



**Full Interview for White horses magazine with Euan Bruce for the materialism article**

**Which material is currently most underused in surfboard manufacture / why?**

Which is most underused? Lightweight materials that stiffen up the structural skin without inhibiting the natural flex of the surfboard – This can be anything from a thin layer of PVC foam to a material layer like Nylextra sandwiched in between the layers of glass.

Using a matrix of materials definitely gives better performance than glass alone. We have to remember what fibreglass is – tiny woven threads of glass and what happens if glass is under pressure? It shatters! It makes sense to strengthen this material with other compounds that complement the performance we are used to...

Surfboards are “curved” sandwich panels (fiberglass top/ Foam Core/ fiberglass bottom), how they break is by stressing the compressed side of the panel, footwells, shatters and other dings just speed up the process. By using the right matrix of materials, we can slow down the buckling process and help the dynamic flex flow through a surfboard; it’s a fine line between the “magic board” and a “broken board”

**What can we do to make surfboards less environmentally harmful?**

There are a few products out there already that are trying to help - Epoxy Bio resins, recycled EPS blanks and there is even company making surfboard blanks made from mushrooms! Though the biggest way to make surfboards a less of a threat to the environment is to make the boards stronger and less of a “throw away” item.

Most of the keen surfers have a few boards (a board for every surf condition) in their quiver. They update their boards these days at least once or twice a year - most commercial board builders know this and have set up their production line to cater for this.

It’s about re-educating surfers that they don’t need the lightest core and skin for every surfboard in their quiver.

**Is it possible for a backyard/hobby shaper to make a board that outlasts standard PU/Poly boards? I know they can glass a standard PU blank with epoxy, but how accessible are the more technical materials? Are shapers / surfers wary of them?**

Yes absolutely! Laminating a PU blank in epoxy is a starting point! To break the mindset that PU/Poly boards are “the only way to go” is hard... I never forget a conversation I had with a surfboard company sales rep about 6 years ago when he asked what I make my boards out of. When I mentioned “Epoxy” he laughed and said so you make “pop-outs” to then I had to explain to him that “Epoxy” was just a resin to use for lamination not the whole board!!

For a hobby shaper, usually, starts as a cost factor, “Can I make a board for cheaper than you can buy one?” Then they ride their creation and they think “What would happen if I change...?” That’s when they start looking into construction and find the different materials, and then it’s what “this” tech can add to their next build.

On the website’s forum we have guys posting build threads to show that there is other ways to build a backyard surfboard apart from PU/Poly set up. The great thing about having a forum like this is that people who are ready to try new materials can ask questions of people who have already used the product and not make the same mistakes. From my experience, it’s once they work out how to make a board differently they don’t look back! As an example, take a look at one of my forum member’s, “Pirate Agenda” - Todd hadn’t used the products we developed until 5 months ago, now he is displaying them at “Wanda Fish Fry” and taking custom orders on Nylextra hybrid cloth surfboards!

**What will change in the industry in the next few years?**

I’m seeing more commercial board companies wanting to try more new materials and techniques.

It’s looking more promising that change will happen, I gave some samples of products to a well-known board manufacturer the other day at his factory, and was excited to see they were building a board with a Geoblank – multi density foam blank and lamination process was being finalised with wrapping the board in peel ply!

You never know... In 20 years we might be riding Airloy cores with spray painted- on Carbon Nanotube Skins!