

MAKKA

THE SURF MAGAZINE | 2013

CELEBRATING

7 YEARS OF MAKKA PRO SURFING COMPETITION





Makka Pro Event Magazine

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Cover Image:
Eli Shama Beckford
Photo by Anthony 'Billy' Wilmot

Production Team:
Imani Wilmot - Editor -in-chief, Layout Design
Alroy Lawrence - Graphic Designer, Layout Design

Contributing Writers:
Anthony 'Billy' Wilmot
Inilek Wilmot
Adam von Sternenfels Rosenthal
Lea Black
Imani Wilmot
Alroy Lawrence

Photo Contributions:
Anthony 'Billy' Wilmot
JSA Arrchives
Lea Black
Nathan Adams
Kurt Stephenson
Ronan Gladu
Jon Steele

MAKKA PRO: SEVEN YEARS OF SURFING

BY ANTHONY 'BILLY' WILMOT

To write the history of the Makka Pro surf contest, one would have to go back many, many years before its inaugural staging in 2007. In fact, to write the history of the event is to write the history of competitive surfing in Jamaica because the Makka Pro is the culmination of the efforts of the Jamaica Surfing Association (JSA) to establish Jamaica as a legitimate member of the world surfing community, and a sport of choice for all Jamaicans.

Competitive surfing in Jamaica began back in the mid 1990's when Billy Wilmot sat in his car on the beach at Zoo and wrote the wave scores of his three sons and one of their friends in a 15-minute heat. They were so excited and focused. At the end of the heat he blew the horn and the kids scrambled back so fast for the results that Billy realized competition would be the catalyst to encourage the growth of the sport locally. This could not happen however unless there was a legitimate national governing body for surfing, so that became the first objective.

The JSA was formed in 1999 and began holding regular local events for its membership and declaring champions in open, women and junior divisions. Membership with the International Surfing Association (ISA) and Pan-American Surfing Association (PASA) resulted in teams being selected and sent to compete at World and Pan-American surfing championships since 2002. That exposure to the world of international competitive surfing planted the pro surf seed and the summer of 2007 became the target date for the first Jamaican Pro Surfing Event!

The contest needed a home, one that would allow for the maximization of all possible options. The event needed somewhere fairly close to civilization. Somewhere with easy access, a good vantage point for the judges, access to electricity, space for spectators and the resulting parking needs but most of all with consistent surf! It was a slam-dunk... Makka was the perfect spot! The Makka Pro became a major project, which would mean networking with the other



two major surfing nations in the English speaking Caribbean – Barbados and Trinidad. Nick Donawa out of Barbados, who at the time was in the process of establishing the Caribbean Surfing Network, was very supportive of the contest. The concept of a Tri-Nation challenge was spawned with points adding up from a major event in each island used to declare a Caribbean Surfing Champion.

The JSA had the allocation from the Sports Development Foundation but needed sponsors to make the event happen. Nick had Suzuki and the JSA had the SDF. The Citizens Association of Southaven, where Makka is located, was also contacted and together, with a whole lot of volunteer help, they pulled it off. And in no uncertain terms either. The first Makka Pro in 2007 was the biggest event, in terms of spectator turnout, of all the surf events in the English speaking Caribbean that year!

Ensuing years saw the Makka Pro growing in recognition and prestige. More sponsors got on board and the event began pushing the boundaries of Caribbean surf contests. Computerized scoring system and live online video streaming of the event are now standard.

By 2012 the results from the Makka Pro, the Soup Bowl Pro in Barbados and the San Souci Pro in T&T declared Barbados' Dane Mackie the first recipient of the Paul Blades Memorial Caribbean Champion's Trophy, donated to the JSA by the Blades Family who originally settled in Jamaica from Barbados, founders of the Jamaican company Musson Jamaica Ltd, in honor of their only son Paul, a surfer, who met a tragic end in an automobile accident in Kingston many years ago.

MAKKA PRO







MAKKA PRO 2013
Review



Local surfers Icah Wilmot, Garren Pryce and Elim Beckford walked away with the lion's share of the purse at the two-day 2013 Makka Pro surf contest held at Southaven in Yallahs, St Thomas, over the weekend.

The competition was held in three divisions — Open, Juniors and Women — and saw entries from Australia, Trinidad & Tobago, the USA and Jamaica.

Icah Wilmot captured the Open category, Pryce won the Juniors, and Beckford was successful in the Women's division. The St Thomas surfing beach provided 'solid' overhead waves for the event to the great delight of the competitors and spectators alike. Thousands turned out as is customary and the event was spared the traditional first day heavy rains that have become the standard over the past six years. It was replaced by brilliant sunshine and cool tropical trade winds for the entire weekend. The competition was adjudicated by a professional panel of Caribbean judges, and featured a local computerised score calculation system which was designed by Icah Wilmot, a graduate student of the University of Technology Jamaica.

The heats began last Saturday at about 11:00 am with the first round of the Open and Junior divisions in front of a moderate gathering of spectators that grew in numbers throughout the day.

The first round was a 'no loser' round with winners of the three-man heats advancing to round three and second and third-place finishers facing off in round two for a final chance to get to round three. In the first round most of the top seeds advanced, including Trinidad's Chris Dennis, Australia's Bryce Young, and Frank Roper of the USA, who all put on impressive performances.

Icah Wilmot, however, was relegated to round two, where he managed to scratch himself back into round three to continue his quest for the championship title. Success there ensured a spot in the Open quarter-final round the next day. In the Junior division, the biggest overseas threat came from Trinidad's champion Dario Jordan, but he had his hands full when he met up with Jamaica's Pryce, Ivah Wilmot and Elishama Beckford, who represented strongly in the first two rounds. They all made it to round three.

Sunday's competition featured all three divisions. The day began with the Junior and Open round three action for the early comers. Heat One in the juniors was like a final in terms of performances with three national champions Elishama Beckford, Pryce and Akeem Taylor going head to head for 20 minutes, and



PHOTO BY NATHAN ADAMS

putting on an exciting show for the two available spots in the semi-finals.

It was action packed and by the horn it was Pryce with 12.47 and Akeem Taylor with 11.00 for their two-wave point total that advanced to the semis.

Heat Two had the Trinidadian Dario Jordan meeting Ivah Wilmot and young Ronald Hastings during their 20-minute battle. Ivah swayed the judges with his performance that gave him a 6.00 and a 5.00 for his 11.00 heat total and his semi-final slot. Dario and Elishama were close, but at the horn Dario's 8.17 squeezed him into the semis over Elishama's 7.60 two-wave total. The Men's round three Heat One was an international affair which saw young Elishama Beckford going up against Trinidad's Chris Dennis and Bryce Young from Australia. Chris posted the highest wave and heat total of the event with his 8.5 wave and 14.33 totals, taking the win. He was joined in the semis via the first major upset when Elishama's 9.90 heat total was out of

reach for Young and his 7.03 total. Heat Two was a challenge met by Icah Wilmot, Aceam Phillips and Frank Roper. The American seemed unable to catch a wave that would allow him to demonstrate his significant skills and could only muster a lowly 5.47 heat total against Icah's 12.83, and Aceam's 10.27.

In Heat One of the Junior semi-final, Trinidad's Dario Jordan opposed Garren Pryce for a spot in the final against the other semi-final winner. Garren left no doubt for the judges, posting 11.67 points to Dario's 7.73. Junior semi-final two was next with Ivah Wilmot and Akeem Taylor paddling out for the 20-minute showdown. They rode a dozen waves between them under the scrutiny of the judges panel and at the end of the heat Ivah's 10.17 took him to the final over Akeem's 8.33.

The Open Men's semi-final round was next, and Heat One had Trinidadian champ Chris Dennis against local wonder Aceam Phillips for 20 minutes. Aceam put the brakes on his advance-



ment with a brilliant 10.60 total to Chris' 7.86, effectively eliminating all foreign contenders for the top spots. The second heat had Elishama Beckford against his mentor Icah Wilmot, and though it was one of the closest heats, Icah edged out Beckford 12.17 to 12.50.

The single heat of the women's division was between Elim Beckford and Imani Wilmot. They rode six waves between them with Elim getting the better of the exchange earning 10.67 to Imani's 7.07 points. Beckford copped the \$50,000 winner's prize. The Junior final saw Ivah Wilmot and Garren Pryce clashing for the \$100,000 up for grabs. It was a 25-minute heat and Ivah had command, scoring strongly as the lead changed hands a number of times, but as it came down to the last exchange Ivah got a sweet 'peeler' only to be in time to see Garren pick off a perfect 'breaker', which afforded him a magnificent ride to the beach giving him the win just on the buzzer.

The final heat of the weekend was the men's Open final, and Jamaica's top two surfers Icah Wilmot and Aceam Phillips had the stage for the steadily growing audience on hand. The surfers caught 16 waves between them in a fairly anticlimactic, low-scoring final. The best score of the heat was 6.67 by Icah near the end of the heat, while a 4.43 was the best that Aceam could muster. At the final horn the scores were Icah Wilmot, the champion with 12.33 points, with Aceam Phillips second with 8.43 points. Icah won \$200,000 for the winner's prize.

JAMAICA

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The Surfing Environment

BY INILEK WILMOT

One would have to agree that surfing is the most environmentally sensitive sport practiced in Jamaica. I would also add that surfing is the most susceptible to impacts from global warming and climate change. Surfing depends on coral reefs, sediment (sand) processes, local wind and water current patterns, seasonal weather patterns, and water quality.

The surfing lifestyle is completely embedded in nature. While surfing, we share an environment with reef animals and plants, open water fish, dolphins, manatees, sea turtles, sea birds, coastal vegetation and the animals that inhabit them. When these animals, plants and systems are healthy and free from pollution the surfing experience is very pure. In fact it is spiritual. It is for these reasons that environmental matters are of particular importance to Jamaican surfers and the Jamaica Surfing Association.

The Jamaica Surfing Association has an environmental arm that focuses on pollution prevention, environmental awareness, and environmentally responsible lifestyle choices.

The environmental arm of the Jamaica Surfing Association also participates as much as possible in national and international efforts to positively impact the natural environment. Among these are International Surfing Day, International Coastal Cleanup Day, and the national sea turtle monitoring program.

One of the long term goals of the environmental arm of the Jamaica Surfing Association is to document the natural resources associated with all the major surfing beaches in Jamaica. When the JSA learned that NEPA (National Environment Planning Agency) does sea turtle monitoring at one of our surfing beaches on the Palisadoes we jumped at the opportunity to receive training on how to do sea turtle monitoring and to lend our hands and hearts to the effort. We learned that hawksbill sea turtles nest along the section of beach that we regularly surf at on the Palisadoes. This is a type of turtle that we see more commonly when we are surfing at Makka at certain times of the year. So while at the surf competition be on the lookout. You may just have a very special experience.





SURFING! The word conjures up images of sun, sea, sand, palm trees, bikini-clad peroxide blondes, Hawaii, California, Australia, The Duke, the sixties, hippies, drugs, wild beach parties, Gidget, the Beach Boys... the list goes on and on.

The sport of surfing originated in the south Pacific Islands hundreds of years ago as the sport of kings. Today however, it has become a giant economic sports empire headed by the USA, Hawaii, Australia, South Africa and Brazil. Fortunately, the waves of the world are not restricted to these few countries, as perfect surfing waves break on reefs, river mouths, points, sand bars and beaches all over the world, including.... Jamaica???

The island of Jamaica, situated in the north western Caribbean Sea, seems an unlikely place for surfing to develop. Cut off from the large southward moving swells of the

WRITTEN BY ANTHONY 'BILLY' WILMOT

north Atlantic by it's larger neighbors Cuba and Hispaniola, Jamaica seems trapped in the middle of the tiny, tranquil, Caribbean Sea, with very little potential for receiving good surfing waves, except maybe for when a hurricane passes by, which could provide a good swell, or be all blown out, or even worse....blow the whole freakin' island away! However, under closer scrutiny we find that this is definitely not the case! The truth is..... Jamaica is blessed with an eight month surf season with the remaining four months of flat time broken up into short one or two week spells. This provided the perfect raw material for the development of Jamaican surfing.

In the sixties, when young teenaged rebels were riding the waves of Malibu, Narabeen and Waikiki making surf history, Jamaica also had it's own brave young souls who were riding Boston and Wreck on home made boards fashioned from refrigerator foam laminated with resin and fiber glass drapery cloth with black electrical tape

to make "racing stripes" manufactured up on Skyline drive at Wesley Powell's home (Excelsior Principal) where the young shapers almost poisoned themselves with resin and acetone fumes. The young rebels included Cecil Ward, Steve Solomon, Dennis Pigott, Leighton "Pin Head" Powell, Tim "Apache" Chinyee, The Martel brothers from U.S.A., Gordon Cooper, Donnie Soutar, David "Puss" Langdon, Jack and Charley Murray, Nigel Andrade, Terrence "Mush" Muschette, Robbie Epstein, Tony "Tugu" Lancaster, Herbie Sharp, Robin Samms, David Couch, Alfred "Junior" Kong, who had "Royal Store" in Port Antonio, Eddie Chin from CC Bakery where every local surfer would stop by after a long day at Boston for some hot hard dough bread and butter or a bun and cheese and box milk and the late Paul Blades, who's tomb stone at the Stony Hill Cemetery is shaped like a surfboard and has an inscription which reads...."He rode the waves",. Boston Beach in Portland, for decades



well known by tourists for it's pristine white sand beach, crystal clear water and it's notorious "Jerk Pork", was Jamaica's first internationally recognized surf spot. Visitors to the famous beach witnessed local fishermen returning from sea and "surfing" their boats in on the powerful driving surf rolling into the cove and took the news back to eager ears. Surfers returned to ride the waves, dropping in and sliding left as the fat peak wedged off the outside rock, or charging the thick right on the other side of the tiny protected bay. When these surfers went home, sometimes they would leave their boards behind with locals like Riggley, Morton and Buju, Jamaica's first black surfers, and thus began the Jamaican surf story.

Since those early days, Jamaican surfing has evolved through a number of developmental stages. First was the "before there were boards" era (pre

60's), the "Long Board" or before there were leashes era (60's - early 70's), the "Bungie chord" or "Short Board" era (70's), the "multi-fin" era (80's) and the "High Tech" era (90's - present).

Back in the early days, the "Wreck" was the prime south coast surf spot. Situated on the Palisadoes peninsula, the Wreck got it's name from the poor unfortunate cargo vessel which misguidedly ran aground in the late 1950's, forming a groin-like set up, off which perfect 200 yard long lefts would mechanically peel to the beach. Today however, the Wreck has become a victim of the very waves it helped to create, and is now no more than a submerged heap of rusting metal. Scratch one break!

The decade of the 70's saw many new faces in Jamaican surfing. Along with myself, there was Randy Cargil, Douglas "Nix" Hutchinson, Pat Talbot, Sean



SHIP WRECK
Palisadoes 1967

Bourke, Ricky “Pearl” Mafood and Pedro Flora. The waves of Lightbourn Corner, Lighthouse, Lollipop, Copa, Nine Mile, Salt Ponds, Roselle, Prospect, Holland Bay, Long Bay and Boston had all been ridden by then. But in the summer of ‘74, the discovery of the decade! The now world famous “Zoo” was “discovered” when David Couch and Terry Muschett paddled out for the first time to sample the clear water, spitting tubes, consistent dependable line-up with the easy go-out. The much steeper, shorter walls of the Zoo, forced local surfers to compress their maneuvers. Tube riding skills were honed to razor sharp perfection on the hollow river mouth barrel, resulting in a new more radical brand of Jamaican surfing.

The “discovery” of the Zoo right on our door step, prompted a whole new era of surf exploration on the island

throughout the late 70’s into the mid 80’s. Potential spots which had been identified years previously such as Prospect point, Morant River, Holland Bay, Orange Bay, Rio Grande, Swift River, Spanish River and Buff Bay were surfed for the first times, but all had to play second fiddle to the Zoo which became known as the Jamaican Pipeline, not for the size of the wave, but rather, for it’s quality and consistency. The Zoo was the discovery of the decade!

By the 80’s, more new faces had appeared on the scene. People like Piere Diaz, Neil-John Andrade, Julian and Nigel Benjamin, Robert Haughton, Mark Scott, Gary Gregg, Warren Marley, Eugene Miller, Alton Smith and George Cousins. The newcomers surfed most of the established breaks and went on to popularize Peenie Wally and Shark Cove on the North Coast.

The final decade of the old millennium has produced the latest crop of very talented “Tanned Jammies”. The new and promising group is made up of a number of second generation Jamaican surfers including the Wilmot Kids, Ishack, Inilek and Icah or “The Rats” as they have come to be known, the Chinyee boys, Daniel and Charles, and Justin and Scott Murray. Other “freshers” included Drum Drummond, great grand son of Jamaican national hero Norman Manley, Yves Yearwood, Warren “Beegus” Bailey, Dwayne Walker, Jacquiann Lawton, Luke Williams, Andre Bowman, Joel Lawrence, Kenny Augier, Louis Matalon, David Lee, Alton Smith and Omar Atkinson. A few new spots were were also ridden for the first time in the 90’s such as Makka, Prospect middle reef and Yallahs River. The 90’s also saw the founding of the Jamaica Surfing Association, which has brought the sport to the attention of the general public, winning fans and encouraging participants through it’s publicity drive and national contests.

The New Millennium is here and now a sport that was not even thought to exist in Jamaica is slowly clawing its way to the surface and every day new and exciting developments unfold. New faces are seen in the line up, male and female, young and old. Jamaica has been represented at the past two World Surfing Games and the last Pan American Surfing Games. New spots have been ridden and old ones lost in the recent spate of hurricanes that have unleashed their fury on the Caribbean. The world famous Zoo was annihilated by the torrential rains and thirty foot seas associated with Hurricane Ivan, but not before Billy Wilmot caught the largest wave in recorded Jamaican surf history. There is good news however for long boarders who had very few options in Jamaica



prior to Ivan. The whole Palisadoes peninsula has come alive with countless spots begging for a 9'6" Robert August.

The full potential of Jamaica's surf is still to be realized. Jamaica has had a long and rich surfing history which is still being drafted today by the young bloods of the Jamaican surfing fraternity who will lead the charge into the next era of Jamaican wave riding!

To be continued ...



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SURFING AROUND JAMAICA

WRITTEN BY ANTHONY 'BILLY' WILMOT

Although not known for the sport, the island of Jamaica is blessed with world class rideable surf for about 300 days a year. The waves range from playfully, inviting beginner waves to thick death-defying hurricane slabs! On the average, Jamaica provides waves in the 4'-6' range with the bigger days up to 8'-10'. Of course a hurricane swell can give Hawaii-like surf but, the devastating repercussions of a hurricane usually outweigh the few days of epic surf associated with it... except for surfers of course.

The great thing about Jamaica as a Caribbean island is that although seemingly trapped and cut off from the Atlantic, It has a sweet swell window, the Windward Passage, which funnels winter time cold front Atlantic swell

at Jamaica's north east shoreline that wrap around to the protected southeast side. During the summer months it is perfectly situated to reap the maximum swell potential from the Caribbean Sea as the Trade Winds blow across 1500 miles of Caribbean Sea driving powerful waves at the island's south east shore.

There are innumerable locations to surf in Jamaica but due to the small number of surfers on the island, most surfing is restricted to the best quality, more consistent and easily accessed locations. Surfers tend to want to go surfing where there is company as crowds are hardly ever the problem. Most of Jamaica has been scouted for waves but there are still a few more unexplored areas that show real promise and those rewards await those bold

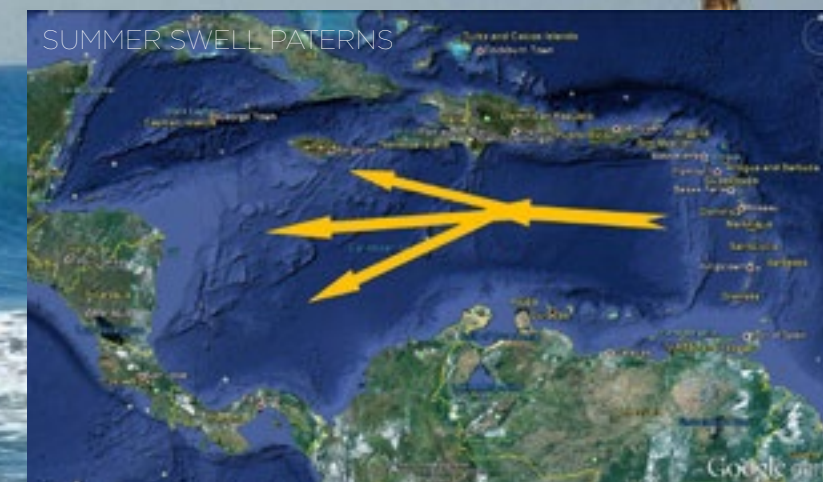
enough for the adventure. So whenever there is a big swell on the way, like anywhere else in the surfing world, boards are strapped on and the crew sets off.

On ordinary days the most commonly surfed locations in Jamaica would be Lighthouse, Copa and Makka on the southeast side, and Boston and Peenie Wally on the north. In between all those waves you can find a slew of small river mouths, points and reefs that provide good fun surf for the taking. Places like Long Bay, Roselle, Ranch, Iron Pot, Prospect, Dog Leg, Spot, 9 Mile, Salt Pond, Sharky's, Hammer Pit and Rafters Rest are a few spots that spring to mind.

If on a surf trip to Jamaica a rental car would be your best bet as public transport in the

wave rich zones of the island is irregular at best. Roads are poor to say the least, so a 4x4 is a good choice. If you are on a budget you can check Jamnesia Surf Camp in Bull Bay and they can get you straightened out with affordable rooms, meals and shuttles. Camping is also another budget option, but it is advisable that you seek permission to camp in some ones yard near the waves as opposed to just "on the beach".

Jamaican food is the BEST... ask anyone! It is one of the other factors in the "Should I take a surf trip to Jamaica" equation that along with beautiful women, waterfalls and breathtaking scenery, smoke, music, white rum and coconut water, should tip the balance in Jamaica's favor... and trust me... you won't regret it!





PORTLAND



Boston

PORTLAND

Best tide: Any
Best swell direction: N, NE, and ENE
Best size: Chest high to 3’ overhead
Best wind: S, SW,
Perfecto-meter: 5 (1=Lake Erie; 10=Jeffreys Bay)
Bottom: Reef
Ability level: Beginner, intermediate to advanced
Bring your: Favorite shredding board
Best season: December-March.
Access: Take A3 from Kingston to Anotto Bay, then east on A4 through Port Antonio continuing past Blue Lagoon to Boston Bay. Parking at beach
Crowd factor: 5 (1=solo, 10=mad-house.
Local vibe: Mellow
Bicep burn: 3 (1=knee-high Waikiki; 10=triple-overhead Ocean Beach)
Poo patrol: 2 (1=clean; 10=turds in the lineup)

Boston Bay is reported to be the original home of modern surfing in Jamaica where the sport was enjoyed by tourists who brought some of the first surfboards to the island in the late 50’s to ride the “Breakers” that formed off the outside reef and rolled into the crescent shaped cove. A small local community of surfers lives at the beach where surfboard rentals and lessons are available. On its day, it is undoubtedly the most picturesque spots on the island. The wave forms mainly as it refracts off the cliff entrance on either side of the crescent shaped cove and depending on swell direction, forms a right or left peeling wall. The wave tends to experience a lot of backwash and side chop from the surrounding cliffs. When it gets more than four or five feet overhead it starts to close out the bay.

PLACES TO EAT

Boston Bay is world famous for its’ indigenous Jerk cooking. A local food court is just next door to the beach and the chefs there provide the best examples of this authentic Jamaican cuisine on the island.

PLACES TO STAY

Port Antonio is one of the oldest tourism destinations on the island dating back to the days when visitors to the island arrived on Banana Boats from England who would vacation on the island until the ships were loaded. There are many hotels and guest houses in and around Port Antonio but if you want to be close to the spot, check Great Huts overlooking the cove (876) 353 3388, drpaulshalom@yahoo.com www.greathuts.com \$60-400

THINGS TO DO

The Parish of Portland has many sights and attractions. Make sure you check Reach Falls or Reich Falls as it is sometimes spelt, is a few miles inland from the fishing town of Manchioneel. World famous Blue hole, a 170 foot deep spring fed lagoon, is also a beautiful spot to spend some time swimming in it’s unique waters with the warm salty sea water a few inches underneath the cold fresh spring water at the surface.



Peenie Wally

PORTLAND

Best tide: Any
Best swell direction: NE, ENE.
Best size: Head high to double overhead
Best wind: SW, S, WSW.
Perfecto-meter: 7 (1=Lake Erie; 10=Jeffrey’s Bay)
Bottom: Rock reef
Ability level: Intermediate to advance
Bring your: Favorite shredding board
Best season: December-March
Access: Travel 1.5 miles east from Buff Bay along the A4 highway in direction of Orange Bay. Wave is visible from the top of bluff. Continue another 200 yards to Pauline’s Place and park in front of waves.
Crowd factor: 1 (1=solo, 10=madhouse.
Local vibe: Mellow
Bicep burn: 8 (1=knee-high Waikiki; 10=triple-overhead Ocean Beach)
Poo patrol: 1 (1=clean; 10=turds in the lineup)



Peenie Wally is undoubtedly the best right point discovered in Jamaica so far. Just east of the town of Buff Bay along the A4, Peenie Wally can hold up to triple overhead waves... if you can get out there! The break has two main peaks. The east peak holds the bigger waves and also provides an occasional left for the taking. The middle peak grants the taker a long groomed wall with multiple makeable sections to shred. As the swell size increases, the current set up by Shark’s Cove.

PLACES TO EAT

As you get out of the water Miss Pauline is right there if you need snacks, cold beer and drinks. If you need something more substantial there are local Restaurants back in Buff Bay for local cuisine, curried goat, stewed beef, fish tea or fried fish and bammy or festival.

PLACES TO STAY

Not much is available in Buff Bay but speak to Miss Pauline for tent camping and she will do meals for you while you are there too. There is also Paradise Inn (876) 993 5778 ([paradiseinn295@hotmail](mailto:paradiseinn295@hotmail.com)) just east of Ken Jones Air Port near Saint Margret’s Bay, which has rooms ranging from \$35-60. Otherwise you have to go to Rio Vista right by the Rio Grande River in Saint Margret’s Bay, where exquisite cottages range from \$75-250 per night. (876) 993 54444 (riovistavillaja@jamweb.net) www.riovistajamaica.com

THINGS TO DO

Check Somerset Falls 1.5 miles east of Hope Bay on A4, admission \$12 for adults’ and \$6 children. The beautiful magnificent fall is accessed by boat through cavernous cliffs. A restaurant provides fish, chicken, shrimp, lobster, burgers, hot dogs and fries. Beer, rum, fruit juices and soft drinks are available at the bar. For the historians, the St. Georg Anglican Church in Buff Bay dates back to 1814but it’s original foundation is much older and worth a visit. The Maroon Village of Charles Town, a few miles inland has a cultural tour with the local Maroon Colonel is worth an hour or two of your time. The free entry Maroon Museum at Asafu Yard in Charles Town has Maroon artifacts on display. Tours and hikes can be arranged by the Colonel to Grande Hole Cave, Sambo Hill, Crawford Town and Quao’s Village, the home of Maroon warrior Captain Quao “The Invisible Hunter” where traditional lunch is prepared by local chefs. Contact Colonel Frank Lumsden (876) 445 2861.



ST. THOMAS



Makka

PORTLAND

Best tide: Any
Best swell direction: E, ESE, SE, SSE.
Best size: Chest high to triple overhead
Best wind: NE, N, NNW
Perfecto-meter: 7 (1=Lake Erie; 10=Jeffrey's Bay)
Bottom: Rock reef
Ability level: Intermediate to advanced
Bring your: Favorite shredding board
Best season: December-March, July - September
Access: Park right there.
Crowd factor: 2 (1=solo, 10=madhouse.
Local vibe: Mellow
Bicep burn: 6 (1=knee-high Waikiki; 10=triple-overhead Ocean Beach)
Poo patrol: 1 (1=clean; 10=turds in the lineup)



The pride of Yallahs, this left reef point provides one of the longest rides on the southeast coast of the island. Makka is one of hte most consistent breaks, catching all easterly swells. Susceptible to early morning blow-outs during the summer, Makka delivers the best in winter months when the cold front swells that wrap into the Caribbean are fanned all day by the crisp offshore northeasterlies. It loves big swells and can handle anything up to triple overhead and bigger!

PLACES TO EAT

Yallahs Square has the best Jerk Chicken and festival around, a must for every hungry visitor. Don't forget to try a cup of the Fish Tea (fish broth) that is supposed to put the "Lead in your Pencil"!!!

PLACES TO STAY

Yallahs is far from everything. I wouldn't advise camping but you could make a friend in the area and "cotch" with them for a while. There is "Casa Lagoon Hotel" at Pomfret about 3 miles east of Makka along the A Highway that has rooms from \$50. Phone (876) 703 5300 or email casalaguna@yahoo.com for reservations. Otherwise it's back to Morgan's Harbour Hotel in Port Royal 876 967 8075 with rooms starting at \$106 single and \$111 Double. Jamnesia Surf Camp (876 750 0103) just 10 miles down the road offers camping from \$15 and simple rooms from \$30/person/night, with higher end packages including car, driver, meals and transfers from \$200/person/night. Or if you prefer up scale living you can hit Kingston 18 miles away. The Hilton (876 926 5430) or Pegasus (876 926 3690-1) Hotels (\$160 /night-\$250/night)

THINGS TO DO

While in St Thomas you might as well make the trek up to Bath Fountain where a natural thermal spring bubbles up 115 degree water which was believed to be discovered by a slave who was severely beaten by his master and ran away Lleft for dead, it is said he found the spring and bathed his wounds in the water and they healed prompting the tradition that the waters have magical healing powers. Also at Bath is found the Caribbean's oldest Botanical Gardens, a must see for the plant enthusiasts. The Hotel at Bath also provides private rooms with private baths at reasonable rates. There is also the Blue Mountain Peak tour where if you are early enough you can witness the sunrise above the clouds. Check Jah B at (876)377 5206 or online at . The Blue Mountain coffee tour takes you up 7000 feet into the tropical highlands where the world's best coffee is grown. Check out the Maroon villages of Moore town, Charles Town, and Nannyville in the interior highlands of St Thomas and Portland where the descendants of Jamaica's famous "runaway" slaves fought for and won an independent life from the hands of their slave masters.



KINGSTON



Lighthouse

KINGSTON

Best tide: Any
Best swell direction: E, ESE, SE.
Best size: Chest high to 4’ overhead
Best wind: N, NNW
Perfecto-meter: 7 (1=Lake Erie; 10=Jeffrey’s Bay)
Bottom: reef
Ability level: intermediate to advanced
Bring your: favorite shredding board
Best season: December-March.
Access: Park in lot and walk 100 meters.
Crowd factor: 3 (1=solo, 10=madhouse.
Local vibe: Mellow
Bicep burn: 3 (1=knee-high Waikiki; 10=triple-overhead Ocean Beach)
Poo patrol: 2 (1=clean; 10=turds in the lineup)



In many people’s eyes, Lighthouse is the best spot on the south coast. The shallow reef ledge creates some of the squarest right barrels on the island and the long tubing left that is also generated can hold its own with the best of them. Winter months deliver the best seasonal waves with all day off shore winds with average head high surf. Lighthouse can handle surf up to around 4’ overhead above which a current across the reef starts to negatively affect the quality of the waves. With only a few spots, getting in and out of the water is the Lighthouse’s greatest challenge. Replete with urchins, Lighthouse is famous for exacting a toll on its less experienced visitors. The best way in is 100 meters west of the main peak there is a sandy exit spot between the beach’s table rock ledge!

PLACES TO EAT

Port Royal is 10 minutes drive up the road for some of the island’s best seafood, or you can head back to Harbourview for some “Rouneys” fried chicken and famous fries, and make sure you get a “Jelly” coconut from the “Jelly man” at the airport roundabout!

PLACES TO STAY

Morgan’s Harbour Hotel in Port Royal 876 967 8075 with rooms starting at \$106 single and \$111 Double. Jamnesia Surf Camp (876 750 0103) just 10 miles down the road offers camping from \$10 and simple rooms from \$35/person/night, with higher end packages including car, driver, meals and transfers from \$200/person/night. Or if you prefer up scale living you can hit Kingston 18 miles away. The Hilton (876 926 5430) or Pegasus (876 926 3690-1) Hotels (\$160 /night-\$250/night)

THINGS TO DO

While in and around Kingston there are a plethora of activities in which you can indulge. Live music, clubs, museums, shopping, sightseeing, hiking, golfing, theatre, restaurants, horse racing, motor sports, spas, ... whew....





The Perfect Coconut

BY ADAM VON STERNENFELS ROSENTHAL

PHOTOS BY LEA BLACK

When I arrived at the airport in Jamaica, I was met with a coconut. The man who gave it to me was empathetic to my long trip from California down to Jamaica. It was nice to be greeted with something so cool and refreshing.

Coming to Jamnesia, the Wilmot family's home turned surf camp I was thrust into something, special and needed, like that first coconut I had experienced. I was welcomed with kindness and positivity, treated as a friend rather than a passerby, or traveler. That meant so much to me.

Whether one stays with the Wilmot's for a night, or two months, they treat and accept you as family, and that is the spirit that is mirrored in the surfing culture they live by

at their Bull Bay sanctuary.

Lacrosse too, brings a familiar feeling that all are included, that your counterparts in competition are your brethren on the shore, or off the field. Everyone has something special to teach, to share, to give. That is the beauty of surfing and lacrosse, and that is why the efforts of Fields of Growth and the Wilmot family flow together in cohesive harmony.

Striving to bring together youth through sport is not easy, and it is in fact a struggle that is met forcefully by those who desire more for the younger generations. There is never a break here at Jamnesia. There are times, perhaps when no young surfers are passing through the camp, but still there is

learning and growing. Billy Wilmot's fervor for passing knowledge to others is hilariously intuitive, but it also carries a seriousness that hinges on the great challenges and responsibilities that will burden our younger generations.

When I met Maggie, Billy's wife, I felt comfortable immediately. Her kindness was shown to me from the first time she greeted me as I came from a long, tiresome plane trip; she excited and energized me, as I watched her sing and raise smiles at her grandson's second birthday celebration.

My favorite thing about lacrosse is the people that I play with, against, and for. All involved are excited and passionate about honoring the game and spreading their love for it in whatever way they can. It's a game that the Native Americans said had a healing power, and that's why Kevin Dugan, Field of Growth's founder, asked the Wilmot family if they would be a part of lacrosse's birth in Jamaica.

Lacrosse and surfing bring people together in awe, and create dreams for others through majestic performance and creativity in the sport. It helps people realize their potential, and also how they can become better. Through competition we meet those we idolize, and also those we can help.

Maggie may not be able to handle waves like her sons, but she is handling other challenges that are touching many through her efforts. Recently Jamnesia held a fundraiser for young people and families affected and effected by HIV and the aids virus. People danced and had fun. The children affected were not highlighted or given special attention. Everyone was together, having a happy experience as one unified group.

My experience at Jamnesia has solidified my belief that being with people is all that I require to live a life that does more good than harm.





Young Cory Jamaica's Furture Lacrosser



A young boy from the Benetlands community in Kingston verges on bursting into a smile as he engages with the Fields of Growth athlete volunteers.

I see this action in the Wilmot's sons who routinely teach people the surfing ways, but also incorporate human goodness into the experience by being with the people they have taught: they share their surfing techniques and postures, they distribute friendship and make true connections that positively affect those who have had the fortune to pass through Jamnesia. The sons have learned well from their elders, and now it is their turn to pass on whatever they can through those they encounter.

The lessons I am learning at Jamnesia make me more curious and excited about translating these teachings into action, as the Wilmot's, and Kevin Dugan have done. I knew this summer would be a special experience, though I did not anticipate it would already have such a distinct impression on my heart.

The experience I am having at Jamnesia is quenching my dehydrated soul, and is indeed like that first coconut I had: a thoughtful gift that has created goodness for me.



info@jamnesiasurf.com | jamnesiasurf.com | 876-750-0103



Drums & Dance

Welcome Makka Festival of Culture and Environment to St. Thomas

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY
LEA BLACK

Young parade performers joke with each other as the crowd begins to congregate and head towards the Southaven Community Center for the environmental panel discussion.

Loud, rhythmic drumming drowned out sound system tunes to mark the beginning of a march welcoming the first annual Makka Festival of Culture and the Environment from the Yallahs town center to the Southaven Community Center on Wednesday, July 17.

The energetic parade marked day three of the festival where several dozen young dancers and marching band musicians proceeded smiling and laughing alongside one another, drawing community members out of their homes to observe the commotion and inquire about the happenings. The first two days of the festival featured information and hospitality booths equipped with hot morning coffee spurring fresh and lively conversations at the Community Center. In addition to the local happenings, Tuesday introduced a catered heritage tour stopping off at nine various locations throughout the island, including Judgment Cliff and the highest lighthouse in Jamaica, Morant Point.

The scent of cooking chicken, rice and spices permeating through the thick and humid air welcomed the arriving crowd at the Southaven Community Center. Conversations and expressions of synchronized dances continued on to the heavy baselines of records playing for the crowd. Further down the field, environmentalists and keynote speakers set up booths laden with posters, information packets and locally grown products such as pimento oil and wine. The panel discussion started at 2 p.m. and featured such relevant subjects as pollution reduction, sustainable living and organic agriculture practices.

The importance of clean watersheds and the negative impacts of pollution were addressed by David Reid, environmental officer in the ecosystems management branch of the National Environment and Planning Agency. Reid spoke about water and nitrogen cycles that exist in our environment and the utmost important role of individuals in the community in reducing pollution, as the problem is

a compilation of individual acts of unawareness and carelessness. To keep Jamaica as beautiful as only Jamaica is, it is up to the personal responsibility and accountability of all Jamaican citizens. A young girl sitting in the front row sucking the last reminisce of her plastic packaged bag juice was made as an example of the obligation of the youth to take the future of their lives and the environment into their own hands through such practices as responsibly disposing litter. Raymond Martin, representing the Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement, explained the importance of preservation of traditional and organic agricultural techniques in order to maintain sustainable practices. "Organic is really about systems that are more sustainable," he expounded on the short term profits of large companies selling synthetic seed and chemical fertilizer and how the short term gains should not be exchanged for the price of self-sufficiency. "High yields can't be at the cost of people getting sick," Martin said.

People continued to pour in to listen to the information and take notes. The assembly was eager to participate giving personal examples and opinions from life experience while posing critical questions relating to how they could personally embrace sustainable practices with limited resources. Adjourning around five o'clock, dialogues of the day's happenings endured into the cooling evening spurring further philosophies and questions. The first annual Makka Festival of Culture and Environment proved to be successful, the small building holding the panel discussion filled with shifting crowds throughout the discussion. By the reaction of this years' crowd so readily embracing the event, it is anticipated that next year's festival can only improve by adding more people, time and space to accommodate the excitable and motivated group. Hope to see your smiling face and hear your input as the community assembles again next year!



Mr. Edwin Marr, Councilor of the Llandwey Division, makes announcements in Yallahs in preparation for the day's activities.



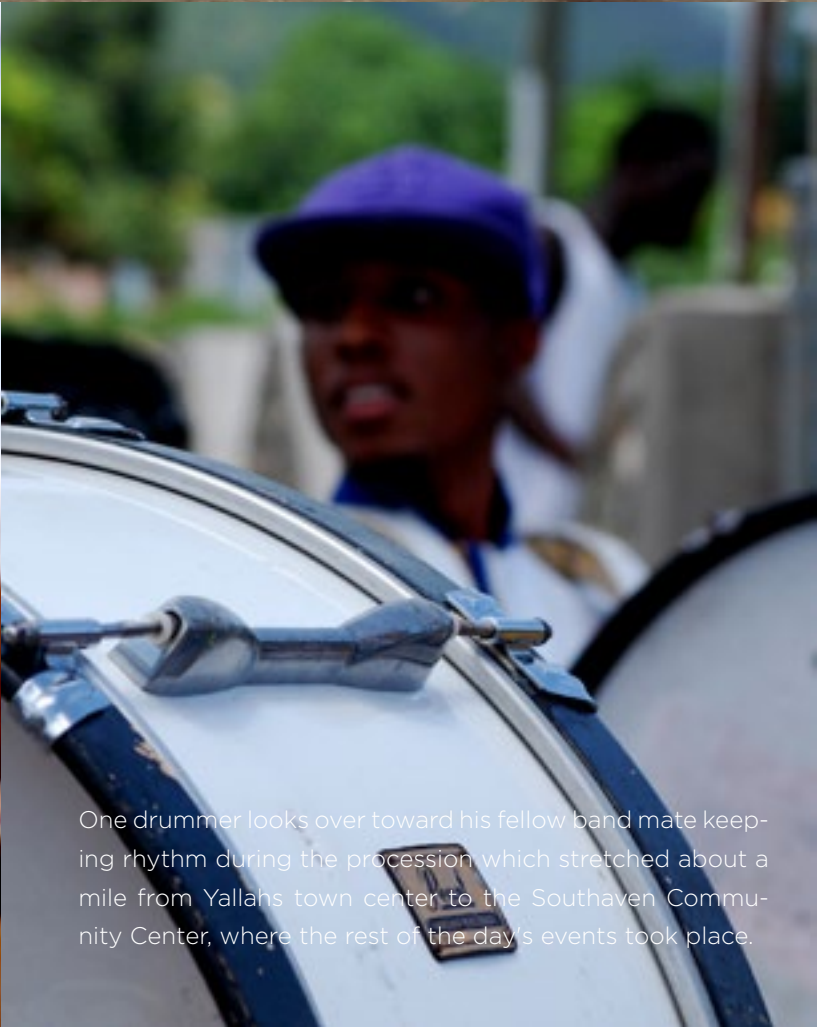
Caught in mid-air, dancers from the Jaguar Jan Academy of the Performing Artists lively up the community members coming out to inquire and observe the parade.



Locally grown products were featured in order to show the importance of local sustainability and self-reliance.



Participating in the panel discussion (covering such topics as environmental protection, sustainable agriculture and health), one woman rapidly scribes notes in response to research, opinions and questions posed by attentive and concerned individuals.



One drummer looks over toward his fellow band mate keeping rhythm during the procession which stretched about a mile from Yallahs town center to the Southaven Community Center, where the rest of the day's events took place.



JAMAICA SURFING ASSOCIATION

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A view of **MAKKA PRO**

From the Eyes of A Volunteer

Story by Joseph
Blount

photo by Lea Black



It was my first time witnessing the Makka Pro Surf event in Jamaica. It was great to see everything come together during the event after being a part of all of the planning that took place the months leading up to it. Maggie Wilmot, Secretary of the Jamaica Surfing Association, brought me to many meetings with the South Haven Citizens Association to see how they planned the culture festival that would kick-start the week leading up to the surf event. I was not able to attend each day of the festival but the feedback from the members of the association was extremely positive.

During the week leading up to the event, Icah Wilmot walked me through his program for tracking wave score data during the event. It did not take long to use his system since it is very user friendly. My responsibility during

the event was to relay the scores from the judges to Chrissana Wilmot, who would then enter the scores into the computer. Those scores would then be passed on to the announcer who would inform the surfers of their scores. There wasn't much room to make any errors so all of my attention was on the surfers catching their waves, and then waiting for the judges to score them.

It was my first time watching a surf competition and it was very exciting. The entire set up of the event gave it a warm vibe. I stayed around for a while after the contest ended to watch to the surfers in the free surf session, but was too tired to stay for the entire night for the after party. I'm definitely looking forward to helping out again for the 2014 Makka Pro Surf Contest.

L-R: Ivah, Billy, Maggie, Imani, Inilek, Içah | Photo by Ronan Gladu

The Wilmots

Jamaica's First Family of Surf

WRITTEN BY ANTHONY 'BILLY' WILMOT

The Wilmot Family has come to represent everything surfing in Jamaica. Patriarch Anthony “Billy” Wilmot is a man of many hats. Son of famous Jamaican Journalists Fred and Cynthia Wilmot, lead singer/songwriter for the reggae group The Mystic Revelers, founder of the Jamaica Surfing Association and operator of Jamaica’s first Surf Club/Camp, is probably best known in Jamaica for his ongoing role as “CC” in the island’s first soap opera “Royal Palm Estate”. Billy is a graduate of the Jamaica School of Agriculture where he met his wife Claudette.

They have produced five kids, a girl and 4 boys. The eldest, Ishack, like his brothers, graduated from Excelsior Primary and Kingston College High. He went on to pursue his tertiary education at the George Brown College for the Culinary Arts in Toronto, Canada where he completed his chef training.



Ishack and his sister Imani are the only regular foot surfers in the family. Ishack is well known for his big wave surfing prowess, which he demonstrates during hurricane surf conditions.

Inilek, their second child, pursued his tertiary education at the University of the West Indies where he graduated with a Masters Degree in Marine Biology. Inilek is known for his smooth, flowing style and is considered Jamaica’s “Rob Machado”. Inilek has also earned both national open and junior titles in his surfing career.

His younger brother Icah graduated from the University of Technology “UTech” with a bachelor degree in Enterprise Computing. Icah is currently the national champion and a contender at all major regional events. Icah has secured sponsorship deals with



Ivah Wilmot at Lighthouse
Photo by Billy Wilmot



Iciah at Lighthouse | Photot by Billy Wilmot



Photo by Kurt Stephenson



Ivah at Jamnesia | Photo by Imani Wilmot



Ishack at Copa | Photot by Billy Wilmot



Imani at Lighthouse | Photot by Billy Wilmot

notable surf brands such as Reef, On A Mission, Smith, Freestyle, and Rhythm Driven clothing to name a few.

Their fourth child is their only daughter Imani. She is currently completing her bachelor degree in Enviornmental Studies and Film Studies at the University of Ottawa in Canada. Like her brothers, Imani has represented Jamaica at numerous regional and international surfing events and has held the womens national championship title on many occasions.

Ivah, not only the youngest son, but the youngest child of the five, is currently in high school, and is at the top of his young surfing game. He has already represented his country at numerous world junior surfing championships and is a constant threat to the top spot at all national junior and open events.

The Matriarch of the clan Claudette “Maggie” Wilmot is another remarkable individual. Social worker, JSA secretary, mother of all, and all around dynamo, Maggie is the secret king pin of the family. She is the one who keeps everything on track and is the knee jerk response for all domestic issues that arise on a day-to-day basis. She runs the surf camp, and in her spare time is a loving and supportive mate to Billy.

The children are chips off the old blocks. First son Ishack finished his chef training and has his own catering service, Inilek, number 2, has his Master’s degree in Marine Biology and is working at the Oracabessa Fish Sanctuary, Icah, number 3, has graduated with his Bachelor’s Degree in IT and is a professional surfer. The big boys have their own band “From the Deep” which is the first “Surf Reggae” band on the island. They have made a big impact in the underground music scene on the island. Sister Imani is on a scholarship pursuing Environmental Studies and Film Studies and is currently the Coordinator at Zoom Productions; she is a



Inilek at Makka | Photo by Billy Wilmot



poet in her own right. Youngest sibling Ivah is a student at the Kingston College High School for boys and is one of the hottest young groms around.

The family also hosts the fortnightly Jamnesia Sessions at their home, which provides a stage for upcoming bands, singers, groups, poets and all talent to practice and perfect their craft in front of a live audience while working with live musicians. The sessions have also become famous for their vegetarian cuisine courtesy of "Shack's Resturant" where Ishack serves up the best veretarian food around to an appreciative clientele who have seen the nurturing of notable stars such as Protoje, Chronixx, Raging Fyah, Kabaka Pyramid and many others.



STORY BY IMANI WILMOT

I was pretty young when I started surfing; I was only about 7 or 8 years old when I rode my first wave. There weren't many girl surfers at that time, or for most of my younger learning years, but there was always Jacquian Lawton. Jacquian was the legendary Jamaican female surfer when I was growing up, and as a youngster in the game, I looked up to her.

Other than myself, the only other surfer girls were Nathalie Zenny. Danielle O'hayon, and the Beckford sisters, Elim and Esther. Tabby, and Makeida Beckford would also occasionally jump in and ride a wave with us in front of the house at Cable Hut Beach.

I grew up a water baby, playing and dancing along the shores of paradise for as long as I can remember. "A rose among the thorns" is what my daddy would call me: an only girl with four brothers. Our little beach in Bull Bay, Jamaica was paradise for me. The sand would often get too hot for bare feet, and the beach wasn't secluded, but the water was always warm and inviting. Water has always been my element and there was enough of the glistening Caribbean Sea there for me to be content.

Growing up in a surfing family meant that it wasn't long before I was up on my own board gliding towards the beach and the rolling hills in the background. After our surf sessions, my brothers and I would often explore the seagrape bushes, enjoying the sweet, juicy, purple fruits in the shade. Some days, when the waves were flat, we'd blow the fuzzy balls off the tall cotton trees that formed the barriers between our little feet and the confinement of civilization, and watch them race away toward the horizon. Being an only girl meant having to keep up and be just as tough as the boys.

S



Like A Girl

I eventually got good enough to represent Jamaica on the international scene, and in 2004, at 14 years old, I entered my first International Surfing Association World Surfing Games in Ecuador. And all this time, there were still only a few of us girls who surfed. Since then, I have represented Jamaica at several ISA games, Pan American Surfing Association (PASA) games, and at the Jupiter Beach Fall Classics; and I've been awarded numerous awards.

Not only have I gained significant experience about competitive surfing, but I've also seen our Jamaican female surfer population dwindle. This is what led me to start Surf Girls Jamaica – Jamaica's first all-girl surf club – and kick-start 'Surf Like A Girl' in 2010 with the help of the Jamaica Surfing Association and the Jamnesia Surf Camp.

Surf Like A Girl is a series of learn-to-surf

camps specifically designed for girls – regardless of age. The camp, taught by myself and some of Jamaica's finest surf instructors, and professional and professional-amateur surfers, pays special attention to both the theoretical and physical aspects of surfing; such as competition ethics and athlete nutrition. As a young female surfer representing Jamaica internationally, I was able to recognize the need for athlete mentorship, and the Surf Like A Girl surf camp satisfies this need by creating a nurturing and supportive environment where all girls are encouraged to step outside their boundaries to become the best they can be.

Surf Like A Girl has recently seen its fourth staging, growing strong since the very beginning. It has helped to rejuvenate Jamaica's female surfing population by introducing more girls to Jamaica's surfing scene.

Girls of all ages learning the ropes from some of Jamaica's top surfers



Photo by Jamie Brissick



Imani giving a few tips



L-R: Danielle O'hayon, Elim Beckford, Esther Beckford, Imani Wilmot



Surf Like A Girl participants



Surf Like A Girl participants





Ackeam Phillips

BY ALROY LAWRENCE

Have you ever met someone with so much potential that, though unfair and if not down right presumptuous, you cannot help but to expect nothing but greatness from them? Well, if you have then you can relate to this phenomenon, and for those of you who have not been so fortunate to meet such a person, let me introduce you to Ackeam “Bob di Builder” Phillips one of Jamaica’s surfing sensations.

I met Ackeam about five years ago on one of my Sunday morning treks down to our local beach; he was running from the beach towards the main road in an hurry to cross the street. He had a surfboard under his arm - a scene one is accustomed to seeing somewhere else, like California or Hawaii, but not here. This is Bull Bay; 8 miles from Kingston, one mile from Shooters Hill. Plus this is Cable Hut beach, the “Rainbow Grilz” party spot. But I was fairly new to the community so I thought; well, you might be able to rent the boards on the beach.

When I got on the beach to my surprise there were no surfboards for rent, and no one surfing; just the regular guys juggling a football in a circle. I did, however, notice the size of the waves; they were huge and crashing hard on the shore with a thundering sound. I stood for a moment to take in the sight and sound of the early morning vibes on the beach when I saw Ackeam returning



to Donald Quarrie High school, my name is Ackeam Phillips aka “Bob”. Bob is my nick name, shorting for “Bob the builder”. When I was younger and just start out surfing, I used to catch the waves before they would even break and they would always just build up on the inside, so they were like, yo we should call this dude Bob the Builder.

ALROY: So how old were you when you started surfing?

ACKEAM: I started surfing when I was about 10 or 11 years old, I made it on the junior team when I was 14, and then I went on my first surf trip. I went to Tahiti to represent Jamaica in the World Surfing Games. We didn't get to participate because we didn't have the right visa so we had to stay in LA for a week. Some phone calls were made to the embassy and we were given the go ahead, but by the time we got there we missed the heat, we missed everything. Overall it was a good experience thought. We were able to



with a different surfboard at his side, and the same hurried pace.

His pace was more of a half jog/half walk as he headed toward my direction, the western section of the beach where the swells were much larger and the breaks more suitable for surfing. I stopped him and asked; “Do you surf or are you just messing around? And where did you get the boards?” He smiled with a slight child-like embarrassment as if to say “C'mon man what do you think?”

It wasn't until that very moment that I realized I had asked a stupid question, but he replied; “Yeah man, mi surf.” He's probably answered this question so many times, He gave me a brief explanation about his board not being able to manage the waves so he had to borrow his brothers, but I could tell he really wanted to get back into the water so I let him go about his business. I watched him rip wave after wave for about thirty (30)

minutes while I stood in awe and wished I had a camera.

I eventually met up with him one Sunday after a football game where he played defense for a small interview. ALROY: So Ackeam what's up men? Saw you playing football; I didn't know you were a baller. Tell us about that?

ACKEAM: Well, football for me is like every other Sunday, some friends and I get together, chill out, play some football and run a pot or boat (cook a meal) depending on how much people is there. Yuh know, keeps the friendship going, make sure everybody is ok and doing well, play some football and enjoy ourselves.

ALROY: Tell me a little about yourself and how you started surfing?

Ackeam Phillips: Well, I'm 21 years old, I went



see how the contest was organized and how the judges scored. In 2005 I went on my second trip to California where I finished 37 in the world ,which was one of the best ranking on our junior team. Since then I've been pushing to achieve more because I know I can do more.

ALROY: How did you got involved in surfing?

ACKEAM: One day I was on my veranda and Fire T aka Joel Lawrence asked me if I wanted to try surfing and I was like what's that? I went with him and saw some guys surfing and I thought it looked cool, so I wanted to try it. I tried and when I stood up on my first wave, it was good, I was sold. I started paddling for my own waves, after that I would get up everyday and surf. When I came

home from school, I'd do my homework and head straight to surf... I practiced everyday.

I have to give Fire T his props. He's the one that took me off my veranda and asked Icah to teach me to surf, even though I started surfing before I knew how to swim. I was out there scared but it wasn't in my head at the time, I wasn't thinking about drowning even though I couldnt swim, there were a lot of people around me so I didn't have any fear at all, up to this day I'm fearless. It was a big step for me, because I was competing in JSA (Jamaica Surfing Association) events and I couldn't swim. I think I was about 13 when I entered the JSA tournament and made it to the finals... and even then I couldn't swim. There were always People was on the beach waiting for me, yuh nuh, like if I'm riding a

wave and I fall off my board they would help me get back on. Even though I finish last it was a good experience, everyone was cheering for me, I was the youngest to make it out the pack and compete against the big guns. Even some of the guys I knock out in the rounds (open round) was supporting me, pushing me and telling me I can do it.

ALROY: At a young age you got an opportunity to travel to a lot of different countries, what was that experience like?

ACKEAM: Well, you know, once you travel and you tell other people you're from Jamaica, they are like 'aw Bob Marley, Bob Marley!' They would ask you if you have any weed yuh nuh, and you say no, they be like aw, let's take a picture. It's like everywhere

we go, any part of the world the Jamaican Surf team goes we take more pictures than the other teams. It's like the other teams are in the background. Everybody just wants to take picture. Sometimes when we go surfing it's like we have to run to the water because the people wants us to take pictures and sign autograph. But it's a good experience to learn different langue, meet different people, try different food, and enjoy their culture, see how it go yuh nuh.

ALROY: What are the names of some of the countries you have competed in?

ACKEAM: I've competed in Tahiti, United States, Brazil, Portugal, Chile, Peru, Barbados, Trinidad and France.

ALROY: How many international competi-





Irons, even though he's passed and gone, "RIP" Andy Irons.

ALROY: Where do you see yourself in the next five years in surfing?

ACKEAM: The next five years in surfing I would like to put Jamaica on the map in surfing, you know, help Jamaica get the first medal in surfing, because we haven't gotten a medal in ages.

ALROY: What about college, do you see yourself attending a university?

ACKEAM: Yes, I hope to get a good sponsor in surfing that I can have enough money to

go back to school. It would be a good thing for me to go to college to learn about the make up of the ocean and the formation of waves. I want to get familiar with the ocean because I'm in it every day.

ALROY: You're also involved with a modeling agency, right? How did you get involved in that, and how is it going?

ACKEAM: Yeah, Pulse was having an audition and my friends encouraged me to sign up and I got accepted, so I'm currently working with Pulse modeling agency, but it's kind of on a break from it right now, but I guess they will call me when they are ready.

tions have you competed in since your surfing career started, and what was your best finish?

ACKEAM: Well, one of my best finishes was in 2008 in Trinidad, I won the Juniors CSN (Caribbean Surfing Network) Championship. It was a good experience for me, I went there with my head on my body, after every heat I watched the footage over and over, and the next heat I went out there and I push myself harder. I finished 37th in California in 2005, 49th in Brazil in 2006, and in 2010 I got one of my best result in Brazil in one of the WQS in a air show I finished 4th place.

ALROY: Who are some of the top surfers you have competed against since your career started?

ACKEAM: I've competed against Miguel Pufu, who is number four in the world; I've surfed with Gabriel Mendez, Phillip Godido. I surf with a lot of big surfers, I don't really remember a lot of their names right now.

ALROY: Who are some of the surfers that inspire you?

ACKEAM: Kelly Slater, yeah he's the number one surfer in the world right now, I can surf, I can do some of the tricks he can do, not as good but I'm practicing. But really and truly, if I was to be like any surfer it would be Andy



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