

URBAN

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We hope you've all had a safe and enjoyable holiday season so far! With 2024 coming to an end we look forward to new opportunities and experiences that the new year has in store.

In this edition, we share an article on mold and mildew prevention in your home, some history on Ala Moana Center, the third featured business of our segment on local mom-and-pop retailers that grew, some pictures from one of our office's annual traditions and a classic local recipe perfect for any holiday party.

We hope you enjoy this edition of Urban Concepts and we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Mahalo,
Brett Hill Construction

MOLD & MILDEW PREVENTION

In Hawaii, mold and its byproduct, mildew, have been widely discussed as a significant issue in the construction industry. If left unchecked, mold and mildew in your home can cause substantial damage to furniture, carpets, and clothing, as well as trigger medical symptoms in sensitive individuals. Due to our warm and humid climate, this remains as a persistent problem that requires proactive measures for prevention.

Mold prevention is especially important for those sensitive to mold, as exposure can lead to symptoms such as nasal congestion, eye irritation, or wheezing. Individuals with severe mold allergies may experience more serious reactions, including fever and shortness of breath. Additionally, those with chronic illnesses, such as obstructive lung disease, may be at risk of developing mold-related lung infections with frequent exposure.

This article highlights various preventative measures you can take to minimize mold and mildew growth in your home.



Keep Things Clean

Keep closets, dresser drawers, basements, and other areas prone to mildew growth as clean as possible. Dirt and debris on items can provide enough nutrients for mildew to grow when the moisture and temperature are favorable. Greasy films, such as those that form on kitchen walls, also offer a rich source of nutrients for mold and mildew.

Get Rid of Excess Moisture

1. Remove or correct the cause

The first step in controlling mildew is to manage dampness inside the home. Everyday activities such as cooking, laundry, and bathing without proper ventilation can add up to three gallons of moisture to the air daily. Dampness often results from the condensation of moisture from humid air onto cooler surfaces. To address this, ensure your stove fan filter is cleaned regularly, your dryer is venting properly, and your bathroom exhaust fans are free of dust buildup.

A more serious cause of moisture in your home could be a water leak from plumbing or a clogged air conditioner drain pan. Such issues must be addressed immediately upon detection, as they can lead to rapid and widespread mold growth. Left untreated, these problems can cause significant damage not only to your home but also potentially to your neighbor's property.

2. Dry the air

According to the EPA, the ideal indoor humidity level to prevent mold growth is between 30% and 50%. Achieving these levels in Hawaii can be challenging, as our naturally humid climate typically ranges from 60% to 90%. Properly installed air conditioning systems help reduce moisture by drawing in warm air, cooling it (which removes the moisture), and circulating dry air back into the room.

In areas without adequate air conditioning, using dehumidifiers can be effective, particularly in spaces where air circulation is limited, such as closets. Other ways to keep indoor air dry include opening windows to release moisture-laden air and using fans to improve airflow.

3. Circulate the air

Air movement plays a crucial role in removing moisture. When the air outside is drier than the air inside, it enters the home, absorbs excess moisture, and carries it back outside. When natural breezes are insufficient, air conditioners, fans, or dehumidifiers can help facilitate the drying process.

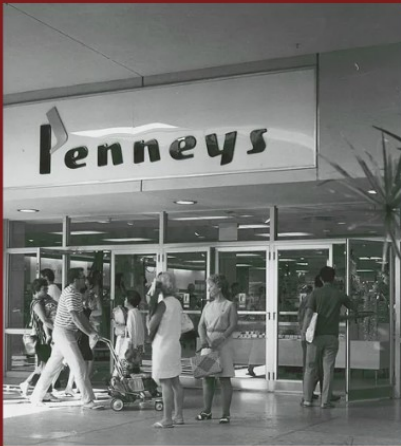
Poorly ventilated closets can become damp and musty during prolonged wet weather, exposing stored items to mildew. To improve air circulation, keep closet doors open or consider installing a small fan. Additionally, hang clothes loosely to allow air to circulate around them.

Everyday activities like cooking, laundering, and bathing are major sources of moisture in the home. Without adequate ventilation, these activities can lead to excessive moisture buildup. To combat this, use exhaust fans and ensure the fans and their vents are regularly cleaned to remove dust and dirt buildup.



Mold is a persistent concern for residents of Hawaii, and the best way to prevent it from becoming a problem is to take proactive measures. As we approach the cooler winter months, it's important to remember that while the air may feel cooler, it remains high in humidity. Therefore, the same best practices for mold prevention should continue to be applied.

Ala Moana Center, the Path to the Sea



During this time of the year, we thought it would be appropriate to present a historical perspective of a popular gathering place. It was 65 years ago on August 13, 1959, Ala Moana Center opened its doors to the public. Hawaii, at the time was a week away from becoming the 50th state of the United States, so that event overshadowed the mall's opening. At the time, few anticipated this but the opening was the beginning of the growth of the busiest shopping mall in the world.

In 1912 the 50-acre property was acquired by local businessman, Walter Dillingham from the Estate of Bernice Pauahi Bishop for \$25,000. At the time, the property was a wetland that was filled in by coral dredged by Dillingham's company, Hawaiian Dredging Company when they were constructing the dry dock at Pearl Harbor. Later, when his company dredged the channel that runs the length of Ala Moana Park, they filled what is now Ala Moana Boulevard and the remaining part of Ala Moana Center. The property stayed that way for many years, until 1948 when the son of Dillingham, Lowell suggested and initiated a plan to build an open-air mall that would move Oahu's retail center away from Downtown Honolulu.

The mall was designed and developed by Don Graham who at the time was employed by Walter Dillingham. A renowned real estate developer in Hawaii, Graham is credited with developing many of the urban structures and centers in Honolulu from condos to hotel resorts, shopping centers and residential properties. Upon the mall's opening, Graham would become Ala Moana Center's first General Manager.

Working with two prominent mainland architectural firms, John Graham & Company and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Ala Moana Center's conceptual plans were finalized. On a side note, John Graham & Company was the firm that designed the Space Needle in Seattle, while some of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's work includes the Sears Tower and John Hancock Center in Chicago and the Burj Khalifa, which is currently the tallest structure in the world.

When construction began in 1957, Graham's design was criticized by many because he designed the two-story mall to have the merchants face inward down a center mall walkway when most malls at the time had their stores face outward to show customers what stores were part of the mall. Ala Moana Center was completed in 1959 at a total cost of \$25 million, which comprised of 87 merchants that occupied 650,000 square feet of tenant leasable area and included 4,000 parking stalls. There were three major anchor merchants - Sears Roebuck & Company, F. W. Woolworth Company and Shirokiya, but aside from the three major merchants, the rest of the stores were smaller locally-owned merchants. And of the 87 original merchants, five are still in the mall - Long's Drugs, Foodland (now Foodland Farms), Reyn's (now Reyn Spooner), Territorial Savings Bank and the U.S. Post Office.

When construction was completed, it was decided to name the shopping mall Ala Moana Center. The name Ala Moana means "path to the sea," which is a fitting name due to the shopping center's proximity to the sea. The mall's connection to the ocean is also reflected throughout the property in the art work, koi ponds, and fountains.

Through the years, the mall has gone through a few extensive expansions that have brought popular local and international brand merchants to the mall. The expansions have taken Ala Moana Center from the original 87 merchant retail spaces that occupied 650,000 square feet with 4,000 parking stalls to the world's largest open-air mall with 350 retail and restaurant tenants occupying 2.4 million square feet of retail and commercial leasable area and 11,000 parking stalls, generating annual sales of over \$1 billion.

- In 1961, the Ala Moana Building was built to accommodate the demand for commercial and office tenants.
- In 1966, the mall expanded to the Diamond Head end of the property and added two new major merchants - Liberty House and JC Penney.
- In 1983, the Ala Moana Pacific Center was built to accommodate additional commercial and office tenants.
- In 1987, the Makai Market Food Court was built and has become one of the busiest mall food courts in the nation.
- In 1999, the Makai wing opened which included several new merchants and a new anchor merchant - Neiman Marcus.
- In 2008, the Mauka wing opened which included a new parking structure, more new merchants and another new anchor merchant - Nordstrom.
- And finally, in 2016 the Ewa wing opened and added additional merchants, the addition of Hawaii's first Bloomingdales store, and the relocation of Nordstrom and Foodland Farms.
- In 2014 and 2017, Ala Moana Center in partnership with a local real estate developer, built two luxury condominiums on its property. The first was ONE Ala Moana which was completed in 2014 next to the Mauka wing of the mall. The second was Park Lane which was completed in 2017 and is located next to the Ewa wing of the mall.

Today, Ala Moana Center is one of the most successful shopping malls in the world. The location of the mall between Kaka'ako and Waikiki attracts both local shoppers and the visitors vacationing in Hawaii, and the mix of the most popular local and iconic international brands that appeal to just about everyone makes this mall one of the world's best shopping destinations.

The history of Ala Moana Center also included a few ownership changes. In 1982, after owning the property for 70 years, the Dillingham family sold it to a joint venture made up of Daiei and the Equitable Life Assurance Society. In 1995, Daiei purchased the 40% ownership from its joint venture partner Equitable Life Assurance Society and held it until 1999 when Daiei sold the property to its then property management firm, General Growth Properties. General Growth Properties held the property until 2018 when it sold Ala Moana Center to its present owner Brookfield Properties.

Here are some interesting facts about Ala Moana Center:

- The original Ala Moana Center logo was designed to represent progress at the time Hawaii became the country's newest state and Ala Moana became a central part of the rapidly changing times.
- The koi ponds have been a part of Ala Moana Center since it opened in 1959. It's a representation of the large Asian population in Hawaii and the Japanese culture, where the koi represents happiness and tranquility.
- At one time there was a large bird cage where it's now the entrance to Macy's. This bird cage kept an array of birds native to Hawaii.
- In the late 1980's, Ala Moana Center's marketing department developed and coordinated the 4th of July Magic Island fireworks show that was an annual event for 30 years.

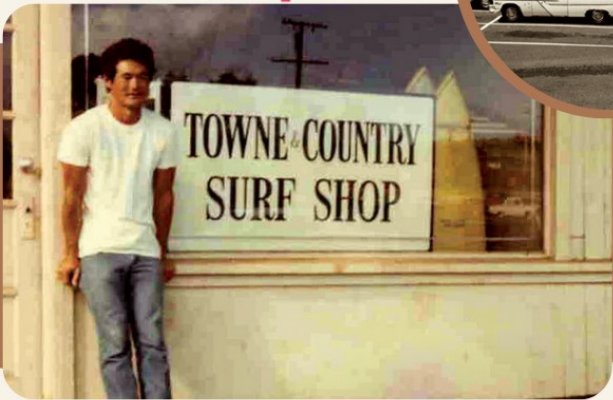


Over the 65 years, Ala Moana Center has evolved and reinvented itself several times over, and has been setting the standard for retail in Hawaii for all those years. Many of us have had jobs in the shopping mall, many local retailers have found great success in the center and many international brands have their top performing stores in this mall. The future will likely bring more changes, but the one thing that will remain is that Ala Moana Center will have stores of interest for just about everyone who visits.

When Walter Dillingham purchased this 50-acre parcel more than 112 years ago, it's quite certain he never envisioned a shopping mall on what was then marshland filled with dredged coral, but the incredible foresight of his son Lowell created what many in the shopping center industry considers the crown jewel of shopping centers.



Local Mom-and-Pop Retailers that grew



"Buy local" and "Support local" are two slogans we often hear in Hawaii. Their meaning goes well beyond purchasing from or contributing to any organization founded and developed in Hawaii. They signify supporting the people of our community and honoring the rich history of our multicultural values that make us who we are today.

Supporting a local company or organization means we malama (take care of) our own and want to see them have a sustainable future in Hawaii. This is especially true when the business or non-profit organization we're supporting reinvests its resources back into our community by providing jobs, supporting other local businesses, or helping our residents who benefit from these services.

Many of today's well-known businesses and non-profit organizations in Hawaii started from humble beginnings. Through hard, honest work, embracing the local cultural values, and giving back to the community, they grew and thrived, becoming household names in Hawaii. Some of these businesses have survived and thrived for well over 100 years and have even branched out worldwide.

Please enjoy the continuation of our limited segment on local mom-and-pop retailers that grew, featuring the iconic City Mill.

CITY MILL



Beginnings ~

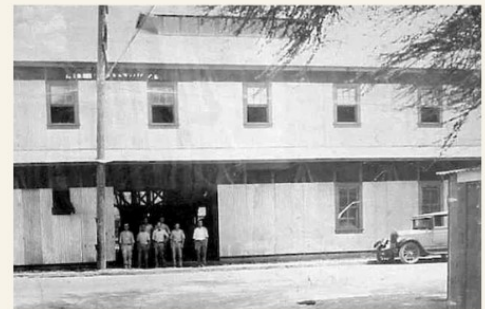
City Mill was started in 1899 by Chung Kun Ai, as a lumber importing and rice milling business, in Chinatown, Honolulu. Facing hardships early on, at just eight months old, the business unfortunately surrendered to the Chinatown Fires. In 1900, the bubonic plague devastated Honolulu and in an attempt to stop the spread of the disease, the Board of Health ordered all the buildings in the infested area to be burned. City Mill was not in the ordered area but unluckily the winds shifted causing the fire to spread, diminishing Ai's entire \$60,000 investment. Despite the devastating loss of his investment, plus having to owe \$25,000 to creditors, due to having no insurance, Ai's resilience and integrity allowed him to raise the needed funds to rebuild City Mill. After the steady rebuild and growth of the business, another financial setback happened in 1907. This resulted in Ai being unable to pay an outstanding shipment from abroad but fortunately, his personal reputation allowed him to borrow foreign capital. Then in 1919, City Mill was burned by another fire, fortunately the damage from this one was covered by insurance.

City Mill began picking up success and in the early 1920s, Ai set off into the pineapple business and started the Honolulu Fruit Company, which owned 5-pineapple fields and a cannery. Unfortunately, this venture was short lived, as it did not survive the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Pre-World War II, along with its building supplies, City Mill was known for having the only rice mill in Honolulu.

The war pushed City Mill to leave its rice mill and focus on providing construction materials for the armed forces and civilians. By the end of the war, City Mill came out as one of the largest building materials suppliers in the Pacific.

In 1950, Chung Kun Ai opened the existing City Mill store located on Nimitz Highway and dedicated the building to his mentor and friend, James I. Dowsett.



City Mill, rice mill 1929



City Mill, grand opening 1950

Chung Kun Ai ~

In 1879, at 14 years of age, Chung Kun Ai and his father sailed to Hawaii from the port of Whang Poo in China. 11 years prior, Chung Kun Ai's father had traveled to Hawaii, establishing himself as a merchant in Kona. With his flourishing business, he decided to bring his family from China to his new home in Hawaii.

In 1887, at the age of 21, Ai joined the firm of James I. Dowsett as a secretary, clerk, and bookkeeper. Ai almost resigned after the first day, due to frustrations of not knowing how to operate a telephone but after Dowsett's carriage driver taught him to use a telephone he eventually went on to become Dowsett's protege. He was able to carefully manage the rent collection money, earning him respect from Dowsett, who allowed him to use half of his warehouse to start his own sideline business. With this opportunity, Ai began importing cigars, tea, peanut oil, and other items.

In 1898, James Dowsett sadly passed away. Ai continued to work at the company and refused pay, while the estate was being settled. During this time, he purchased Dowsett's safe, desk, and swivel chair and went into business for himself. After the passing of Dowsett, Ai visited his grave every Memorial Day, and after Ai's death, his daughter Clara carried on the tradition.

In 1899, Chung Kun Ai founded City Mill, and he served as the president until 1961.

In 1953, Ai founded the Chung Kun Ai Foundation and over the past quarter century it has helped churches, charitable organizations, and deserving students throughout the world in receiving higher education.

In 1956, Ai was awarded "Father of the Year" by the Honolulu Chamber of Commerce, for recognition of his exemplary family life.

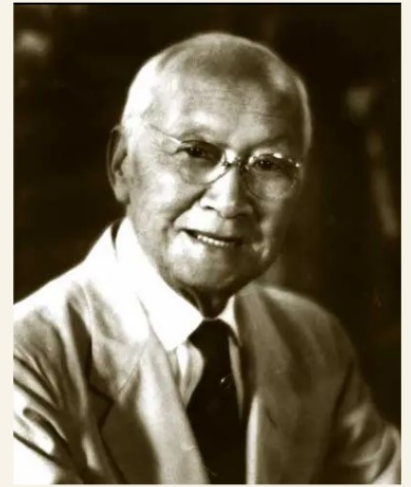
In 1957, Governor Samuel Wilder King presented Ai with the "Order of the Splintered Paddle", for his exceptional service to mankind. This reputable award was originated by Kamehameha the Great and has only been given to 26 people in the past two centuries.

In 1960, at age 93, Chung Kun Ai published his autobiography and he lived til the age of 96 years old.

The Ai Family~

Chung Kun Ai's youngest son, David C. Ai managed the company until 1991.

David C. Ai's son, Steven C. Ai took over the company and continues to lead it alongside his sister, Carol Ai May. They represent the third generation of the Ai family to lead the company, continuing on their grandfather's legacy.





Three generations of the Ai family.



Siblings, Steven Ai and Carol Ai May.



Chung Kun Ai lived in the home of his son, David until his passing. He was able to pass down his wise words to live by to his son and his son to his grandkids, "when you drink water, remember the source." This saying is still their company and family value, as they continue to donate to community charities and treat their employees as family.

Until 1998, they would hire employees with plumbing, electrical, or carpentry backgrounds but now they look to hire individuals with good attitudes who enjoy helping others and then focus on training their associates about their products so they are still able to provide the proper services.

Growth ~

Since the success of their retail home centers, City Mill has expanded into the Honolulu suburbs.

1960: Their first branch store opened in Kaneohe.

1967: The second branch store opened in Waipahu.

1975: The third branch, opened at the Waimalu Shopping Center, in Pearl City.

1984: The fourth branch opened in Kaimuki.

1993: The fifth and sixth branches opened in Hawaii Kai and Mililani Town Center.

1999: Their seventh branch opened in Waianae.

2012: The Waipahu store moved to Laulani Village Shopping Center in Ewa Beach.



1956 City Mill ad (left) vs. 2024 (present day) City Mill ad (below)



TREE DECORATING WITH HABILITAT

Our yearly tree decorating with our good friends from Habilitat.



Happy Holidays



Produce Showcase ~ Holiday Recipe

Okinawan Sweet Potato Haupia Pie



Ingredients:

- 2 cups of flour
- 2 sticks of margarine or butter
- 2 cups (about 3 potatoes) Okinawan Sweet Potato
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 envelopes Knox gelatin
- 2 frozen or canned coconut milk (12oz. each)
- 1/2 cup corn starch
- 2 1/2 cups water
- chopped nuts (optional)

Directions:

Step 1 ~ Crust:

- 2 cups flour
- 2 sticks of margarine or butter
- Chopped nuts (optional)

1. Cut cold butter or margarine into flour until combined.
2. Press crust into bottom of 9x13in pan
3. Bake @ 350 F for approximately 30 minutes
4. Cool completely

Step 2 ~ Filling:

- 2 cups boiled (peeled) Okinawan Sweet Potato (about 3 potatoes)
 - 1 cup sugar
 - 2 envelopes Knox gelatin
 - 1 1/4 cup boiling water
1. Blend sugar, gelatin, and water together, add mixture to potatoes. Mash well together.
 2. Spread filling over cooled crust.
 3. Let cool & harden.

Step 3 ~ Haupia:

- 2 frozen packages or cans of coconut milk (12 oz. each)
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cups corn starch
- 1 1/4 cups water

1. Blend sugar, corn starch, and water.
2. Add coconut milk to mixture.
3. Heat combined mixture over medium heat, stirring until thickened.
4. Once thickened, pour over cooled potato and chill.