

## Closeup: Tourism



Advertiser photos by Carl Viti

Concierge Jim Simpson inspects a taxi at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Hotel while driver Steven Wong looks on through the back window.

### HILTON'S TAXI RULES

- Cars:**
- No more than 5 years old; no damage, cracks or dents.
  - Preferably black, dark blue, gray or maroon. Not too many white cars allowed.
  - Must have high-luster exterior paint, interior carpeting.
  - Must have clean white cotton head-rest cover on seats.
  - Must be fully air-conditioned.
- Drivers:**
- Must complete Charley's classes and Hilton orientation.
  - Dress neatly, wear company name tag.
  - Treat all customers with courtesy and dignity.
  - Be reasonable, fair in attitude, conversation.
  - Show aloha spirit. Be friendly, helpful.

## When cabs come clean as whistle

### Hawaiian Village, Charley's roll out their best image

By Stu Glauberman  
Advertiser Tourism Writer

Only 60 of the newest and shiniest of 250 Charley's Taxis are good enough to pick up guests at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Hotel.

Taxi drivers working the Hawaiian Village concession are responsible for making sure their cars sparkle inside and out, carpets are vacuumed and the seats have clean, white cotton head-rest covers.

The hotel wants the taxi rank filled by Cadillacs, Lincoln Town Cars and other four-door sedans that look new. But, because some guests like vans, a few have been allowed into the Hawaiian Village taxi stand. Van drivers have to carry a step-stool to help riders board, however.

Charley's drivers who serve the Hilton must meet a non-nonsense dress code of crisp white shirt with a red tie, clean black trousers, socks and dress shoes for men. Women drivers must wear white cotton blouses with a red accessory.

Drivers who hope to work the concession have to attend training sessions given by Charley's and Hilton. If accepted, they pay a \$400 monthly fee to Charley's, plus another \$20 a month for a hotel sticker.

"The cars have to be spotless and even the wheel rims have to be shiny," said Jim Simpson, 23, a native of the Seychelles, who has been a Charley's Taxi & Tours concierge at the Hilton for about a year. "On rainy days, the drivers have really got to work hard to keep their cars clean," Simpson said.

Simpson inspects cars in the stand-by rank and attends to customer inquiries and complaints. He also arranges limousine service for hotel guests.

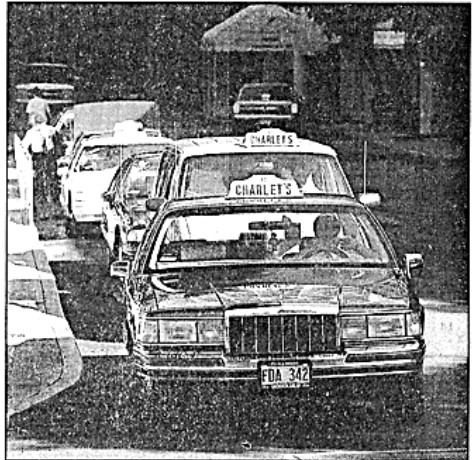
Simpson won an Aloha Spirit award from the Hilton Hawaiian Village for helping a hotel guest recover a purse that had been left in another company's cab.

Charley's driver Steven Wong, who works the Hawaiian Village cab stand, recently found three \$100 bills wrapped inside a \$10 bill that a rider gave him. Wong also was rewarded with an Aloha Spirit award from the hotel.

When Hawaii's biggest hotel was looking for a taxi service in 1993, Hilton executive Peter Schall told Charley's executive vice president Dale Evans he wanted car service that was equal to what travelers get in Japan.

"I told him we would set an industry standard," Evans recalled.

The collaboration between the hotel and the cab company has earned top marks from the Hawaii Hotel Association, which recently named Charley's the Hawaii Hotel



Only the best and brightest of Charley's Taxis are fit to join the line at the Hilton Hawaiian Village.

Supplier of the Year.

The taxi concierge aspect of the service also won praise from Kathy Clark, a businesswoman from Santa Clarita, Calif., who was here for a conference.

"It's really nice to have someone come and help you out like that," said Clark, who got her purse back after leaving it in a cab. "It really gave me a special feeling about that hotel."

A written explanation of Charley's standards for the Hilton Hawaiian Village concession fills an eight-page handbook that covers dress and

grooming, ethics and behavior, car condition, safety equipment, and procedures for picking up passengers at the hotel.

Drivers who work the concession also get an orientation on the Hawaiian Village and Hilton's overall innkeeping philosophy.

When Hilton chose Charley's to launch the "red tie" service in September 1993, Evans met resistance from the drivers, who didn't appreciate the long list of dos

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## MONEY

# Hotel: Clean taxis hailed

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and don'ts that came with the Hilton sticker.

That changed when the drivers realized they would be making top dollar for providing top service, she said.

"Obviously, the incentive is financial," Evans said. The Hilton stand is by far the state's busiest, she said. "They can have 1,500 people who are going out to dinner."

Drivers who work the Hil-

ton taxi rank during dinner hour on a busy day can earn \$40 an hour, double what some drivers make at other stands or on radio-call.

"Cab service is almost like a part of hotel service and the cabs are right there on our property," said Hawaiian Village general manager Noel Trainor.

Trainor was resident manager when the hotel undertook the taxi project as part

of its Total Quality Management program for vendors and suppliers.

"We wanted the drivers to share our insatiable appetite for pleasing people," said Trainor. "That's what drives us."

Charley's "red tie" service at the Hilton has set a standard: The service has been duplicated at Aloha Tower Marketplace, where the taxi company also has a concierge.