



38 YEAR-OLD HOT MAMA 'HANGS TEN' WITH THE BEST OF 'EM IN MARGATE, NJ

Stacey Marcel is not your typical mother of two active boys (Spencer 10, Cameron 8). After the little guys catch the school bus, she catches the waves - in all sorts of weather - nearly 200 times a year! In fact, when many moms are off to the salon to get their brows waxed, Stacey is off to the Jersey beaches to get her board waxed. She does confess that time is precious and that she would never miss any of her sons' activities (baseball) in the pursuit of the perfect wave beckoning in her backyard. In the early morning hours she routinely studies the surf conditions. "Getting up early is both exhilarating and peaceful. Most of the town is still asleep and it's almost like a secret I share with the ocean that gets me stoked," she remarks. Balancing mommy duties and her surfing passion can be a challenge, but family activities come first. Hubby Steve doesn't sweat the small stuff, and realizes that surfing is a big part of Stacey's happiness. He's happy to play Moondoggie along side his Gidget.

Stacey started surfing almost five years ago and has been seriously hooked ever since. Her family lives on one of Margate's surfing beaches (Quincy Avenue). Incidentally, she's almost always the only woman in the water. Stacey believes that surfing isn't just a sport, but rather a cathartic exercise where nature takes over, and what ever ails ya washes out with the tide. The other veteran male surfers treat Stacey like a little sister and continuously watch after her regularly.

"My friends always ask me to take them surfing or teach them how. When I was still learning the basics, I once set up a day in which my friends (and their daughters) could surf with two formal instructors. I'm not qualified to give lessons. About five moms and four kids took me up on my offer," Stacey explains,

"A dear friend of mine, who was just recently separated, was up all night (the night before the lesson) crying and absolutely breaking down. She

called to cancel the day of the lesson. I just wouldn't let her! She has two boys that surf, was always talking about trying it, and passing up this experience just wasn't an option! Well, she joined us after much cajoling. She confided in me as the sun went down that day. She left her woes in the ocean. She was able to let go of the past and, put her sadness behind her. She felt a sense of accomplishment and just happy to have done something for herself. She has since bought a board and is waiting for the water to get warmer to surf this summer!"

Since diving head first into the sport, Stacey has surfed in Costa Rica, Panama, Tortola, Puerto Rico and St. Barts. Any day there is a surfable wave, you can find her at one of the local surf breaks, even during winter months when ocean temperatures get as low as thirty five degrees Fahrenheit in Margate, Atlantic City (New York Ave), Ocean City and Cape May.

She started surfing when her then six year-old son, Spencer, expressed interest in the sport and she figured she'd learn along with him. Since then, surfing has



become more than just a sport. It's a bonding activity that she and her son do together. Surfing has grown into a source of intense fitness, spiritual happiness and an absolute passion. She not only enjoys the natural rush of riding a wave, but also the fitness aspect, and the fact that she's out there among nature's beauty doing something she loves with someone she loves!

"Panama was one of the most memorable situations my son Spencer and I ever had. It was straight out of a surfing movie. My youngest son, Cameron, had an ear ache so my husband, Steve, stayed back at the villa with him while Spencer and I went on a wild adventure looking for some surf. We were with a small group of people who were staying at the same lodge. Once we were about twenty-minutes out in the ocean the skies got grey, the wind picked up the swell got bigger and then the rain started. Now, in Panama it's much different than here. It pours, then stops, then starts, and then it's a beautiful day. So, as the swell was now reaching five feet, the boat was banging down hard and we were freezing I realized we made a mistake and needed to turn around. Unfortunately, they wouldn't and kept assuring us we're almost there. When we finally arrived on land, it had stopped raining, however, my son was still miserable and I felt like the worst mother, subjecting my child to such a tough time with Mother Nature. We now had a 40-minute walk through muck and cow feces, over logs and up and down hills. Carrying a surfboard in one hand, and trying to keep my son from getting swallowed in what felt like quick sand, we finally arrived, to what I thought was going to be the greatest surf experience ever. But, the waves were way too big to ride. There was no way I was letting him surf and he smiled at me sheepishly as if he already knew it. At this point, my son and I just looked at each other laughed, and raced into the ocean to just play and splash around. We ended up having the best day ever! We laughed the whole way back, falling knee deep in swampland and loving it. Whenever I hear him tell his friends this story, with such pride and wide-eyed accomplishment, I just smile and I think to myself this is just the first example of a 'surfing journey' I hope to share with my kids."

Stacey credits much of her involvement and continuous improvement to two of her mentors: Jay Mizrahi and Mark Neustader, totally "sick" surfers who have encouraged and helped her perfect the craft along the way. Mizrahi, fifty-five, and long-time family friend has enjoyed helping her achieve new plateaus. He also thinks Marcel is somewhat of a natural.

"My first lesson was just laying on a board, getting pushed into the white wash. I started with a soft board and I'd paddle around and try to stand up. I stood right away, but it didn't matter. Standing again was hard. It takes a long time to get the hang of it.

My son picked it up a lot faster than I. I'm so not the athletic type," confesses Stacey.

Big Kahuna buddy, Jay Mizrahi disagrees. "Stacey's got real natural ability. She doesn't even realize it. Her overall positive attitude is what makes her better in the water. She is a "glass half-full" type of person, which bodes well in terms of self-improvement - in life, or in the water. She doesn't ever think she's failed, even on a day when she's only caught one wave," he explains. "Surfing is a great way to face your fears. It slowly becomes a passion or even a healthy obsession. Surfers have no boundaries, no limits. It's a highly creative sport, and being that Stacey is such an individualist and an optimist, it truly suits her."

Lucky for Stacey, the local surf shop in Margate is highly supportive to women surfers and enthusiasts. Heritage Surf and Sport: 9223 Ventnor Ave. Margate, NJ (609) 823-3331. Check them out or contact your local surf shop for lessons, board rentals, etc.

PF: Don't you freeze your butt off in the winter, Stacey?

SM: Neh. I like the challenge of winter surfing. I don't love all the heavy gear like the winter suite, gloves, boots and a hood. But, it reminds me to make the session worthwhile because I'm still going to have to take all the gear off - while wet and cold. When the air is crisp and waves are good I don't even think about the thirty seven-degree water.

PF: Do you have advice for other "Betty's" (Older surfer chicks)?

SM: You know, my dad died of cancer around the same time I started surfing. It provided a release for me that wasn't specific to being a woman, but I will tell you that discovering the sport at a time that I needed to dive into something was fortuitous. I would tell any woman to go for it as the benefits are so varied-conditioning, the benefits of nature, the sense of accomplishment through perseverance, over coming fears, laughing at yourself when you wipe out...because it will happen a lot. Also, when the surf is a little rough, wear a wash guard over your bathing suit. Surfing is challenging enough without having to worry about keeping your clothes on!

PF: Ever get banged up? Ever see a shark?

SM: I always get banged up. I once got slammed with another surfer's board, which resulted in a nasty black eye. In the days that followed people actually looked at my husband as if he had hit me or something! As far as animals, I've seen tons of dolphins, a few lone fins, and bunches of Skates. I also saw a few Stingrays and a giant turtle while surfing in Costa Rica. Yes, I've seen some sharks, but I convince myself that they're not really sharks so I can stay in.

PF: Life is like surfing because...

SM: The challenges you face in surfing are mirrored in life--the need to overcome adversity, for perseverance, and to be able to laugh at yourself as falling and wiping-out are just part of the sport. Just like in life, you just have to get up, dust yourself off, and get up on the board again. When my dad was ill, his doctor

All Moms Need a Break!

The Three Main Types Of Waves Demystified:

Beach Break - The Beach Break is where the waves break on the sandy seabed. This type of wave is the best to start surfing on. A good example of a classic beach break is Hossegor in Southern France, which can hold perfect barrels up to twenty feet.

Point Break - The Swayze / Reeves flick entitled Point Break was named after the type of wave! The Point Break is a wave that breaks onto a rocky point. A good example of a Pointbreak is Bells Beach in Australia (nice how this links the film and the wave together!)

Reef Break - The Reef Break is a wave that breaks over a coral reef or a rock seabed. These waves are usually the classic ones that you can see on the surfing videos. These waves can be unforgiving if you happen to wipe out badly, but can be the most rewarding in their perfection.

Cloudbreak is a superb example of a Reef Break.



told me there are going to be really bad days for him and the family. He went on to say it's how you view tomorrow on days like those, how you recover from adversity, set-backs, and disappointment that separate some people from others. I often think of that philosophy when thinking about my surfing. Though it's fun and joyous most of the time, there are other times when you get beat so badly it takes a lot of commitment to stay energized and enthused.

PF: You have a great body! You must get a killer workout!

SM: Thanks Jami! It's a huge workout. First off, you increase cardio endurance because of all the paddling. It's a great strength workout as well, working your arms, shoulders, chest, and back. The balance aspect is cool as well as you can work on your lower body coordination as you ride the waves. I am spent like no other workout after a couple hour session of surf. My arms feel like noodles. I recommend lots of stretching pre-surf and yoga helps too. I also run three times a week to stay in shape for surfing.

PF: You must get hit on a lot by the other surfers. Right?

SM: When guys hear that I'm married they usually respect that. I never take off my rings just to be clear. My husband is so supportive of my involvement in the sport. I'm lucky!

PF: What was riding your favorite wave like?

SM: I would like to say it happened in one of the exotic places that I have traveled to because my story would sound so much better. But the truth is, I love to surf Quincy Ave., in the summer, when some of my girl friends and kids are there with me and we're all laughing and acting goofy, trying to do silly tricks and stuff. It's just pure fun.

PF: Stacey, does your mom got it goin' on?

SM: Absolutely.



Jami Tryer is a freelance writer, who grew up in Margate, N.J., but has been a Center City Philly resident since 1991. She is a partner with Munroe Creative Partners, a well-known graphic design firm, where she is a Senior Project Manager and helps to develop new business. She has been freelancing in her spare time for five years for magazines such as Philadelphia Style where she has reported on trends in beauty, fashion, food and culture. For PhillyFIT, Jami has countered the myth that dining out can be frighteningly fattening in her column. Contact JamiTryer@phillyfitmagazine.com.

RED TIGER

BENEFITS INCLUDE:
WEIGHT CONTROL
CONCENTRATION
SELF CONFIDENCE
FITNESS
SELF DEFENSE
SELF ESTEEM
DISCIPLINE

**DISCIPLINE
FOCUS
CONCENTRATION**

www.red-tiger.com

CARDIO-KICK: \$35.00/Month
(Unlimited Classes) at one of our 3 locations. Bustleton, Mayfair and Oreland, Pa. INCLUDES HANDWRAPS, T-SHIRT & BOXING GLOVES!

TAEKWON-DO: \$35.00/Month
at any of our 18 locations!
INCLUDES UNIFORM, T-SHIRT AND CLASSES!
New members only

TAEKWON-DO · CARDIO-KICK · PRIVATE LESSONS · PERSONAL TRAINING
1412 WELSH ROAD (215) 969-9362 7530 FRANKFORD AVE. (215) 332-1003