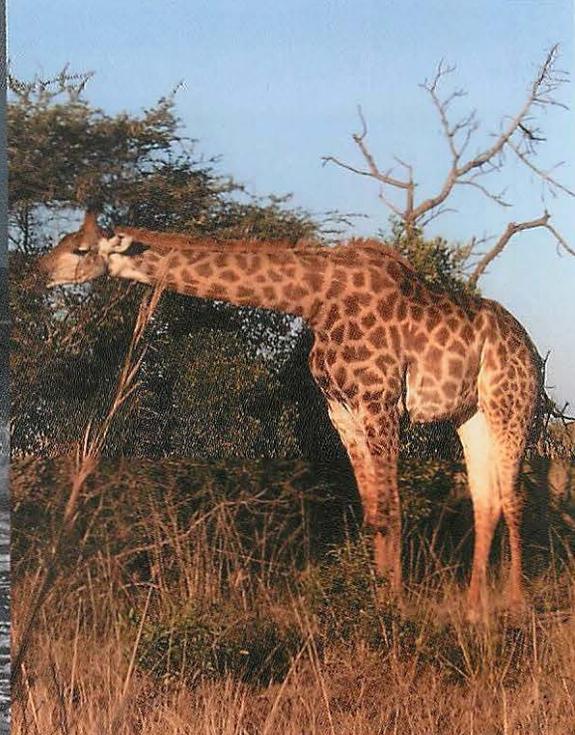


# An Antipodial Surfari in South Africa

By Arnold L. Lum



Arnold Lum finishes up a long ride at the Point.



Henry and Jerry Richmond relax with Spider Murphy of Spider Surfboards.

Ever since Bruce Brown showed *The Endless Summer* at Roosevelt Auditorium in the summer of '63, I've wanted to surf the East Cape of South Africa, where the Cape St. Francis scene was filmed.

Who can forget those pictures of young Mike Hynson

and Robert August, crouched and riding, parallel-stance, across those seemingly endless rights? Almost 42 years later, Henry Richmond and his Durban colleagues Spider Murphy and Rod Stainton of Safari Surf Company presented us with the opportunity to surf South Africa.

George Plechaty and I, joined by three other friends, decided to make what is essentially a surfari to the opposite side of the world. (Technically, Botswana is antipodial - opposite from Hawai'i - but there's no surf there.)

To make a long story short, our trip to J-Bay was spot-on.

The beach where Bruce Brown filmed along the East Cape is now called "Bruce's Beauties," but the wave is fickle, so Jeffreys Bay, a short distance from Bruce's, churns out hollow right point waves on a consistent basis due to low pressure systems constantly moving across the Roaring Forties, and is now where the surf action is centered.

We scored waist to head-high surf on four of the five days we were there. The famed Supertubes break turned out to be too radical for us old long boarders, but The Point, which is the next break down from Supers, has a mellow wave, ideally suited for riding tankers. Twenty-second rides are not uncommon, and I managed to score a 10-second nose ride from the middle through the final inside section.

A typical day for us consisted of a full English breakfast, followed by a mid-morning session with maybe a half-dozen surfers at The Point (when it got to 6 ft. plus, it did become more crowded). Afternoons were spent relaxing on the balcony of our condo overlooking Supers, watching the kids get barreled.

For those of you who short board, the weapon of choice at Supers is a 5'11" narrow thruster, less than 2' thick, weighing about 4.5 lbs. (2 kilos). The boards are glassed light because the wave breaks so close to the rocks during typical southeast swells, and you don't want to be dragged too far after the wave finally closes.

The East Cape not only produces fantastic waves, but also primo food and beverages. We ate kudu, ostrich, and other game meat cooked on the grill at our condo (a "braai" in Afrikans), and drank endless bottles of local pinotage, lager, and milk stout, all of which I highly recommend.

Restaurant evenings were spent over bowls of calamari and soba at the restaurant next door, and the Mexican restaurant in town served up huge plates of salsa-laden food that challenged even the most hard-core chili picante freaks.

To top things off, Henry and his wife Jerry accompanied us on a game park safari after our surfari to J-Bay wrapped up. This time, our headquarters was Hilltops Lodge in Hluhluwe Umfolozi Park, located not too far from Mozambique.

At Hluhluwe (pronounced "shlushluway"), cape buffalo, warthogs, and other big game stroll by the bar, and zebra, baboons, and impala greet you at your doorstep in the morning. Needless to say, more pinotage, lager, and milk stout was consumed, along with copious amounts of food, between park ranger-led trips to view giraffes, rhinos, elephants, hippos, crocs, and the big cats.

Actually, Henry was the only one of us to score a big cat - a leopard obligingly crossed in front of his car. So is it worth the effort to travel half way around the world to surf? We all agreed that it is one of the things that has to be done before you exit the planet.



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