

HELLO



03

ZUKEEN



THE SINGLE FIN MINGLE

WORDS BY STEPHANIE SCHECHTER // PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVE THEW AND CAM HAY

19

00
18

0019



SUMNER
S.I
NZ

2018

S



20

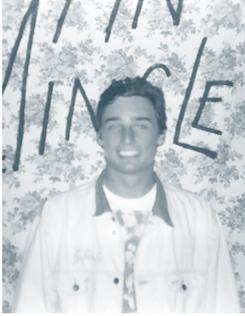
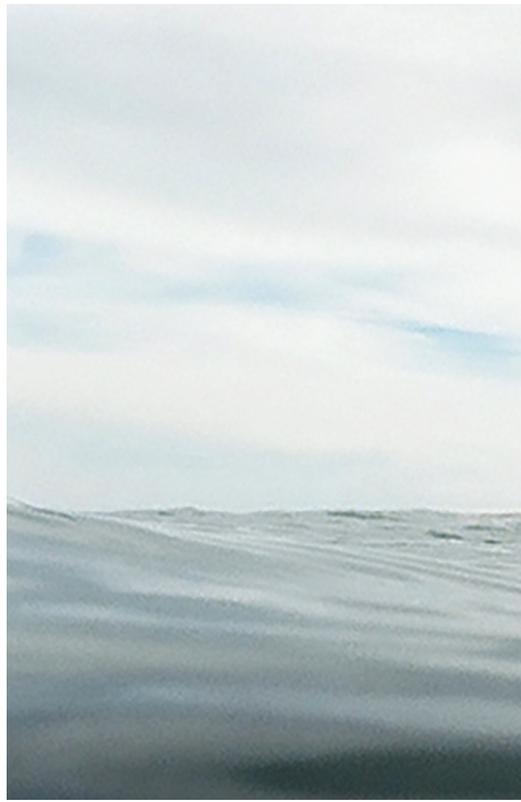
ALL PHOTOS BY DAVE THEW



BACK IN APRIL, HELLO ZUKEEN TRAVELLED TO SUMNER, CHRISTCHURCH FOR THE SINGLE FIN MINGLE, A TRADITIONAL LONGBOARDING CONTEST AND ARTS FESTIVAL. IT WAS AN ABSOLUTE HUMDINGER; A BEAUTIFUL CONVERGENCE OF SURF, ARTS AND SALTY FROTHERS. STEPH SCHECHTER, A STYLISH WAVE-RIDING AND WRITING CALIFORNIAN WAS ONE SUCH FROTHER. SHE AGREED TO RECAP THE EVENT FOR US, SO YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO ENDURE YET ANOTHER ZUKEEN RAMBLE ABOUT DRUNKS, LOST MARBLES AND TOO MUCH TUMERIC. SO HERE'S THE EVENT, THROUGH THE EYES OF STEPHANIE SCHECHTER.

INTRO:





00
22
0023



When I was living back home in California, I'd hear whispers of the fabled Single Fin Mingle. At the time, I was merely a University student / washed-up competitive surfer pursuing the joys of sitting in the library and writing research papers. Traveling all the way to New Zealand in the middle of an academic term was simply not an option. The notion of attending this glorious event remained in the far corners of my mind for the next couple years.

After Uni, I set off on my post-grad travels, making the ceremonial stop in Bali en route to to Australia. On a Bintang-infused evening (a very rare occurrence, in those parts, of course), I met a handful of absolute legends from the wee town of Sumner, New Zealand. One of these lads was none other than Bradley King, artist extraordinaire and wizard of all things Single Fin Mingle. Upon arriving on the beautiful northern NSW coast, Australia, I ran into Ambrose Mcneill, Master of the Mingle. I expressed my interest in the event, but really, my mind had already been made: I would be setting my little paws into the Kiwi sand come April 2018.

After a classic surfer vs. airline board bag clash, I touched down in Christchurch and quickly got a taste for Kiwi hospitality. A kind hearted young man working at the airport actually helped me carry my 30kg longboard bag through customs. It knocked my socks off... I do recall, I come from a place where carrying a surfboard bag through an airport causes looks of disdain from each passerby, as if my choice to carry an unwieldy piece of baggage is for the specific purpose of inconveniencing them, and them alone. As soon as I got to Sumner, I dropped my bags off at "the flat," - if you know, you know- found a couple of friends and a cold beverage magically found its way into my hands. Thus, the extended weekend to end all weekends began.

From exploring surf spots straight out of Shred-Lord of the Rings (thought of that myself, thanks) to immersing myself in the cultural traditions of Sumner - A.K.A. playing pool at Cave Rock Pub - the few days leading up to the contest's commencement were strong factors inspiring my burgeoning love for New Zealand. On the first morning of the competition, the sun was shining, the birds were singing, and conditions for the 2018 Single Fin Mingle were looking pretty heckin' good.

THE SINGLE FIN MINGLE

As I sort of alluded to at the beginning of this account, my formative years in California consisted of weekends chock full of competitive surfing. With a lifelong emphasis on academics and positive reminders from my parental units that winning plastic surf trophies did not determine my self-worth, I put the competition stuff on the backburner as I reached my later teens. I still enjoyed attending competitions to some extent, but mostly for the beach hangs, after parties, and camaraderie with my fellow surfers, all of which were on display in the finest of forms at the Mingle.

The Single Fin Mingle is, without a doubt, the most well-run and fulfilling surfing event that I have ever participated in. Unlike practically every other surf contest I've attended, there was not a single complaint heard on the beach, allowing bystanders and surfers alike to enjoy the harmonious sounds of laughter, dad jokes, and jazz music.

Decked out in our most sophisticated formal wear, the Mingle masses flocked to the Sumner Community Center to witness the musical geniusness of hometown heroes, The Butlers. Although the final rounds of the contest were still to be held the next day, not a single soul held back from enjoying themselves in any capacity.

Since the event is based around surfing, it is worth mentioning that the talent in the water was by far some of the finest traditional longboarding I've seen in a while. I loved seeing surfers that aren't necessarily in the "scene" getting the credit that they truly deserve. Coming from Southern California, we constantly hear the same names over and over again, and to be completely honest, regardless of how beautifully these individuals surf, it can still be a bit stale at times. The Single Fin Mingle is an amazing platform providing some of the more underground loggers with the opportunity to express themselves and showcase their skills, and for this, I am eternally grateful. This refreshing absence of ego, combined with the welcoming spirit of Sumner's surfing community makes The Single Fin Mingle a contest that I hope to return to every year.

