tomatoes here. 781 Eha Street, Wailuku. (808) 242-6888 or (800) 832-0933; [rimfireimports.com](http://rimfireimports.com).

**MAUI CATTLE COMPANY,** a consortium of Maui ranchers who grass-feed their herds, supplies some lucky chefs/restaurants, a few small retailers, and Longs Drugs stores islandwide.

Theo Morrison's chickens lay some fine eggs at **THE NEIGHBORHOOD FARM**. Get them directly by emailing [thefarm@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:thefarm@hawaii.rr.com) or at Maui Prime Fine Foods; Nāpili Farmers Market; or Launiupoko Farmer's Market (open Saturdays, 8 a.m.–noon. Kai Hele Ku Street and Honoapi'ilani Highway, Lahaina. [facebook.com/LpokoFarmersMarket](https://facebook.com/LpokoFarmersMarket)).