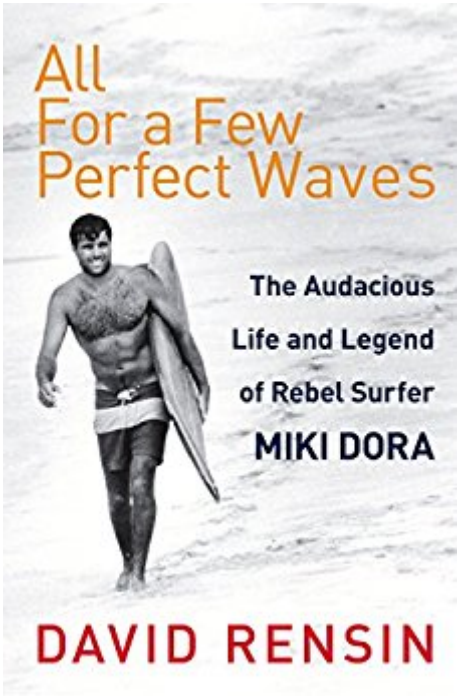
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All For A Few Perfect Waves: The Audacious Life And Legend Of Rebel Surfer Miki Dora



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Synopsis

There will never be another surfer like Miki ’Da Cat’ Dora. For twenty years the dashing and enigmatic dark prince of California surfing dominated the Malibu waves and his peers’ imaginations, blazing a trail that would inspire generations to come. But when the sport exploded into the mainstream and surfing changed for ever, Dora’s paradise was lost.Outraged at gridlocked swells and a scene that had grown ever more commodified, 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. Yet, Dora would never give up searching for the spirit of the Malibu he’d lost. Wherever he made his home - New Zealand, South Africa, France - he personified the rebel heart of surfing and became a legend in his own time.This brilliant biography, based on interviews with more than three hundred people who knew Dora, finally uncovers the truth about surfing’s most seductive and complicated icon.

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Customer Reviews

Rensin has really done his homework and found out every minute detail there is to know about Miki Dora. He paints an enticing picture of the guy and it’s worth it to know all these facts about the guy.

And, to his credit, he doesn't glorify the guy too much, but paints a portrait of the narcissistic character that he must have been. I don't like Miki Dora after reading this. The writing isn't spellbinding, but it is interesting and seems quite accurate. It isn't like Rensin's goal was to 'put an end to the legend,' or 'tell the inside truth' about Miki. Because he's really nice about everything he says. Still, the guy comes off as a total jerk who looked pretty good out there on a board and pulled off some daredevil board maneuvers, and some nice postures on the board that caught on and made other riders want to copy him. . . more by virtue of his personality than any super-amazing skill as a surfer. That this type of arrogance and chicanery was lauded and emulated, says something about the surfer culture. He was one of the originals and, therefore, he set the tone and gave charisma and charm to a simplistic, down-to-basics way of existing. Appealing, maybe, if you're Adam or Eve, or a caveman. Or, totally into sun, surf, sex, speed, and substances . . . but kind of sad as an example of a role model for future generations of surfing aficionados. The problem is that a writer of a book like this cannot be too hard on the subject of the biography. Because who would buy it then, only to hear a mainstream voice once again criticizing a rebel-hero? As a writer, you kind of have to like this guy if you want people to buy your book. But, even so, Rensin is honest in his portrayal -- and perhaps that's what keeps the book from being a five-star gripping read. He sacrifices a totally compelling story built on playing the conflict and inner psychological conflict besetting a character in a leadership position for accuracy. He did allow the facts to dampen the impact of what might have been a super-compelling story. I give him credit for that because in my mind, facts are more important than story. (Maybe Dora was so shallow he had no conflict or guilt, but I don't believe it.) Even so, it is not a boring book. But also not one of those that you have to read in one or two (or three) sittings because you can't put it down. You CAN put it down, but you also can skip around in it and read 'the good parts' without feeling you've missed something essential. I'm glad to have this as part of my book collection even so.

Great read but found myself disappointed with the person of Mickey Dora and his amoral and utilitarian use of friends and acquaintances. His cons and blatant stealing all under the guise of poverty and living for the perfect wave was only possible by living on the charity of others; and it was so ironic given the wealth of over $500k he banked away in various save deposit boxes which was revealed only after he passed away from cancer. He truly was an artist on the waves but an extremely flawed individual. The writer did a brilliant job of providing a fair and objective perspective of the tortured enigma of Dora.

By the time author David Rensin contacted me regarding the book he was writing about Miki Dora I'd already spoken to or exchanged emails with several people who were writing books or articles about Miki and his life.From the story I'd written before Miki's death and the tribute I'd written after he'd died (on surfwriter.net), it was assumed I knew Miki somewhat. "Somewhat" being the operative word.What impressed me from the beginning was David's integrity and absolute commitment to somehow capturing Miki and the story of his remarkably convoluted and sometimes Byzantine life in a book. He wanted it to be a fair, balanced and comprehensive account that reflected the dynamic vitality, complexity and mystery of this enigmatic individual.In my opinion he not only succeeded in that ambitious quest, but produced a real page turner in the process.As I said to David at the beginning, "Miki's and my paths crossed several times over the years - both in and out of the water - and each encounter was unforgettable."In the water, Miki was the most skilled, accomplished and naturally gifted surfer I've ever had the pleasure of seeing on a wave ... and for that he will always have my deepest respect.Out of the water, he could be forceful, intelligent, clever, funny, generous, charismatic, charming and challenging one minute, and confrontational, difficult, disagreeable, selfish, unpleasant and paranoid the next.In other words, he was fascinating, totally unknowable, and the most puzzling, unpredictable individual I've ever met.So, naturally, I was looking forward to seeing what David could make out of Miki's labyrinth of a life based his own conversations with Miki and after talking with literally hundreds of Miki's friends, family, acquaintances and enemies.What he has done is weave all that information - and all those memories, anecdotes, comments, reminiscences, revelations, facts and fiction - into a seamless account that brings Miki and pivotal events in his life back to life.As an extra bonus, the book contains dozens of revealing photos from Miki's childhood onwards, many of which have never been published before - or I've never seen before - including the last portraits of Miki taken for a Vogue Hommes International article by Prosper Keating before Miki's death.To say I couldn't put the book down would be an understatement. I'm usually a slow reader, but I raced through the book because I couldn't wait to find out where it would take me next.The funny thing is, my wife - who never met Miki and whose only interest in surfing is through me and the kids - couldn't stop reading it either. When she finally put the book down all she could say is, "Whew! That was an amazing read ... whether or not you're a surfer or know anything about Miki Dora or even care. Amazing! A genuine tour de force."Personally, I think I was expecting to simply read a book when I started. But it ended up as a deeply moving experience that often left me laughing and sometimes led to tears.The book is rich in information and background I only became aware of when I read the book. I was constantly surprised - both by the subject's pathos and the author's ability to express it so

poignantly.That depth of feeling and understanding could only have been achieved by the author getting to know Miki through their personal encounters as well as by reading his letters, faxes and other writings - combined with countless hours of interviews and conversations with the people who knew him best.The research is impeccable.Congratulations, David. You've really met the challenge you set for yourself and produced the definitive biography of the man I will always think of as the "Wavemaster."It is a truly fascinating book about a fascinating life and legend.

All for a Few Perfect Waves is a brilliant study of surfing legend Miki 'Da Cat' Dora, a personal hero of mine. Not that he would have liked me much - I was a 'Valley' surfer. Nevertheless, Miki was a symbol of the Rebel with a Board and his smooth, graceful surfing style was imitated, not too successfully, by every surfer at Malibu. David Rensin captured the essence of the anti-hero with an eclectic collection of interviews and anecdotes, that are both incredibly entertaining and insightful.

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