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Hawaii Business

ANATOMY OF A STARTUP

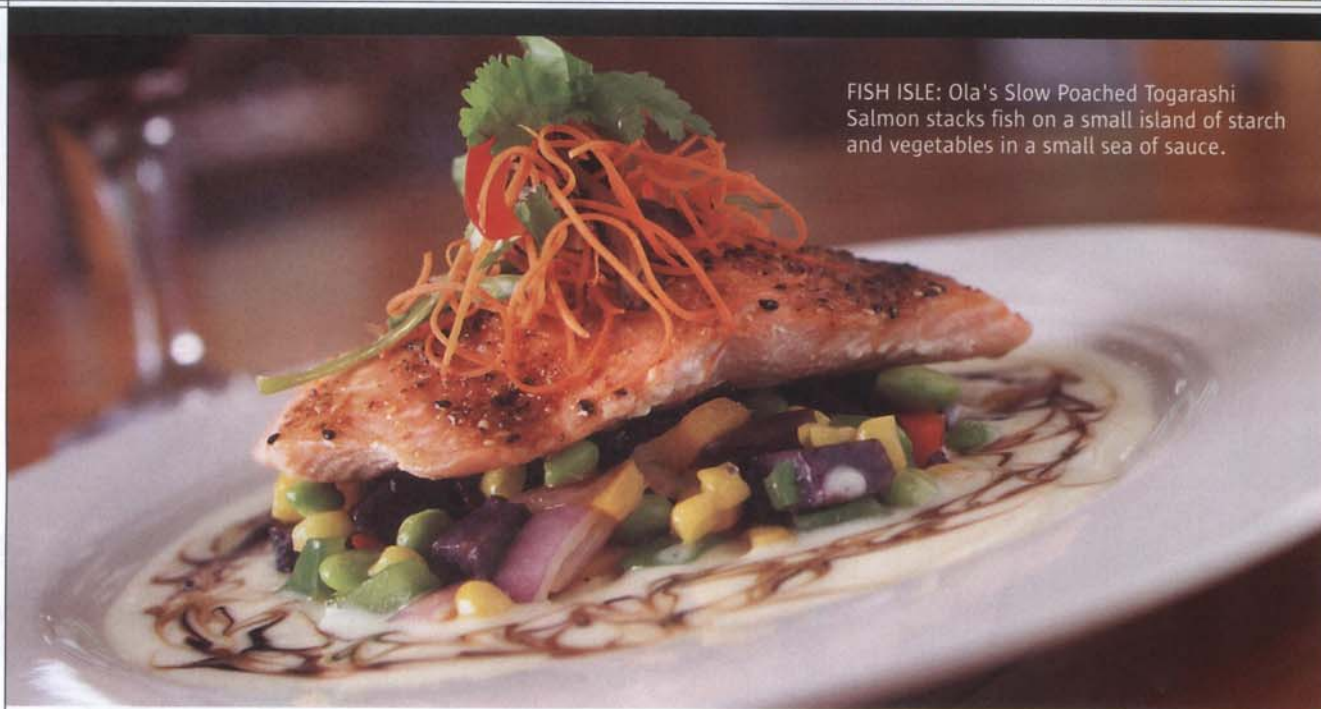
BY JACY LYOUN

*An exclusive, behind the scenes look
at Hawaii's latest dot-com venture*

(Left to right) ChipIn Founders
Song Choi, Kevin Hughes,
Carnet Williams and Olin Lagon

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FISH ISLE: Ola's Slow Poached Togarashi Salmon stacks fish on a small island of starch and vegetables in a small sea of sauce.

Castaway Cuisine

The beachside Ola looks as though it washed ashore with the last wave, which is a good thing

I don't think there is another restaurant more in tune and in touch (literally) with the beach and the ocean than Ola. The new North Shore eatery, on the shores of Kuilima Cove, is not only very close to the water, it looks as though it just washed ashore on the last wave, which, in this case, is a good thing.

Ola occupies the site of the Turtle Bay Resort's old Sand Bar beach concession, on a foundation of unfinished concrete, and features ironwood pillars and rafters, which support a plastic and metal roof that is reminiscent of old, corrugated tin. The spare structure's only protection from the elements is a series of sliding glass doors, which, when opened, disappears into the corners of the space. If the castaways from *Gilligan's Island* were to open up a fine-dining restaurant, it would probably look a lot like Ola.


Ola, which means life, living, healthy or alive in Hawaiian (coincidentally, it also means wave in Spanish), was opened last December by Chef Fred DeAngelo. DeAngelo is a local boy and Kamehameha Schools graduate, who is familiar with openings and ocean views, setting the tables for Waikiki's Tiki's Grill in 2003 and downtown Honolulu's Palomino in 1999.

We started off our meal with a pair of appetizers — Ahi and Lobster Poke (\$11.95) and Crab Cakes (\$10.95). I preferred the poke. At first, I thought the raw fish and cooked lobster salads were a little bland compared

to traditionally prepared versions. But, after a few more bites, I appreciated its subtle seasonings, which allowed the natural flavors to shine through.

For my entrée, I ordered the chef's signature dish, Slow-Poached Togarashi Salmon (\$26.95). The fish, a New Zealand King Salmon, was flavored with togarashi, a Japanese spice mixture with citrus, chili and sesame seeds, among many other goodies. The generous portion of fish, which was kiawe smoked, sat on a small mound of diced Okinawan sweet potatoes, edamame, and was finished with caramelized cane sugar, a fistful of Asian slaw and a light white sauce.

The fish was moist and tender and fell away easily with a touch of my fork. It was delicious. I also liked that everything — fish, vegetables and starch — was all in one multi level tower. A couple of times, I was able to get all three onto one forkful. However, I did notice that the salmon seemed to be getting sweeter and sweeter with every bite. The white sauce and the cane sugar seemed to bring out all the natural sugars of the potato, corn, peppers and carrots. Even the starchy edamame started tasting sweet. Although I have a sweet tooth, I think I would have liked something a little more salty to reset my palette.

After dinner, my son played by the hotel's nearby outrigger canoe. Later, we wandered along the beach while my wife wrote postcards at our table. The full moon was shining, the waves were crashing. Gilligan never had it so good. 

OLA

- Turtle Bay Resort
- 57-091 Kamehameha Highway
- Lunch: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Dinner: 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
- 293-0801