

---

## Village Audio & Lighting: Another Day in Audio Paradise

Bruce Sandler went to Hawaii on vacation. He's still there 15 years later&hellip;

Saying that Bruce Sandler's life changed when he landed in Hawaii for a vacation 15 years ago is a bit of an understatement. After about a week on the islands, Sandler decided to head back to his Indianapolis home, pack his bags and road cases and head back to the 50th state.

&ldquo;I left everything in Indiana,&rdquo; Sandler recalls. &ldquo;I had one of my employees move in and I told him to run the shop, run the business. He was petting my dogs, driving my cars, doing everything, and I came to Hawaii to try it. I figured if it didn't work I'd go home, but the bottom line was that I'd be able to look in the mirror every day and say, &lsquo;At least I had the balls to try it.&rsquo; Fifteen years later, I'm still here, so I must have done something right.&rdquo;

That doesn't mean, however, that it was easy getting Village Audio & Lighting up and running on Maui, although there were only a couple of other companies in the state. The first thing Sandler had to battle was the perception of locals that mainlanders were not going to stick around. &ldquo;For the first year, I couldn't give a PA system away,&rdquo; he recalls. &ldquo;I'd call and say, &lsquo;Hey, I hear you're doing a concert. I'd like to donate all my gear so you can meet me and see what I do.&rsquo; They were like, &lsquo;No.&rsquo; I couldn't figure it out.&rdquo;

Then he realized that if he was brought in the odds were that the existing provider would feel angry about being replaced. &ldquo;If I decided that after six months I wasn't going to stay, because it's such a transient island, then they would have to go back to the old guy and ask him to come back,&rdquo; he says. &ldquo;It was a solid year where I didn't work at all, just trying to give stuff away to let people know that I was here, that I was going to be here, and through time they started to give me shows here and there.&rdquo;

Nowadays, Sandler reports, the company provides services for 40 to 60 shows per month. Those gigs bounce between major label bands stopping on the island to mini-luau's to food and music festivals. Recently, Village has worked with Incubus, James Cotton Blues Band and Alpha Blondie who visited Maui for a show. The island hosts dozens of community parties each year, including Whale Day, Maui Slack Key Guitar Festival, SeaFest and Taste of South Maui, and Village Audio and Lighting is right on the scene.

It's these types of gigs that Sandler seemingly likes best. &ldquo;Load up a van and get over there, set up and then go surfing,&rdquo; he says with an audible smile. &ldquo;It can't get much better than that.&rdquo;

Sandler also isn't shy about renting his gear to others, including those who are looking for a \$100 rental to cover a luau or another small event. That kind of flexibility has served him well, especially since voyages on the Hawaii Superferry that takes people and vehicles between the islands are often canceled because of weather. In fact, he

---

says, "I'm doing a show today because a guy was bringing a truckload of gear over from Oahu to do a show, but he's screwed. There's no way to get the gear over here, so he has no choice than to call me and have me do a show for him."

The biggest venue on the island is the Maui Arts & Cultural Center, which fits 4,500 people at its peak. So, Sandler has been able to keep his PA gear choices a bit in check and his inventory includes EAW 650 cabinets and SP-1000s, consoles including a Yamaha Pm5D, along with a handful from Midas and Soundcraft. He also owns a Showco SRM monitor rig. "One of my competitors here went to Showco, because he was from Dallas and he actually bought the rig. That's unheard of," he states. "He went out of business as far as the audio end, so I bought all the Showco stuff."

Being in a remote setting has been helpful at times, Sandler adds. "People are willing to settle for what we have," he says. "For example, on this Alpha Blondie show they are yelling for a Midas 2000, but I've got a Verona. I don't have a Heritage 2000. I've got a Verona. So, it's very simple — use my Verona or bring your own."

While the 650s have worked at the Cultural Center, Sandler is looking to bring in a JBL 4888 line array because the city has plans to add a roof with a grid system. To power the new array, he recently went out and purchased all new Crown amplifiers to go along with the Crest amps that he uses for the EAW rigs.

The PA collection at Village is relatively modest, but Sandler admits to going a bit overboard when it comes to collecting backline equipment. At last count, he has 40 guitar and bass amps from the likes of Fender, Marshall, Ampeg, SWR and Roland, eight drum kits built by Yamaha, Sonor and LP, and 28 keyboards that includes a Hammond B3 and Leslie cabinet, Korg, Roland and Kurzweil. "I do almost all of the backline, not just on Maui, but in all of Hawaii at this point," Sandler says. "I went wild on the backline stuff. It seemed like nobody wanted to take on that aspect of it."

In addition to audio, Sandler has brought in a number of auxiliary pieces that makes Village a complete production company. On the lighting side of things, Sandler has consoles from HOG, Jans and Lepricon, and fixtures from ETC, Source 4 PARS and Source 4 LEKOS and moving lights from Martin and Highend. Village also has its own stage, generators and trucks.

"I can offer a true one stop package," Sandler reports. "I can provide everything except for the talent."

And, just like 15 years ago, Sandler hears all the time from audio pros looking to make a move to a tropical climate. "I get resumes every day," Sandler says with a laugh. "But the ones that come have to stick around for awhile, just like I did."

---

Worked out for him now, didn't it?