

ADVENTURE

Board of Education

Where anyone can learn how to ride the waves | *By* SARAH GOLD

Upon observing wave-riding Hawaiians in 1907, Jack London rhapsodized that surfing was “a royal sport for the natural kings of the earth.” These days, teens to CEOs connect with the elemental thrill of the surf, and devotees of the sport have set up surf schools and camps around the globe for would-be beach royalty.

KAUAI, HAWAII > Startling beauty, a low-key vibe, and brawny offshore waves have long delighted serious surfers at Hanalei Bay (Laird Hamilton calls it his home break). But the bay’s crescent also welcomes newbies with clean swells, a sandy bottom, and warm water; nearby, humpback whales can sometimes be seen spouting. **Surf n Sol’s** multiday programs include private or small-group lessons, beachside digs, yoga, and massages.

NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA > Miles-long beaches draw tourists to Playa Tamarindo, but thick jungle and unpaved roads keep most travelers from venturing south of the beach town. **Surf Diva’s** resort, set near a traditional Tico village, features a stretch of sand so secluded its location is kept secret from enrollees before they arrive. The camp is for women only; boards are scaled for their narrower shoulders and shorter reach.

MONTAUK, N.Y. > The shore break at Long Island’s Ditch Plains can be challenging—it’s choppy, cold (lower 70s° F at the highest), and edges a mostly rocky beach. But warm, enthusiastic **Corey’s Wave** instructors, including many who’ve been surfing here their entire lives, reveal how to navigate the rocks and where to find beer and burgers onshore.

SANTA CRUZ, CALIF. > For those who crave hands-on help, **Richard Schmidt Surf School** delivers. The onetime pro surfer paddles alongside beginners, lifting them into the pop-up and adjusting their stance for smooth, long rides. At Cowell’s Point break, where Schmidt runs classes and camps, a single wave can roll for a quarter mile.

BYRON BAY, AUSTRALIA > Wave chasers mingle with New Age crystal healers and astrologers at beaches along the coast’s easterly apex. The surf haven is also the longtime home of 1965 U.S. surfing champion **Rusty Miller**; now nearly 70, he teaches private, early morning lessons at Byron’s gentlest shore breaks. For Miller, surfing is a near-spiritual pursuit; he encourages ocean respect and humility.



Surf's up: Richard Schmidt Surf School guarantees novices “uprightness on the first go-out.”