Chapter 15
Searching the Seven Seas: Investigating Western Australia's Cape Naturaliste Surfing Tribe as a Surf-Tourism Paradigm

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Abstract A byzantine phenomenon, surfing has escalated from a countercultural lifestyle into mainstream. Surfing populations exist as tribes, isolated by time and space, distinguishable by beliefs, values, history and ecology. These subsets operate as idiosyncratic subdivisions of the wider parent surfing culture. Western Australia's Cape Naturaliste surfing tribe is an example of this paradigm. Motivated by fun and driven by the search, the Cape Crusaders travel the planet to consume surfing. Surf tourism is big business, and like most surfing tribes, the Cape Naturaliste crew visit diverse destinations to supress their appetite for riding the cliché perfect wave. Using ethnography and autoethnography methodology as the basis of socio-cultural investigation, this chapter explores the Cape Naturaliste wave riders as a surf-tourism tribe, identifying and examining the motives and mechanisms for their travel predilection.

Keywords Ethnography · Tribes · Surfing · Tourism · Autoethnography · Neo-tribes

15.1 Introduction: The Endless Search

Stepping from the Douglas DC-7 onto Dakar's steamy tarmac, Robert August and Mike Hynson arguably launched international surfing tourism. In their black suits, tapered ties and dark glasses, lugging awkward suitcases and their Malibu longboards, the two young Californians looked more like hatless Blues Brothers than contemporary surf travellers. Starring in Bruce Brown's 1966 surf movie, *The Endless Summer*, the boys entranced a global audience with graceful wave riding, extensive exploration and fun antics, their superb session at Cape St Francis, South Africa, forever carved into surfing folklore. Canniford and Shankar (2007, 42) describe *The Endless Summer* as "an iconic and archetypal example of the *Pure Surf Film* genre", a motion picture developed by surfers, for surfers. Resultant of their film, August, Hynson and Brown encouraged a generation of wave riders to advance their surfing

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performance. However, in relation to this work, they also stimulated many of those same surfers to develop their lifestyle as an adventure platform to explore the planet, searching for perfect waves.

15.2 Tribal Definition: Waves of Meaning.

"Borrowed from anthropology" as a means of characterising "archaic societies, where social order was maintained without the existence of a central power", the term 'tribe', according to Cova and Cova (2002, 596) can be used to define "postmodern social dynamics". Marsh (1988, 10) similarly classifies a tribe as being "acephalous", a group of people sharing "patterns of speech, basic cultural characteristics … a common territory … [and who] feel that they have more in common with each other than with neighbouring groups." Summoning meditations of indigenous peoples, isolated and ancient, bound by rituals and traditions, colourfully adorned and tuned with their ecology, the tribal cliché is solidified by the beautiful photographs of Herero and Himba, Mangati and Maasai, Balti and Bhutanese, Inuit and Aborigine in Prior (2003). On the contrary, globalisation, tourism and commercialisation has clearly led to a more homogenised society, and the virtual extinction of the "untouched tribe" (Prior 2003, 8).

Seeking an alternative framework to characterise youth culture, Bennett (1999, 605) reviewed the word 'subculture' using Maffesoli's (1996) notion of *tribus*. Juxtaposing with the expression 'neo-tribe', Bennett (1999, 607) gracefully expanded definition stating that the "… concept of 'lifestyle' provides a useful basis for a revised understanding of how individual identities are constructed and lived out". Neo-tribes, according to Hardy, Gretzel and Hanson (2013, 48), are "people from different walks of life who come together in fluid groupings, bound by common interests, similar lifestyles, rituals and language." In neo-tribes, tribal members express their "collective identities [and] membership at "performance sites" with their "homogeneity [lying] in their passion and emotion" (Hardy and Robards 2015). This notion directly relates to tribal surfers practicing at surfing spots within the boundaries of their territory. Moreover, surfing tribes, such as the Cape Crusaders, exhibit the passion and emotional prerequisite, as per the quotation. Furthermore, if lifestyle accurately reflects collective tribal associations, then surfing communities are reasonably considered as neo-tribes. Pertinent to this work, neo-tribal evolution "… is tied inherently to the origins of mass consumerism" (Bennett 1999, 607). Using such nomenclature as the basis for definition, I contend that geographically isolated surfing communities exist as tribes. Surfing tribes consume surfing, and part of this consumption involves surf tourism.

In 1968 Dahrendorf suggested that humans behave with predictability. Reiterating the Shakespearian metaphor 'all the world's a stage', Dahrendorf (1968, 8) proposed that humans live their lives as "*Homo sociologicus* … the social actor". *Homo sociologicus* plays different roles on different stages. If *Homo sociologicus* acts the part successfully, then she/he must know what the role entails. Furthermore, she/he must

also know how to deliver the acceptable lines, the appropriate gesticulation, the pause, the tears, the laughter, the money shot at the right moment. Like any demographic, surfers demonstrate variety, however, surfers also share numerous qualities in the way they act out their lives as surfers, as *Homo sociologicus surferensis.*

Although surfing involves personal performance, surfers seldom play out their surfing life in solitude. As social actors, surfers function with other surfers, often existing as tribes. Some work has been undertaken involving surfing spaces (Hull 1976; Farmer 1992, 2002; Waitt and Warren 2008; Wheaton 2000; Langseth 2012; Uekusa 2019), yet investigation involving the veracity of surfing groups existing as geographically distinctive units is somewhat lacking. According to Irwin (1973, 133), devoted surfers make a "commitment to their surfing lifestyle" with such sophistication rewarding surfers with a characteristic phenotype. Fiske (1983, 123) indicates that surfers look like surfers because of their "connotations of leisure". *Committed* surfers recognise themselves as surfers, immersed in a holistic lifestyle. In her windsurfing ethnography, Wheaton (2000, 148) supports this notion labelling the action sport lifestyle as "all absorbing". In such cases, the dedicated windsurfer adopts an identity and when such dedication occurs en masse at a common location, this generates a "collective identity"—the tribe. Situated on the northern tip of Western Australia's South West surf coast, Cape Naturaliste is home to a distinctive surfing tribe, the Cape Crusaders. This chapter considers the group as a surf-tourism case example.

15.3 Establishing Balance: Research Methodology.

Using ethnographic methodology, the qualitative data used to generate analysis and synthesise discussion in this chapter was sourced during my doctoral research from two traditional research methods—interview and participant observation (Malinowski 1922; Spradley 1979; Ellen 1988; Fetterman 1989; Agar 1986, 1996; Gold 1997; Brewer 2000; Sands 2002; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Gobo 2008; Hughson 2008).

Participant observations in the original investigation involved 84 diarised annotations, accrued from surfing practice in Europe, Indonesia and extensively in the Cape Naturaliste field. Interviews, spanning 36 h of recorded data, involved semi structured discussions with 74 Yallingup, Dunsborough, Margaret River and Perth surfers—men, women, boys and girls, who provided consent to validate their commentary using personal identification. As the chapter incorporates personal vignettes, an autoethnographic flavour is assumed, blending cultural research with personal subjectivity to make sense of the data and provide engaging manuscript, in demonstrating tribal interaction and understanding (Geertz 1973; Chang 2008). As a surfing ethnographer, I immersed myself in the ocean and involved myself in the surfing practice. A participant observer is different to an observer participant, as highlighted by Woodward (2009, 558), describing herself as "hanging about" as an observer, rather than "hanging out" as a participant, in the male dominated fist-fighting realm.

As a participant observer I devoted substantial time "hanging out" with the Cape Crusaders. Being an active tribal surfer assisted in the data gathering process. As a wave riding ethnographer, I have been privy to an insider's view, such positioning importantly facilitating intimate observation opportunities. Notably, Butts (2001, 4) supports this claim in stating; "the only way tacit knowledge of [surfing] … can be developed is through active participation". In transplanting field experiences into this chapter, I modified Spradley's "Description Matrix" (1980), streamlining his parameters (space, object, act, activity, event, time, actor, goal, feelings) into two *Tourism Tales*. This scheme enabled insertion of contextualised participant observation in the work.

Perspective is a tenuous beast, and although cultural observation is imperative in ethnography, alone it is insufficient. Behaviours, patterns and cultural actions that are observed by the anthropologist are considered from the scientist's point of view. As such, these observations may contrast with reality. To achieve ethnographical nirvana, Spradley (1979, 4) advises that "native realism" should be attained. To truly understand a culture, an ethnographer must communicate with the cultural members in addition to observing them in action (Spradley 1979; Brewer 2000). An ethnographer depends on the cultural actors to explain cultural enigmas. Correspondingly, Patterson (2010, 14) states "connectedness to the surf community … can only result from listening closely to [surfers'] stories". According to Cruikshank (1990, 1), tales "breathe life into academic writing". Stories provide a vehicle for people to "explain aspects of their culture … aspects of their lives, place, space and social relationships" (Cruikshank 2005, 66). Narrative presents a base for ethnographic description. Fishers are not exclusive in their proclivity for tales. Surfers have always loved storytelling. Preston *Pete* Peterson, a legendary Californian surfer from the 1930s, could "sit and spin stories hour after hour about his 48 years of surfing …" (Dixon 1969, 22). Storytelling allows the narrator opportunity to explain a point via personal experience. Stories provide occasion for learning, they foster tradition and provide entertainment. In the data gathering process, I encouraged interview participants to tell their stories, eagerly listening and learning as I questioned, probed, redirected and recorded. Narrative quotations, gathered during interviews, have been woven into this work as primary ethnographic data, enabling assertions to be supported and discussion to be enhanced. Incorporating narratives in ethnography enables characters and events to be enlivened, and so epitomise the spirit of the Cape Naturaliste surfing tribe.

Motivated by the Geertzian (1973) thick description edict, and excited by Sword's (2009) style manifesto, I felt compelled to write an ethnography that is "a pleasure to read" (Sword 2009, 320). To be rewarded on the style scoreboard, Sword entreats the writer to engage her/his audience with humour, passion and creativity. Stylish writing relates anecdotes and conveys examples, providing illustrations and metaphors to entertain, as well as enlighten. Sword's goal is to communicate a sense of self by displaying material in personal academic prose that welcomes readers with precise, rich, appetising language.

Branded as "cultural hoppers" by Agar (1996, 56), ethnographers are privileged to act as cultural investigators. Traveling the world, experiencing diverse people and

stunning coastal vistas, searching for glassy waves, bright sunshine and warm water, I am grateful that surf tourism is a significant element of my life.

15.4 Surf Tourism Genesis: On the Road

Myths and legends identify *he'e-nalu* (wave sliding) as an intrinsic ancient Hawaiian cultural ingredient. The Polynesian Islands are the zygote of surfing and, according to Moser (2008, 4), a great deal of surf related oral history was recorded because of Sheldon Dibble, William Westervelt and endemic Hawaiian scholars Kamakau, Malko and Hale'ole. "Kane surfed the waves of Oahu … he surfed through the white foam, the raging waves … from Maui to Hawaii and on to Mauwele …" (Moser 2008, 36). This mantra outlines the extent of wave riding across the Hawaiian archipelago. Arguably, such primitive surfing tourists were searching for, and performing in, diverse environments to satisfy a desire to ride top-quality waves.

Catalyst molecules accelerate chemical reactions, providing the energy required to drive molecular transmission. World renowned authors Mark Twain and Jack London were important human catalysts, tourists who hastened surfing dispersion from the tropical North Pacific into western society. Twain visited Hawaii in 1866, writing several editorials regarding his adventures for the *Sacramento Daily Union* (Kampion 2003; Moser 2008). Publishing *Roughing It* (Twain 1872), a humoristic account of his travels, Twain vividly illustrated the excitement of surfing to a worldwide audience. When the charismatic Jack London arrived in Oahu in 1907, he was introduced to riding Waikiki's rollers by Alexander Hume Ford. This experience captivated London as indicated in his memoir, *The Cruise of the Snark* (1913). Dubbing surfing "a royal sport for the natural kings of earth", London (2001, 50) conveyed the exhilaration of surfboard riding to a huge audience across the United States and Britain. Bitten hard by the surfing bug, London's excitement was apparent in his persuasive memorandum of fun. As Jack Kerouac stimulated American wanderlust in the 1950s with his celebrated novel *On the Road*, so too did Jack London, forty years beforehand.

Legendary Hawaiian surfer Duke Kahanamoku described his vision for surfing tourism in vibrant beachboy style. "For many years it has been a desire of mine to see the people of other nations derive pleasure and benefit from the Hawaiian surfboard … It is my dream to some day tour other countries and personally acquaint people with the uses of the surfboard … it commands respect …" (Blake 1935 iii). Duke's dream has occurred. According to International Surfing Association's operations coordinator Kiko Toledo (Personal communication 2011), the global surfing population at that time approached 35 million surfers. On a planet with limited surfable waves, and an ever-expanding surfing armada, surf tourism is thriving. Defining surf tourism, Buckley (2002) indicates that a journey of at least 40 kms, for an overnight stay involving surfing, suffices. The remainder of this work considers the extensive surf tourism undertaken by the Cape Naturaliste surfing tribe.

15.5 The Yallingup Portal: Surf-Tourism into the South West

Global surf-wear company Rip Curl has hung its corporate hat on the concept of *The Search* since the early 1990s (Rip Curl website 2019). This celebrated, highly successful marketing campaign was underpinned by the concept of adventure associated with the hunt for perfect waves. When Kevin Merifield, Tony Harbison, Mark Paterson and their surfing friends made preliminary surf tourist visitations from Perth into Western Australia's South West in the mid-1950s, they recognised the depth of their discovery in a goldrush like scenario. Merifield described his "first real surfing experience" to me during an interview on the lawn in winter sunshine, overlooking Yallingup's waves.

"I first came down here on the January long weekend in 1955, with my cousin … we couldn't believe our eyes as we drove down the gravel, Yallingup was huge!" Kevin recalled being mesmerised by the mountainous swells, exploding on the outer reefs. Compared to the typical summertime Perth surf, this was a whole new realm. "When we got the hang of it down here, [the journey] was on every weekend," chuckled Mark Paterson. "I remember loading up the cars, putting the boards on top … you could taste the excitement of heading down-south. Surfing down here then, with no crowds, finding new spots, we had lots of laughs, we had lots of fun." In Noongar language, Yallingup literally translates to 'place of love'—the boys had clearly fallen head-over-heels with their newfound domain.

Exploration was elemental in the youthful Cape Naturaliste surfers' psyche, the surf environment was extensive, raw, and in many cases, relatively inaccessible. The region has always been a vast wave field and from their vivid and entertaining recollections, those initial *surfaris* (surfing safaris) were rites of passage for the intrepid young surfing tourists. Investigation intensified in the subsequent decade, with a host of fresh surfing locations, at Injidup, *Guillotines*, and *Gallows*, discovered south of the Cape.

Tony Harbison recited his earliest Margaret River experience, clearly a watershed moment in his surfing life. "One day when Yallingup was pretty flat, Kevin [Merifield] and me [sic] packed up our surfboards … and headed down to see Margs for ourselves." After temporary bamboozlement, eventually rounding the potholed coastal track, the lads were presented with a corduroyed ocean, tipping over into perfect peaks on the Surfers' Point reef. "When we saw those waves for the first time … wow, it was like those guys who found J Bay [Cape St Francis]." Tony paused reverently. "There it was. We'd found perfect waves, with nobody around. Unbelievable!".

The Search drives surf tourism. Surfers persistently think about surfing, they dream about riding flawless, tubing waves. Surfers converse with compatible fanatics about recent surf exploits and speculate about impending surf schemes. Surfers enthusiastically trip the planet, hunting for fun, craving adventure … searching for perfect waves.

15.6 Countercultural Surge

Roszak (1970, 11) indicated that the counterculture was "the spirit of the times". Widespread anti-Vietnam War sentiment that trailed Cold War consternation generated an international, youth-based rejection of preceding cultural standards. Showcased by sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll—and surfing—the countercultural revolution defied establishment.

Mick Marlin grew up surfing on Sydney's northern beaches in the early 1960s. Relying on publications such as *Surfer*, *Surfabout* and *Surfing World*, Mick studied the hotdog techniques of American surf heroes Dora, Noll and Edwards on the celebrated waves at Malibu, Sunset and Waimea. These same surfing magazines also showcased the eminent Australian surfers. Farrelly, Young, Conneeley and McTavish developed global surfing status as the right-hand points at Noosa, Burleigh and Crescent Head became renowned. "We started getting these mags with photos taken by guys who *actually knew* about surfing," said Mick. "Hawaiian and Californian waves and surfers mainly." He fondly recalled the first sixteen-millimetre surf flicks rolling at the Collaroy Surf Club. "And when those John Severson movies started screening all hell broke loose. We'd hoot and holler, we couldn't believe what they were doing on the waves. Watching those surfers was coaching us what we should be doing … and directing us to where we should be going."

There was a new affluence attached to surfing in the flower-power era. Airline travel was relatively affordable and custom-made surfboards were accessible. The middle-class youth of coastal Australia and the United States had money in their pockets, hedonistic time to spend and surfing role models to emulate. Led by *The Endless Summer* and later turbo-charged by Alby Falzon's *Morning of the Earth*, surfers looked beyond their local breaks and headed off to exotic locations. A new form of global travel materialised—international surf tourism was born.

"Early on in the piece, surfers mainly travelled to Hawaii," Mick related. "*Endless Summer* was the big one that really motivated me to get to South Africa. It blew everyone away seeing 'Bruce's Beauties' [Cape St Francis] … every surfer wanted to surf there. It became a magical Mecca … everyone wanted waves like that." Mick paused, "Our parents had to cope with the depression and just when they got on their feet, along came World War Two. Then they had kids. Our generation changed all that. And now we're changing the retirement scene too." Mick grinned. "I don't want to give up and die. I want to be out there doing things … travelling and going surfing."

15.7 Tourists Turn Residents: Radical Entries

George Simpson is commonly regarded as a Cape Naturaliste surfing tribal marvel. His surfing prowess and his fishing exploits are legendary, his chiselled features indicative of hard work and love of outdoor Australia, his fun-loving nature endearing

him to all. Clearly recognising his serendipity, George's encyclopaedic understanding of Cape Naturaliste surfing knowledge has widened over fifty solid years in the South West lineups. "Our generation was down here at the right time. Tony and Kevin and those blokes, they started it all, but without the right gear. Once surfboards went down from nine-foot … to six four [6′ 4″] … in about a year, surfing performance [advanced]. We were doing things on waves you couldn't do on the longer boards," said George. "We started surfing the bombies and at [Injidup] Carpark, places that you couldn't previously surf."

As surfboard size diminished, surf tourism in South West Western Australia grew. Cape Naturaliste's waves enticed enthusiastic surfers to relocate from Perth, the eastern states, and from overseas. George was in the trickle of surfers who decided to live the surf tourist dream, relocating to become one of the first permanent Cape Crusaders. "I think that Murray Smith was actually the first guy to come down here and live, then came the guys like Bob Monkman … we'd all drive down-south from Perth on the weekends." There was no wine industry back then—and not much work. But the pioneering tribal members were present for waves, not for wages. Emigration must have been a huge decision for the young countercultural surf tourists, moving wholes-bolus in pursuit of their passion. George Simpson took the plunge and redeployed full-time to Yallingup in 1969.

As wave riding tourists trekked to Hawaii, Africa, Mexico and Indonesia in search of perfect, unpopulated waves, the South West surf secret was soon out of the bottle, divulged by magazines, movies and tales of adventure. The Yallingup waves enticed a fresh crew of surfers to the Cape Naturaliste lineups, immigrants from Perth, from the eastern states and from far-flung California. During the early 1970s, the hunt for new surfing spots between Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin continued in earnest. And as exploration was occurring to Yallingup's south, thinking outside the box, Simpson peered opposite, observing waves feathering on distant outer reefs. Acting on a hunch that quality untapped surf was proximal, George's search unearthed a treasure trove—Naturaliste's triple crowns, Three Bears. After an unsuccessful initial foray, George and crew took to the dusty trek a week later, when the winds backed around. "We parked up at Sugarloaf and walked in, a good half hour, and there they were, about four to five foot, no one there of course, no one had ever surfed the place … We went racing down the hill and we had our first surf there, the four of us—Tony Harbison, Russell from Queensland, Glyn Lance and me." The three discrete breaks later prompted the *Babies*, *Mammas* and *Pappas* taxonomy, these Three Bears delivering a 'just right' wave riding field. And how good was that initial session? "Yeah I remember it clearly," George grinned. "We paddled out and I got the first wave at *Babies*. Paddling back, I looked down to *Mammas* and saw a perfect wave break. We were like two-year-olds, hooting, totally amped!" Although Georgie had told his tale of discovery a hundred times before the rendition, he radiated over a swig from his cold beer during the interview. "And that was Bears!" he concluded with a characteristic big beam.

If the folklore associated with the exodus of surfers into the South West from Perth is impressive, then John Malloy's migration from the United States to Cape Naturaliste is extraordinary. John grew up in Los Angeles, "a long way from the ocean".

Like Mick Marlin, he recalled the impact of surfing publications and surf movies in shaping his surfing life. With a small band of high-school buddies, John regularly made his way down to surf the weekend waves at Santa Monica and Malibu. As a nineteen-year-old, John's spirit of adventure took over, and he boarded a Norwegian freighter as a work-away, scarcely a surf tourist in traditional sense. Voyaging across the Pacific Ocean, John and his mates were in surf heaven, scoring warm waves in Tahiti, Samoa and in Fiji. But the distant South West coast of Australia summoned him. "We'd heard about Margaret River," John recalled during our interview. "We'd seen photos in the magazines … so we decided to make our way out to Western Australia. We arrived in Sydney … young blokes with surfboards, got to the Hume Hwy, hitchhiked across the Nullarbor to Perth, and then down to Yallingup. We arrived in the autumn of 1972 … beautiful weather, beautiful waves. I just loved the place straight away." John fondly remembered the first time he and mate Carter stumbled upon an offshore reef near Yallingup. "The waves down this way were significantly different to anything I'd ever surfed before. I clearly remember our first surf out at *Supertubes.* We just couldn't get over how perfect the waves were … and we couldn't believe that there was nobody else in the lineup."

As well as being an avid wave rider, John was also an entrepreneur. Recognising that a market existed for legropes, a relatively new surfing hardware accessory, John started his *Pipelines* surf company in 1974. Introducing urethane chord and injection moulded parts, the innovation radically transformed legrope manufacturing. Product endurance in the South West big wave environment underpinned John's legrope evolution and ultimately directed the development of a new surfing business, *Creatures of Leisure*, in 1987. Interestingly, Malloy's enterprise occurred as an outcome of his surf tourism, with *Creatures* evolving into a global surfing icon. John still enjoys his surfing life, and firmly remains a surf tourist aficionado, regularly journeying to the Maldives in search of warm perfect waves.

Countless other Cape Naturaliste surfing tourist anecdotes exist. Enthralling stories involving adventure, camaraderie, happiness, mistakes and sometimes tragedy. Developing within all surfing tribes, propagated over time, etched in history, often achieving legendary status, tourism-based narratives are fundamental in characterising distinctive surfing tribes within the global surfing society.

15.8 Tourism Tale (i): *Baila Mi Hermana*

With Carlos Santana's *Dance Sister Dance* (*Baila Mi Hermana)* harmonising to crystal clear-blue Indonesian waves, the 1975 Hoole/McCoy surf movie *Tubular Swells* tweaked my surf adventure spirt. However, it was their subsequent 1982 classic *Storm Riders* that instigated my life as a surfing tourist. I mentioned the formative influence with movie director Jack McCoy during our interview, and his response was as cool and as perceptive as his movies. "For me," said McCoy, "*Storm Riders* was just a fun time in my life … and we recorded that. We were travelling,

and surfing and I guess guys like you felt out the vibe … and the rest as they say, is history."

Footage of coconut palms and Sentigi trees fringing tropical beaches and cerulean, hollow waves breaking perfectly on shallow coral reefs had me 'feeling out the vibe', chucking boardshorts and tee-shirts into backpack and scurrying to the airport. My first ever plane trip transported me to the 'Island of the Gods', Bali, Indonesia. With great mate Drew Murrie, I managed to do all the things I promised Mum we wouldn't—chowing down magic mushrooms, riding motor bikes at velocity around Denpasar's roads and swilling Bintangs under the moon on the beach at the Sand-Bar. Bali was a total adventure, an uncrowded playground. And the Balinese surf was superb. Inside an hour of jumping off Garuda Flight 879 and negotiating the humidity, heat and hassles of Ngurah Rai Bali International Airport, we were playing in the waves at Kuta Beach. I was thrilled to be surfing in boardies, revelling on the three-foot glassy beachies in the tepid north-eastern Indian Ocean. We rode scores of clean, fun breakers on the outer reefs and along white sand strip during our stay at the Lestari Beach Inn. Oh yes, this was what surfing was *really* about!

In 1982 the villages of Kuta and Legian were separated by five kilometres of fields, bush and coconut palms. A limestone track skirted the beach front. There was no traffic chaos, no massage teams, no surf shops or boutiques. The crazy hubbub of twenty-first century Kuta was inconceivable. There were a few polite street hawkers, a couple of pirate-cassette shops and the occasional proffer of 'mar-eeee-wannna' from a shadowy alley, but for all intents and purpose, Bali was relaxed and safe (Figs. 15.1 and 15.2).

The Kodachrome snap of a clean, empty, tree lined Jalan Melasti in Fig. 15.3 unmistakably reflects laidback Kuta. The barking geckoes, the drifting dogs, the tasty satays, the scented offerings, the sweet Gudang Garam cigarettes and the beautiful Balinese people—these things were novel and exciting. The culture of Hindu Bali captivated me. We witnessed a Geertzian (1973) cockfight, a beachside funeral pyre, a traditional Balinese wedding ceremony. Our motor bikes transported us from the impressive coral reefs at Lovina to the steaming volcano at Kintamani. We wandered past the resident macaques at Ubud's ancient ruins, we walked out on low tide to the famous Tanah-Lot temple.

However, the Bukit Peninsula was undoubtedly the highlight of my first Bali visitation. The ride out to Uluwatu was fearsome and the long dry walk through the thorn trees, gruelling. With hearts in mouth we approached the coast, the vibration of breaking waves carried through the afternoon humidity. Two animated Balinese lads carried our surfboards to the cliff top warung and called back to us—"Ombak! Ombak! Bagus ombak!" ("Waves! Waves! Good waves!") What we saw below was our fantasy. We stood there staring, gobsmacked, the ocean was a sheet of glass disturbed only by corrugations of long-period swell lines, racing down the reef. *Ulus* was on! I felt like a pioneer as we clambered the rickety bamboo ladder into Uluwatu's notorious cave. Excitement coursed as we crossed the reef, my skin goose bumped, and not from cold water, as we paddled out into the world class waves. There was a sense of connection with the space, a déjà vu. Uluwatu's surf really was as good as it looked in those Hoole/McCoy surf flicks. We rode the waves until dark—uncrowded,

Fig. 15.1 *The Search* delivers: The author on a nice one, Bangkaru, North Sumatra 2003 (Holt archive)

four foot, superb to perfect on the falling tide. The racetrack section on the end of the long left was hollow and epic. A few scrapes from bouncing on the coral were later sprinkled with the penicillin powder, the wounds paraded like badges of honour at tour end. At that point I realised that surf exploration *could* result in unearthing treasure, and for the first time in my life I appreciated the existence of a big, exciting world that required further investigation. In that moment, I morphed into an addicted surf tourist.

15.9 Up and Off: Exit, Stage Left

At any given time, fortunate surfers are relishing idyllic swells at some exotic location on Earth, slaking their thirst, finding and dancing on long, walling waves. And that is a marvellous thought. Powered by fantasy and driven by a sense of exploration, surfers scour the planet, gambling with opportunity cost, willing to direct significant time, energy and funds into surfing-based vacations, achieving what Buckley (2002, 427) terms "competitive advantage" as a part of their wave riding habit. Cape Naturaliste surfers are truly possessed by adventure (Figs. 15.4 and 15.5).

John Ferguson is a passionate surfing tourist, and a long-time surfing companion. A Cape Naturaliste surfing tribal member for nearly thirty years, I recently interviewed him in his new abode on Lombok, Indonesia. "I was first captivated by the

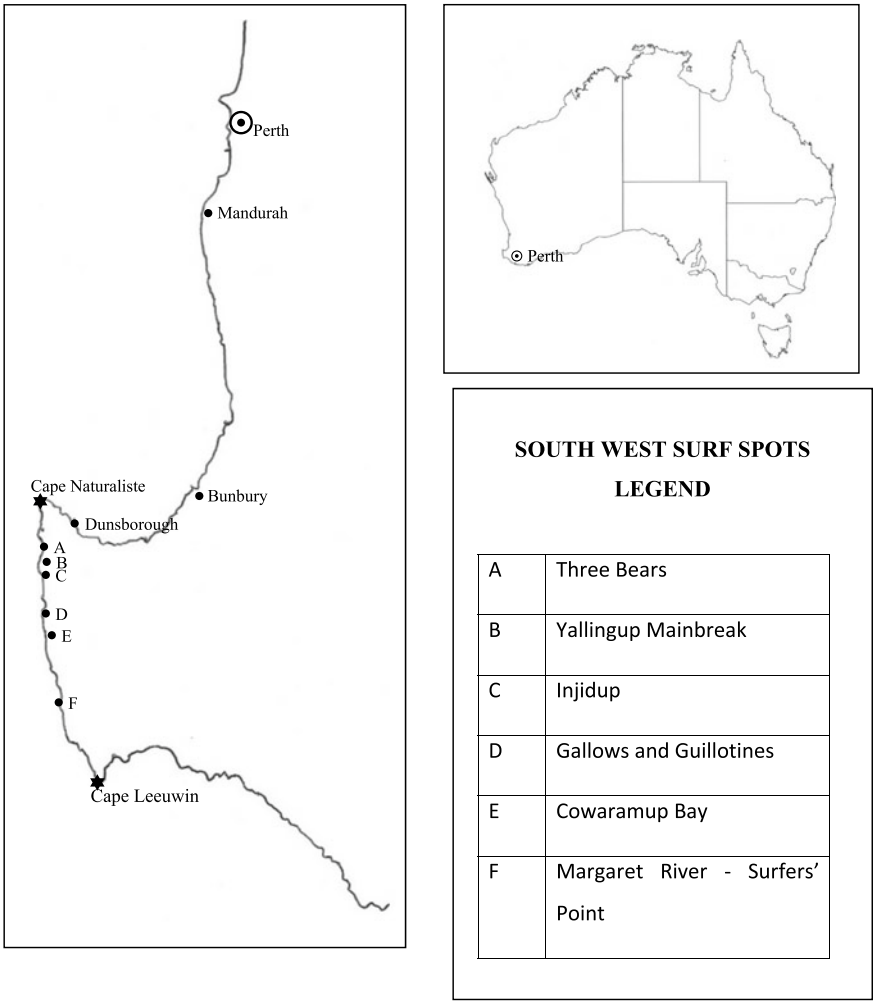

Fig. 15.2 Surf map of the Cape to Cape region of South West Western Australia

Indonesian surf when I saw a photo of Nias [Lagundri Bay, Sumatra] in *Surfing Life* [Australian surfing magazine]," recalled Ferguson. "But as a young bloke, stories of malaria and the hassle of making the long journey put me off a bit. So, we put Sumatra on ice, and did our first overseas surf trip to Bali instead. And that was so good … I wanted to go further." Boat trips to Sumatra, Lombok, Sumbawa and Sumba followed, as did excursions to land camps in Java, Lembogan and the Telos. Ferguson's extensive surfing tourism to the archipelago fittingly earned him the nickname, *Indo John*. Buying real estate and setting up a relaxed dwelling at Kuta in Lombok, John has fulfilled his dream. "When I'm up in the humidity and warmth, I feel good, I'm healthy. My arthritis plays up in the cold. So, Heather [partner] and

Fig. 15.3 Jalan Melasti, Kuta 1982: Thirty-seven years is a *very* long time in Bali (Holt archive)

Fig. 15.4 Uluwatu, Bali: Andrew Murrie and author, on the reef with twin fins and Balinese caddies (Holt archive)

Fig. 15.5 *Baz* Young: Searching for and enjoying *those really special* Maldivian days (Young Archive)

I decided to move up here and enjoy life in the tropics, while we still can. We love the lifestyle … the Sasak people, their culture, the food, the beaches, the warm water and the surf." Although earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are part of Indonesian reality, John is another exemplar of surf tourism leading to long-lasting relocation. "Sure, there's sometimes a few hassles living up this way," John chuckled over his frosty Bintang. "But that's life, no matter where you're positioned. There's lots more surfers around Kuta now, lots of Europeans, but dealing with tourists in the surf is a reality. You can't begrudge [people] from wanting to ride these waves. And as long as they're respectful, everything's fine."

Highly esteemed across the surfing world, Injidup resident Damon Eastaugh is admired for his big wave riding abilities and unpretentious demeanour**. "**Surfing is much about adventure, the risk taking … although those things sound cliché, they are the reasons I'm involved in surfing," deliberated Eastaugh. "Surfing is all about riding a wave. You can over-think it, but if you pare it back … you're just riding a wave." I asked Damon about the importance of travel in his surfing exploits. "Mate, I do it as much as I can. Just about every spare dollar I have goes into surfboards or surf trips [big laughs] … when we got married, we had this massive trip around the world and did some of the best things I've ever done. We hired a boat in Tahiti and sailed around searching for surf. We went to Mexico, to Puerto, looking for waves, we had such a great trip. When I was younger every time I could afford it, I'd go to Hawaii during their winter. It's a massive part of our [Cape Naturaliste] surfing culture. Everyone I know does it. It's like a ghost town around here in winter."

In my experience, tourism teaches people about culture, about self-awareness and about patience. Surfing teaches people that the world does not owe them special privileges. Surf tourism teaches that good waves are a very valuable and rare entity, sought after by many like-minded adventurers. When surfers gather around limited areas to ride perfect waves, competition often becomes fierce. Damon Eastaugh provided analogous context during his interview. "I try to take a pretty tolerant attitude and don't judge too much when I travel," he said. "But the thing I *don't* like when I travel is localism. I think localism is a product of small-minded people who haven't travelled much. If you've travelled, it is hypocritical to be showing aggressive behaviour at your home break. When you're overseas, you keep your head down … you show respect." He smiled through his famous last words, "… and you *usually* won't get into trouble."

Eminent Dunsborough surfboard shaper/artisan and surf adventurer Mark *Oggy* Ogram similarly regards travel as a method of curtailing the gloomy shadow of localism. "Most of our local surfers get away regularly on surf trips. If you travel and you surf somewhere else, well you're not going to be the heavy local in your own back yard, are you? That'd be totally hypocritical. That's the vibe I get anyway." *Oggy* implied that surf tourism promotes an "an open-mind" encouraging tolerance and a wave-sharing philosophy.

Long-time Yallingup charger, Stewart Bettenay, asserts that "getting away during winter" is part of life around Cape Naturaliste. "If you can avoid part of the winter, it makes it all the more enjoyable down here. Getting the tropical fix … the fun of going somewhere exotic, the lure of surfing waves you've seen and heard about in the magazines or the movies. You want to go and see it for yourself." Stewart nominated the definitive 1971 Albert Falzon and David Elfick surfing film, *Morning of the Earth* as a significant moment in his life. "That did it for me … those waves we first saw from Indonesia.[We] never thought of waves up in *Indo* … always thought it was just flat water and lagoons up that way. I guess we had a narrow focus on what was out there … but when we saw those blokes surfing Uluwatu at six foot in board shorts, warm water—wow [laughs] off we go!".

"Winter-time gets long, cold and hard down here," said Dunsborough surfer, Garrick Jackson. "Everyone gets away up north or to Indonesia … holidays around here typically involve going surfing in tropical destinations." Fellow Dunsborough local, John Tognini, likewise indicated that surf tourism is about temporarily escaping the Cape's bleak winter period. "The annual surf trip is an important part of our local surfing culture, a great way to escape winter … getting into your favourite boardies, relaxing and sharing surf and a few Bintangs with your mates. It's fantastic fun."

Surf travel is a noteworthy part of the global surfing culture. Environmental position and fiscal ramifications ultimately determine *when* surfing subcultural members vacate and *where* they search. Home practice for many Cape Naturaliste surfers is put into torpor as a result of an elongated cold winter phase. The Dunsborough/Yallingup wave riders rate their regular surf-related holiday as a function of their ecosystem. *The Search* is, and has always been, intrinsic to the Cape Crusaders. Warren Boyes considered his fortune being a Cape Naturaliste surfer. "You get a lot of European tourists down here in their Wicked [camper] Vans and a lot them can't even surf

[polite chortle]. But they want to be surfers … and you can't blame someone for wanting to be part of the surfing culture, can you?" he nodded. "We're very lucky to be surfers down here. We have these world class waves in our back yard, and you've got to expect people to want to experience our waves and lifestyle." Using Warren's commentary as a segue, let's jet off to Europe.

15.10 Tourism Tale (ii): *Es Boa Como Milho*

Surf tourism is a gamble, but surfers are an optimistic mob. Enticed by the lure of riding perfect waves in exotic locations, best mate Jeremy Pearce and I quit our jobs, packed up our surfboards and headed to Europe, an extended surf tour beckoning. Way back in 1986, long before the Quiksilver Pro had invaded the Basque coast, the European rite of passage for most young Aussies was more about Contiki Tours than catching waves. *Pearcey* and I had heard of some mystical beach breaks in France, a perfect left in Spain and cheap seaside living in Portugal, so we decided to take the punt. After a laborious flight to Heathrow, we purchased a Ford Falcon from an Arthur Daly doppelganger, jumped on the ferry to Calais and were on the Autoroute to Aquitaine before you could say *bon-jour*. Arriving at Hossegor twelve hours later, our lotto numbers bobbed up and for 21 consecutive days, the surf pumped. The quality beach-break peaks were amazing, our surf smorgasbord generated by a recalcitrant low-pressure system loitering between Iceland and Greenland. Such North Atlantic fury produces vast swells that empty out in the Bay of Biscay. Hossegor is a wave magnet, and we were iron filings stuck to its pole.

Spring life in the camp ground under the aromatic pine trees was superb. The local *Biere Boc* brew was tasty and affordable on our budget. Jeremy was a devotee of the *Gauloises* cigarettes. We were nourished by *jambon*, *fromage*, French sticks and the occasional chocolate from the *Seignosse Supermercado*. We played tennis when the winds wafted onshore, lounged on the beach between surf sessions, read Wilbur Smith books in the sun, enjoying the indulgent lifestyle of an indolent surf tourist. As Europe was somewhat of a secret spot on the surfing radar in that period, we enjoyed the waves with relatively few competitors. Occasional participants from home, from the US, South Africa and New Zealand bobbed up in the lineup, however, we generally surfed on our own. Although few local folks surfed at that time, the French loved the seaside. An intriguing element of Hossegor's beach culture was the regularity of gorgeous topless local girls in the waves—a most distracting episode.

The harsh reality of 'good things coming to an end' meant that the Hossegor swell eventually subsided. We cleared border formalities with pre-arranged Spanish visas, the fabled Basque village of Mundaka beckoning. A beautiful fishing community located at the mouth of the Guernica Estuary in Spain's Bizkaia Province, Mundaka was a major pull for our European surf trip. We had heard yarns and seen photographs of a long, fast, hollow, left hander that peeled quickly along a sandy bottom in front of the Catholic cathedral. Time to taste it!

Pitching our oversize tent on the terraced Mundaka camping ground, we rapidly acclimatised to the local lifestyle. The cuisine was delectable. We lived on the delicious bar snacks, the tapas served at eighteen old-world bars on the cobblestoned lanes. The Tempranillo was excellent, and at fifty pesetas per glass, it was way too affordable. We dubbed our favourite cantina 'Cone-eyes' after the perpetually stoned, laconic young Spaniard who filled our wine glasses and supervised our tortilla demolition. It was amazing how this young bloke's demeanour sparked up when we presented him with a Hoodoo Gurus and Jimmy Hendrix tape over an afternoon card game. Immediately treated like his best mates, the young local patrons started acknowledging us with smiles and greetings. Tourist lesson learned—a small gift can bring much reward.

We encountered other like-minded surfer travellers in Mundaka, patiently waiting for the waves to turn on. Days were spent kicking the footy and flicking the Frisbee on the river flat at low tide, playing 'five hundred' on the camp ground lawns, drinking frosty cerveza and enjoying luxurious afternoon siestas. Unfortunately, a new ground swell didn't eventuate. In reflection, we should have fled Hossegor earlier to ride the Mundakan freight trains, but it's always easy in retrospection. Local knowledge is gold to surfers, capital that the surfing tourist sometimes lack—know the environment, know the field. The European map was hauled from the Ford's glove box and a new travel plan was hatched—onward to Portugal.

Colonial giant of the fifteenth century, Portugal is the birth place of Vasco da Gama and Ferdinand Magellan. Famous for its temperate climate, musical fado, ancient castles, friendly people, cheap lodging, with over 1,000 kms of Atlantic-facing real estate including the notorious *Supertubos* surf break, Portugal ticked all our surf tourism boxes. Being a surfing tourist in Europe was an enlightening experience for us. In addition to learning history and geography, we also developed an appreciation for language. As courteous tourists, Jeremy and I always attempted to converse with the locals in native tongue, generally successful in making ourselves understood. Many of the young Europeans understood English and seemed happy to practice their conversational language on us. Of the informal language that we learned on our sojourn, one phrase remains imprinted in my temporal lobe. We learned this expression from a group of Lisbon University students, holidaying in Peniché. Enthusiastic to hear our Australian tales, they laughed at our jokes and enjoyed drinking coffee and red wine with us in the sunshine at our favourite café. During a fun surfing lesson, we offered on a warm Portuguese morning, the gang unexpectantly started chanting 'es boa como milho' in singsong unison. Obviously stoked about riding a few waves, the rendition was fascinating. What was the chorus all about? Inquiry provided the translation—'as good as popcorn'. Riding waves is a difficult experience to describe, however likening surfing to popcorn had us in hysterics. Although we were assured that 'es boa como milho' was a huge tribute, a traditional Portuguese accolade, we tried to convince our friends to modify their wording. "Try as good as beer," we suggested. But they would not hear of such blasphemy. For the remainder of the trip at any feel-good moment, Jeremy and I would trot-out our newfound Portuguese sonata.

Our surfing experience in Portugal was unforgettable. From the northern beach breaks of Costa Nova and the Aveiro Peninsula, through the points at Figueira da Foz and Nazaré, the wedging peaks at Peniché and the heaving reefs at Ericeira, we were treated to some quality waves. Unexpectedly though, surfing became *almost* secondary on the journey. We enjoyed our immersion in the Portuguese culture. The Escudo was a cheap currency, being spoiled by Portuguese widows in their homely pensions was a welcome change from our subsistent tent-life regime, restaurant food was affordable, and the wicker bottles of vino tinto a bargain. We visited museums, art galleries, universities, cathedrals and castles. We became conscious of the proud Portuguese maritime traditions, developed a taste for the omnipresent grilled sardines, sat mesmerised as the Portuguese Forcados challenged the all black bulls in a rugby style scum at the Grande Corrida and visited the docks in the wee hours of the morning watching the tanned fishers unloading their catch. Portugal was 'es boa como milho'.

15.11 End of Tour: The Last Wave

As a boy, Barry *Baz* Young developed his love for surfing on the waves at Glenelg, South Australia. "I started when *Midget* [Farrelly] won the 1962 Makaha Championships," he recalled during our interview. "There was a photo of him in front of the paper, sitting next to his surfboard and trophies … and I just thought that [surfing] looked like a good thing to do." *Baz* undertook his mission and progressed to realise a wonderful surfing life. "During the '70 s, surfers followed the hippy-type-thing. Polyester shirts, flower power, long hair, rebellion … we didn't really have a surfing identity like the kids today. There was nothing that labelled you as a surfer, other than the fact that you surfed. Those early days were days of discovery." As part of his journey, Barry exited the desert state when he was 27 years old, touring west to chase his destiny as a prominent Cape Crusader.

"Surfing is a healer and it has always been a big part of my life," Barry stated, gratefully recognising his providence. "I often think that only a fraction of a percentage of people on the planet surf! You've got to keep doing it for as long as you can. Now that I've more time on my hands [in retirement], it's a lovely way to fill in my day. Surfing is about accomplishment … and some days I do it better than others [laughs]. But I've learned to accept that situation over the years. You've got to realise that when you're 70, you're not going to surf like you did when you were 40. But some days you get that magic happening," *Baz* grinned. If you're expecting too much of yourself, then you [should] give it away, go and play golf …".

Barry is a surf tourism devotee. His biannual pilgrimages to the remote central Indian Ocean are emblematic of his lifestyle. "When I go to the Maldives, I have sessions when I feel like I surf as well as I can. Surf travel really brings home *why* you're surfing. … it's all about self-gratification. You're searching for those really special days in your life, days that don't happen that often." *Baz* contemplatively paused. "In the Maldives, you are surfing waves that are more perfect than we get

at home. It's offshore all day, and you're surfing in warm water in board shorts … it's the only time when I go surfing three times a day, you're like a grommet [young surfer]. I get five or six really good waves in a session, and on a surf trip, it's just a total joy … it's everything you desire as surfer. That Rip Curl campaign, that cameo about *The Search* … the romantic dream, the perfect wave with no one on it. That stuff gets to the surfing crew. Surfers love the element of discovery—and it's hard finding new places to surf now [deliberation] …but I'm sure they're out there, it just depends how hardcore you want to go in your search, I guess."

15.12 Conclusion: Close-Out Set

Using the Cape Naturaliste surfing group as a paradigm, this chapter investigated the veracity of surfing tribes. As an acephalous group of people, bound by territory, lifestyle, passion and emotion, the *Cape Crusader*s parallel Bennett's (1999) and Hardy et al. (2013) concept of lifestyle defining neo-tribes. Using ethnographic methodology, specifically interview and participant observation method, I have attempted to substantiate this claim, investigating the Cape Naturaliste surfing tribe as a surf-tourism paradigm.

Surf tourism is driven by The Search, a concept originating from the 1960/1970 s pure surf movies and later patently branded and marketed by the *Rip Curl* surf company. Coupled with surfing magazines, these media stimulated a generation of adventuresome surfers to leave the comfort of their tribal homeland, and to travel to exotic destinations chasing the cliché *perfect wave.*

I have drawn on interview data to elaborate the history of surf tourism associated with the Cape Naturaliste tribe, developing the notion that surf tourism led to the genesis of the original surfing tribe—the first surfers to migrate to the region, to live their surfing lifestyle. A contemporary example of this theory was deliberated, considering the relocation of an interviewee, who has permanently emigrated from Cape Naturaliste to Indonesia.

Surf tourism often involves seasonal tribal migration, specifically Cape Naturaliste surfers exiting their tribal performance sites during unpleasant winter ecology, to the tropical climes of Indonesia and the Maldivian archipelago. Resembling animal migrations, such surf-tourism resonates with what Maffesoli (1996, 98) coined as "rituals of evasion".

However, surf tourism extends beyond searching for perfect waves, and avoiding the winter blues. Surf tourism promotes the quest for knowledge, understanding and tolerance, intangible qualities that grow and define 'self'. Using autoethnographic narrative, I have endeavoured to illustrate how surfing and wanderlust can amalgamate, acting as a vehicle to value diverse cultures, and develop gratitude—sometimes seemingly lacking in the contemporary consumer society—for being part of the global surfing culture, but moreover, for being part of a surfing tribe.

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