

Hawaiian Airlines taps husband-and-wife team as executive chefs



Hawaiian Airlines team of Executive Chefs and Featured Chefs for 2021

Hawaiian Airlines today announced the appointment of husband-and-wife team Wade Ueoka and Michelle Karr-Ueoka, owners of Honolulu's [MW Restaurant](#) and [Artizen](#), as its executive chefs. Together, they will oversee menus from the carrier's popular onboard [Featured Chef Series](#), as well as curate First Class meals for inbound flights from the U.S. mainland and all cabin menus for flights between Hawaii and Japan, Australia and New Zealand and outbound flights to South Korea.

Ueoka previously prepared meals for Hawaiian's passengers as a featured chef in 2016 and 2018. The airline's first executive chef duo replaces Chef Lee Anne Wong, owner of Honolulu's [Koko Head Café](#), who joined the Featured Chef Series in 2015 and has served as executive chef since 2018.

"Our Featured Chef Series has developed into a top-rated meal program that celebrates the vibrant culinary scene and outstanding agricultural bounty of our islands," said Renee Awana, managing director of product development at Hawaiian Airlines, in today's announcement. "Lee Anne Wong has played an innovative role in developing this program, and we are thankful for her time as both a featured chef and our executive chef. We offer her our sincere gratitude as she passes the torch to Chef Wade Ueoka and Chef Michelle Karr-Ueoka."

Ueoka was born and raised on O'ahu and graduated from the culinary program at Kapi'olani Community College. From his humble beginnings as a fry cook at Zippy's Restaurants, he became chef de cuisine at the nationally recognized [Alan Wong's Restaurant](#). Ueoka has worked at several acclaimed eateries, including [The French Laundry](#) in Napa Valley, California, and Alex in Las Vegas. He has been recognized nationally as a Rising Star Chef and has received numerous local awards for being one of Hawaii's leading chefs.

"After participating in the Featured Chef Series for nearly five years, it was an honor to be offered the role of executive chef," Ueoka said. "Michelle and I are excited about the opportunity to share our passion for food on a global scale and look forward to welcoming Hawaiian's guests with new menus

that represent our home.”

Karr-Ueoka, one of Hawaii’s well-known pastry chefs, was born and raised in Honolulu. While attending the University of Hawaii at Mānoa, she discovered a love for cooking after working at Alan Wong’s Restaurant. Karr-Ueoka attended the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, and later worked at various award-winning restaurants, including Daniel and Per Se in New York, and The French Laundry in Napa Valley. In over a decade as a pastry chef, she has been recognized as a semi-finalist of the James Beard Award and received the Rising Star Chef Award as a pastry chef.

“I have flown Hawaiian Airlines since I was a child, so as a chef, it’s very exciting to think that I now have the opportunity to design its in-flight meals,” said Karr-Ueoka. “Wade and I can’t wait to get started as Hawaiian’s first executive chef duo and husband-and-wife team.”

The Hawaiian Airlines Featured Chef Series offers First Class (U.S. mainland) and Business Class (international) guests onboard Hawaiian’s flights the opportunity to enjoy menus designed by regularly changed roster of Hawai’i’s greatest established and emerging chefs.

The lineup and schedule for the new chefs can be found [here](#).