



History of the Waimea Theatre

The Waimea Theatre originally opened on September 2, 1938 featuring the 20th Century-Fox production, "Josette", with Robert Young, Simone Simon, and Don Ameche.



The theater was built for Waimea Amusement Company at a cost of \$25,000. Local contractors were used: building contractor Taro Iwasa, electrical wiring by Waimea Garage & Electric Co., Ltd., plumbing contractor George Kondo and building materials suppliers C.B. Hofgaard & Co. Ltd. The architect was Fred Fujioka of Honolulu.



1938 was the height of the art deco period of architecture. The 500 seat theater was a steel frame structure with a concrete front. The exterior was originally a sand color with dark brown trim. Electric lights on the marquee were the first of its kind on the island.

Decorative neon elements emphasized the modernistic details of the art deco facade. The stand-alone glass-enclosed box office in the middle of the lobby was another unique feature. The grayish-blue with tan interior included more modernistic ornaments. The seating was on an incline with no balcony and featured a section of loges with rattan furniture purchased from A. Christian of Honolulu. A blower system provided ventilation and coolness for patrons.



As was the fate of many rural movies houses, the Waimea Theatre closed in 1972 with the building converted into a warehouse and retail spaces. Hurricane Iniki destroyed the decorative marquee and front elements in 1992. West Kaua'i Business & Professional Association, leased the building in 1992 after hearing the owner wanted to tear it down. Over 8 long years of perseverance and patience went into saving the landmark theatre. The County of Kaua'i purchased the building in 1996. Funding for the restoration was provided by the Federal Economic Development Agency and Community Development Block Grant administered through U.S. Housing and Urban Development. The project design architect was Lloyd Sako and general contractor was Kikiaola Construction Co.



Today the renovated Waimea Theatre seats 260 patrons. It features a small stage, big movie screen, state-of-the-art sound system, snack bar and rattan loge sections. It is operated for the County by West Kaua'i Business & Professional Association. Recorded showtimes are available by calling 338-0282 or visiting its website at www.waimeatheatre.com



West Kaua'i Business & Professional Association is a nonprofit organization fostering economic viability with the involvement of community, business and government. Its mission is to develop effective, innovative and affordable solutions to improve the economic situation and the quality of life of residents; to develop and enhance the environment; and to revitalize business districts by retaining the visual character and heritage of the past as we move towards the future.

