



## **Gr-Leroy Grannis : Surf photography of the 1960s and 1970s**



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*Steve Barilotti*

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At a time when surfing is more popular than ever, it's fitting to look back at the years that brought the sport into the mainstream. Developed by Hawaiian islanders over five centuries ago, surfing began to peak on the mainland in the 1950s, taking America - and the world - by storm. Surfing became not just a sport, but a way of life, and the culture that surrounded it was admired and exported across the globe. One of the key image-makers from that period is LeRoy Grannis, a surfer since 1931, who began photographing the scene in California and Hawaii in the longboard Gidget era of the early 1960s. This collection, drawn from Grannis' personal archives, showcases an impressive selection of surf photographs - from the bliss of catching the perfect wave at San Onofre to dramatic wipeouts at Oahu's famed North Shore. An innovator in the field, Grannis suction-cupped a waterproof box to his board, enabling him to change film in the water and stay closer to the action than other photographers of the time. Equally notable is his work covering an emerging surf lifestyle, from "surfer stomps" and hoards of fans at surf contests to board-laden woody station wagons along the Pacific Coast Highway. It is in these iconic images that a sport still in its adolescence embodied the free-spirited nature of an era - a time before shortboards and celebrity endorsements, when surfing was at its bronzed best.

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Binding: Hardcover

Review

"The book has the effect of a time capsule, bringing back an era that continues to resonate for us in shades of Technicolor and black and white." Los Angeles Times Book Review, Los Angeles" About the Author LeRoy Grannis's initial foray into surfing began at age 14 with a six-foot slab of pine, but it wasn't until the age of 42 that he picked up a camera and made a career out of it. Under doctor's orders to take up a hobby, Grannis built a darkroom in his garage and began shooting surfers at Hermosa Beach, selling prints for a buck apiece. His photos soon started appearing in many of the burgeoning surf magazines, and "Photo: Grannis" quickly became a hallmark of the California surf scene of the 1960s. Grannis is considered one of the most important documentarians of the sport, and was inducted into the Surfing Hall of Fame in 1966. Jim Heimann is Executive Editor for TASCHEN America in Los Angeles and the author of numerous books on architecture, popular culture, and Hollywood history. Over the past decade working as Surfer magazine's globe-roaming editor at large, photojournalist Steve Barilotti has made it his business to document the sport, art, and lore of surfing. A lifelong surfer and fourth-generation California, Barilotti's passion for West Coast beach culture runs deep. His writing has also appeared in The Perfect Day and the books of renowned surf photographers Art Brewer and Ted Grambeau. Between trips, Steve lives in San Diego, California.

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