



CHRONICLING SURFING'S HERITAGE CALIFORNIA SURF MUSEUM

BY LEIGH HAMMOND

What can be done with an old box of surf footage from the 1930's? Where does a visiting Lake Erie surfer connect with the Southern California surf community? How does a seven year old groom learn about the metamorphosis of the surfboard? All of these questions are easily answered at California Surf Museum.

Standing proudly on Pacific Coast Highway, as it has for over sixteen years, California Surf Museum welcomes individuals from varying cultures, ages and walks of life. Centered on "honoring the heritage of surfing, not the commercial end", the museum remains a pinnacle foundation not only for San Diego; but, surfing as a whole.

Featuring annual exhibits, CSM pays homage to pioneers of the surfing movement. Currently, "Tom Keck: Exposed" is on display. Keck is a legendary news and surf photographer who has been documenting surfing since the late 1950's. A walk through his exhibit is an international journey through time. "History of Pop Culture," featuring the wild days of surfing will soon be on display.

Rated second behind the San Luis Rey Mission as a tourist destination, CSM is open seven days a week, free of admission and accepting of donations. Jane Schmauss, Acting Director explains that CSM is committed to "educating all of the men, women, surfers, professionals-whoever walks in the door, on surfing history!"

A native of San Diego, Schmauss is conscious of what a "wonderful gift surfing is for

Southern California and vice versa!" She describes surfing as a "triumph of perseverance and dedication!" She has been a part of CSM since its Encinitas birth over twenty two years ago. The museum eventually migrated to Pacific Beach and settled finally in Oceanside.

"Oceanside embraced us very nicely!" Like much of Oceanside itself, the museum is blossoming. In 2008, CSM will move just around the corner to a 6000 square foot facility. This will allow for multiple exhibits and space for guest speakers and movie nights.

While the museum does have an array of books, gifts and art for sale, it is far more than a boutique. The Oceanside Surf Museum is a hub of information, history, knowledge and overall communication. An afternoon spent at the museum guarantees the acquaintance of an array of unbelievable individuals.

The stories and adventures told surrounded by photos and surfboards on any given day could generate a daily magazine. CSM hosts visitors from every corner of the globe. In an hours time Evie Obias, a member of Lake Erie's, "Wagner Surf Crew," artist Bob Merson and Board of Director associate Tillman Eakes all stepped into the warm embrace of CSM. Unique is the triangle that can affix a woman who surfs 35 degree water, an acclaimed artist and a representative. Experiences such as these are the foundation of California Surf Museum.

Perpetuating the visual, spiritual and oral history of surfing, CSM is "not a dead museum by any means." CSM is a living history

lesson, fueled by the pioneers that frequent it and the staff that makes certain the founding father's stories and adventures will forever live on.

As surfing continues to evolve and expand, its ideology remains in tact: Explore, share, be free. No lessons parallel those of life better than surfing: Everyone gets caught inside at one time or another. Sometimes all you can do is just put your head down and paddle like hell. Even though it looks scary on the drop, you never know what happens unless you try. Everything is always better when experienced around the ones you love and respect.

Like those that frontiered it, surfing continues to push the envelope. New equipment, unexplored territories and unheard stories filter in. Schmauss suggests that, "It seems surfers are more respectful, considerate and aware of the inventors" than ever before. A return of interest in the history of surfing continues to cycle through society. As always lessons are learned by looking to the past. Forward movement in equipment, technique and technology can all be generated in researching the earliest foundations of the sport. California Surf Museum is a wealth of visual and oral information for anyone interested in exploring the world of water sports, both past and present.

Determined to keep the history of surfing alive, CSM has just released its first book, Surfing in San Diego. Featuring over two hundred photos, the book is a journey from 1907 into the late 1960's. It highlights the people,

places and experiences that make San Diego what it is today.

CSM is a unifying thread in the fabric of society. Serving as a voice of surf culture, it promotes the historical foundations of the sport. Enabling a platform for volunteer and intern positions, CSM is generating community give back. Showcasing incredible exhibits, the museum is bringing international interest to Oceanside. Ultimately, CSM is a vehicle communicating the beautiful, exciting and unique history of surfing to every individual it touches.

Take an afternoon or even an hour and immerse yourself in CSM. You may find yourself engrossed in conversation with one of surfing's great pioneers. Perhaps you will meet a visitor from a place you never knew existed. If you are lucky, you may win the surf board that is up for raffle. Regardless, after a visit to California Surf Museum, you are guaranteed to walk away with knowledge, appreciation and a story of your own!

Treat yourself to a sunny day off and visit...

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