

# Hana Hou!

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**Little, Local  
and Long-lived**  
*Five of Hawai'i's  
oldest family  
businesses*

**The Shell Hunter**  
*One man's quest  
to find every shell  
of the Islands*

**Pipeline from  
the Air**  
*Above the world's  
most famous wave*



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**Chip Off the Old Block**

When Jen Homcy was young, she and her father Dave would scour Florida's southeastern neighborhoods and beaches looking for driftwood, discarded furniture and timber. In a makeshift woodshop in the family's garage, Dave trained Jen to cut, carve and sand their findings and transform them into one-of-a-kind pieces to sell at local craft fairs. Dave named their line Foundwood, and he branded each piece with an H, for Homcy.

Many years later, after a long career as a marine biologist, Jen moved to O'ahu's North Shore—she'd fallen in love with it while visiting her brother, surf photographer Dave Homcy Jr.—and eventually became a science teacher at Kapolei Middle School. Two years after she moved, in 2003, Dave Sr. passed away, and Jen felt a strong urge to return to woodworking. At the Kapolei school she had access to a woodshop, so she began using salvaged wood to craft custom frames for her brother's work and kitchen cutting boards for friends. The boards were such a hit that Jen took a few to the Hale'iwa Farmers Market. They sold out within minutes, and Dave Sr.'s protégé realized she was onto something.

In 2013 she decided to dedicate herself to creating her cutting boards and serving trays full-time. Today, piles of Hawai'i-grown wood sit outside of her Hale'iwa home, salvaged from felled trees and dropped off by friends and neighbors. She analyzes each slab with a discerning eye, then sketches shapes in blue chalk, framing swirling grains and blemishes. Each slab is cut and smoothed into shapes inspired by her father's original designs before taking a long soak in a mineral oil bath. "I always say the wood is my boss," Jen says. "The material itself is art; all I'm doing is enhancing something that is already naturally beautiful. This project is so close to my heart. It's fulfilling a legacy started by my father a very long time ago." The final touch Jen always applies: a large H with a small j attached.

—Noel Nicholas / Photo by Ryan T. Foley

foundwoodworking.com

**Like father, like daughter:** Jen Homcy's dad taught her to work with wood and instilled in her a lifelong love of the art. Today Homcy, who lives on O'ahu's North Shore, pays tribute to that history by crafting distinctive cutting boards and serving trays from salvaged wood.

