



Albert Moniz makes and repairs saddles in Anna Ranch's barn.

Home on the Hawaiian Range

HAWAII'S RANCHING HISTORY AND THE LEGACY OF ONE OF ITS MOST REMARKABLE FAMILIES ARE ON DISPLAY AT ANNA RANCH HERITAGE CENTER.

BY JENNY QUILL

After driving through the glassy, blackened lava fields that blanket much of the Big Island's sunny South Kohala coast, the painterly green hills of Waimea, one of Hawai'i's most bucolic corners, are a shock to the senses.

This is *paniolo* (cowboy) country, where ranches outnumber resorts and there are more cows than convertibles. Sitting pretty in this countrified landscape is Anna Ranch, a small, working ranch and heritage center where visitors can explore the property, delve into Hawai'i's ranching history and learn about the prominent Waimea family that called this place home for nearly 150 years.

The ranch house, a registered National Historic Site, built around 1910, is a charming, single-story structure that would look right at home on *Little House on the*

Prairie. The surrounding grounds are a gardener's dream, with hāpu'ū and monstera ferns and tidy rows of birds of paradise, geraniums, agapanthus and lilies, all bursting with color. Covering two 'ili, or land divisions, the 110-acre ranch was, in ancient times, the site of sweet potato and taro fields. Since 1850, the ranch has been home to the descendants of James Fay, who established the first sawmill in South Kohala, and his Hawaiian wife, Ka'ipukai.

The greatest chapter in the ranch's history, however, belongs to its namesake, Anna Leialoha Lindsey Perry-Fiske. Born in 1900, Anna was the Fays' great-great-granddaughter, and, upon her father's passing in 1939, became ranch manager—an unheard-of title for a woman of the era. A keen businesswoman, Anna's innovative ranching practices bolstered the family business. She was also a cowgirl, jockey and licensed butcher. But she is best known throughout Hawai'i as the "Queen of the Pā'ū Riders."

These days seen mostly in parades, pā'ū riding is a uniquely Hawaiian equestrian style in which women on horseback wear pā'ū—elaborate, culotte-style skirts requiring up to 17 yards of fabric to make. Anna won many awards for her pā'ū riding and was its greatest ambassador, having introduced the style at the Pasadena Tournament of Roses in 1971 and Canada's Calgary Stampede in 1974.

As were Anna's wishes, following her death in 1995, the ranch house and surrounding buildings were restored and



Anna Ranch's main house is surrounded by grounds that are a gardener's dream.

SADDLE MAKER: JOSHUA FLETCHER; ANNA RANCH: ALVIS UPTAS

ANNA RANCH

65-1480 Kawaihae Road, Kamuela, (808) 885-4426, www.annaranch.org

Anna Ranch namesake, Anna Leialoha Lindsey Perry-Fiske, on one of her bulls.



Anna Ranch became a heritage center. Among the family heirlooms and assorted treasures that fill the house is a collection of Anna's pā'ū and riding attire, including rhinestone-bedecked outfits made by Nudie Cohn, a famous rodeo tailor who designed ensembles for Elvis Presley and Gene Autry. In every room visitors encounter collectibles that would leave *Antiques Roadshow* appraisers speechless: a Tiffany bell clock, a Regina music box and an original Lionel Walden seascape painting among them.

One particularly fascinating room is chock-full of Anna's and her husband, Lyman Perry-Fiske's, old cowboy boots and saddles, including an example of *Ka Noho Lio*, the Hawaiian tree saddle. Descended from the saddles of the Mexican *vaqueros* who came to the Islands in the 1830s, the Hawaiian tree saddle was adapted to the unique challenges of Island ranching.

Only a dozen or so saddle makers still live and work on the Big Island. One of them, Albert Moniz, recently opened up shop in the ranch barn, where he makes and repairs saddles and crafts leather accessories. Most days, Moniz shares the barn with local blacksmith Ethan Fronney, who hammers out custom art pieces, such as hooks and horseshoes.

Visitors looking to stretch their legs a bit will also soon have a self-guided Discovery Trail. The walking tour will amble through the lower portion of the ranch, where interpretive displays created by Big Island artist John D. Dawson will depict the history of ranching and agriculture in Hawai'i.

The trail is sure to lend even more appeal to a tour of Anna Ranch, a true home on the range where Hawai'i's ranching history and cowboy culture have been preserved, and the stories of the Fay family and the dynamic woman at the heart of it live on. ¶