

Hawaii's Film & Television Legacy

More than a century of
Made-in-Hawaii films and television shows.

The sleek helicopter began its descent against a backdrop of breathtaking tropical mountains and rain forests, finally hovering in the face of a plunging waterfall, then settling on the landing pad of ***Jurassic Park***. It is a memorable live action moment from the Steven Spielberg motion picture, which widened our view of what is real and what is make believe.

Spielberg's scene was taken from Michael Crichton's best selling novel, set on an imaginary island off the shore of the Central American nation of Costa Rica. But it was shot on the island of Kauai, in the Hawaiian archipelago.

The picture grossed \$920 million.

Outsized creatures, of course, were not new to the movies or to Hawaii when Spielberg's velociraptors were running wild on Kauai and Oahu. Dino deLaurentis and Paramount had filmed the Jessica Lange remake of ***King Kong*** on Kauai's Na Pali Coast in 1976. In 1997, Disney remade ***Mighty Joe Young*** against the backdrop of the Kaaawa Valley, demonstrating for the umpteenth time that Hawaii does a beautiful job of standing in for Equatorial Africa. And TriStar used rural areas of Honolulu County as Tahiti, Panama, and Jamaica for a new ***Godzilla***.

From a trio of travelogues in 1898, to a pair of Universal one-reelers in 1913, to the monumental ***Pearl Harbor*** in 2001, the state boasts a history of professional filmmaking that is now over a century old. And it is safe to say that Hawaii, the only tropical state, has seen more dramatic television production than any U.S. location apart from Los Angeles and New York.

It has been quite a legacy.

An industry built on the strong back of Steve McGarrett.

The history of filmmaking in Hawaii is really divided into two parts: the first 70 years, and everything since 1968.

From 1898 through 1967, Hawaii provided filmmakers with beautiful locations, occasional storylines, exotic fantasies, and, after World War II, memorable settings for some incredible classics.

Then came Jack Lord.

In 1968 the actor/producer used his star and ratings power to convince CBS to produce a weekly dramatic television series in Honolulu. ***Hawai'i Five-O*** became the longest running police drama ever to appear on U.S. television. Reruns still play all over the world.

CBS not only created the first series ever to be shot entirely on location, but it built a Hollywood-like studio complex to support it. And Jack Lord went to work on creating a production infrastructure that not only would serve his program for 12 seasons, but would go on to support eight years of ***Magnum, P.I.***, and 18 other dramatic television series since, including ***Baywatch Hawaii*** and ***North Shore***. (www.hawaiifilmoffice.com/filmstudio)

Many of the Hollywood pros who came to work on *Five-O* never left. They trained a generation of Hawaii crew people, some now with more than 30 years of experience on sets. Their successors are also in place--knowledgeable, skilled, and practiced. At least 115 motion pictures have been made in Hawaii since Jack Lord arrived, almost all of them with the front-line help of Hawaii crews, equipment, and facilities.

Since 1968, Hawaii has been far more than just beautiful locations. It has become a true production center -- Hollywood's tropical backlot.

Contemporary made-in-Hawaii classics and box-office blockbusters.

Popular acclaim, industry awards, and enormous box office success have characterized the feature films made in Hawaii in recent years.

Eight of the pictures have entered the coveted category of the "Top Grossing Movies of All Time at the Worldwide Box Office." They are: ***Jurassic Park, The Lost World: Jurassic Park, Raiders of the Lost Ark, Godzilla, Pearl Harbor, Dinosaur, Jurassic Park III,*** and ***Waterworld***. Together, their theatrical runs have produced more than \$4 billion in gross revenues, 15 Academy Award nominations, and nine Oscars.

Add just the U.S. ticket sales of ***Planet of the Apes, The Karate Kid, Part II,*** and ***George of the Jungle*** to the list, and the box office figures swell to more than \$4.286 billion. Those three pictures, plus all but ***Waterworld***, above, are on the All-Time USA Box Office chart. A film must do a minimum of \$100-million in US ticket sales just to be included. Michael Bay's ***Pearl Harbor*** made it in three weeks. ***Planet of the Apes*** earned \$68.5 million in its first *weekend*.

The acclaimed motion picture successes of the post-1968 era.

Although Disney's feature *Pearl Harbor*, starring Ben Affleck, received worldwide attention on its 2001 release, thirty years earlier the first huge success in Hawaii's modern history of motion picture production was *Tora! Tora! Tora!* The 20th Century Fox film from 1970 was the first-ever U.S./Japan co-production, and dramatically examined the attack on Pearl Harbor from the vantage point of both nations. It garnered six Academy Award nominations and one Oscar, interestingly for special effects.

Between *The Hawaiians* (Charleton Heston), *Papillon*, *King Kong*, *Islands in the Stream*, *The Deep*, *10, Wind*, *Hook*, *Don Juan DeMarco*, and *Mighty Joe Young*, Hawaii pictures scored another 24 Oscar nominations and an additional pair of golden statues.

The complete list of films made in Hawaii, from 1913 to the present, is available from the Film Office web site, www.hawaiifilmoffice.com. To name all of the contemporary films here would be excessive, but among the better known titles not already mentioned are: *Midway* (Charleton Heston), *Body Heat* (Kathleen Turner), *Uncommon Valor* (Gene Hackman) *Black Widow* (Debra Winger), *Throw Mama From the Train* (Danny DeVito, Billy Crystal), *Joe Versus the Volcano* (Tom Hanks, Meg Ryan), *Flight of the Intruder* (Willem Dafoe, Danny Glover), *Point Break* (Patrick Swayze, Keanu Reeves), *Honeymoon in Vegas* (James Caan, Sarah Jessica Parker, Nicholas Cage), *Under Siege* (Steven Segal), *Outbreak* (Dustin Hoffman), *A Very Brady Sequel* (Shelley Long), *Krippendorf's Tribe* (Richard Dreyfuss), *Sphere* (Dustin Hoffman, Sharon Stone), *Six Days/Seven Nights* (Harrison Ford, Anne Heche), *Dragonfly* (Kevin Costner), *Blue Crush* (Kate Bosworth), *Lilo & Stitch* (Daveigh Chase, Tia Carrere), *Tears of the Sun* (Bruce Willis), *Windtalkers* (Nicholas Cage), *Punch-Drunk Love* (Adam Sandler), *Along Came Polly* (Ben Stiller, Jennifer Aniston), *Fifty First Dates* (Adam Sandler, Drew Barrymore), *You, Me, & Dupree* (Kate Hudson, Owen Wilson, Matt Dillon), and *Snakes on a Plane* (Samuel L. Jackson).

Two of the greatest films of all time.

Raiders of the Lost Ark has already been listed as one of Hawaii's biggest box office hits, but it is also on the list of the American Film Institute's 100 Greatest Movies. And it is not alone. *From Here to Eternity* stands with it. Somehow it seems fitting that we should have one representative film from each of our production eras.

Raiders was director Steven Spielberg's fifth feature film after he emerged from television drama. Spielberg had already created *Jaws* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, both of which would also make the AFI list. His writer/producer was George Lucas, who had already written and directed *Star Wars* and *American Graffiti*, also destined for the "100 Greatest."

Raiders of the Lost Ark was shot mostly on Kauai in 1981. In it, Harrison Ford created a memorable new American hero in Dr. Henry "Indiana" Jones, a renowned archeologist hired by the US government to find the Ark of the Covenant before the Nazis. *Raiders*

raised the bar on what constitutes an action/adventure film, and won six Academy Awards. As a director, Spielberg returned to Hawaii to shoot ***Jurassic Park*** and ***The Lost World: Jurassic Park***. He was the executive producer of ***Jurassic Park III***, shot mostly on the islands of Kauai, Oahu, and Molokai.

Charged with passion, ***From Here to Eternity*** swept the 26th Academy Awards in 1953, winning Best Picture, Best Director (Fred Zinnemann), Supporting Actress (Donna Reed), Cinematography, Editing, you name it. Eight Oscars out of 12 nominations, including one for Actor in a Supporting Role: Frank Sinatra. He had been a sensation as a singer for years, but ***From Here to Eternity*** made him a movie star. It was also the picture that broke barriers in the way Hollywood treated physical intimacy. Burt Lancaster and Deborah Kerr, wearing only bathing suits, locked in an embrace as the waves rolled over them at Oahu's Halona Cove. The "racy" love scene was unheard of at the time. Today and every day, hundreds of tourists will go to Halona to capture a bit of film history. Fred Zinnemann returned to Hawaii five years later to direct Spencer Tracey in ***The Old Man and the Sea***.

Motion picture classics from an earlier time.

There are records of 17 Hollywood studio films shot in Hawaii between 1913 and 1932; quite an impressive number given the infancy of the industry and the fact that World War I and the Great Depression shared those years. Universal was the first, followed by Paramount, Fox, Metro, and others.

Then in 1932 came RKO with a picture entitled ***Bird of Paradise***, starring Dolores del Rio and Joel McCrea. Part travelogue, part hokey love story, del Rio (born an aristocrat in Durango, Mexico) appeared as a Polynesian "native girl" who falls for a visitor to her undisclosed island, but chooses to be sacrificed to the "volcano god." It was a big hit. So big that it inspired what may have been the first motion picture remake. The second ***Bird of Paradise***, starring Debra Paget, Louis Jourdan and Jeff Chandler (three of the steamiest actors of their time), was made by 20th Century Fox less than 20 years later. This time it was shot on Oahu, the Big Island, and Kauai, and in COLOR.

Columbia Pictures didn't seem to need color to garner 12 Academy Award nominations and eight Oscars for ***From Here to Eternity***. The film seemed to mark the beginning of serious drama in the state's production history. And the more serious the film, the more serious attention it seemed to get at Academy Award time. In the 15 years between the wave-washed love scene between Burt Lancaster and Deborah Kerr (both were nominated, neither won), and 1968, 10 other Hawaii films garnered 33 nominations and five Oscars.

The nominated films were: ***The Caine Mutiny*** (Humphrey Bogart), ***Miss Sadie Thompson*** (Rita Hayworth), ***The High and the Mighty*** (John Wayne), ***Mr. Roberts*** (Henry Fonda, Jack Lemmon, James Cagney), ***Between Heaven and Hell*** (Robert Wagner, Terry Moore), ***The Enemy Below*** (Robert Mitchum), ***South Pacific*** (Rossano Brazzi, Mitzi Gaynor), ***The Old Man and the Sea*** (Spencer Tracy), ***In Harm's Way*** (John Wayne, Kirk Douglas), and ***Hawaii*** (Julie Andrews, Max von Sydow).

There were a lot of other popular movies made in Hawaii before 1968, though some did not garner praise of critics. Among them: ***Gidget Goes Hawaiian*** (Deborah Walley, James Darren), ***Devil at Four O'Clock*** (Spencer Tracy, Frank Sinatra), ***Donovan's Reef*** (John Wayne), ***None But The Brave*** (Frank Sinatra, Clint Walker), Bruce Brown's classic documentary ***The Endless Summer***, and a trio of films that forever linked Elvis Presley to his beloved Hawaii...***Blue Hawaii***, ***Girls! Girls! Girls!***, and ***Paradise, Hawaiian Style***.

Success in the tough world of series television.

Hawaii's most recent hit series, ***Lost***, created by J.J. Abrams and Damon Lindelof for ABC, continues to maintain a huge viewership and cult following with its mysterious, engaging storylines. The series has received critical praise as well, earning—among many awards—an Emmy and a Golden Globe for Best TV Drama Series, a SAG Award for Best Acting Ensemble, and an AFI Award for being a Top 10 TV program.

Baywatch Hawaii, which perpetuated the cultural phenomenon of its *Baywatch* predecessor, was also a huge hit. In its first of two seasons of Hawaii production, it became the top syndicated action/adventure series in the world. It had 5.1 billion (yes, that's a "b") viewers worldwide. ***ER*** shot several episodes here, including some set in Africa for its "Doctors Without Borders" storyline. ***Beverly Hills, 90210*** shot a two-hour show in Waikiki to open its eighth season, and the episode garnered the highest ratings the program had enjoyed since its first year. Universal felt so confident about the concept of Tom Selleck playing a private detective in Hawaii, that they didn't even shoot a pilot. ***Magnum, P.I.*** ran eight years.

One of the most acclaimed mini-series in the history of television was shot in Hawaii. ***The Thorn Birds*** starred Richard Chamberlain as a priest, Rachel Ward as his lover, and the island of Kauai as Australia. It was just one of some 20 made-for-television movies and mini-series that have filmed here to date, which have ranged from ***Gidget's Grand Tour***, to a mini-series remake of ***From Here to Eternity***.

Since the *Hawaii Five-0* debut in 1968, 23 major American television series have been based in Hawaii: *Little People* (two seasons, CBS, Brian Keith), *Westwind*, *Big Hawaii*, *Magnum, P.I.*, *Hawaiian Heat* (one season, ABC), *Tour of Duty* (two seasons, CBS, Terence Knox), *Jake and the Fatman* (two seasons, William Conrad), *Island Son* (one season, CBS, Richard Chamberlain), *Wide World of Kids* (ABC), *Raven* (two seasons, CBS, Lee Majors), *Big Wave Dave's* (ABC summer series, Jane Kaczmarek, Adam Arkin), *The Byrds of Paradise* (Steven Bochco for ABC, Timothy Busfield, Elizabeth Lindsey), *One West Waikiki* (original for syndication, Cheryl Ladd), *Marker* (Paramount Pictures Television for syndication, Richard Grieco), *Wind on Water* (NBC, Bo Derek, Lee Horsley), *Fantasy Island* (new in 1998 for ABC, Malcolm McDowell), *Baywatch Hawaii* (two seasons), *North Shore* (one season, Fox, Brooke Burns, Shannen Doherty), *Hawaii* (one season, NBC, Michael Beihn, Sharif Atkins), *Flight 29 Down* (Discovery Kids), *Beyond the Break* (The N), and *Lost* (ABC, Matthew Fox).

TV Specials, Network Sports, Commercials, and International Production.

Images of Hawaii have always been nothing short of magical. Even the *name* “Hawaii” conjures an explosion of visual references that have proven compelling to people all over the world. It is no wonder producers want to come here to stage television specials and events.

Wheel of Fortune (Sony Pictures Digital Entertainment through KingWorld) travels to Hawaii nearly every other year to tape two weeks of programs, simply because viewers respond to the setting, the culture, and the unique nature of this special place.

And ratings go up.

Shows from ***Sanford & Son*** to ***The Lucille Ball Show***, from ***Beverly Hillbillies*** to ***Beverly Hills, 90210***, from ***Sesame Street*** to ***Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous***—over 60 popular TV shows in all—have shot episodes here. A complete list is available at www.hawaiiifilmoffice.com

Fox created ***Britney in Hawaii*** with pop icon Britney Spears in 2000. And in 2002, HBO televised Janet Jackson’s ***All for You*** concert, taped live at Aloha Stadium. Both of these followed, by almost three decades, the milestone telecast of Elvis Presley’s ***Aloha From Hawaii*** concert on January 14, 1973. The Elvis concert was the first-ever televised internationally, with more than one billion people watching in 40 countries.

Many sporting events are televised from Hawaii, including perennials such as the NFL Pro Bowl, The Sony Open, the Aloha Classic Pro Windsurfing World Cup, Outrigger Hotels Hydrofest, Ironman Triathlon, Honolulu Marathon, and the Hula Bowl. Local Honolulu production companies provide most of the facilities and crew for coverage of sporting events. ESPN regularly offers surfing, deep-sea fishing and exercise programs produced in the islands.

Foreign producers, especially from Japan, shoot in Hawaii constantly. The popular Japanese prime time soap opera ***Hotel*** filmed an entire season of programs in Honolulu a few seasons ago. ***Marilyn in Hawaii***, a Tokyo tourist show, is so well liked that Japanese visitors to Hawaii mob the local star of the program when they see her on the streets of Waikiki.

Foreign production in Hawaii is so common that multi-lingual facilitation companies thrive in the state. The visa waiver program that exists here makes it easy for producers from many foreign lands to bring key crew to Hawaii for filming. The Hawaii International Film Association (HIFA), a trade organization of production companies that provide coordination services, was instrumental in establishing the visa waiver program with the Immigration and Naturalization Service. HIFA strives to facilitate communication among federal and local government, the local industry in general, markets abroad, and its membership. The organization also helps nurture the international production business in Hawaii.

Commercials from Hawaii, the mainland USA, and abroad constitute a large volume of production in the islands. Automobiles and beer are two popular categories. Dodge, Toyota, Lexus, Kirin Beer, Steinlager, Bud Light, Coca Cola, and Nike have all filmed here. So has Visa. "Rags to Riches," a Jerry Seinfeld made-in-Hawaii spot for American Express, was named to the top 50 list of "uncommonly good commercials" compiled by *Entertainment Weekly* magazine. There is a large group of production coordinators, location scouts, casting directors, and other film professionals who specialize in commercials. They can be located through the online Hawaii Production Index at www.hawaiifilm.com.

Since 1999, when MTV shot *The Real World: Hawaii*, reality television series have regularly found their way to the islands. *The Last Resort*, *The Bachelor*, *Surf Girls*, *Celebrity Mole*, *High School Reunion*, *The Amazing Race*, *Boarding House: North Shore*, *Cowboy U: Molokai*, and *Average Joe* are some of the most recent shows.

Notably, Hawaii's local film industry is on the rise. Documentaries, travel and resort films, music videos, and business-to-business programs are standard exports, but in recent years, local, independently produced films have found markets outside Hawaii. Some examples are *Picture Bride*, directed by Kayo Hatta; *To End All Wars*, directed by David Cunningham; *Moonglow*, directed by Dennis Christianson; *Goodbye Paradise*, directed by Dennis Christianson and Tim Savage; *The Ride*, directed by Nathan Kurosawa; *Then There Were None*, directed by Elizabeth Lindsey Buyers; *Waikiki: In the Wake of Dreams*, *Paniolo O Hawaii: Cowboys Of The Far West*, and *The Hawaiians*, all directed by Edgy Lee; *An Untold Triumph*, produced by Stephanie Castillo; *Arirang: The Korean American Dream*, produced by Tom Coffman; *Blood of the Samurai* directed by Aaron Yamasato; *The Procrastinators* by the Bumatai brothers, Andy and Ray; and *Silent Years*, directed by James Sereno, which won a BAFTA (British Academy Award) for Best Short Film.

Hawaii's Pacific Rim cuisine has attracted a number of national cooking programs such as *The Best of Wine & Food*, *Emeril Live!*, *Follow That Food*, *The Iron Chef, Ready...Set..Cook!*, *Too Hot Tamales*, and *Travel Café*, while locally-produced *Hawaii Cooks* with Roy Yamaguchi, in its sixth season, has been aired in 66 countries.

August 2006