



LeRoy Grannis is an old-school surfer. He learned in the ocean off Hermosa Beach, back in 1931 when he was a 14-year-old boy taking to the waves on a big ol' slab of pine. And he kept surfing for nearly all his life. He'll be 90 in August, and only in the last few years has he left the waves to younger fellas. So while we'd celebrate him as one of the early guys in the sport in any event, Grannis - or Granny as his surfing buddies dubbed him in the '30s - deserves even more respect as one of the first surf photographers as

the sport went mainstream in the '60s.

A new book, "LeRoy Grannis: Surf Photography of the 1960s and 1970s" (Taschen, \$39.99), provides a wonderful look at the scene Grannis chronicled - the famous surfers (**Dewey Weber**, **Greg Noll**, **Corky Carroll**, **Dru Harrison**) and the famous beaches (San Onofre, Huntington Beach, Hermosa Beach, Palos Verde Cove).

Grannis wasn't available to chat about the book, so we rang up **Steve Barilotti**, editor-at-large for Surfer magazine, whose essay introduces the photographs collected in the book.

His thoughts on Grannis - and three cool photos from the book - after the jump....

Q: What should people get out of this book - the photographs it has and the career it describes?

A: Leroy came along at a time when there were very few guys who were seriously taking surf photos. Maybe four. And this is, we're talking early '60s - 1959 to 1965. And so a very formative time in surf history. It was going from being a really outsider fringe bohemian activity to becoming a full-on lifestyle.

I don't think anyone really documented it more thoroughly, because he was so conscientious about going to every surf contest up and down the coast. He was catching some of these guys in their early, gawky adolescence, and then blew up into superstars.

Q: Who were some of those kids he shot on the way up?

A: **Mike Doyle**, for one. **Mike Hynson** was just a kid, before he was in 'Endless Summer.' The gang down in Redondo, **Henry Ford**. **Dewey Weber** was a few years older but was in his prime as a surfer. He was one of LeRoy's favorite subjects. **Linda Benson** as a young woman. **Margo Oberg**, who was just a child.



Surfers at Palos Verdes Cove, 1964

(Credit: LeRoy Grannis courtesy of Taschen)

Q: I'm assuming you've met him a few times over the years - what's he like?

A: He was a meticulous record keeper in his own way. It was all hand filed, and he had his own little system that he could go and find a negative for you in no time flat. He basically knows everything that he shot and where it was.

He's so matter of fact, he just will not overblow anything. All these guys that I consider surf gods were just kids to him. So it was very hard to get him to use a superlative about anything. I wrote the copy, and he said, you know, you sure do use that word 'legend' a lot. He's probably the most no bull— guy I've run into.



Gremmies checking out the U.S. Championships in Huntington Beach, 1964.
(Credit: LeRoy Grannis courtesy of Taschen)

Q: Any plans to do signings or appearances for the book?

A: I called him and said we'd love to have you come down to the Patagonia shop (in Cardiff) and see people. He was up for it. If we do it, we'll take a crate of books down there, show some slides, and do a signing.



At San Onofre in 1963 it was grass-and-board shacks, buses and station wagons.

(Credit: copyright LeRoy Grannis courtesy Taschen)