



Old Rhodian “Spike” Pike Rides the Wave of Publishing Fame

Global Surf News

Q&A with Steve Pike, Author of the Newly-Released Surfing South Africa Book

Surfersvillage Global Surf News, 15 November, 2007 : - - Double Storey Books is stoked to announce the release of Surfing South Africa by Steve Pike (known to many as Spike). Surfing South Africa is an indispensable resource for locals and visitors, packed with new information on South African surf spots, lore, history and culture, and illustrated by stunning photos and art from some of South Africa's most eminent photographers and illustrators.

What are some of the highlights of your book? The Other Side of the Coin story - about the growth of black surfing in South Africa. This is a neglected area of our history that deserves its rightful place in any mainstream account of our culture. What these guys had to do to surf beggars belief. Another highlight is Harry de Zitter's beautiful portraits of surfers, while another is an article on Beautiful, a film that draws attention to the huge growth in women surfing. In the history chapter, the book unearths what are regarded as the first known photos of surfing, by a woman riding boards brought to Cape Town by US Marines during the First World War! Then there are the quirky descriptions of surf spots, a funny slang glossary, and the latest developments in shark research that help us understand these much maligned creatures.

Describe yourself in five words Erratic, fast, forgetful, artistic, friendly.

How would you describe your personal philosophy to life? When the surf is perfect, a voicemail bursting at the seams is worth the risk.

In what ways can surfing be likened to life? To borrow from my book: Surfers liken the tube ride to those fleeting moments in life when we feel fulfilled, and the harder the road that ends in such fulfillment, the greater the reward when we reach it. Surfers don't agonise over heavy existential issues. There are only two questions: What is the swell doing? What is the wind doing?

How did you find the process of writing the book? For the most part enjoyable, but it was a long and sometimes arduous process. It was fun writing, but difficult to enforce structure and coherence. The hardest part was deciding what to include and what to leave out.

What inspired you to do this book? The need to express our uniquely South African surf culture as separate to the big brand, big bucks mentality that has tainted the soul of what it should be about. I wanted to make everyone evenly remotely connected to surfing to feel part of an inclusive, transparent collective. For too long, our surfing culture has been colonized and commandeered by a conservative elite who make the rules just because they surf well.

What are some of your projects at the moment? The second iteration of my surfing website Wavescape.co.za and teaming up with a global weather provider to build a uniquely South African marine data service for ocean users.

Aside from surfing, what are your other passions? Writing, gardening, rugby, my family, hiking and playing soccer.

What comments have people made about your book? The comments have been positive and passionate. To use surfing parlance, people are 'stoked' with the book. It's a good read, and contains some uniquely South African surfing images and stories. The book is a huge step up from my first book *Surfing in South Africa*, published in 2000.

Tell us about the contributors to the book The full-colour 280-page book contains top surfing imagery from some of South Africa's most eminent photographers and illustrators, including Barry Tuck, Harry de Zitter, Tom Peschak, Andy Mason, Lance Slabbert, and Brenton Geach.

A range of articles by journalists, writers and scientists enrich the book with mixture of culture and science. Veteran surfing promoter Paul Botha kickstarts a detailed history chapter. Marine biologist and author Tom Peschak adds gravitas to issues around sharks and conservation. The brave life of the father of surfing John Whitmore is poignantly remembered by former Cape Times editor Tony Heard. Veteran writer Tony Weaver eloquently tackles the challenge of sharing the sea with sharks, while Argus journalist Henri du Plessis contributes a profile of a committed surfer. Cape Times columnist Ben Trovato romps through issues around surfing evolution and lifeguards in skimpy Speedos.

ABOUT SPIKE During a journalism career spanning 25 years, Steve Pike worked graveyard shifts at newspapers so that he could surf. He has sub edited, written,

illustrated, designed and edited for newspapers and magazines in Cape Town, Johannesburg, East London, Hong Kong and Melbourne. In 1999, Spike, who has an Honours degree from Rhodes University, got wise by combining his two passions - words and waves - into a lifestyle career as a writer and creator of the surfing portal Wavescape.co.za. In 2001, his book *Surfing South Africa* was published, the forerunner of this title.