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'UNCLE UKE' COMES TO QUEENS' MARKETPLACE

For immediate release

WAIKOLOA BEACH RESORT, Hawai'i Island—In the 100+ years since the 'ukulele was introduced, it has become an icon for Hawaii's music and island lifestyle. Expanding its reach, the Hawaiian 'Ukulele & Guitar shop will open a new location at Queens' MarketPlace in April, more than doubling its retail space, and sharing new products with a growing family of 'ukulele-lovers.

In addition to instruments, Hawaiian 'Ukulele & Guitar will stock an extensive selection of sheet music, CDs, DVDs, books, strings and accessories, plus a new line of 'ukulele-centered clothing for men and women. Owner operator "Uncle Uke" Robert Yates has been building and playing instruments since he was a teenager on Oahu. He and his wife returned to Hawaii in 2012 and opened their first location in Kailua-Kona.

Uncle Uke will carry a wide variety of ukuleles, guitars and other instruments, including banjos and banjoleles. Many are custom made by nine different luthiers across the islands, himself included. Working in batches, Yates sets aside time two or three times a year to produce handmade instruments, a process he obviously loves.

"Being a builder—it's not just about making a buck. It's about creating something that's unique, something that's beautiful, something that sounds fantastic," said Yates.

Yates is also working on a number of joint ventures with others around the world. "One is with a master luthier in Philippines to produce six very special pineapple ukuleles," said Yates.

"Another one coming up, out of Canada, is "Prestige," a semi-hollow body, cutaway steel string electric 'ukulele. We've also started talking to a company about making a 'harp 'ukulele,' with two necks, one with regular 'ukulele strings and one with harp strings," said Yates. "We have all sorts of different things coming up."

For more information, call (808) 315-2919, or visit www.Hawaiian-Ukulele.com.

Since it opened in 2007, Queens' MarketPlace in Waikoloa Beach Resort has earned a reputation among visitors and kama'āina as "the gathering place of the Kohala Coast," full of shopping opportunities, services and great food, along with entertainment and arts programs, movies under the stars and large-scale concerts in Waikoloa Bowl at Queens' Gardens. For more information, visit www.QueensMarketPlace.net or call 886-8822.

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