

Wednesday, August 08, 2007

Surfing Heritage Foundation Tour

August 4th was a special day for the members who attended the Surfing Heritage Foundation tour. For many of us, we were seeing the facility for the first time. The building is magnificent! Spencer Croul built and owns the structure and it is designed to display surfboards, house offices, and support a library. It also has ample storage space to archive items not on display. Dick Metz and Tom Pezman are also responsible for what has happened at the Foundation and have made a major investment in time, money, and property to insure the historical significance of surfing survives for future generations to enjoy.

When touring the facility with Mike Marshall (docent, surfer, and lifetime board builder) you begin to realize the effort people have put into this. Mike begins with the ancient boards and works his way around the building toward the transition (late 60's and 70's) boards. It is easy to note the similarities and differences between boards of different eras. Mike's presentation brought it all-together for many of us interested in surfboard evolution and the history surrounding surfing. He is one of several "experts" who guide people through the board-rich warehouse. There are information cards describing every board, for those who really want to dig into history.

I know that I will be returning to spend several days reading and seeing what I missed. Velzy's reproduction surfing shed is beautifully done and there is a film loop of Dale that is particularly interesting. I wish every shaper could tell their story (from those who shaped in the backyard, under the pier, in their parent's garage, to those who shaped in the production line of the 60's and survived in the present day economy).

Tom Pezman spoke to the club after Mike's tour. He is straight-forward and honest about the future of the facility. Currently, the Foundation is seeking monetary support. They also have many gaps to fill in their board display. Many significant boards are owned by collectors and will hopefully be shared with the up-and-coming surf generation. Many surfers, and some of our members, have donated money, surfboards, and other related memorabilia. Tom hopes we will continue to support the Foundation and think about their future. From my perspective, the Surfing Heritage Foundation will survive and be much like the Bishop Museum in Hawaii.

If you missed the tour, you should really try to put it on your calendar when you are in the area. I guarantee you will be excited when you walk in and reverent when you walk out.