



WEST OAHU PANEL

IN PURSUIT OF A ROBUST WORKFORCE

Leaders in the fast-growing region
grapple with staffing shortages.

ELIZABETH 'UFI | 10-17

EXECUTIVE INSIGHT

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PRINCE WAIKIKI

Chef shares the meaning of sustainability

BY KATIE HELLAND
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Jeremy Shigekane became the executive chef of Prince Waikiki in April of 2022. In this role, he oversees operations and menus for the hotel's signature 100 Sails Restaurant & Bar and the casual poolside Hinana Bar, as well as events and in-room dining.

Prior to joining Prince Waikiki, Shigekane was the executive chef and owner of the restaurant M by Jeremy Shigekane, the concept he launched after taking over the former Chef Mavro. The restaurant closed "due to the hardships of Covid," he shared in a March 2022 Instagram post.

Over the years, he also worked as an executive sous chef at the Royal Hawaiian, a Luxury Collection Resort, and as chef de cuisine at The Kahala Hotel & Resort.

At Prince Waikiki, Shigekane

has partnered with Gina Kanekoa, the founder of Kanekoa Farms, to bring more fresh, Hawaii-grown food to the menu.

"She had a small plot, so I said, 'Whatever you grow, we will take,'" Shigekane told Pacific Business News.

While the farm's founder recently moved on to another endeavor, the partnership continues under its new owner Devin Murphy, he said. Over the years, Prince Waikiki has used a variety of items from the farm, including radishes, taro, tomatillos, tomatoes, eggplant, kale and salad greens.

"I don't really care for throwing [food] away, so we use as much as possible," he said, adding that even radish tops find their way into recipes.

Shigekane spoke with PBN about trends in the restaurant industry and why supporting local agriculture is so important in Hawaii.



Can you talk about your partnership with Kanekoa Farms?

How do you

work with this farm to source locally grown ingredients?

So originally, I had a restaurant a few years ago, and I've always wanted to partner with a farm. I think as farmers, they have a hard job. Just to harvest and plant and everything, and the weather – and all these things. There's so many variables. ... And then they have either try and sell it at restaurants or basically do their own marketing. And they do CSA [Community Supported Agriculture] boxes. And they go to the farmers market. I felt, "You just do what you do, and I do what I do, and it'll be better for both businesses."

What are some of the biggest challenges in the restaurant business right now? After Covid,

a lot of people just got out of the restaurant business – servers, cooks, everybody. I think they wanted something more stable. ... So staffing is always an issue, and I think the way people dine [has changed], as well. ... They look for more of a connection to the place, to help out, to something – almost a sense of community – which is good. ... For all those staffing challenges, we cross-utilize a lot of things. We cross-train a lot of people. And it helps everyone else out in the back of the house [and] the kitchen.

Is there anything else you'd want to share? Since everybody wants to be a part of something – whether they're local or tourists – sustainability doesn't mean just recycle and whatnot. I think sustainability, to me, is to keep the money here in Hawaii. To support our local businesses is not cliché. I think it's real [and it is needed] to help everyone out.