

Corky: The second life of Tom Curren

By [CORKY CARROLL](#) / FOR ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

I have always been a fan of California surfer Tom Curren. His parents were friends of mine and I got to watch him develop from a kid with huge potential to become one of the greatest surfers of all time.

Along with being World Champion, the dude has carried as much or more respect than pretty much anybody else ever in the sport. He was unquestionably the top surfer of his era.

During all this he was also following a love and interest in music. As he got older, and his surfing career traversed from competitive to "legend" status, the time and efforts he put into his music moved to the forefront of his attention.

He spent a lot of time learning and perfecting the craft. He put out a couple of albums some years ago, nice work but pretty much "developmental" in comparison to his current release, "In Plain View," which came out on April 2.

I can say without blinking an eye that this is a GREAT album. Tom has gone way beyond the "surfer who plays music" stigma. The dude is really good. His songs are wonderful, his singing is right on the money and his musicianship is top notch. His work stands on its own merits and doesn't need the boost that having been what he was in surfing will inevitably give it.

He is right there with the other two surfing/musicians that have cracked the big time in music: Jack Johnson and Donavon Frankenritter. And Tom's work is all its own.

Trying to come up with somebody to compare it to is not easy. He is who he is and his music is just that. I have listened to "In Plain View" about five times now and I love it. Each time I hear something different that I really like. It is produced extremely well and I can find no flaws. Just the opposite, I just keep going, "wow, this is really good."

Tom puts the whole surfer/musician thing in context in a quote from the recent story on him in Rolling Stone magazine: "I've been [surfing] for a long time, so the plus side is when we do a show and people come see and they go 'Oh, that was good.' They like me, even if I don't play well, because I've been very fortunate to have people like how I surf."

Well, the fact is that that almost all of us like how he surfs. But the new fact is that probably more people are gonna like his music because music is a much bigger stage than surfing. I can see Tom Curren as a rock star in the near future.

Read the Tom Curren story [in Rolling Stone](#).

On a completely different subject, and one that has absolutely nothing to do with surfing but I want to include it anyway as it has a lot to do with sports here in Southern California: [Kobe Bryant](#). As I am normally somewhere in the tropics I don't get to see many [Lakers](#) games. Yet I am as big a Laker fan as they come. I worked with Jerry West when I was young and he used to let me sit in his family seats during the regular season.

I became a rabid fan and have stayed that way. I can still remember one morning I was on a cruise ship in the Caribbean doing a Miller Lite promotion when I heard on somebody's radio as I passed down the hall something about Magic Johnson having gotten AIDS. I cried that day.

So the other night I actually got to see the game in which Kobe got hurt. Didn't sleep that night. I love the way this guy does what he does and to see him give it more than he has, to physically and mentally just WILL his team to a win, and have this happen just crushed me.

So, I want to say here, and with the hopes that somehow he reads this or hears about it as he lives in the O.C., my thoughts are with ya dude, and if anybody can come back from this and still rock it is YOU.

Get well and come back when you do. And if you ever wanna learn to surf, come see me.