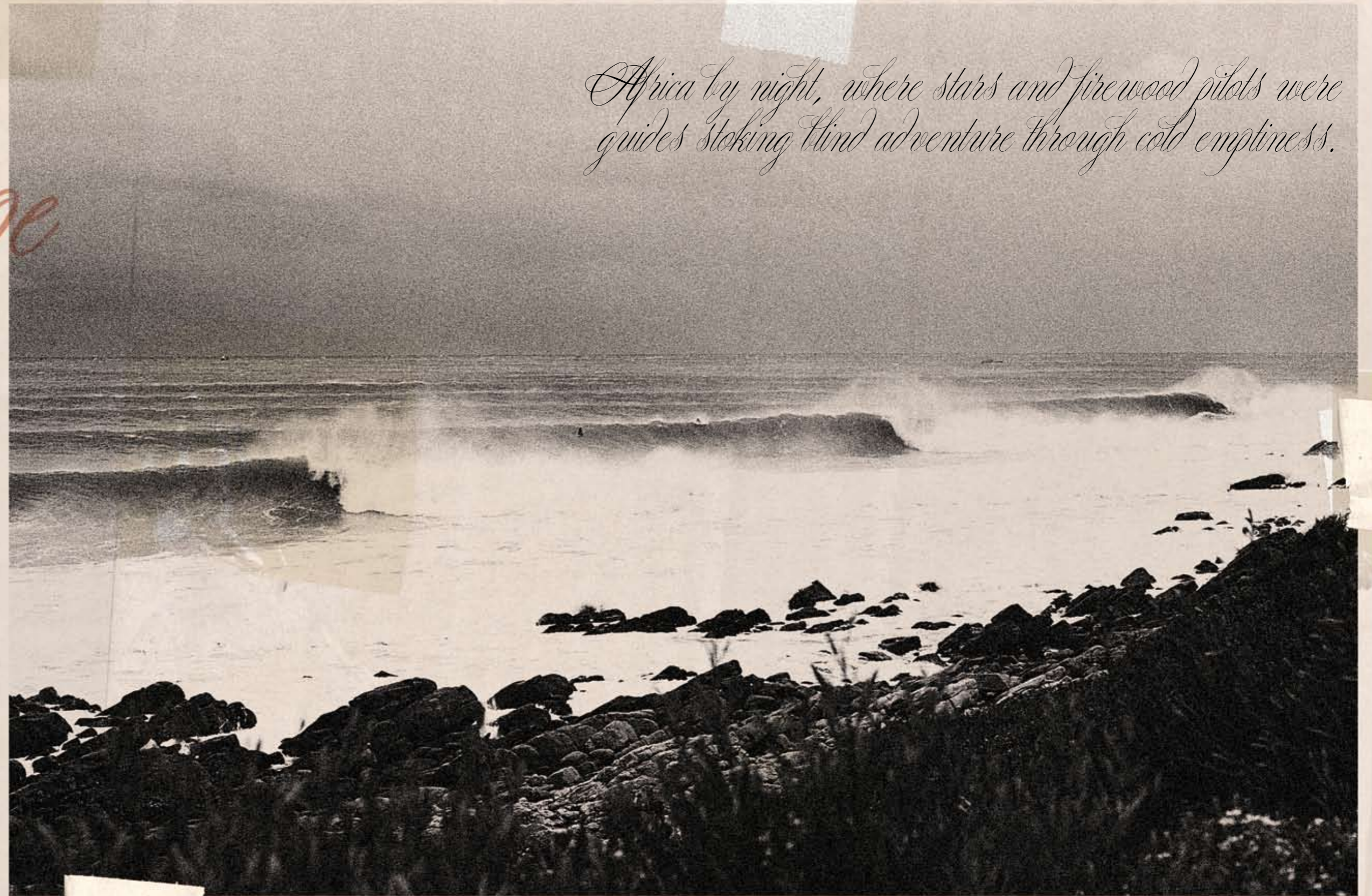


# The Cape

IT'S BEEN THREE DECADES SINCE  
TERRY FITZGERALD FIRST STARTED  
LAYING DOWN SPEED LINES AT J-BAY  
AND THE PLACE TOOK SUCH AN IMMEDIATE  
HOLD OF HIM THAT HE HAS BEEN  
A REGULAR VISITOR EVER SINCE. ON A  
RECENT RETURN TRIP WITH HIS FAMILY,  
TERRY WATCHED SONS KYE AND JOEL  
DRAW THEIR OWN LINES ON SOME OF HIS  
MOST IMPORTANT AND INFLUENTIAL DE-  
SIGNS. IT WAS A MAGIC EXPERIENCE, AND  
ROUNDED OUT PERFECTLY WHEN ONE OF  
THE WORLD'S ICONIC "MYSTO" BREAKS  
TURNED ON LIKE IT NEVER HAD BEFORE.

WORDS AND CAPTIONS BY TERRY FITZGERALD



*Africa by night, where stars and firerwood pilots were  
guides stoking blind adventure through cold emptiness.*



*The boys took a couple of my original boards from the late 70s and early 80s, plus some re-builds. A mix of new, rude and raw. Not a mission, but perhaps a retreat.*

**So, what do you do with a mystical day?**

File it away with all those one-off waves and days, swells and spells that lurch in and out of reflective memory banks, in a haze. Boomer adage is that the last 30 years have gone so quickly ... or, 10 or 20. But have they really? Try nailing what you did in April '91, where you were in September '77, or, the board you were riding in January '88.

Unlocking the mental filing cabinet becomes a mass grave of memory that reveals plenty of pain with gain. And working through all that experience, the realisation hits: there is/was so much that was done, and it actually took a bloody long time! And the best thing is that there's another 30 years to go ... and that 'time' can all be served again.

My first ride into J-Bay was with Piers Pittard in his bakkie, overnight from Durban through the newly created Transkei with a rifle and handgun for no fun. Africa by night, where stars and firewood pilots were guides stoking blind adventure through cold emptiness. A border crossing rite and continue the flight from a sun that seemed to muscle in from the left like an incoming apocalypse. Now dawn is a glory from across J-Bay, lighting the walk through dewed grass and frosted sand, with offshore crispness at your back and sheer delight in your heart.

Those first trips in the mid-'70s found a town that was closed on Sunday, where 'a drive' was the big day out and hippie pilgrims had found(ed) a holy land. In those early years,

agricultural jobs gave way to Tony stitching sheepskin boots, Kenny shaping nine-footers and Cheron sewing an industry to come. The Sunday Times wrote about young girls drifting away to meet up with surfers, as a tent/beachfire clannishness began drilling its pylons into the dunes.

Ignition: the beginning of a relentless lava flow into the surfing psyche. Those days of "Sustagen for energy, whiskey for warmth and penicillin for disease" marked a swell that went for ten days. Clashing cultures survived the best and worst of punk-age professionalism sticking its ugly head into simple values. As Bunker Spreckles pulled up in a Merc (with entourage), others rode three minute waves for days on end and could not stay awake for parties that were the beginning

*The Cape*





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*Joel admitting his fear, with a grin from ear to ear. KF somehow pulled a board too short under lips of ten feet teeth, before being chewed and spat.*

of another end.

There have been many (but not enough) return visits/pilgrimages/escapes, with family, friends and alone. A filing drawer full of moments. Derek in trim silhouetted against morning glow, Poto's bum under a green awning in a shared down-the-line run. Hoyo at Boneyards ballistic, Jake "the Snake's" first win. Shaun! All highlights that don't really compare to surfing with friends and locals who share. Sessions that become personal, rare.

Hsi Yu Chi, Monkey's buddhist monk Sanzo, faced monsters riding in search of Gandhara, the realm of love. Time is one of those monsters: will there be enough, will the swell come. Will Gandhara light up for this year's window in Africa's winter sun? There is no sense in wandering without point of reference and in sympathy to Basho, the famous Edo poet...it is "for the taste".

Where did that come from? Well, this year an old mate Shuji Kasuya turned up at J Bay to surf with us. Last time I saw Shuj was when he and Takao Kuga tried to follow DH and I to Bells one Easter...lost 'em in ten minutes, but, they survived and turned up 18 hours later...and now, again, 18 years later. In an undefined escape, Kye, Joel, and I went back to my source of solitude, for our own time, in homage. The boys took a couple of my original boards from the late '70s and early '80s, plus some re-builds. A mix of new, rude and raw. Not a mission, but, perhaps a retreat. Expression with no plan. Surfing as it was, in a time when we can.

My early Jeffreys boards were products of fortune. Sunset, Ulu, Honolua, Bells, Narrabeen, Winkipop, all contributed in creating a pitch line drive design that was a magic wand. Despite getting old and fat, my latest boards are pretty much the same as those, 30 kilos ago. Oh, sure there is a little difference in foam and foil, curves are more refined and nose area reduced, but, they have the same concaves, wings and fins. The double concave V is better now, but the reaction times and speed lines are very much the same. It was just me who got slow, damn it!

Obviously lip-line and gravity are the two things that create

speed. Getting high enough to use both is a function of ability. If you can bury a concave flat on the wave face, you will climb. Add wings with a thin tail and there is nothing like the feeling of peeling off a long vertical face with gravity pulling, the lip throwing. Riding an edge balanced between dropping out and the fastest you can go. There is a point where there is weightlessness, riding over ball bearings, completely free.

The boys rode those old boards in a week of waves, gardening, furniture hunting and a bit of work thrown in. Not that distant from a North Coast camping reverie, all family. We have had so many experiences. Being with sons who have held true is more than a man can wish for.

And so it came to 'that' last day. No sunrise this morning, an ugly bruised yellow sky rolled across the bay. Swell lines were chaotic, with the wind tearing holes in walls of waves that thrashed in upon themselves. There was only one chance ... Cape St Francis, which we hoped would be four-to-six with a clean exit. For 30 years I had only ever seen Bruce's Beauties the same way most of us have...in Endless Summer. Why leave Jeffreys, if it's cracking, to ride a wave half the size?

Outside Humansdorp, driving over the veldt into the teeth of the gale, steering became aiming and rain became sleet. Only the thatch-roofed building planners delight of the Cape's village huddled in welcome as we crept into a storm maxing to the horizon. Killers was 10-to-12 and lined, outside reefs were breaking, closing the harbour door. As three locals went off the inside rocks Joel grabbed my 7'6" pin wing (straight out of '75) and Kye took his re-birthed 6'3" double-wing-swallow-single-fin (with his eyelids peeled back).

And here it was another Sunday, decades later, and they had come on their drive...from Humansdorp, Cape, Jeffreys, Seal Point to see a spectacle that had rarely been. "Biggest since '97", "no, 86...", "I've lived here for 40 years and this is the best I've ever seen".

As Joel rode his first wave inside, we all breathed a sigh. One wave notched and the paddle began, over 200 metres of eight-wale corduroy, up the outside point to a wild ride, as

only Africa can be. Sitting beside the drop zone, it seemed almost impossible to even push over the ledge, with spray stinging your face and eyes blind in pain. Braille and rail, and power being set free.

Little sand along the point is a fact of life since the breakwall has been built, the rocks a living breathing cauldron in your left frontal lobe ... Joel admitting his fear, with a grin from ear to ear. KF somehow pulled a board too short under lips of ten feet teeth, before being chewed and spat. Lining and driving over rivulets of cross chop, finding smooth face by pulling inside, the only escape from elements so hard to define. Hours fled as time slowed in dealing with jagged sensory overload. JF slid sideways through one last sand-spitting cave for at least 50-60 yards before smashing fins out on a submerged rock inside. Kye paddled over a ledge and launched into a free fall on his edge, only to catch chop and land in the trough, where the lip took him through his board like an axe through a toothpick. Watching that, from 30 feet away, paddling up a vertical ledge, ranked!

Through that morning and into the early afternoon the sea did calm as the storm rotated. The gale turned side-shore and the swell dropped with the tide, rain became rain. Struggling up the boat ramp inside the bay, I did wonder - in wonder. Sitting in the harbour pub, eating a slab of calamari burger, drying out pruned fingers, the sun broke through and rain-bows winked nourishment in the instants that whitewater smashed above the break wall. We were not first, I never did see Bruce's before they built the breakwall, did it matter?

This was our time. Mystical...and filed ...

*(Special thanx to Susumu Nakano and Shizu-san)*

**Footage from the trip will be included in the HOT BUTTERED SOUL movie due to be released this summer, a preview of the movie along with further photo's from the trip can be seen at [hotbattered.com](http://hotbattered.com) SW**