

Hawaiians are an aquatic people. The ocean is a reverent place for them and a huge part of their culture. They fish for a living and for fun, they surf the waves on surf boards, boogie boards, standup paddle boards, wind surfing and kite surfing boards. They just enjoy swimming and being near and in the ocean. A second huge pastime in Hawaii and throughout the Pacific is paddling – paddling in one man canoes, two man canoes and six man canoes as well as a variety of kayaks. On any given day you will literally see hundreds of people participating in many of these ocean related activities. Why not? The weather is fantastic year round with 80 to 85 degree days and the northeast tradewinds blowing at 15 to 18 knots. The water temperature is usually around 70 degrees. The striking blue – green water surrounds the outlying reefs and local islands and this vista is bordered by the beauty of the majestic mountains.

The one-man ocean going canoe caught my eye immediately. In Hawaii this canoe is referred to as a wa'a and designated as an OC1. This is an outrigger canoe with an average length of about 22 feet. It has a rudder at the stern controlled by foot pedals. You paddle this craft with a single-bladed paddle and alternate strokes on both the port and starboard sides. The OC1 has a molded hull and deck using either the traditional fiberglass or the more modern material consisting of epoxy resins, carbon fiber and Kevlar. The modern canoes weigh approximately 27 lbs. They are fast and maneuverable.

My favorite pastime is surfing my canoe called Kai 'ea (which means "spirit of the ocean" in Hawaiian). This keen little vessel is an OC1 built by John Martin, Hawaiian Design and is designated the Naia Ike (dolphin, little). I surf in a number of areas but usually off the reef which is about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile off Lanikai Beach, Kailua, HI. This area offers some amazing surfing conditions. It takes about ten minutes to paddle out to one of two holes in the reef. I paddle out beyond the reef and look for a good 4 to 8 foot wave to ride in on through the reef into the inner lagoon, a distance of about  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile. It can be a very exciting ride depending on the size of the wave you catch. On a big wave you lean back as far as you can to help keep the bow up. You also have to maintain a line perpendicular to the direction the wave is moving. If you get off the wave line you will mostly broach and "huli" which mean capsize in Hawaiian. On a good wave you will travel at about 15 to 20 knots with the spray rising off the bow and hitting you in the face. It is really exhilarating!