

CALGARY HERALD

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Horseback riding in the land of aloha



Equitrekking, an equestrian vacation provider offers self-drive horseback riding tours on the Big Island of Hawaii. The riding vacations are an offshoot of a PBS series, which will feature Alberta ranch and ride vacations on the series this fall.

Photograph by: Courtesy, Equitrekking, Chip Ward

HAWAII • Equitrekking, a new equestrian vacation company, is now offering horseback riding vacations in Hawaii, fitting in the state that has a rich cowboy heritage through its own ranching and riding paniolos.

With the success of its Emmy-winning Equitrekking series on PBS, hosted by Darley Newman, the outfitter has been searching the best places in the world for travellers to get on a horse and ride. (An episode filmed in the province last summer will air this fall. It features several riding trips in Alberta, including a look at the Stampede.)

With its Hawaii offering, guests get to experience three thoroughly different views of the Big Island of Hawaii with a self-drive and guided horseback riding adventure. Two of the days take place at historic ranches and another day takes guests to some of the state's most spectacularly lush valleys. Included in the four-night, three-day package, (\$891 US) is accommodation at the Hilton Waikoloa Village resort on the Kohala Coast. By day, you'll have access to a rental car to get you to your daily riding destinations.

Day 1 you'll be introduced to the paniolo culture of the Big Island at Parker Ranch, one of the oldest ranches in the United States. Located on thousands of hectares in the shadow of Mauna Kea, the often snow capped peak, which is actually a dormant volcano. Gallop the day away on lush green hills.

Day 2 takes you to the tropical paradise of Waipio Valley (the Valley of the Kings), where wild horses, the only ones on the island, roam free. Ride through streams, get up close to waterfalls and awesome vistas unlike any other on the islands.

Day 3 is spent the storied landscape of historic Kahua Ranch. Set on 48.5 square kilometres, this is a real working cattle and sheep ranch overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

All rides are geared for beginner to advanced levels.

For details on this and other trips from Equitrekking, go to equitrekkingtravel.com

— Calgary Herald