

**It's a privilege to sit and chat with influential people. Sometimes they're famous, most times they're more knowledgeable than us, and often they give a glimpse into what's up ahead... lines on the industry's horizon.**

**This issue, we caught up with Occy to find out what's up with Wave Pools, and whether he thinks we'll see the WSL run dual tours; in the pool and in the ocean.**

Wowee, wave pools, they're all the rage at the moment aren't they? Surf Lakes is the name of the pool I'm involved with and we're hoping that it's going to be the first one in Australia. Obviously it's not the first one in the world, they're popping up everywhere and they've been around for a while.

I competed in my first one back in the eighties in Allentown, Pennsylvania and it was half a foot and we were grovelling all the way. You wouldn't really call it a wave, but now they're for real aren't they! We've seen Kelly Slater's wave and it is amazing, but we think we've got a unique wave happening with a unique system; we've actually got eight different waves or four different peaks that are all going off at one time in the pool.

They're all different waves and they are actually all quite challenging waves. There are very intense peaks, so no one gets bored... we've got one wave that is more of a beachie which will be quite user-friendly, but apart from that they are all pretty ledgy. There's one called Occy's Peak which I've designed, which is pretty much like a wave you'd find at Dbah. It's a pretty-sucky-drawn-out-hollow wave which will bend back at you; you can backdoor the wave, come out, and then snap as the wave comes back at you.

There's a wave like Shark Island too, that will be for guys who like slabs and there will be waves that

you can get towed into as well... you know, those waves that can be a bit hard to take-off on, so we will have some winches in there for the ones that might be a little too ledgy.

What makes our wave so different? Kelly's wave is one wave every 5 minutes, we can make 10 wave sets; we can do unlimited waves, with different peaks making lefts and rights so we can have like 30 guys in the pool at once all catching waves, making a couple of thousand waves per hour with intervals of about six seconds in between waves. It's a short interval, so once you wipe out you've got to get out of the wave pretty quick. The waves will be quite big too... if we turn it full on we expect the waves to be well overhead, like 6 foot and over so it will be quite intense.

I was up there a couple of months ago and it's only a few months away, so I'm getting pretty excited. Next time I go up, it will be finished and I'll be the first one to surf it and I can't wait. The Surf Lake is going to be for shareholders only at first, because we are testing it and then we will open it up to the public. We've got a lot of investors around the world that are looking at it, to see how it's working.

I've seen the prototype down in Melbourne (URBNSURF with Wavegarden technology – Ed), it's a tenth of the size and only currently makes waves knee

high, but if it can make waves six foot high the way I saw it, it's going to be unbelievable... it's gonna be so good, I can't wait to see it in full scale.

I can see surf competitions in both, but with wave pools it will be like Friday night football, you press the button and Friday night football will turn into Friday night surfing. With all the bells and whistles and it's gonna be a guaranteed event. There's gonna be a huge stadium, lights, music, tickets and everyone knows exactly what time it's going to be on... and that will take over.

It's a good thing because you will be able to sell it, because it's a guarantee. Having said that there's still going to be the huge waves in the ocean and that variety because you can't make that in the pool. Pools are going to be all-time and fantastic and they're going to be perfect, because when the waves are flat or there's too many sharks at your local beach, or if it's onshore for two months, there's pollution or blue bottles... then you can go to your local pool... and when everything settles down again, you can go back to the ocean.

You can't ever beat the ocean and you can always go back there. But in the future there is always going to be both. 🐻

- Mark Occhilupo

Soon Occy will transfer all his ocean skills and knowledge into Queensland's first commercial wave pool.  
PHOTO: JOLI

