

STEVE KRAJENSKI-AND YES,
HE MADE IT.





compiled by Esteban Bojorquez, Kirk Putnam, Matt Miller, and Alex Kopps

THE GOOD THE BAD
AND THE SUBBIE.

1967, California. The seeds of rebellion were planted.

A foot-and-a-half of nose broke off the longboard I was accustomed to riding. Enlightenment can strike at any moment.

That evening I reshaped the nose at the point of the break—a true hatchet job.

It stoked a fire that's now burned for almost 40 years.

Within a wave lie many natural forces. My quest? To find every inch of speed within a few feet of glide. The journey has taken me far from the mainstream. I became an out-cast, my boards interpreted as oddities, my rides freaks of nature. I lived in an abandoned chicken coop with a 20-board quiver and my girlfriend Karen. No heat, no hot water. It was good friends and the freedom to surf at a moment's notice. Life was good and life was hard.

I wasn't the only one. Ideas were shared and experiences exchanged.

We shot miles of footage, analyzing the film frame by frame. The equipment became more specialized, demanding perfect conditions and total physical and mental commitment. Life revolved around a few seconds of glide...

—Esteban Bojorquez
aka Steve Krajewski
aka Dirt



DIRTY

The displacement hull Stubbie is a board designed around the parameters of speed, feeling, and flex. They are generally round, full-outlined boards seven to eight feet in length, 21" to 23" wide, thickness around 3", with nose widths ranging from 17" to 19", tails 14" to 16", and wide points located anywhere from 6" to 10" ahead of center, and a flex fin from 8.5" to 9.5" in depth, with a base of 5" to 6" long. Hulls utilize a combination of S-decks, straight rocker, and neutral rails.

The concept is to drop in, hit the bottom of the wave, bank over on the rail, which in conjunction with the flex fin, blasts the board out and up, slingshot-like into the highline of the wave where the power is. Once there, the hull and fin work together to keep the rider locked into that power zone. If balanced right, you can stay in that highline position, trimming as fast as the wave is for as long as the wave is. This requires minimal rider input—the board does all the work. The hull rails enable the board to become part of the wave. Flat bottom boards ride on top of the wave face—hulls penetrate it and become part of it. The hull utilizes the wave energy to spring it forward, matching the speed of the wave without having to break trim, butt wiggle, or do the Huntington Hop. Just lock-in and hang on my friend. Let it fly through the gears and feel the wave...subtle adjustments made with toe pressure or ankle flick. Of course, if one needs to drop down and blast past a section or do a cutback, go ahead and let it fly. Minimal effort earns the greatest return.

-Matt Miller

The regulars at Four Mile were a pretty mellow group, but everyone got their share of waves. Bob was good friends with Ritchie West who used to come up every so often. Ritchie was a phenomenal surfer, but he was also incredibly aggressive out in the water, making it tough to get excited about his surfing. Having watched Bob

and Ritchie on their Wilderness hulls, and having gone back to riding one of Greg's boards (a de-tuned "Dirt" machine) when I was home for summer made me want to have Greg shape a board that I thought would be more suited to the full range of Santa Cruz conditions—Middle Peak and the Slot at the Lane, minus tide at Mitchell's and Natural Bridges, winter peaks at Moss Landing, dredging dumpers at a reef up from Scott's, summer swells at the reef. The first version was 7'2" with a pulled tail, a fair amount of vee and the wide point just ahead of center—still a hull with round rails and a thin tail. This thing worked in a wide variety of conditions. My highlight day was my 20th birthday when I caught Stockton Avenue head high with two other people out. The second version was 7'4", which I still have, where everything got refined with a smooth transition between hull and flats—slight vee, low rails through the back half of the board. A version of a Stubbie that performed in nearly every kind of wave Santa Cruz offered. It allowed me to aim for Dave Sutton's style, while still getting the feeling of laying the board over and driving on the rail through the turn.

-Mike Brown

Displacement hulls, to the cognoscenti, are nothing but bulbous, sensuous, convex curves, alluringly feminine in spite of lacking the hourglass physique—the Peter Paul Reubens' women of the surfboard world, aimed not at herding water in a *roll-'em roll-'em roll-'em rawhide* fashion, but rather, seducing and steering the water around its invasive and disturbing shape, tricking the water into not only wanting, but even needing the board to fulfill its own sinuous-curving destiny before perishing—spawning salmon like on the sand.

Hulls Need Water. Water Loves Hulls.

-Brian Hilbers

TONY MASIE'S FLEX TAIL



The incessant waves peeled mechanically from start to finish. The thing that struck me the most about the place was the way the waves ended. Not a closeout or mush burger, they just wrapped and bent into the inside bowl and gently faded onto the shallows. It was a surreal moment staring off the bow of the boat while I dropped anchor and studied the line-up.

Andy was the first in the line-up, out the back I watched him stroke into a six-foot, blue-green wall, fade down the face and crank a ten-yard bottom turn—arms raised Nat Young fashion, while taking two steps forward up to the highline. His speed and the wave's speed was incredible, as fast as he was going in perfect trim, he seemed to only stay just ahead of the curl. Putnam was next: he found his position, paddled, and took off fading into a backside bottom turn, crouched and lightly grabbed his rail, pulling his board up into the tension of the pocket and drove it to the inside.

For Krajewski, this was a study of when all things come together. Cojo with perfect conditions, 30 some years of surfing and a surfboard designed with these types of waves in mind; it is like Miles Davis playing with John Coltrane during the Kind of Blue sessions—just a sight to behold. Krajewski was taking off so deep up toward Cockroaches, his waves seemed unmakeable at times. These big sets would come in from out the back and he would paddle farther and farther over, taking off over the ledge and just driving the longest bottom turns I had ever seen. Out of the turns, he would project himself down the line so fast that it seemed only a minimum amount of his rail was engaged on the face. Crouched two feet from the nose in perfect trim, cutting water like a Chinese high-diver, Krajewski would drive these rocket ships into the inside bowl. On the inside with speed to burn, Krajewski would lay over cutbacks, burying eight feet of rail into a full roundhouse. Do you know how hard it is to bury eight feet of rail? Try it! Also, Krajewski can proudly boast he has never worn a leash—not many people can say that.

-Wesley Davis

— 6'4" LITTLE IN THE EARLY 80s,
WITH SHOP SIGN
PAN MALLOY - INDO ON A 6'4" LITTLE

QUIT AT THE BU.

DAVID LLOYD

D. HUMP





HAND FOILED UOLAN
FLEX FINS.



Be careful, you might get addicted...and if you do, it will mess with your mind. You, the way you surf,
won't be the same. I'm just warning you!"
-Greg Liddle



BOB SHORE
DISPLACES WATER

70's

X 19 STEVE KRAJEWSKI - MOTEL CALIFORNIA.



RICH PAVEL

JIMMY GAMBON.
ROCK CRAWL, SOUTH AFRICA



“Don’t stand on the tail or you’ll spin out,” was his only warning as I clambered down the cliff with a six-foot something disc so wide I could barely get my arms around to grip the rail. The scythe of a fin was pushed up, seemingly to the middle of the board. On my first wave, I spun out...second, the same. After four waves and four failures, I jumped straight to the nose and leaned over the inside rail...oooooh, baby. Smooth acceleration and lift, a lot more than I expected out of the wave. The board found an energy source that I was not aware existed. It was like taking off the parking brake. I was hooked.

It was the time of the Bunker rails, beak noses, four-inch wide diamond tails, Rainbow fins right on the tail. I hooked up with a fellow geologist to room together in Point Loma. With giant feet and an infectious cackle of a laugh, Dave Lloyd was to be my hull spirit guide. He hung the boards on the ceiling in our living room so the shadows would play on the subtle transition from rail to bottom curve. Wide, round noses, 17" arc tails, and S-decks blended almost organically into the antithesis of a “real” surfboard. When the mood was right, Dave would spin yarns about Yater,



GRFY WALL - MALIBU.



Greenough, flex fins, and the synergy that Greg Liddle had captured to create the perfect rail-turning machine. The proof was on the screen when Dave would break out the 8mm; I could watch that shit all night...and did.

The thing about a hull is that you get immediate feedback: If you foul up even a little bit...you swim. But when you get it right, you will know just as quickly. If you are using the rail properly, you will look really, really good. You can't help but get that California point surf style on a hull...it's the only way they'll work.

The rail turn is the tie that binds hull surfers together. To roll the board up on edge and feel the instant pull down-the-line. To be able to change direction without losing any momentum and knowing that by tacking your turns together, there is no limit to how fast you can go. The feeling of five feet of rail and four inches of twisted flex fin holding you on the pure line just does not happen on any other surfboard.

Every self-respecting huller owes it to themselves to make a hajj to Kirk Putnam's garage. Through a series of coincidences, cosmic randomness, and Swaylocks.com, I fell within the gravitational pull of Kirk's world and arranged an audience a few years ago. The garage lies a few miles from the freeway along the edge of the valley. It is a modest, two-car space with a big padlock and Ginger providing security. KP greeted me like a long-lost cousin then fell into a rap as he lifted the door.

Some artists paint, some artists sing, some write, some act: Kirk talks. The man has a gift for gab every bit as inspiring as Monet's eye for color. He can layer his stories like paint on a canvas, build to a crescendo like a symphony, or slap you with stinging BB King riffs. There is always a punch line, an ending, always a payoff. The man talks the best story, ever, peri-

od. He also never throws anything away.

Half of the garage is a work area with tools, shaping rack, and a bundle of full-length hull templates that would make any shaper's mouth water. The other half is a reproduction of Liddle's shop, including photos, countertop, sign, and a sailing trophy George Greenough won in his youth. But most of all, like the sediments of the Grand Canyon standing on end, is his collection of hulls from Simmons to Yater, Keyo to Liddle, Gross to Bojorquez. You can run your hands along the rails, peer down the stringers, and revel in the foils. Kirk fills in the spaces between the boards with an oral history of Southern California surfing...it doesn't get much better than that.

The First One is Free
-Lee Vanderhurst



JOHN KITIMURA

MARK ANDREINI SHAPING
~~FERRARI~~ KITTY HAWK BOARD



FERRARIS



PAUL FERRARIS



KITTYHAWK USING IT
IN SOUTH AFRICA -



CAMPBELL



BOJORQUEZ COLLECTION



BOJORQUEZ COLLECTION



UFO SIGHTING - WEST VALLEY
 STUBBIE TEST TRACK
 FLEXIBLE FIGURES LURKING DEEPLY.
 MIKE MCLESCCO, BERNIE TOSTENSON
 CAROL DAVIS AND WES DAVIS
 THE SAND CRAB.

It's inevitable that when I walk down the beach someone will say something like, "Nice fun board." (Would you ride a board that wasn't fun?) What I like even better is when I paddle out in some two-foot shitty beachbreak just to get wet and someone says, "Perfect board for these waves." Comparing a so-called "fun board" made for two-foot beachbreak with a fully committed hull design is like comparing a Chevy Cavalier to a Ferrari F-40.

Your typical beginners' "fun board" has a couple of gears, but my boards have six or more. When you try to explain that this board is designed to work in really good, fast, down-the-line point waves, more often than not you just get a vacant stare in response.

-Tony Masie





ALL FOUR ON THE FLOOR
GREG LIDDLE



Andreini put the 7'3" down and used both hands to give me a crash course in hull design and its performance characteristics: "With a rounded bottom and pinched rails," he said in hushed yet excited tones, "the board rolls over onto its rail and cuts through the water." Andreini stood in a parallel stance, moving his two hands, one positioned behind the other, from thumb edge to pinky edge, simulating a surfboard moving from rail to rail. "The fin is based on a Greenough flex concept," he continued, "and when you combine the knifey rails with a flexible fin that builds and then releases tension as the board changes direction, it feels like you're driving through the water, rather than merely skimming on top of it." Soon, we were discussing this design in detail, myself, the eager student, and Andreini, the willing master. I quickly forgot about the old 7'3" sitting there on the grass. Andreini's words filled my mind with new visions of speed, of drive, of "leaving a trough," of drawing Greenough lines and figure-8s across the open face. At the end of our conversation, I asked Andreini to shape me one, and my life changed forever.

Three months later, I stood on the rocks at Supertubes, brand new Andreini 6'10" Stubbie under my arm, scanning the horizon for a lull. The sun was shining, the surf was head-high, the wind offshore, and the Jeffrey's Bay race-track was in full effect—waves poured in from deep water, drew off the Supertubes shelf, and spun down-the-line building speed and momentum as Southern Indian Ocean energy pushed down the reef. I paddled out, sat in my favorite spot for about 30 seconds, then turned and went on the first empty wave that came my way. I dropped in and set my edge, got to the bottom, and banked it over on the rail as the wave squared up on the reef. The entire rail line of the 6'10" cut through the water; the flex fin drew back like a bow and then released, projecting me down the line and up the face in one smooth swoop. After a few moments of arcing along the lip line, I rolled the board over onto its heel-edge and drove down the face again, the board building momentum with each rail change. As the wave sped down the shelf, growing in size and steepening as it uncoiled over shallower and shallower reef, the board cut through the surface-tensioned face with increasing speed, driving from low line to high. I felt the bottom turns in my belly, G forces that transformed into butterflies as the board moved me from the base of the wave toward the weightlessness of highline trim.

Kicking out of that first wave, I realized I had discovered the design I had been seeking all these years, a board that captures the essential elements of surfing: speed, drive, and the effortlessness of perfect trim. During that maiden session, I began to look at waves in a new light. Rather than watch the lip pitch over as I had always done, my eyes focused on the trough, that sweet transition where water is first drawn up the face, where the surface tension is greatest—that often overlooked area of the wave where the hull likes to ride, where it revs up, gathers speed, and finds the trimline, reaffirming, rejuvenating, and reproducing my first sensations as a true surfer.

-Jon Kitimura

By 1970, Mickey Dora had checked-out of Malibu, the shortboard revolution was happening. Longboards were vanishing like some of the bad drugs at the time and some of the surfboards were just as bad. Some people were just cutting their longboards down. A guy walked by who had cut down a beautiful Phil Edwards model Hobie. Is nothing sacred? I know Mickey had split, but who is this guy surfing every bit as stylish as the Cat himself? I thought to myself: he looks like Dora, he surfs like Dora, who is he? He said his name was Steve, but his friends called him "Dirt," 'cause he was always broke and smoked dirt weed. I listened to Steve and his friends talk about how surfing in a contest was prostitution, that surfing with a dork cord was like wearing a condom. These guys were unraveling the truths of surfing much as Mickey had done.

There was a surfer at Malibu named Greg Liddle: great surfer and part-time art student. Greg had a surf shop and carried Jacobs and Yater surfboards and was learning to shape boards in the late '60s by masters Hap Jacobs and Rennie Yater. Greg's shaping was influenced by what the Aussie's Nat Young, Wayne Lynch, and Michael Peterson were riding.

By 1972-'73, there were Stubbie surfboards at Malibu, Rincon, and the Ranch, climbing and dropping, carving up the place. Greg Liddle's potato chip, Stubbie round boards were so deceiving to the surfing public. The surf media had gone a different direction: semi-guns, hard downrails, two fins, three fins, four—you get the idea.

Greg had mastered the flow of hydro dynamics, the shape and foil of the board with his single flex fin. Liddle Surfboards were very deceiving. They did not look like fast boards, there was no visual association with jet fighters or Indy cars, just these round, stubby, potato-chip looking things.

People would always drop in on a round board rider thinking they would not make a section only to be run over by the Liddle rider. Steve Krajewski was the best of these riders. Andy Davis, Marty Peach, Tony Masiel, Little Grossman, and Greg Liddle were some of the best watermen I've seen. Our friendships and our Liddle Surfboards were so personal; we were like a tribe.

-John Parker
The Missing Link



GSS



VALLEY PIMPING

BOJORQUEZ COLLECTION



JIMMY GAMBOA ON A COPY OF THE DEATH BOARD.

HOWARD

Once you've ridden hulls they mess with you. They have a sensual beauty to their form: curved decks, round bottoms, and thin rails. It's a formula you build into all your boards, be they Stubby or semi-gun. Then there's the flex fin—the energy that makes it all come alive!

So where is the problem? The mind-fuck? When people saw Greenough on Velo, they knew that was it—that's how we should be surfing—only standing up. Thus, stand-up boards based on Velo were being built. Like Velo, they had displacement hull going into dead-flat tail, S-decks (Velo had no deck) neutral rails, and a single flex fin. Their problem was that the dynamics involved riding a kneeboard are different than when standing up, so adjustments had to be made to the stand-up boards: e.g., adjust the hull depth, put in a touch of tail rocker, decrease size of fin and change its placement, etc. Some horrible boards were made, as well as some very good ones. Unfortunately, just when the hulled Stubbies seemed to be tuned in, they dropped off the mainstream radar in favor of the down-railed Hawaiian semi-gun that was in vogue at the time. Hawaii became the epicenter, the focus of the surfing world. Thus, the trends in board design, style, clothing, etc., spread out from there like a wild brushfire—burning all in its path that had come before.

-Grandpa

A friend had a 7'2" Greg Liddle pig board hull in my garage while he went to join the fun and games in Vietnam. It had a thick, round tail with a slight vee bottom and a very large Greenough-type flex fin. I ignored it.

My friend came home on leave, and we went to ride Malibu. It was three to four feet, Kiddie Bowl was just beautiful, and he wanted to switch boards to try the weird, short, round board I had. I could not believe how incredible his board worked, I never gave it back, well, not until he came back from Nam. After that, my concept of surfboard design changed. For some reason, Greg had the right combo of rocker, bottom, and rail figured out. The shorter hull allowed you to do sweeping, down-the-line rail turns and move with the wave instead of fighting it the way most shortboards did. There is a huge glide factor with the hull that wasn't there with my other shortboards.

Most surfers don't get the hull: it looks different, it's too round, it's too wide, it only has that weird flex fin. Well, that's what I thought at first, but 30 years later I'm still riding them. I used to love surfing Malibu in the post longboard era, you had the beauty and grace of the Liddle league and the radical Zephyr Z-boys. But the hulls allowed me a free-flowing ride I had never felt before, I could ride higher and deeper in the wave, turning around sections doing really round cutbacks and flying down-the-line. The shapes allow you to climb and drop in the front third of the board. Everyone interested quickly learned the merits of such boards. Those who rode Malibu and the other point breaks only had to watch Steve Krajewski and Greg Liddle to see the vast potential of the hull-shaped board.

-Roger Doucette

KAREN BOJORQUEZ



STEVE ON HIS "MAGIC" DEATH BOARD
- 100 YARDS TIL' IMPACT.



EAT THAT POSSUM.

In 1966 we were busy surfing Governments on our nose-riders when an old Renault, with half the air out of the tires, pulls up to the beach and out pops Danny Hazard and George Greenough. He had with him his 5'2" spoon named "Velo" with a flexible center and a slender, swift, flexible fin. The entire design embodies the displacement hull. George swam out on his kneeboard to the top of the point where the waves were 6' to 8' and breaking top to bottom in front of large rocks. This is the sort of thing that our kind avoided. I watched in awe as he drove the deepest, hardest bottom turns I have ever witnessed, and came straight up into complete cylinders where he would disappear for several seconds, then come flying out onto the shoulder into a figure-8 cutback and accelerate back into the tube with the same velocity that he had coming out. He would repeat this process as many as two or three times on the same wave. Having restored surfboards from age 12, it would only be a year-and-a-half later that I would start building complete boards for others and myself, starting with a template from George Greenough. Since that day, I have built very few boards that have not carried a little bit of what I learned that day from George Greenough.

The principles of displacement hulls was originally a science applied to boats or watercraft and a concept that surfaced through many scientific magazines through the first half of the 20th century—principles originally applied to surfboards by Bob Simmons during the 1940s, followed by Joe Quigg in the 1950s, and finally by George Greenough in the 1960s. These individuals' boards had key ingredients in common: wide, parallel templates; foiled thickness flows going from thickest ahead of center and tapering to thinner at the tail and thinner at the nose; a bottom curve that lifted in the nose and gradually straightened back to the tail; a rail line that was higher in the nose and gradually dropped to low in the tail; a bottom curve that went from round in the nose and gradually flattened out toward the tail. All three designers used the materials of their day, which included redwood, balsa wood with fiberglass, and, finally, foam with fiberglass. They looked for a way to produce speed and projection from the board as it went through the water. The ultimate goal was increased speed, while pushing the board through or across an angle. It was George Greenough who completed the concept by adding a tall, narrow-based fin modeled off of the tail-fin of a tuna fish, which allowed the water to rush past the slender foil and quickly release, making the board accelerate. This, combined with a short rail line (created by the length coming down from 10' to 5'), allowed the board to release water as it achieved maximum planing speed. It actually went faster coming out of the turn than going in.

KRAJEWSKI²⁰
SUPER 8 FROM



By contrast, the early 1970s brought the hydroplane design based on Dick Brewer and his flat bottom, flat deck concept with a box, or vertical-sided rail that dropped-down around the edge. This design creates automatic lift from nose to tail, which brings the board completely to the surface of the water as soon as it starts moving. This design became the standard and continues to this day with the concave bottom being a variation of the same theme. This design creates much more neutral handling since the board is always placed on top of the water and ready for any direction change that the rider decides. This design is much simpler and easier to achieve success with in the shaping room. Unfortunately, there are very few of us board builders who continued to develop the alternative displacement hull design, which I believe is a proper contrast and offers a different approach for riders who are so inclined.

In conclusion, a displacement hull is a wide, round bottom board with a very thin foil and straight bottom, which gives the rider the sensation of driving through the water rather than on top of it. This design sets a course that the rider is obligated to follow, only applying and releasing pressure as necessary to allow the board to follow the natural fall line, or power zone, in the wave—a very flowing and soul-satisfying experience. By contrast, the hydroplane design allows for neutral handling, and the rider is in command at all times. Maneuver-oriented surfers can fit in as many maneuvers as the wave allows. As for me, I choose to ride my displacement hull and let it take me for the ride.

-Marc Andreini

In the summer it gets very hot where we live. On occasion, Steve would suggest a trip to the beach to cool down. We'd put what little money we had in the tank of an old car with no air conditioning. About midway through the canyon, the fresh ocean air would hit you, bringing you back to life. Steve would double park on PCH, look out the window past me to the nonexistent surf, and then, without a word, make a U-turn and drive home.

-Karen Bojorquez

"Put it in Neutral and Let it Fly"

-Paul Gross

I was watching Matt Miller ride his hook hog down the point in perfect trim when I made a simple observation. His body was postured in the exact same low center of gravity with his arms relaxed by his side for the whole ride! The only thing that seemed to move was his ankle tilt as he poured on the gas. I took it on instantly as a project. If I could train my right hip and shoulder to sit higher than my left side and apply my existing wave knowledge, I figured I could begin to learn the board. I scrambled back to the house, blew the cobwebs off my board, and hit the water. My very first wave was a waist-high sand gurgler that swung wide. I paddled into it, put my hands on the rails and slid awkwardly up to my feet dipping my inside rail deep and catching my knees in the face. When the water cleared from my eyes, I found myself in trim near the top of the wave with a 50-yard sand sucker before me. I stayed as square and low as I could, and when I leaned in it all came together. My ass puckered as I projected around a lip that landed ten feet ahead of me and I found myself back in the pocket going even faster than before. The rest of the ride I simply watched the water move along my rails as it bent and spun back up into the tube. I was hooked.

-Chris Malloy





WES DAVIS. PHOTO: IRA AMERSON



KIRK DRISCOLL



BOJORQUEZ COLLECTION

ANIMAL TRACKS CREW



1. UNIDENTIFIED AND NONPRESS

INT 2. KIRK PUTMAN SECOND POINT, THIRD GEAR



DIRT GOES LITE.



HALF DEAD ZOMBIE HOMO-EXOTIC
6'0" NUG RIDER



The recent resurrection of the single-fin as a mainstream surfboard is resulting in grave-robbing shapes and designs better left six feet under. The true Stubby surfer is, and has been, riding boards that have been refined constantly over the last 40 years by a group of shapers who know what it takes to hold the highline, bank from rail to rail without a hint of the hippity-hop, draw arcs on the wave by burying the rail from tip to tail, and harness that surface tension that will draw you down the line like a comet to the sun. These are riders that exalt in connecting a few nice rail turns as much, or more, than a successful barrel.

Who are the current Stubby shamans? Greg Liddle, Skip Frye, Scott Anderson, Paul Gross, Spencer Kellogg, Mark Andreini, Bob McTavish, Geoff McCoy (although he may not know it), Larry Mabile....

-Lee Vanderhurst

My personal involvement with Liddle "hulls" began in 1974 after buying a used one from a friend's older brother—a 7'0" apple-red potato chip hull that I shared with my brothers Ron and Rex. I wasn't quite sure what to make of it, or even what to do with it. After riding a few Malibu waves, however, I realized what this board was made for, and what direction I was ultimately headed: tapping small to medium-sized point break surf—specifically, Malibu Point. Watching Steve Krajewski take Malibu apart in the '70s stands out as a vivid memory. One incident, however, really confirmed my mind set. It was October 1974, and I watched Mickey Dora rip six-foot Malibu in one of his very last sessions there. Later that day, near the end of the wall, watching "The Cat" with his short john pulled halfway down, rinsing off under the single shower head I noticed his board was a Liddle 7'6" egg neatly tucked under his arm.

-Rob Rinaldi

Very few man-made objects deal functionally in three-dimensionally changing curves—most are vehicles required to move through fluid mediums: airplanes, boats, and to a limited extent, skis, snowboards, water skis, wakeboards, and, of course, surfboards.

An airplane designed in the late '30s, the Lockheed Constellation, is, in engineering circles, acknowledged as the most curve-intensive airplane ever built. The "Connie" (recognizable by its unique three tail stabilizers) had no cross section that remained the same for more than three feet: fuselage, wings, tails—the lot. Modern airliners are basically a long, unvarying tube with a nose and tail. The Constellation broke all multi-engine speed records until the advent of jets. The Connie's last functional use was with the Air Force, flying into the eyes of hurricanes to obtain weather data.

Displacement hulls are the Constellations of the surfboard world.

-Brian Hilbers

Tarzana, 1980. Hooked on that design, decided to visit the Liddle shop. Upon entering and finding nobody in the front, I opened a door that led to the laminating room. It smelled of resin, with boards on the glassing racks. Somehow I was no longer so sure about my decision, I bought a transition board, but not an egg-type design. Later, as I walked by a lad who was at the base of the cliffs of Palos Verdes Cove, carrying a Liddle, I hear, "A Liddle goes a long way." More certain now...why not go for the real saucer, potato chip, bar of soap, slab, sea slug, carver, Flexi-Flyer, Stubby? Greg was sitting on the showroom floor during our conversation when a customer entered. Greg remained seated, and the customer stepped over him and asked to speak to the manager. Greg identified himself and the customer asked where the skateboards were. Without getting up, Greg pointed to the front door and said, "Sears."

-R. Safady

I grew up watching two guys surf—Tom Mobley and Matt Miller. They rode boards that didn't fit into the normal categories of "short" or "long" boards. Tom rode his own design, a vee-bottom single-fin with belly in the nose, and Matt rode the works of Greg Liddle and Paul Gross. I watched them and their boards do amazing things with the waves. It was a different style of surfing than I had seen with traditional thrusters or longboards. It was not driving to do a big hit off-the-lip, nor was it drop-knee turns and hanging five. Their surfing was minimal, yet deliberate. These guys surfed their mid-lengths with precise and calculated movements. It was about rail-to-rail turns and trim lines that were no frills, yet connected sections that no one else could. The entire boards, from nose to tail, were always in contact with the water; the board and wave seemed to be connected. A single drawn-out bottom turn could spring them into a trim line that would take them down the point with amazing speed in all sizes of surf. I remember watching Matt during a "fin day." He would catch a wave off the top and ride it all the way down the point. Then you would see him run back up the point to Tom's house, grab the screwdriver, make an adjustment, and record it in the notebook, then continue running to the top for another paddleout.

-Nate Pidouck ✨



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