

Surf Americas 1999

SURF AMERICAS

'Surf Americas' was the first surfing expedition through North, Central and South America organized by the ISA. The Surf Americas team was composed of Alberto Castro, Rafaela Sá and Beto Franco and was sponsored by ISA, Reef, Company, and ELC Security products, which were their sponsors. This expedition began in La Jolla Ca, and ended in Brazil, they travel through México, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panamá, Colombia, Ecuador, Perú, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Brasil.

This kind of expedition not only helps the surfing community worldwide but helps spread the word about ISA and what ISA represents and the countries it represents. This was truly a grand adventure taken on by these three. It would be great if something like this were to happen in Europe or Asia, so to expand the sport of surfing even more, and introduce countries like Nicaragua to a whole industry.

The team of Surf Americas made a great report about all the Surfing Associations they visited. Alberto Castro says that the report "reveals the reality of surfing in the Latin American countries...and should be treated with maximum relevance to help the development of the sport worldwide". The questions asked to the Presidents of the Associations, and some surfers were designed to gain insight into the association and their needs, there were four:

1. What is the schedule of competitions are who are your sponsors?
2. What does the National Surfing Association wish from the ISA?
3. What is the Athlete's perspective of it's National Surfing Association?
4. What is the Surf Americas perspective on the Association?

Their most interesting stop was in Nicaragua, a country that is not a member of the ISA, nor has a National Association. Although they were obviously not able to answer some of the questions we were able to gain insight on the perspective of a small nation with good surf but no Association. In this country there are about 25 surfers, most of them from San Juan del Sur close to the border of Costa Rica. The two individuals interviewed by the Surf Americas team were Manuel Antonio Lopez Mendoza "Mei" and Luis Manuel Espinoza Maiorga "El Pájaro". These two were chosen because they were the only one's with some kind of professional connection with the sport, they take care of the visiting surfers, take them to the good surf spots, restaurants, cultural sites etc. What they feel Nicaragua needs is a push from the surfing community worldwide, most of the population has only seen surfing on television. They had a rough idea of the development of the sport of surfing and competitive surfing. Although they were familiar with most pro surfers, and surf spots around the world, they knew little about entities that promote the sport, or even how to begin an Association. The Surf America team feels that "both Mei and El Pájaro are reliable enough to get the surfers together and promote events to educate and train them" possibly to form an Association.

