



All for a Few Perfect Waves: The Audacious Life and Legend of Rebel Surfer Miki Dora

David Rensin

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There will never be another surfer like Miki 'Da Cat' Dora. No one. Not even close. Dora was surfing's most outspoken practitioner, charismatic prince, chief antihero, committed loner, and enduring mystery. From the early 1950s through the early 1970s, this enigmatic rebel with movie star looks and a restless intelligence dominated the Malibu waves and his peers' imaginations -- both on and off the beach -- blazing a singular trail that would inspire generations to come.

But when, post-*Gidget*, the sport exploded into the mainstream in 1959-60, and surfing changed forever -- many say for the worse -- Dora's paradise was lost.

Outraged at gridlocked swells and a scene that had grown ever more commodified, as well as what he perceived as society's inevitable corruption and compromise, Dora eventually fled Malibu, seeking empty waves - and anonymity - beyond America. He'd also run afoul of the law, and he led the authorities on a seven-year chase around the globe. After his arrest in 1981, and some jail time, he left America, returning once in a while to visit, but never again to live -- and in the end (2001) only to die.

Dora would never give up searching for the spirit of the Malibu he'd lost, or for the freedom to live as he chose. Wherever he made his home - New Zealand, South Africa, France - he personified the rebel heart of surfing and, unlike other wavemasters, became a legend in his own time.

This brilliant oral/narrative biography is based on interviews with more than three hundred people who knew Dora, as well as the author's own encounters with him. It uncovers more truth than thought possible about surfing's most seductive and complicated icon. It is the story of one man's insistence on personal freedom, and the rewards and the costs that brings. It is also a story of innocence lost, of the growth and commercialization of the post WWII California lifestyle.

Loner. Rebel. Outlaw. Wanderer. Legend. The life of Miki Dora is the greatest surf story never told. It's all about surfing, and not about surfing at all.

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