

Valley of the Temples in Kaneohe completes first phase of expansion

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Courtesy Valley of the Temples

Valley of the Temples Memorial Park has completed its latest expansion and will celebrate this weekend with a storytelling festival.



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Valley of the Temples Memorial Park in Kaneohe in Windward Oahu recently completed a 10-acre expansion with its Ocean View Terrace, creating more options for families to memorialize the deceased.

The park, which was established in 1963, is known for the Hawaii Byodo-In Temple at the rear of the property. It changed ownership in 2011 when it was purchased by Texas-based NorthStar Memorial Group, which also operates Diamond Head Mortuary and Maui Memorial Park, according to [its website](#).

[Mark Gilmore](#), area operations director for Valley of the Temples, said it expanded to fulfill previous commitments for burial plots, some of which were made 10 years ago. He called it a multimillion-dollar investment but declined to give an exact cost of the expansion.

The expansion offers different options, he said. For example, cremation has become popular, but it was not a market being served. The Ocean View Terrace includes a cremation garden and new cremation products such as a niche set into a lava-veneered rock wall and waterfall.

Also, pedestals commemorate loved ones. Gilmore says customers have requested aloha shirts, doves and even a motocross dirt bike.

There also are spaces for traditional burials and exclusive family estates. In all, the new expansion includes 1,000 plots in the cremation garden and 3,700 lawn burial plots.

The Ocean View Terrace also features a heart-shaped design in the main garden that was built in consultation with feng shui master Clarence Lau.

"Whether you understand the principles of feng shui or not, many families who visit just say it feels good, and they don't or can't explain why," Gilmore said.

He said a family from Florida recently visited and the mother found the experience so serene and peaceful that she bought a cremation plot on the spot because she said she couldn't think of a better place to rest in peace. Gilmore said the new Ocean View Terrace is expected to generate a 20 percent increase in revenue for the park.

Valley of the Temples has two more phases planned, which will be driven by customer demand, he said. The company also generates revenue by renting out portions of the property as a backdrop for TV shows, weddings and even a [Chris Brown music video](#).

Valley of the Temples will celebrate the completion of the new phase with a storytelling festival Saturday and Sunday featuring [Alton Chung](#), [Jeff Gere](#) and [Kathy Collins](#).

"We asked ourselves, what is it that we do?" Gilmore said. "A cemetery is about preserving memories and telling stories. The storytelling festival really tells our story."