

THE TOY

TERRY FITZGERALD & PATRICK JUVENTIN DISCUSS ONE OF THE WORLD'S FIRST SHAPING MACHINES AND A TAHITIAN SURFBOARD REVOLUTION

Terry Fitzgerald

I first met Patrick Juventin in Hawaii one November toward the end of the 70s. He was there searching out surfboard supplies and picking up shaping tips. Jaded with the North Shore's door-banging machinations, it was pretty easy to say yes to Patrick when he invited me to visit Tahiti on my way home. Even if it meant missing that year's Duke Contest. In those days getting to and from Hawaii, the airlines all island hopped with at least a stop in Fiji, and if you were really lucky, you got New Zealand and American Samoa thrown in. So, I took a left turn at Pago Pago and ended up in Papeete after leaving a flat North Shore, unsure.

Becoming great friends with Patrick and Robert Tanseau was easy. Annual surf trips to ridiculously beautiful, uncrowded reefs on the outer islands combined with helping the growing surfing community. Vastly improving performances from the Tahitians added to the mystique of surfing new places, with new friends.

Patrick set up a small factory in a shed attached to his garage at Faaa. He would get me over for surf trips and to shape a few boards. Patrick was instrumental in starting the Tahitian board industry for the local surfers, Arsene Hoehare, Wilfred Sanford, Poto, Manoa David and a host of champions. We used to ship Patrick his blanks, and that's where the machine idea started. Even though they were boxed, the blanks could and did arrive twisted. So Patrick in his precise and patient manner starts thinking: "How can I put true rocker back into twisted blanks?"

Patrick Juventin

Well concerning our shaping toy - the shaping machine, we started to think about it in about 1980 because of the blanks problems. I did the first drawings on paper during 1984 and started to set up the first prototype in

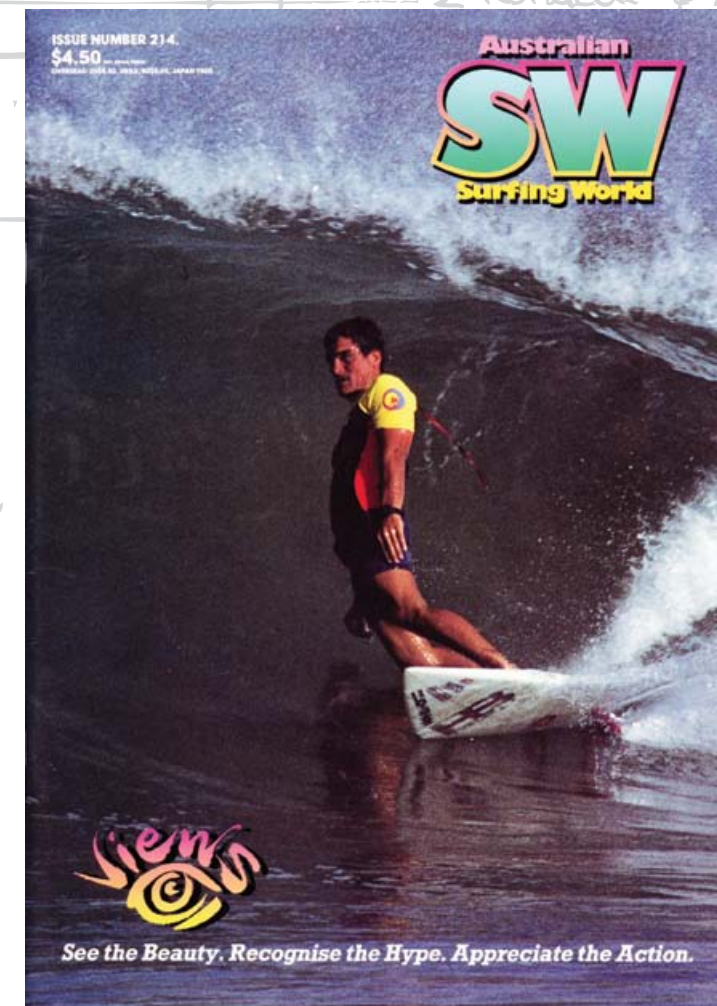


early 1985. The first test was during September 1985. I built the shaping toy in Tahiti in December 1985, and then in January 1986 I flew to Australia carrying all the most important parts. I spent a few days there with one of Terry's welder friends who helped me do the frames. Then Terry took me to his uncle to build the rocker templates in plywood. I remember doing one of his favourite concave board for Poto. That very first day testing in Australia; Terry was smiling, and very happy playing with it. Terry has his new "Toy". He he he he. We both look like children at that time. Getting the Toy to work would help us do fast and accurate rockers with precise thickness. But, we still had a problem at that time; it was to get a good wide router blade. Terry custom built one for me, it was a 4" wide carbide blade that had many blades. The Toy worked much better then. At the beginning, in early 1986, we were using a flat trolley for bottom and deck cutting. We fine tuned the trolley by changing the wheels and building one specially curved for deck cutting in mid 1986. We used the flat trolley for the bottom. One of the shapers who used the machine there at Hot Buttered, Wayne Cleggett if I remember correctly, he helped with the curved deck trolley and a newer wide blade. Today, because of the computer shaping machines, our Toy took the name of Surfboard Profile Machine. I think it was the right name for it, that Toy was the beginning for the machines.

Terry Fitzgerald

The result of course was that we could send paper templates to Patrick and he could keep up to date with the latest rocker and curve developments in Australia. From that time, and Patrick's efforts, Tahitian surfing was ignited. Poto could get our curves exactly in the boards Patrick shaped and finished in Faaa. Ju-Ju also ran the Tahitian Federation and was instrumental in separating Tahiti from the French Federation. Vetea went on to win the Junior World Title and then spent more than ten years on the Pro Tour and WCT. The rest is history in more ways than one. The force that is Tahitian surfing now, and of course, CAD machines that are shaping up to 85% of most surfboards. With Patrick's first machine, after set-up and milling, there was very little actual time saved in shaping a board, but, what we did achieve was beautiful beautiful accuracy with rocker and thickness. The Toy is off to the Surfworld Museum in Torquay after gathering dust on the roof of BM's shaping bay for the past ten or so years. Putting it together again, well, I almost didn't want to let it go. So simple, almost primitive, yet so effective. And today, ever more complex, surfboard shaping really is experiencing the rise of the machines.

HE COULD KEEP UP TO DATE WITH THE LATEST ROCKER AND CURVE DEVELOPMENTS IN AUSTRALIA... TAHITIAN SURFING WAS IGNITED.



OPPOSITE: PATRICK AND HIS MECHANICAL WONDER. ABOVE: TF PUTS FRANKENSTEIN THROUGH ITS PACES. INSET: TEST PILOT POTO RIDES THE TOY'S CREATION TO PAGE ONE LATE 80S.