

Editionen ▾ Portugal

Foil Surfboards

von Katha



Billy is a passionate, talented shaper and surfer living in Baleal, Portugal. He loves to shape longboards, twin fins and retrosapes. As a kid he always was the one with the biggest and most uncool board because he liked the classic surfing. Before we ordered a new surfboard, we spoke with Billy about »Foil Surfboards« and his love for surfing...



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How did Foil Surfboards started?

In the first place it wasn't about surfboards. It all started twelve years ago with my own little surfschool »Imenso Mar« (huge ocean) where I taught kids. During that time surfing wasn't that popular the way it is now, kids focused more on other sports. It was very hard making a living out of it.

At some point surfing got more popular and some big surfcamps came to Baleal. They wanted to buy my surfschool and gave me a good offering for it. As I became a father at that time I really needed some financial guarantees so I had to sell my surfschool to a big company. That was a big mistake. I loved my little surfschool and teaching kids. I also became a surfinstructor for the big surfcamps because I really like being an instructor.

In my freetime I always did surfboard repairs for my friends and that's how I started getting to know fabrics, resin and fibreglass.

Three years ago I got back from a long journey to Australia where the waves were often very small. I was shortboarding in Portugal all the time, but during my stay in Australia I got into longboarding and I dedicated myself to classic surfing. So when I got back home I knew exactly which longboard I wanted to have, but the market was very small and there were just a few shapers in Europe. Suddenly there was this little devil in my head telling me »shape your own board man!«

How did you started shaping?

I remember that very well. It was around november and I bought a blank. I had that friend who was shaping boards and he gave me as an early christmas present a few lessons of shaping boards. In december we got together and he taught me the basics. A short time after that a really good friend of mine who was working in a surfschool ordered six boards of me. This was an amazing way to push my work and get straight into it. With the money for the boards I bought tools and materials and it all became real.



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What makes shaping boards special to you?

I have a good comparison for that: As a kid your mother is cooking for you the dishes. But at some point you start cooking by yourself. When you are hungry and when you eat your selfmade meal, it is so much tastier than everything else you tasted before.

“ So if you make things yourself, it is so much better. It's the same with shaping surfboards.

When I see my friends riding a board of mine it is like watching them eat the meal I cooked for them. It makes me so happy to see them flying and cruising happily in the water with a surfboard I did. I makes so much sense to me. More than getting a salary.



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Do you have a favorite part of doing a surfboard?

Yes, definitely the shaping. It's my favorite part. But I also like to work with resintint. I like the decoration and putting fabrics inside surfboards. That's the second best part I like. I guess the sanding is the part I wouldn't prefer to do.

Who taught you shaping boards?

It was manly this friend of mine. He taught me the basics. But I was just watching him and didn't do it myself. So after watching him, I just tried it and learned it by myself. And now after three years of shaping I am still learning so much with every board I do. I guess this process will never end.



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Why do you focus on shaping classic boards like longboards, twinfins and retrosapes?

My passion for classic surfing started in Australia. And also maybe because I learned surfing with a singlefin. Surfing a singlefin is a different way of surfing like on a shortboard. Since then I always tried to ride boards with more volume. Of course, as kid or teenager my friends used to make fun of it because bigger boards just didn't look cool. Also if you didn't have a thruster you were just weird and when you were riding a quad or twinfin you were just someone crazy. But nowadays the retro boards are just a revolution to the true classic surfing. Surfing is about speed and surfboards are about volume. Retroboards surely have more volume than performance shortboards. Let's say 90% of surfers in the water are not Kelly Slaters who can surf a small board. And again, surf is all about speed. The more volume your board has, the more speed you get and the more waves you get. The more waves you get, the more fun you have. Most of the people just need more volume in their surfboards. People finally start to realise this and I hope it stays because it brings more fun for the people.

Where do you think does the classic surf movement come from?

I think its the image. It's not about the »reals« surfers who sleep surf, drink surf, eat surf and wake up about surf. I am talking about all the others who create surf like surfshops, media, surfcamps and commercials. The retroboards are connected to an image of classic surfstyle and gypstyle. Longboarding brings happiness. And people are looking for happiness in a world where is so much war and sadness. People want flowers and longboarding is chilled and brings the flowers and hippystyle.

I prefer to take my longboard and go slowly and smooth with the waves instead of fighting for waves.

California, Australia and Hawaii are much more ahead concerning classic surfboards but it finally swaps over to Europe.



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Anything else you we should know about Foil Surfboards?

Yes! A very important thing concerning my company. When I had that idea about becoming a shaper, I always dreamed of creating a shared work space with friends. So now I have these perfect studio that I share with friends who do boardbags and other creative things. We always help each other and share ideas together. So we created a place for artists.

Another big goal of mine is recycling stuff that I use to do the surfboards. For example I use old plastic bottles to mix the resin and the lid is going to be used to for some paintings. As well I use the old resin when it gets dry to shape stuff like ashtrays or buttons. Sometimes I bring too much trash from the beach I really don't know where to put it.

[Click here to get a board from Foil Surfboards](#)



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