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TWO WORLD
CHAMPIONS

KAROLINA & YOURI // STORM SIZED SWELL
TRAVEL - INDO AND TAIBA // TECHNIQUE, TESTS & MUCH MORE!

// THE WORLD'S NUMBER ONE KITESURF MAGAZINE //



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Reflections in Green

Packing up my quiver heading over to Bali, I wasn't sure at all where I was going to go from there. I knew I wanted to go back to Sanur, to reflect and see how the place has changed... But as my focus in kiting today is waves, waves and more waves, Sanur was certainly not a place I wanted to get stuck in. It's a perfectly flat freestyle-heaven plus I really wanted to check out another island in Indonesia than Bali... and I knew the perfect person to hook up with in order to go on a new adventure: Jason Wolcott, an amazing photographer and truly great guy.

Jason is originally from Ventura, CA, and has been living in Bali for the past 4 years. He's just about 'father-to-be' and lives with his wife in Canggu, one of Bali's premier surf-spots. Jason's metier is waves and he has succeeded in establishing himself as one of the top guys in the highly competitive surf-photography industry on the Island of Gods. He's also made a name for himself on the kitesurf scene, shooting regularly with Ben Wilson, Keahi De Aboitiz, Reo Stevens and many more...

"The local terminal could be a bit of a nerve-racking experience for people who haven't travelled in Asia much."

Jason and I headed off to Denpasar International Airport, we had a rough plan in mind but it all depended on flight-availabilities. The local terminal could be a bit of a nerve-racking experience for people who haven't travelled in Asia much. There's hundreds of people, cardboard boxes used as suitcases, the noise-level is unreal and getting information at the counters can turn into a real head-f***.

Each time you ask about flight schedules, seat-availabilities, and baggage-allowance, you will be getting a different answer. One concerning fact however, which was confirmed by all the staff of all different airlines that we spoke to, the planes to the neighbouring islands are really small propeller planes and therefore the luggage compartment was rather restricted. Surfboards have the least of priority and mustn't be any longer than 6'5". If the plane is full, the luggage compartment is most probably too and the surfboard (in my case: a whole quiver full of them) would arrive on the next plane, or the next, or the next...



What made this fact even more concerning: depending on the destination and airline, there were flights every other, three, or four days! So if the gear doesn't come on the same plane like us, it might be days before we can even start shooting! I got seriously worried and mentioned that to Jason. He replied with a line that everyone should have as a motto in life: "Stop worrying, that's something I don't do. I simply don't do worrying, it's completely useless". So I tried to get that into my head and as there was no way of escaping this rather nerve-racking fact - not that I was worried about it - we bought two tickets. I checked in the gear, paid 200,000 Rupiah for each board and off we went.

"what we found was paradise; perfect waves, amazing people, the best food, turtles all around us in the water and so much more..."

A couple of islands further west, the plane set down. That's where our adventure starts, what we found was paradise; perfect waves, amazing people, the best food, turtles all around us in the water and so much more... It must have been a brother of the "God that created Bali", who was in charge of this piece of Indo heaven!



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Getting off the plane and arriving in the tiny weenie arrival hall, my worrying started again. My looks must have said it all, because Jason was immediately there "Don't worry; simply don't do worrying, it's absolutely useless!" And he was right! A few minutes later I saw one of the airport staff struggling with my monster-quiver, yew, all here, let's go!

Before I could inhale wave-energy with my kite, however, we still had about 4 hours of rough, bumpy driving in an indo-taxi through a maze of really, and I mean REALLY, bad roads. Jason is fairly fluent in Indonesian, which was a great help. The island itself was much more arid and nothing like tropical Bali but definitely had a special flair in its own right.

We passed by beautiful salt farms, rice paddies and tiny villages, where we stopped and got us some fruits from the market. No doubt there are at least ten times as many horse carriages on this island than cars. I felt a little bit like in another age, which is one of the beauties of travelling.

"the anticipation and the surf increasing by the day as its 'due date' came closer."

Finally we reached our final destination. It was late afternoon and I have to admit I was actually happy that the wind wasn't blowing. We were pretty knackered after a strenuous journey, we took it easy;

found ourselves two cute though very simple rooms in a "Warung", and with a Bintang in hand I set up my boards in anticipation of the coming days. The forecast didn't let us down. After a great surf in the morning in glassy, indo wave-perfection, the wind came in. It stayed light all day and I struggled with my 11m to get to the break but the waves that I managed to catch in between turtles swimming round in the green waters of the Indian Ocean were unbelievable.

The next few days greeted us with pretty much the same scenario: surfing in the morning and light-wind kiting in the afternoon. Jason and I checked out several spots, although one spot was without a doubt our favourite:

a heavy, tubing lefthander that was breaking on a super gnarly reef. Given the swell size of the first few days though, it was not as hardcore as it would get on heavier, bigger days. There was a serious swell forecasted for the end of the week and one could feel the anticipation and the surf increasing by the day as its 'due date' came closer.

"it's not surprising that some of the locals have trained themselves in being 'kite-caddies'."

In Indonesia you'll find the locals being extremely friendly, plus they're always up for making some \$\$\$.

As surfers and kitesurfers are one of the main sources of income on the island, it's not surprising that some of the locals have trained themselves in being "kite-caddies". They know all the tricks to pretty much all the different brands of kites, bars, makes and models... They will pump up your kite and lay out lines perfectly, connect them and help you to launch and land like a pro. Furthermore most of them have a motorbike and will take you anywhere you want, which opens up the opportunity of long downwinders, during which they will watch you and pick you up from wherever you stop.

It took me a couple of days to get my head around the idea of having a 'caddie' and at first refused their offers to help me. I'm quite simply always setting up my kite myself; I see it as a kind of mental and physical warm-up. Talking to a couple of 'new' surf- and kite-mates about it, I realized, though, that it actually really helps the economy and so I got myself a caddie too! My caddie's name was Nasar. He was 14 years old and an incredible sweetheart.



Smart and fully switched-on, Nasar even spoke English pretty well as he was going to school as opposed to many of the other caddies. Every day he would send me a txt to my indo mobile mid-morning from the classroom with the question "is windy yet?" and once the school bell rang, he immediately shot over on his bike to come and help me.

The friendship that developed during my time on the island with Nasar, gave this trip another incredibly special and good feel that will stay in my heart forever. One evening Nasar invited me to his home for dinner. I felt privileged and accepted happily. We jumped on his bike and 15 minutes later, in a small, very primitive fishing village we arrived at the house of his parents, uncles, aunts, and 6 brothers and sisters. Everybody lived together one an extremely tiny space, in a wooden house on stilts. The women prepared spicy 'Sambal' in the kitchen, Nasi Goreng and Rice and Nasar's father put some fish on the fire outside. Although nobody apart from Nasar spoke English, we had a truly lovely time. We used the universal language of gestures and smiles and that night was the most memorable of the whole trip.

"Sunday is the day when everybody comes to the beach and enjoys some time-out with friends, chatting, eating and laughing..."

The friendliness of the locals was confirmed again on another Sunday. Sunday is the day when everybody comes to the beach and enjoys some time-out with friends, chatting, eating and laughing... I was walking up the beach in order to set up my kite with Nasar, when I was invited by a group of Indonesians to join them having lunch.





They were sitting in the shade of a big tree and grilled some chook that they plucked there and then. YAMMIE, this power lunch got me smashing the waves even harder!

That night I woke up and wasn't quite sure whether it was the stoke of the day before or me going crazy but I was sure I could feel the room and my little bed shaking.... "What da ****?", back then I couldn't really understand what was going on. The next morning revealed the mystery: an earthquake of 5.6 on the scale had hit in the nighttime. Thank God, no one got injured and nothing damaged. I immediately sent a text to my local buddy Nasar, to see whether he and his family were ok. "Yes, all good", came back immediately and further "is it windy yet?".

"all together a truly awesome and absolutely unforgettable experience"

I also owe another one of the very best parts of this trip to Nasar. One day after kiting he asked me whether I wanted to come with him to the wedding of a schoolmate. A girl of only 13 years of age, "in the little fishing village not far, come!", so I did. Once again on the back of Nasar's bike we cruised over bumpy tracks, through little villages, stilt houses, shacks and little stalls along the road... The wedding was AMAZING!!! The bride looked stunning, mind you, she looked almost 10 years older with the 'special festivity make up' but truly beautiful.

The ceremony itself was different than we're used to in the Western World. First we all ate together; there was a very simple but very tasty buffet, 3 types if main courses and banana as desert. The majority of Indonesians on this island are Muslims, so obviously there was no alcohol but water instead. I was the only 'white' person and everybody wanted to come over to touch, talk and take photos (on their mobiles) with me! Equally I couldn't stop taking photos of everything around me. Once the two lovebirds were declared as husband and wife, there was no kissing; no exchange of rings all that had already happened the night before. There was music, dancing, and congratulations, all together a truly awesome and absolutely unforgettable experience