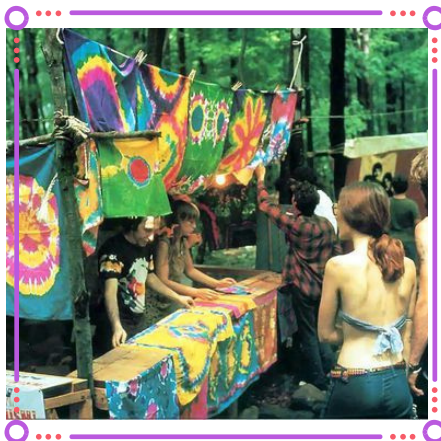


Keeping up with Hama'Lu

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL EDITION OF THE NATIONAL
FESTIVAL

CULTURE



ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL EDITION OF THE NATIONAL FESTIVAL

BY SARAH POPPE

From 13 June till 20 June, the national festival of Hama'Lu, Pa'ina, was held. It was the most successful one ever since the first edition hundreds of years ago. More than 7 million people were counted over the whole week.

The very beginning

When we look back at the past, the **difference** is very noticeable. The very first Pa'ina was on a very small scale. It can't even be compared to the ones taking place in this current day and age. Only a handful of people were at that festival: the ones who had organized it and their friends and family. Food was made by the attendees itself. Music came from someone who thankfully knew how to play the guitar accompanied by someone with a beautiful voice. It was simply a **big family picnic**.

Over the years, with Hama'Lu's population growing and the festival becoming bigger and bigger, more people attended. More money was also being put aside for the festival. Slowly it became the Pa'Ina we know and love right now. The festival grew from an afternoon with friends and family to a week-long celebration of everything that makes Hama'Lu Hama'Lu.

Magic

"This edition was truly magical," said **Koa**, one of the many attendees. "I went every day and it was so much fun! You would think that a one-week festival would be repetitive, but it wasn't! Every day there was something new to discover, be it food, an activity or a new artist performing. I even took a whole week off of work just because of the Pa'Ina."

A week long Hama'Lu was being celebrated. The food being served at the festival was all domestic. The activities had a huge variety. There was something for everybody. There were the typical ones only known in Hama'Lu like canoe racing through the mangroves to more well known ones like bumper cars. The artists that performed this year were similar to last year's (as in Lady Gaga, the Hama Hama, etc.), but a couple of new names were spotted. For example, the band Marau, one of Hama'Lu's local artists, headlined day 3 of the festival.

"It was an honour to play at Pa'Ina. It had always been a dream of ours to perform there. We are still a bit shocked that it happened. The crowd was wild and we had so much fun. It won't be a day that any of us will likely forget", said **Haoa, bassist of Marau**.

The organisers of the festival have been trying to revitalise the festival to show that they also are capable of change. "People have got so used to how it used to be and we wanted to change it up. It's also more fun that way, don't you think?" said **Nani Kane**, one of the masterminds behind Pa'Ina.

What to look forward to

Next year might be even more spectacular. Pa'Ina gets to celebrate her 150th birthday. "We are definitely already working on the next edition. 150 years of existence is a very big thing and we want to show that as well. I can already tell you that you should really look forward to it as the plan we are currently working on is spectacular! You'd better clear up some space in your calendar." said Nani.