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## FEATURES

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ON THE WATER

### Surfing with a purpose

• Indies Trader, docked near Newport Harbor Nautical Museum, is on a quest to find the perfect waves.

By Lindsay Sandham, Daily Pilot

Newport-Mesa residents who have driven past the Newport Harbor Nautical Museum recently may have noticed the purple and orange ship docked outside.

The Indies Trader has served as a promotional vessel for the Quiksilver Crossing, a mission to cruise the world's oceans looking for perfect waves, for the last six years.

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"There's so much ocean and so many waves to be discovered," said Dana Mesenbrink, manager for the Quiksilver Crossing.

The Quiksilver Crossing will complete a weeklong stop in Newport Harbor on Saturday.

The visit is part of the West Coast leg of its North America tour.

Since its initial journey in 1999, the boat has traveled throughout the Pacific and Indian oceans and the Caribbean, with a crew and a rotating group of pro surfers discovering roughly 150 new wave locations, said Indies Trader host Simone Kelly.

But the mission is greater than just discovering surf spots and shooting promotional footage for Quiksilver.

Bob Foster, a marine biologist who lives aboard the Indies Trader, studies the reefs wherever the boat takes him.

Quiksilver partnered with Reefcheck, a United Nations-sponsored volunteer organization designed to save coral reefs worldwide, for this part of the mission. Reefcheck has volunteers in 82 countries and territories around the globe.

Foster said that thanks to the partnership, he's managed to survey some extremely remote places and has found some pristine ecosystems, which Reefcheck can use as baseline data.

Reef checks involve looking at the variety and number of fish, examining the ground around the reef, and looking at other ocean life -- all of which can give an indication of the reef's health.

Foster said he also teaches local volunteers in the communities they visit how to check and maintain reefs.

"We employ local communities with the tools to measure the reefs," Foster said.

Pro surfer Tom Carroll, who has been on many of the Quiksilver Crossing's voyages, said he has learned how to survey reefs with Foster.

He said surfers often just go surfing and enjoy the waves but that it's good to do something to help maintain the reefs that create the waves.

Meleana White, a pro surfer who is currently aboard the Quiksilver Crossing, said she is planning to get certified as a diver so she can help Foster collect data to send back to Reefcheck.

"He can only do so much," she said.

Although the goal of the Quiksilver Crossing is to contribute environmentally, educate local communities and find those impeccable waves, one of the core goals of the operation is to keep from disturbing or exploiting the cultures it encounters.

In other words, the perfect waves it discovers will never be revealed, much to the dismay of the mainstream surfing community.

The only proof of the waves' existence are some amazing photographs in "Explorations," an annual edition of Surfing magazine that details the Quiksilver Crossing's travels.

"There's no actual end date in sight," Kelly said. "It will keep going around until Quiksilver and the owner [Martin Daly] are all satisfied that all the waves have been discovered."