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More surfing turf

Brothers ride waves, their online video show surfs the web

By ANDREA NEMETZ Entertainment Reporter

PSST! Wanna watch some "surf porn"?

Or hang 10 with three-time world champion surfer Tom Curren?

Or see someone getting matter sucked out of their ear during surgery for surfer's ear?

Surfdonkey.ca, a project from Dartmouth brothers Craig and Lance Moore, is helping surfing fans the world over satisfy their fascination with their favourite sport with personal reviews of products like the Rip Curl H-Bomb battery-heated wetsuit —retailing for about \$1,200 — surfing footage and features on sub-zero surfing.

Begun last August, the site has had well over 50,000 views of the 11 short webisodes it has aired so far. It's linked to the site for Lance's Halifax store, Dacane Surf Shop, www.hurricanesurf.com which features everything from products and lessons to the local surf report and Lance's blog. Combined the sites have had one million hits.

The Prince Andrew High School grads began surfing as teens at Lawrencetown Beach.

"Craig started surfing and I wanted to tag along," says Lance, 36. "I was into snowboarding and I thought I'd be a professional snowboarder and I thought surfing would help me cross-train."

After three trips to the world championships, the first when he was just 19, Lance still surfs about 150 days a year when he isn't working at the surf store he's operated for about 14 years. He started his business in his mother's basement, and then moved to Portland Street and Cole Harbour locations, before settling on his current Blowers Street spot, with a summer stand at Lawrencetown Beach doing rentals and selling refreshments.

His local haunts include Lawrencetown, Cow Bay, and the South Shore. "Exploring is a big part of surfing and you can do it here," Lance says, noting he's also surfed in hotspots like Costa Rica, Fiji, California, Hawaii, Barbados and France.

Craig, 39, and the father of three — Griffin, 7, Dylan, 5, and Rose, 2 — laughs and says he's now a once-a-year surfer.

After "an extended undergrad" earning a philosophy degree from Saint Mary's University, he went to NSCAD.

"I have always been an artist at heart," says Craig. "I wanted to be a director, and I thought about film schools in other parts of the country but you can learn everything you need to learn here."

He worked on a few film sets, and then turned his attention to making corporate videos under the brand name CM Creative, which allowed him to be creative and pay the bills at the same time. Fairly early on, he saw the potential of video on the web and set his sights on being a producer of content, rebranding his company last year as Spider Video (spidervideo.tv).

His goal is to develop an online network of shows, with many in production at once.

"It's important as an artist to try new things," he says, noting he's done a pilot for an emergency medical services podcast and has a video gaming podcast in development. He's also co-created a comedy series with Mike Amo, Baddad.tv, about a man in suburban dad world.

Craig says Surfdonkey is an excellent showcase for his work.

Lance is the host and star of the show, while Craig takes on behind-the-camera and editing duties.

Sometimes Craig even makes it on camera, surfing or breaking down the fourth wall.

"We talk back and forth and it adds reality-style production values."

Plus the show is fun for both brothers who say dinner conversations around their table are full of back and forth and chirps, where they cut each other down in a comedic way. That fun translates onscreen.

"I know the surf world and I understand the culture. There is constantly changing content, different technology and an entertainment factor. Lance and his friends have an entourage feeling, a 'guys hanging out' vibe.

"The content is very fresh and we've created a formula for the show — video on the web is golden at about five minutes. It's difficult to make regular scripted content; the key is to get online on a regular basis. We talk about surfing stuff everyone around the world is interested in."

There was lots of interest in an episode featuring Lance surfing in -16 C, set to award-winning Enfield MC Classified's single Trouble.

The three-part What Up Doc featured an in-depth look at Lance's surgery for surfer's ear. Southern Californian professional longboarder Christian Wach rode his homemade Alaia surfboard, a finless board in Hawaiian tradition, in one of the brothers' secret spots in another episode.

Dartmouth rocker Matt Mays, who used to work in Lance's store, makes an appearance and comic Shaun Majumder is slated to catch a few waves in an upcoming episode.

"Everyone wants to be entertained," says Lance, who likes to live large and always chases the

biggest wave. "And everyone wants to see themselves surfing."

Craig takes care of distribution, putting up every episode on YouTube, blip.tv, videosharing sites devoted to surfing and extreme sports as well as on surfdonkey.ca and on iTunes as a podcast. He's also a member of surfing user forums in Australia, New Zealand, the U.K., Germany, Sweden, Norway and across Canada and the U.S.

"When I upload an episode, I engage as a conversation on the forum. I build brand and audience loyalty. Now we're starting to seek sponsorship. We have a workable business model and a great product." And they've got an invitation to Surf Film Festival, a surf film and culture festival that takes place every summer in Donostia- San Sebastian, Spain.

The organizers have already subtitled an unseen episode cut especially for the festival in Spanish and the brothers are hoping to get the sponsorship they need to get there, too.

They'd also like to make the show bigger, travelling across Canada.

"A big part of surfing is the adventure," says Lance. "We want to show unique places, places like Newfoundland and Cape Breton . . . and cold water spots are the future because they haven't been surfed."

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