

KELLY SLATER'S SURF STYLE

MAXIM

JANUARY 2009

STINSON CARTER (323) 377-4505



Back when he was costarring on Baywatch in the early 1990s, 20-year-old Kelly Slater became the youngest surfer ever to win the world championship. Now at 36--and a record nine pro-surfing titles later--the Quiksilver athlete has this year become the oldest world champion in the history of the sport. He's posed for Versace, jammed with Ben Harper, penned a memoir, and dated Gisele Bündchen and Pamela Anderson. But after 30 years of hanging 10, the kid from Cocoa Beach isn't about to hang up his neoprene and walk into the sunset...or clam up about his run-ins with killer waves and wild women...or stop dressing like he hasn't a care in the world. On a recent afternoon at a beachside ranch near Santa Barbara, the East Coast short-boarder mixed and matched some of this season's coolest designs and sportswear as deftly as he conquers hardcore curls. Some things just come naturally.

When was the moment you went from surfer dude to surfer celebrity?

When I was 20. For people who become well-known, there's usually a point at which that knowledge of your name surpasses who you really are. Baywatch thrust me into fame immediately. I did win the world title my first time that same year, but the number of people who hear about that through the media as compared to the people who see Baywatch on TV is kind of minuscule.

You've had plenty of high-profile girlfriends. Was that a part of fame?

No, it's just the circles that you run in. Dating Gisele Bündchen and Pam Anderson just happened organically, because we used to work together. But some of it was bullshit, completely blown out of proportion. I never dated Cameron Diaz, for instance. She's like my sister. She's like a dude.

How would you describe your personal style?

Sloppy. My girlfriend tries to style me. She makes fun of me because I don't care. I just throw on whatever's comfortable and what's relatively clean. I've never been into the baggy stuff. Pants are supposed to sit on your hips. I like to wear jeans that I don't have to wear a belt with, and maybe a T-shirt, or maybe just a pair of shorts. The only time I get dressed up is when I go golfing.

How does the surf culture mix with golf?

When the water's flat, we golf. We travel to all these tropical places, and there are usually golf courses around. For years we didn't know anything about golf, but then we discovered something possibly as challenging as surfing—or at least as frustrating to learn as surfing is in the beginning.

You don't do booze or drugs. Is that uncool to other surfers?

I don't know that surfing really affects those choices so much; drugs and alcohol and that sort of stuff are all individual choices. But some of the places you find yourself in the surf world, well, there is quite a bit of partying. Most of it is no better or worse than you'd find at college or high school—just people having fun. But it's a really free lifestyle, and anything's available that you'd want to do.

What's the biggest surfing scare you've ever experienced?

I was in the Java Sea in Indonesia. I ate it on a wave and hit my head on the water so hard it knocked me out. And I was underwater for that wave and the next one. I was unconscious and ended up getting whiplash. I had amnesia for a day. I was very calm when it happened, but later I realized how close to drowning I was.

How does the surf culture mix with golf?

When the water's flat, we golf. We travel to all these tropical places, and there are usually golf courses around. For years we didn't know anything about golf, but then we discovered something possibly as challenging as surfing—or at least as frustrating to learn as surfing is in the beginning.

**You don't do booze or drugs.
Is that uncool to other surfers?**

I don't know that surfing really affects those choices so much; drugs and alcohol and that sort of stuff are all individual choices. But some of the places you find yourself in the surf world, well, there is quite a bit of partying. Most of it is no better or worse than you'd find at college or high school—just people having fun. But it's a really free lifestyle, and anything's available that you'd want to do.

**What's the biggest surfing scare
you've ever experienced?**

I was in the Java Sea in Indonesia. I ate it on a wave and hit my head on the water so hard it knocked me out. And I was underwater for that wave and the next one. I was unconscious and ended up getting whiplash. I had amnesia for a day. I was very calm when it happened, but later I realized how close to drowning I was.

BY STINSON CARTER

