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THE NIGHT STUFF

## An unassuming local bar with top entertainment

 Photo gallery: [Chiko's Tavern](#)

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Chiko's Tavern is not unlike any other local neighborhood watering hole, with drinks, pupu and karaoke. Unless you drop in on a night Hoku Zuttermeister plays.

### CHIKO'S TAVERN

**Where:** 930 McCully St., 949-5440

**Hours:** 2 p.m.-2 a.m. Mondays-Saturdays; 4 p.m.-2 a.m. Sundays

**Got parking?** Yes, but it fills quickly. We parked a block mauka on King Street.

**The appeal:** A mellow, very laid-back old-school hideaway lounge where you'd likely be recognized as a regular after three visits. Local grinds. And on alternating Thursdays, Hoku Zuttermeister.

**The crowd:** At 8 p.m. on the Thursday we dropped by, post-work klatches of friends, couples and barflies ... many of them regulars. Late twentysomething to fiftysomething in age.

**What to wear:** You're good with a T-shirt and jeans.

**Interiors:** Oddly comforting, no-nonsense furnishings and fixtures from just about every decade since the '70s. Padded black vinyl booths, high-top bar tables and stools, a corner stage, playful-mod ceiling-hung lamps, a side room with scarlet, low-to-the-ground, Euro-cool booths and stools.

**Food:** Simple local grinds — think poker night with the dudes in the family room: gyoza, fried noodles, shoyu Vienna sausage, poke, garlic fries, soybeans, rib-eye steak over kim chee fried rice, etc. Passable, if a bit uninspired; surprisingly small portions, considering the prices (average \$5-\$7) and local clientele.

**Libations:** Full bar. Standard stuff.

**Service:** Attentive at start; less so as it got crowded.

**Soundtrack on most nights:** Karaoke — much of the talent, I was told, is quite good. Otherwise, a piped-in soundtrack and occasional live music.

**Hoku Zuttermeister every other Thursday:** The reason we stopped by. The gifted singer/songwriter/musician has been holding down a low-key gig at Chiko's for more than three years. Keeping things way laid-back, spontaneous and cracking jokes left and right, Zuttermeister on guitar with Ioane Burns on bass made for a sweet night of traditional Hawaiian music. In Chiko's relaxed setting, Zuttermeister's accomplished voice was pure chicken skin; his and Burns' spontaneously selected set list of Hawaiian language classic and modern songs inspiring. "We never plan anything except what we're going to wear,"



Hoku Zuttermeister, right, and above with bassist Ioane Burns, attracts fans every other Thursday night at Chiko's. On other evenings, you're likely to be hearing karaoke singers or piped-in sounds.

JOAQUIN SIOPACK | The Honolulu Advertiser

Zuttermeister said. "It's a lot of fun for the audience, and sometimes too much fun for us!"

**Why Hoku digs it:** "Chiko's is a nice, laid-back venue for us. We've played at hotels and other bars before, but (they're) not as relaxed as Chiko's. ... (We like) seeing old friends and making new ones. ... There is a great mix (of people) in the room from kupuna to our peers. ... You can almost guarantee great hula when you come to Chiko's."

**Tips for Hoku night:** Come earlier than the 9 p.m. start time. You'll find an empty booth easier to come by, and \$3 cover is charged after 8:30 p.m.

**Next Hoku night:** Thursday. Check out [www.hokuzuttermeister.com](http://www.hokuzuttermeister.com) for his Chiko's dates. Na Hoa plays on the Thursdays Zuttermeister is off.

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[Back](#)

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