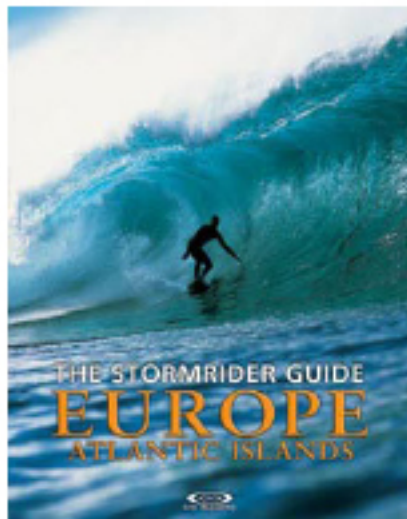


BOOK REVIEW



Stormrider: Europe, The Atlantic Islands.

However you might feel about them, the one thing about the Stormrider Guides you can't ignore is that they will move you. Whoever you are - hardcore local, free spirited traveller or city dwelling weekend - the Stormrider guides are going to have some impact on your surfing life. No doubt they will upset some surfers. But they will inspire many more. The latest edition, Europe, The Atlantic Islands, will prove to be no different.

A part of me thinks that surfing is made too easy by guide books and internet forecasting. The old school self wants to see you pay your dues. I suspect I am not alone. But I use guide

books when I travel so I dearly need to get over myself. Being a welcoming local, a good surfer or a respectful visitor all contribute to your place in the line up. Travel is just a part of the process. No matter how easy they make it, you still have to paddle out and behave yourself. The Stormrider Guide on the dashboard might get you there, but your surfing will say who you really are.

As someone with travel in my bones I can't get enough of the Stormrider Guides. They make my feet itch. They make me want to jack it all, grow my hair, sell the house and take off for the rest of my life, whether the rest of the family are coming or not - even though I live very close to some of the best breaks in England.

Glossy, glorious and generously comprehensive, the Stormrider Guides just keep on getting better and better. And, in case you were worried about your secret spot, this time they have gone further into the wilderness. Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Azores. Nice work if you can get it. They make the Canaries, with their crowd problems and heavy localism, look old and tired. In this edition the maps are more practical, the imagery more enticing and the information, from what I can gather about my own area, sensitive and respectful. And I love it. The Icelandic locals may feel different when their 'empty' breaks start to fill up.

Infuriatingly I can't make up my mind whether this book belongs on the dashboard or the coffee table. It's no handy sized but on a first time

visit to Easly you'd struggle without it. Happily, at the moment it's in the downstairs toilet so we can have more quality time together. All I have to do is turn to page 139 and look at the picture of the Cove at Brims Ness to get things moving. I went there recently and it wasn't anything like that. Would I have paddled out? The picture makes me want to go again and find out. It makes me want to go, period. But it's more than that. It's surf porn art. Page after page of sick surfing filth promises you everything, makes it look easy and shows you its very best side. Teasing, tantalising, tricking you into believing it's like that every day. Lubricated by points, bowls and reefs, the imagination takes off, searching, surfing, pulling in, meeting friendly faces, sharing a jar.

And that's what it is, this Stormrider Guide. It's more than just a book of directions. It's the biggest and best invitation you're ever going to get to the biggest and best adventure of your life. If you love your surfing you just can't leave it. My copy might not go on the dashboard just yet because I've got unfinished business around here. But it will, soon enough, it will.

Review by Martin Doray.

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