

Holoholo Sails Outrigger Seas

By Michael Durkin



The *Holoholo* sails along Diamond Head cliffs.
Photo by Michael Durkin.

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The Outrigger Canoe Club's new sailing canoe is named *Holoholo*, which translates as a "leisurely sail", like a stroll in the park. But, when I went out on her in 25-30 mph winds from the Northeast with gusts to 50, she went like a race horse on steroids.

With Sam Clemens steering, Deroy Lupica and I as paddlers/crew, we sailed on a beam reach to the Populars surf spot in front of the Sheraton Hotel. We surfed a wave at Pops, and came about for a run toward the Diamond Head Buoy.

The wind coming around the makai side of Diamond Head forced us to pull in the sheet and sail close to the wind through choppy seas. I was impressed that *Holoholo* sailed close-hauled as well as some mono-hulls. Then we turned, and sailed downwind, with following waves, back to the Club.

I think that this canoe should have been named *Le`ale`a*, which translates as "great fun".

Holoholo is 30 feet long and carries 150 sq. ft. of sail area. The canoe has seats for four, but two more can ride on the trampolines that cover the space from the canoe to the port-side ama, as well as the safety ama on the starboard side.

The steersman uses a paddle to steer, and controls the sail. The sheet runs through a quick-release cam cleat in front of his seat. The canoe also has a motor mount with an optional outboard motor.

Besides paddling in light wind conditions, the crew balances the boat by moving their weight to the trampoline on the windward side. And back again, as the course changes. This keeps the sail upright. Sliding off a trampoline, quick stepping over the canoe, and scrambling up onto the tram-

poline on the opposite side, does require some athletic dexterity. And, yes, even with the safety ama, the canoe can huli in strong wind.

It has been 25 years since the Club owned a sailing boat. The most recent were some Sunfish in the 1980s. (The canoe with a sail that you may have seen at the Club, was a jury-rigged surfing canoe.) But sailing at the Club goes back much further.

"We have photos of all kinds of sailing canoes on the beach in front of the old Club in the 1930s," said Don Isaacs, the head of Beach Services. "What we are doing with *Holoholo* is not something new for the Outrigger."

Holoholo was built by Sark Wetzel on the beach in Waimanalo in 1999. Over the years, she has raced across every channel in the Hawaiian Islands. The Outrigger purchased her from Club member Chris Laird. She has been repainted and refurbished with the help of Club member Matt Buckman. A new sail, boom and spar are planned.

Beach Services will be setting up a training program for members interested in sailing her. "It will be a comprehensive program with about ten classes," Don said. "We want to teach, not just how to steer, but how the canoe is put together, how to retie things. So if something breaks you'll know how to fix it.

"We have Club members who have raced sailing canoes like Matt Buckman, Billy Philpotts, Bruce Black and Dale Hope. They would be good instructors. We want to make it as safe and fun as possible."

Thinking long term, Don says that there could be a cruise to the west side. The Club could tow the canoe to Molokai, and sail it back.

The *Holoholo* will become part of the Ko Kainalu summer youth program. Don sees putting together a list of members who are trained to take the canoe out on their own. "We could put together a contact email list," said Don. "So when a good wind day comes up, we can say, let's go out, and have fun."



Crewing the *Holoholo* recently were Ali Rigg, Deroy Lupica, Ali Rigg, Max Solmssen and Bob Linn.