

Bob “the Greek” Bolen
Interview by Bruce “Snake” Gabrielson 12/29/2006

Q: Tell us a little about your history. When/where did you first begin surfing?

A: I started surfing in Doheny Beach in 1958. I had a home made 9' 4" balsa. I surfed on a Holden beginning in 1959.

Q: When did you open your Greek Surfboards shop, get into shaping, and did anyone help you learn?

A; In 1960 I moved to Huntington Beach. I started shaping with a blank I got from Holden and basically learned on my own. I started selling Greek Surfboards in the Hang 5 T-shirt Shop on Main and Pacific Coast Highway in 1961.



Q: What is one of your greatest surfing memory?

A: I've had many great memories. Some of my most memorable early day trips were in 1961 when I went on a 2 week surfing safari north to Santa Cruz in a 1947 Mercury Woodie. I went on another trip to Wind and Sea where I met Butch Van Artsdale.

Q: What surfers influenced you most in your life and from what perspective?

A; I liked to watch the early day surfing movies. Some of the early surfing stars who influenced me included Illia Kalama, Mickey Munoz, Phil Edwards, Corky Carroll, and David Nuuhiwa.



Q: When did you get involved with the contest scene?

A: I'm not really sure. I've surfed contests off and on for many years. I surfed in the US Championships in 1964.

Q: Describe your surfing "stoke". What is most pleasurable to you?

A: It's relaxing with just you and the wave. When I'm on a wave I forget everything else. You can't have problems cluttering up your mind when you surf.

Q: What was your worst surfing wipeout?

A: I was surfing Tamarac Street on a head high day when I got a face first wall. I went over the falls backwards and was really hammered into the bottom.

Q: Describe your perfect conditions.

A: I like a slightly overhead long right with slight off-shore winds and one other person out. You need someone in the lineup to talk to and watch your good waves.

Q: What is your preferred longboard design?

A: I like a full nose rounded pin or square tail noserider with low rails. I prefer a 9' to 9' 4" length with a 7 ½ inch fin. The Turbo Tunnell fin design in invented works great with this board shape.



Q: What is your favorite maneuver?

A: Noseriding

Q: What do you consider the greatest threat to surfing?

A: Pollution is the number one threat.

Q: Is there any thoughts or wisdom you would like to pass along to future surfers?

A: If we want to keep surfing we absolutely have to start taking better care of the ocean – learn to respect it.



Bob “the Greek” Bolen, Bruce “Snake” Gabrielson, and Josh Mohr