





A Greenough  
Scrapbook:  
1960-1970

All unattributed photos are by  
George Greenough or  
courtesy of his collection.

# MOVING





# FORWARD

**F**rom the time George Greenough graduated from high school in 1960, through the worldwide acceptance of the shortboard by 1970, his exploits as a surfer were beyond the scope of mere legend. In many ways, he became the living personification of surfing's own evolution. Whenever he entered the sea, it was with every bit of the honesty and passion that was emblematic of those unique times.

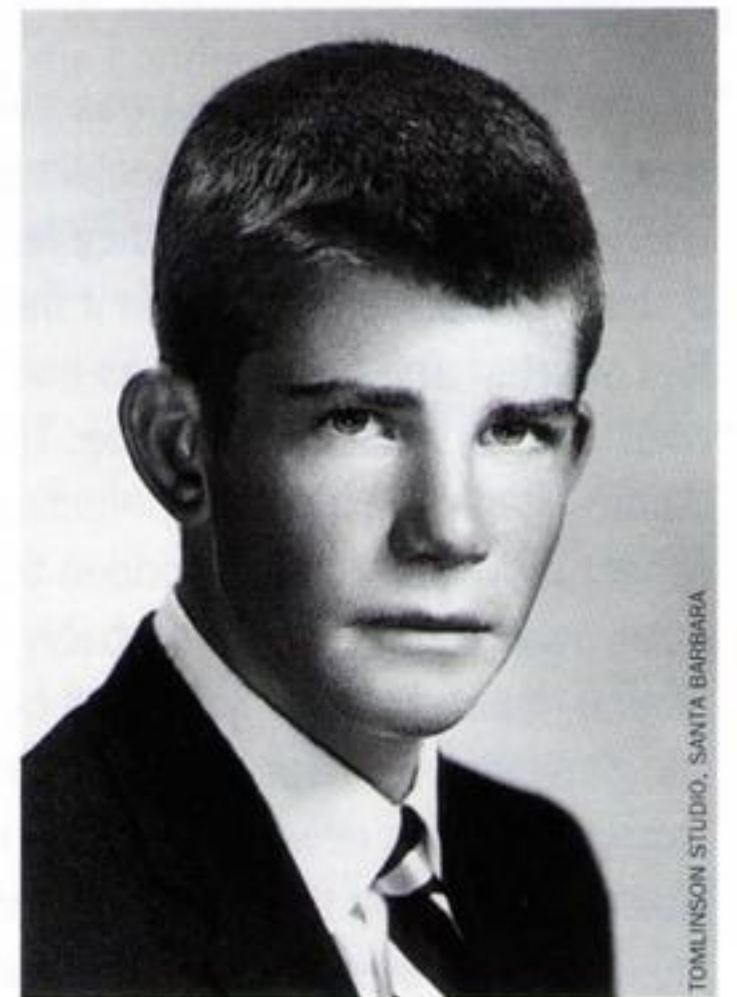
George's growth as a surfer and a board designer during that period was unparalleled. He was on the fast track in each discipline, and the two fed off of each other like nuclear fusion. It was reminiscent of the classic relationship between the young hottie and the older, more experienced shaper, who push each other forward with their respective merits...only it was broiling away inside of one guy! Advancements as a surfer would reveal weaknesses in his equipment, which he would refine with a potent mixture of intelligence and imagination, and that new equipment would then push him to the next stratum as a surfer. With enormous aptitude in both areas, the height of his performance in the water and the universal impact of his design work isn't surprising.

In glimpsing his personal photo collection from the Sixties, however laid back it may seem in retrospect, we are witnessing the seeds of the only genuine revolution that ever took place in surfing. In an abrupt, eighteen month span between 1967 and 1969, virtually 100% of the active, worldwide surfing community abandoned longboarding in favor of the shortboard. To put that into perspective, imagine if everything you saw in the water today—shortboards, longboards, bodyboards, everything—was gone in two years, replaced by something you hadn't yet imagined. It seems like an impossible eventuality, because it very nearly is.

George's motivation as a designer was disturbingly simple. Having fun in the water was the only rush he ever craved, and three decades of subsequent media manipulation in surfing haven't been able to generate the influence he wielded with the sword of his own innocence. You can't help but wonder how long would it have taken for surfing to change had it not been for the mind-rattling example of shortboard surfing Greenough gave us. Scores of surfers had ridden smaller-than-normal boards since the turn of the century, but it was George who first captured our imagination, then reprogrammed it. In that context, even leisurely snapshots of the first chords struck by the godfather of rock-and-roll surfing have meaning.

George has always placed a supreme value on the knowledge he accumulates, so he perceives his own aging in a positive light. For older surfers, that kind of optimism is sullied by increasingly crowded lineups and the perpetual shake-up of surfing's pecking order. George's nature, however, has always been to accept reality and continue moving forward. When he released *The Innermost Limits Of Pure Fun* in 1970, he ended the film with a point-of-view tube riding session filmed at dawn. To this day, it remains the only surf film to conclude with a sunrise...an imaginative expression of his faith in the future, and a fitting end to the most dramatic decade in surfing's history.

—Paul Gross



"My high school graduation photo from 1960. The only other time I wore a suit was the first time I went to Australia in 1964."

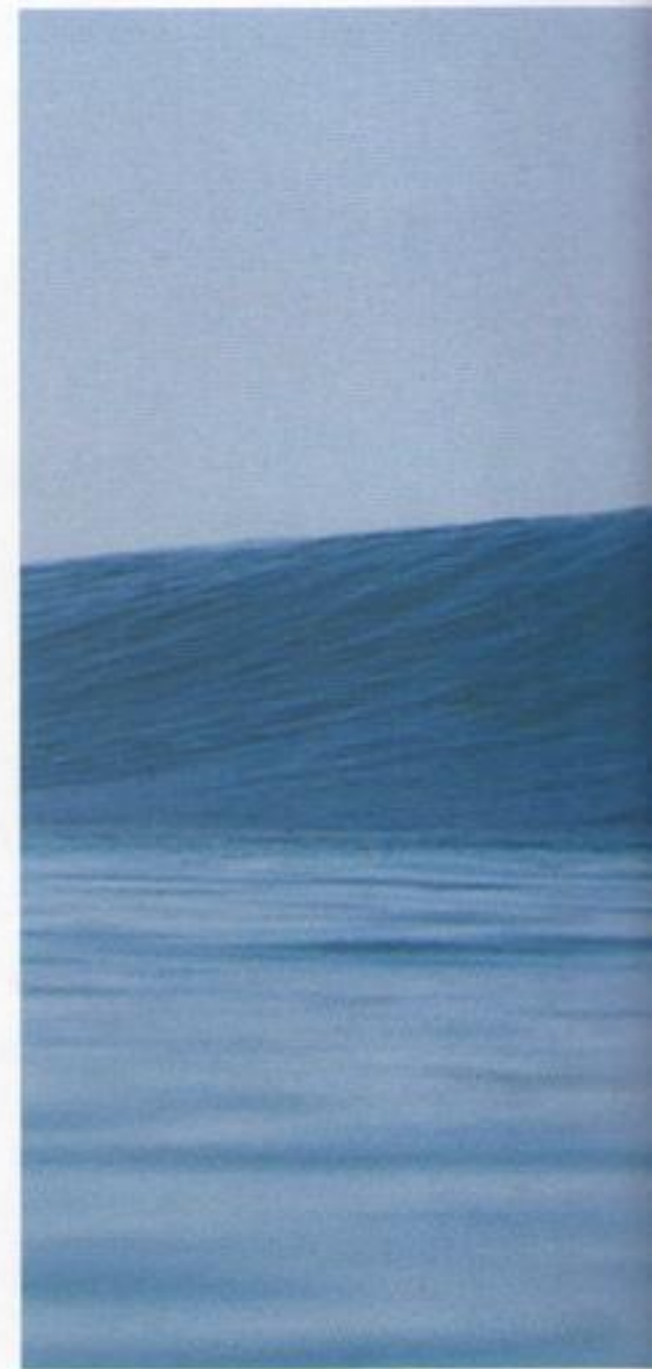
(left) George, May 1998, at his family's estate in Santa Barbara, California. With the recent passing of George's mother, Helen, their home was sold and George will be living full time in Australia...for Santa Barbara surfing, the end of a long and storied era.



# The Six Footer



"I made this six-footer while I was still in high school. I had tried conventional length stand-up boards, but I hated the way they felt. So I built a standard board, only I made it three-and-a-half feet shorter. The fin I used was just a copy of what was happening at the time. This was before I had done any experimenting with high aspect ratio fins. I wish I'd ridden this board with a narrower fin, because it probably would've been a ripper, but it broke in half before I got into designing fins. The board was made of foam, which was new at the time. I bought the blue pigment from the Yater shop, which was the first time I ever met Rennie. That's my first surf car, a '55 four-door Ford station wagon."



The Baby Surfboard's outline and "S" deck. While arrived at independently, Greenough's forms bear a close resemblance to those of Bob Simmons.





Australian Bob McTavish puts the Baby Surfboard through its paces while visiting George in Santa Barbara in 1966. As a world-class surfer/shaper celebrated for his open mind, McTavish hit the mother lode when he hooked up with Greenough in '65.



## Greenough Boards: Baby

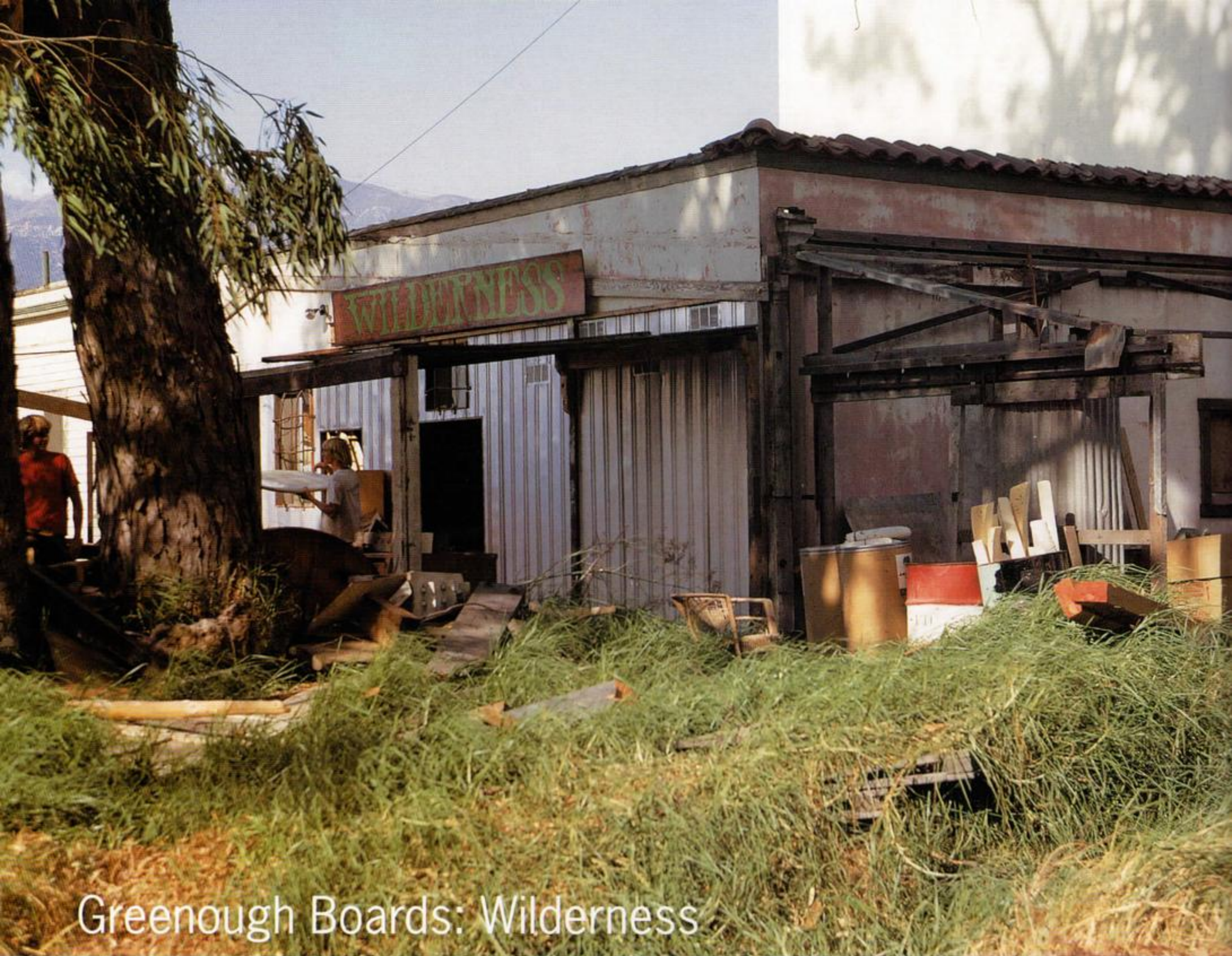
"I shaped the Baby Surfboard at the same time I made my first solid balsa spoon kneeboard. That was in 1962. The Baby Surfboard was 7'8" by about 22", and it had dead straight tail rocker and a fairly deep displacement hull. It was designed for shortboard surfing from the ground up. There was no consideration for anything like trimming or noseriding. It was made to power turn in the pocket. Like my balsa spoon, it started out as a twin fin, but ended up being a single fin. Single fins just suit displacement hulls better. After I rode the Baby Surfboard awhile, I scarfed some wood on the nose



and added some lift. You can see that it had an extreme "S" curve to the deck, and that the rails were full and round all the way though the tail. The "S" deck got a lot of weight out of the nose, and the soft rails in the back let the wide tail bank over into a turn easier. It didn't have any Vee in the tail. I didn't ride the Baby Surfboard all that much. It was mostly for my friends. Cooper rode it at Rincon, and Skip Frye surfed it once when we were down in San Diego. McTavish rode it every time he came to California. I have no idea where it is these days. The last time I saw it, David Elfick had it while he and Alby Falzon were in Santa Barbara making *Crystal Voyager*."







## Greenough Boards: Wilderness

"The original Wilderness shop in Santa Barbara. It was located behind an old ice plant across from Stern's Wharf. I think it opened up in '68. Mike Cundith was a really progressive shaper, and he was interested in translating my design ideas into conventional boards. In the beginning, most of the Wilderness boards were full-on stubbies. By 1970 they were more pulled in, but still with displacement hulls."

"I shaped this board for Terry Keys in 1968. It had a deep displacement hull, round rails, flat tail rocker and it was fairly wide. Actually, it was a lot like the Baby Surfboard, but lighter and with the area moved forward."



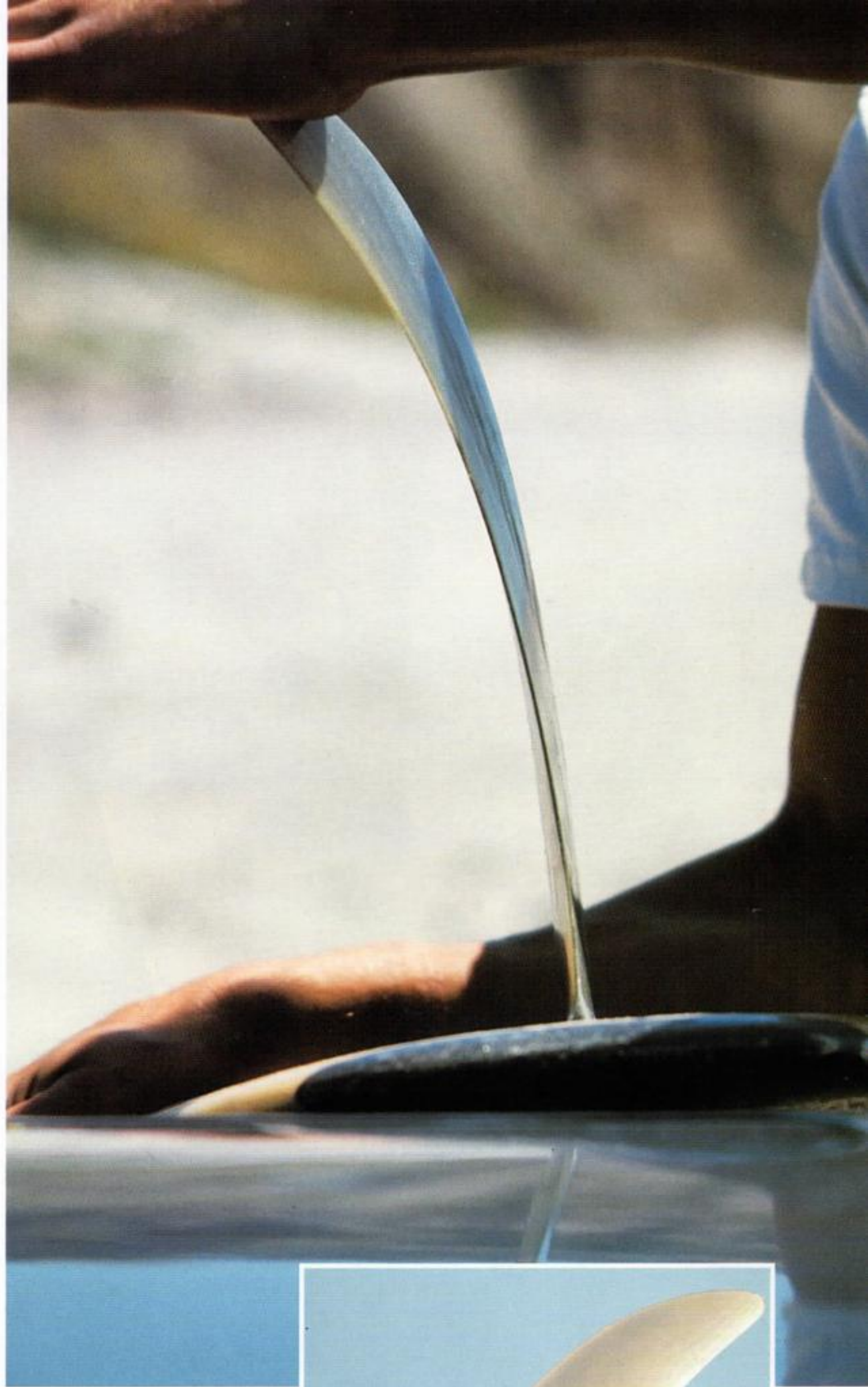
CHRIS BROCK





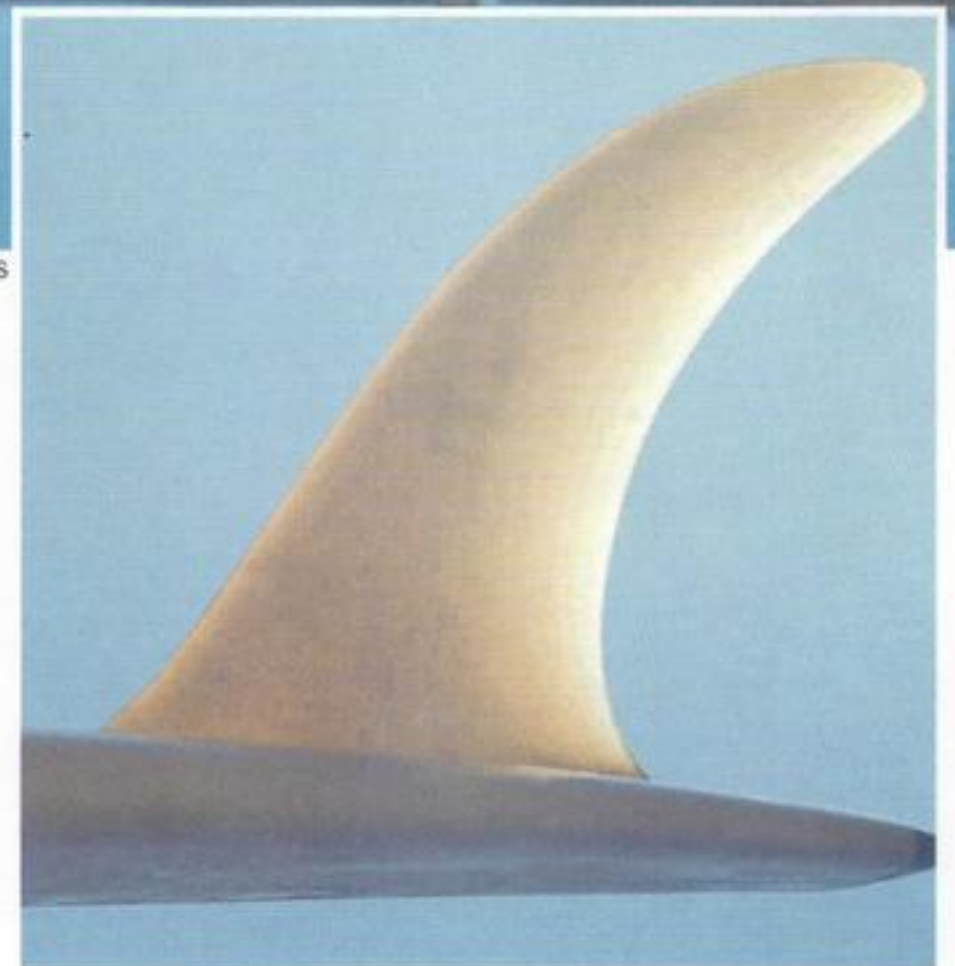
## Greenough Fins

Stage III and Stage IV Greenough fins, manufactured by Morey-Pope in the mid- to late-sixties. The Stage III was heavily promoted, and George's name was alongside Yater, Weber, Harbour, Gordon and Smith and Bing. Living in that high recognition neighborhood became instant credibility for George. The Stage III was extremely progressive for its time, because full-on power turning—rather than noseriding—was at the heart of the design. The last generation of molded fins from Morey-Pope in 1969 was limited to one offering...the Greenough Stage IV, still one of George's favorite designs. In their respective eras, the Stage III and the Stage IV were the most advanced fin designs ever made available to the surfing public.



PHOTOS: AL LEES

"This was a flexible fin glassed on to Danny Hazard's board in '67. Even conventional longboards benefited from a higher aspect ratio flex fin. They were easier to turn, and they sat deeper in the pocket without sliding around."





# Greenough Boards: Small Hulls



74







JOHN WITZIG

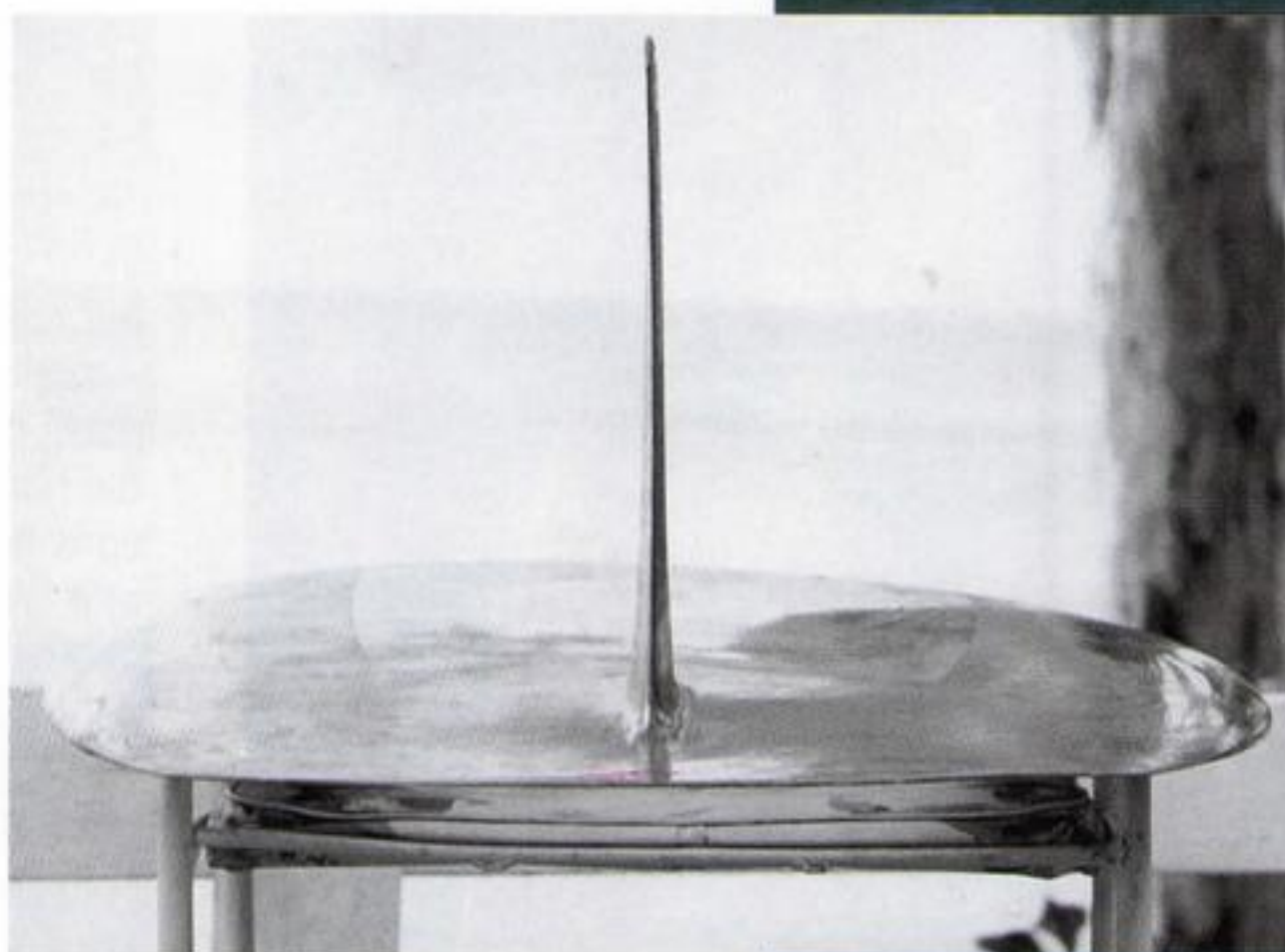
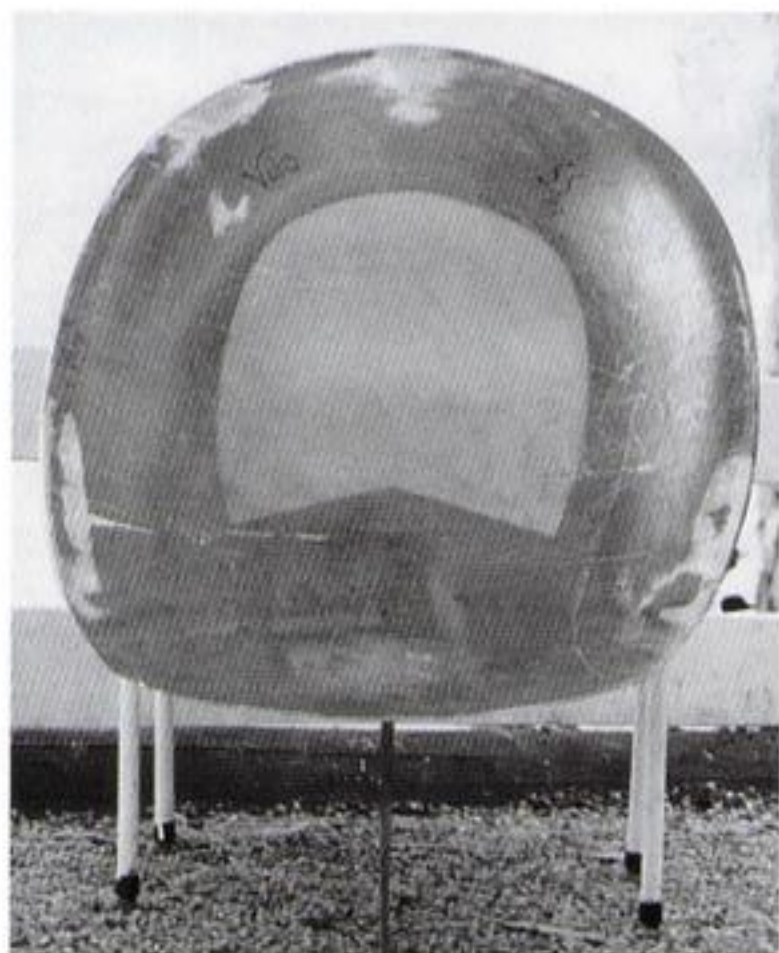
“Denise, Gary and Terry Keys, Chris Brock, Ted Spencer and myself at Lennox Head. This was near the end of 1969, and their boards had gotten almost a short as mine! The early development of the shortboard was actually hampered by a few things. I didn’t ride stand up boards at all, so I didn’t know what they were feeling. I could watch them and make suggestions and shape boards, but it was hard for me to get into the fine-tuning aspect of their boards. And that’s really what good design is. Just about anything will work if the handling is tuned in, but stuff like the fin set up is hard to get right if you’re just making a stab at it. You have to ride the same kind of board for years before you can understand all the nuances, and the shortboard thing was moving too fast for that to happen. Ted Spencer’s boards eventually started looking like my spoons—small, with full outlines and deep hulls. Without the flexibility or low center of gravity of my spoons, they couldn’t fire as well off the bottom, but he could get buried at Lennox on those things like you wouldn’t believe, and come out every time.”

Ted riding his small hulls at Lennox.





# Greenough Boards: Velo



“Velo was my favorite board, but I actually didn’t like it when I first rode it. There was this big twist in it. (I don’t know if someone bumped it off its blocks after the deck was laminated or it just twisted on its own when the resin went off.) Plus it had too much glass on it. It was stiff and heavy. I rode it a few times, then took a grinder to it and tuned it up. It lost some weight and became heaps more flexible. After that it ripped. I tried various ideas to improve the design over the next few years, but nothing worked quite as well. I rode it from 1966 through 1970. I’d still be riding it, or something very similar to it, if the surf hadn’t gotten so crowded. You can’t ride a spoon in crowded conditions and have fun, and Velo needed long, perfect, twisting walls with offshores before it caught fire. You don’t find many days of surf like that anymore with no one out! What made Velo such a challenge to ride was that it had untold gears. Because of its deep displacement hull, it never peaked out. No matter how fast you were going, you could bury the forward rail into a bottom turn and break the fin out, and it would jump into the next gear. The best that board ever worked was one day at a place called Moffet’s in Australia. It’s a reef break with gobs of power. It was eight to twelve feet that day and offshore. There was so much power off the bottom, you couldn’t kill it, no matter how hard you turned! A guy was watching me from on the beach, and he told me later that the board looked like a water ski when it turned. That’s exactly how it felt! When I finally stopped riding Velo in 1970, it took a good while to develop boards that worked in junkier conditions and still felt good to ride.”

“Walking back up the point at Rincon after a run from the Indicator to the seawall. I was wearing a full length dive suit. It was too cold to ride a spoon in a Farmer John shorty. This would have been around 1967, so full length surf suits hadn’t come out yet. During the longboard era, the Indicator was like having my own private spot! Hardly anybody ever paddled up there. The shortboard revolution actually worked to my disadvantage, because the spots I had been riding all by myself for years began to get crowded.”







"When I arrived in Australia in '67, Ted Spencer picked me up at the airport in Sydney and informed me that we were going to Victoria instead of Byron Bay! I was keen to have a look at the area, so off we went. After two months of surfing the dead based waves around the Bell's area, I couldn't believe how good Lennox felt when I got back...even on an average day like this."





# Greenough Films: Innermost Limits: Making Of



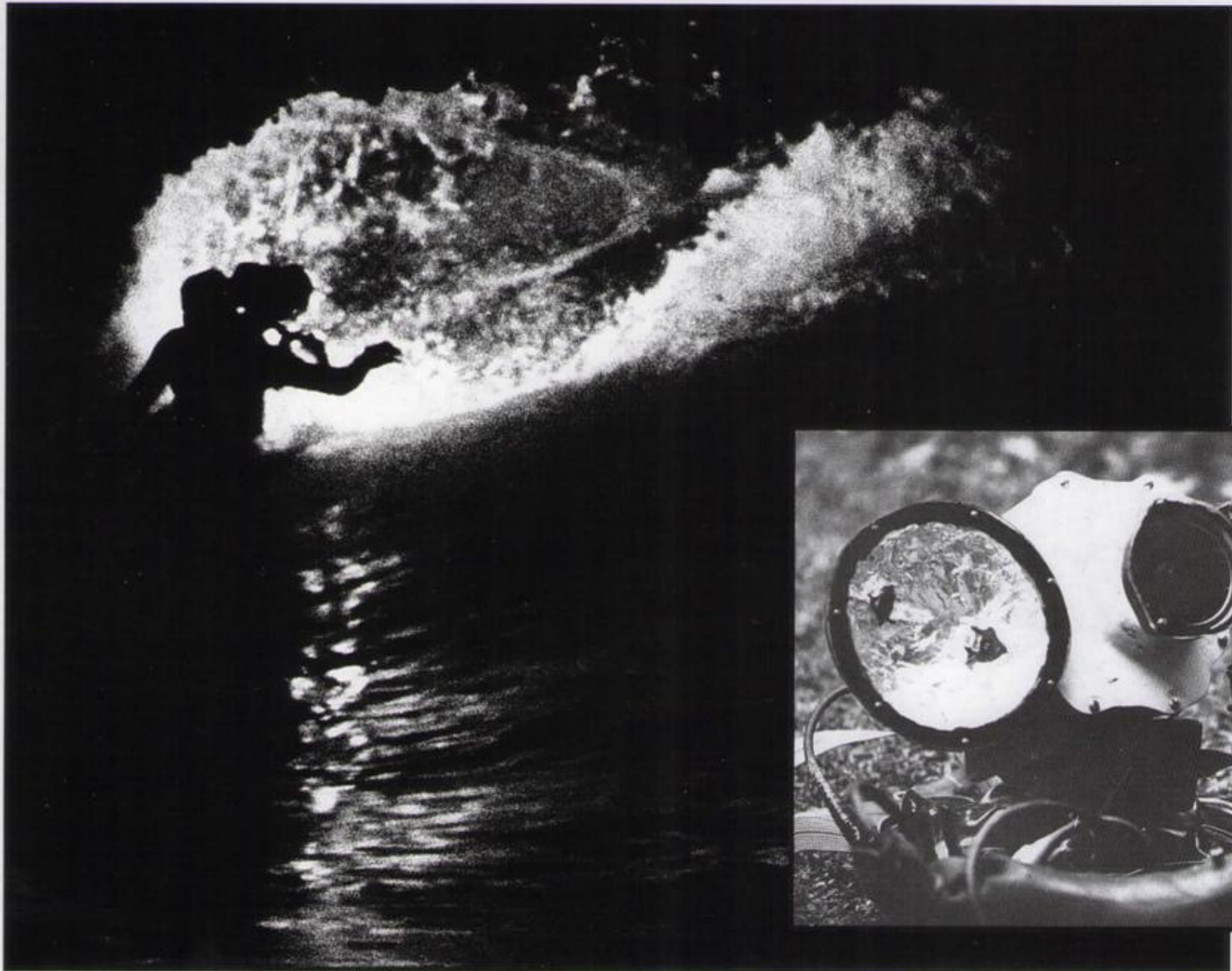
"Dennis Dragon playing drums in our living room while we were recording the soundtrack to *Innermost Limits* in late '69. Denny Aaberg organized the whole thing, and Dragon engineered it. We spent the entire day in the Lobero Theater in Santa Barbara, cutting tracks while the film was being projected. Then we came back to my house to finish up that night. The whole soundtrack was recorded in one day. That's one of my relatives on the wall in the background. I'm not sure which one."



SANTA BARBARA. PHOTO: WAROIE WARD







STEVE BISSELL

"Shooting the point-of-view footage for *Innermost Limits*. My basic rig was a Kodak K-100 with the widest lens I could get that would still fill the entire screen. I wasn't interested in losing the corners for the sake of a little wider coverage in the image. I was surfing with 28 pounds of gear on my back, so it really effected what it felt like to surf."

"This is the lighting set up I built for shooting back into the tube at night. I had no idea if it would come out at all. I shot the footage at Rincon using high-speed film, and I had the lab push it a couple of stops just to be on the safe side. The first shots in *The Coming Of The Dawn* were from that session."



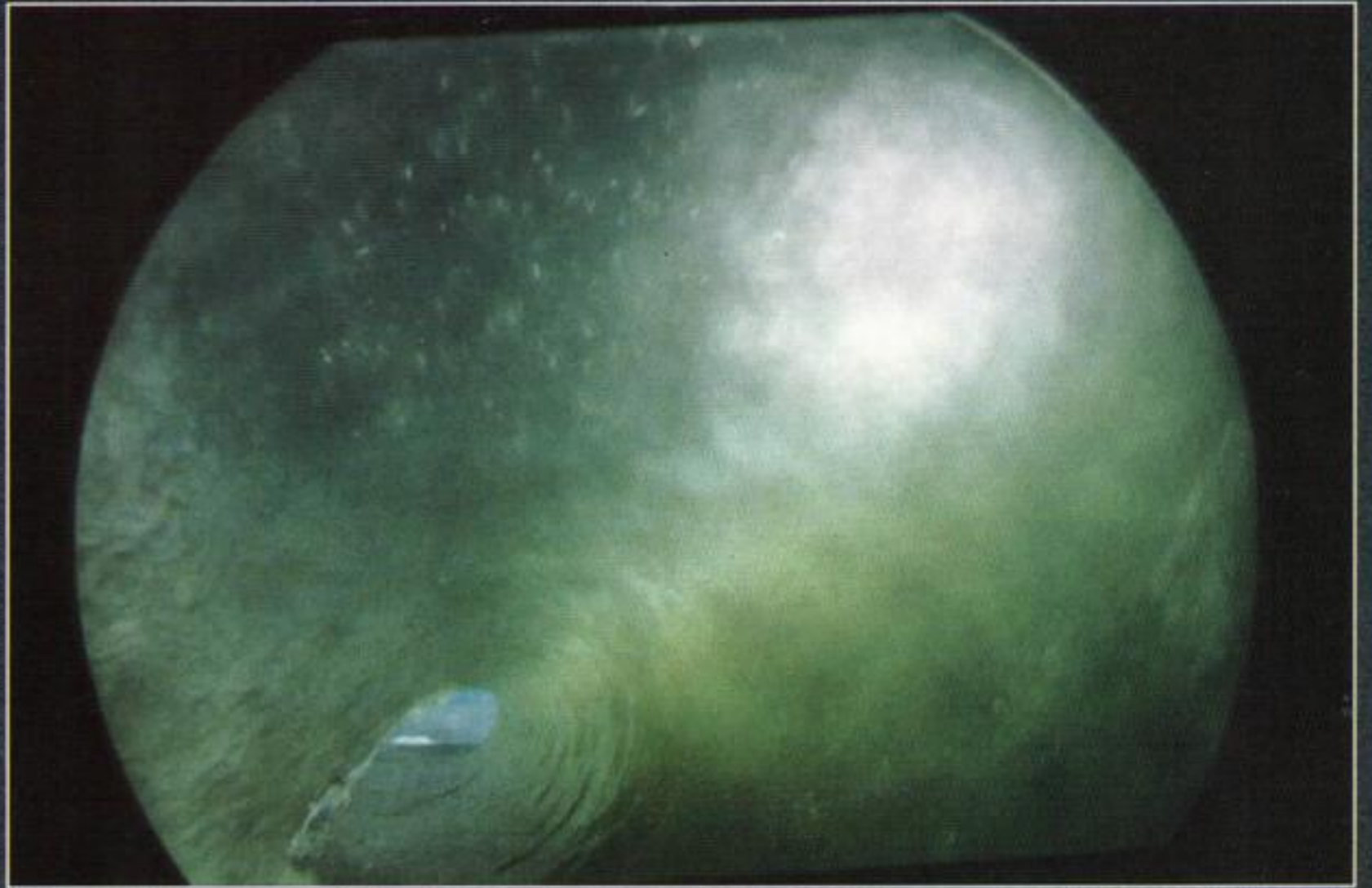


# Greenough: Films: Innermost Limits: Frames

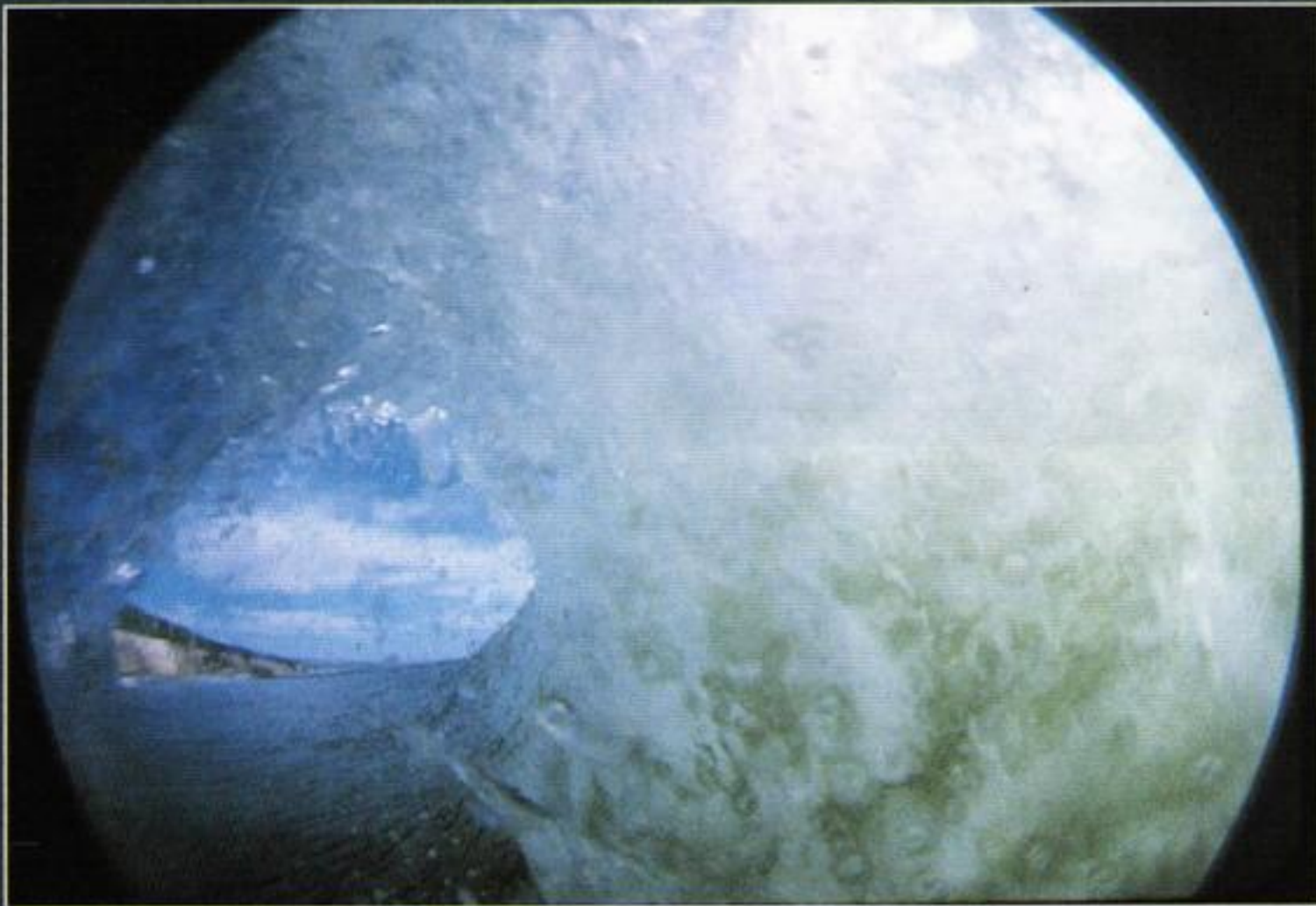


Lennox Head.

BROCK

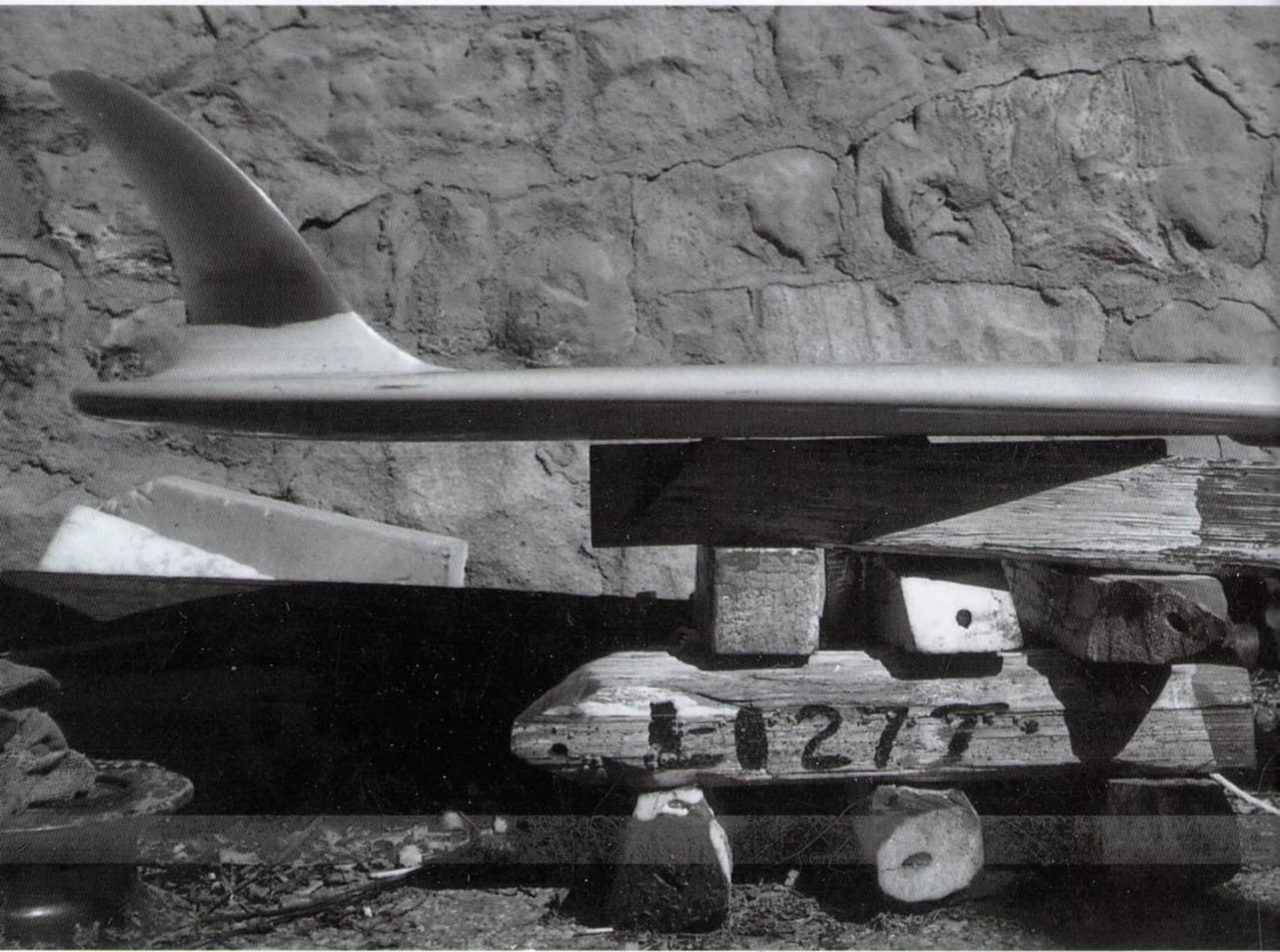






"The point-of-view shots in *The Innermost Limits Of Pure Fun* were the primary difference over what had been done in surf movies prior to that. I wanted to get the feel of surfing up there on the big screen, not just what it looked like from the beach. The shots looking out of the tube really pushed the envelope of what a surf movie could be, but for raw action, my favorite angle was looking back at the board's track."



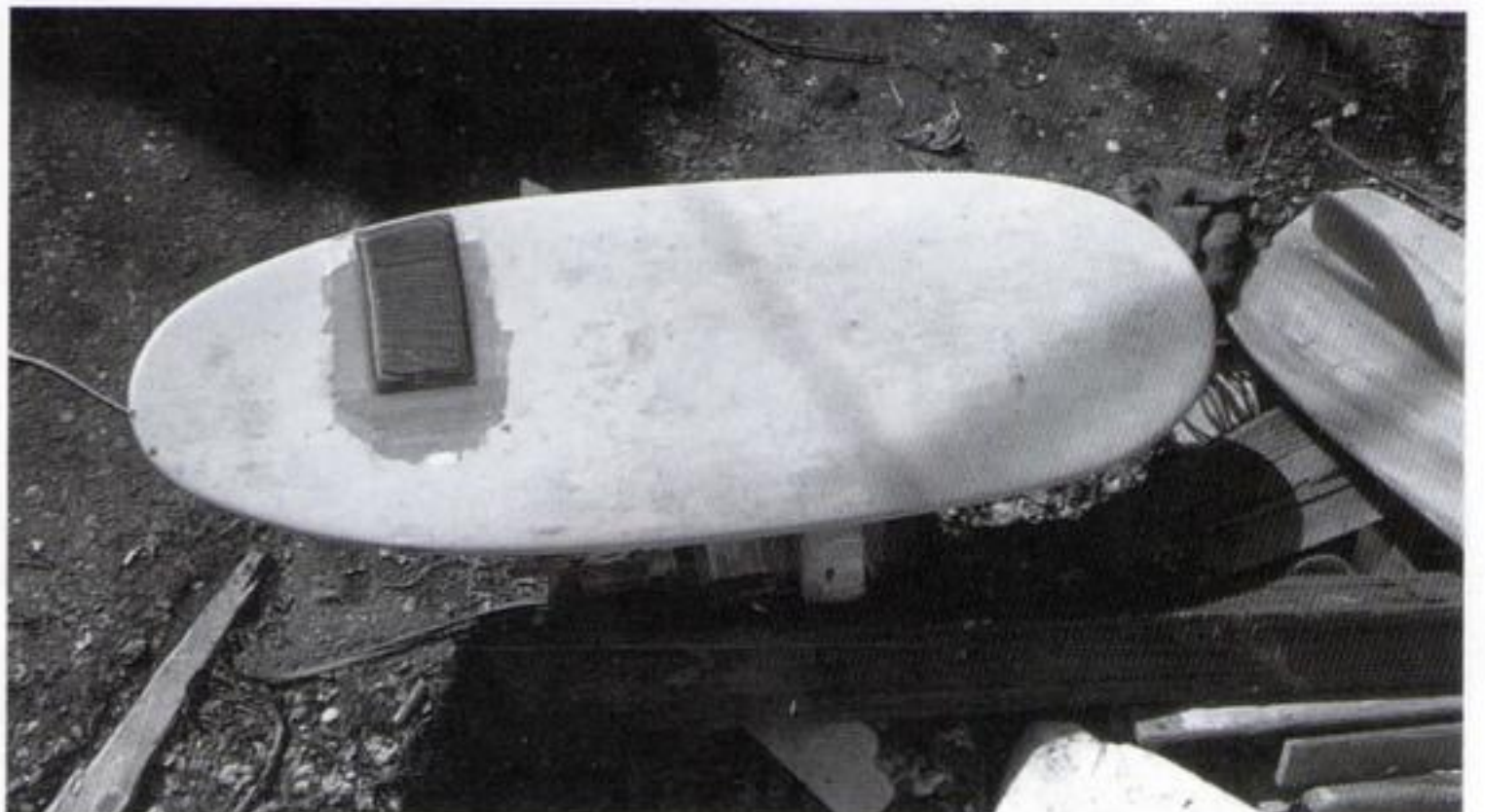




## Greenough Boards: Early Balsa Kneeboard



"This is a 16mm movie camera in its water housing mounted on a different kneeboard. It was set up for shooting back into the curl."



"I made this kneeboard in wood shop at school in '59. It was solid balsa. You can see the "S" shape to the deck, and that the rail line ran from down in the back and up in front. It didn't have enough nose lift for bumpy conditions, but it flew in clean waves. Originally, it had a fin similar to what they were using on conventional stand-up boards at the time. I eventually designed the one you see here, which was the first flexible, high aspect ratio fin I tried. It was based on a dolphin's dorsal fin, and it made an unbelievable improvement to the speed and handling of the board. The fin moved with the water flow, so it never cavitated or stuck in a track. The success of that first fin influenced everything I've designed since. The wooden block laminated on the board was for mounting a 16mm movie camera, so I could shoot point-of-view footage."



"Dickie Vincent took this shot of me on that early kneeboard at Upper Drakes in 1960. They used it in *The Surfing Guide To Southern California*."





## Greenough Boards: Balsa Spoon



“Top view of the first balsa spoon in my lobster fishing boat. I made this board along with the Baby Surfboard in 1962. Both were yielded from the ten-foot long balsa stock I had on hand, so I had to use every scrap of wood. You can see the wedges of wood that came from all the milling I had to do. This was the first spoon-type kneeboard I made. It was dished out to about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick. That alone was a big improvement in kneeboard design.”

“In the Summer of '63, we took a trip up north on my family's sailboat. Not much surf, and June gloom the whole voyage. I originally made my balsa spoon as a twin-fin, but as time went on, I moved the fins closer and closer together, and it kept working better and better. Eventually, it turned into a single fin!”



# Greenough Craft: The Barge

"This is a barge I made to haul supplies out to my 16 ft. Boston Whaler, which was set up for commercial lobster fishing. I left the Whaler anchored off the beach up at the Hollister Ranch all winter, then drove in and paddled out to it on an air mat with the barge in tow. Whatever I needed, I just stowed on the barge. That way I didn't have to mess with launching out of the harbor every day. I fished lobster for four or five years in the mid-sixties. It was pretty lucrative back then. I could make between five hundred and a thousand dollars a week, and it only cost about one hundred dollars U.S. a month to live in Australia. At the time, living in Australia was like living in Mexico! So I'd fish lobster all winter here, then go down to Australia for their winter

to surf. I got burned out fishing lobster after four or five years. The gulls were always crapping on me, and it was freezing cold most of the time. The last year I fished, I spent months making a new set of traps in my backyard. I set the traps the day before the season opened, then the next morning I walked up to the top of the hill behind my house to check the ocean, and the swell was huge. I lost every trap, and that was enough of that! I started concentrating on filmmaking. I was making a run out to San Miguel Island on the day this particular shot was taken. That's a fair haul in a 16-footer, so I had plenty of food and gas on the barge."





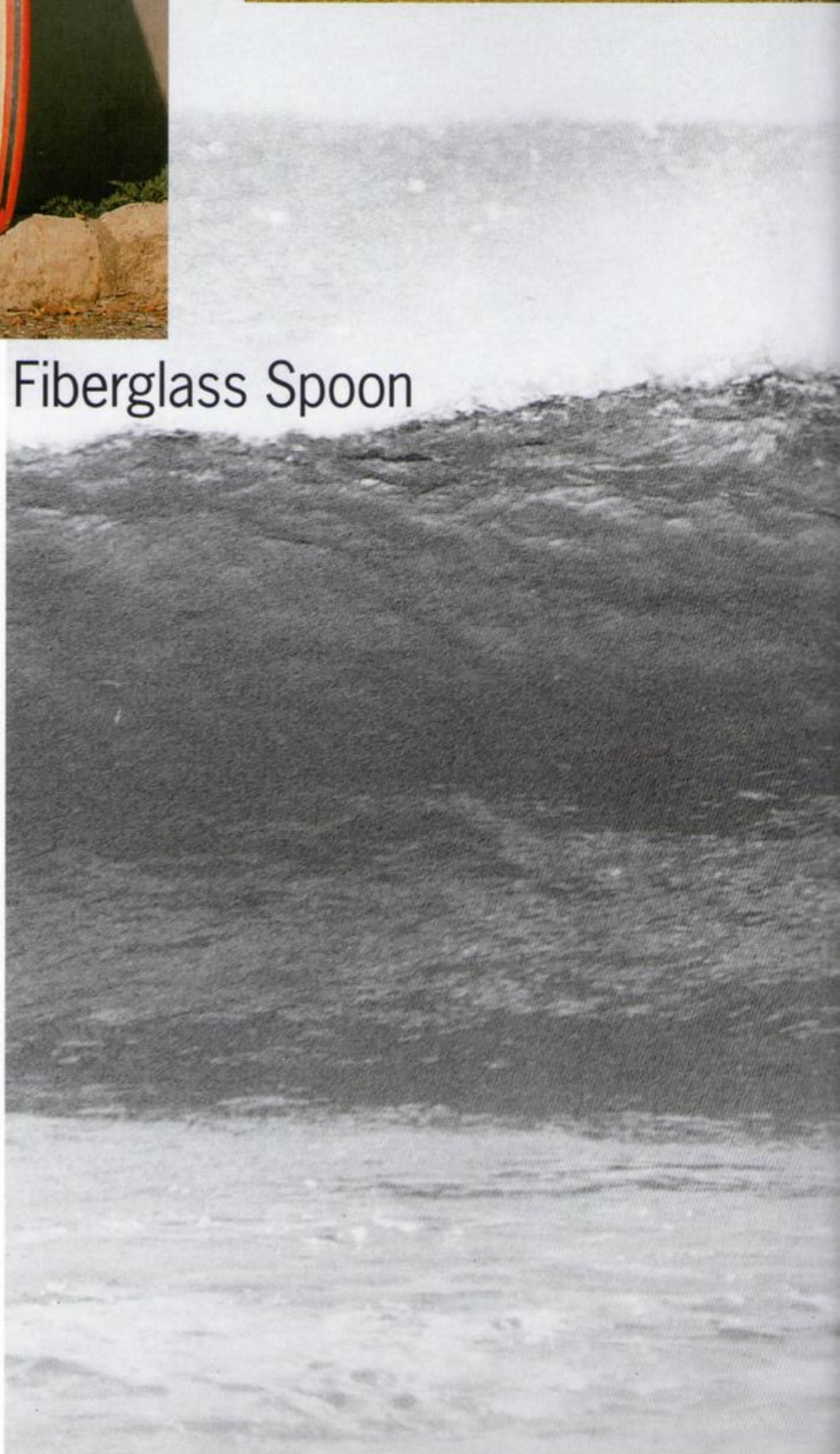


## Greenough Boards: First Fiberglass Spoon

86

"My first flexible spoon kneeboard taking shape in 1965. I'd ridden the solid balsa spoon for three years, and I'd been using flexible fins for longer than that, so I decided to try to make an entire board that flexed like my fin. Fish moved when they swam, so why not make a whole board that moved when it rode waves? The difference between the solid balsa kneeboards with stiff fins and flexible fins was very noticeable, so the next step was to make an entire board that flexed in a similar manner. I used the balsa spoon as a male mold and laid up a fiberglass shell over it. Then I shaped some foam bones left over from a Yater semi-gun and laminated them into the outer rim of the shell, and glassed over that. I tuned the whole thing with a grinder so it would become progressively more flexible towards the tail. Since it was the same shape as the board I had been riding for three years, I already had the fin set-up dialed in. Starting with a familiar shape was the perfect way to test the flexibility concept. The first flexy didn't go well on smaller waves, but if it was over five or six foot, it just ripped. Plus it handled big, gnarly, bumpy waves with a lot more authority, because it could absorb the bumps as it moved over them."

WITZIG



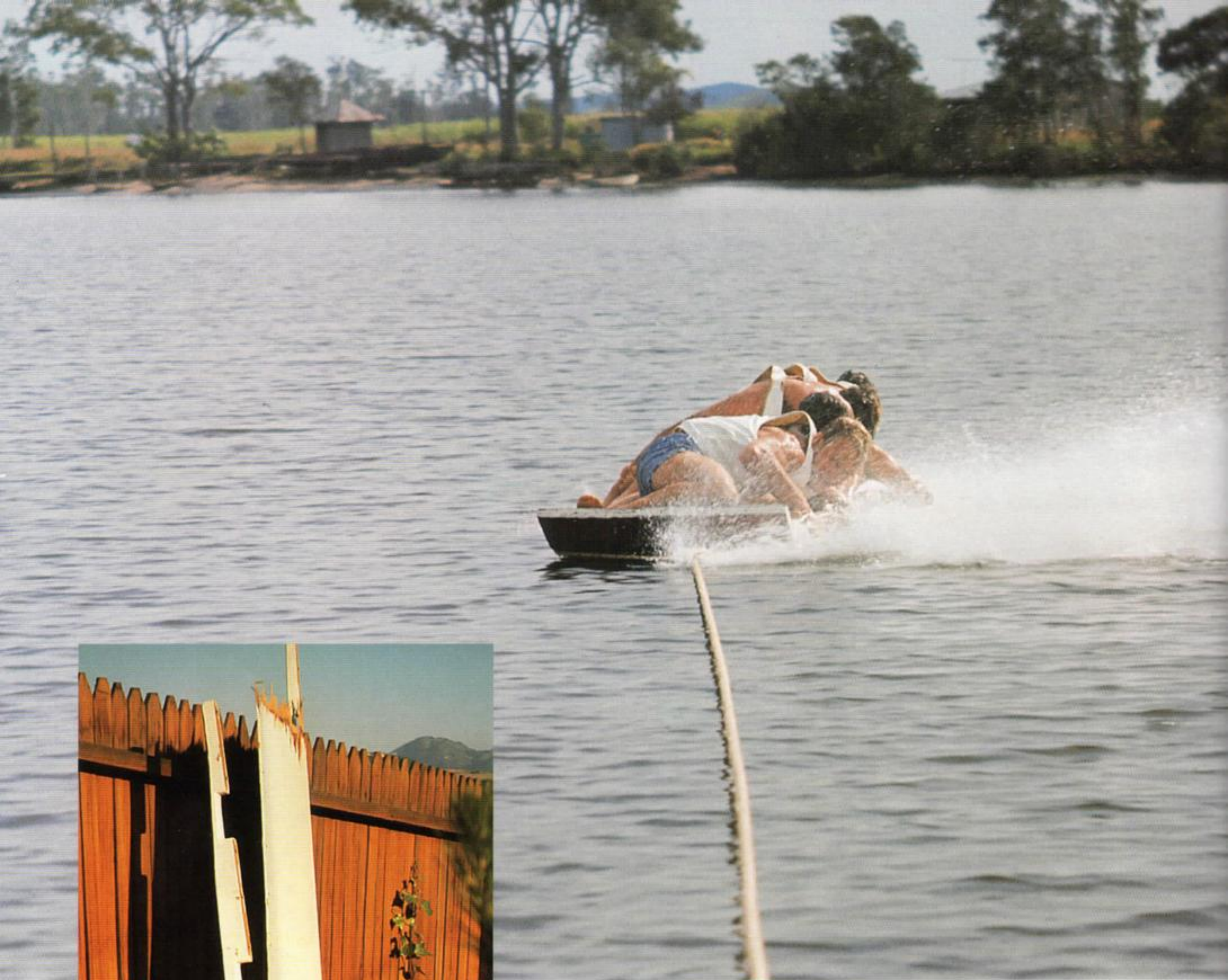




"The first flexy at Point Cartwright in Australia. I had already made a trip there in '64 with my solid balsa spoon, so I couldn't wait to uncoil the fiberglass spoon when I went back in '65."







## Greenough Craft: The Toboggan

“Algie Grud and some of his mates tobogganing behind a six cylinder ski boat at Lake Maroochidor in '65. The people at the lake used to tow people around on that toboggan at about ten miles an hour. I just said, shit, let's put a little horsepower behind it and do some crack-the-whips! The Aussies couldn't stand an American calling them a bunch of poofs, so they got the guy to open it up for them. That got me started making toboggans. You can see the disastrous result of my first effort (left) . We were running it behind my lobster boat full throttle one day, and it got going sideways into a twenty knot offshore wind. A gust got under it and it went about six feet into the air, spinning like a top! Howie Rue was riding it at the time, and he went through the center of it like a sack of potatoes falling through a pane of glass, totally disintegrated the whole thing. I don't recall him ever going for a ride after that! My next toboggan was fiberglass, and it's still in action.”

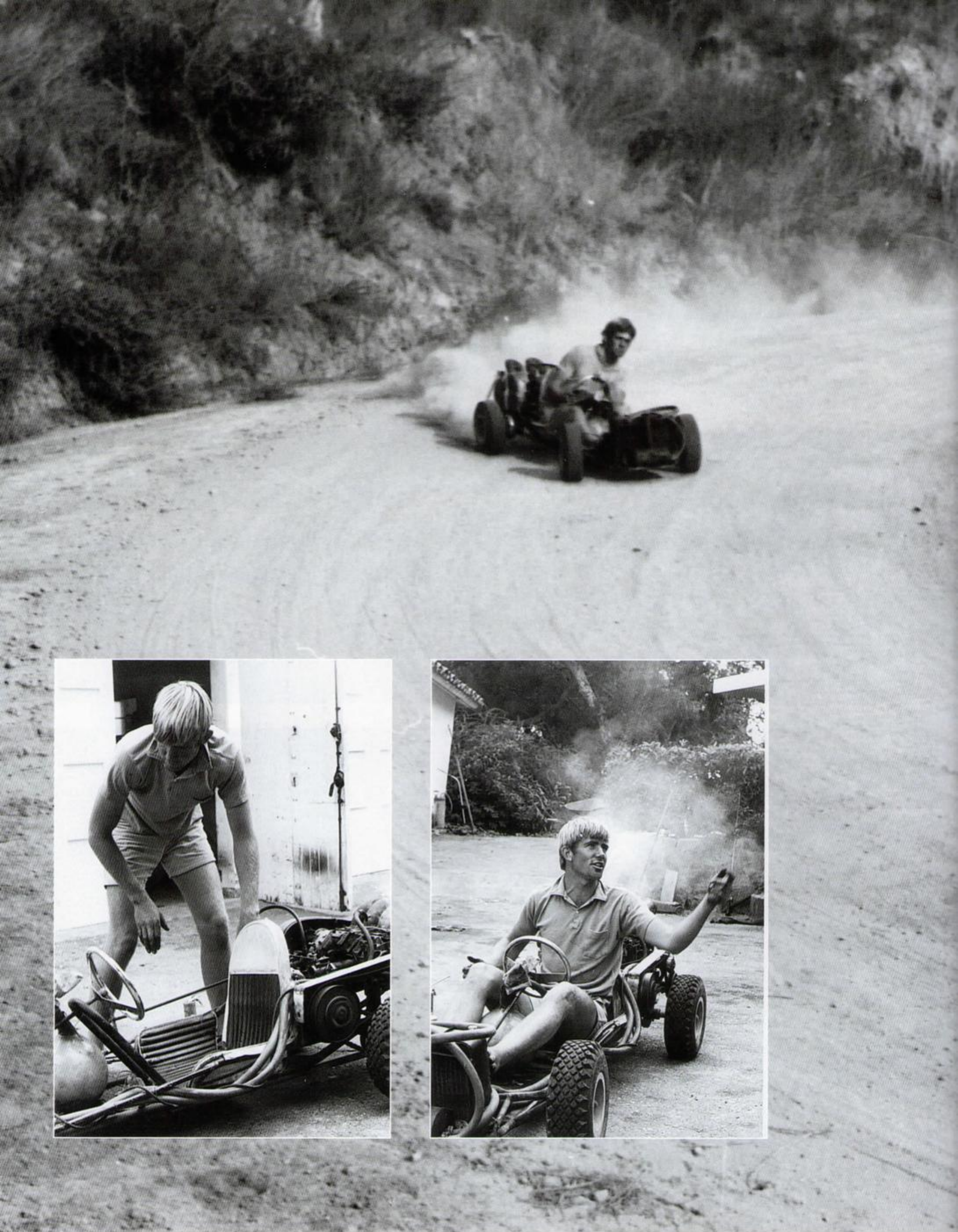


"The Coupe was an idea I got one night in a dream. I dreamt that a bunch of aliens landed and they took me out to sea in a boat that was covered over like a car. It seemed like a good idea, so I decided to make one. The top shell was made out of high density foam and fiberglass, and the windshield came from the rear window of a '57 Plymouth. It was actually a pretty rough riding craft because of the 16 ft. Boston Whaler hull, but it was warm and dry, so it was a good surf boat. I used to get static from the Harbor Patrol about it. They would grizzle about the fumes from the outboard, saying they would create a dangerous situation inside the cabin or something. I sold it to Ronnie Wolf in the early seventies, and it burned up in a forest fire a couple of years later."

## Greenough Craft: The Coupe

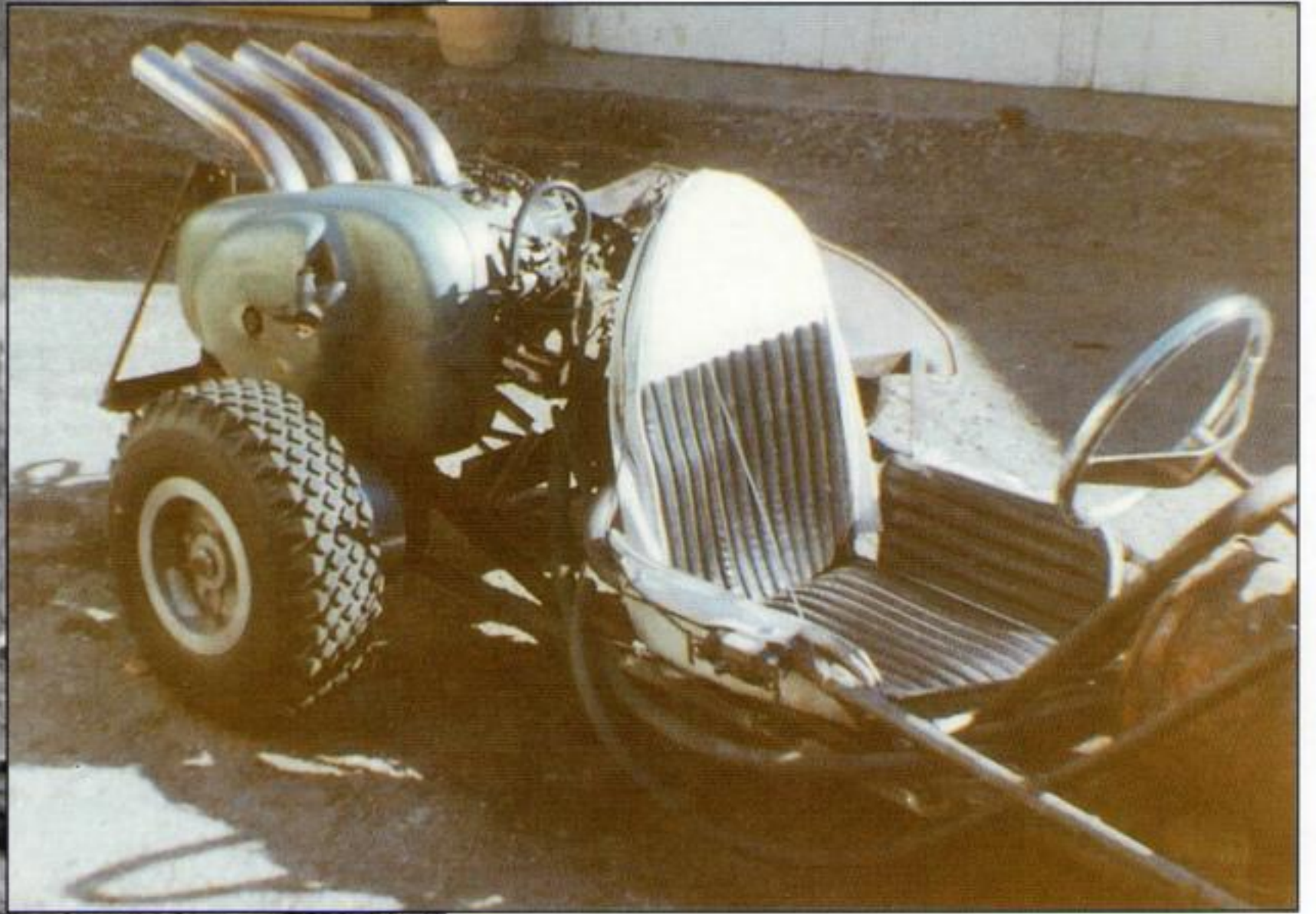








# Greenough: Go Kart



"My go kart was mostly made of leftover stuff... a four cylinder, 500cc Mercury outboard engine and a four speed BSA Gold Star motorcycle transmission. I used a car heater as a radiator, and it generated over thirty horse power. With the four speed tranny, that was a ton of power. I figured it would probably hit 130, but I never got anywhere near that. It weighed almost 200 pounds and most of it was in the back end, so if the tail ever got away from me, it would be a handful to reel in. The hardest I ever pushed it was when I was being chased by this huge dog that lived down the hill. I would've been better off putting it into a ravine than tangling with that beast! My kart had straight pipes, so it was a real screamer. My ears would ring for days after a burn through the hills. If anyone tried to do anything like that today, they'd be hauled into stir, straight away!"





"I called my 1937 V-12 Cadillac "The Eater" because it was so big and heavy that it totaled three other cars in wrecks without spending a day in the repair shop. You can't even see any body damage! The rope tied to the steering wheel held the rear-hinged door in place after the latch busted."

## Greenough Cars

"My all-time favorite surf car. It was a 1965 Dodge Polaris that had been a California Highway Patrol unit. I got it for \$750 at a cop auction when it was only a year old! They only made a handful with this much juice. It had a 413 Pursuit Interceptor motor and a high performance suspension package. It was an automatic, but it smoked the tires in first, burned rubber in second, and chirped 'em pretty good when it kicked into third...which was well over 60 mph. It ate so much gas you could actually watch the fuel gauge creep down as you drove. You couldn't even feel going 80. I got pulled over one time for doing 95 on the way to the Ranch, and the CHP moseys up to me and says, 'These babies really move, don't they.' That's Alan and Danny Hazard with my cop cruiser on the beach at Rights and Lefts."

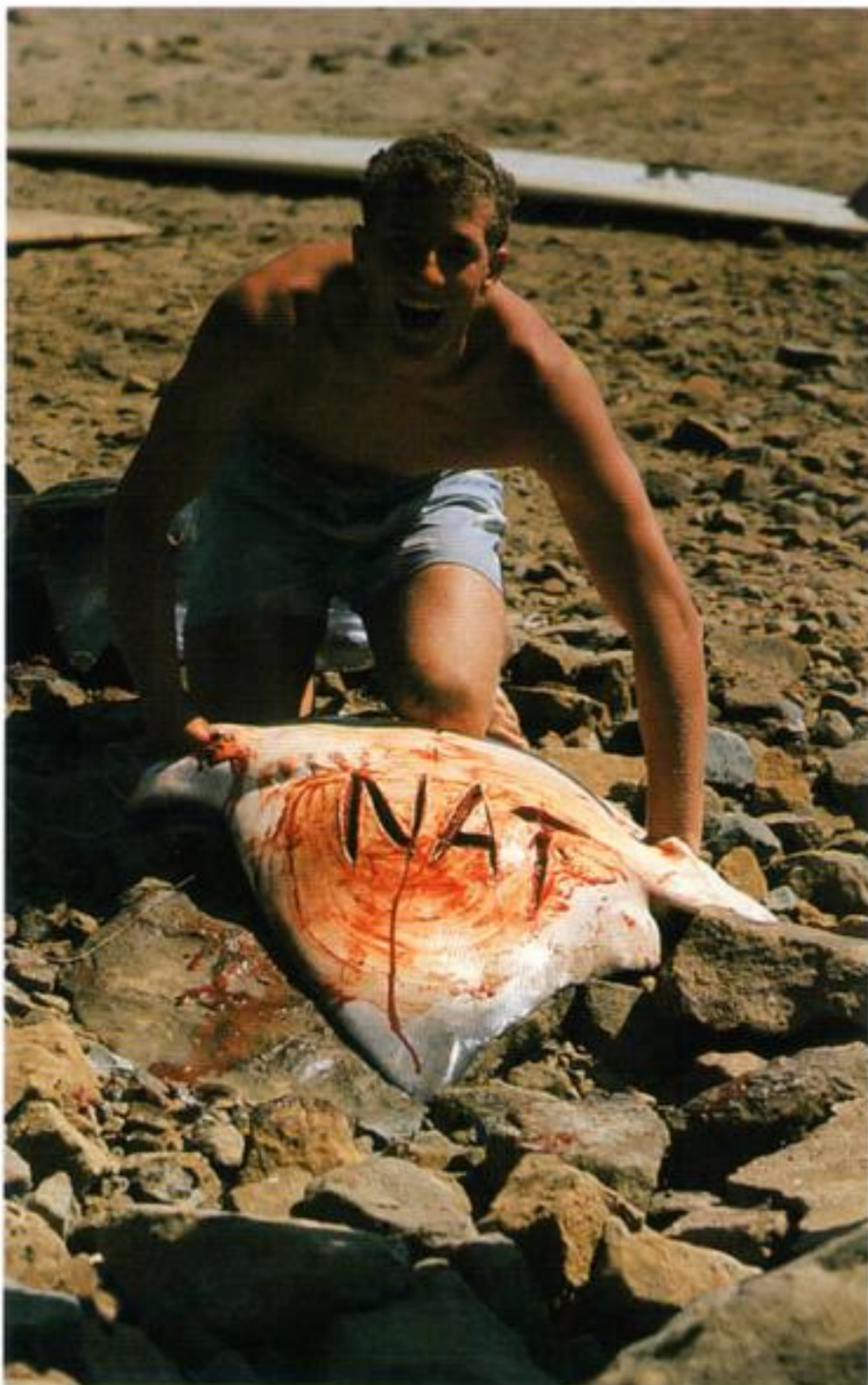


"This is the living set up I had for a whole winter in Australia. It was a Humler Super Snipe, which was an English luxury car...like a Jag. It was the ultimate surfari car...it ran! The hood was six or seven feet long, and it had a huge six cylinder engine and a dee-luxe leather interior. It was so comfortable to sleep in that when I got back to the States, my own bed at home felt lumpy."





## Greenough: Nat



"I don't remember if the shot of Nat with the stingray he caught was taken before or after his 1966 World Contest victory, but from the looks of it, I'd guess it was after! It's the best blackmail material I've ever had on Nat, and I've waited thirty years to drag it out!"

"I didn't meet Nat until I was on my second trip to Australia in '65. He was just unbelievable. Very powerful, very impressive. He had the strength to throw around longboards like they were shortboards. Plus he really had a good feel for where to put the board on a wave. He was riding boards just over nine feet long, which was the same size boards that guys who weighed 140 pounds were riding. Nat stood out in a way that nobody does today. There are so many good surfers now days who are so close in ability level, you can barely distinguish them from the beach. Nat was just miles ahead of everybody else at the time. He was riding longboards like they were shortboards, but he was also noseriding with a lot of sensitivity. When he came to the U.S. for the World Contest in '66, he stayed with me in Santa Barbara. He was riding Sam, which was 9'4" and really thin. Just a blade. We worked the fin over with a grinder and got it tuned up. He was unbeatable on that board."







"While Nat was around, we went down to Carpenteria to buy a used car. He was looking at this bargain beater, a real lead sled, when this salesman puts his arm around him and tells him to take it for a little spin. So Nat fires it up, pulls out of the lot, and disappears around the corner. A few minutes go by, and the sales guy and I are standing there bullshitting, when we hear this roar from about a half mile away. A few seconds later, Nat comes screaming past us doing about 85, foot to the floor, absolutely flat out. The car is totally peaked, the rods are wailing, the whole thing is about ready to explode! Nat rolled back into the lot a few minutes later and told the sales guy that the car was a gutless piece of crap, and we left."





"Kirra during the longboard era. On dungas without leashes, most rides ended up in a swim!"





# Greenough: Australia: Noosa

"McTavish and I hired a plane for twenty bucks an hour to take us up during a swell at Noosa Head. I shot movies and he shot stills. Back then, it was only crowded on the weekends. That was before leg ropes, and the rocks at Noosa are brutal. There are actually five breaks...Main Beach, Johnson's, National Park, Ti Tree and Granite. Main Beach was the most heavily surfed. It has the least rocks. Noosa is mostly a summer break. It needs a cyclone swell from the northeast to get in there. On south swells, it can be twenty feet on the back beach and only three feet along the points."







"Main Beach at Noosa is really a classic longboard wave. You need the length of a big board to run across the walls. It's usually offshore in there, so it's long and clean."

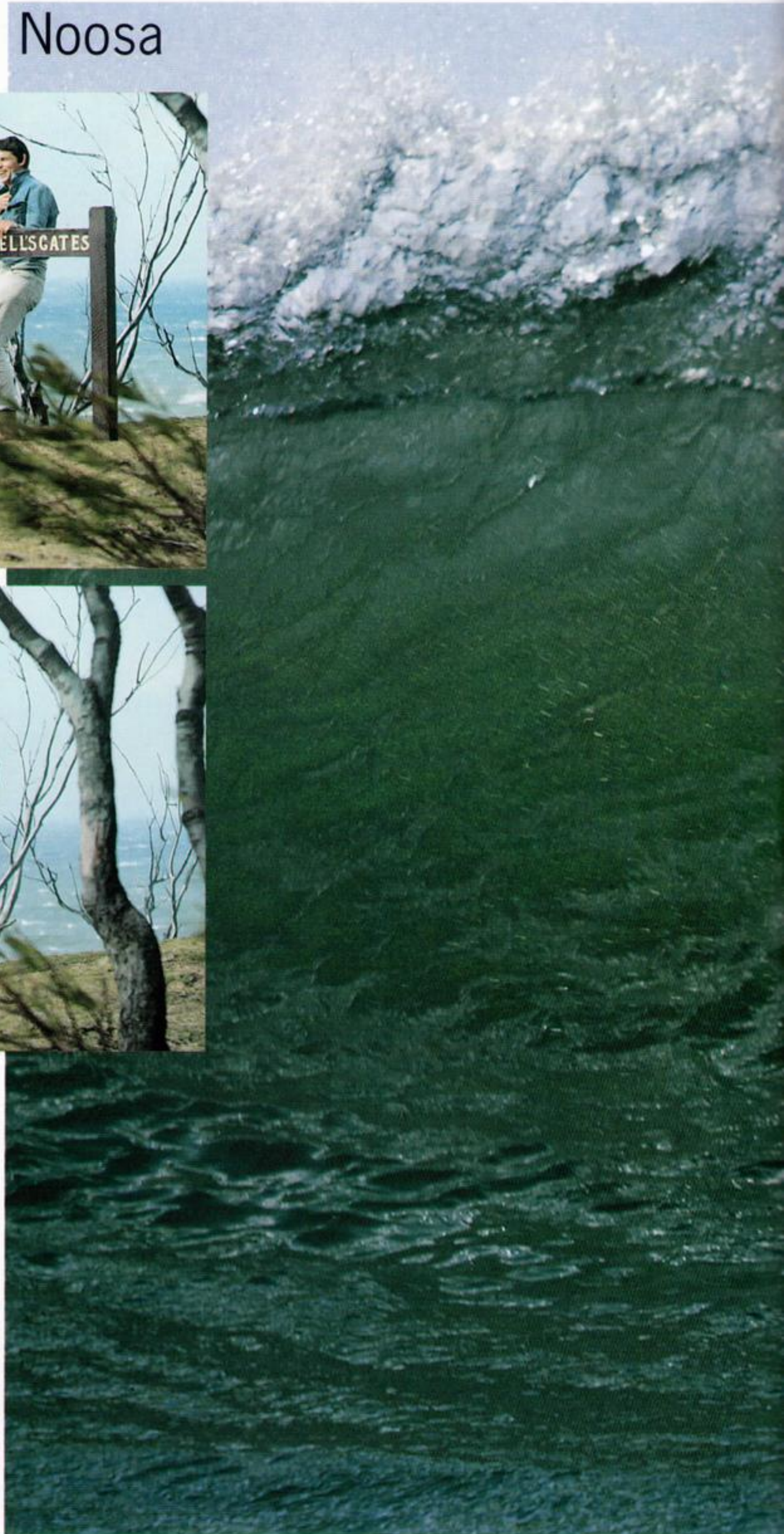


# Greenough: Australia: Noosa



"A windy day at the top of National Park at Noosa Head."

"McTavish was considered the unofficial mayor of Noosa. He was probably surfing up there on a regular basis before anyone, and really had it wired."









① George, well I don't know where to start telling you things. How about this first. We got married. at a registry office. Only people there were us two, the guy marrying us, and John and Nyarie. Really simple. The only way. You would've been asked. It was really funny. We had to repeat a whole bunch of shit after him. We laughed all the way through it. Then that night we had a big party. It was really neat. About midnight some clappers knocked off three boards from us. So we chased 'em on bikes and found the boards. We were gonna beat shit out of 'em but Max hit one and the big ape didn't even budge. He just said "you've got 4 more than I'm into you." We all shut up we said "piss off and think yourselves lucky". Then we threw rocks at their windscreen and hope the back one. They didn't stop. Thank God.

Theresa is looking good, with a huge belly I feel it kick all the time. Babies due about the 20th March, so if you want to feel it kick you've gotta be here by then. We're living in the van at the moment because it's Christmas and impossible to rent a house. Holidays and all.

② Now let me tell you about the surf we had. Hawaii was incredible. Not crowded, and great for five days. Sunset first day was 12-15 but windy, but really good. Inside section was linking up, and I got a cover up in there. Plenty of really hot rides, no wipe outs, really. A few close prone-outs. The board was a 8' slight Vee, 18" wide. Rails a bit low up front, but still hot. Could really put it up on its edge. And drive off the bottom hard. The cover up was a set-up thing. Not a drive. Off the bottom just as the inside section started to suck, up under the top and the curl threw out thick and hard. about 2 feet thick. Very scary. Blast out of it down to the bottom into a prone out as it folded in from all sides. It's a weird feeling cause everything happens so slowly. Next day was 12 with 15 sets. I was out for more than 8 hours over 2 sessions got mostly big sets. Very clean day, but the inside wasn't as good. I got a left go right turn on the peak that felt like it was banked 90°. Board nearly flew out of the turn. Next day was 9-10 tubes. Wayne ripped shit out of the lefts on

## Greenough: McTavish

"Bob McTavish with one of the last longboards (middle photo) that he made in that era, at Alexandria Heads...probably '65. He laid up the fin panel with alternating layers of black-and-white pigmented resin so he could follow the foil shape as he was grinding it. I can't remember why he had a shaved head. Who knows, maybe he had lice! It was probably a fashion statement... McTavish was always ahead of his time. He was keen to start building smaller, lighter boards as soon as we started surfing together. More than anyone, he gave the shortboard movement the kick in the ass it needed. He was an excellent surfer who also shaped, so there weren't any communication problems. If he thought of something he wanted to try, he could just build it without having to explain it or justify it to anybody. And he wasn't afraid to fail. That's a hang-up a lot of good surfers have nowadays. There's too much pressure on them to perform at a high level all the time, so they don't have much inclination to screw around with something new that might make them look bad if it doesn't work."



Theresa McTavish, Bob's wife, 1968.



the point. Riding his 7' 8" round tail ③  
 he was turning from way forward and  
 drifting the wide board through the turns.  
 A big sheet of spray was pouring out all  
 around the board. It looked like a  
 hovercraft. Ted shapes three boards, one  
 each for Paul + Wayne + Him, in eleven  
 days. None of em went surfing in that  
 time, and sunset was really good.  
 The boards were so spaced. 6'10" x  
 16" with wide tails. Roll bottoms.

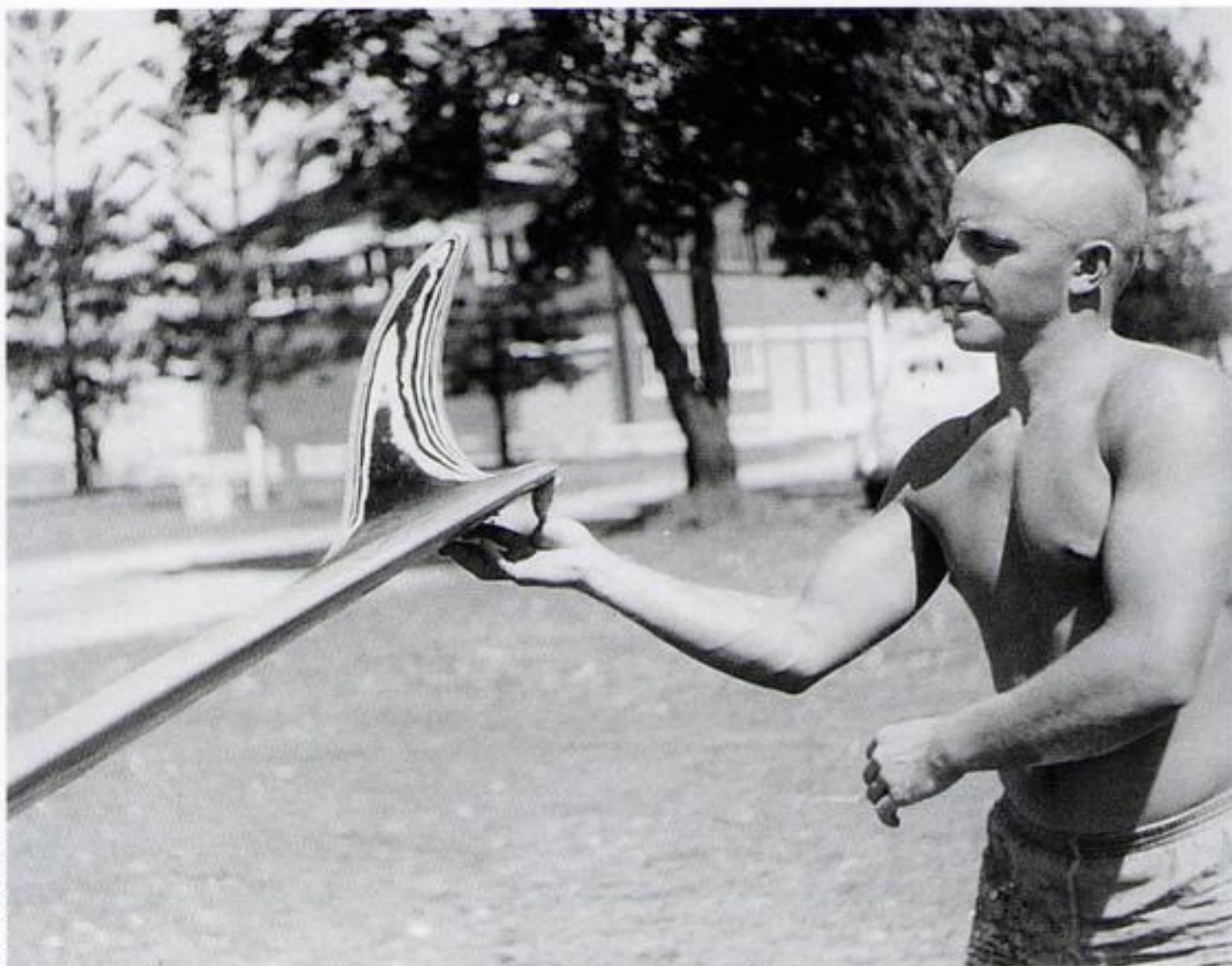
They'd probably go well in a 10 foot  
 tube. But where are all the 10 foot  
 tubes? They didn't get to ride the boards  
 in the islands, just back here where  
 it's sloppy junk.

We been riding the mattress for a  
 month solid. Sore foot and no board.  
 It's great. Had a few 8-10 foot days on  
 it. Up at Seal Rocks it was 10-12  
 capping on a reef then pushing through  
 a bay and curling for 100 yards.

Bob McTavish and George had a close relationship, one that often transcended surfing. However, it didn't take long for any communication between them to come back to the fundamentals. Letter From McTavish to George, circa 1968.

Just Page ④  
 I'd start the drift right at the bottom  
 of the first drop, and hold it sometimes  
 for 50 yards. Sometimes right through.  
 Sometimes I'd ride the wide side backwards.  
 Got some terrible wipe-outs, though.  
 Got horribly eaten after getting bounced  
 off in a hairy cross-up. I was riding  
 the mattress soft, and it even pearled  
 a few times in bamy stuff. Just  
 clinging on. I wish you'd been there.  
 It was perfect mattress surf. We would  
 have got each other stoked.

Went to another place that after-  
 noon, and I got one wave from way the  
 hell out on this big rip. Solid 12 feet.  
 Only one out. The mattress was just  
 flying. Heaving. You know that fantastic  
 sound and feeling. It went for at  
 least a quarter of a mile. Wish you'd  
 been there. Hope the islands movie  
 and go-cart are in good shape. See  
 you sometime. Bob.



BOB MCTAVISH.



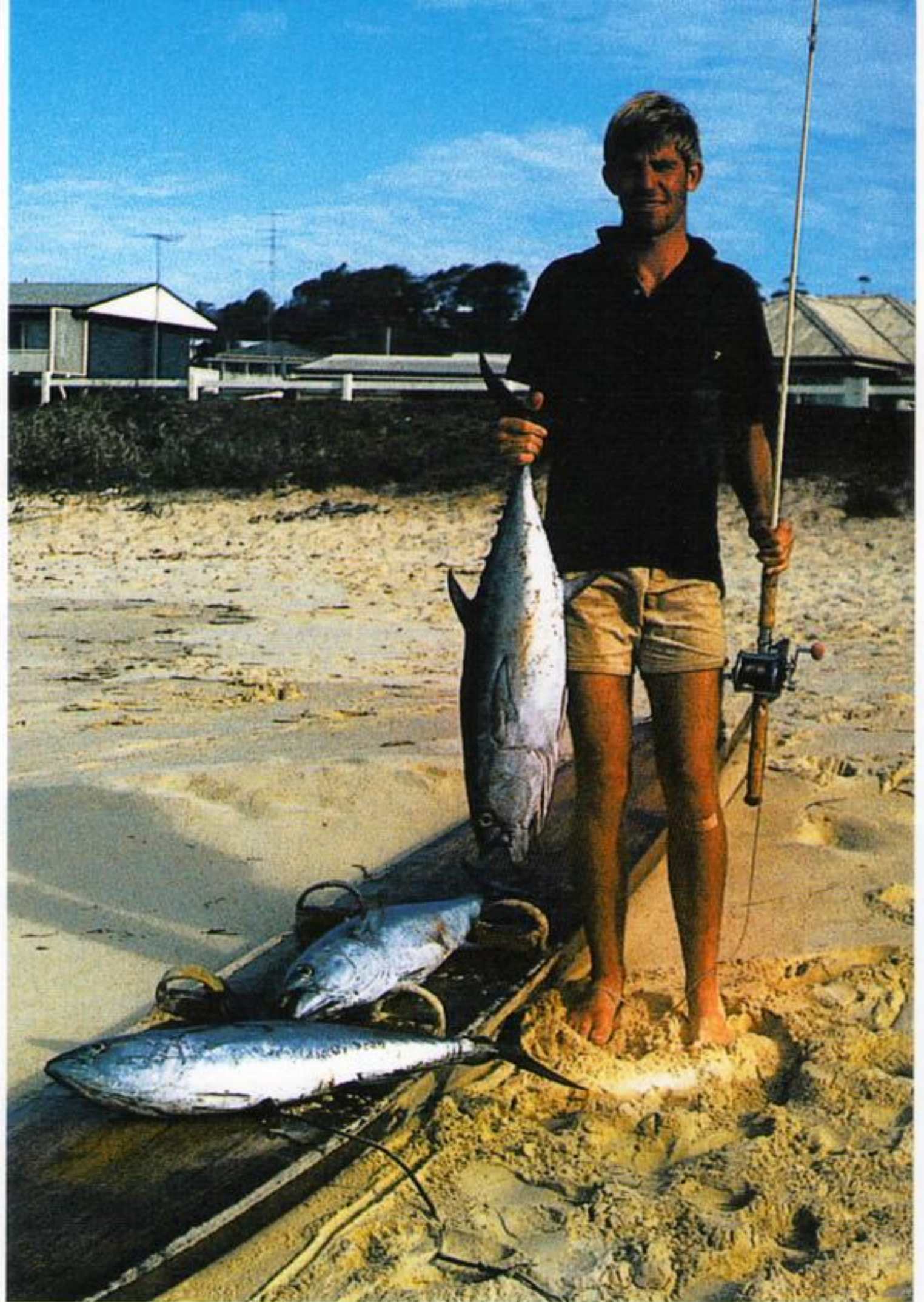
THE WILDERNESS FACTORY IN BYRON BAY IN '69. MCTAVISH LIVED THERE.



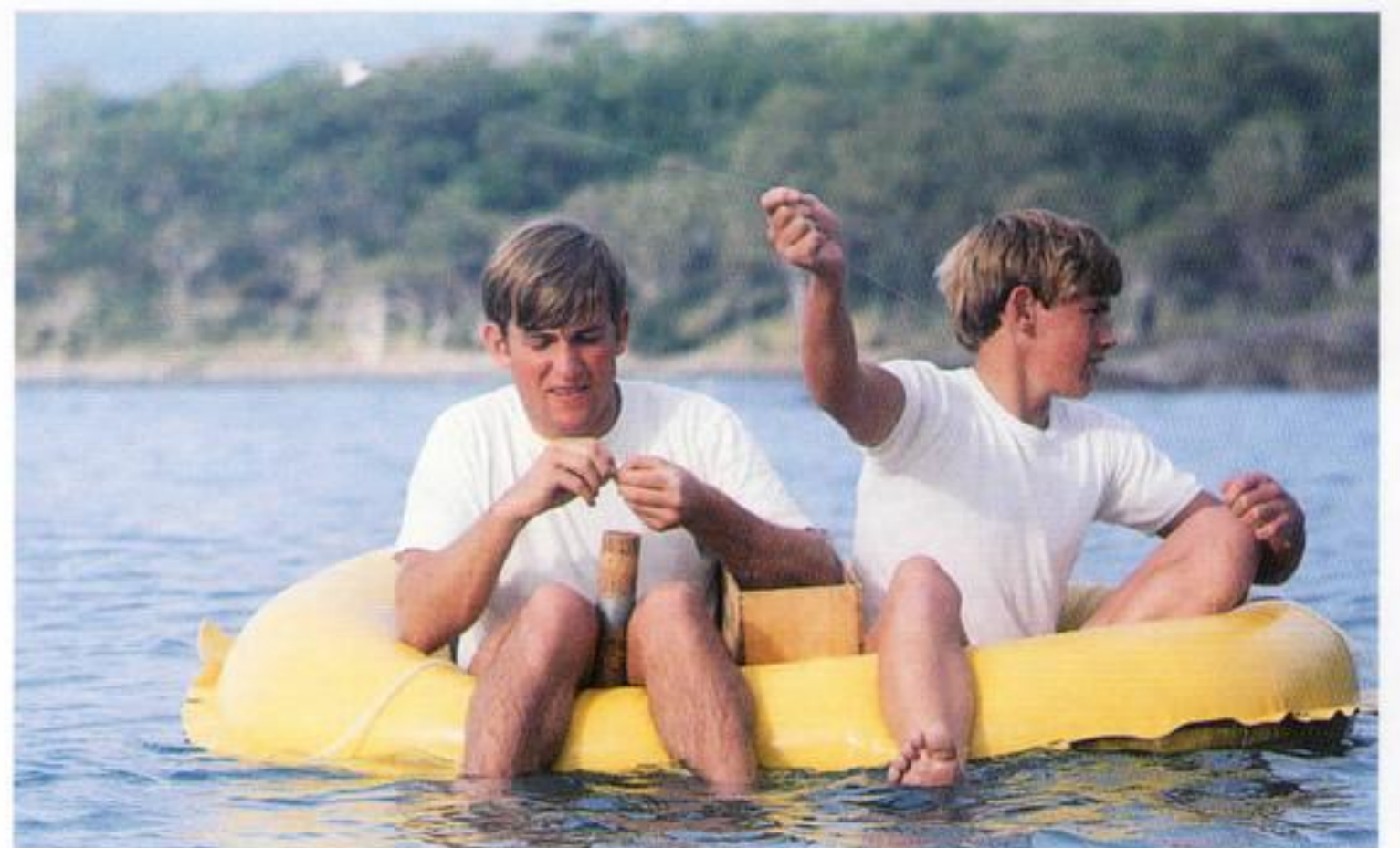
# Greenough: Fishing



"I was a dismal student in high school, and I spent one semester in college in Florida in the Fall of 1960. I got straight F's and didn't get any waves, but I got some good fishing in. We hooked this shark while we were drop line fishing off of an inflatable raft. It was on a weekend, and there were hundreds and hundreds of people on the beach and wading in the water. When we dragged this brute out onto the beach and across the sand, it was like the mass panic scene in *Jaws*! Just total chaos!"



"A successful tuna fishing expedition off of an eighteen foot redwood paddleboard in Queensland, 1968."



"John Witzig and Wayne Lynch drop line fishing off the coast of Victoria, 1967. I've always liked trolling with a drop line. You can feel the tiniest hit, and there isn't as much gear to haul around, either."



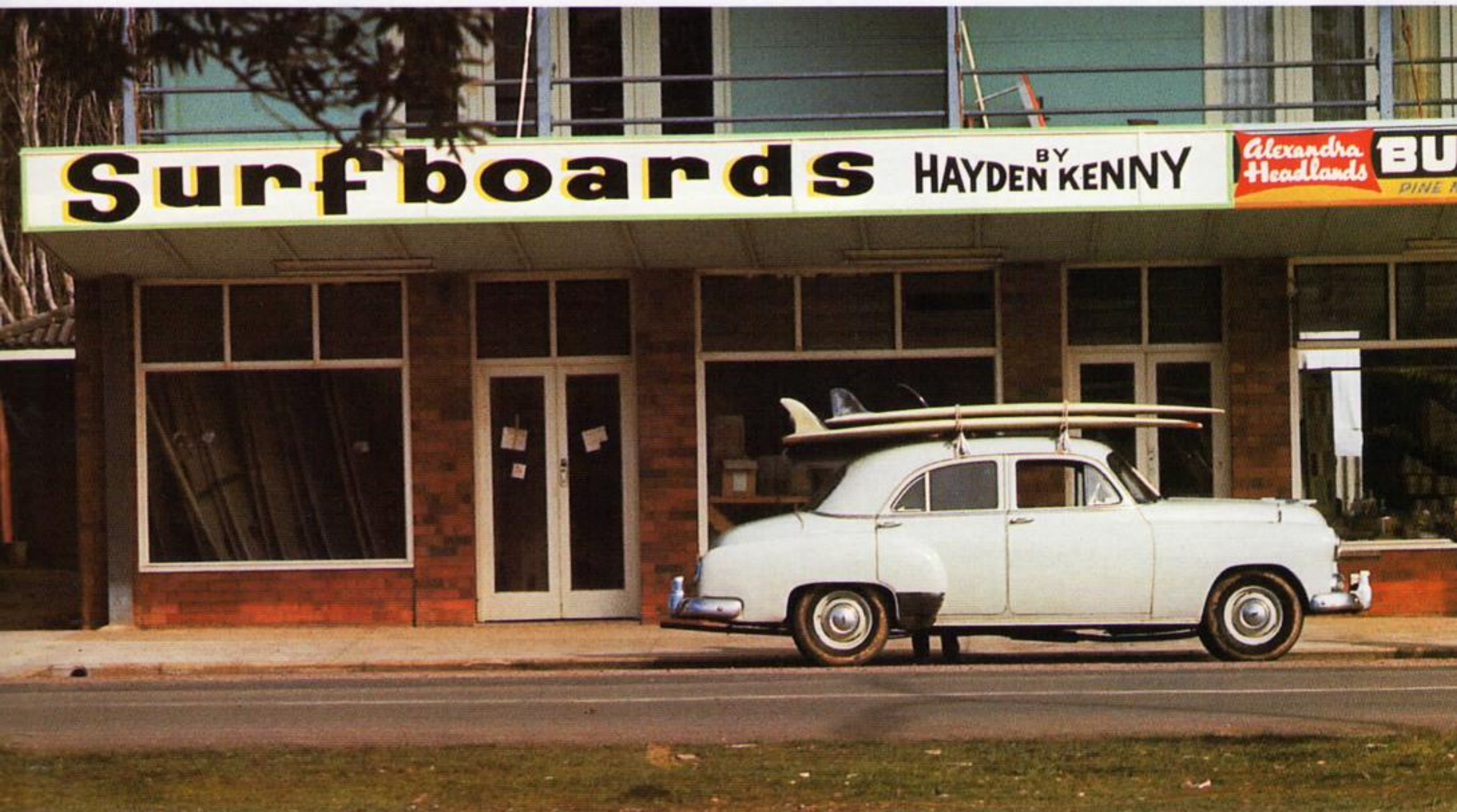
# Greenough: Seeds of the Revolution

"Algie Grud's car in front of the Hayden Kenny shop in Alexandria Head, 1965. The board with the white fin is Algie's. He was the first guy to ever try one of my high aspect ratio flex fins on a conventional longboard. That fin was the beginning of the end of the longboard era! It spread throughout Australia and New Zealand within a year, and the improvement really opened people's minds up to a more power-turning kind of surfing. That fin was really the basis for the shortboard revolution, because it was an interim step that people could try without changing the boards they were riding. After that, it was easy to move forward with changes in the design of the board itself. What's interesting about the shortboard thing was that the changeover in Australia was gradual. First the fins changed, then longboards got thinner and lighter, then the first V-bottoms appeared, then full-on shortboards caught on. The shops were able to turn over their board inventory a little bit at a time, so there was no negative economic impact. In the U.S., the whole thing hit all at once a year or so later, and it was so dramatic that shops were left holding tens of thousands of dollars worth of longboard inventory they couldn't give away. Image what all those boards would be worth today, new and unridden!

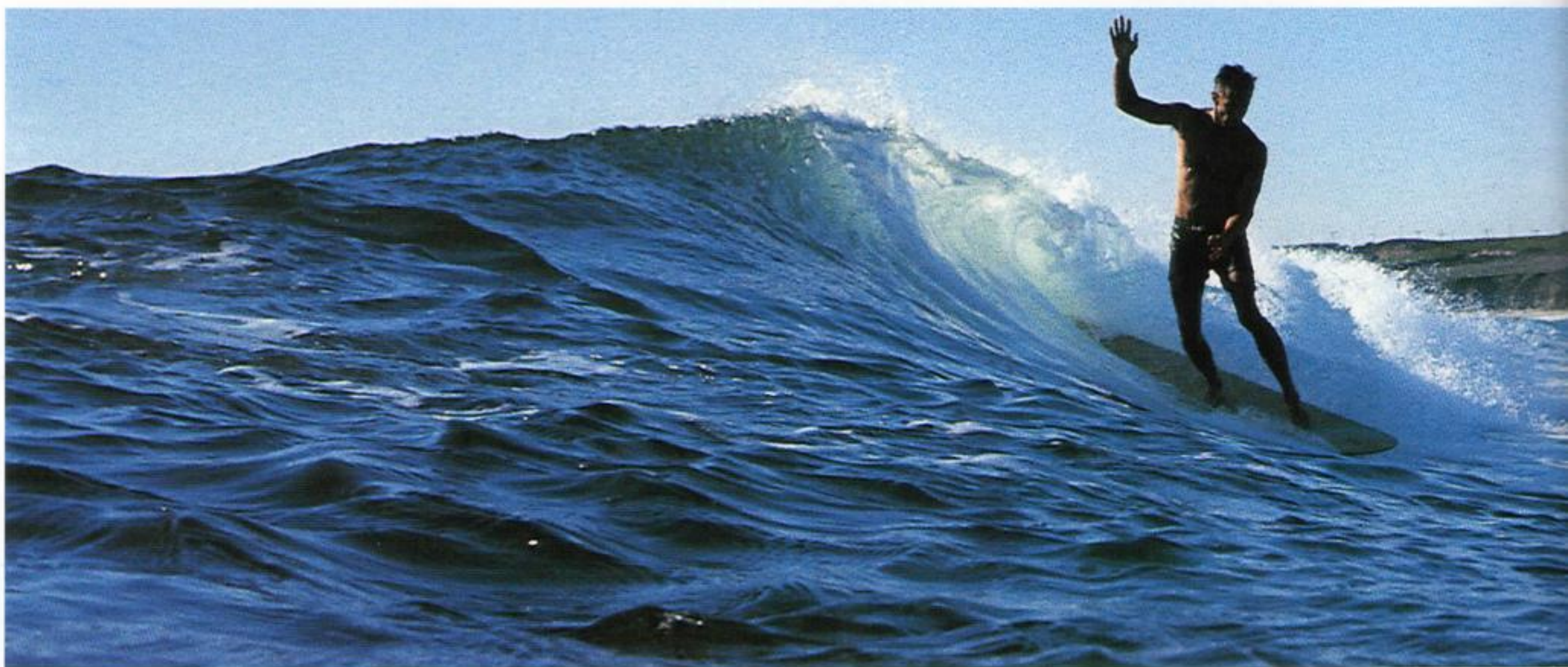


"Hayden Kenny with a spoon that I built in 1967. Bob McTavish was working out of the Kenny shop when we first started building smaller boards, so a lot of the early shortboard progress took place there."

"The other thing about the shortboard revolution was that it had to be universal or it wouldn't have caught on at all. If even a few good surfers on longboards were still out at each spot, they would have gotten all the waves and shortboards would've died out before they became popular. That's kind of what's happening today. Shortboards and longboards just can't coexist at the same spot...and longboards always win out unless the surf is too big and gnarly for them. The original shortboard movement all started with the fin you see here on Algie's board."











## Greenough: Yater



Lefts and Rights, circa 1965.

"Rennie out lobster fishing with his family in '65. He and I kept an eye on each other's traps if the swell came up. Once I was around the top of Point Conception, and it was really big. At least fifteen feet. I spotted one of Rennie's traps inside the surf line. So I waited for a lull and motored in to pick it up. Just as I was about to bail out of the impact zone, my engine died. I couldn't believe it! I started yanking on the starter...nothing. This huge set loomed up on the horizon, so I ran over to the edge of the boat and got ready to dive off the side if any of 'em broke. They each crested, then backed off just as they got to me. I went back and desperately started pulling on the starter again...nothing. Then another set lifted up outside. So I ran over the side to dive off again. I was dead certain I was going to get hammered that time, but the set broke just after it passed me. I got back to the stern, and this time I about ripped the starter rope out of the engine! It finally started and I got the hell out of there! That's the last time I tried any hero lobster trap rescues!"

Rights and Lefts, circa 1965.



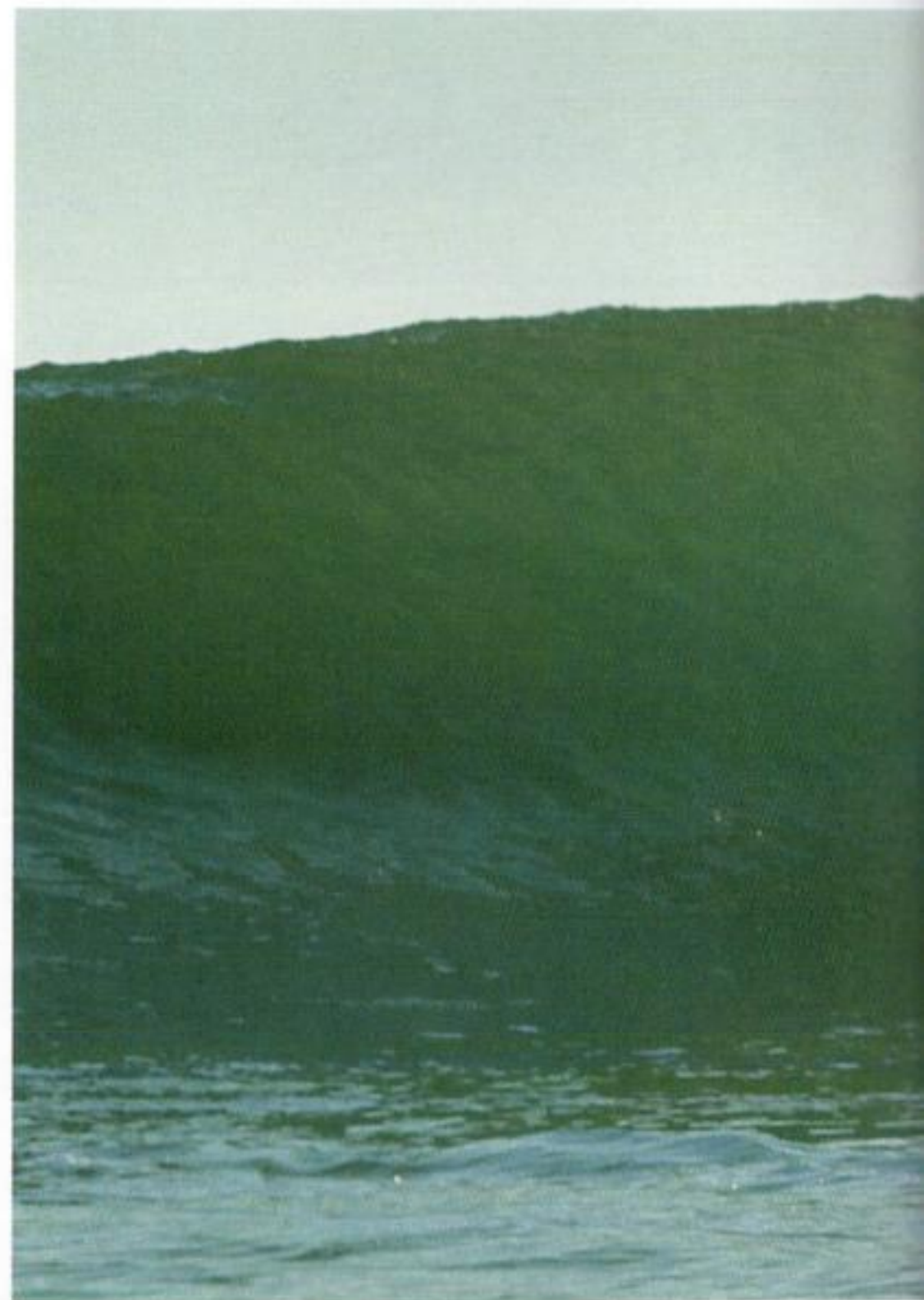




## Greenough: Yater

"Reynolds Yater is one of my all time favorite surfers. You never saw him out of trim or plowing water on the nose. He had the whole thing so wired, he could just lay back and feel everything that was happening around him. He epitomized everything that was good about longboarding. You couldn't take a bad photo of him surfing! And when he switched over to smaller boards, he brought all of that knowledge and ability with him. He's a totally classic surfer in every way."

Rights and Lefts,  
circa 1965.







Cojo, circa 1965.







## BRADBURY ON GREENOUGH

*"I met George in my first year in high school, in 1957. He was a year older than I was, but we were both into surfing, so we hung out. He was way ahead of the rest of us. He had board building figured out when we were still learning how to surf! In high school, he was shaping balsa wood boards in his backyard, under the sun, using old draw knives...just the crudest tools. But he had control over every inch of whatever he was shaping. He was zeroed in...he had it figured out almost from the very beginning.*

*"We were in the Santa Barbara County Surf Club together. The SBCSC actually started out as a group of surfers who had joined the Santa Barbara County Sportsman's Association, which had access to the Hollister Ranch. The Sportsman's Association was oriented towards hunting and fishing, and our "in" with them was that we agreed to police the beach. It was a wide open area, and occasionally people would come in and see all that openness*

*as an invitation to go nuts. So we were the cops! The main thing was for us to keep people from leaving trash or harassing the livestock. Our only problem was when we wanted to drive up the beach to surf the Bixby Ranch. Floyd Smith was the Bixby Ranch foreman, and he was on a full-on Gestapo trip. It was an ongoing war for years. He hated surfers, and would do anything to keep us from making it around the point at Cojo. It actually added to the mystic of surfing up there! Once Floyd parked a bunch of cars on the beach to make it impossible for us to pass. He knew his shit about cows and horses, but he wasn't real water oriented—he didn't realize that high tide would wash away all the cars! So they didn't last long! He used to fire his rifle over our heads when we were driving along the beach—at least I hope he was firing over our heads—just to let us know he was there. It took a lot of years to tame Floyd, to make him understand that we could help him keep the area pristine.*



"We used to ride three or four spots on the Ranch in a single day...moving around just for a change of pace, or when the tide shifted. High tide here, low tide there. We'd never see anybody else, ever. We'd have these hoot sessions...a full-on round robin thing. You'd ride a wave, and a couple of guys would be hooting at you as they paddled back. Then you'd paddle back hooting at them as they rode. Incredible. Everybody was in the same mental space, riding these waves over and over again, just experiencing the whole thing like we were one person. I'll never forget that feeling. We also surfed Rincon a lot in those days, too. We had the Ranch to ourselves, so you might wonder why we'd ever go anywhere else to surf. Well, there are Ranch swells and Rincon swells in the winter, and the two areas weren't always good at the same time. Plus Rincon was never that crowded in the mornings, or on the first day of a swell, or after four or five days of swell.

"A lot of the club regulars were more daily than George when it came to surfing the Ranch, because he was always off lobster fishing or building something. And a lot of the time he'd drive up there alone and peel off and go surf a spot by himself. Whenever he drove a car, he would rock in the driver's seat like he was riding in a boat. He probably spent more time in his boat than his car, so maybe it was natural for him! It was the kind of idiosyncrasy that you notice about a person after being around them for a while. We used to watch him ride huge waves on his air mattress. Just blowing our minds with how fast he could get that thing to go...faster than a surfboard a lot of times. The funny thing is, when George took photos, we'd never know it. He'd be off in the bushes, lurking out of sight, really mysto. Then we'd hear he had all these insane photos, and we didn't even know he was taking pictures! Reynolds Yater was another real loner. He'd go up to the Ranch by himself all the time. Occasionally he'd take a friend from down south. After he surfed, he'd kick back underneath some trees with a box of vanilla wafers and a bunch of totally gone-off bananas. The vanilla wafers looked pretty good, but those bananas...I'd don't know about them! Rennie was hard to get to know, but we eventually became friends when I worked as a glasser in his shop.

"Some of the crew that rode the Ranch during that period were the Hazard brothers—Alan, Bobby and Danny. Danny was about ten years younger than most of us, and whenever we were loading up to go to the Ranch, he'd be getting ready to go to school, just dying. He got good grades and really took school seriously, so he was outta luck! Bob Duncan, Gary Connelly,



"We watched this boat go over the falls at the left at Utahs, in 1965. These guys had anchored in the wrong spot to go surfing, and the swell was getting bigger and the tide was dropping. We were up at the shack watching in horror as a big set finally broke over it. It got pitched over the falls like a toy boat! One guy was actually on it, and he managed to bail out as it went over. It was spectacular. They got rides out of the Ranch area with whoever was patrolling the area from the club, and were told that they had to get the boat off the beach before it started rotting away." —J. B.



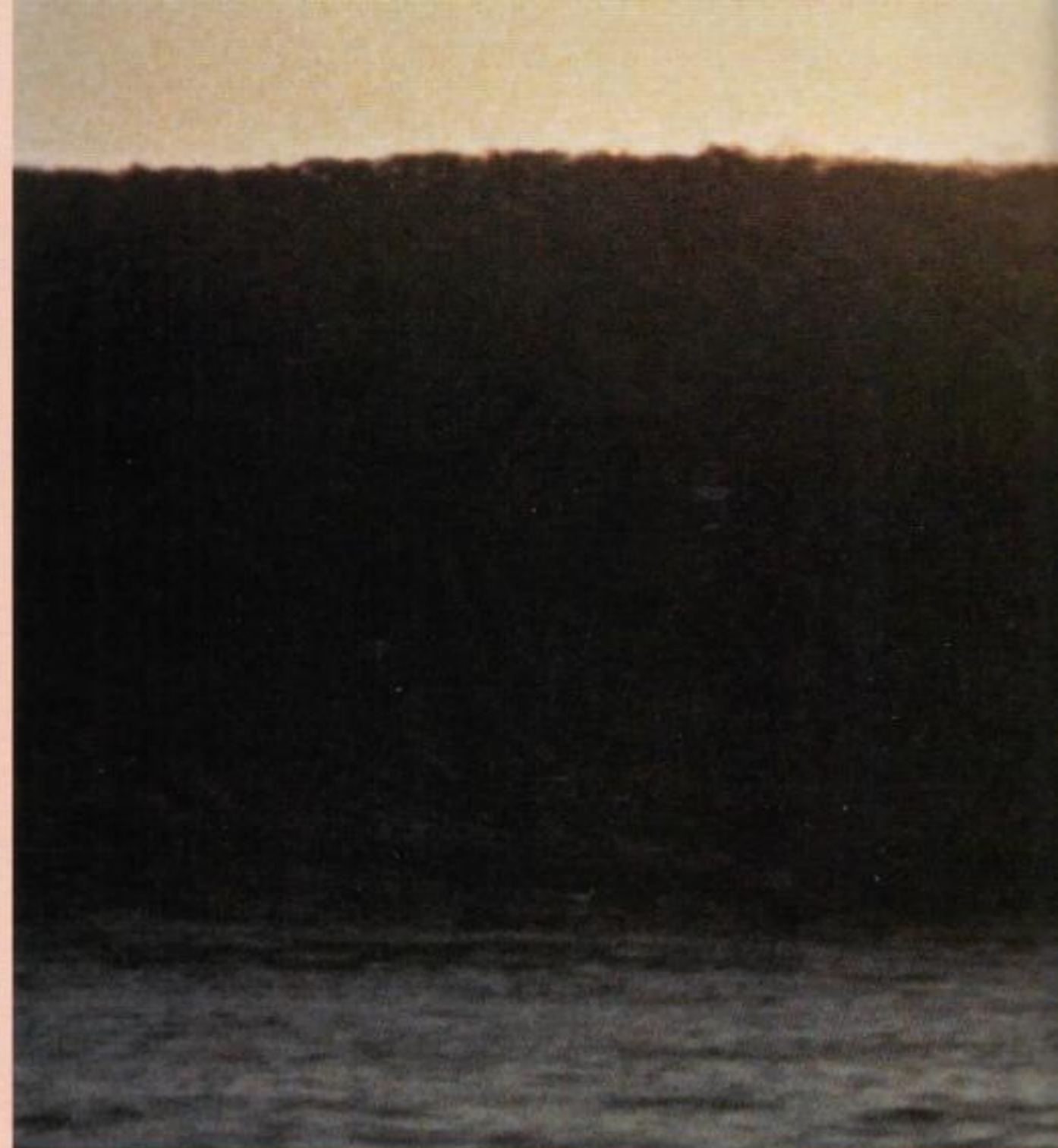
"This is me at Rights and Lefts. I can distinctly remember the first time we surfed there. Up 'til then we'd been surfing Little Drakes and Big Drakes in the winter and Cojo and St. Augustine in the summer. We were driving up the beach one day and passed this perfect peak. We'd never surfed it. Maybe nobody'd ever surfed it! We didn't know! There were two car loads of guys, and we stopped and said, "Hey, let's try this spot!" I paddled out to the right and this other guy paddled out to the left. It was mind blowing how good it was. We just kept asking ourselves, what have we been doing all this time, not surfing here? Of course, we'd been riding great waves all along, but none of it was as good at Rights and Lefts. And it turned out to be the most consistent spot up there. Summer, winter...it didn't matter. George always called it "The Kiddie Pool," because it was such a short ride, but he loved it!" —J. B.



Bill Lasarzig and Joel Clayton were up there a lot. Bob Perko, Tucker Stevens and John Eikert sort of had their own group off to the side. Howie Rue and Jimmy Grey were around too, and they ripped. So did Kevin Sears. He wasn't a SBCSC member, he was in the Hope Ranch Surf Club, which was for guys in town and for going into competition. Kevin was a good surfer and an insane paddler. As good as anyone around.

"The late Sean Claffey was one of my best friends ever, and he was so good it wasn't real. In my opinion, he was the best guy, period. Back then, no matter how well you surfed, you weren't any good if you didn't ride with style. And Sean had style. Once, he broke off half a fin from a board I shaped him, and he just kept surfing. On one wave he was running through the barrel and the tail came loose. He stepped right up to the nose, tucked in and slid down the face under the hook. He didn't make it, but from that point on, he just kept doing it over and over again until he got it wired. It wasn't a trick kind of thing, either. It was fully functional. Right where it had to be. He was better than most big name surfers. Sean could blow them away. But he was in Santa Barbara. There was no media, so nobody really ever heard about him. He painted my house maybe twenty-five years ago, and I haven't repainted it since. Whenever I think of repainting, I stop and think, 'Nope, Sean did it, so I'm gonna leave it.' He eventually became a Ranch guard. He wasn't one of the club members, but when he got on as a guard, he could go in everyday and surf before or after work. He had his board and his sidearm and his dog, and that's all he needed!

"Sometimes we'd go for rides on George's toboggan when it was flat. It was horrifying...beyond description, really. As far as I was concerned, it was an accident looking for a place to happen. George would open up his boat full bore, and you'd be going so fast you were skipping over the water. Then he'd crank it into a big turn, and you'd accelerate into this huge crack-the-whip. Your eyeballs would be jiggling, and everything would start to get real blurry. You'd be freaking out, holding on for your life. You had no control. You couldn't even bail out, because you were going too fast. You'd get mauled just hitting the water! One time Cowboy Henderson came up from Malibu, and George talked him into going for a little ride. Once they got going, Cowboy was crying for George to stop, just begging. George kept giving it more and more throttle, laughing his ass off. Now that I think about it, George talked us into a lot of things we probably shouldn't have done!



"George had open heart surgery when he was still in grade school, before I knew him. I think he was the first person to ever survive that particular surgical procedure. It's written up in medical books, so he was on the leading edge right from the start! I was staring death in the face when I had my brain tumor removed, and I know how it changed my life. Maybe it was the same thing with George, only he was ten years old! Maybe that's why he is the way he is, living every day to the limit. When George was a kid, he was a boy/man. He was so sharp and mature and intuitive. As an adult, he's a man/child. He's still a kid, going barefoot and always trying to find new ways to have fun. George hasn't changed in all the time I've known him. He works so damned hard. He's the next Jacques Cousteau as far as I'm concerned. He's the one who can show us how to relate to the ocean. He's such an ingenious character. So creative, always building things. His thought process is so deep, that sometimes he'll say something, and you wonder, "What in the hell's he talking about?" But then you think about it for a while— usually a couple of days—and you finally put it together. It'll be right on the money every time. George is so free-minded and tuned into what he's doing, that sometimes it's hard to keep up. He's really one of a kind. There will always be great surfers and great innovators, but there will never be another George Greenough."





Rights and Lefts, 1966.

"George and I were out in The Coupe looking for surf one morning, and we spotted some sea elephants basking on the beach. I'd never seen anything like that in my life, and George picks up on that fact and says, "Aw, they're totally cool. You can go right up to them and pet them. Give it a go!" So I walk up to this monster bull, he got up and started barking and moving around! It scared the hell out of me! And there's George, safe and sound up the beach, laughing so hard he can barely take pictures." —J. B.

Hollister Ranch, 1968.





# Greenough: Ranch

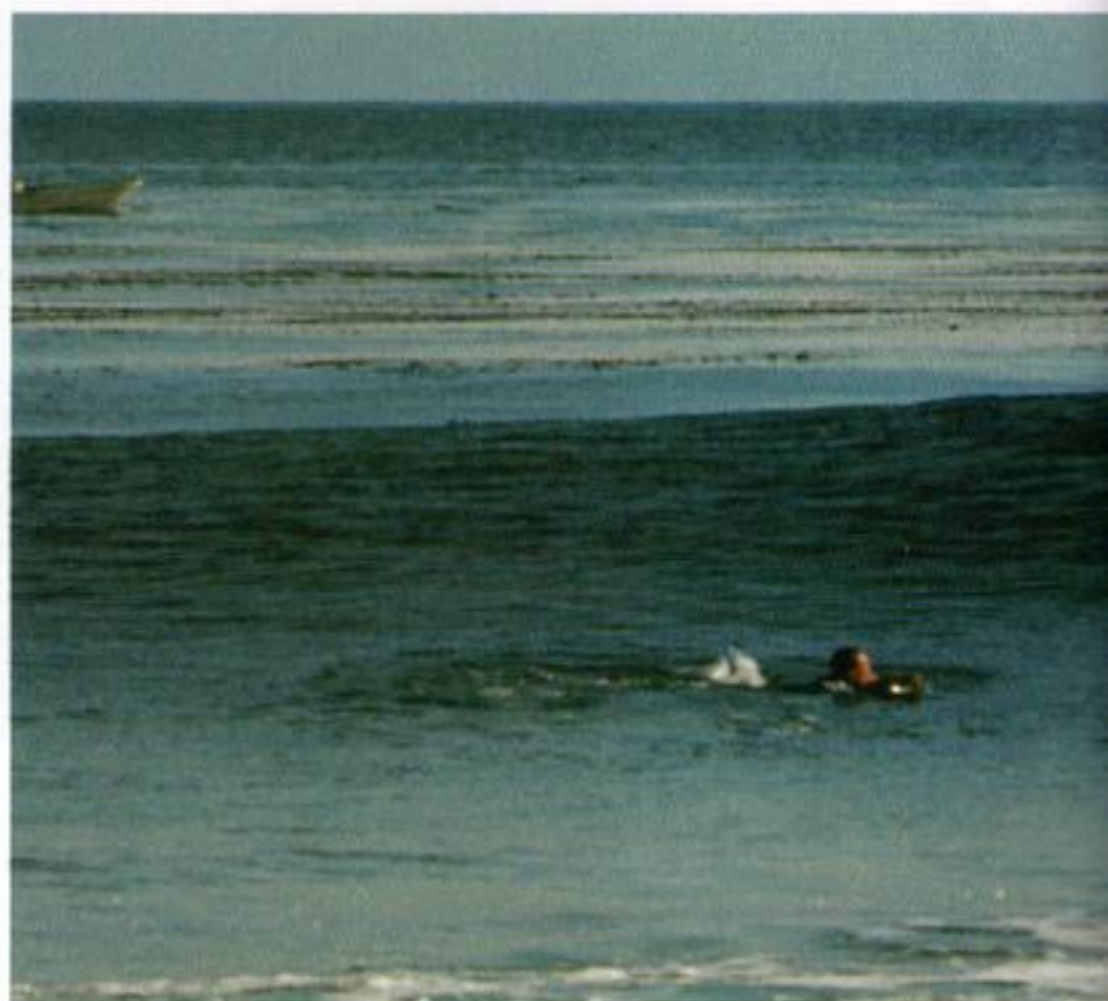


ROSS CAVE, RIGHTS AND LEFTS, 1965.



DANNY AND ALAN HAZARD, RIGHTS AND LEFTS, 1965.

LITTLE DRAKES, 1965.







UNIDENTIFIED, RIGHTS AND LEFTS, 1967.



UNIDENTIFIED, BIG DRAKES, 1966.

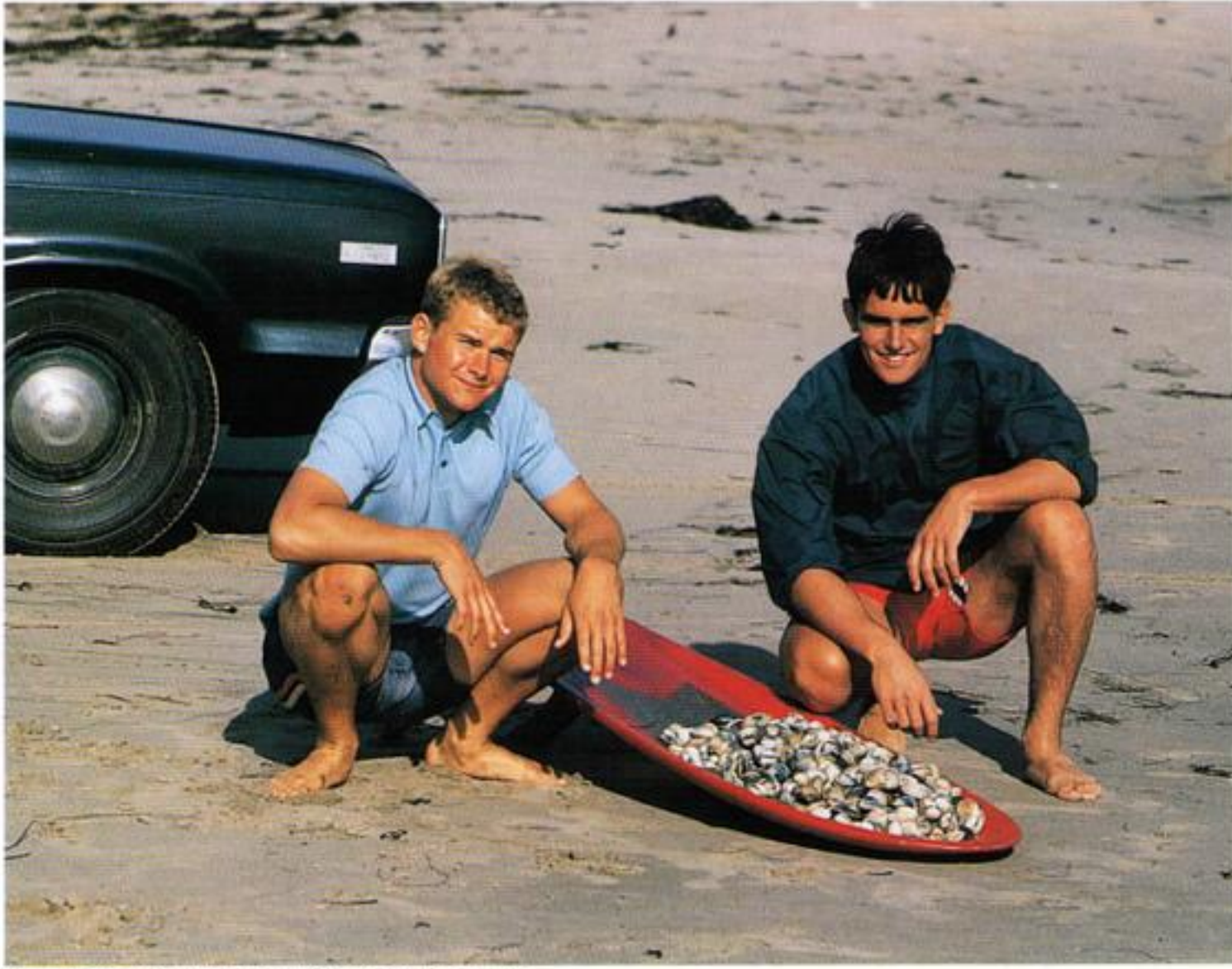


DANNY HAZARD, RIGHTS AND LEFTS, 1969.





# Greenough: Ranch



KEVIN SEARS AND ANDY NEUMAN, RIGHTS AND LEFTS, 1967.

During the sixties, the relationship between the Santa Barbara County Surf Club and the Hollister Ranch was the zenith of surfing in California. The number of world-class surfers who emerged from the S.B.C.S.C. ranks is indicative not only of how fertile the waves were, but how fertile that period of time was. The lack of high caliber surfers to surface from the area in subsequent years underscores that point.

What's paradoxical about The Ranch is the place it occupies in our minds. During the sixties, a fair percentage of the people who knew about the area had access to it. When it became world renown by the early seventies, there were thousands of surfers dreaming about a place that a) they had never been to, and b) was no where near as consistent or as uncrowded as they imagined it to be. The mythical existence of "The Ranch" actually satisfied a spiritual need in surfers. It became a Valhalla of sorts.

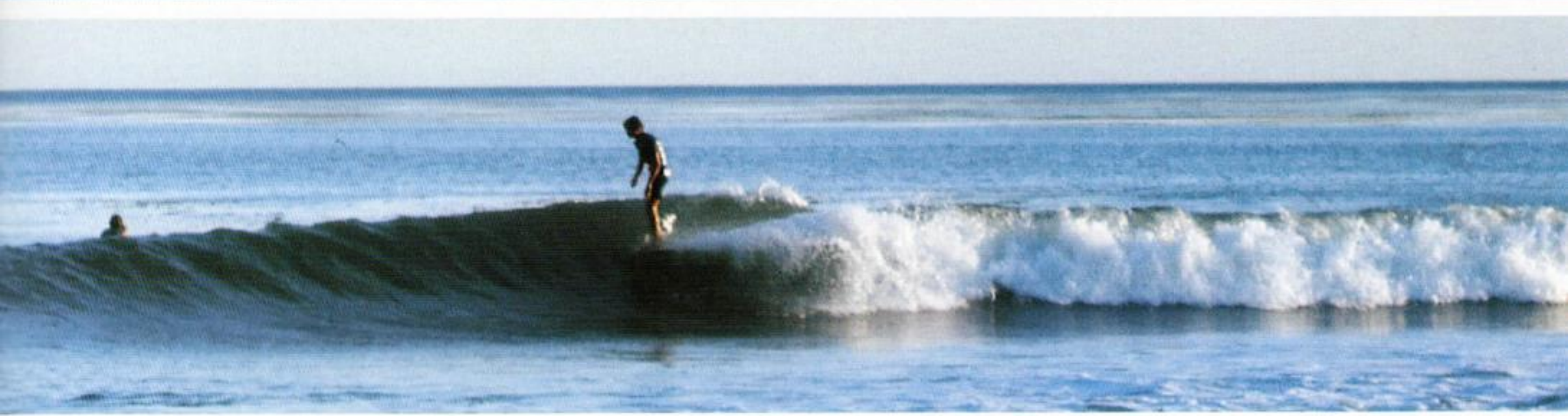
The experience of surfing The Ranch today is balloon of high expectations constantly being punctured by a curious reality. Because the publicly held ocean is just off private land, access is limited to those who either own a parcel or boat in. The result is boaters with the zeal of raiding buccaneers sharing the lineup with property owners who are expecting a country club experience. Further discord festers within the parcel owners themselves, because they're a consortium of well-off surfers (all of whom learned of The Ranch through the surf media) and "old guard" S.B.C.S.C. members. The ensuing politics are persistent and brutal.

Like a depleted gold mine that yields just enough treasure to keep prospectors hooked, The Ranch Dream will always lure surfers to its shores. But the place in time that made it truly special has passed. —P.G.



DANNY HAZARD, RIGHTS AND LEFTS, 1967.









## Greenough: Ranch

"I've been surfing up at the Hollister Ranch since the late fifties...probably '57. Our family knew the Hollisters, so they let me drive in. I kept my lobster boat anchored just offshore, so between surfing and fishing, I was up there almost every day in the winter. You could go months at a time without running into anyone. I actually did most of my serious surfing in Australia by the mid-sixties. The surf I got up at the Ranch had to fit around my fishing schedule. I surfed a lot of small days at the Kiddie Pool (George's dis-moniker for Rights and Lefts!) or Little Drakes, just to relax after a day of pulling traps. If it was big, I'd surf Razorbacks. That place was virtually unriden prior to the advent of leg ropes! A wipeout was a destroyed board, guaranteed! Even though it's still semi-private up there, it's gotten crowded just with parcel owners and their guests. The Kiddie Pool is perfect, but it's a six-and-a-half second long ride. I've timed it! And it's always heavily surfed these days. I wouldn't walk across the street to surf a micro-brew spot like that in a crowd, let alone buy a parcel or hassle boating in! When I drive up there now days with friends, it's just to surf the B-grade spots or to go beach combing."

Danny Hazard  
Lefts and Rights.  
1965.







Alan Hazard, Cojo. 1964.





# Greenough: Australia: Perfect



120

"The inside reef at Lennox, maybe four feet. That's a Pandanus tree in the foreground. This must've been on a weekday, because even back then a lot of surfers were driving up from Sydney for the weekend if there was any swell turning up at all. That's a long haul to make in two days! These photos were taken in '65 or '66. If I had to define the good old days in Australia, these shots would be it."



PHOTOS: JOHN PENNING





"A killer day at Broken Head. I can't wait for my friends down in Australia to see this shot. It's absolutely perfect. Perfect size, perfect swell direction, perfect wind, perfect banks...and no one around!"

"Lennox Head from up on the hillside. No condos, no roads, no people. This is a pretty good sized day...at least six or eight feet. A big depression had just passed through the area, and the offshores are organizing a swell that had a little unevenness in it." ☉

