



PHOTOS: ANTHONY CONSILIO

Tavern Turns Back Time

Kapolei's newest eatery evokes memories of its past.



Chef/Owner Adam Gilbert

For PLANTATION TAVERN's owner Adam Gilbert and his wife, Sunny, Kapolei was the perfect place to start a business and improve the quality of life for their family.

The couple grew tired of the commute to town, and became frustrated with the lack of dining options in the West region—which led them to research the potential market of the Kapolei area.

“With a love and passion for this community, we sought to find a concept that would pay homage to the history of the area, bridging the gap of the past to the rapid-growing population,” says Gilbert, an ‘Ewa-based entrepreneur who previously lived in Makakilo for eight years.

Drastically different than the hustle and bustle of downtown Honolulu and Waikiki, Kapolei's ambiance is reminiscent of “Hanabata Days,” and that's precisely the feel Gilbert wanted for Plantation Tavern.

“[It's] a relaxed, nostalgic restaurant and bar with comfort food,” he explains. “The atmosphere is clean and cozy. It's very open and homey, like going to your aunty's house. I get the feeling of the old ranch houses of the country, which is very nice, but also comfortable.”

Kapolei's rich history of cane fields and plantation culture inspired the décor and food choices at the establishment.

“The concept originated when my wife brought home a kau kau tin,” Gilbert explains. “We researched and imagined [that] plantation cultures—Hawaiian, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Portuguese, Okinawan and Korean—all sat in the cane fields where we stand today and shared their lunches in these very same tins.”

Going along with the same concept, Plantation Tavern serves up its plantation cuisine family-style to encourage sharing and provoke storytelling.

According to Gilbert, the restaurant's flavorful steamed fish (market price) might bring back memories to a man who used to fish, and then cook his catch, with his father.

By Nicole Kato



1/2 lb. Local
Beef Burger \$14



Not Your Auntie's Kal Bi \$15

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Uncle Norm's Poke Nachos.
Market PricePlantation Style Kahumana
Farms Organic Kale Salad \$12

"He can now share this memory with people he's with and perpetuate the aloha," he adds.

An almost familiar dish of notoriety is Uncle Norm's Poke Nachos (market price) made with fried wonton chips, Kamuela tomatoes, avocado, choice of 'ahi poke, sriracha aioli and unagi sauce.

And those craving something with local flair can try the Especial Bagoong Fried Rice (\$7), made with fermented shrimp paste (bagoong) fried rice accompanied with eggs, chili pepper, green onion, green mango, red onion and chopped *lechón*.

Plantation Tavern is a true Renaissance man of restaurants. It's perfect for a business luncheon, happy hour after golf, pau hana with coworkers, a romantic dinner or just a great venue to catch live music with friends (check their website for schedule updates).

Gilbert's hope is that Plantation Tavern can remain open for years to come, but in the meantime, he has big plans for the establishment.

"We plan to start donating a percentage of profits toward homeless programs of Hawai'i focused on building up the farming industry," he says.

So if you're hungry, head on down to Plantation Tavern to experience a sense of community unlike any other. And as you're dining, remember that each bite helps the restaurant get a tiny bit closer to bettering Kapolei and Hawai'i. ●

PLANTATION TAVERN
590 FARRINGTON HWY., #536 SPACE A-2
888-4299 | plantationtavern.com

HOURS
TUESDAY-SUNDAY
LUNCH: 11 A.M. TO 3 P.M.
HAPPY HOUR: 3-5 P.M.
DINNER: 5 P.M. TO MIDNIGHT
LATE-NIGHT HAPPY HOUR: 10-11 P.M.