

cutting(edge)



HOT SUITS – WETSUIT HEATER

www.hotsuits.com.au

Avail: www.pacificlongboarder.com

I can hear you Sydneysiders, South Coasters and Mexicans poo pooing when I say I tested the Wetsuit Heater on a freezing day at Peregian, but believe me, on a cloudless July morning with a westerly blowing down from the Blackall Ranges, the Sunshine Coast can get surprisingly bloody chilly.

Frost surrounded the carpark at first light, the sand crunched underfoot, steam rose off the waves, and wearing only boardies and rashie I strapped on the Wetsuit Heater and took the plunge. By definition the Wetsuit Heater is designed to be worn under a wetsuit, but I figured if it works with lycra, it works. And does it ever!

This is a sensational product, uncomplicated, unobtrusive, lightweight, and as toasty as a just-filled hotwater bottle. The most efficient way to warm a human body is to heat the lower back/kidney area, as blood flows from there to the extremities and carries the warmth with it. With its slim battery and wafer-thin, flexible heaters, that's exactly what the Wetsuit Heater does. The batteries give two hours heat time, and to recharge just plug in like a mobile phone.

Based in Victoria, the Hot Suits company invented the world's first heated wetsuit and have earned a string of international awards for their products, including series winner on the ABC's *New Inventors*. Their battery powered Wetsuit Heater kidney belt is top of the range. At \$289 they're not cheap, but they're manufactured to last, and above all, they work. You can drop a wetsuit thickness, and aside from feeling erotically warm, you'll hardly know you're wearing one. And nobody's getting mine off me, but you can get your own and increase your comfort and water time this winter.

- JB

SURF-O-RAMA

Treasures of Australian Surfing

By Murray Walding (Miegunyah Press)

Avail: book shops

www.pacificlongboarder.com

Firstly I must take my straw hat off to Murray Walding for his bravery (or sheer madness) for undertaking such an ambitious task in attempting to cover so much territory in one weighty tome. Certainly not a job for the faint-hearted,

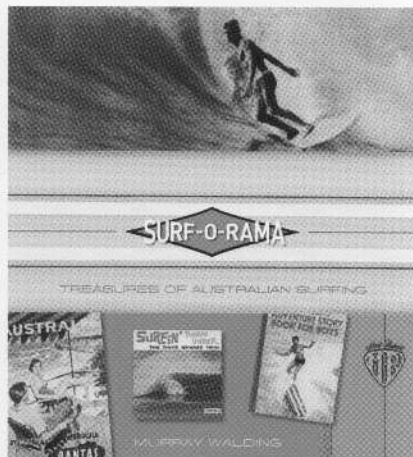
and something even I would balk at, and I'm usually not one for avoiding risks!

Yes folks this is something special, not just a quick money making publication as one might expect in this day and age, but something you could safely feature either on the coffee table or in the tiki bar, and at over 230 pages there's plenty to eyeball, discuss and debate.

Surf-O-Rama comes hot on the heels of Walding's two other books, *Blue Heaven: The Story of Australian Surfing* (2004), and one of my favorites, *Plastered: The Poster Art of Australian Popular Music* (2005). It's quite obvious that he's passionate about beach culture, especially surf and pop music poster art and assorted vintage ephemera, and of course it's the poster section in *Surf-O-Rama* where he really excels, along with the magazine section. The contents are split into six main collectable areas, concerning surfboards, skateboards, magazines, books, records and posters, but only at the end of three of these is there a list of "top" examples to collect. I for one would have preferred a top ten or so items in all the areas discussed. Now this is where the aforementioned debate part comes in. Walding's leaving himself wide open here simply by including, for example, "the top 20 essential boards for any collection", followed up by the top collectable magazines and posters. But it's definitely the surfboard area that's going to inflame some passionate responses here!

I'm prepared to go out on a limb and ask why no Michael Peterson surfboard in the top 20? Sure he may not have been the best shaper in the country, but his boards are highly collectable and very sought-after both here and overseas. That then begs the question what would you drop from the list of 20 in order to put an MP on there? I guess you get my drift. And guess what, I'm not about to tell you what the top 20 are in *Surf-O-Rama*, which means you'll just have to buy this book and discover that for yourselves! And plenty more besides.

In fact I'm going to buy a second copy of *Surf-O-Rama*, track down Murray Walding at First Point Noosa to get his signature, and



Rider: Tim Boal / Photo: [unreadable]

Tim Boal

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