



John R. Waidelich, citizen of Hawaii, is a native born Californian. In his younger days he body surfed at Rincon, Trestles, San Onofre, and other California surfing beaches. He tried board surfing, but his main interest was in body surfing.

In 1956 John moved to sunny Hawaii, and it was not long before he was dunking his body in the waves of Makapuu and Sandy Beach. Both of these beaches are well known for excellent body surfing.

Time after time, John would take off, only to find himself cut off by someone riding a paipo board. Most of these boards were crudely fashioned from pieces of plywood and were of obvious origin, as they still carried the words "For Rent" or "For Sale"

BY VAL VALENTINE

Although he is not the type to give up easily, John decided not to fight them, but to join them. He fashioned a board after the shape that was popular at that time. Being a law-abiding citizen, John could not bring himself to liberating a real estate sign, so he used marine plywood. This move turned out to be step number one in the shape of things to come.

After his first few rides on the paipo he was hooked. This was it. This was the ultimate in the surf as far as John was concerned, no more bulky surfboards to struggle with, no more car racks, here was a board that could be carried very conveniently in the back seat of the car. It was a board that was faster than any surfboard he had ever ridden and could be easily pushed

through the most critical wave. This board gave him the nearness to the water and the feel of body surfing.

Let's leave John for a moment, jazzed by his first few rides at Makapuu, and go back to the early forties, to Malibu Beach, California, and a thinking young man by the name of Bob Simmons.

Up until this time, surfboards were difficult to ride, as they were very heavy, had no skeg, and were practically impossible to turn. Bob Simmons made boards that were lighter, he added a skeg, and applied scientific principles to surfboard shaping. In short, like the man who built a better mousetrap, he built a better surfboard, and the surfing world beat a path to his door.

Now it is almost 25 years later, and history, as it has a habit of doing, is repeating itself. Paipo boards, or belly boards as they are called in California, have been used for centuries, with little thought having been given to efficient design. Then along came a thinking young paipo board rider by the name of John Waidelich, and changed all of that.

Just as Simmons had improved the surfboard, John applied the science of hydrodynamics to improve the paipo board.

His first major improvement was to scoop the nose of the board, which immediately eliminated much unnecessary and annoying pearling.

Next he reasoned that the boards would be much more efficient if they had a larger planing area. He realized that after the takeoff the rear third of the board became the planing surface. This, then was the logical place to add the greater dimension. Consequently, he did an abrupt about-face on the shape of boards being ridden at this time. He left a reasonable width at the nose of the board to maintain lift, and widened the tail. The delta shape that resulted entirely eliminated the need for skegs. When the skegs came off, the speed increased greatly. Now Waidelich-designed paipos are the fastest boards in the water. A commercial version on the market is known as the "Paipo Nui."

Now, armed with a vastly improved board, John Waidelich looked for new water worlds to conquer. Makapuu and Sandy Beach were too crowded, and the waves were not quite large enough.

He turned his attention to Publics in Waikiki, which can get to a fair size on a good southerly swell. From Publics it was a long kick out to Castles, but John made it, and rode some big surf at this spot. I had the good fortune, on one occasion to watch John ride a wave from Castles through Publics, Cunha and Techniques to the beach by the Kuhio breakwater. Local people are

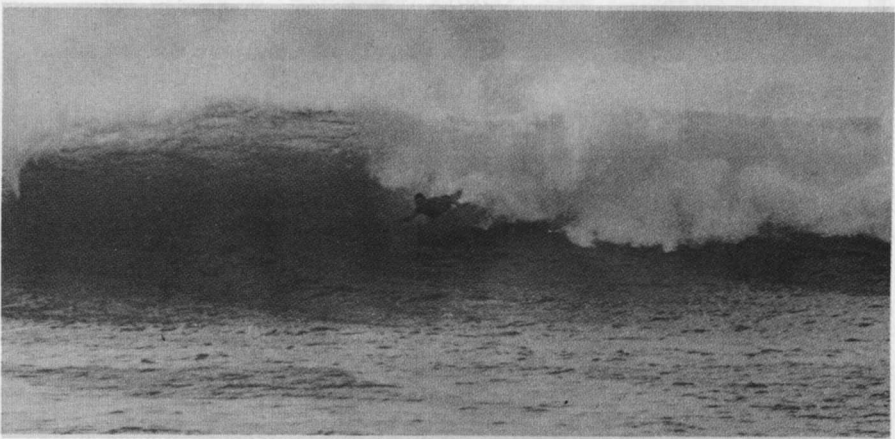
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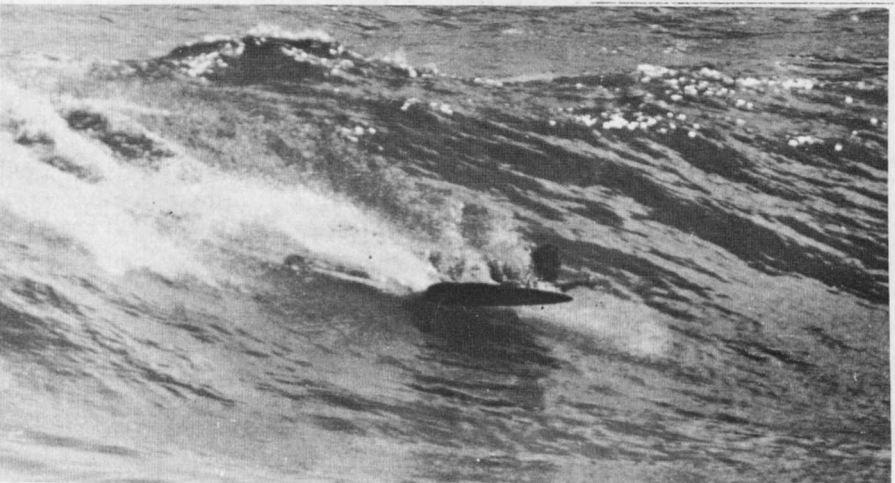
The author of article, Val Valentine, knows a lot about Paipo Board, shown here at Sunset.



Paipo Nui has been used all over the world. Candy Calhoun in Peru. Photo by Rich Harbour.



John Waidelich in trim at one of the world's best body surfing and Paipo beaches, Makapuu. Hot left by an unknown at Makapuu Point. Only his trailing legs keep him from being airborne.





JIM FREEMAN'S THE GLASS WALL



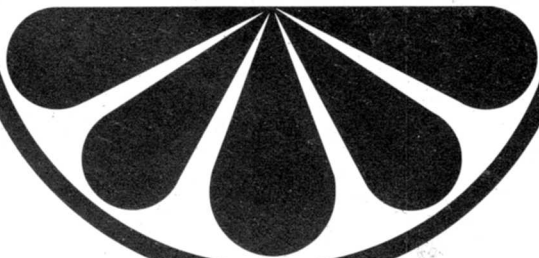
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still talking about a ride over the same route on a surfboard many years ago by the famous Duke Kahanamoku.

When the winters came, John turned his attention to the huge north swell. Maile and big Makaha on the west shore of Oahu fell before John and his paipo.

Next came the hardest-breaking waves on the island — the North Shore. Haleiwa, Sunset Beach, and the Pipeline were ridden successfully. By this time John was fully confident of his board and his physical condition. He was ready for the ultimate test — big Waimea.

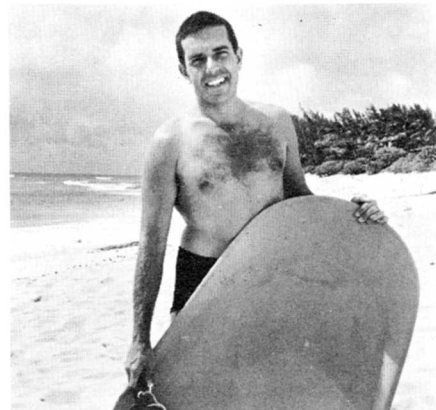
February 22nd, 1963, was the largest day at Waimea for the season of 62-63.

PAIPO NUI

(continued from page 51)

John Waidelich and his paipo companion, Jim Grownie, kicked out through the shorebreak. Using the channel rip and their fins, they soon reached the lineup. Here they were faced with a problem. Although their boards were much faster than surfboards, they would be forced to take off farther inside, in the critical part of the wave. This meant they would be forced to take off in the vicious throwout section of the Waimea monsters. This position also left them a prime target for the fast-dropping big gun surfboards.

Would they be able to hold an edge? Would their thin plywood boards be



John Waidelich, pioneer of the Paipo board. able to survive the crushing force of a big Waimea wave? John thought ruefully of the fiberglassed paipo that had broken neatly in two on a big wave at Sunset. He dismissed the thought from his mind. No time now for thoughts of what had happened or might happen, they were committed.

Alongside of them sat men who had already mastered Waimea on their surfboards. Max Lim was there, Buzzy Trent, Peter Cole, Fred Van Dyke, Kealoha, and others.

A set loomed up, blotting out the misty horizon. They kicked furiously and felt the drop. They were on it! Suddenly their fins felt no resistance. They were airborne. Down they fell, into the trough of a twenty-plus Waimea giant.

Eight feet down, their boards hit the face of the wave with a sickening slap. They ricocheted. They hit again, and at last they were trim. Their edges dug and held, and they shot out with the speed of a projectile. Behind them the roar was deafening. On and on they flew, in perfect control now, and finally wound up, spinning like tops, in the channel.

Waimea had been ridden by the paipos. Another milestone had been passed. It was another breakthrough in the history of surfing, thanks to the ingenuity and courage of John Waidelich, Pioneer of the Paipo. ★