

House of the Sun

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Known as the House of the Sun, Haleakala crater sits on top of the 10,000 ft high dormant volcano Haleakala that makes up the eastern side of Maui. The crater is 3,000 ft deep and you could easily fit Manhattan in it. It is part of Haleakala National Park and one of the main tourist attractions of Maui and today. Everyday bus loads of visitors drive up to the summit to check out the unreal view, and that's all most people see. But, it's only a small dose of the "da crater's" magic. This chapter contains a glimpse of four tales about exploring Haleakala crater in the early 1970's from my book Maui Tales. The following are true stories from a different time of magic, gods and UFOs! These stories and 300 photographs from my Haleakala Park collection are now part of the permanent collection of Haleakala National Park Museum and the US National Park Service. This collection preserves our tales for the future.

"Maui's Quest" This is the ancient legend of Demi god Maui catching the sun, with photos.

"An Alien Tale" On my first trip in we found a UFO landing site among the cinder cones.

"A Stoney Adventure" We explore a huge lava tube with a candle and no matches. Too Funny.

"The Mystical Journey" Tripping out around Kapaloa cabin and hiking out Kaupo Gap.

Each tale explores a distinct part of the crater, the native wildlife, and plants found nowhere else. This chapter also looks at how different types of people handle the mind bending trip of staying in crater. These tales and photos cover many trips in the crater from 1972 to 1975.

You can still hike, camp and rent cabins in the crater today, MANY people do. While the crater hasn't changed much, the people and the vibe have. Still, it's a great trip. Many of the areas the photos were taken from are severely restricted now and the park rangers will get very pissed if you go there. Too many people spoil everything. This book does not encourage people to come to Maui, there is a whole industry devoted to that.

Haleakala Crater did not seem like a National Park back then, it was our back yard playground with very few people around. These tales and photos are a testament to what the local Maui people gave up so millions of visitors from around the world could take a selfie.

Maui's Quest

The legend of the Demi-God Maui catching the sun is well known throughout Polynesia. The plateau on top of Haleakala where this happened is one of the most amazing and difficult places to get to on Maui. Like Mt Olympus, it is definitely a place where Gods could hang out far above magnificent Maui and the lives of its' mere mortals. Below on the north side is Haleakala crater, to the east is untouched Kipahulu valley, and the south side drops into Kaupo Gap. Totally unreal. The plateau is about 10 acres of low fern cover flat land. Nene geese love to hang out there.

It's said the Demi-god Maui captured the sun and forced it to move slower across the sky so people would have enough daylight to do what they gotta to do. While there are many different legends of exactly how Maui captured the sun, most people think that it was done on this stunning plateau. It's a hard climb and I saw no signs that others had been there. There is even one lone tree where the legend says Maui's grandmother cooked bananas for the Sun's lunch and told Maui how to catch the Sun. These photos were taken over many trips and this area is now off limits.

One time I climb up to the ridge by myself under a crescent moon before the sun came up to photograph the sunrise. Sitting under the lone tree up on that ridge waiting for the sun to rise out of the ocean I could feel the ancient legend come alive. With the stars of Maui's fish hook over head, I watched the edge of the earth turn purple as the light of day pushed back the night revealing the Big Island of Hawaii floating in the distance. Then the first rays of the sun start climbing down the mountain as it breaks through the ocean and hits a stone finger monument that catches them. It was a real chicken skin moment that left me feeling very humble.

This story takes place in the Shire like Paliku where one of the 3 National Park cabins in the crater is located. It is one of the most naturally beautiful places on the planet. Unlike the moonscape of the rest of the crater, Paliku is lush and tropical. There are beautiful Ohia and plum trees in the back of the cabin full of rare Hawaiian song birds. In front of the cabin is a grass field full of magic mushrooms. After a few Paliku magic mushrooms you can almost see the Hobbits.



Maui Legend



Waiting For the Sun



Maui Captures the Sun



Beyond Unreal



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Maui's Grandmothers Tree?



Plenty Time Now



Shangra la



Paliku Hale



Spacing Out



Mystical Mist

An Alien Tale

Haleakala crater, which we Just called "da crater", was a major source of awe, adventure and exploration, both Internal and external, for everyone In our tribe when I first moved to Maui. It cost a buck per person to rent a 12 person cabin and you could usually get a reservation for 3 nights by just calling the-ranger station back then. There was always someone I knew heading into the crater. Since each cabin is located in a entirely unique environment, every trip is totally different depending on which cabins you stayed at, and for how long. I've spent 40 to 50 days at the cabins over the years.

The Journey starts at one of the two trails that go Into the crater from the summit. It's like going to another planet of bright red cinder cones, lava caves, exotic birds and strange plants that mourfs into Hawaiian rain forest as you hike through. There is no place like it on earth. Each trip in was completely original with distinct groups of people, adventures and discoveries. Over the years I've explored most of the crater and its ridges, during the day and In the moonlight.

Since Haleakala seems so alien, you Just expect to see a UFO, especially with the huge lasers our government has on the summit. This tale is about my first trip into Haleakala crater in 1972. We found, by total accident, what could only be described as a UFO landing spot hidden below a giant cinder cone. It looked liked a giant had burnt a perfect black 1ft by 6 inch deep, 200ft circle in the red sand cinder of the crater floor without leaving any marks.

This isa true tale that I shot with a super 8 movie camera. Just before the film shows the burnt circle It goes white, like It is over exposed. The rest of the film is fine. At the time it didn't faze us much, we thought there were alien landing spots all over the island. A year later we found the circle had been destroyed by horses. So what really burnt that circle and why was it destroyed? The truth is really out there and a trip into da crater is always strange enough to leave one with more questions than answers.



Snowy Sliding Sands Trail



Decent into Fairyland



Looking for Aliens



Another Planet



Miles from Nowhere



Dead Ferns



Take Me To the Pilot

A Stoney Adventure

Being a naturally stony place, Haleakala crater is the place to get high and trip out. Magic mushrooms grow wild all over the crater. We would dip the mushrooms in some honey and watch the crater come alive. The place is strange when you're stoned, so psychedelics take it to a whole other reality. It's not that you need drugs to appreciate and feel Haleakala, it just gives you a different, far out, magical perspective of this fairy-tale place. Wait till you meet the Silverswords.

This tale is about exploring a large lava tube not far from Haloa cabin for the first time with a couple friends. None of us had been to the cave and didn't know exactly where it was. Naturally we smoked out before we went looking for the tube. We finally found a steel ladder going into the cave hidden in the lava fields. Only problem was we didn't have a flashlight, only some candles and a glass gallon jar from the cabin. We were pretty baked by that time, so we proceeded to explore the huge spooky tube by candle light. In the middle of the long, very dark, lava tube we realized that we had no more matches. This could have been a major bummer as the lava tube was full of very sharp lava with many side lava tunnels. But we just cracked up laughing. It was too funny. The crater always seemed to play tricks on one's perception of reality.

There were many things that made each trip different. While generally everyone had a good time, people could get on each other's nerves in the raw, intimate atmosphere of the cabin. There were many long, intense, emotional, hilarious, bizarre, discussions around the candle lit cabin table.

It is always fascinating to see how the unfamiliar world of Haleakala crater affects the friends, family and total strangers who come in with you. It's a mind bending experience, even for the most jaded people, especially on the first trip in. The completely different and strange environment in the crater will shake anybody's tree. It's also a quick visit back to the time of outhouses, wood burning stoves, candles and having to walk to where you're going.



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Trucken up Switchback Trail

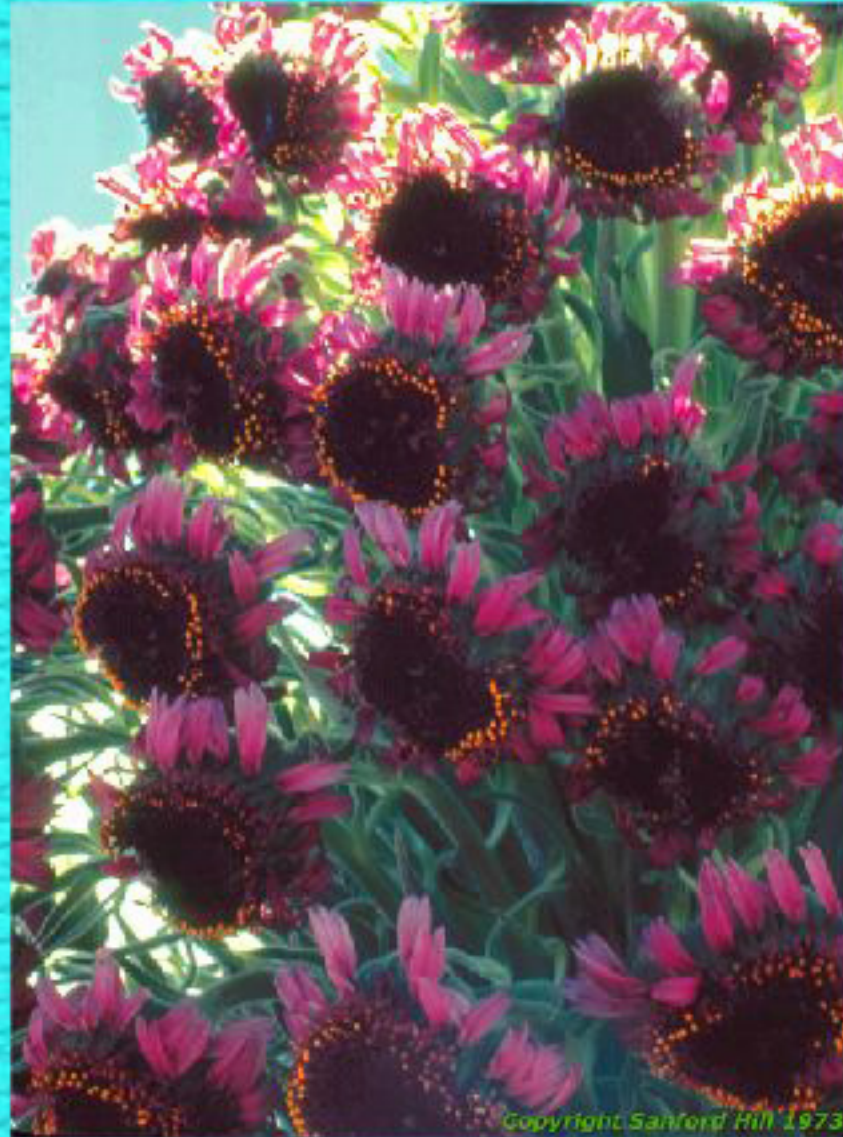


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Outta Sight



Meet the Silverswords



Flower Power



Stoney Lava Tube Entry



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Trippin by Candlelight



You get Matches?



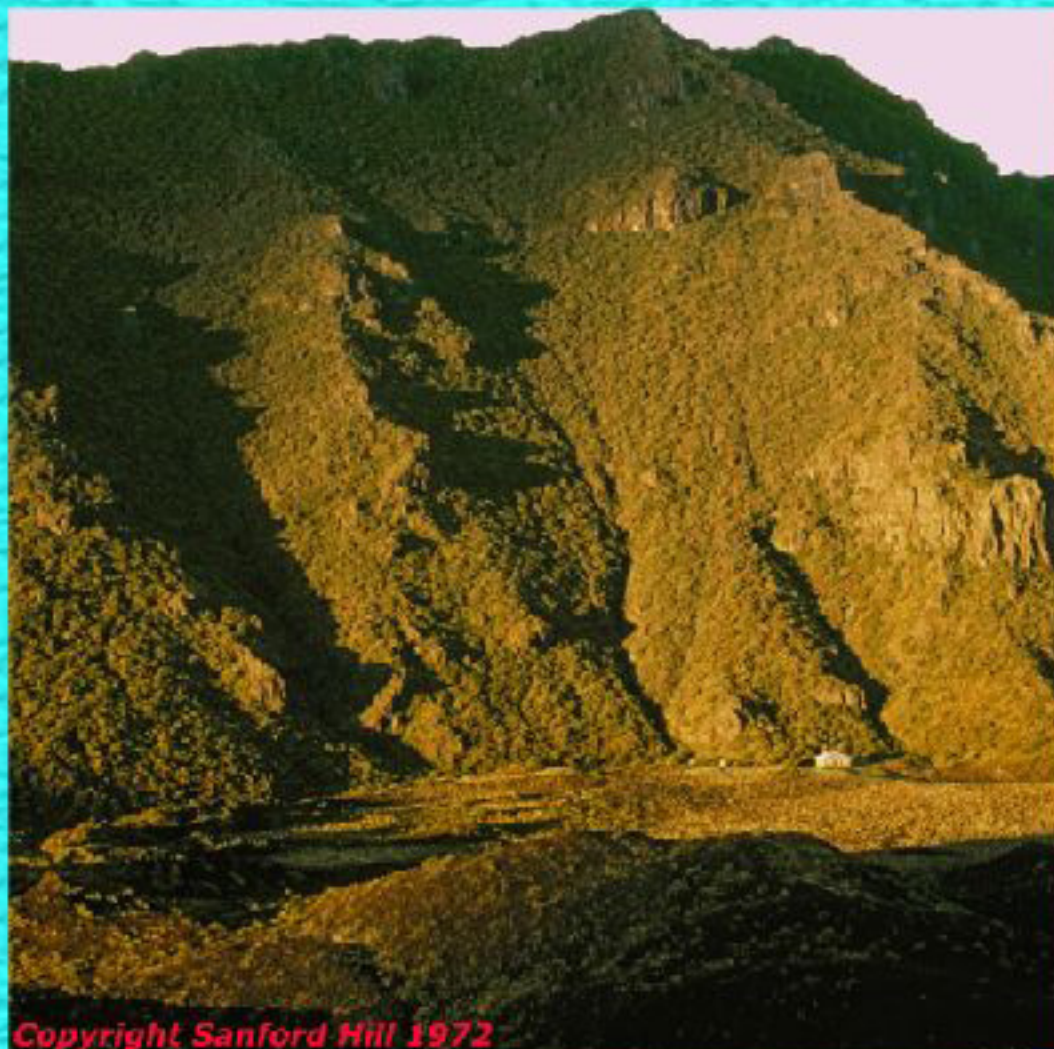
Light at the end of the Tube

The Mystical Journey

Kapaloa cabin is a great place to hang in the middle of the crater. It is a pretty easy hike from the summit so you can bring in plenty of goodies and have a nice light pack when you leave. With Nene geese cruisin outside the door, it's a short walk to the massive cinder cones in the crater's center. It is the only cabin without a campground, so it's a private place to trip out.

Like at Paliku, I've climbed up to the top of the rim behind Kapaloa cabin many times, including at night. Up there the stars are so brilliant I felt like I was blasting through the universe alone with the 7ft, stone sentinel that quietly watches time pass, gathering mana, on top the ridge. I have no idea when, why or who built the rock monuments I found around the crater rim. The colors of the coming dawn began revealing one of the most totally magnificent views I've ever seen. The ridge of the crater is very narrow and falls dramatically away to Maui's barren south shore coast 9,000 feet below with the Big Island of Hawaii resting majestically 30 miles away across the Alenuihaha channel. Turn your head, and the all of the splendor of Haleakala crater is spread out below you. It is a place where you can truly stand on top of the world traveling through the cosmos high above a vast ocean.

The best way to leave the crater is the trippy 10 mile hike down Kaupo gap to the ocean. As you hike through the lava flows above the clouds into the untouched Hawaiian rain forest below the clouds and on to the ocean, everything changes. The temperature can literally go from freezing at Paliku cabin to tropical down by the ocean. If your lucky enough to be cruising through the rain forest just after a heavy rain you'll see hundreds of waterfalls cascading down the sheer walls of Kaupo gap into the Jungle in front of you like a scene out of Middle Earth. The sun comes out and the dripping forest just sparkles as the rare native song bird begin to sing. It's a magical way to end the journey through the House of the Sun. I feel so fortunate to have been able to experience and explore Haleakala Crater when it was still an unknown wonderland..



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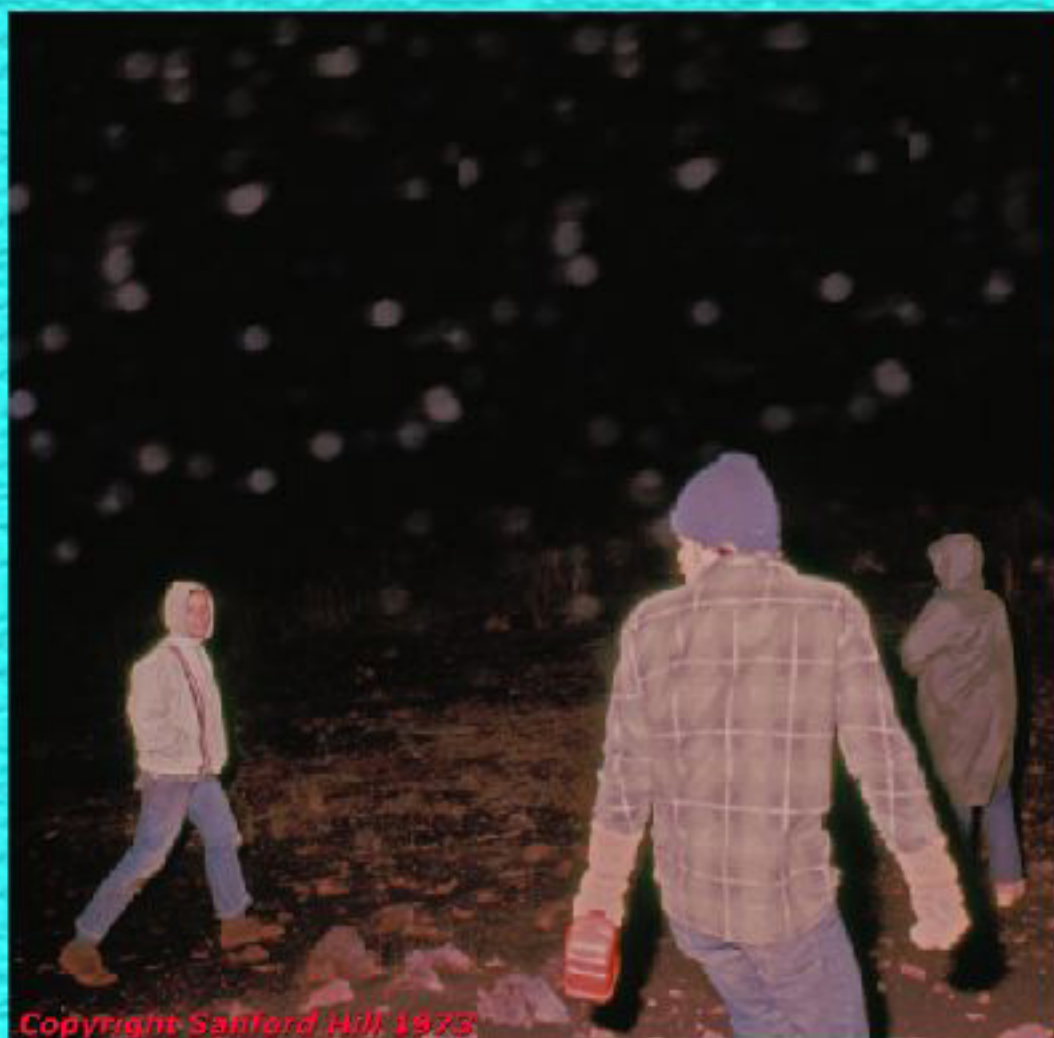
Middle Earth



Way Cool Hawaiian Nene



Naturally Psychedelic



Snowy Night Freak Out



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Looking For the Wizard



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Gathering Mana



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A New Crater Dawn



Pristine Kaupo Gap



Waterfalls of Kaupo Gap



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After the Rain



Journey's End