

Brad escaping punishment at Ho'okipa



Sitting here on Maui, in our 4 by 4m studio with three mattresses on the ground, my days sitting in school dreaming of my trip to Maui seems like a long time ago! The last three months I have spent on the rock with two of my good friends, Brad from Idaho and Craig from Ottawa, Canada, have been primo.

As soon as I finished high school in November 2005 I started working at Wild Winds (Wellington's windsurfing store) during the day and at the Speights Ale House in Petone at night. I continued to sail every time it was windy and trust me, I did ask myself on more than one occasion what I was doing when I was rigging up at 7 AM in a cold southerly! In March I flew up to Auckland and spent a few hours convincing the American Embassy to give me a six month holiday visa, instead of the usual 3 month visa. Letters of support from the Wellington Windsurfers Association (thanks!), my parents and Wild Winds helped win over the embassy. I also had to show them previous pay slips and bank records to prove that I could afford to live for 6 months without working. With my visa in hand the trip was on! I flew from Wellington to Sydney, spent 5 days seeing friends and family, than flew to Honolulu, onto Oahu and then Maui. Friday the 9th of June saw me successfully persuade the check-in lady to let my double board and quiver bags on the

plane for free. Sydney greeted me with sunshine and I had a fun weekend checking it out. Tuesday arrived and there I was, convincing another check-in lady to let my gear on for free. Qantas seem to be the airline to fly with, because if you check in with overweight gear, they see how many people are on your flight and if it's pretty empty they let your gear on for free! On both Air New Zealand and Qantas you are allowed two bags of 23 kgs. My gear bags weighed 31kgs each! To get my gear on at no extra cost I was extra friendly to the check-in ladies and offered to carry my gear to the oversize baggage compartment. They like this because it saves them from doing it! I don't know from experience but apparently Air New Zealand is a lot tougher on your excess baggage. The 10 hour flight overnight went smoothly and I watched my share of movies. Stumbling out of the plane at Honolulu the heat really hit me (yes I know, everyone says that), especially dragging my gear from one terminal to the other. This time round the

check-in lady wasn't so kind, slapping me with a \$100 USD bill for my baggage, but I didn't mind not having paid anything for my previous 2 flights. Checking in at the Rainbow Hostel in Paia, I was stoked to finally be here. The windsurfing hub of the North Shore is Paia and happens to be where we live. Paia is a funky little hippie town which is located on the very bottom slopes of the worlds' largest dormant volcano, Haleakala, with the local grocery store selling only organic products (from cereal and pasta to chocolate and fruit), and an abundance of interesting characters like yoga gurus, professional windsurfers, tattoo artists and loud American tourists with "I love Maui" t-shirts on (we haven't brought ours yet, we only have the hats...). The next day Brad arrived and we hit the water in the afternoon. The first things I noticed was how nice it was to sail without a wetsuit, how many turtles are lying in the water waiting to be hit, and the amount of people on the water. All I'm going to say is look before you gybe!

We spent the first week sailing at Kanaha, which is divided into two spots, Lower and Uppers. In the Summer, Lower is flat and good for learning and freestyle while Uppers picks up some of the small swells on the outside, perfect for jumping and still good for freestyle on the inside. Since then we have spent most of our time sailing at Sprecklesville Beach (Sprecks). This is a super fun place to sail with a nice crowd and good ramps from the wind swell,

The amount of wind this place has is crazy. I have used my 74Ltr JP radical wave everyday and rigged my 4.2 Neil Pryde Zone on a regular basis. In three months of sailing we have only used 5.2s around a dozen times which gives you a slight idea of how windy it is during the summer here. Summer (our Winter) is the time of the trade winds and is the best time to come for strong, reliable wind. The Winter (our Summer) is when the northern swell arrives, making Ho'okipa and other famous spot on the North Shore come alive. We haven't had any serious swells yet, but have scored a few shoulder high days at Ho'okipa. Even on the small days Ho'okipa is a pretty scary place to sail and it isn't uncommon to find your sailing level drop due to nerves. On the inside at the west side of the beach are the infamous "Ho'okipa rocks" and to the east is an old reef shelf so the pressure is on to make that gybe or tack.

Maui can get crowded on the water but having been here for the whole summer we have scored a few good sessions to ourselves. There is nothing better

than sailing with your friends in epic conditions. One of the best days was during a south swell at Maui Sunset in Kihei (South Shore of Maui), where Brad and I and two Irish friends got head high waves and cross-off wind for 3 hours with no one else out! The only problem with Maui Sunset is how shallow the reef is, ranging from ankle deep to only 2 feet. Needless to say whenever we sail there our fins come back a little worse off.

With Maui being the windsurfing Mecca, it is a really exciting place for an 18 year old to be. Many pros live here and it is pretty amazing watching and learning from them, but also sailing with them. Windsurfing is alive and better than ever, but it does seem to have skipped a generation. All the windsurfers at the beach are either 40 plus or under 13 years of age, Brad, Craig and I at 24, 25 and 18 respectively stand out. Everyone has been super nice to us and helped us out with various things from technique, finding a place to stay, a car and general advice on Maui. Maui 'the Valley Isle' lives and breathes windsurfing and in turn is like the 'homeland' of windsurfing. It is the place that every windsurfer, pro or weekender alike, feels drawn to. Come and visit, trust me, you won't be let down.

I would like to thank my Mum and Dad and Wildwinds, Wellington for everything they helped me with - without them I wouldn't be here!

Mahola Tim Bamford



Brad, Timo and Craig



Timo - vulcan at Sprecks