

PEOPLE

I hope this barrel goes,
"On and On and On..."

SAY
HELLO
TO:

JACK JOHNSON

[PHOTO : CHRISTIE]

Jack's unofficial biography dispels many myths yet opens the world to many more new rumours.

Mention the name Jack Johnson in the company of anyone, from an amped-up grommie to your mate's Nan, and you'll invariably get more than a few nods of recognition. The quiet Hawaiian has made a household name for himself over the past decade, first as a North Shore up-and-comer, then as genre-breaking surf filmmaker, and finally in the well-known guise of muso. Jack's music is everywhere: from Triple J to Pommie backpackers' panel vans, surf shops to inner-city cafés.

But who the hell is he? Most surfers know that Johnson overlooked Pipeline, almost literally in his front-yard, as he ate his morning Cheerios as a rug rat. Some will have heard rumours of a 17-year-old Jack face-planting at the same break and apparently putting an end to his pro career.

But how many know of Johnson's move to California in pursuit of a degree in mathematics, or that he grew up with Laird Hamilton, Derek Ho and Gerry Lopez hanging in his lounge room? *Natural Born Man: The Life Of Jack Johnson* opens to the world the journey of Jack, from pre-birth to the present day, dispelling some rumours, creating others and introducing the world to Hawaii's most successful export since Dole Pineapples. It should be noted that this book got penned without its subject's consent. "We tried to see what we could do to not have it come out," said Jack, when quizzed about the

new biography. "I wasn't so worried that it was going to tell a bunch of lies or anything. I just figured that it wasn't quite right for me to be having a book come out."

At only 32, the ever-humble Jack is the first to admit, "I write songs, that's just about been my life". Added to that, Johnson is quick to point out a scattering of foibles, including his father's inferred determination to make a pro surfer of his son. "My dad is the last guy in the world to care about whether his sons become pro surfers or not. In fact, if anything, he steered us away from being pro surfers. He didn't really like the contest side of it." The book's author, Mark Shapiro, wouldn't know a roundhouse from a reo, continually misspelling "Quicksilver" and talking of Jack surfing his longboard for a bit of mellow, alone time... at Pipeline! But with his latest album, *Sing-A-Longs & Lullabies For The Film Curious George*, hitting number one on Australian music charts, there's no doubt that Jack's popularity *Downunder* will more than compensate for the book's shortcomings. This is just about all you'll see of Johnson in 2007. The singer-songwriter has opted to spend the year at home with his family, surfing, working on his next album and ducking the spotlight whenever it swings its probing beam his way. **Natural Born Man: The Life Of Jack Johnson, Available: Now from all good bookstores. – TOMMY LEITCH**

WHO IS JACK?

Age: 32

Resides: North Shore, Hawaii

Sponsors: Dave's Ukuleles, Garry's Spare Tyres, Jim's Auto-Repairs... psyche!

Weird Fact: Jack produced the classic 2003 surf flick *September Sessions*.

