

## UKULELE GUILD OF HAWAII

### E HO'OMAU UKULELE WORKSHOP & RETREAT RAISES \$750 FOR UKE'S FOR KIDS BY JAN HOLT

Wow, is the only way to describe the 1st annual E Ho'omau Ukulele Workshop & Retreat by Dave Tachera, his wife Teresa and father Herman last month in Northern California's wine country. The ukulele fever is on fire with Dave and family. Dave, who is a relative newcomer to uke building, hosted this grand workshop retreat featuring Ukulele workshops given by Kimo Hussey and Tim Dang and a feather Lei workshop given by father Herman Tachera. The workshops and retreat were all they promised to be and more. Gourmet meals, wine tasting, lodging, swimming, strolling meandering paths, perfect California weather, music fellowship, benefit concert with hula, nightly kanikapila sessions and the warmly received workshops were all included in the fully contained workshop held at Westerbeke Ranch.

Location Location, Location – Lessons, Lessons, Lessons-Timo Timo Timo

The Westerbeke ranch exudes just the kind of charm that helped bring out the special creativity needed for this extraordinary workshop. The spirit permeated the warmth of the people who joined in for the conference at the Ranch, nestled in Sonoma's Valley of the Moon wine country. Owen and I arrived the second day of the workshop just as a session was breaking up. It was apparent by the beginning that we had stumbled upon something special, as we arrived at the lovely grounds for the workshop. One never had to leave the place. It was all right there. The sounds of strumming ukulele, laughter, birds singing and splashing fountains filled the air. As the workshop participants slowly drifted out of their morning sessions for a break, I couldn't help overhearing the overwhelmingly positive responses. Some of what I heard was, wow, I'm really learning a lot, this is so much fun. I've never learned more! Intrigued, I asked one of the participants who sat beside me at the edge of the large and lovely swimming pool how she was enjoying the workshop. She delighted in telling me that it was really refreshing. I asked what she meant. She said, well, there was never even a piece of sheet music put in front of her and that was a really great approach. Instead of concentrating on the sheet music and stressing over it, she instead concentrated on learning chord progressions that in the past she would have forgotten quickly. I asked if she thought she would forget these and she said, no way. The songs were all familiar to her and the way things were taught, she would remember how to play them. This was echoed as well by her husband. Later in the afternoon another couple came up and they were also thrilled with their experience so far. I asked if they would be back if there was another retreat next year and they said "oh yes". The feeling I got, was this is a Not to be Missed Workshop. Next year, I'll bet there will be a waiting list. Incidentally included in the price of the workshop is a follow up to reinforce what was learned.

The Uke workshops were taught by Kimo Hussey and Tim Dang, who were soon affectionately referred to by their students' as "Timo". Kimo, known for his ability to relax and engage his students instructed the most of the workshop while Tim went around individually to ensure students were getting any help they needed, answered questions, etc... As I mentioned earlier, from outside the workshops I heard a lot of laughter and as the meals were served and folks were relaxing, many of them approached Kimo like an old friend and the affection seemed mutual.

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## E HO'OMAU... (CONTINUED)

Incidentally Kimo's theme for the workshop was Therapy thru Music which I would like to explore soon in a future article. Kimo also explained some of the things to look for when purchasing a new uke and there were some local uke builders on hand as well. Kimo, as everyone in the Guild knows is the Executive Director of the Pacific Music Foundation and has 30+ years of experience workshop training and over 50 years of ukulele experience and much much more. Tim Dang has been playing a variety of musical instruments for 30+ years including the uke, piano, guitar, and flute. He has studied with the masters of Hawaiian music. Tim plays Hawaiian slack key guitar in San Francisco.

The feather Lei workshop was taught by Herman Tachera and his students also raved over their teacher as they made several feather lei adomments. Herman has over ten years experience as a feather lei artist and has created numerous feather lei, kahili and 'uli'uli. He has studied his craft with Paulette Kaha'epuna and Mary Lou Kekuewa, Michael Vieira and kumu hula Mark Keali'i Ho'omalau. He also had a guest who brought in a beautifully intricate wonderful feather lei cape and other feather lei pieces of art. Flowers for the women participant's hair were made by Herman's workshop that day and supplied at the Dinner concert Saturday nite. This concert was headlined by Tim Dang, Kimo Hussey and Faith Ako. It was a wonderful evening as the oak trees became alive with Hawaiian music as the sun was setting over this piece of paradise in the wine country. To top off the grand activities a spirit of generosity was also in the air as the concert was a benefit for UGH's Ukes for Kids and \$750 was raised that evening.

So, how did this workshop come to be? By the wonderful spirit of giving by the founders Dave, Teresa and Herman Tachera. Dave a relative newcomer to building ukes approached Kimo Hussey a couple of years ago while at his first UGH conference and asked Kimo to check out and play a uke Dave had built. Kimo did just that and a friendship developed and they started talking workshops. In a relatively short period of time and a relatively huge amount of work, this 1st annual workshop came to be. Dave and Teresa live in S. San Francisco where Dave works in computers at a local bank. He started selling his ukes last year and his website is [www.oiwukulele.com](http://www.oiwukulele.com). This is an extraordinary couple who has done so much already for this instrument called the ukulele. Look for this workshop again next year, it is NOT to be Missed!



Left to right: Dave, Herman, Kimo, Teresa and Tim