

PREMIER ISSUE

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Undercover

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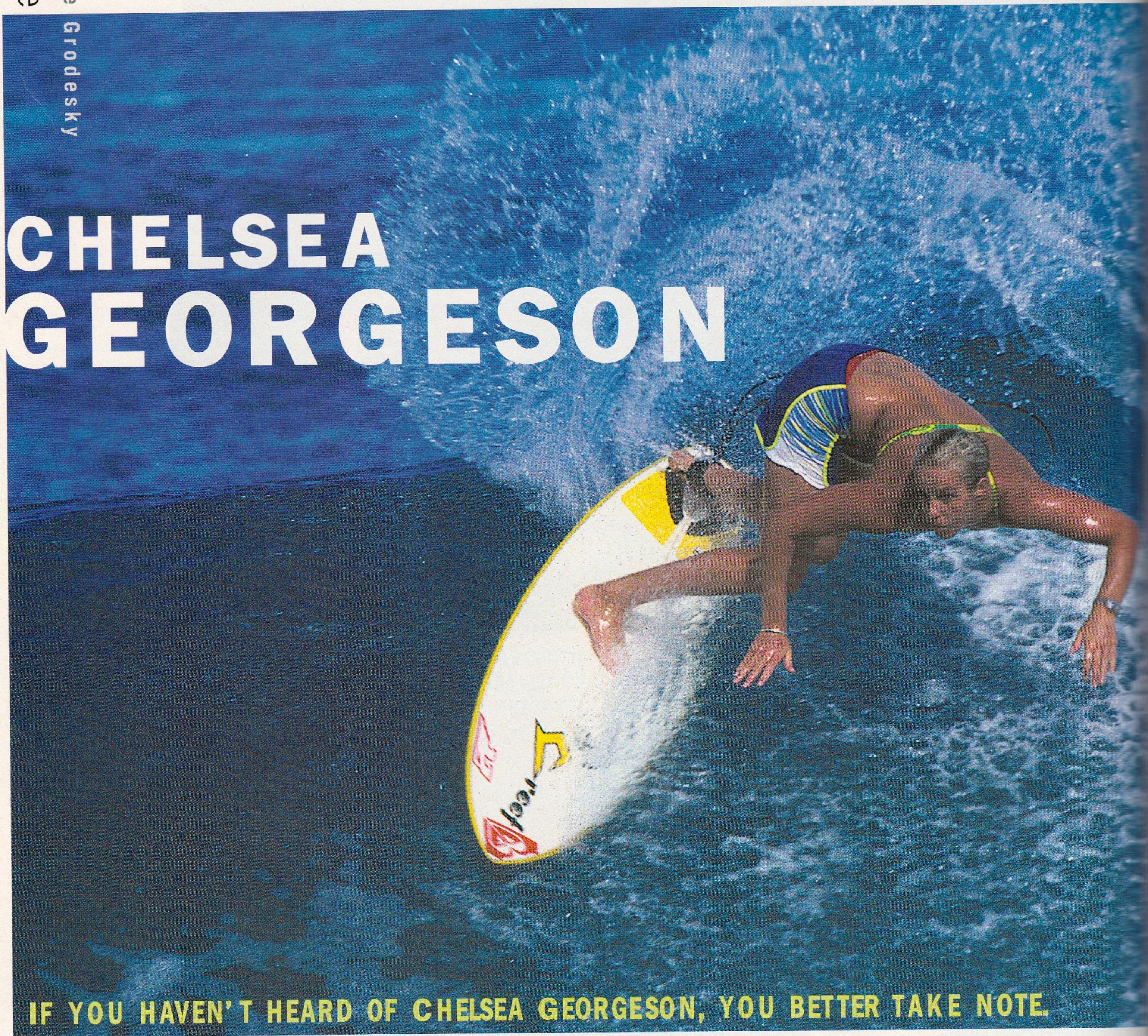
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CHELSEA GEORGESON



IF YOU HAVEN'T HEARD OF CHELSEA GEORGESON, YOU BETTER TAKE NOTE.

She's the newest threat on the World Championship Tour and she's already giving the more seasoned competitors something to worry about. It was only a year ago when Chelsea claimed the Quiksilver World Grommet Title in her hometown of Avalon, a northern suburb in Sydney, Australia. A few months later Chelsea graduated from high school and went to Hawaii's north shore for the winter. She entered the Roxy Pro in Haleiwa and dominated every heat, eliminating veterans like Serena Brooke, Kate Skarratt, and Rochelle Ballard. Chelsea went into the finals undefeated and made a strong third place finish,

ultimately securing herself a slot on the WCT for 2002. Not bad for a girl who only started surfing six years ago. In fact I can't think of anyone who has qualified for the WCT after just one year on the WQS.

SLW: How did you get into surfing?

CG: My parents used to take my two older brothers and I to the beach ever since I can remember. My dad surfed and my two bodyboarding too. When I was 13, we ended up moving to

Avalon. My brothers started to ride shortboards and they convinced me to give it a try. As soon as I did, I loved it.

SLW: What was your amateur career like? How did it help prepare you for the WQS/WCT?

CG: After that first contest I was hooked. The next year I started to compete for regional, state and national titles. I then found out about the Billabong Junior Series and began competing in each of the contests held all over Australia. The Billabong Junior Series is the best thing anyone can do before competing on the WQS. I was also being coached by Martin Dunn, and he has definitely helped me to get where I am now. I think for me, just the experience of surfing in lots of contests, learning how to lose, and how to travel by myself has

already given me a huge head start. It also taught me that you may not win every contest as soon as you start but once you get comfortable and get into a rhythm you begin to make your way up the ladder, and eventually you win.

SLW: Well you're definitely climbing the ladder faster than most! The 2002 WCT season just opened with the Roxy Pro in Australia. Congratulations on your third place finish! Can you tell us a little about the contest?

CG: It was held at Snapper Rocks, a right hand point break. We had to wait for the swell and we eventually got it on the second to last day of the contest. It was like three foot and you could get some that would link up all the way through. It was on my backside and it was a lot of fun.

SLW: How did your heats go?

CG: In my first heat I had Rochelle Ballard and Pauline Menczer!

SLW: Was that intimidating at all? Surfing against them?

CG: Not too bad. I've surfed against both of them before so I just took it as a normal heat. They are both really good surfers and they both have the experience so I knew it was going to be a tough one. I just went out and had fun and ended up getting second to Rochelle.

SLW: What happened in your semi-final? We heard you fell on most of your waves.

CG: Yeah, I was pretty bummed. I just totally stuffed up that one. I had Jacqueline Silva in my heat and I was just trying to take off in the critical part of the wave. I knew I had to get high scores and I was pretty nervous. So I was trying to take off,

looking for barrels, but every time I got to the bottom of the wave, I just nosed dived. I only caught one scoring wave! It took me a whole day to get over it.

SLW: That happens to all the best surfers in heats. On a positive note, you finished third which puts you third in the world rankings after your first event! How does that feel?

CG: (laughing) Wow, I guess I hadn't thought of that! That's the first time anyone mentioned it. I guess it feels pretty good at the moment. But you know anything can happen. I could go from third to sixteenth, so we'll just see how it goes.

SLW: Let's backtrack a little. You surfed the WQS last year while you

AGE: 18

BIRTHDAY: 10-15-83 VIRGO

HOMETOWN: AVALON BEACH SYDNEY AUSTRALIA

STANCE: GOOFY

YEARS SURFING: 6

SPONSORS: ROXY AND REEF

FAVORITE WAVE: 3-4 FOOT BEACHBREAK WITH LOTS OF WALL TO PLAY WITH

DREAM TRIP: MACARONI'S IN THE MENTAWAIS

MUSIC: BEN HARPER, JACK JOHNSON, HIP-HOP AND DANCE.

SPORTS/HOBBIES: DRAWING, BODYBOARDING, TENNIS AND READING.

I started surfing every afternoon after school with the boys and one other girl named Gracie. I guess you could say I was addicted to surfing! The local surf shop held a contest at the end of that year, and everyone told me that I should enter it, so I did. I ended up getting third and had heaps of fun!

photos: debra colman

were still in high school. How did you juggle school, travel, and competition?

Chelsea: Overall, my high school was pretty easy going. I think the fact that my friend Gracie and I won a National school surfing title for them had a lot to do with them letting me go! When I first started taking time off they weren't too keen on the idea but I made a deal and said that I would do the work before I went away or while I was traveling. At first I was a good girl, but then I started having too much fun and stopped doing my work. Somehow I still managed to squirm my way through the year. I missed out on the actual graduation ceremony and the end of year dance because I went to Hawaii instead. It was such a hard decision, yeah right! I was in 20th place on the WQS, but when I finished third in the Roxy Pro event it bumped me up to 10th which got me the slot on the WCT for this year.

SLW: What's the vibe like in the water between the veterans and the new comers?

CG: Actually it's pretty cool because the newcomers, Amee Donohue, Sam Cornish and I get along really well. What I've heard from the older girls is it's getting everyone motivated, more excited. Just the whole deal of having new people on the WCT is totally different.

SLW: Do you think that you are pushing them a little bit more?

CG: I hope so, well yeah I'd say so. Considering the first contest of the tour, both Sam Cornish and I, two out of the three rookies made it further than any of the seeded surfers. Sam made it to the quarterfinals and I made it to the semis and all of the seeded surfers were knocked out in like the second heat. So, yeah, I guess we're stirring up a bit of a threat.

SLW: So next up are the Roxy Pro in Fiji and the Billabong Pro in Tahiti.



How are you feeling about surfing Teahupoo?

CG: I've seen footage from last year's event in Fiji and I hear all the girls talking about how it's supposed to be the best contest of the year. So I'm really excited. It's a left-hander, which, I've never really surfed in a contest before. (Ed's note: re-read that sentence! She's on the WCT and has NEVER surfed in a contest that's a lefthander!) But surfing Teahupoo, I'm a little nervous actually. It's a little bit easier taking off backside so we'll see how that goes. Hopefully it won't be too scary.

SLW: What is your everyday board right now?

CG: Right now I'm riding an Insight, it's from a shaper in Sydney and he's been shaping for a bunch of the WCT guys. Mine is a 5'10" X 17 5/16 X 2 1/8 with a rounded square tail.

SLW: How tall are you and how much do you weigh? We ask because often girls want to know what the pro's ride in relation to their size.

CG: I'm 5'6 and a half and weigh 57 kilos (125 pounds).

SLW: We are also curious to know if you do any training or follow a certain diet?

CG: Well I probably should do more training than what I'm doing right now, but I try to run and do sit-ups regularly. At the moment I've just been surfing so much there hasn't been that much time for anything else! I try to eat healthy, like cereal, heaps of fruit, and salads. I like almost all foods, especially sushi. If I'm at a contest I try to make sure that I have plenty of energy, but I'll always enjoy an ice cream or something as a treat.



SLW: How about sponsorship? When did Roxy pick you up and how did that happen?

CG: Roxy started to sponsor me when I was 14. I was surfing out at South Avalon and Andrew Murphy, who was the Quiksilver team manager at the time, asked one of my friends who I was. Then, when Lisa Andersen came to compete in the Coke Classic she saw me surfing and I guess she said something to Murph and a few weeks later I was sponsored by Quiksilver. (Laughing) So thanks Lisa! Roxy has been such a good

sponsor. They've always supported me and given me so many opportunities. Last year on the WQS I did have to find some extra cash to compete in all the events, but I am certain if I was ever stuck in a position where I needed to get somewhere that Roxy would be there. I think that's the most important thing, just knowing that your sponsor is there for you. This year they are supporting me 100% so I have nothing to worry about. All I have to do is surf! They have been the perfect sponsor and I'm very thankful for it.

SLW: So do you think about a world title?

CG: Sure, it's my dream! But the day I stop having fun and enjoy competing, will be the day I quit. There's no point in following your dream if your heart isn't in it.

"YOU MAY NOT WIN EVERY CONTEST . . . BUT ONCE YOU GET COMFORTABLE AND GET INTO A RHYTHM YOU BEGIN TO MAKE YOUR WAY UP THE LADDER . . ."

