



### SURFING: VINTAGE SURFING GRAPHICS

Edited by Jim Heimann, Taschen, 192 pages, \$12.85

When stoner surfer-dude Spicoli rolled out of a parked van in a pungent cloud of his own pot smoke in *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, he single-handedly wiped out any remnants of the sanitized surfer image that might have been left over from the guileless days of Gidget, Annette Funicello, and Frankie Avalon.

Surfing, for all its simplicity, has gone through a number of incarnations, from its early freak-show days in the South Pacific as far back as 1000 AD to the sun-bleached Californian rendition of the '50s to the corporate-sponsored sport it has become today. In *Surfing*, graphic designer, writer, and historian Jim Heimann documents this evolution through a well-curated collection of illustrations, photographs, vintage ads, and postcards.

Heimann proffers that, in the 1920s, surfing visuals, initially used as promotional material for the Hawaiian islands, became advertising for more than just the sport; they endorsed the lifestyle itself. Thirty years later, with new board designs and regular plane travel to Hawaii, the once-counterculture activity went mainstream. (Interestingly, surfing's most famous mouthpieces have been the bloated men of excess, more likely to drink, smoke, and chew pills than balance on a board — namely Brian Wilson and Elvis Presley.)

What *Surfing* illustrates is that, despite its many faces, the surfing images that endure are iconic, and beautiful, and still deeply indebted to the notion of personal freedom. We are, as Heimann puts it, “drawn to the mystique of an alternative lifestyle,” and as these pictures reveal, the seductive idea of the endless summer.

— Heidi Sopinka