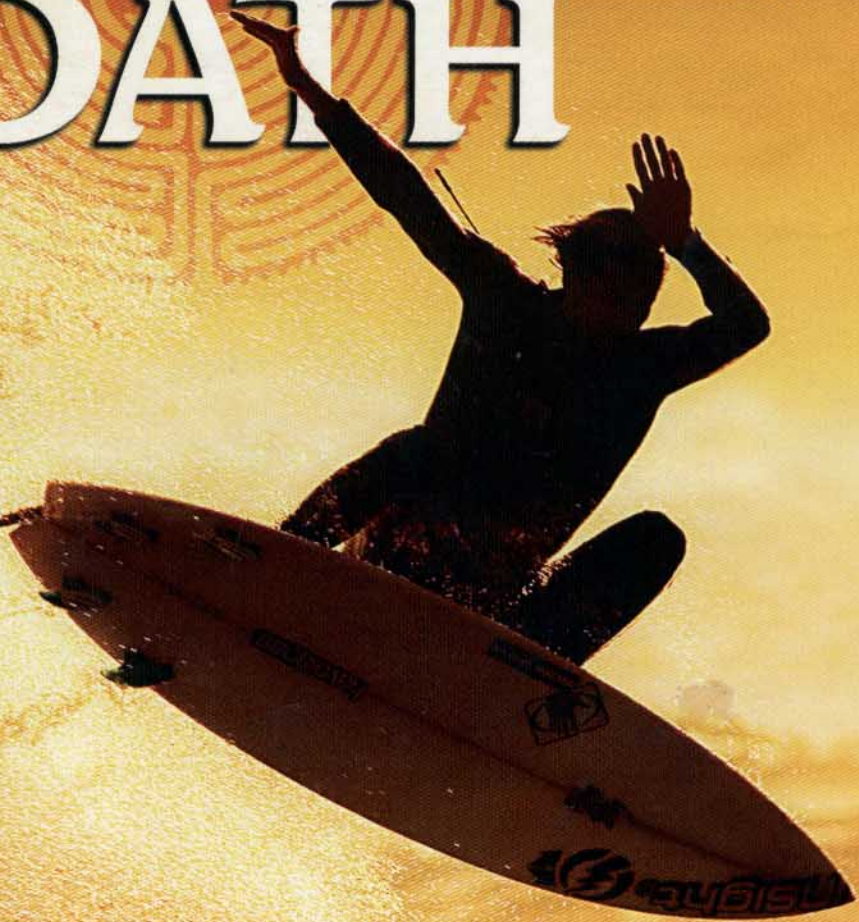


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# THE SURFER'S PATH

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60 SURFERS

ECO CHECK

HAITI

NEVINS FOLIO

McMILLAN'S RISE

As the surfing world expands, so does the array of gear available. To alert our readers to the best green and/or cool stuff, Mark Anders and other staffers evaluate new products on offer. Readers are invited to contact the test team by emailing suggestions for this column to: [stufflike@surferspath.com](mailto:stufflike@surferspath.com)



## SOLIO

This has got to be one of the coolest gadgets I've come across in a long time. A mini solar panel that stores energy, the Solio can power up most anything from mobile phones and digital cameras to iPods and GPS. It packs down to about the size of a large mobile phone, and when you're ready to harvest some sun you simply spread out the three blades of the solar array. It works best outside in direct sunlight but can also collect solar rays through a window. It takes about eight to 10 hours of sun to charge up the internal rechargeable battery. Once full, it'll recharge your iPod in about two hours. On gray days, you can harvest energy from a wall socket instead (takes about four hours). Besides the obvious green benefits of solar power, the device's maker, Better Energy Systems, also plants trees in a sustainable forest to offset the carbon dioxide used to manufacture each unit. The Solio is indispensable, and especially handy for surf trips. Instead of carrying around a rat's nest of individual chargers for your phone, mp3 player, and camera, you can just pack a Solio and the necessary adapters for your gear. Long ago I lost my iPod's power plug, so now I exclusively use the sun to charge it up. (GB£50, US\$100; [solio.com](http://solio.com))

## SLOSH

Rank. Ripe. Puke-inducing. These are all adjectives that describe the smell of my six-year-old pair of surf booties. If you're like me, you never wash your wettie and boots – I'm doing well to rinse the stuff out – but I also pay for my laziness in stinky gear.

Though I usually walk right past the wetsuit shampoos in the surf shop, recently I decided it was time to give it a try. For this test I used Slosh, a wetsuit conditioner/cleaner made of natural ingredients that's hypoallergenic, biodegradable, and earth-friendly (the company even donates 10% of profits to [Oceana.org](http://Oceana.org)).

To properly evaluate the results, I had my lovely wife get a good whiff of my booties and wetsuit both pre- and post-Slosh (she wasn't stoked on this duty, I assure you).

First, I mixed the prescribed half-ounce of cleaner with two gallons of water (for the "Medium Mix"), and started Sloshing.

Fifteen minutes later, her post-wash verdict: wetsuit smells fresh, "almost lemony". And the booties? "Back in the wash!" So I sloshed them a second time in a higher strength mix. Better, but still gross. Though Slosh couldn't totally tame the smell of my booties – I'm not sure anything could – it worked nicely on my other gear, so it still gets the green thumbs up. (US\$8 per 4oz bottle; [justaddwatersolutions.com](http://justaddwatersolutions.com))



## SAMBAZON ORGANIC AÇAÍ JUICE



I've got something to confess: While taste-testing the newest Sambazon juice, I accidentally knocked the bottle over and it spilled all over my desk. Instead of sopping it up with a rag, I put my lips to the desk and sucked it up like a human Hoover. It wasn't pretty, but this organic açai juice is so darn tasty I couldn't bear to see it wasted. Pronounced 'ah-sigh-ee', the açai berry is a fruit that grows atop palm trees in the Amazon rainforest. The fruit is celebrated for its nutritional value (it's packed with powerful antioxidants, omega fats, fiber, protein, etc.) and natural energy-boosting characteristics. I found the dark purple smoothie-style drink to be pleasingly sweet with a light pomegranate-type flavor. It goes down smooth, but also has the slightest seedy grit so the juice feels substantial on the tongue – almost like a meal. I drank it after surfing and at times when I'd normally reach for a carbonated energy drink. Afterwards my thirst was quenched and I felt energized.

Sambazon is also planet-friendly. Amazon locals earn more harvesting açai than clear-cutting the Brazilian rainforest, so by importing the fruit to the US, Sambazon realized they could foster a healthy, sustainable economy and save countless acres of virgin rainforest. I'll drink to that. (US\$2.50; [sambazon.com](http://sambazon.com))

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## CURVE OVERSTAYER

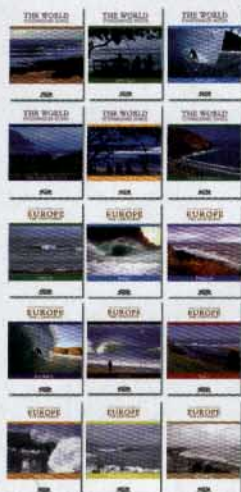
If you've ever blown out the zipper on a boardbag then you already know why the Overstayer is so cool. Most boardbags have zippers that run lengthwise along the edge of the entire bag. When you overpack (like every surfer I know does) with padding for boards plus all your other gear, the bag bulges at the zipper and sometimes breaks. Curve has solved the problem with this unique wrap-style bag. No zippers to blow. Instead it wraps up like a burrito with an overlapping flap of fabric and buckles that adjust to make room for whatever you're carrying. Curve says you can put up to three boards inside, but with my packing tendencies two is more likely. I tested this one on a recent trip to Mainland Mexico and it worked really well. My Channel Islands thruster arrived in perfect condition – and probably would've made it home the same way had I not snapped it on the last day. The Overstayer also comes with a handy surf sling for those long treks to the break and, my favorite accessory, a removable packing pad for your boards that doubles as a comfy sleep mat for camping or sleeping inside your boardbag – Come on, admit it: you've slept inside your boardbag before.

(sizes: 6'6", 7' and 7'6"; US\$180-200 / GB£75-85 [www.curvesurf.com](http://www.curvesurf.com)) – Mark Anders

## COCOON SEACELL TRAVELSHEET

These days, I always bring along my travel sheet on surf trips. Whether you're sleeping in a tent or bedding down in a gnarly \$3-a-night hotel in Nicaragua, a travel sheet is key. Basically it's like a super-thin sleeping bag that covers your pillow and protects you from bed bugs, mites, and other critters found in sketchy hotels and hostels.

For years I've used an all-silk one from Cocoon, but now my favorite is their new SeaCell TravelSheet. This one weighs less than 11oz and is made of 50% organic silk, 35% natural cotton, and 15% seaweed. Yup, seaweed. The silk and cotton blend keeps you cool in hot, humid climates – or you can slip it inside a sleeping bag to add about 9° of extra warmth for those cold nights. The coolest ingredient is SeaCell, a seaweed- and algae-based fiber that is naturally anti-bacterial (so it won't stink on long trips) and some experts even claim seaweed fibers help heal sunburns, windburn and other skin irritations. If you're on a tight budget, Cocoon's US\$20-all-cotton TravelSheet might be the call; but as a surfer, I know first-hand the healing power of the ocean, so I'm backing the SeaCell version. (US\$75; [www.designsalt.com](http://www.designsalt.com)) – MA



## STORMRIDER GUIDE EBOOK

Guidebooks are a boon companion for surf travel, but why drag around a big-ass book covering all of Central and South America when you're only headed to Panama? And why take Indo to Ireland? I was already familiar – and fond of – Low Pressure's *Stormrider* guidebooks, so when I heard about their new eBooks I was stoked to check them out. Of course first I must admit the idea of a virtual book seemed a little kooky to me. I'm relatively tech savvy but personally I prefer having the real thing, feeling the pages flip through my fingers. Still, I downloaded the FlipViewer to my PC (took a few minutes) and bought a couple of *Stormrider* eBooks to give it a try. I was surprised to find that I actually loved having access to the books on my computer. With the click of a mouse I could flip quickly through multiple pages that look exactly like those in my actual *Stormrider Guide*. I then printed only those four pages on the Maldives that I needed for my upcoming surf trip. If I decided to bring my laptop on my trip, I could effortlessly tote the entire frickin' five-book series on my PC. Check out the free samples online for yourself, but I think you'll agree that besides being handy and infinitely portable, the enviro benefits of not printing and shipping real books is well worth your time and money. (US\$12-20 / GB£6-10 [www.lowpressure.co.uk](http://www.lowpressure.co.uk)) – MA

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**WOOL T-SHIRTS**

Folks seem to spend a lot of energy these days trying to manufacture the next "wonder" fabric. Meanwhile, one of the world's most superior textiles has been sitting right under their noses all the while. Wool. Sure, it's old school – surfers in the pre-wetsuit 1940s wore wool sweaters in the water for warmth – but it works. Wool is naturally breathable and keeps you warm, even when wet. It's also naturally anti-microbial, which means it won't stink even after wearing it everyday for a week. And it's easy on the planet too; wool is annually renewable, recyclable and biodegradable. Okay, I know what you're thinking: the word "wool" conjures images of big ol' itchy fisherman sweaters, but today's garments, such as those from I/O and Icebreaker, are nothing like that. Recent technical advances allow for Merino wool that's non-itchy and can be washed and tumble-dried for easy care. I've worn this super-thin 100% Merino Icebreaker Atlas tee on surf trips in hot climates like Baja and Panama and have never been more comfortable. Wool tees could also be worn under a wettie like an insulating rashguard. One of my favorites for fall is this long-sleeved wool Universal Crew from I/O. Give wool a chance, and you'll be a believer too.

**(US\$50 [www.icebreaker.com](http://www.icebreaker.com); US\$65 [www.iocompatible.com](http://www.iocompatible.com))**

**PATAGONIA MINIMALIST II**

Aside from the surfboard, a comfortable pair of trunks is the most essential piece of gear we use. So consider these eco-friendly boardies. In a past life, Patagonia's 100% recycled polyester trunks were actually just a bunch of empty soda bottles, but they've been re-purposed into a pair of no-nonsense trunks fittingly dubbed the Minimalist. The button-fly is bombproof (no Velcro to wear out or zippers to get jammed with sea salt), and the fabric is silky, lightweight and

quick-drying (though you'll want to rinse them out well after use as some testers complained of thigh rashing from wearing the trunks for several sessions in a row). These are old-school, above-the-knee short and the fit is slim, so if you're used to long baggies you may find these a little too ball-hugging for your taste. But if you're a fan of quality trunks that are easy on the environment, the Minimalist II could become your everyday boardies.

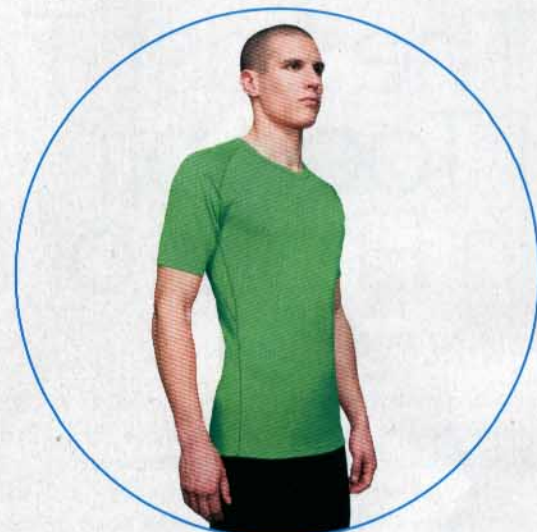
**(US\$55 - available in early 2008 [www.patagonia.com](http://www.patagonia.com))**

**INKA**

I love taking photos on a surf trip, but one of the best ways for remembering all the great details is to keep a journal. For years I just used disposable ballpoint pens – especially those chintzy ones I'd steal from hotels. But have you ever tried to write in the rain with a wet ballpoint pen? How about making notes in a journal while lying on your back in a tent? Both are darn near impossible – and that's what makes Inka so cool. This small travel pen is made of carbon fiber and stainless steel with a pressurized ink cartridge that lets you write under most any conditions – rain or shine, freezing temps, even upside-down. It weighs just 0.6oz and is a tad over 3" (pen becomes five inches long when fully assembled) with a built-in key ring. Yeah, it may seem pricey a lot for a pen, but it's refillable (refills are available from suppliers) so you won't be sending countless disposable pen carcasses to the landfill.

**(US\$25, AU\$40, GBE14, €21 [www.writeanywhere.com](http://www.writeanywhere.com))**

*A word on prices: we try and find prices for US, AU, GB and Euro currencies but where products aren't available in all regions we use the manufacturer's price in their local currency.*



# Stuff I Like

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**ECO SHOE REVIEW:** This issue we tried some of the options available for clean, green footwear.

## WORN AGAIN ESCAPE



Lately, lots of shoe companies have been waving the green flag, but none back it up quite as well as Worn Again. Their Escape shoes are made from 99% recycled materials so they're as eco-friendly as can be. The pair I tested was hewn from scraps of old military jackets, t-shirts, collared dress shirts, and jeans, while the soles are composed of recycled rubber. The Escape conjures a welcome bit of urban-style with a skate-shoe-like fit and I'm happy to report: They're totally comfortable. Worn Again itself is a UK-based collaboration between eco designer shoe company TerraPlana and Anti-Apathy ([antiapathy.org](http://antiapathy.org)). In addition to using all recycled materials, they pledge a percentage of sales to offset the carbon emissions that come from the manufacture and shipment of the shoes. It's rare that I run across a piece of gear that's absolutely green and equally cool – and when I do, as in the case of these shoes, I want to tell every single person I know about it. So consider yourself informed. Now go buy a pair! Seriously, instead of just talking the green talk, these Worn Again shoes will let you walk the talk too. (£65UK and \$130USD; [wornagain.co.uk](http://wornagain.co.uk) and [terraplana.com](http://terraplana.com)) – Mark Anders

## PATAGONIA DAWN AND THONG ALONG

While not as green as the Worn Again shoes, Patagonia is making a solid effort to offer environmentally responsible footwear. The first pair we tested were the Dawn sneakers. These low-profile minimalist trainers are made exclusively of leather from ISO-14001-registered tanneries. Let me decode that for you: ISO is short for International Organization for Standardization, and they've established global standards to recognize companies that minimize their environmental impact and strictly follow international and local regulations. Though the leather is quite supple, both of our testers noted the shoes definitely required several days of breaking in. The laces are 100% hemp and the soles are made from 20% recycled rubber with unique hemp and burlap "swirls" cut into the sole. Those swirls look cool but unfortunately they don't provide much traction on wet surfaces – so beware. We also tested the Thong Along. Though they sport the same grade of leather and eco-friendly yet traction-lacking soles as the Dawn, I'm particularly stoked about the fit and feel of these lightweight flip-flops. After just a handful of wearings, the foot-beds quickly molded to my own footprint and the Thong Along are now my new favorite. (\$90 and \$50USD/£79GBP - £39.99GBP [patagonia.com](http://patagonia.com)) – Mark Anders



## SIMPLE GREEN TOE

Simple have invested serious money, time and design thought into making their shoes as low impact as possible. From the flip-flops to the loafers, they're all made from all either natural or recycled materials, and yet you'd never know it. They have the solid feel and look of well-made, mass-produced shoes because they are mass-produced, but with as little impact as possible. I've been road-testing some, including the **Loaf Off Road** model with its recycled car-tire soles and jute and bamboo 'uppers' – an excellent everyday shoe, comfortable and like all of the ones I tried, it has nobbly insoles that give you a reflexology massage as you walk. The car-tire sole has great traction. Also the **Men's Shuf** – a remarkable slipper-like creature shaped like a clog but made of soft felt wool with natural crepe soles and bamboo insoles. It is absolutely the most comfortable shoe I've ever nuzzled my toes into. And finally the **Sloppy Toe** which I've successfully used on those rare occasions when sensible shoes are required. It happens about once a year, and I'm always undergunned at someone's wedding or something with my usual skate shoes or flip-flops. But the Sloppy Toes have saved my ass, made me look and feel smart and they're just about the most planet-friendly footwear you'll find. I'm a convert, not just because Simple is a model for all manufacturing companies – changing their products to sustainable materials, redesigning machinery to manufacture quality low-impact stuff – but because the shoes themselves are so damn comfortable. Feels like you're treading softly.

(Men's Shuf \$90USD/GBP£65.00; Men's Loaf Off Road \$90USD/GBP£75.00, Sloppy Toe \$90USD/GBP£80.00 from [www.simpleshoes.com](http://www.simpleshoes.com)) – ADR

