

“I think the best way to describe the 'Surf Culture' of St. Augustine is the old bumper sticker/t-shirt/coffee mug that has been floating around for years... "St. Augustine: A quaint little drinking village with a Surfing/Fishing problem.”

To me, surf culture is just culture. It's a representation of the melting pot that is America. Every surfer is unique in their own right no matter who they try and emulate or what kind of board they ride. St. Aug surf culture is as diverse as the community and as dynamic as the ever changing sand bars from Vilano to Matanzas and swells that come and go that give us all our favorite memories.

The waves in St. Aug are mostly bad on a consistent basis compared to the Pacific Coast so it takes a dedicated and imaginative searcher to score consistently. It's a prideful thing when there are no waves anywhere but you know a secret honey hole that will produce a waste high nugget with the right water level. You may have to be lined up with the perfect window of a certain house but when you score and all else is flat, you stole candy from a baby. Most of the time you will not be able to ride what you want to ride but you'll have fun all the same. When the swells come it's like a staycation on the best level.

At the end of the day, it doesn't matter what surf shop you support, where you go to school, where you work or eat, or go to church. Auggie dogs are all just regular Americans just trying to survive and living one tide cycle at a time, swell to swell, chow to chow, beer to beer, and smile to smile.

I've been away in the Army for a while now but St. Aug will always be home to me. The tropical storm and hurricane names blend together but the epic rides, beatings, and memories shared with good friends you never forget. Most big days in St. Aug are 'victory at sea' conditions where you put in hours of work for some tasty close out barrels and survive within inches of your life (with a smile). You've got the lazy summer nose ride days, the crowd-less winter/North Easter days (read above about victory at sea and add ice cream headaches). Then the spring swells that are magical and give you some fun little sections and resemble Nicaragua or Costa Rica on a small day that you wouldn't paddle out...haha They all will always keep you coming back for more... No matter where I've surfed, surfing in St. Aug is the easiest where most of the time you can just grab some trunks and a board and go surf unlike Cali or elsewhere.

If I had to put names on the most influential people in our surf community, there would be a long list but no one spreads the Aloha spirit more than Tory Strange (Surf Station owner). Another legend would be the late Bill Murray who owned the original Island Surf Shop. They both have sponsored the local Eastern Surfing Association chapter and have mentored and supported countless surfers for many years.

I've attached some of the only pics I have on digits. Most are from the 2009 time frame.”

Rob Walters, former St. Augustine resident and surfer