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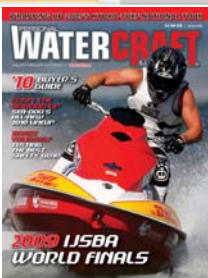
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Chasing Tales: Part I

Aug. 24, 2009

By Justin

Chasing Tales: Part I

An Intro to the Exit

Text and photo by Robby Myer



POLLS

What's your idea of the perfect PWC getaway?

- A week exploring the Colorado River, camping out each night under the stars.
- I want to circumnavigate New Zealand on my own. Anything less is for wimps.
- Chasing glacial waves in the Arctic Circle. Got a dry suit and tow board?
- Cruising around a nice resort, like Golden Eye or Atlantis, taking breaks for the occasional massage.
- I already live this vacation: It's called the National Tour.
- It doesn't matter where I go, as long as I get to ride my ski and leave everything and everyone else in my wake.

It's been a long time since I've slapped a keyboard in communiqué with my fellow Jet Ski brethren. Fourteen years to be exact. Man, time flies; I didn't realize it had been so long till I really counted up the years. Now that I know how long I've been gone I don't imagine there are too many left that remember me or the "Tales of the Tour" articles I did during my racing tenure, and if you do, well then my friend, you too have probably seen your best days.

"I'd rather quit than sit!" I preached from my soapbox, so many years ago as the runabouts took over the TV slots and the paid rides. "We'll miss you Robby," the industry replied, and so it was. I was out. I moved to Tahoe and founded DoubleUp Wakeboards with a group a friends. Ironic, really.

Wakeboarders had a bit of a disdain for PWC. I converted quickly and with a natural ease, traded a tray for bindings and never looked back, standing

up in the wake of a free Air Nautique.

The DoubleUp story is long and unrelated so I'll just fast forward through those years to the part where I returned to the family business, started a family of my own and built some bitchin' houses. Then this summer I got bit by Jet Skis again. Not by racing so much as just free riding. I decided I wanted to try to learn a barrel roll before I was too old to do it. So I started working on my old stuff lost in the attic. Doing so put me in contact with old friends I hadn't talked to in ages – guys like John Dady at Blowsion, who is singularly responsible for conning me into racing his SurfSlam event, and subsequently writing this blog.

Back in the heyday, I was on top of the world. Ranked pro, clothing company, author, and all around fun-chasing idiot – it appeared I was living the dream. There was one very large reality looming offshore: I knew it was coming to an end. The Factories were force feeding the sit-down to the IJSBA, and the writing was on the walls for stand up riders outside the top three.

Sit or quit.

MacClugage was just beginning to come into his own and would dominate every class he rode for the next few years and, to some extent, I guess even into today, so he was basically writing his own checks. Jacobs was still able to get paid off of his legacy alone, but the once all-mighty had shown kinks in his armor and missed the boat when the 750s came out and never really recovered. Opening the door for a victory-starved Sheldon, whose early 750 adaptation paid the dividends he whined about never seeing. Can't forget Fish, the master of the multiple sponsor. Fish had a little deal with almost everyone, and was a character that the world couldn't help but love. He camouflaged a keen business sense that made sure he was profiting from the runabout revolution. With dollars in sight, he was the first to jump ship.

Then there were the rest of us. Guys like Tommy Bonacci, Clay Cullen, DL Wood. All top 20 pros scrapping out a pathetic living (if at all) chasing the Tour. Guys the sport needed to be there for the stars to have somebody to race, the same caliber of competitors that earn millions racing NASCAR so there is full field for the Tony Stuarts and Dale Earnhardts of the track. Top level riders who could've made more money pounding nails. One by one we fell off. The industry disregarded us as casualties of evolution. Almost all those guys gave sit downs a try (I, rightfully, never did), and none lasted but a season. And so it began, the deterioration of the sport to the point it's at today. With no real TV – thus no corporate sponsors – guys were unable to support themselves by racing, and one by one the field shriveled up like a pear on the highway, and with it the companies that built the industry itself. PJS: gone. Westcoast: gone. Jetco: gone. Mariner: gone. And so it was and I'm sorry to say it.

"I was right."

I am happy to say I was there when it was. I have pics of me on the line with my heroes and a grandstand so full of racing fans that they had to arrive before dawn to mark their territory.

But that was then, and this is now. Now there is a chance for a resurgence, thanks to freeriding and innovative thinkers like my man Johnny. Freestyle has evolved and given birth to a whole new segment of the industry and, if

we play our cards right, we may be able to ride the freeriding movement to bring interest back to stand up racing, and it's in this spirit that I agreed to come out to Johnny's SurfSlam this year and write a story – which turned into this blog on watercraft.com. The only way to make it authentic is to participate, so I'm doing just that and all the while will be sharing the road I travel back to the beach with you guys in a new medium that gives me the freedom to say a lot more, a lot more regularly. Not that that is always a good thing, but there's a lot involved with trying to become a world class surf racer in eight weeks.

It's a new concept, SurfSlam, free riding and racing, put on by a new promoter with roots so deep in the stand-up market that I just discovered today, while chatting up Steve Webster at the almighty Kommander Industries, that my farewell "Tales of the Tour" column, the one where I bashed the Industry for the sit-down debacle forthcoming, is still proudly hung on the wall in the shitter.

So check back here from time to time, or subscribe to this feed. I've agreed to once a month, but as I write this, I've already got four stories sacked and I'm having fun with Jet Skis again and am taking them on the road a little as one of my favorite pastimes has always been...

Chasing Tales...

-Robby

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“ Yeah Robby! Back to the sport we lived for in the early 90's. Keep it coming. ”

You're getting me fired up to throw in a fresh battery, pour some mixed fuel down the dual carbs of my '93 750 and take it for a throttling. Gotta love... [Read More](#)

DRahives

“ Well said, Robbie. It is amazing to read what you've said here. I miss the good ”

old days.So much so, that I bought a 2009 Kawasaki 800 SX-R and have been freeriding and running buoys in every spare minute since. I look forward...

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DforDummy

“ GREAT ARTICLE. I missed the golden days of jet skis. This needs to be in the ”

magazine, not just on the... [Read More](#)

ATS_Aaron

