

LIFE,
DREAMS *and*
SURF:

Márcio Freire



Dione Freire Silva

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Márcio Freire

The story of one of the greatest big wave riders
and Mad Dogs pioneer of paddle-in at Jaws,
Hawaii -USA



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	7
INTRODUCTION.....	9
CHAPTER 1	
HIGHLIGHTS IN THE LIFE OF MÁRCIO FREIRE	11
CHAPTER 2	
BAHIA, BRAZIL: 1975 – 1998.....	34
2.1 BIRTH.....	34
2.2 THE FAMILY.....	35
2.2.1 A Family of Surfers.....	38
2.3 CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE	40
2.4 SCHOOL LIFE: FROM KINDERGARTEN TO UNIVERSITY.....	51
2.5 SURF IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE FROM 1984 TO 1989.....	58
2.6 SURF THROUGH THE YEARS 1994-1998.	88
2.7 BYE BYE BAHIA	116
CHAPTER 3	
RIDING THE BIG WAVES IN HAWAII: 1998-2017.....	118
3.1 1998 to 2002	118
3.2 2003-2006.....	126
3.3 HAWAIIAN OUTRIGGER CANOE	139
3.4 PERIOD from 2007 to 2010	142
3.5 PERIOD: 2011 to 2013.....	169
3.6 2014 – 2016	192

CHAPTER 4

MÁRCIO FREIRE'S ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION EFFORTS ON MAUI..... 211

CHAPTER 5

HAWAIIAN CHARM 213

REFERENCES 218

FOREWORD

Life, Dreams and Surf is a book written with love about the life of one of the world's greatest big wave surfers. This is the biography of Márcio Freire, written by Dione Freire and revised by Hagamenon Rodrigues, in other words, my brother, my mother and my father.

I was very happy to have been invited to write the foreword to this book since, as the brother, I have lived a good part of the story. The sibling rivalry between us – two brothers only a year and two months apart – was intense and was played out in our surfing. He was goofy foot. I was regular. While I tried to imitate Jojó de Olivença, he copied Dadá Figueiredo's surfing style. I liked going to Floripa. He preferred Fernando de Noronha. If he was surfing at Barra Vento, I would go to Sesc. If he was at Sesc, I would go to Barra Vento. There was even a surf shop in Salvador that alternated sponsorship between us: when Márcio won the local championship, it sponsored him. When I won, they sponsored me. There were Homeric fights over who was going to use “mama's” car. Fights over friends too. Danilo Couto would often be torn between surfing with Márcio or me, because there was no way to go with both of us, since we would both call him at the same time to go out, but of course at different point breaks.

Deep down, however, we loved each other and rooted for each other a lot, which was totally evident in countless situations. I remember one time I was given a “yellow card” as a warning in a Bahia surfing State Championship event. I had gone to complain to the judges about the result of Márcio's heat. I thought they'd misjudged the heat and went up to the podium to let them know; I really cussed them out. One time, in a heat in Itacaré, when I had to get out of the water and race down the beach to get back to the point break, after having been dragged off by the current, Márcio was waiting for me with a big smile on his face, ready to help by getting my board and running back with me.

Despite our rivalry in the water, there was mutual admiration and much respect, although I have always been different from him in two respects. The first, is our stances in the barrel, especially backside. While I always had a hard time, Márcio's grab rail position was and remains impeccable. And second, the drive for and courage to take off on big waves. On big days, he always stood out for daring to take off on the biggest waves, often outside the break. There were so many times I got into deep shit trying to keep up with him.

Márcio Freire's story has been told here in full detail, from our childhood and adolescence in Bahia, to the period of his being recognized in the surf media as one of the greatest Big Wave Surfers in the history of world surfing. It chronicles periods of surfing competitions, State and National titles, the hardships he experienced in Hawaii, his involvement in Hawaiian culture and participation in outrigger canoeing. It also chronicles innumerable episodes and surf sessions, as well as the international repercussion of being one of the pioneers of paddle-in surfing at Jaws in Maui, along with Danilo Couto and Yuri Soledade. The three friends formed the trio known by the locals as the "Mad Dogs", which led to the documentary of the same name, shown on the channel "OFF", which won awards in Australia and the United States.

This book is illustrated with several photos from Mama Dione's photo archive. Mama Dione, along with our dad, Haga, had a really tough time. They were worried about his studies at school, and the dilemma of whether or not to support his career in surfing, which was starting to gain momentum. Nonetheless, this is an exciting story of Márcio's life, written with love and emotion. Everyone who admires and follows his career, any surf or any extreme sports lover should read it. Or even anyone who wants an example of how to pursue their dreams, even if the dream doesn't provide any material assets, but is based on something of much greater value: happiness.

Ultimately, I was thrilled reading this book and I am inspired by my brother Márcio's attitude. Life is too short and we need to pursue our dreams to be happy. Let's also set the example for the new generations to come – surfers who want to excel in Big Wave Surfing. Attitude, determination, courage and humbleness were the ingredients in Márcio's life that made him one of world's greatest big wave surfers, and a legend on Maui, Hawaii, where he is always greeted with a big smile anywhere he goes on the island. Read his story and discover the truth in these words.

Bruno Freire e Silva

INTRODUCTION

This book was written with great affection, typed out through the tears of the 19 years we have longed for our son Márcio's return home to Salvador-Bahia-Brazil.

With this heartfelt sentiment, this work recounts his story, from birth through childhood and into his adult life as a big wave rider. We expect him to and hope one day he returns, remembering us, his parents, who raised him with love, care, advice, guidance and support. His ethics, his wholesome, gentle, caring and respectful character, aside from being part of his nature, also comes from his family environment. This environment created the basis for his self-esteem, which in turn gave him the confidence to realize his dream to move to Hawaii. Although we didn't share this dream, we've learned to respect his choice.

Today we are proud of him for his courage, for having faced a world full of adversities, leaving everything behind in search of a dream that came true, despite all obstacles. A dream free of material goods, and abundant with spirituality. For him, the legacy of surfing is joy, a sense of well-being and spiritual peace, ultimately it brings him the most important thing in life, HAPPINESS.

This book begins with a retrospective of the important events in Márcio's life, from his birth into childhood, then later when his surf skills began to emerge in junior championships, followed by his adolescence into adulthood as he competed and excelled in Bahian surf, reaching his golden phase in 1997, consecrated as champion of the Bahian *Open*. After winning this title, he became a professional surfer, and then left the Brazilian surf scene in 1998.

In October 1998, he arrived in Hawaii, where he opted to for *free surfing* instead of *competition surfing*. This book then also chronicles his life as a big wave rider from 1998 onward. We close with the text "Hawaiian Charm", which refers to the island magic that held him in this paradisiacal land, and the poem "What is Surf"

written by his uncle Rivaldo, who is also his godfather, who dedicated the poem to him on his birthday, followed by some final reflections.

This book is, in short, an account of a mother's feelings, faced with the long absence of her son, through personal memories, as well as magazine articles, newspaper clippings, interviews, photos, emails, blogs and electronic articles.

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE LIFE OF MÁRCIO FREIRE

From his early childhood, Márcio's immediate attraction to the waves and the sea foretold his life's passion for surf.

When he arrived in Hawaii, nobody knew who he was, but through his personality, his easygoing nature, his relationships with the local surfers, his determination and exceptional surfing skills, he began to gain recognition, ultimately being written about and interviewed in newspapers, magazines, blogs, and surfing sites.

In the introduction to an interview with Eric Akiskalian, Hawaiian Rodney Kilborn described Márcio:

Marcio Freire is a handsome native Brazilian who came to Hawaii 12 years ago with the intent to learn the Hawaiian Culture and surf the biggest waves he could on the outer reefs of Oahu and Maui. His short stocky body and wide shoulders makes him look like an 'Army Tank' that is ready to take on anything in his path.

Many would quickly turn away from Marcio at first glance because of his stocky appearance. However, if you were to get to know Marcio, you would notice his gentleness and how his handsome smile will never disappear. His radiant energy filled with warmth makes you want to just 'Hawaiian Hug' this handsome 'Gentle Beast'.

I call Marcio the Greg Noll of Pe'ahi and here's why. Back in the early 60's, Greg Noll was everyone's hero for us young surfers and back then he was always looking for the 'Giant' and 'Biggest' days to surf and conquer for himself and his soul. This is how I see Marcio in today's big-wave arena. He is a very gentle giant with the purest of hearts, waiting and seeking the biggest days he can paddle at Pe'ahi without a care for media coverage or sponsors. Just like Greg Noll used to do at Waimea and Makaha in the early 60's.

Marcio portrays the same 'Soul Surfer' attitude that many big-wave surfers of the early days had. He has no sponsors and has never had any media coverage on himself for his

big-wave abilities and status. Like Jeff Clark who pioneered Maverick's in the late 70's only to surf monster waves by himself for 15 years, eventually one will be recognized for their amazing abilities and commitment to paddle into giant waves year after year. Especially now, because what was once known as a tow-in or windsurf only location on giant days, has now been overthrown by the pure at heart who have chosen to paddle into the giant JAWS of Pe'ahi. What was once thought as almost impossible or a death sentence, is now being accomplished and the bar has once again been raised in the paddle-in community.

Marcio has made the decision to not tow-in surf Pe'ahi or use a PWC to access its arena on any monster day that he chooses to paddle. He has actually only towed a couple of times and is not really that pumped on it. His commitment is always, man verses ocean and he always makes the hike down the sheer 200ft. cliff with his broad shoulders carrying his 10' gun to the 8'-10' pounding shore break that crashes upon the shoreline covered with giant boulders. Once standing on the shoreline covered with massive boulders, he waits for his break and begins the heavy paddle out. Marcio can surf Pe'ahi w/ 15'-18' + sets Hawaiian Luau feet. Marcio has made the hike down this cliff many times by himself since 2007 and now with fellow big-wave chargers like Danilo Couto, Yuri Soledad and a couple others.

Whether Marcio is with his friends or by himself, he always finds his way into the channel and right under the hook of the biggest and meanest Pe'ahi waves he can find. Sometimes he's by himself and many times with 15-20 skis in the water towing the rights as he is paddling into the big giant lefts. Yes, his mind would 'Fear' but he would also attack each wave with a 'Fearless' attitude that was backed with pure respect for his surroundings. This is his surf medication for the addictive desire he has to ride massive waves at Pe'ahi. He knows this spot and the shoreline better than any other surfer on this planet. He has paid his dues and made his mark as one of Maui's elite and respected underground big-wave chargers.

For this reason we have decided to share his story and interview with the surfing community and introduce to you, Marcio Freire as one of the world's elite big-wave hellmen. To all our friends who ride and paddle into mountains! We have so much respect for you and how you are all supporting the growth of our sport and paving the way for future generations. Malama Ke Kai (cherish the Ocean).

This Akiskalian's interview won the "Journalist of the Year 2011 award, Surfer Interview Category".

Márcio's life has been about surfing from the time he was 9 years old when, in the wake of his brother, Bruno, and their friends, he started surfing on a little styrofoam board, which was soon replaced by one of Bruno's used boards. That made him ecstatic: even though it was old and worn, now he had a *real* board. Surfing soon became his only passion, the childhood dream that would engage and envelope him for life.

In 1986 he started to take part in competitions. The first was the "ASBL Circuit" championship – Barão de Loreto Streets Surfers' Association – which was held by his cousin Paulo Marcos and friends who lived on Loreto Street, which was next to ours, Humberto de Campos Street, in the neighborhood called Graça, where we lived in Salvador, Bahia. Márcio and his cousin Luis Eduardo were the youngest in the competition. Márcio was 11 years old and won a medal finishing in 6th place. It was surely the beginning of an addiction, an encouragement to keep on surfing, more and more.

In 1988, he began to compete at the State level. He was 13 years old and won the "Emerging Surfer" medal. In 1989, the surf newspaper *Qual o Lance* published a photo of him, seen in Image 1 below – the first of many articles on Márcio. In 1990 he gave his first interview. He was a Junior surfer at the time.



Image 1 – *At 14 years of age, Márcio's Image was published in a surf magazine for the first time – 1989.*
SOURCE: Newspaper *Qual o Lance?* 1989 (month and number unidentified)

On Image 1: *Márcio Freire's explosive and powerful surfing.*

Márcio's first interview as a surfer.

Surfing was his first priority, studying was secondary. So, Haga, his father, and I weren't very motivated to support his practice during the years of surfing in Bahia. It was a time when we followed Márcio step by step, to make sure he wouldn't lose interest in studying due to his intense participation in surfing championships.

But we couldn't be at all places at all times, and that year Márcio got under our radar and snuck out to participate in the trials in Ubatuba-São Paulo – *Mundialito Cup Competition* in Barbados. He somehow managed to secretly get the plane bus, the registration fee and accommodations with one of the sponsors of the Association and friends. On the day of the trip, he left home as if he was just going to school like he always did. But that day, Márcio did not show up at home for lunch. I started to get worried and at first Haga and I called his cousins, then his friends. One of them was Danilo Couto. Everyone said they hadn't seen Márcio. I was about to really lose it, when right at dusk he phoned, and I eagerly asked:

“Son, where are you?! I've been looking for you everywhere and haven't found out where you are”.

“I'm in Vitoria da Conquista, ” he answered, “on my way to São Paulo, to take part in the championship. Mom, I was worried about you. Sorry I didn't tell you about this trip.”

“Are you nuts?” I answered. “How could you do such a thing without telling me?” Calming down, I said, “All right, but you should've told me. I'll find a way to tell your father. The worst part is worrying, not knowing where you are.” He apologized and told me he felt relieved after talking to me and now he could continue the journey in peace.



Image 2 – Márcio Freire when he was 12 years old, on the playground of our condominium, 1987.

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family Archive

He was highlighted in the following championships:

1991 – 4th place-Brazil-USA Interchange. In the same year, he won the “Expression Session” with his traditional 360 Backside.

1992/1993 – Vice-Champion Bahian Junior; Bi-Champion Wave Beach Cultural Exchange.

1993 – 5th place on the National Amateur ranking – the 9th Best Amateur Surfers of the country – in the Selection of the Brazilian Team to compete in the Mundialito Cup in Barbados.



Image 3 – Márcio Freire (17 years old)

SOURCE: Banzai newspaper, year 1, # 3 Feb / Mar, 1992.

“This year the Aloha Newspaper highlighted him as the best athlete of the Second Event of the Bahian Circuit of Amateur Surfing, held in Itacaré-Bahia”. The news editor commented about Márcio: “He has style and determination, and with each event stands out as an excellent competitor “... one could count on seeing this athlete rip it up in the lip, thrusting spray and confidence features of his explosive surfing.”



Image 4 – *Marcio Freire's explosive surf*– 1993.
SOURCE: personal archive

1996: *Circuit Champion in Itacaré Fest Surf; Champion UNICLUBES; 3rd Place – Circuit of Bahia.*

1997 – *Champion Cup MDK / Greenish; 5º Placed – Best Baiano Ranked in the Championship Sea Club Wave Beach Brazilian Professional Surf; 3rd Placed – Circuit of Bahia.*

In 1993 he became one of the TOP 5 of ABRASA (the former Brazilian Association of Amateur Surf). But the most important title of his career in Salvador, Bahia came in 1997: “BAIANO OPEN CHAMPION” by Daniela Guedes, Newspaper A Tarde, 1975.



Image 5 – *Márcio Freire, Bahian Open Champion 1997.*
SOURCE: *A Tarde newspaper, Salvador, Sunday, September 14, 1997*



Image 6 – *Marcio surfing in Fernando de Noronha.*
SOURCE: *Hardcore Magazine, June 9, 1997.*

His first Image in a magazine with national circulation was in the June 1997 issue of the magazine *Hardcore*. The caption read: “Márcio Freire in a free fall. Now everyone will know what the Bahian is doing at the *Cacimba do Padre* (Beach in Fernando de Noronha).”

By end of October 1998, his dream continued with more intensity, no longer in Brazil, but out beyond the Atlantic, into the Pacific Ocean, in the most distant archipelago of the continent, the Mecca of the surfers of the world, Hawaii, formed by the islands: Oahu (where Honolulu is located, the capital of Hawaii), Maui (one of the most beautiful in the world, Márcio's current home); Kauai, the Garden Island; the Big Island (the largest of all); Malokai, Nihau, Kahoolawe. The surfers' favorite spots however, are Oahu's North Shore and Maui with Jaws / Peahi, known for having the biggest and most dangerous waves in the world.

When he arrived on the North Shore he stayed with Danilo Couto for awhile, at the Lapo Coutinho Inn, owned by Lapo, Hawaiian resident and International Surf Judge.

In one of his interviews, Lapo commented that when Marcio arrived, he encouraged him to participate in the competitions, but Márcio didn't give it much thought. Lapo said that among all of the bahian surfers back then, Márcio was the most talented.

At the end of 1999 he went to Maui where he continued to surf big waves: Honolua Bay, Outter Reefs etc., going back and forth between Oahu in the big wave seasons, where he surfed Waimea, with 20 to 30 feet waves, closing Waimea Bay on November 25, 2002, and other great swells.

As time went by, his financial difficulties increased, and the dream of surfing big waves was complicated by the need to earn money to support himself and finance his surfing. So he chose to work less, lead a modest, simple life and devote more time to surfing. He did not have much interest in sponsorship and surfed for the sake of his passion for the sport. His father Haga and I decided that if he wanted to study, sure he would have our support, but for surfing, no. We thought that if the situation tightened he would return to his studies in Salvador. We were mistaken, despite appeals, advice and email-s, plenty of reflections by Haga, rethinking his life, his future. Despite Haga's insistence, he didn't give up his dreams, nor ever asked for financial support, even in a difficult situation.



Image 7 – *Márcio Freire surfing at Mavericks, California – 2003.*
SOURCE: Photographer, Frank Quirarte

Without a sponsor and barely any money, he made one of his dreams come true: to surf in at Mavericks, in Half Moon Bay, California. He hit it in the 2003/2004 season, arriving in Halfmoon Bay in the beginning of November to return to Hawaii only in the end of February. Two years later he would return to Half Moon Bay to surf two swells in December/2006. The film “Ride On” produced by Powerlines Productions, released in 2008, showed Márcio riding for the first time on a film, December/2006-Mavericks.

March 14, 2007, marks a watershed moment in his life in Hawaii: he and his friends Danilo Couto and Yuri Soledade pioneered paddle-in surf at Jaws known for the heaviest and most dangerous waves in the world. The pioneering spirit and the courage to take on the *bombs* at Jaws, which until then had only been ridden tow-in, catapulted the three Bahians into worldwide fame among the surf community as the best among Big Wave Riders. That crazy feat earned them the name, “Mad Dogs”.

In the interview with Mad Dogs (Danilo, Marcio and Yuri) by Maira Pabst, Yuri Soledade replied: “*This nickname, Mad Dogs, came through the local guys who at first really thought we were crazy surfing Jaws paddling. It’s also a caring way of treating with respect and to value the attitude of surfers.*” According to Maira, in Hawaii the slang “mad dogs” has a special meaning, that is: go for it, make it happen, confronting any

barrier in order to accomplish your goal. And that is exactly what Danilo Couto, Marcio Freire and Yuri Soledade did when they, exceeded the limits of surfing the waves at Jaws by going out and taking off just paddling.

After this historic day, Márcio contemplated the fearsome waves of Jaws in Peahi from the cliff and began surfing them alone or with friends. He dared that giant wall without a safety gear, jet ski, or a rescue team. He went barreled down that steep slope of water, in Brazilian slang known as “pirambeira” with courage and strength, putting his very life at risk.

That supernatural cinematographic scene impresses anyone who has ever been on the cliffs watching him. It was a fantastic show by Marcio, with no protection, sliding in on those monstrous waves like the claws of a fierce animal, terrifying and devouring anyone who enters its sphere.



Image 8 – Márcio Freire surfing Jaws, paddle-in, with no protection – 2007.

SOURCE: Photographer, Mike Neal



Image 9 – Márcio Freire in Jaws.

SOURCE: Photograph © Tracy Leboe, 2008

In April 2008, at the beginning of the awards ceremony of the Traditional Billabong XXL, in Anaheim, California, filmed by Elliot Leboe (ACL Films) were shown of Márcio riding the swell of February/2008. The footages sent the crowd cheering. Later these footages were converted to video and shown on YouTube (“Jaws Paddle-In” – Jaws na Remada). That night Marcio’s valor under those giant waves was officially recognized, and that’s how he became a reference in Paddle-In Surf at Jaws, and the inspiration for big wave riders from all over the world.



Image 10 – Danilo Couto, “Ride of the Year” Winner 2011.

Source: Photo: Erik Aeder.

In January 2010, in his text “Report of an Adventure of Fools”, published by *Waves* under the title: *Couto and Freire Mad Dogs* he describes, in detail, the dramatic and dangerous moments lived in that fierce episode. This surf session filmed by Aldo Tassara (Pure Digital Maui). Becoming an excellent video (Jaws Paddle Session) and exhibited by the website surfline.com had great impact in the world surf community.

Despite that fearsome passage of his life, he only came to wear a life-jacket in 2012 and as of 2014 an inflatable vest offered to him by the company ‘Patagonia’.

In 2011, at the *Billabong XXL* event, Márcio competed in the main category of the event ‘*Ride of The Year*’ along with Shane Dorian, Mark Healy, Rodrigo Koxa, Danilo Couto and Pedro Scooby; yet, he ended up not entering as a top 5 finalist, and Danilo Couto took the prize on April 29 that year in Anaheim, California. It was a great party, celebrated with much happiness by the “Mad Dogs”.

In the Monster Paddle category, Brazil was represented by Marcio Freire, Danilo Couto, Yuri Soledade, Igor Lumertz, Carlos Burle and Felipe Cesarano.



Image 11 – *Márcio Freire – Paddle-in at Jaws riding the wave that brought him notoriety in the 2011 Billabong XXL Big Wave Awards Monster Paddle category in the swell in January.*
SOURCE: Photographer, Mike Neal.

This wave set him up as a strong contender in the Monster Paddle Category in the 2011 Billabong XXL.

In 2012, Márcio Freire, along with other famous Hawaiian surfers, debuted in the film, *Jaws- Changing the Game*, (Directed by Wangdu Hovey) the first documentary of paddle-in at Jaws, presented on June 17 of that year at the Maui Film Festival. This documentary was released in Brasil on the OFF Channel. For many, Márcio Freire's participation was considered the best, especially for his message on the environment and on his personal values. He was named "Dark Horse" by Wangdu Hovey. In chess, the dark horse moves around the board more easily than the other pieces.



Image 12 – Poster of the first documentary about paddle-in at Jaws: “Changing The Game”.
SOURCE: Márcio Freire’s personal archive.

About The Movie

As surfers pray for waves on Maui during the winter, a select few ask for the gut-wrenching 30 plus foot walls of water that only Jaws on the North Shore can provide. You may have seen surfers towed into the massive breaks behind a jet ski, but there is a group of riders who paddle into them, taking the sport to an even more extreme level, only a few years ago thought impossible.

Today, as an experienced Big Wave Rider, surfing the largest waves of Hawaii: Ma’alea, Honolua Bay, Pipeline, Waimea, especially Jaws and Mavericks – California, Márcio shows his happiness, learning and improving his performance on those waves, realizing his dream.

The price was high though, to do it without sponsorship and with few resources; he faced many difficulties. He preferred to be without a fixed job, free to go wherever the waves – his eternal companions – appeared. So he worked in gardening, construction, restaurants... freelancing to survive and invest in surfing gear.

Today, he is an accomplished big wave rider. He acknowledges that he has never chased after sponsorship, perhaps a mistake, but he doesn't regret and prides himself for, on his own effort, winning the respect and recognition in Hawaii and Brazil. His name is included in the Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, on line as one of the world's pioneers for paddle-in surf at *Jaws*.

He's a true waterman, loves nature and all water sports. He could not live far from the waves of the sea, he would be a fish out of water. Besides surfing, he can practice other water sports such as paddleboard, SUP, Hawaiian outrigger canoeing etc. And he is a member of the traditional Hawaiian Canoe Club where he is very dear and considers it his second family in Hawaii. His "first family" there: his sister Itana, his brother-in-law Jefferson and twin nieces Moana and Taina for whom he has special affection.

Kind, unassuming, simple and indifferent to material wealth, he is uninterested in the bustle of urban life, and seems at times detached from everything that surrounds him.

Surfing is his passion. Without waves he gets annoyed, anxious, distressed and restless. His gaze is often lost on the horizon in thoughts he cannot seem to define, but when big waves hit the coast, his face changes and his eyes shine with happiness. It is as if something good has suddenly filled his soul, making him cheerful, talkative and glow with a giant smile. That was the feeling I got after living with him for five months in Hawaii. I came to understand him better and accept him as he is. In Hawaii, for the first time, I remember people greeting me, saying, "Congratulations on the son you have". Those words made me very proud, happy with the world of happiness that he has built around him. All of this compensated for the anguish that I felt during those long years of his absence.

In 2013, *Surfing Magazine* invited Márcio for a photography session with the best surfers of big waves in the world. The magazine dedicated to the best surfers in the world was published in February/2014 (image 184). Danilo Couto was included. They never imagined that this would happen someday.

Two striking events occurred in his life in 2015. The first was harrowing, the monstrous wipeout he suffered in one of the largest swells ever at *Jaws* that reached 30 feet on January 25, 2015.

He retells the incident saying, at that moment in his life, he felt death. The story was news in the national and international media. As soon as he recovered from the “wipeout”, he phoned me telling me about what had happened and that he was well. This reassured me. Had I received that news from anyone else, I don’t know how I would have reacted. His experience put him in the running for the Wipeout of the Year XXL Billabong Award 2015, but the winner was Benjamim Sanchis, with a giant wave in Nazaré – Portugal.



Image 13 – *Márcio Freire in the terrible wipeout.*

SOURCE: 2015 Wipeout of the Year Entry-XXL Big Wave Awards, by Dan Norkunas

The second was the release of documentary film *Mad Dogs* by Bahian filmmaker Roberto Studart, in which Márcio stars along with Danilo Couto and Yuri Soledade.

In an interview, Roberto Studart describes: “They surpassed the limits of surfing, when paddling the famous Jaws, the most gigantic and dangerous waves in the world. They surfed without vests or the aid of a jet ski. They were the pioneers of this modality in Peahi- Jaws, which, until then, had only been surfed with the support of jet skis”



Image 14 – *Mad Dogs* Documentary promotional poster.

This documentary was awarded at the Australian Film Festival at the Bells Beach Surf Film event, where it was the unanimous winner of the Peter Troy “Spirit of Surfing Award.” In the United States, it was successfully presented at five festivals: two in California: the Santa Barbara International Film Festival and the Newport Beach Film Festival. In Hawaii, his debut was on June 16, 2016 at the Maui

Film Festival. More than 2, 000 people watched the documentary that received the “Largest Audience” award on August 1 at the Honolulu Film Festival and lastly at the Waimea Ocean Film Festival on Big Island.

After the presentation of the documentary “Mad Dogs” at the Maui Film Festival, Márcio was the last to thank the audience. He was met with the audience’s cheering, shouting, whistles, roaring applause and chanting his name: “Már-ci-o!!! Már-ci-o !!!” The reaction of the audience moved him deeply and he was thrilled.

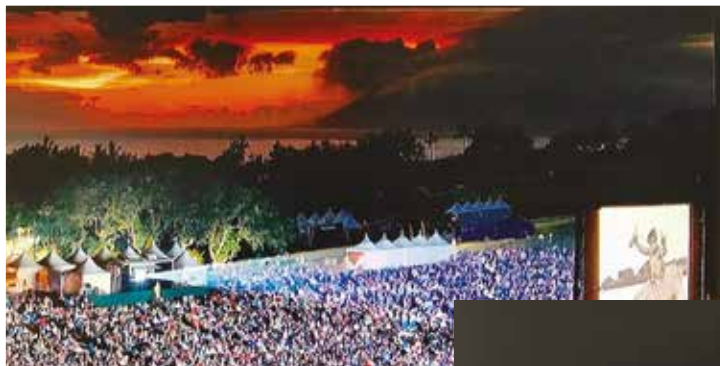


Image 15 – *Launching of “Mad Dogs” – at the Maui Film Festival.*

SOURCE: <http://www.mauisnow.com/blog/2016/6/6/maui-film-festival-2016>



Image 16 – *Márcio Freire thanking the public at the Maui Film Festival, Hawaii*

SOURCE: Personal archive.

In Brazil, the release of this documentary was in October 2015, on Channel OFF, followed by a series of 10 episodes. According to Director Roberto Studart, the series went deeper into themes that the documentary had provided only a small

glimpse, so people could better understand the whole universe of the Jaws Paddle-In led by the Mad Dogs. The 8th episode of the series is specifically about Márcio. It focuses on his entire surfing trajectory, which started in Bahia and continued in Hawaii.

The media recognition and his surfing shown in this documentary made him very happy for the long years of sacrifice, dedication, love of surf and the victory achieved through his own effort.

He currently works for a Hawaiian tourism company as a crew member of the “ALII NUI” Catamaran that does tours: sometimes to see the whales, sometimes to watch a romantic sunset with dinner on board and the snorkeling on the island of Molokini as the main attraction.

The identification that he feels with this work, daily in contact with nature and people of various nationalities makes him very happy, a fact that he registers in the documentary “MAD DOGS”.



Image 17 – *Márcio Freire: Amazing encounter with a whale shark while working at Molokini Crater, Maui.*

SOURCE: Photo Chloe Cryan

On the 4th, 10th, 15th and 27th of January and 25th of February of 2016, he surfed the giant, monstrous and dangerous waves of Jaws. Yet, on the 15th and the 27th of January, were the biggest and best waves, that he ever masterfully challenged paddling, except for the february 25th wave, which he was towed in to catch (jet sky modality known as tow-in). The waves of January 27 were about 30 Hawaiian feet or 50 and 60 feet face (image 18). With that wave he became part of the group of big wave surfers, recognized by the WSL -Big Wave. Unfortunately, other bigger waves in the paddle surpassed his and who won the prize of Biggest Paddle Award Nominee Paddle-In Wave, at the XXL Billabong Award 2016 was Aaron Gold.



Image 18 – *Márcio Freire – Paddle-in at Jaws on another wave that brought him notoriety from the WSL in the swell on January 27th, 2016*
SOURCE: Photographer, Aaron Lynton.

The biggest swell of the whole season was actually on February 25th, 2016 when the waves hit the 70 to 80 feet mark – 20 to 23 meters of height, impossible to paddle-in surfing. So, it was on this day that he and Yuri surfed tow-in to catch this wave, that is, with the help of a Jet Sky.

It was a special day!!! In that swell Yuri had the luck and happiness to catch the biggest wave and surf it with “mastery.” With that wave he won the “Biggest Wave Award Nominee” on April 24 at the XXL Billabong Awards event in Anaheim, California.

It was a burst of joy when Yuri’s victory was announced, everyone was euphoric, especially Márcio who was thrilled with the prize received by his best friend, as if he had also won it.

The Mad Dogs made history yet once again. In 2011 it was their companion Danilo Couto who had won the award in the category “Ride of the Year”.



Image 19 – *Márcio celebrating the victory of his friend Yuri, April 2016*
SOURCE: Personal archive

The Mad Dogs: Danilo, Marcio and Yuri, have been friends since adolescence in Salvador-Bahia-Brazil and that friendship continues to this day. They are people of totally different personalities as described by Lucchesi.

Marcio is spiritually enlightened, always calm and happy.

Danilo is the hyperactive guy, always wanting more and high on adrenaline.

Yuri is extremely focused, he knows exactly what to do and where he wants to go.

Although they are such opposing personalities, there is something stronger that unites them: the love of surfing.



Image 20 – *Márcio Freire, the friend Danilo Couto and the special boards for big waves (Jaws).*



Image 21 – Márcio Freire, Danilo Couto and Yuri Soledade after success of the documentary *Mad Dogs* in Maui, Hawaii, June, 2016.

In 2016, Márcio Freire was considered one of the best Big Wave Riders of Brazil. The newspaper Maui Times published “BEST OF THE YEAR 2017 of Maui-Hawaii. In the category BIG WAVE RIDERS, the first place was Hawaiian Billy Kemper and the second, Albee Layer, also Hawaiian. Márcio was placed third.

Thus, this part of the trajectory can be wrapped up in the words of Márcio himself in an interview with Eric Akiskalian (2011):

“I want to continue developing big wave paddle-in; this way, I’m more connected with the sea and the Earth; that doesn’t happen with a Jet ski... it’s a special vibe when I’m dropping down those mountainous waves. It’s the adrenaline rush in my veins that makes me want to go beyond the limit. It’s a very special when there’s a big swell, when I feel very connected with the sea and the universe. That’s when I feel totally alive.”

BAHIA, BRAZIL: 1975 – 1998

2.1 BIRTH

It was an August morning, the 19th, 1975 – in the city of Salvador, Brazil at precisely 7:25 a.m. where the sun was already shining on the horizon announcing that day would be sunnier and brighter than the others, especially for Hagame-non and I. We lived the joyful expectation of the birth of our second child Márcio who would soon join Bruno, the first born, who was 1 year and 2 months old. Weighing in at 3, 710 kg and 51 cm length, in apartment number 412 of the Maternity Section of the Portuguese Hospital, Marcio was celebrated by the entire family. We had already had the immeasurable joy of the first child, with Bruno on June 10th, 1974 in this same hospital and to complete our treasure of life, another joyous experience of motherhood, as Márcio, Itana arrived, on February 27 in the summer of 1978.



Image 22 – *Marcinho at 3 days old, in the arms of his mother Dione, 1975*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

2.2 THE FAMILY

Father: Hagemenon Rodrigues da Silva, a pediatrician who is still practicing, a retired Professor of Medicine at UFBA (Federal University of Bahia) and at the “Baiana” School of Medicine. Mother: Dione Freire Silva, retired librarian at EBDA – Bahia Agricultural Development Company. She retained employment in The Health Department of the State of Bahia – Couto Maia Hospital until October, 2015.

Married for 44 years, they have three children: Bruno, Marcio and Itana Freire e Silva.



Image 23 – *Celebration Ruby Weddings (40 Years of Marriage), March 2012.*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive



Image 24 – *Celebration of his father's 70 years -2011*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

Bruno is a lawyer with a law firm in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (BF-Bruno Freire-Advogados), holds a bachelors and post-graduation through UFBA (Federal University of Bahia), with a Master's degree and PhD – PUC Pontificia Catholic University - São Paulo. Full Professor of General Trial Theory at UERJ – State University of Rio de Janeiro; member of the Boston College Law Summer Institute; Graduate Professor of Labor Law of the GV Law in São Paulo; Member of the Brazilian Institute of the Trial Law of the Institute of Lawyers of São Paulo, and of the Commission of Defense of the Judicial Safety of the Federal Council of OAB – Order of Lawyers of Brasil; Titled member of chair n.68 of the Academia Brasileira do Direito do Trabalho. He has published dozens of books and articles on civil and workers laws. Among these were: Rescission Action, The New CPC and The Work Process. He is married to Patricia Vianna Meirelles Freire e Silva , (MA - Social Security Law) and Federal Attorney. They have two children: Pedro, 10 years old and Isabela, 8 years old. Image 25 - Bruno, Patrícia, Pedro and Isabela on holiday in London, February, 2017



Image 25 – *Bruno, Patrícia, Pedro and Isabela on holiday in London, February, 2017*
SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

Márcio Freire, second son is a surfer (Big Rider) a Mad Dogs Pioneer of Paddle in Jaws – Maui HI; he studied biology for three years but did not finish his studies at UCSAL (Universidade Católica do Salvador – Catholic University of Salvador); in 2012 he married Shidasha (American).



Image 26 – *Márcio* – 2016
SOURCE: Photographer, Francois Laborde

Itana Freire e Silva, Marine Biologist, graduated from Hawaiian State University in Honolulu, USA. She is currently working on the Hawaiian island of Maui in the Hawaii State Natural Resources, Aquatic Sector.

She is married to Jefferson Espírito Santo and has twin daughters: Moana and Tainá.



Image 27 – *Itana with Jefferson and their daughters Moana and Taina* – August, 2014

2.2.1 A Family of Surfers

The sea has always been an obsession of our children. Bruno, Marcio and Itana all adore nature, mainly the sea, and the surf. Surfing is in the blood, for leisure and the excitement it awakens. I have always heard from them – “Sea and surf recharge the body and the soul with positive energies, giving a sensation of well-being, lightness, joy, peace and happiness”.

Bruno continues to surf in Guarujá, on the coast of São Paulo, and whenever he can, he goes to famous surf spots: Hawaii, Peru, Central America. Maldivias, El Salvador. A great soul surfer!!!! He continues to love surfing and he even leaves a spare surfboard at our residence in Salvador to catch some waves at Farol da Barra and other beaches, when he comes to Salvador on work or on vacation.

Surfer blood has already shown up in his son Pedro, who has been catching some small waves since he was 6 years old in Guarujá. Today he is 10 years old, but at 7 he surfed well, with no fear in the waves of Hawaii, but under the care of uncle Márcio.



Image 28 – *Bruno in El Salvador.*
SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

Marcio works, but always manages hit the big swells at Jaws in the surfing seasons in Maui.



Image 29 – *Márcio in Honolulu Bay*
SOURCE: DoomaPhotos

Itana enjoys the waves in Hokipa, Hana, and others spots in Maui whenever she can. As you can see all three are soul surfers.



Image 30 – *Itana after a surf session in Breakwall Lahaina Maui, 2010*
SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

2.3 Childhood and adolescence

Márcio lived in the neighborhood, Graça, of Salvador, Brazil until 1998 when he went to Hawaii,

Everyone had a very healthy and happy childhood. Boyish activities were divided between Salvador and the island of Itaparica at Barra do Pote Beach – Bahia, Brazil. During school vacations they went to a vacation home on the island of Itaparica. Every summer and winter they enjoyed the tranquility and beauty of the calm sea beaches with warm, crystalline waters.

Márcio was a sweet child, affectionate, smart, intelligent, sometimes a little restless. He always had a beautiful smile on his lips, a quality he still keeps to this day.



Image 31 – *Márcio when he was 1 year and five months. Summer vacation on Barra do Pote Beach, 1976.*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

By eight months he had already been in the sea and loved swimming. The sea water with waves always attracted him and this has been a constant in his life



Image 32 – *Márcio (eight months) with Bruno (one year and 10 months) and Mom at Barra do Pote Beach, Itaparica Island, Bahia-Brazil.*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

On the deserted beachfront, the vast area of coconut trees seen in the background above. Barra do Pote Beach was a paradise at that time.



Image 33 – *With his father and Bruno, 1976.*

SOURCE: Freire e Silva Family archive



Image 34 – *Swimming with his mother's help, 1976.*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

These were healthy vacations, we got together with cousins and summer friends. along with the calm sea, warm waters, clean beaches, just a paradise. On return from vacation, they would always ask to transfer to a school on the island.

In 1980, from the island of Itaparica, we made an unforgettable trip to Porto Seguro, a historic town in the South of Bahia where Cabral first came to and ‘discover’ this tropical country, a land blessed by God, as Jorge Benjor sings. We visited the native village – the reserve of the Pataxós, a must tourist attraction, and there we acquired indigenous objects as bows and arrows and necklaces.



Images 35 – *Márcio with bow and arrows, Barra do Pote – Itaparica Island, 1980.*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive



Image 36 – *Also with bow and arrows, striking another pose, 1979.*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

In the 70's and 80's, Barra do Pote Beach on Itaparica Island looked like a wild paradise. People looking up to the sky could barely see it because there were coconut trees all over. There was a stream of clear water near our house where small fishes jumped, heading to the sea, by the house of our cousin Paulo Marcus. There was no violence, only the freedom of running through streets of sand with no pavement, only vegetation. When it rained, walking among the formed puddles was so fun. The beach was clean and the kids enjoyed playing on the soft sand, feeling that freedom, playing in that vast area, swimming in that calm sea, bathing in the full tide that looked more like a giant pool, fishing on the rocks, contemplating the beautiful view of the City of Salvador. Everything was fascinating, giving a sense of peace and well being. That was the golden phase for the children who lived there. They still carry reminiscences of that past in their memories. There were lots of wild animals like small monkeys jumping from branch to branch in front of our house. The image 38 shows the ecology of that time, large coconut tree areas in the background. Today the coconut tree areas have disappeared and have been replaced by the construction of several houses. Yet, we still maintain our house and enjoy the happy atmosphere emanating through the air involving every visitor who drops anchor at Itaparica island.



Image 37 – *Márcio (four years old) Bruno (five years old) – Summer vacation on the Island of Itaparica – Barra do Pote Beach.*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive



Image 38 – *Márcio. Mom and Bruno riding a bicycle on Barra do Pote Beach, 1977.*
SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

During summer we used to organized a series of sport activities with the participation of vacationers' children and native children. They were called Summer Olympics. Several sport modalities were disputed, soccer, different kinds of races, even a marathon. Fishing games, with criterias on the total amount of fish caught and of largest fish hooked, were the most interesting modalities – individual or in teams they were carried out during moon tide, when it reaches its lowest and stays low the longest. Fishing games were held on an average of three days. There were medals and trophies for the winners. At the closing party, the queen of the Summer Olympics was chosen among the candidates. The criteria used by the jury were beauty and performance in a parade. The work in our organization was volunteer compensated by fun and provided sports education. It was a celebration of joy and entertainment in which all the children in vacation joined the local natives and were all integrated into the happening. The awards of medals, trophies and the coronation of the queen happened at the the final party.

These were golden years, healthy, cheerful and unforgettable for all kids that shared those moments, forever engraved in their memories. This was one of the environments where Márcio Freire, his brother Bruno and sister Itana as well as their cousins Paulo Marcos, João Marcelo and Luis Eduardo shared most of their childhood.



Image 39 – *Marcio and Paulo Marcus, his cousin.*
SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive



Image 40 – *Cousins and highlighted: Aunt Beti and cousin Bianca.*
SOURCE: Freire e Silva Family archive

Image 40 above: At the center, Aunt Beti who sponsored a party with ice cream delivery for the whole group, cousin Bianca



Image 41 – *Fun meeting of cousins and friends*
SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

The Image above (image 41) in the foreground João Marcelo and Paulo Marcus; behind them Bruno and Márcio making funny faces; in the third plane André, Paulo and Menandro and on their left side the smallest Luis Eduardo; finally, on the right Miro, son of “the old” Mané, local fisherman. The last one on the left is Paulo Elisio.



Image 42 – *A fishing team: Márcio showing a fish and the cousins João Marcelo and Luis Eduardo. January 1985.*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

In the image, a spring tide, the lowest tide. In the background, the image of Salvador city line is hardly perceptible. Márcio and Luis Eduardo showing their catch.

Márcio was nine years and five months old. It was summer time, January of 1985 when Márcio began to surf.

Airport and airplanes have always been attractive to children. The joined photos below (image 41) show Bruno and Márcio with parents at the lookout.



Image 43 – *Dois de Julho Airport; today, Luis Eduardo Magalhães International Airport.*
SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive



Image 44 – *Márcio at two years of age with the paternal grandfather Colonel Luis Gonzaga.*
SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

In this photo above, in 1977, the smiling grandfather looks at the grandchild. We imagine what he thought: “When I leave this life I’ll leave you to continue from where I left off.”



Image 45 – *Márcio at two years and 10 months old.*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive



Image 46 – *Márcio’s three year old birthday party: Bruno, his cousin João Marcelo and Márcio*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

Images 45 and 46: Márcio, playing the drum and the trumpet, Márcio showed some interest for music early on; today he plays a little the ukulele, a type of “cavaquinho” of Portuguese origin, which has become part of the Hawaiian culture.

Besides the island of Itaparica, other options for recreation places for children in Salvador: Clube dos Médicos (Doctors’ Club) – he used to spend the day there, playing ball, swimming in a pool, playing in the park, etc; the Clube Baiano de Tênis (Bahian Tennis Club), which besides enjoying the pool, they took Judo classes when they were younger, tennis classes and Itana took ballet classes, but never really got into those sports. They preferred surfing, when they learned later on.



Image 47 – *Márcio's portrait (left), with siblings (below), and cutting the cake with his mother at his fifth birthday party (right).*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive



Image 48 – *Márcio at age 6, in the 'Clube dos Médicos' (Doctor's Club) with Bruno and Luis Eduardo; in the 'Clube Bahiano de Tênis' (Bahian Club of Tennis) and at home with Itana and Bruno, 1981.*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

Since childhood, they enjoyed playing in the playground of our Building – Serra dos Campos. First, as little kids, they always took their favorite toys, toy cars and little trains; later on they took bikes, skateboard and we had a skate ramp made from a large piece of plywood put on the playground for them to play.



Image 49 – Bruno (7 years old), Márcio (6 years old) and Itana (3 years old) with parents in the playground of Serra dos Campos Condominium – Graça.

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

This set of photos translate the happiness of the family in an unforgettable period of our lives, a time we recall with much nostalgia.

1987 – MÁRCIO FREIRE’S FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

On October 29th, 1987, Márcio (12 years old) celebrated at Capela Nossa Senhora da Vitória (Chapel of Our Lady of Victory, Marista School) his First Holy Communion with his classmates. A very important occasion for us all. After the ceremony, we had a reception in the party hall of our condominium with tasty snacks. Several family members and friends showed up, especially their cousins.



Image 50 – *Márcio (12 years old) with his mother in the party hall of our condominium, celebrating his First Holy Communion. Happiness seen through the smiles of mother and son.*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive.

2.4 SCHOOL LIFE: FROM KINDERGARTEN TO UNIVERSITY – 1982-1998

Márcio's school life from the 4th Grade in Elementary School up to University was hard and that worried us, because surfing entered his life in a phase of transition between childhood and adolescence. Guidance, advice, pedagogical interventions, all kinds of counseling and different practical approaches to keeping him interested in school were soon obliterated by surfing. Surf emerged in his life as an integral part of his very being.

Márcio, his brothers Bruno and Itana, attended Kindergarten at Gurilândia in Ondina.

Bruno and Márcio were really active children and fooled around a lot. They gave me a hard time. But Bruno was very disciplined; he used to do all of his homework and did everything right, but Márcio was undisciplined, especially about studying. During his literacy classes, I helped him with his homework and at the

end, I remember doing spelling practice. He was so lazy it drove me nuts, purposely dropping the pencil on the floor several times and, from sitting on the chair, he would try to catch the pencil really slowly, not looking at the pencil on the floor, or during dictation he would write the words very slowly, pressing the pencil so the tip would break, and minutes were lost sharpening it. Thus, time passed slowly, wasted. Irritable and impatient, I did not give up and kept him studying until the homework was done.

He passed literacy classes with good grades. His teacher was Regina Magalhães and the principal, Vera Teixeira. He passed the test known as “Short Entrance Test” which represented the transition into 1st Grade in Nossa Senhora da Vitória School (Marista). Bruno was already there in 2nd grade.



Image 51 – Gurilândia School – Literacy Course Closing Party. Márcio receiving his first reading book from his teacher -1982.

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

TN: Translator’s Note: In the nineties, scholastic development was divided into early childhood education with levels “K, 1, 2, 3 and literacy”; education and middle school from the first to the eighth grades. Then, high school – 1st, 2nd and 3rd years.

On special dates, the school held parties and parades with students wearing costumes according to the theme.



Image 52 – Márcio as a Mexican (3 years old) and: Bruno as a Mexican Indian (4 years old).
SOURCE: Freire e Silva family archive



Image 53 Mother's Day at Gurilândia School. Márcio (4 years old) dressed as a Franciscan friar.
SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

MARISTA SCHOOL – 1983 through 1986:

In 1983, when he was 8 years old, he entered the 1st Grade at Marista School, where he took classes up to the 7th Grade. On the 1st Grade (1983 – 8 years old), through 3rd Grade (1985 -10 years old), he had a good performance in school and his school report card presented marks varying from 7.0 to 8.8.

From 1986 on, many bad marks began to show up in his school report. At age 11, in 4th Grade, the coordinator started sending notes home: “more attention, interest and concentration are required, as well as more practice of activities worked

TN: Most Brazilian schools still use the scale from 0 to 10 or from 0 to 100 and the students must achieve at least a 6 or 60 mark to pass. Concerning about ways of evaluating tests or papers, numbers – not letters - are still used, thus grades are replaced by “marks” in this version to English

in class”. He managed to improve in Communication, Expression and Integration, but he did not get the necessary mark to pass Math and so he took remedial classes and finally passed with 7.5.

1987 a 1990 – MARISTA School

In 1987, he was 12 years old in 5th Grade. Bad marks continued to show up in his report card; worried we began to give him a closer assistance, studying with him, and he passed all subjects with marks 6.0 or higher except Mathematics in which he got 5.9 but the School Board decided to let him pass to 6th Grade moving his marks to 6.0.

In the 6th Grade, he started to surf more often, participating in competitions along with his brother Bruno, his marks began to drop right from the first subject units. The school board called us to talk about Márcio. He had begun taking remedial classes on all 4 subjects. His father was coaching along that entire period and so he passed all subjects straight to the 7th grade. When his father arrived on Itaparica Island handing Márcio the report, who screamed – I passed I passed. The father replied – We passed!

In the 1980s, the most difficult year was 1989. Márcio was 14 years old, and a very active surfer, who hung out at surfing competitions. He started to excel at surfing and his studies were once again pushed aside. He began to dream of becoming a professional surfer. All of that made us sad and worried because he did not know how to balance out the two things: studying and surfing, but I didn’t give up nor let myself down. This time though, we were left in tears after getting Márcio’s year end report card, he had failed on six subjects and we decided not to make him take remedial classes because he wouldn’t have the basic foundation to attend 8th Grade. In 1990 he repeated the 7th Grade.

TN: The expression “Recuperação” literally translates to “recovery classes”. In Brazil, *recovery classes* is the name attributed to remedial classes for students to recover their marks when they scored below the school average in a given subject. Brazilian schools have a *recovery phase* at the end of the school year: students have intensive classes during which they must learn content not assimilated along the year. To avoid repeating a grade, they take a final test on the subject’s content covered during the entire year. In the U.S., remedial education are designed to students who are underprepared, thus our translation choice of Remedial Classes.

TN: In most schools there are periods of two months still called “Subject Units”.

In 1990 his look was already of an authentic surfer, his hair bleached from the sun and the use of wax, peroxide or even lime, all of it used to lighten their hair in Barra do Pote Beach, Itaparica, surfers' fashion of the time (image 54). He was so involved in surfing championships that even with Math remedial classes, he failed 7th Grade again and was no longer accepted at Marista School for failing grades twice. That is why we stopped supporting Márcio; he was more surf than studies oriented. Today he admits that we were right back then.



Image 54 – Student Card of half busfare – Maristas School -1990 – Márcio when he was 15.

SURFING – 1991 Through 1998:

In 1991, at the age of 16 he attended the 8th grade in the Colégio Decisão, attending to remedial Math classes, and finished primary school with good marks. The following year (1992) he was enrolled in Sartre High School (Colégio Sartre). He did well on the 1st year of High School but failed the 2nd in (1993), again being deeply involved with surfing championships.

He wanted to change schools, but we did not allow it; we kept him at Sartre because it was a school that prepared students well for the Vestibular. He repeated the 2nd Grade in 1994 and took remedial classes on four subjects. He failed in Math. At night he attended classes from a GED course.

TN: *Vestibular* is the Brazilian “university entrance exam”, similar to the SAT. It is a test used by public and private colleges and universities in Brazil to select students.

TN: GED (General Education Development) literally translated to “supplementary course”, where a student can take the classes he is lacking to complete High School, in a small period of time so he can go forward to further education.



Images 55, 56 Student Cards from Sartre High School – 1992 and 1994

In 1995 he decided to put aside surfing for a while and study a lot to get through the Vestibular, we had an agreement: after that, he could go on just surfing for 6 months.



Image 57 – Student's Identity Card – Colégio Sartre (Sartre High School) – 1995.



Image 58 – Márcio with classmates, Colégio Sartre (Sartre High School)

To everyone's joy, he passed the Entrance Exam at the Catholic University of Salvador and entered Biological Sciences.

His dream was Hawaii, and thinking of our agreement he thought the best thing to do would be to take it easy and wait for the right opportunity. Some time

later, already at the university he asked me for spending a six month season in Hawaii as we had agreed. In 1998 Marcio was in the 6th semester of Biology, doing his internship in the Microbiology Laboratory of Hospital Couto Maia – Secretary of Health for the State of Bahia where his father was professor from UFBA – Universidade Federal da Bahia (Federal University of Bahia) and doctor pediatrician infectologist of that hospital in 1997.



Image 59 – Student's Identity Card – Catholic University of Salvador and National Biology Student Reunion Participation ID card.



Image 60 – Identification Card of Biology Internship at Couto Maia Hospital – 1996-1997

2.5 SURF IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE FROM 1984 TO 1989.

1984 through 1989

In 1984 at nine years of age, Márcio became interested in surf, it drew his attention and fascinated him. The influence of Bruno, his brother, and his cousins was a striking factor. Márcio was a wily and active child and these qualities helped the older cousins and friends to accept him in the group. When I once visited Ceres Menandro's mother, she told me that she had asked her son why did they accept Marcinho, such a small kid in the group of the bigger boys? The answer was: "Mother, Márcio is small but he's "retado" and "danado", (Bahian slang that means "fearless and wily" and a slang from the state of Alagoas meaning "bold and fast"). Márcio got along with the group really well, we didn't mind that he was a member of the group. And so, wherever Bruno, his cousins and friends went surfing, Marcinho went along.



Image 61 – *Marcio, 11 years old – On the balustrade of Praça de Mar Grande (Big Sea Square) on Itaparica Island.*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

TN: As Bahia, Alagoas state is one of the states from the Northeast Region of Brazil. It borders Bahia and has some regional expressions and slang in common.

As a child, he began to surf on a styrofoam board in Barra do Pote in Itaparica Island, at the edge of the beach on high tides. In front of his uncle Paulo's and auntie Rosa's house there was a small river that dropped its waters in the sea and with the tide formed small sand benches, which in turn helped create small perfect waves for the children to play.

In the summer of 1985, in February his cousin Paulo Marcos took him surfing for the first time on a fiberglass surfboard with the tide going down (*maré vazante*), behind the reef banks that protect the beaches of the island. That board was his brother's who had bought it from a friend Paulo Elisio. Later, Bruno bought another board, and gave Márcio this first one.

In Salvador he started surfing at “Praia da Onda” (Wave Beach), “Praia Troca de Segredos” (Change of Secrets Beach) in Ondina neighborhood and “Praia do Corsário” (Corsair's beach), in Boca do Rio neighborhood.



Image 62 – *Márcio, 12 years old, and his cousin Joana*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive



Image 63 – *Márcio Freire at 13 with medals and trophies*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

At the age of 11 Márcio started his participation in championships. Soon, he received the “Upcoming Surfer” medal in the first surf championship of Maristas School nominated “Maristão” (Big Marista) at the “Praia da Terceira Ponte” (3rd Bridge Beach) in Piatá – a neighborhood on the coastline of Salvador – in the U12 category.

In his childhood and adolescence, Márcio competed in several Junior (age 16) championships and Amateur categories with his brother Bruno, also considered a talent of surf in Salvador. Bruno was highlighted in 1989 in first place at the 1st Surf Circuit of *Bahia*, at the *Batuba* beach – *Olivença* town; in the Surf Cup ASC, *Praia do Corsário*, and in the 1st *Maristão* of Surf held at *Terceira Ponte Beach*. He was 2nd in the “Ranking of 3rd Stage” of the 3rd circuit of the Barra Surf Association in the U16 category. In the 3rd Circuit of the Surfing Association of Barra neighborhood, 3rd Stage SOS Category U16, Bruno Freire placed second and was surpassed by Marcos Pelegrino. Márcio placed fourth.

Bruno has taken part in several championships in Bahia, from northeastern region and in Brazilian championships at the Junior, U16 and Open categories, standing out in many of those tournaments. Bruno left the surf competitions to dedicate himself to the college entrance exam, however, he has never stopped surfing. Today he is a lawyer and surfing is his therapy.



Image 64 – *Bruno Freire competing.*
SOURCE: Freire and *Silva Family archive*



Image 65 joined photos – Bruno and his collection of trophies, in 1989. Bruno in extase with his collection of trophies at the right and to the left the entire collection up to 1992 when he quit competing.
SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive.

In October 1989, at the 3rd Fico Surf Festival, Amateur Event, Márcio was still little known, as other Bahians like Cristiano Spirro, Armando Daltro, Naldo Nogueira, who were all of showing professional surfing. Márcio placed second at the category U16. He placed first in all rounds and only lost in the final for Peterson Rosa who was the biggest highlight in Brazil at the categories U16 and Junior.

SOME SURF EVENTS THAT MÁRCIO TOOK PART IN WITH BRUNO IN THE CATEGORY JUNIOR U16, IN 1989

Period	Event	Local	Bruno	Márcio
04/06 June	2 ND Circuit ABS 2 nd Stage	Barravento beach	5 th position	6 th position
June 15-18	2 nd Bahian Surf Circuit 1 st stage	Jaguaribe beach	n.n.*	3 rd position
July 22-23	3 rd Circuit of ASBS 3 rd Stage	Barravento beach	2 nd position	4 th position
August 02-05	ASB Circuit 4 th Stage	Barravento beach	1 st position	5 th position
September 22-24	2 nd Manga Rosa 40 Surf 5 th stage	Stella Maris beach	6 th position	4 th position
October 10-15	Fico Surf Festival	Stella Maris beach	4 th position	2 nd position

*n.n. – not noted

TN: Junior U16 – athletes under 16 years old – translates to “*Mirim*”.

TN: Institute of the Marist Brothers of the Schools (*Fratres Maristae a Scholis – F.M.S*) A Catholic religious order founded on January 2nd, 1817, in the small village of La Valla, France, by Marcellin Champagnat. “*Maristão*” is the name of the championship aforementioned and the suffix “-ão” is used in Portuguese as an augmentative form to attribute more intensity or just to express a more informal way of referring to something



Image 66 – *Márcio (14 years old) and his growing collection of trophies.*
SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

Good surfing placements led him to be more enthusiastic for surfing, increased his number of trophies, all at the expense of his studies.



Image 67 – *Marcio – Free surf, Márcio riding on a wave of the AECO beach. Itaparica Island, 1988*
SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

On the island of Itaparica there were two surfing spots: at a beach five kilometers away from Barra do Pote beach, and another beyond the reefs, at the very beach of Barra do Pote.



Image 68 – *Márcio, Itana and the cousin Gabriel, also a surfer – 1989.*
SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive.

In the image 68, Itana and the cousin Gabriel, one year old. Gabriel would start to surf later, too. He did an exchange program in the United States and was the first cousin to visit Hawaii.

YEAR OF 1990

In 1990 Márcio, 15 years old, took part in several surf events. He placed first in the First Open Championship “New Brazil of Surf”, category U16 “*I Campeonato Aberto Brasil Novo de Surf*”. With this feat he was also awarded the sponsorship of Mar Revolto Store. The EXPRESSO DO SURF newspaper published:

«(...) surfer Márcio Freire is the new hired athlete of Mar Revolto Shop. He was the revelation of the last FICO Surf Festival and has the exclusive sponsorship of that store, which offers all the conditions to practice surfing. Such initiative of investing in a Junior U16 athlete deserves our recognition and expresses belief in the present and future of surf».

On August 26th, 1990, the “A Tarde” newspaper (a newspaper from the state of Bahia), published a story about the good beaches to surf and mentioned some rippers of the surf in the city of Salvador. Within that list, there were the names of Bruno Freire, 16 years old, and Marcio, 15 years old. That newspaper also mentioned Barravento Beach in Salvador, Brazil, as the one that they most often surfed at.



Image 69 – Márcio (15 years old) and Bruno (16 years old) at the Itacaré camping ground – Bahia 1990 .SOURCE: Márcio Freire's personal archive.



Image 70 – Márcio, Bruno and one of Márcio's friend, he was nicknamed "Goma" SOURCE: Márcio Freire's personal archive.

At the beginning of the 90's, the town of Itacaré, in the south of the state of Bahia, was a very suitable place for surfing and therefore it was a surfer's destination, where there were and still are surfing championships. Images 69 and 70 show the natural and wild beauty of that time.



Image 71 – Márcio Freire's First Interview – Category U16. SOURCE: Surf Report, year 2, n.7, May, 1990.

Informativo do Surf magazine (image 71) published Márcio's first interview as follows:

In the spotlight: Márcio Freire (MF)

Surf Report (IS) – How long have you surfed?

Márcio Freire – I've caught waves for five years and two months.

IS – Which kind of wave do you prefer?

M.F – From a half to one meter, hollow, to perform maneuvers of speed and expression.

I.-What kind of maneuver do you perform most accurately?

M.F – Floater, reentry and back-side tube.

I.S – Which beaches do you surf most oftenly?

M.F – Barravento, Sesc and Terceira Ponte (3rd Bridge), most of the times.

I.S – The waves are coming, do you have the right board?

M.F – I have a 5.10, but I caught big waves and the board went well on the waves.

I.S – What do you expect from the competitions?

M.F – It's in the beginning with few competitions due to Plano Collor ("President Collor's Economics Plan"), but when it starts it will be for real. I hope that the events are more organized, without delays and that the judges will judge by the shirts and not by the name of the athletes.

I.S – And professionalism in surfing, what do you think about this possibility?

M.F- I have a long way ahead of me, I'm a youngster in category U16 and I'm still going through the categories Junior and Open. I have the capability to become a great professional, just following the right path, without using drugs, traveling a lot and with much dedication. This is what I don't lack.

TN: "Collor's Plan" (*Plano Collor*) is how was called the set of economic reforms and plans for stabilization of inflation created during the presidency of Fernando Collor de Mello (1990-1992).

Deposits from checking and savings accounts were frozen for 18 months, in addition to other austerity measures such as tax on financial transactions and the freezing of prices and salaries. Due to that, as Márcio Freire suggests, there was a scarcity of competitions and sponsorship of surfing.

I.S – Who is your current sponsor?

M.F – Surface, Mar Revolto, Hot Quiver and the shaper Aurélio Santana.

IS – Which surfers do you most admire?

M.F – In Bahia: Adalvo Argolo and Marcos Nariga and in Brazil: Fellipe Dantas and Rogério Alemão.

I.S – What is your message to the lackey shopkeepers?

M.F – Hi, parasites of surf, let's see, this year, if you roll up your sleeves and sponsor surf. LONG LIVE SURF, THE SPORT OF THE DECADE!

YEAR OF 1991

1991 was the first year that Márcio competed in the Junior Category and also the Categories PRÓ-AM and OPEN.

With his traditional 360 *back-side* he won the *Expression Session*, (most radical maneuver) at the 1st Lobus Classic of Amateur Surf. In the competition Exchange Brazil – USA he placed 4th.

The “Expresso” Journal annually broadcasted the best surfers with criterias that did not follow results obtained in the Bahian circuit, but the general performance of the athlete according to the sponsor businessmen and other unknown criterias. In the article of that journal, entitled “**The Best of the Year 1991**”, January 1992, it was written: “**Márcio Freire** was also **a revelation of the year 1991**. *He didn't start the season well, but he gradually improved his maneuvers and gained recognition among the best. He performed several 360s showing that he was a competitor of a lot of grit and determination for the victory. In 1992 he continued to dedicate himself 100% and placed well.*”

Surfers like Armando Daltro, Márcio Thola, **Márcio Freire**, Spirro were constant presences on the podium and had everything to shine as **idols of the future**.

In the Bahian Third Circuit Surf – 3rd Event in Olivença, Ilhéus town, Paulo Mota, from the state of São Paulo, was eliminated in the first round of the trials, placing 3rd, after Toledo and the amateur Márcio Freire.



Image – 72. *Marcio in preparation for another surfing trip in Itacaré.*
SOURCE: Márcio Freire's *personal archive.*



Image 73 – *Márcio Freire and his friends*
SOURCE: Márcio Freire's *personal archive.*

In the image above 73 he, in the middle, next to Kevin Kennedy, Lekão and Naldo, down, in Itacaré- Tiririca beach where the 1st Event of the 2nd Bahian Circuit of Surf was held, in which Márcio was champion. It was an unforgettable event in June 1991. Kevin did not follow in his father's footsteps, upholsterer Kennedy, famous in Brazil for his paintings and upholsteries. Kevin currently lives in Hawaii where he teaches surfing to tourists.

Image 74 – *Márcio's friends and cousins in Vilas do Atlantico – June, 1991*

SOURCE: Márcio Freire's personal archive.



The joy and relaxation of his friends Menandro and Danilo and of his cousins Luis Eduardo and João Marcelo in an amusing photo (image 74), express well the joy of the young crowd with regard to this contagious love of this nautical sport: surf.



Images 75 – *Set of photos of fun between friend and cousins, 1991.*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

What is seen in this set of photos: the arm wrestling dispute, Menandro and Márcio; Marcio's jiu jitsu blow on Luis Eduardo; João Marcelo's vast rastafari hair-style hold by Menandro and Danilo and at last, Danilo making faces at Marcio and João Marcelo doing handstands. It was a circus!



Image 76 – *Márcio Freire sitting with surfboard in front of him, 1991.*

This Image from the 76th image: he was waiting for his round at the Championship “Coming Back to Surf Classes” in Stella Maris neighborhood.



Image 77 – *Márcio Freire surfing on Barra Lighthouse beach, 1991.*
SOURCE: Brussell, M. “Na Barra o Bicho Pega” (In Barra neighborhood, Heads Roll). Banzai newspaper, Salvador, Year 1, # 2, October/Nov, 1991.

In 1991 Márcio took part in several surf championships. He placed 4th in the Brazil – United States Interchange (USA) and in the 1st Lobus Classic of Amateur Surf. In the latter, an unidentified source reported as a highlight: “*Marcio Freire won the expression session with his traditional 360 back side*”, as previously reported.

YEAR of 1992

In 1992 many surfing championships took place in Bahia: “*Circuito Redley de Surf*”, “IV Radical Wave Pro Kildare de Surf”, “*Circuito Treino de Surf Escolar*” (School Surf Training Circuit), “*Circuito Aberto de Surf ASVA*” (Open Circuit of Surf ASVA), “*II Intercambio Waves de Surf Escolar*” (2nd Surfing Waves School Interchange), II Lobu’s Classic.

1. REDLEY SURF CIRCUIT

The Bahian Surf Circuit was nominated Redley Surf Circuit, through a partnership made between the Bahian Surf Association (ABS) and Redley. These two entities organized this championship in order to warm up the Surf market and value it in all aspects.

REDLEY SURF CIRCUIT – I EVENT

The first event of this circuit was held in Itacaré on Tiririca Beach in June, exactly on the days of the June festivities. The first three days of the championship, the sea was with high waves reaching up 26 feet. Those waves provided moments of much adrenaline for all competitors and the public. Such scenario described by “*Qual é o lance*” Journal (“What’s the deal” Journal): “*Huge scary waves, dangerous reef breaks. Summary of the battle of the surfers: 12 broken boards, fainting on the beach, cries with sobs and great tension. Yuri Soledade stood out as a **big wave rider**, and despite having his board broken, before that, he gave a show of tenacity in big waves with hallucinating tubes*”. On the other hand, the Surf Express, on its page covering the event, wrote: “*a name of great expression in this 1st Stage was Márcio Freire who showed a lot of grit and an appropriate style on the waves of Tiririca. Freire rode a full-on tube, made several re-entries and showed that he is a big wave rider with all the merits. Márcio has, in every event, stood out as an excellent competitor*”.

In this championship, several athletes stood out besides Márcio Freire: Yuri Soledade, Bruno Pitanga and Lúcius Galdenze for the disposition and insane tenacity on the big waves. At this First Stage Márcio placed third in the TRIAGE.

REDLEY SURF CIRCUIT – II EVENT

In August 1992, the second event was held on Jaguaribe Beach, in the Itapoã neighborhood.

Gerônimo Bonfim, a native of Bahia, settled in Pernambuco, competed with Márcio Freire in the Junior category. At the end of this event Geronimo placed first and Márcio Freire (sponsored by Surface / Kmar) placed second.

Márcio Freire was nicknamed “Bubble” and also “Pancake” among his friends from surf. We can’t explain the origin of these two nicknames.



Image 78 – Márcio Freire competing in the Junior Final of the Bahian Surf Circuit, 2nd event, Jaguaribe Beach, Itapoã, August 1992. We see a fantastic maneuver by him in the crest of the wave.

SOURCE: Márcio Freire’s personal archive.

The newspaper “Expresso do Surf” in its 24th edition thus conveyed its message at analyzing this second event: “*The amateurs performed very well despite the small waves in Jaguaribe. The highlights were Marcos Martinez and Marcio Thola, champion of the open AM category. In the Junior category there was a close contest between Már-*

cio Freire and the Bahian, resident in the state of Pernambuco Jerônimo Bonfim. With a rather polished and vertical surf, Jerônimo won the Junior category”. Thus, Márcio placed 2nd in this competitive group and showed a promising future.

REDLEY SURF CIRCUIT – III EVENT

The Third Stage of the Redley Surf Circuit was held in Vilas do Atlântico neighborhood, in August. In the category Open of this event, Márcio Freire was the winner, Yuri Soledade placed 2nd and Marlos Viana placed 3rd. In Image 79 below, Márcio shows off his beautiful and elegant surfing style.



Image 79 – Márcio Freire – Round of category Open – Redley Surf Circuit, 3rd event – Vilas do Atlântico, August, 1992.

SOURCE: Márcio Freire's personal archive

REDLEY SURF CIRCUIT – IV EVENT.

This event was held in Piruí – Camaçari on the 10th, 11th and 12th of October. We did not find anything referring to this Piruí event in our research.

REDLEY SURF CIRCUIT – “SPRITE LIMA LIMÃO STAGE” (LIME LEMON SPRITE STAGE), 1992

This event held on Jaguaribe beach had as attractions, the following prizes: \$ 1, 500 in cash, 08 surfboards, clothing, gifts, trophies and medals, as well as valuable scores, which would favor the ranking and that would give the champion the right to travel to the Caribbean aboard a ship at the end of the season. These prizes attracted athletes, surfers of national and international recognition, from Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and almost all states of the northeast.

The newspaper *Qual é o Lance?* n. 26, in a piece about the event, reported:

“The waves were small throughout the event. The technique and the experience of competing were fundamental factors. Among the athletes from Bahia, these stood out: Cristiano Spirro, Marco Martinez, Márcio Thola, Marcio Freire, Eric Guimarães, Tiago Tosto, Sérgio Emanuel, Marcelo Dias and the beginners from Itacarê. About the girls: all of them were perfect, as well as for the participation and encouragement of the category, which also had the exciting intervention of the future “mom” and first Bahian surfer, Carlinha. She talked about the female surfer’s round during the awards and sensitized the general public, raising their awareness about the importance of female surfer category.”

FINAL RESULT OF LIME LEMON SPRITE EVENT-REDLEY SURF CIRCUIT

PRO-AM: 1ST Márcio Okumura (SP); 2nd Dadá Figueiredo (RJ); 3rd Cristiano Spirro (BA)

OPEN: 1st Márcio Thola (BA); 2nd Gustavo Aguiar (PE);

JUNIOR: 1st Gerônimo Bonfim (BA); 2nd Márcio Freire (BA)

JUNIOR U16: 1st Éric Guimarães (BA); 2nd Tiago Tosto (BA)

BEGINNERS: 1st Tiago Tosto (BA); 2nd Hongos Araújo (BA)

FEMALE SURFERS: 1st Uceli Cardoso (BA); 2nd Cândida Nunes (BA)

MASTER: Sergio Emanuel (BA); Remilson Domeneck (BA)

LONG BOARD: 1st Marcelo Dias (BA); Paulo Rogério (BA)

Welton Araujo and M. Brussel in the report on the Redley Circuit / 92 Sprite Stage, presented the results of the Category Junior Ranking after the “Lima-Limão” Sprite event, which we showed below, published in Banzai Journal, issue 5.

CHART

Junior Category Rankin, after Lime Lemon Sprite event

ATHLETE/POSITION	1 st event	2 nd event	Total Score
1º Jerônimo Bonfim	(1)1000	(1)1000	2000
2º Bruno Pitanga	(3)810	(4)729	1839
3º Márcio Freire	(7)531	(2)900	1431
4º Bruno Freire	(5)656	(5)656	1312

In the words of Araújo and Brussel in Banzai Journal, “*The dominance of the athlete Jerônimo Bonfim from Ilhéus town (state of Bahia), settled in the state of Pernambuco, is absolute. He takes the lead, but doesn’t get a break, due to the performance of his opponents Bruno Pitanga and Márcio Freire who promise to “reverse the results.” Bruno Freire, Márcio Freire’s brother, comes into the dispute*” from outside.”

2. IV RADICAL WAVE PRO KILDARE SURF.

Bahia hosted one of the most important Northeast Surfing Championships, the IV Radical Wave, which offered these awards: two trips to Hawaii, one thousand six hundred dollars, fifteen “Surfing Series” surfboards, trophies and medals. It attracted athletes from all over Brazil.

The first event of this event was held at Itacaré – Tiririca beach; the second, the most important, and the third stages were held in Salvador, at Jaguaribe Beach (Itapoã neighborhood) and on Stella Maris Beach, respectively.

The athletes known as Fábio Queiroz, Gustavo Aguiar, Eduardo Fernandes, Romeu Cruz, from other Brazilian states, took part in this championship. Among the Bahians were, Naldo Nogueira, Márcio Freire, Armando Daltro, Kevin Kennedy, Yuri Soledade, Érico Guimarães, André Teixeira, Bruno Pitanga and Cristiano Spirro.

Analyzing the second stage of the IV Radical Wave, the Expresso do Surf journal described it as follows:

«Once again Bahia was the scene of the greatest surf championship in the Northeast. The IV RADICAL WAVE was so well-organized, it blew away any state in the South of the country... with an international level platform structure, for yet another year the event showed the capacity of our state to hold high level championships. The Radical Wave shone for the fourth year, the successful result of Italo Titoni's labor, owner of the Radical Wave store. Athletes from North and South of the country were present, names like Fábio Quencas, Gustavo Aguiar, Eduardo Fernandes, Romeu Cruz were the best known that gave the Bahians a hard time. Some local athletes didn't present their best as they should, perhaps due to the lack of experience in large events such with airline tickets to Hawaii. In spite of that, it did not take away the grip and tenacity of the Bahians, we had: Naldo Nogueira, Márcio Freire, Aramando Daltro, Kevin Kennedy, Yuri Soledade, Erick Guimarães, André: Teixeira, Bruno Pitanga and Cristiano Spirro, the Bahian who won a ticket to Hawaii for the second time, ...an athlete who, at every each event, has stood out as an excellent competitor is Márcio Freire, who won the second place in the Junior category”.



Image 80 – Marcio Freire at the end of the IV Radical Wave PRO
SOURCE: Expresso do Surf journal.

The journal “Expresso do Surf” highlighted a beautiful photo of Márcio in its edition covering the IV Radical Wave PRO. It also showed the results of the second stage, transcribed below. Márcio was once again in the finals and finished in 2nd place.

RESULTS OF THE IV RADICAL WAVE PRO – II STAGE, JAGUARIBE BEACH

PRO-AM: 1st Fábio Quencas (pro) PE; 2nd Eduardo Fernandes (AM) PE; 3rd Naldo Nogueira (pro) BA; 3rd Armando Daltro (AM) BA; 5th Romeu Cruz (pro) SE; 5th Kevin Kennedy (AM) BA; 5th Gustavo Aguiar (AM) PE; 5th Cristiano Spirro (AM) BA.

OPEN-AM: 1st Cristiano Spirro (BA); 2nd Armando Daltro (BA); 3rd Gustavo Aguiar (PE); 4th Eduardo Fernandes (PE)

JUNIOR: 1st Gustavo Aguiar (PE); 2nd Márcio Freire (BA); 3rd Yuri Soledade (Ilhéus-BA); 4th Bruno Pitanga (BA)

JUNIOR U16: 1st Tanio Barreto (AL); 2nd Erik Guimarães (Valença-BA); 3rd André Teixeira (BA), Wilson Nora (Ilhéus-BA).



Image 81 – *Márcio Freire receiving trophy for winning the 2nd place – Junior Category.*
SOURCE:Newspaper Expresso do Surf, n.23, 1992

3. II LOBU'S CLASSIC

The 3rd stage of the Bahia State Circuit, the II Lobu's Classic KWB, was held at Jaguaribe beach, Itapoã. Márcio Freire placed 3rd in the Junior category after Hamilton Tosta and Gerônimo Bonfim who placed 1st and 2nd respectively.

“After the Open final, 12 surfers competed for the most radical maneuver of the championship. With the public ecstatic and cheering, Márcio Freire with an amazing black deck led the “Expression” almost to the end, but Marcio Thola scored in the final seconds with a daring 360° back-side in front of the crowd and took the title from his teammate”.

Márcio Freire was the highlight of this event, he ranked 1st in the circuit with 1, 900 points.



Image 82 – *Márcio Freire running to dispute the radical maneuver.*
SOURCE: Jornal Expresso, 1992 (unidentified number and month of the journal).

In reference to image 82 the newspaper stated “*the rush and thirst for another radical maneuver during the expression session.*” The results were specified as follows:

FEMALE SURFERS: 1st Uceli Cardoso; 2nd Fabiana Santos; 3rd Luciana Tavares; 4th Moelia Santos.

BEGINNERS: 1st Tiago Tosto; 2nd Orígenis Araújo; 3rd Araujo Fungi; 4th Theonilo Solon

JUNIORS: 1st Hamilton Tosta; 2nd Gerônimo Bonfim; 3rd Márcio Freire; 4th Alexandre Ventura (SE)

OPEN: 1st Romeu Cruz; 2nd Gerônimo Bonfim; 3rd Maurício Bandeira; 4th Márcio Thola.

4. SURF SCHOOL TRAINING CIRCUIT.

The 2nd Stage of this Circuit was held on August 30th, on Piruí Beach in Arembepe. The winner of the Open category was Márcio Freire, who received special recognition for his talent. Yuri Soledade came in 2nd and in 3rd Marcos Viana. After the 2nd Stage of the Junior category, Márcio placed 3rd with 1, 431 points and Bruno Freire placed 4th with 1, 312 points.



Image 83 – *Márcio Freire – II SURF SCHOOL TRAINING CIRCUIT*

SOURCE: Expresso do Surf journal, 1992. Photographer, Rilson Campos

The image above shows Márcio's elegant posture and in the text below the image Expresso do Surf refer to him as a talent in the article named UNICLUBES. In this circuit Márcio placed 1st in the UNICLUBES – Open School Training Ranking. The final results were:

1st Márcio Freire (AS) 2000 points; 2nd Yuri Soledade (NA) 1710; 3rd Luis Fernando (IS) 1629; 4th Rodrigo Gouveia (IN) 1466; 5th Carlos Guilherme (IS) 1312; 6th Leonardo Cavalcante (IN) 961; 7th Eduardo Silveira (CA) 860; 8th Lazlo Cairo (DR) 729; 9th Bruno Rocha (ALT) 712; 10th Gabriel Rebouças (IS) 656; 11th André Cabbage (NA) 564; 12th Danilo Couto (SA) 531; 12th Augusto Boni (IN) 531; 12th Tiago Tosto (IS) 531; 15th André Cavalcanti (MA) 430

5. SURF ASVA OPEN CIRCUIT

Held from September 26th to 27th in Vilas do Atlântico, Márcio Freire won the 1st place in both Junior and Open categories.



Image 84 – *Márcio Freire, 17 years old, at the Open Surfing Circuit ASVA, 1992*
SOURCE: Márcio Freire's personal archive

6. II SCHOOL SURF WAVE INTERCHANGE.

The School Surf Clubs Union (UNICLUBES) is an entity that brings together student surf clubs from the main schools in Salvador. It was founded in May 1991 as an extension of the work begun in 1988 by the Surf Club: *Instituto Social da Bahia – ISBA* (a private school in Salvador.)

The II School Wave Interchange for Surf was held by UNICLUBES – on October 18th, 1992, on Jaguaribe beach, *Itapoã*.

It is worth mentioning Fabiano Prado Barreto, one of the founders of Uniclubes, who worked extensively from 1991 to 2000 in support of surf in Bahia.

Márcio, from Sartre School, took 1st place in the Open category, once again demonstrating that he was in an excellent surf phase. Yuri Soledade and Mateus Viana, from Nobel School, placed 2nd and 3rd respectively.



Image 85 – *Márcio Freire and the II School Interchange.*
SOURCE: Banzai: Photographer, Welton Araújo.

Welton Araujo, in one of the paragraphs above, wrote: “Márcio Freire, a Bolha (the Bubble) or, if you like, Pancinha (Little Belly), has been showing an excellent phase of his surfing. He won the category Open after defeating, in the order of classification: Yuri Soledade, Marcus Viana, and Tiago Tost.

Image 86 – *Márcio Freire participating in the II School Interchange.*
SOURCE: Banzai journal, Salvador, 1992





Image 87- Márcio Freire in *Surface* advertising.
SOURCE: Newspaper Banzai,
Photographer, Welton Araújo.

“Surface” magazine used the image above of Márcios impressive surf style to sell the “perfection” of Surface products.



Image 88 – Márcio, 17 years old, and Bruno, 18 years old, at Barra do Pote beach – Itaparica island, Bahia, Brazil.

In the background of image 88 we can see a stream which nowadays is polluted. The stream is next to uncle Paulo and aunt Rosa’s summer house which was mentioned in the section dedicated to Márcio’s childhood summers on Barra do Pote beach.

YEAR OF 1993

1993 was the last year in which Márcio Freire participated in the Junior category and, among the TOP 5, was considered one of the best of “Amateur Open” in the Brazilian Circuit of Amateur Surf. It was a year in which he took part in all the championships, both at state and national level and was sponsored by PIER, a surf shop headquartered in Rio de Janeiro.

1. NATIONAL LEVEL.

VI COMPANY / BRAZILIAN CYCLONE AMATEUR SURF (Brazilian Amateur Surf Championship) This championship was held in July, in Rio de Janeiro – RJ.

The ABS (Bahian Surf Association) hired a bus to bring as many competitors as possible to represent the State on the Bahian Surf Team. The team won the championship thanks to Bonga’s victory on the longboard, as well as other good results from Márcio Freire who placed 5th in the semi-finals of the Open category and from André Teixeira, who placed 7th in the Junior category U16.

MÁRCIO FREIRE WAS CONSIDERED THE BEST ATHLETE FROM THE BRAZILIAN NORTHEAST IN THE “OPEN” CATEGORY AND THE 5TH BEST AMATEUR OF BRAZIL, JULY 1993.



Image 89 – *Márcio Freire at the Brazilian Amateur Surf Championship, Rio de Janeiro, July, 1993.*

SOURCE: Márcio Freire’s *personal archive*



Image 90 – *Márcio Freire with Yuri Soledade and Wilson Ribeiro, Yuri’s coach*

SOURCE: Márcio Freire’s *personal archives*

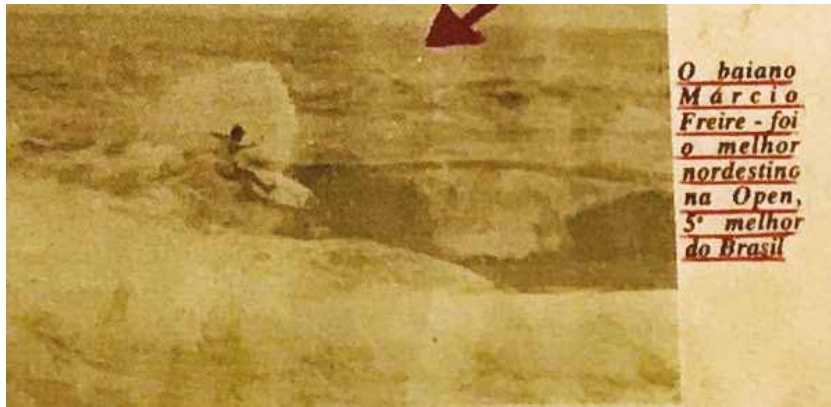


Image 91 – *Márcio Freire competing in the Brazilian Amateur Surf Championship*
 SOURCE: *Jornal de Ação* (Action Journal), 1993.

Jornal de Ação (Action Journal), in an article evaluating the Brazilian Amateur Surf Championship stated: “Among the best in the region was Bahian Márcio Freire who reached the semi-finals and was placed 5th in the Open category.



Image 92 – *Bahian Team, Brazilian Amateur Surf Championship, Rio de Janeiro, 1993.*
 SOURCE: Márcio Freire’s personal archive

From the Bahian team, image 92, two athletes stood out according to “*Inside Magazine*”, 1993: Open category Márcio Freire (BA) wearing red trunks, “placed 5th, scoring 656 points overall in the 1st and 2nd rounds and finished in 2nd place. In the

3rd event he placed 1st in a round with Léo Trigo and Maicon Rosa; 2nd in the quarterfinals, and lost in the first semi-final of the main event. He was the best northeasterner of the event. The second, Bernardo Mussi, nicknamed Bonga, Brazilian champion in the Longboard category. 21 André Teixeira placed 7th in the Juniors U16.



Image 93 – *Team from the state of Pernambuco, 1993.*

SOURCE: Márcio Freire's personal archive.

From the Pernambucan team, “surfer Mário Neto, stood out in the Junior category placing 5th with 656 points overall and almost went to the Finals. In Junior U16 category, Olavo Aguiar placed 3rd with 810 points overall.”



Image 94 – *Team from the state of Rio Grande do Sul, 1993*

SOURCE: Marcio Freire's personal archive.

2. AT STATE LEVEL

PROFESSIONAL AND AMATEUR BAHIAN SURF CIRCUIT, 1993

The 1st Event of the Bahian Professional Surf Circuit was held in *Vilas do Atlântico* on July 18th. The winner of this stage in the PRO-AM category was Eduardo Fernandes (PE). On August 13th and 15th at *Tiririca* beach, Itacaré, in the 2nd Event of the Circuit, Márcio Freire competed as an amateur in the PRO-AM category and placed 5th.

On August 13th and 14th, in the 1st event of the Amateur Bahian Circuit that took place on the same beach of Itacaré, Márcio – in the Junior category – took a stunning 2nd place.

ALOHA journal referred to Freire as follows: “*Freire rocked in all rounds. Márcio Freire stood out as the best athlete of this stage, despite having lost by W.O. in the Open. Freire arrived in Itacaré with the will to win and competed with determined energy. This athlete ripped the lip at every chance he got, shredding confidently with explosive style. Márcio Freire currently ranks 5th in the Brazilian amateur category. Freire reached the Final of the professional category and placed fourth, behind Armando Daltro, Romeu Cruz and champion Cristiano Spirro.*

Tough round... ALOHA, Freire.”



Image 95 – *Márcio Freire receiving trophy. Bahian Circuit, Stage II, Itacaré.*

SOURCE: Aloha Journal; *Salvador*, 1993

The 2nd Event of the Bahian Amateur Surfing Circuit was held at *Praia do Surf* located in the neighborhood of *Vilas do Atlântico*, on September 25th. The conditions were unfavorable and the athletes had a hard time competing.

The champion of the Open category at this event was Bruce Kamonk. In the Junior category, Márcio Freire surfed with style, taking 1st place. Márcio Leal placed 2nd, Hamilton Tosta placed 3rd and Kevin Kennedy, 4th.

We did not find any information about the 3rd event of the Circuit.

In the 4th event Márcio Freire placed 2nd after Jerônimo Bonfim.

In the Junior category, Aloha journal released the following point ranking:

1st – Jerônimo Bonfim, 1000 points

2nd – Márcio Freire, 900 points

3rd – Yuri Soledade, 810 points

In the “Bahian Amateur Ranking Stage, Márcio Freire was the first place surfer in the Juniors on *Vilas do Atlântico* beach. Ranking:

1st – Márcio Freire, 1900 points

2nd – Hamilton Tosta, 1539 points

3rd – Yuri Soledade, 1446 points

4th – Kevin Kennedy, 1358 points

CULTURAL EXCHANGE – BAHIA X SERGIPE.

On *Atalaia* beach – *Aracaju*, Sergipe (January 30th – 31st, 1993) Márcio Freire took the championship.

ILHÉUS CIRCUIT: 20 YEARS OF SURF – 2nd EVENT.

With good waves at a spot known as *Soro Caseiro*, *Narigas*, on the south beach of *Ilhéus*, the sought to show off local surfers from Ilhéus and the State of Bahia. Aloha journal highlighted Márcio as the best athlete of the 2nd event of this circuit, despite his defeat in the Open. In the Junior category, Yuri Soledade placed 1st and Márcio Freire, 2nd.

III LOBU'S CLASSIC KWB, 1993 – November 19th to 21st

Once again held on Jaguaribe beach, the rush for first place among the Junior competitors Márcio Freire and Hamilton Tosta rocked the waves. Unfortunately, it wasn't a good day for Márcio.

Junior category ranking:

1st – Hamilton Tosta

2nd – Gerônimo Bonfim

3rd – Márcio Freire.

III WAVE BEACH CULTURAL EXCHANGE OF SCHOOL SURF.

Márcio Freire was one of the highlights of this championship. He won in the Open and Longboard categories, and was awarded a plane ticket to Fernando de Noronha, as well as two surfboards.



Image 96 – Márcio Freire and his collection of trophies and medals, 1993

SOURCE: Marcio Freire's personal archive.

In the image above Márcio proudly shows his vast collection of trophies and medals and in the following image he happily shows his collection of competitive boards, his companions in great victories.



Image 97 – *Márcio with its competitive boards.*

SOURCE: Márcio Freire's *personal archive.*



Image 98 – *Márcio, Yuri, Balboa and Tiago Tosto. Salvador, Brazil.*

SOURCE: Márcio Freire's *personal archive.*

In the bar of a shopping center in Salvador with friends (image 98), Márcio celebrates the victory of a surf championship.

2.6 SURF THROUGH THE YEARS 1994-1998.

YEAR OF 1994

In January of '94, Márcio fulfilled his dream of surfing in Fernando de Noronha and of getting to know the island.



Image 99 – *Márcio with his friend André Teixeira in Fernando de Noronha, Pernambuco, Brazil.*

SOURCE: *Marcio Freire's personal archive.*

Image 99 shows two photos of Márcio on his first visit to this beautiful island off the State of Pernambuco, approximately at 100 nautical miles from the coast. Above: Cacimba do Padre beach described as having the most famous view on the island, facing Dois Irmãos islands, a landmark of Noronha. It is also a favorite surf spot and its waves are considered one of the best in the country: fast and perfect tubes in “the Brazilian Hawaii”. The seasons are well defined in Noronha: the season for surfing is from December to April and for diving from May to November. Cacimba beach is a good option for apnea diving, but visitors must beware because there are riptides that can be dangerous even for experienced divers.



Image 100 – *Cacimba do Padre beach with a view of Dois Irmãos Island*
SOURCE: Photo @photochagas

Márcio returned from *Fernando de Noronha* already planning for the surf events of the coming season. As he became more and more recognized in the surf world his attention was increasingly drawn away from his studies. As parents, we struggled to control his teenage dream of being a professional surfer. We had a hard time but managed to keep him minimally dedicated to his studies, which was more important to us.

1994 surf championships from April to December:

Wave Beach Circuit of School Surf;

VI Drumond Cup of Surf & Bodyboard;

Metropolitan Circuit of Amateur Surf, Lemon-Brahma stage;

IV Wave Beach Cultural Exchange;

III Sartre Cup of Surf & Bodyboard,

ISBA Circuit, Amateur Surf Training Circuit.

WAVE BEACH SCHOOL SURF CIRCUIT– 1st AND 4th STAGES OF “UNICLUBES” OPEN CIRCUIT, 1994.

The 1st stage of this circuit took place on Sunday, April 24th at Itacimirim beach. Itacimirim is on the North Shore and there were small but perfect half meter waves. This championship also counted for the 4th phase of the “UNICLUBES” Open Circuit.

The team Sartre “Colégio das Ondas” (Sartre “School of Waves”) was the champion of the 1st stage with 13, 621 points, and Márcio Freire, who was part of the team, finished in 2nd place, leading the circuit with 4, 600 points.

In an article entitled “O Sartre é bom de onda” (“*Sartre school is good at waves*”) by Bahia Hoje (Bahia Today) newspaper, there were some comments about the placement of the teams and surfers in the circuit: “*Sartre, “school of wave”, champion with 13, 621 points; the second, Drumond School with 13, 469 points; Antônio Vieira School comes next with 11, 505 points. Nobel ranked fourth with 11, 275 points... surfer Márcio Freire (from Sartre) continues to lead the raking circuit with 4, 160 points. Next, comes André Teixeira (4, 110 points), just ahead of Tiago Tosto (ISBA) with 3, 025 points and Erick Patric with 2, 740 points*”

Correio da Bahia newspaper highlighted: “*Sartre won the title of the school surf cup..... current leader of the circuit Márcio Freire (Sartre, 16 years old, who placed second, even surfing in adverse conditions to the best of his surfing (Freire gets better with big waves)*”

The winner of this stage was André Teixeira, from Nobel School.

According to the president of the Bahia Surf Association, Fabiano Prado: “the Wave Beach Surf School Circuit is a competition that aims to stimulate team spirit and the integration of all Uniclubes (Union of School Surf Clubs) student surfers because surfing is a very individualistic sport.”

From 1994 on, Bahian surf received newfound support. UNICLUBES took a lead role in organization and execution of championships, integrating existing clubs and helping found new clubs, all with the help of those surfers who participated in the tournaments. UNICLUBES also contributed philanthropically by contributing with donations of clothing and food to the needy.

DRUMOND SURF AND BODYBOARD SCHOOL VI CUP.

Márcio Freire was the champion of this cup. On the day of the championship, held on Praia da 3ª Ponte (*3rd bridge beach*), the weather was rainy, but this was no problem for the participants who attended in mass. More than 100 students from the main private schools were present. Open categories represented included Junior, Beginners, Junior U 16 and Male Bodyboard. The ranking was as follows:

Open category:

1st Marcio Freire (Sartre), 2, 810 points

2nd André Teixeira (Alfred Nobel), 2, 610

3rd Eric Petric (Sartre), 2, 160

4th Eduardo Silveira (Antonio Vieira)

This event received special attention of the press.

On April 22nd, *A Tarde* newspaper, one of the most important and read newspapers from Brazilian northeast, highlighted in its sports page: “The 6th Drumond Cup and the 1st Stage of the Wave Beach School Surf Circuit respectively count as 3rd and 4th stages of the Open Circuit/ Uniclubes School Surf and will include more than one hundred students from the main schools. Márcio Freire (Sartre, 16 years old), who won on the 9th and 2nd stages of the Open Circuit on Piruí Beach, Arembepe, leads the ranking next to Tiago Tosto (ISBA), 15 years old, winner of the 1st competition, with 1900 points. Both surfers have won one victory and one second place and both are interesting candidates of the 6th Drumond Cup and of the Wave Beach Circuit. Third place went to André Teixeira from Alfred Nobel School, with 1, 620 points.”

“SURFER FROM SARTRE SCHOOL WINS 6TH CUP” was the title of the *Tribuna da Bahia* newspaper on April 25th, 1994, that described Márcio’s performance as follows:

“The 16-year-old Sartre athlete, Márcio Freire, won the 6th Drumond Surf and Bodyboard Cup, counting for the 3rd stage of the Open Circuit Uniclubes of School Surf, competed for in a downpour on Saturday, on Praia da 3ª Ponte... with his victory, Márcio Freire took an important step towards the title. Now he alone leads the Open Circuit /Uniclubes School Surf with 2, 810 points.

Márcio Freire's second victory, during the school surf season of '94, took things up a notch after he and his schoolmate from Sartre, Eric Petric (second place,) 14 years old, made a double in the 6th Cup... After the 6th Drummond Cup – 3rd stage of the Open Circuit/Uniclubes of School Surf, Márcio Freire (from *Sartre*) was in first place with 2, 810 points, and André Teixeira in second...

On April 25th, "A Tarde" newspaper, again referred to this new stage of surfing with this headline: " SCHOOL SURF STIRS "MONSTERS" ON *TERCEIRA PONTE BEACH*". "Márcio Freire, 16 years old, from Sartre School, won the 6th Drummond Surf and Bodyboard Cup in the 3rd Stage of the Open Circuit / Uniclubes School Surf, which took place under heavy rainfall. More than 100 students from the private school system participated in the competition which included Open, Junior, Beginner, Junior U16 and Male Bodyboard categories."

Márcio Freire benefited from the absence of his greatest rival in the Open category, Tiago Tosto. Despite the surprisingly small choppy waves (2 feet) he surfed well. With his victory, Márcio took an important step towards the title, taking the lead in the Open Circuit /Uniclubes School Surf with 2, 810 points.

Márcio Freire's second victory during the school surf season of '94, had a special taste, after all he and his schoolmate from Sartre, Eric Petric (second place,) 14 years old, made a double in the 6th Cup.

Freire and Petric represented the young generation of Bahian big wave surfers. In poor conditions they showed excellent physical and technical competence, defeating André Teixeira (Alfred Nobel) and Eduardo Silveira who placed third and fourth place.

The ranking after the 6th Circuit Drummond, 3rd Stage Open Circuit / Uniclubes of School Surf was as follows: 1st – Márcio Freire (*Sartre*) with 2, 810 points; 2nd – André Teixeira (Alfred Nobel) with 2610 points; 3rd – Eric Petric (*Sartre*) with 2, 160 points; 4th – Eduardo Silveira (*Antonio Vieira*).

I FIRST AMATEUR METROPOLITAN SURF CIRCUIT – LEMON BRAHMA STAGE

In August of 1994, under heavy rain and wind, with favorable 3 foot waves, the champions of the circuit were the following: Open -Márcio Freire; Long Board – Bernardo Mussi; Master – Jorge Pisca; Beginner – Pedro Beltrão; Junior and Junior U 16- Eric Petric.

THIRD SARTRE SURF AND BODYBOARD CUP

On Barra do Jacuípe Beach in September, Márcio placed first and Tiago Tosto placed second.



Image 101 – *Márcio Freire at Barra de Jacuípe beach – III Sartre Surf and Bodyboard Cup, 1994.*
SOURCE: Márcio Freire's personal archive

ISBA CIRCUIT – 2nd Stage and 22nd C.A.S.E.

It was held in Arembepe on October 22ND, 1994. It was a circuit with good 1 meter waves, lots of sun and a good public. In the 22ND C.A.S.E* – Open category, Erick Petric was the winner and Márcio Freire placed 3rd.

RANKING AFTER 22nd STAGE – CASE

1st – Eric Petric (Sartre), 11, 410 points

2nd – André Teixeira (Nobel), 11, 211 points

3rd – Márcio Freire (Sartre), 10, 430 points.

6. AMATEUR SURF TRAINING CIRCUIT FINALS:

The 5TH stage of Amateur Bay Circuit, November, 1994 was held on Praia de Tiririca beach, Itacaré on November 13th and 14th, 1994.

“Márcio rocked on the excellent waves of Tiririca, earning 2, 234 points. Márcio Thola caught a big tube near the end, but the set of four waves were not enough to overcome Freire”.

In the closing stage of this circuit, UNICLUBES athletes won the three main categories of the event, demonstrating the good work that had been carried out. Márcio Freire (Sartre) was champion of Amateur Open; André Teixeira (Nobel) of the Juniors and Tiago Tosto (ISBA) of Junior U 16.



Image 102 – *Márcio Freire in the Amateur Surf Training Circuit*
SOURCE: Unknown

In this circuit, Márcio won the most powerful backside title, as shown in image 102.

THIRD SCHOOL SURF POWER TRAINING – 1994

On October 1st in the Arembepe neighborhood, Márcio Freire (Sartre) won the championship, André Teixeira (Nobel), came in 2nd; Tiago Miota (Vilas), 3rd and Guido Ramos (Sartre), 4th.

FOURTH WAVE BEACH CULTURAL EXCHANGE – 1994

Held in December on Praia de Aleluia beach, Márcio Freire didn't perform well in the Open category, placing 4th, but in the Open Circuit he improved his performance and placed 2nd.



Image 103 – Márcio, 19 years old with Bruno, 20 years old in *Baía de Camamu* (Camamu Bay), Bahia, Brazil.

SOURCE: Márcio Freire's personal archive.

In the image above, the brothers on a schooner ride along *Baía de Camamu*, Bahia. The bay is made up of beautiful beaches with calm, crystal clear waters. An ideal place for sailing. It is the 3rd largest bay in Brazil in volume of water, trailing *Todos os Santos* Bay (All Saints' Bay, Bahia), and Guanabara Bay in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

YEAR of 1995.

In 1995 Marcio Freire took an entrance exam for a biology course in the Catholic University of Salvador. During the months preceding the exam, for the first time in his life, Márcio focused more on studies than on surfing, participating only in the UNICLUBES championships, school circuits.

THIRD SURF SCHOOL POWER TRAINING: This championship awarded participants with an air ticket to Fernando de Noronha and assured their participation in the SARTRE SURF CUP. Held on Arembepe Beach, on October 1st, the sun was strong and the waves 1.5 meters high. Márcio Freire placed 1st with 2, 810 points, André Teixeira placed 2nd with 2, 710 and Tiago Miota placed 3rd with 2, 529 points. As the champion, Márcio won another visit to the *Fernando de Noronha* Archipelago, making his surf season.

This tournament, organized by UNICLUBES, also served as training for school athletes and counted for 13th, 15th and 16th stages of C.A.S.E.

THIRD SARTRE SURF CUP- 1995.

On October 8th, on Barra do Jacuípe Beach Wilson Nora took first place in the open category, Éric Patric placed second, and Márcio Freire, third.



Image 104 – *Márcio Freire contemplates the beauty of the island Fernando de Noronha, 1995*

SOURCE: Márcio Freire's *personal archive*.



Image 105 – *Marcio coming back from an afternoon surf in Fernando de Noronha. Beautiful landscape. 1995.*

SOURCE: Márcio Freire's *personal archives*



Image 106 – *Márcio resting and eating in the natural landscape of Itacaré, Bahia.*

SOURCE: Márcio Freire's *personal archive*



Image 107: Márcio *Freire's* birthday, 20 years old. Above with his mother and below with his father and brother.

SOURCE: Márcio Freire's *personal archives*



Image 108 – Márcio and Itana, 1995.
SOURCE: Freire and *Silva Family archive*



Image 109 – *Márcio, after an accident on the beach, in his messy room in our apartment.*
SOURCE: Márcio Freire's personal archives

In the image above, Márcio with his cousin Maurício Rego recovering from an accident in which he was hit by a reckless driver at Ipitanga beach, Salvador, Brazil. He recovered well with no long term injuries.

YEAR OF 1996

In 1996 Márcio Freire returned to the surf competitions, but now balancing surf with his studies and an internship. With his Biology course at Catholic University of Salvador (*Universidade Católica de Salvador*) and biology internship in Microbiology at Couto Maia Hospital. This year he was the champion of the Vilas do Atlantico Circuit (AVAS).

The following championships took place in 1996:

ISBA SURF CIRCUIT- 1996

V POWER UNICLUBES SURF TRAINING- 1996.

ITACARÉ FEST SURF CIRCUIT

At 21 years old, surfing was still Márcio's passion. In 1996 he was the champion of the Circuit Itacaré Fest Surf Circuit, champion of "UNICLUBES Surf Training" and placed 3rd in the Bahian Surf Circuit (ISBA).

On March 24th the 1st Stage of ISBA Open Surf Circuit was held on Piruí Beach in Arembepe neighborhood on the northshore of Salvador and counted as the opening of the Beachside School Surf Circuit. Éric Petric was the champion and Márcio Freire the runner-up. In an unidentified newspaper clip from Márcio's personal archive, titled "School surf is back in action in Bahia", Márcio's performance was described in the following manner: "In the Open category, counting as the opening of the Beach Side School Surf Circuit, the winner was Eric Petric, from Sartre, but the runner-up, Márcio Freire, stole the show with his grit and attitude in the eliminatory stages and in the free surf session, where he caught the most impressive wave. He lined up, dropped into the biggest wave, did a re-entry in the bowl and when everyone expected him to leave it, he turned on the wave and went tube riding. Insane!"



Image 110 – *Márcio Freire at the ISBA Surf Circuit – Open Category, 1996*

SOURCE: Márcio Freire's personal archive

The FIFTH UNICLUBES SURF POWER TRAINING was held in April at Barra do Jacuípe – Arembepe and Marcio Freire (Sartre) won all three stage, finishing undefeated. This circuit was worth 2nd, 3rd and 4th stages of the Beachside School Surf Circuit.

Márcio, in the lead with 3, 900 points, followed by Éric Petric with 3, 529 points and Tiago Mota, 3rd place with 2, 950 points. This event was carried out by UNICLUBES and was sponsored by several companies.

In the Beachside Surf Circuit the ranking after the 4 stages was as follows:

1st- Márcio Freire (Sartre)

2nd- Eric Petric (Sartre)

- 3rd- Tiago Mioto (Conv)
- 4th- Diogo Dias (Drumond)
- 5th – Léo Tezanas (Support)
- 6th – Peterson Filho (Nobel)
- 6th – Mateus Santana (Drumond)
- 8th – Pedro Príncipe (Sartre)

After the championship, the Surf Press Newspaper published: Márcio Freire, undefeated in the 5th Power Training.

“Márcio Freire, Sartre, was unbeatable in Barra de Jacuípe, winning the three stages of the 5th Uniclube Power Training which finished on March 31th, counting as the 2nd, 3rd and 4th stages of the Beachside School Surf Circuit.

Although the winner has a reputation as a big-wave surfer, he showed he was at ease in the small waves of the event, “I like more powerful waves, but I feel good in conditions like these and the rounds weren’t different, I was calm and I chose the right waves “, says Freire, who took the lead in the Beachside School Surf Circuit with 3, 900 points, followed by Eric Petric, with 3, 529 and Tiago Miota, who placed 3rd in the ranking, with 2, 950 points.”



Picture 111 – Márcio Freire competing in Arembepé – Northshore, Bahia.

SOURCE: Expresso magazine, n.4, 1996



Image 112 – *Márcio and his mother, 1996.*
SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

YEAR of 1997

1997 was a year of great accomplishments for Márcio. He realized his dream of becoming the Bahian Amateur Surf Champion 1997 and the positive energies that surrounded him brought more strength and determination in his performance in following championships.

Completing 13 years of surfing, he traveled to several Brazilian states competing in Ceará, Rio Grande do Norte, Pernambuco, Alagoas, Sergipe, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul.

As far as his studies were concerned, he was in the 4th semester of his Biology course, at the Catholic University of Salvador-UCSAL (Universidade Católica de Salvador). Near the end of the year he stepped into the professional category.



Image 113 – *Márcio Freire in one of his best performances*
SOURCE: Correio da Bahia newspaper, April 15th, 1997.

1997 SURF EVENTS THAT MÁRCIO PARTICIPATED IN:

ECO SURF CIRCUIT 1997 – 4TH place.

SEA CLUB WAVE BEACH – Brazilian Professional Surf Circuit – 5TH place, the best amateur of the competition.

ILHÉUS OPEN CIRCUIT (Classification unidentified)

NORTHEAST AMATEUR SURF CIRCUIT (Classification unidentified).

FOURTH BAHIAN PRO- ECOLOGIC OF SURF CONTEST – 3RD place.

GREENISH / MDK SURF CUP – 5TH STAGE OF BAHIAN CIRCUIT OF AMATEUR SURF – 1ST place.

ECO SURF CIRCUIT.

The second stage of this circuit, held between June 21st and 22nd on Tiririca Beach – Itacaré, was organized by the Surfing Association of Itacaré (ASI – Associação de Surf de Itacaré). Márcio Freire placed fourth, Bruno Pitanga placed third and the second place surfer was not identified. The winner of the circuit was Fabio Costa, a local who knew the waves of the Tiririca beach like the back of his hand.



Image 114 – *Márcio Freire disputing on Tiririca beach – Itacaré – Bahia, 1997.*

SOURCE: The Surf Express, Salvador, 1997
(unidentified number and month)

The image above shows Márcio's defiant maneuver in Itacaré. "The Surf Express" newspaper posted the photo with the comment: "Márcio Freire rocked on *Tiririca* beach".

At SEA CLUB WAVE BEACH

Brazilian Professional Surf Circuit, Márcio Freire placed 5th, but he was the best amateur of the competition.

After 10 years, this event was happening again in Bahia. This championship, which took place between July 19th and 21st, made Salvador the capital of Brazilian surf. Stella Maris beach went wild with the presence of 64 surfers from all over Brazil and over 10 thousand people showed up to watch. Local newspapers and surf newspapers commented on the event as follows:



Image 115 – Márcio Freire participating in the championship, 1997

SOURCE: Photographer, Eduardo Silveira.

The A.B.S. News, #3, 1997, described:

“After 10 years without national level events in Bahian waters, the Sea Club/Wave Beach was held on July 19th and 20th. Neptune sent nice 2 meter waves that made the 10 thousand spectators go wild as the surfers competed for the title of the Brazilian Professional Surf Circuit. There was no channel, making it hard for the surfers to get through the break. The Bahians competing surfed well, showing great potential for more competitions of the sort... Márcio Thola, Yuri Soledade and Márcio Freire, who went to the semi finals, were the best ranked Bahians... Hemerson Marinho, from the state of Rio Grande do Norte, led the finals from beginning to end and won the championship. He was followed by Dunga Neto from Ceará (2nd place), Guga Arruda from Santa Catarina (3rd), and Romeo Cruz from Sergipe (4th). By the end of the competition, Márcio Thola had taken the lead in the Bahian ranking with 1, 890 points.”

Yordan Bosco wrote in Expresso newspaper (number 4):

“Hemerson Marinho, undefeated at Stella Maris, was the most recognized surfer in the competition on July 19th/20th in Salvador... The traditional Stella Maris beach was crowded both days and the competition was formed by sixty-four participants, divided into six rounds. The sixteen surfers who passed the first round competed with the top 30 from ABRASA in the second round. The three surfers with the best averages went to the third round...Yuri Soledade, a Bahian who has lived in Hawaii for 2 1/2 years, surfed with Hawaiian style and was a highlight of the competition. In the third round, the best ranked Bahian surfers, including: Márcio Thola, Wilson Nora, Jerônimo (who even with a cut in his foot performed beautifully and earned 20.5 points, the highest average of the phase) and Márcio Freire went to the quarterfinals. Yuri Soledade presented amazingly, with incredible bottoms and re-entries, and chose his waves well. He scored 19.40 points, leaving Evandro dos Santos, from Santa Catarina, in 2nd place in the second round”.

Yuri Soledade shredded in the first round of the quarterfinals ranking first with 20.27 points, leaving Guga Arruda, the runner-up from ABRASA, in 2nd. In the following round, Hemerson Marinho assuring his place in the finals with Márcio Thola, the champion in 1996. Romeu Cruz, from Sergipe, scored 19.00, followed by the amateur, Márcio Freire. Jairzinho, who assured his place riding his last wave, went to the semi-finals along with Dunga Neto.

The semi finals started with a fight between “big dogs” Hemerson, Guga Arruda, and Márcio Thola. Hemerson came in first place and advanced easily to the finals and Guga Arruda defeated Márcio Thola by 0, 95 points, also advancing. In the second round, Dunga Neto put up a good fight, scoring 22, 10. **Romeu Cruz, with the just 0, 23 points more than Márcio Freire, took the last place in the final.”**

62 athletes were considered the best in Brazil by the Bahian Ranking after the second stage. Bahians who stood out in this stage were: Márcio Freire and Marcio Thola. Márcio Freire ranked in 5th with 1, 830 points and Marcio Thola placed 4th, with 1, 880 points.

“Márcio Freire was considered the best amateur and he has been putting in a lot of effort, with only Hot Stik boards as a sponsor. This was the 7th championship he participated in in the past two months.”



Image 116 – *Márcio Freire surfing in the championship.*

SOURCE: “Expresso” journal, year 4, n. 7, August, 1997. Photo Ptolemy / Glow Reef

BAHIAN RANKING AFTER 2 STAGES:

- 1) 2500 – Hemerson Marine
- 2) 2150 – Dunga Neto
- 3) 1920 – Romeo Cruz
- 4) 1880 – Márcio Thola
- 5) 1830 – Márcio Freire
- 6) 1825 – Guga Arruda
- 7) 1430 – Bruce Kamonk
- 8) 1388 – Yuri Soledade
- 8) 1288 – Jair de Oliveira
- 10) 1350 – Wilson Nora
- 11) 1278 – Márcio
- 12) 1250 – Isaias Silva
- 13) 1250 – Jerônimo Bonfim
- 14) 1250 – Erick Patric
- 15) 1250 – Erik Rebiere
- 16) 1235 – André Teixeira

ILHÉUS OPEN CIRCUIT – 1997

In Ilhéus, at Batuba Beach, Olivença, a beautiful and thrilling amateur surf competition took place, counting as the 3rd stage of the Ilhéus Open Circuit. The waves were reasonably sized, ranging from 2 to 3 feet in height. In the afternoon, at high tide, the surfers were able to make more connections on the inside, raising the point ranking of the entire competition. The champions of this event were not identified.



Image 117 – *Márcio Freire competing in “Ilhéus Open”, 1997.*

Sentence in the *photo*: *Top Bahian Márcio Freire at the Ilhéus Open.*

SOURCE: *Expresso*, Salvador, 1997
(unidentified number and month)

NORTHEASTERN AMATEUR SURF CIRCUIT- 1997

The 2nd Stage of this Circuit was held in Natal, in the State of *Rio Grande do Norte*.

FOURTH BAHIAN ECOLOGIC PRO-SURF CONTEST – 1997

The local government of Camaçari invested heavily in this contest to welcome surfers and tourists from all over the Northeast and it was well organized. On September 14th, 1997, in the Open category, Márcio Freire placed 3rd and took a leading position in the ranking. Bruno, from Ceará, took first place and Carlos Guilherme, second.

GREENISH/MDK SURF CUP – 5TH STAGE OF BAHIAN AMATEUR SURF CIRCUIT, 1997.

This event was held in Vilas do Atlântico on October 25th and 26th, 1997, by Vilas Promotions and was sponsored by the local government of Lauro de Freitas and several companies. The structure and organization was top- notch.

The Greenish / MDK Cup counted for the 5th stage of the Amateur Surf Circuit, 1997. In the Open Category Márcio Freire assured his place as the favorite for the cup, placing first. Tiago Miota came in second, followed by Bruno Pitanga and Carlos Guilherme.



Image 118 – *Márcio Freire at the Greenish / MDK Cup, 1997*
SOURCE: Márcio Freire's personal archive.

RANKING TABLE – RANKING AFTER 4 STAGES, 1997.

OPEN Category	GROMMETS Category	LONGBOARD Category
1 st Márcio Freire 2843	1 st Danilo Moraes 2800	1 st Evandro Balalai 3710
2 nd Carlos Guilherme 2274	2 nd Leonardo Hereda 2520	2 nd Bernardo Mussi 2900
3 rd Bruno Pitanga 1163	3 rd Flavio Hughes 1385	3 rd Carlos Moraes 2816
4 th Gilberto Araújo (AL) 2059	4 th George Hughes 1385	4 th Michel Terranova 2772
JUNIOR Category	PRE-MASTER Category	FEMALE Category
1 st Erick Patric 2862	1 st Jorge Martins 3387	1 st Carla Circeis 1710
2 nd Orígenes Araújo 2841	2 nd Jorge Alves 2663	2 nd Denilsa Alcântara 3710
3 rd Mushrooms Araújo 2286	3 rd Marcos Moraes 2187	3 rd Alcione Silva 900
4 th Charles Costa 2086	4 th Esdras Santos 1800	4 th Cândida Nunes 900
JUNIOR U16 Category	MASTER Category	KNEEBOARD Category
1 st Charles Costa 3656	1 st Marcos Moraes 3729	1 st Carlos Moraes 2710
2 nd Hongos Araujo 3330	2 nd Carlos Moraes 2241	2 nd Carlos Almeida 2350
3 rd Patric Coelho 2628	3 rd Remilson Domenk 900	3 rd Marlon Seixas 1900
4 th Newton Mizutani 2572	—	4 th Rosinval Tinguinha 1800



Image 119 – Márcio Freire, top ranking amateur Bahian Surfer
SOURCE: Jornal A Tarde, 2 de novembro 1997



Image 120 – Finalists, 5th stage – Open, Greenish / MDK Cup.

As the “Hilton Issa Trophy” was awarded to Freire, naming him the top Bahian Amateur Surfer in the Open category, Freire stated:

“This victory is thanks to hard work. Since ‘88, when I started competing at the U 12 level, I’ve been pursuing a Bahian champion title. This year I quit everything, including my job, to dedicate my life to this title and I’m so grateful that my efforts have paid off”.



Image 121 – *Marcio Freire upon receiving the Hilton Issa trophy, Greenish Cup / MDK Mundaka Surf 1997.*

SOURCE: Márcio Freire's personal archive.

Márcio Freire's victory in the headlines of several newspapers:



Image 122 (joined photos) – *Márcio Freire made the headlines of several newspapers. In the foreground a photo of him, surfing.*

SOURCE: Photographer, Ptolomeu Cerqueira / Glow Reef

1. Freire wins Greenish / MDK: **“A Tarde” newspaper, December 21st, 1997**
2. Márcio Freire wins surf title: **“A Tarde”, October 28th, 1997**
3. Marcio Freire is the Greenish Cup champion: **“Correio da Bahia” newspaper, November 1st, 1997**
4. Freire wins the Hilton Issa Surf Trophy: **The ABS News, December, 1997**
31. Freire wins the Hilton Issa Surf Trophy: **The ABS News, Salvador, Dec. 1997.**

BAHIAN CIRCUIT SURF SERIES FINAL HEAT

The last stage of this Circuit was held on Ipitanga beach. The sea was in perfect conditions after 20 days with no waves and the best Bahian athletes were present.

The winner of the Professional category was Cristiano Spirro, (An athlete who was making a big impact in the professional Brazilian circuit).

Márcio Freire won one of the crowning glories of his surf career: he was named champion of the open category. This was the last competition that he participated in as an amateur athlete.

Márcio returned for with third visit to Fernando de Noronha, now as champion, and for the first time his picture was published in the national magazine, “Hardcore”, June 1997.

MÁRCIO FREIRE’S FAREWELL TO AMATEUR SURFING – DECEMBER 1997.

During the period that he lived in Salvador, Márcio Freire dedicated himself to surf and was featured in many events between 1988 and 1998. The last championship that Freire competed in as an amateur athlete, in 1997, was the Bahian Circuit Surf Series Final Heat in which he became champion of the open category and moved on to the Professional category, saying:

“I’m ending my amateur career with the Bahian title and looking for a sponsor in order to dedicate myself and compete in the professional championships all over Brazil next year”.

And so, Márcio finished his amateur career with the idea of getting sponsored as a professional surfer, and with a collection of over 70 trophies, 32 medallions,

and 3 plaques won in surf competitions between 1988 and 1998 in Bahia and other Brazilian states.



Image 123 below shows Márcio Freire's collection
SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive



Image 124 – Márcio Freire, 22 years old.

SOURCE: The ABS News, April, 1998
Photographer, M. Brussel

This year of Márcio's life was full of dreams and the belief that good things would come as a professional surfer.

YEAR OF 1998.

With the end of his amateur career, at the end of 1997, Márcio had big dreams of becoming a professional surfer. In 1998, facing difficulties in finding sponsors, he started to become less participative in the surf competition. Brazil was in a difficult economic situation and sponsors were hard to come by. Márcio even considered quitting surf in order to finish his studies and start a career as a biologist, but the very possibility left him feeling empty. It was then that he considered traveling to Hawaii, where he could develop his potential as a big wave rider.

Our reaction to Márcio's proposal was largely influenced by our experience with Márcio's studies. We had worked so hard for him to concentrate on his studies, but he had never prioritized his studies over surfing. His grades were consistently poor, despite his natural intelligence. I worried about this lack of balance between surf and studies and our participation was fundamental both in his studies and in his surf life. When, in the year of his entrance exam, he asked me:

-Mom, if I study hard and pass the entrance exam, can I spend six months totally dedicated to surfing?

I didn't think twice and answering immediately:

- Yes, you can!

After our conversation he started to focus on his studies in a way that I had never seen before. He would stay closed up in his room for long periods of time. It was the first time I saw him choose to study instead of surf and his attitude surprised me. To our happy relief, he passed the entrance exam in Biological Sciences at the Catholic University of Salvador (UCSAL – Universidade Católica de Salvador). He started attending his college classes and even got an internship in the Microbiology at Couto Maia Hospital Laboratory. During his time at the hospital he was dearly loved by his colleagues for his simplicity and good demeanor. To this day colleagues and hospital staff ask about him. He continued surfing, but less frequently, staying focused on the internship and his studies.

The month of March had big waves at nearly all the surf breaks in Bahia, especially "Praia da Corrente" (Current Beach) in Stella Maris and Praia do Farol de Itapoá (Itapoá Lighthouse Beach). At Farol de Itapoá beach, Márcio, along with surfers Wilson Nora and Leo, a local surfer, surfed 7 foot waves. Márcio had a

conversation with his friend Yuri that had a big influence on his decision to travel. Yuri, along with Danilo Couto and Kevin Kennedy, were also living there. After the conversation he came to talk to me about my promise to let him spend six months focused on surfing. He said that he wanted to interrupt his studies and spend six months surfing in Hawaii. At first I rejected the idea, but Ana Rita, Danilo's mother, convinced me. His father was harder to convince, concerned with the impact of interrupting his studies, but he ended up giving in to my appeal.

Página 4 THE ABS NEWS Abril 98

RANKING FINAL ABS 97

OPEN	INICIANTE	MASTER
1- Márcio Freire	1- Flavio Hugues	1- Marcos Moraes
2- Carlos Guilherme	2- Danilo Moraes	2- Carlos Moraes
3- Bruno Pitanga	3- Leo Hereda	3- Remilson Domenech
4- Guilherme Araújo (AL)	4- George Hugues	

JUNIOR	LONGBOARD	KNEEBOARD
1- Eric Petric	1- Bernardo Mussi	1- Carlos Moraes
2- Charles Costa	2- Ewandro Balalai	2- Rosival Tinguinha
3- Michel Hereda	3- Carlos Moraes	3- Carlos Almeida
4- Origenes Araújo	4- Michel Terra Nova	4- Marlon Seixas

MIRIM	FEMININO	PRÉ - MASTER
1- Charles Costa	1- Carla Circenis	1- Jorge Martins
2- Patric Coelho	2- Denilza Alcântara	2- Esdras Santos
3- Hongos Araújo	3- Karina Vieira	3- Jorge Alves
4- Newton Mizutimi	4- Liane Góes	4- Marcos Moraes

PROFISSIONAIS PRE CLASSIFICADOS PARA 98
1° Márcio Thola
2° Jeronimo Bonfim
3° Márcio Freire
4° Bruce Kamonk
5° Márcio Leal
6° Wilson Nora
7° Daniel Pires
8° Daimo Meireles
9° André
10° Ivan Teixeira
11° Hilton Issa
12° Bruno Pitanga
13° Mauricio Weyll
14° Roberto Vieira
15° Grimaldo Teles
16° Robert Matos

Image 125 – ABS FINAL RANKING TABLE, 1997: PRE-CLASSIFIED PROFESSIONALS FOR 1998.

SOURCE: A.B.S. News, April 1998.

As shown in the ABS Final Ranking Table of the pre-selected surfers in the Professional category, Márcio Freire was the champion of the Amateur Open Category 1997 and the 3rd pre-selected surfer in the Professional Category for '98.

In April, *A Tarde* newspaper reported on the ASP Kaiser Cola Summer Surfing Championship, scheduled for April 4th and 5th, 1998, on Praia da Armação across the street from Holy Rock.

According to the report, Márcio Freire, champion of Bahian championship of the Open category in 1997, confirmed his presence in the championship and stated:

“This event will open the season with a golden key, I hope the waves are great, because I don't plan to give my opponents any chances.”

Actually, the last phrase of his statement, “I don’t plan to give my opponents any chances” was added by the reporter to Márcio’s annoyance and disillusion.

On August 19th, 1998, Márcio turned 23 years old. We had a get together at our home with friends and family from Barão de Loreto Street and some colleagues from the Catholic University of Salvador. It was a simple birthday and we took advantage of the gathering to sing happy birthday.

I told him, “Congratulations, son! May you be surrounded always by positive energy, bringing the best luck and success in your surfing; may your days be full of health, joy, and love; may you be persistent in fulfilling your dreams and never give up on them! Keep being the simple, honest, ethical, respectful, person that you are, with pure positivity, always bringing the open smile that enchants everyone and that’s easily translated into “HAPPINESS”. A kiss from *mama*, who loves you so much.”



Image 126 – *Márcio, while his friends and family sing “Happy Birthday”.*
SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

2.7 BYE BYE BAHIA

The day of his departure was approaching and to Márcio’s excitement, everything had been arranged: passport, travel insurance, dollars for the trip and his 6-month stay in Hawaii.

On October 27th, the day before his trip, Márcio was euphoric, super happy, restless and anxious. He seemed not to believe what was about to happen in his life, pacing and calling up friends to talk about his trip as he gradually packed his suitcase.



Image 127 – *Márcio Freire, 23 years old, at his desk in his room.*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

The day of the trip finally arrived, October 28th, 1998, at Dois de Julho airport (“Second of July” airport, today known as Luis Eduardo Magalhães International Airport). Everyone said goodbye to Márcio with hugs and kisses. I had tears in my eyes and felt my heart heavy as his father and I hugged and kissed him goodbye. I wished him a happy journey, and reminded him that we would be waiting for him to return in 6 months.

The trip had a layover in Rio de Janeiro, where he spent a few days at his paternal uncle, Luiz David’s apartment. Márcio told the truth to his uncle, asking him to keep the secret that he was going to stay and would not return to Brazil. We really only came to recognize his decision many years later. In this way Márcio Freire left Brazil, chasing his dream and leaving behind him a feeling of emptiness and nostalgia in our home.

RIDING THE BIG WAVES IN HAWAII: 1998-2017

Finally arriving in surfers' paradise, Márcio flew into Honolulu Airport at night, feeling that he was in the promised land at the beginning of a dream. He looked for Danilo Couto's phone number, his contact in Honolulu, couldn't find it, and ended up spending the night in the airport. The next day he left his bags behind, took a bus to North Shore, Sunset Beach. He was looking for the Brazilians, and Danilo Couto in particular. Sitting on the sand, watching the sea, he overheard a pair of Brazilians speaking in Portuguese, so he asked if they knew Lapo Coutinho or Danilo. One of them was a shaper, Jorge Vicente, and the other was Murilo, a surfboard laminator. Murilo took him to LA POUSSADA, Lapo Coutinho's Inn. When he met up with Danilo he was so happy, they gave each other a big hug and celebrated. It was a truly joyful encounter.

3.1 1998 to 2002

Upon his arrival in Hawaii, at the end of October of 1998, Márcio stayed in Oahu and spent November and December on the North Shore. He was aware that he had left everything behind: the comfort of his home, his car, and most importantly, the closeness to the affection of his family, all in exchange for personal fulfillment. He was sure that whatever sacrifices, difficulties and obstacles might appear were worth facing. His decision was firm, even if it was against our will.

Six months passed and he asked us if he could stay longer. Time passed and he did not return. It took a long time for us to become aware of his decision not to come back to Brazil. We spent three years renewing his enrollment at the University of Biology and his father sent emails repeatedly, imploring him to rethink his life and his future. His father entitled these emails "reflections". There were six in total and the last one was the strongest of all and consisted of a synthesis of the previous emails and included a final conclusion. We requested him not to send it and we edited it, removing the harshest words.

“REFLECTIONS ON REFLECTIONS”.

To my friend and son Márcio:

I encourage you again despite having little hope, to consider the four main reflections I've written to you thus far.

Reflection I, on September 2nd, 2001, I talked to you about life, in particular the goals that stimulate us and your main goal in nearly two years that you are in Hawaii. I believe you have already started surfing in this Mecca of Surfing as a big rider. I also emphasized the importance of listening to those who have more life experience; as your father, I certainly still have much to share with you.

Reflection II, dated December 14th, 2001, I wrote: “After three years out of Brazil, far from family and friends, I believe that Itana and Clarissa have evolved beyond surf, compensating for your absence. But it's time to stop your wanderings and reflect a little, not about what you failed to do, but about what you will need to do “from now on”. You should review what has been emphasized in these reflections.

Reflection III on April 8th, 2002: I reminded him where we were in life:

This is it: where are we in this walk of life? I'm sure we are at the end of the road, and you? You're in the beginning. It is possible that I have failed to do many things or have inadvertently done many things wrong, but I am sure that I still have a lot to do, including for you. However, age is coming and with that, the impetus. After the age of sixty when I was hospitalized for three days I understood that my age no longer allows me to achieve what I once was capable of achieving. It is clear to me that happiness is not brought by a graduation, money, a moment of joy or satisfaction, lust, pure fun or pleasure, but rather it is within each of us tied to our connection with the people who are dear to us. Family, friends and the woman you choose as your loving companion for your life. Happiness surely rests in your commitment to yourself, in your acceptance fruitful trees planted throughout your life, whether well planted or poorly cared for, whether the fruit is sweet or bitter and also in your acceptance of the end of the fruit and shade that shelters you for the time being.

Reflection IV, 2002, I stated: *this is it, we like you just the way you are: you live the present without worrying about the future. You are happy with a pair*

of shorts on a surfboard, riding a big wave. Satisfied with whatever there is to eat, capable of sleeping on the floor of a treadmill and wake up happy just because of the sunrise.

However, there comes a time when one must stop in this life to reflect, just like any human being who lives in a society based on rights and duties to fulfill.

Reflection V, August 19, 2002

Márcio: today is your birthday and we miss you.

Twenty six years old: Congratulations to you, the “makikurico” of your childhood that never returned.

We miss you so much, it's been almost three years without seeing you.

A longing kiss from your parents who love you so much.

*Now, in summary in the **Reflections on Reflections**, Márcio, it's been eight years (2010) and you have not yet defined what you'll do with your life besides surfing. Within one year and nine months, when I turn 70, I will be obliged to retire, but we still have conditions to support you financially to support you in bettering your working conditions.*

Your parents, Haga and Dione.

Between 1999 and 2002 period, Márcio Freire was anonymous. He moved to Maui, facing a situation in which he had little money to survive, not to mention for surf equipment. He started to work in gardening, construction, and restaurants to get by. Anything to be able to continue participating in the surf season, especially in Oahu. He lived simply, without comfort and with little money. He never asked us for money and we didn't offer. Only for health and education, for example an English course that would allow him access to college studies. As a mother, I did not accept Márcio's situation, and I suffered with his life choices. I kept thinking that I had raised my son with so much affection, love, comfort; I provided him with education in the best schools of Salvador and gave him everything he wanted in life and paved the path for a bright future. He exchanged all I'd given him for a dream in which it seemed there was no future. Unfortunately, we have to respect our children's choices and dreams and we did so with all our children, including Márcio, accepting that his happiness was not attached to the material things that surrounded him, but to the simple life, which allowed him to breathe. He was happy living in contact with nature and the waves in the ocean, surfing in a paradise called Hawaii.

Once we were sure that he would stay in Hawaii we encouraged him to take an English course to speak and write the language correctly, enabling him to attend college. When he finished the course, he showed no interest in going forward, even knowing that we would finance his studies. He began to work, often times taking heavy jobs that he had no experience in and that didn't fit his profile, but for him any honest job was good enough. And so he faced numerous jobs. He didn't mind undergoing all that, after all, the jobs sustained his life in Hawaii, which was his dream. It was not easy to see him work so hard and to feel that the future we had dreamed for him was beginning to fall apart in exchange for a dream with no future. So, on his own, he sought to distinguish himself in the surf world and gradually, he was winning ground as a big wave rider.

During his time in Oahu (North Shore) he became very close to Lapo, Danilo Couto and a few other friends. He surfed the famous waves of the North Shore a lot and, feeling that he could evolve best in freesurfing, opted out of participating in surf competitions. Lapo saw Márcio's potential to grow as a surfer and encouraged him to participate in competitions, but Márcio decided to live on Maui, a less populated island and lead a quieter life.

In the image below (128), Márcio wearing a "lei" (Hawaiian necklace of natural flowers), Hawaiian surf shorts and holding his board. A true Hawaiian!



Image 128 – *Márcio Freire in Maui-Hawaii, 1999*
SOURCE: Márcio Freire's *personal archive*



Image 129 – *Marcio Freire and his friends watching the Pipemasters decamber in Pipeline, Oahu, 1999.*

SOURCE: Expresso Magazine, 1999.

Image 129, from Expresso magazine in Pipeline, shows Lapo with the Bahian crew: Márcio Freire on the left, Clarissa and Danilo Couto on the right in the foreground, Rodrigo, Charles, and Bonga watching the World Surf Championship Final (WCT). Slater became Six time world champion.



Image 130 – *with Itana on another day of surfing, Maui, Hawaii, 1999.*

SOURCE: Márcio Freire's personal archive.

Shortly afterwards, Itana, went to Hawaii to attend an International Marine Biology Congress. She fell in love with Hawaii and asked us if she could stay six months to improve the English she had learned in an exchange program in 1995 in Carson City, in Michigan.

She returned to Brazil in July, 2000. A week before returning to Brazil, in a ca-poeira class, her instructor had accidentally hit her, leaving her limping. She arrived

in Rio de Janeiro, coincidentally at the same time that her father was attending a pediatric infectology conference, and he surprised her at the airport. After a period in Salvador, Itana said that she wanted to study in Hawaii and vehemently insisted that her destiny and dreams were on the islands. Her father and I tried to convince her to complete her undergraduate degree here because she was already in the middle of the course and go to Hawaii for her graduate degree, but she would not be persuaded. The fact was that we would soon become “orphans of our children”, on a Saturday Itana traveled to Hawaii and Bruno, on the following Saturday, traveled to São Paulo to work as a lawyer for OAS and to do a Masters in Law. We were left with the tears that accompanied us for some time and missed our children intensely. It’s true that we don’t raise children for ourselves, but for life and the world. The emptiness left by the three children grew within us and nostalgia took hold of our hearts.

At the age of 25, Márcio had been in Hawaii for two years. He was completely happy and had no plans of returning to Brazil.



Image 131 – *Márcio with his collection of surfboards – 2002*

Source: Márcio Freire’s personal archive.

TN: OAS Group is a Brazilian conglomerate founded in Salvador, Bahia, in December of 1976. Based in São Paulo, OAS operates in several countries in the field of civil engineering.

In image 131, Márcio displays his collection of surfboards designed for various types of waves. So he made his dream come true, surfing in Hawaii, the Mecca of surfing.



Image 132 – *Márcio living the dream in a secret spot in Hawaii*
SOURCE: Doomaphotos

The image below (133), shows Márcio at on the North Shore of Oahu enjoying a nearly perfect wave with style.



Image 133 – *Márcio Freire on the North Shore of Oahu – Hawaii.*

SOURCE: Márcio Freire's *personal archive*.



Image 134 – *Marcio smiling with his lei, a Hawaiian symbol, 2002.*

SOURCE: Freire and Silva Family archive

The Hawaiian flower wreath is called a “lei”, and it is a symbol of Hawaiian culture. Each type and color of flower that forms a lei has a meaning and is offered on special occasions and important celebrations, (wedding, graduation, anniversary or also welcoming the people who visit Hawaii for the first time). ALOHA is a word with variable meanings such as: welcome, success, good luck, greetings, and congratulations.

In December of 2002 we went to Hawaii for the first time with Bruno to see our other children. We hadn't seen Márcio in more than four years and missed him and Itana dearly. On December 23rd they received us at the Maui airport with Hawaiian leis. It was a moment full of emotion, our overflowing happiness shines in our expressions in Image 135.



Image 135- Our *arrival at Maui, Hawaii airport, for a memorable visit.*

SOURCE: Freire e Silva's family archive

3.2 2003-2006

From 2003 to 2004

At the end of 2003 and in 2004, the name “Márcio Freire” began to show up in “Fluir” magazine and on the site “Waves”. During this period, he decided to spend a season in California, even though he was in a difficult financial situation. He spent three months in California with little money, no car, and no sponsor. He rented a bike to get around and to surf. The icy California waters were worth facing for the chance to surf the big waves on the California coast that he had never surfed before. He used a wetsuit for the first time as seen in picture 136. It was a great experience.



Image 136 – Márcio Freire surfing Half Moon Bay, 2003
SOURCE: Tony Canadas.

SEASON 2003/2004 IN CALIFORNIA

Márcio described his surfing season in California:

“The 2003/2004 season I spent surfing Mavericks in Half Moon Bay (HMB), which is known to be more treacherous than Waimea. The water there is really icy. The region is located within the “Red Triangle” where there are many white sharks, lots of rocky areas and the paddle out is kind of far. I had never surfed in cold water. I think the only way for me to surf really well at Mavericks would be to move there and get used to surfing the breaks, wearing wetsuit from head to toe. Half Moon Bay is a quiet coastal town, where the weather always seems to be overcast and with beaches that are empty because of the cold. Loneliness... everyone stays home and we didn’t get to know anyone. When I got there I was always going to surf alone. I didn’t have a car and in order to surf and to commute to other places nearby, like San Francisco or Santa Cruz, I rented a bike. Because I didn’t have a sponsor, I didn’t have much money and I even

got into some financial trouble. Even so, I was patient in waiting for the swells and to do my part. I gained a lot of experience for my career and surfed waves that I'd never surfed before. It was an important moment in my life that I grew a lot as a surfer and also as a person. After three months, I returned to Maui with a wide experience at catching big waves and moreover I made some good friends there. The mission for the moment was accomplished with a good disposition, patience in waiting for the swells and lots of attitude.”



Image 137 – *Maverick's Article Clipping*
SOURCE: Fluir Magazine n. 2, 2004

In February of 2004, Fluir magazine published an article about Mavericks. The following text is an excerpt from the article that mentions Márcio:

... The ocean was perfect and the onshore winds presented an extra challenge to the surfers. The waves were a solid 18 feet with some sets of 20 plus feet. The “crowd” (the number of surfers competing for the waves) was big, but the waves were so constant that many passed without being surfed. We ran into the “Brazucas” in the area: Marcelo “Biju” and Márcio Freire, who were spending the season there and the rest of the group who had come to Hawaii chasing waves. They surfed with style, hungry for ‘bombs...”



Image 138 – *A clipped picture of Márcio and a short note:*

SOURCE: Fluir Magazine n. 2, 2004

“Bahian Márcio Freire left his homeland obsessed with the idea of surfing Mavericks. He stayed in Half Moon Bay, got a job and waited for over a month to get a wave like this one. This sequence, on the left of the peak, shows his eagerness for a serious drop.”

The impressive drop is shown in image 138.

Still in 2004, in Ma’alaea Harbor, in image 139 we see Márcio surfing one of the fastest waves in the world. Tube: eight (8) solid feet, Maui, Hawaii, 2004. Showing dexterity and beauty.



Image 139 – *A barrel in Ma’alaea Harbor.*

SOURCE: Photographer, Bruno Lemos



Image 140 – *Márcio Freire, surfing North Shore of Oahu, Hawaii, 2004.*
SOURCE: Bruno Lemos

YEAR of 2005.

Under the title “MÁRCIO FREIRE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF BIG SURF” – in 2005, the site WAVES published an interview held in Hawaii by Bruno Lemos. In the interview, Márcio talks about his first steps as a beginner surfer until he stepped into his life as a big rider



Image 141 – *Márcio Freire in Waimea.*

Bahian Márcio Freire has lived in Hawaii for seven years and is one of the archipelago's greatest Brazilian riders.

In addition to surfing, Freire also practices Hawaiian outrigger canoeing; he's a member of the traditional Hawaiian Canoe Club and also represents Brazil in paddling competitions on the islands.

In this interview with correspondent Bruno Lemos, Freire talks about his life on Maui where he has lived ever since the waves enchanted him.

He understands that to get to the point of towing-in to big waves there is a whole learning process to know how to ride big waves.

"I can't finish high school and go straight to a doctorate degree. First, I have to go through university and a master's degree", says the freesurfer. This means that in his opinion, to reach the full big wave rider status the surfer has to face Waimea, Mavericks and then Jaws to drop into even bigger waves.

– Tell us a little about yourself, how you came to Hawaii and what you did in Brazil?

I started surfing at nine and today I'm 30 years old. I was a competitor in Bahia from age 11 to 23, at which point I moved to Hawaii. In Brazil, I dedicated myself to surf competitions, earning two titles of runner-up Junior Bahian and Bahian champion in the Open category. I became one of the Top Five of ABRASA (Amateur Surf Association that no longer exists)

I spent a lot of time as an amateur and only professionalized the year I moved to Hawaii and was already a little older. Because there were lots of amateur surf events in Bahia and I had no support to travel to events all around Brazil, it was better for me to stay in the amateur category and compete consistently.

For me, it was frustrating not to have a career as a professional, but on the other hand, it led me to focusing on the big wave riding in Hawaii. Instead of pursuing a professional surfing career, I sought to become a freelance surfer qualified in all wave types.

What brought me to Hawaii was the example of a strong generation of Bahian surfers, like Yuri Soledade, Danilo Couto and Kevin Kennedy, who were already living here and were good surf friends of mine.

I studied Biology in Bahia and even did a microbiology internship in a hospital. I dedicated myself to surf competitions and enjoyed my homeland, which I miss so much nowadays.

– Why did you decide to go to Maui instead of Oahu? What is your day-to-day life like on the “Valley Island”?

I arrived in Hawaii on Oahu, fulfilling a dream. I surfed a few months and went to visit my friends in Maui where my ex-girlfriend got a job at a dance gym and with the help of my friends I got a job. I fell in love with some point breaks at Honolua Bay, Wind Mills and with the vibe of the place.

But there's nothing in the world that compares to the North Shore of Oahu. That's why every season I insist on throwing myself into the waves that are the true ocean bombs.

In my day-to-day routine, I work with an American friend at a landscaping company. It's a job I like to do and that allows me to pay all my bills and sponsor myself in surfing and canoeing, but there is never anything extra at the end of the month.

My life in Maui is healthy. I surf practically every day, in the company of good friends Yuri, Kevin and Alfredo. And I spend the whole summer training in Hawaiian canoes, representing the Hawaiian Canoe Club in the sprint season and the Brazilian crew in local and international long distance races.

Last year I had the pleasure of representing Brazil in world sprint canoe paddling competition, held on Hilo Big Island. I had one of the most exciting moments of my life as the flag bearer of the Brazilian crew with Yuri Soledade, Jefferson Roberto Espirito Santo, Rodrigo da Silva, Jorge Müller and the president of the Brazilian federation, the world's smallest team.

We entered the crowded stadium, and while the crowd applauded Brazil's first participation in international paddling, I waved the Brazilian flag.

I looked at the crowd, looked at my friends and couldn't believe what was happening. Our crew was made up of six people and we entered the parade in the stadium behind Australia that had about 250 paddlers.

On October 9th, the last long-distance race of the season was held: the Hawaiian outrigger canoe race through the channel between the island of Molokai and famous Oahu. Molokai Hoe.

We started paddling at 07:30 a.m. and finished the race at 1:40 p.m. We did very well, finishing in the top 40 of over a hundred canoes. The crew was formed by the most experienced of us (Myself (BA), Yuri Soledade (BA), Guigo da Silva (BA), Francisco Prado (RJ)), as well as some that are newer to the sport (like Lívio Menelau (PE), Eric Santana (SE), Gustavo (RS), Diego Panca. We were lead by the American veteran, waterman, Johnny Macc, one of the coaches of the Hawaiian Canoe Club.

The race was very difficult because of the conditions of the channel; for the second time, Brazil was present at the most challenging paddling event.

– What kind of wave do you like the most and where did you surf the best waves of your life?

I like any kind of wave. I have fun riding tiny waves one foot waves on my 10'4 "gun". On small beach breaks I like ripping, on medium and maneuverable waves I can release energy with explosive maneuvers. And, of course, big tubular waves, caught paddling. I'm not the kind of surfer who looks out to a sea and due to its small size and little wind, give up on the surf. I insist on practicing in any condition. To paddle into a 25 foot wave you have to train on the little ones. And always keep in contact with the ocean.

I've surfed so many good waves, but one of the most memorable was at Mavericks on December 17th, 2003. It was an 18-20 footer that I had waited for for about six hours.

I rode the biggest waves of my life at Waimea Bay, on November 25th, 2002, 20-25 feet high.

And this fall, Ma'alaea Harbor broke like it had never broken before, people said it was the best day in the last twenty years at Ma'alaea. I was happy to have dropped into two epic waves that day. I only got out of the water after I had been all scratched up on the coral reef. Even so, happy as can be.

– Do you also practice tow-in? Have you ever surfed or want to surf Jaws? How do you describe that wave and that place?

My friends ask me why, living in Maui and with friends such as Alfredo Villas Boas, Yuri Soledade and Danilo Couto, I haven't yet surfed Jaws. I answer them: I can't finish high school and go straight to my doctorate. I have to go through university and a master's degree first.

After surfing several Waimea waves, the largest of them up to 25 feet, on the 25th and 26th of November, 2002, I thought I was ready to tow-in. But I reconsidered and came to the conclusion that before surfing Jaws I would have to surf Mavericks, sort of finishing my master's degree in big wave surfing. I spent a season at Mavericks and I was able to surf three big swells, on the 17th of December, 2003 (15 to 20 feet); on the 9th and 10th of January, 2004 (15 to 18 feet) and on the 18th of January, 2004 (15 to 18 feet).

After so many experiences, I see myself ready to take this big step and this season intend to dedicate myself to towing-in.

I've already ordered some boards from Jeff Timpone, considered one of the best shapers and I'll order some more from Matt Kinoshita. Yuri Soledade, promised to tow me into some "bombs" this season.

Besides being my surfing buddy from the old days, he is a surfer who has a lot of experience in the area and he makes a point of passing his knowledge on towing, rescuing etc. I'm counting on other friends, like Danilo Couto and Alfredo Villas Boas for their help. Who knows, one day I may turn out to be a good tow-in surfer. Because I've lived on Maui for about seven years now, the locals are used to seeing me in the water on a daily basis and I think I have a good chance of not being hassled or iced out. Who knows, I may even have access to the best waves of the sets.

– And this summer, did you get to surf some waves?

We had some swells, but only small ones. Even so, the small waves were perfect, breaking with no wind on the reef.

At the end of the summer, one of the biggest swells of the last twenty years hit Ma'alaea Harbor, reviving one of the best waves in the world. It was the same gigantic swell that hit Tahiti and came in the right direction for the right-breaking wave that rarely breaks and is considered one of the fastest waves in the world.

The waves were between 6 and 8 solid feet and I think I saw two 10-foot sets. The water was crowded with surfers from other islands, like Pancho Sullivan, Myles Padaca, Joel Centeio, Dustin Barca, and veterans Michel Ho and James Jones and all the Maui Boys.

I paddled out at the ideal time, early morning, with Yuri Soledade and Alfredo Villas Boas and I caught several waves. It was one of the best sessions of my life. Luckily I was

able to surf some of the best and biggest waves that came in that day. Swells like those won't happen again anytime soon.

– What are your goals for this season?

No doubt, focusing on the towing-in, surfing some good Hawaiian tubes, continuing to improve my surfing performance on small and medium-sized waves, with lots of maneuvers and, God permitting, to have some extra money to get a flight to San Francisco to surf Mavericks paddle-in because there are still two “guns” waiting for me there. The more time that passes the more I want to get back to that point break. Without a sponsor, sometimes it's impossible to do everything I have in mind at the big wave surfing level, so I have to plan for the investment.

– What are the main traits that a surfer has to have to catch big waves in Hawaii?

Respect for the ocean and daily contact with the ocean through surfing, swimming, paddling, etc. All types of ocean sports, that make a true waterman. Attitude, courage, determination, focus and patience, waiting for the big swells.

YEAR OF 2006.

In 2006, Márcio's surfing life took a huge leap. But even though he was thriving as a big wave rider, his financial situation did not improve; he was making little money and was unsponsored. I believe that this was due in large part to his shy personality and discomfort in asking for anything, as well as his disregard for material things and carefree lifestyle. For Márcio, everything is fine as long as he is catching waves. I think the ocean, waves and surf relieve the sadness, stress and homesickness that he must sometimes feel. They give him that air of happiness that shows through his frank and easy smile. That's how he leads his life, in his underground surf career without the glare of the spotlight and the media, and without a sponsor. As he himself has said: I'm an “underground”. And so he will continue, without striving for sponsorship, fame and success, and if one day he makes it, it'll be due to the recognition of years of love and passion for surf, his charisma, and for surfing with his whole soul. To me he is and he will always be “**Marcinho**”, who grew up to become a greatly admired and beloved big wave rider.

When he hugs me, when he calls me, when he writes me the phrase he always says: My mother “I LOVE YOU”. There is nothing in the world more loving for a mother to hear than this phrase that reaches the core of the heart!

In June, 2006, California’s SURFER Magazine, one of the most renowned in the world, published an article about the ISLAND OF MAUI AND THE NEW GENERATION. One photo of Márcio was published in this article; one of the biggest waves caught by him in the biggest swell of that season, but the magazine did not give him credit in the photo. Instead, credit was given to surfer Ola Eleogram. In fact, none of the photos included his name. Márcio’s response to this was “this is a great example of what it means to be an *“Underground”* surfer. He didn’t care about the credits though, he was just happy because his photo was on a double page spread in one of the most renowned and respected surf magazines in the world.

When the magazine was published, he immediately bought a copy and sent it to us, after writing this loving message on the cover, as seen in picture 142: “For the most beloved mother and father in the world, for you to enjoy your son on pages 148 and 149. Aloha with a lot of Love, Márcio Freire, Hawaii, 05/30/06”.

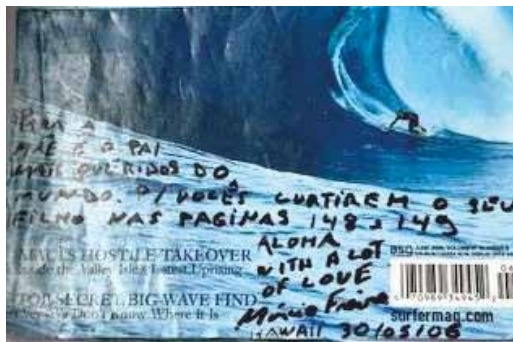


Image 142 – Cover of SURFER magazine, with Márcio’s dedication.
SOURCE: SURFER Magazine v.47, n.6, 2006



Image 143 – Márcio Freire surfing MA'ALEA HARBOR.
SOURCE: SURFER magazine, photographer, Eric Aeder

One of the rarest and most photogenic waves in Hawaii, also considered the fastest wave in the world. Published in a spread on the article Maui and the New Generation. SURFER magazine, v.47, n. 6, p. 148-149, Jun. 2006.



Image 144 – *Márcio surfing with style.*
SOURCE: DoomaPhotos

After the photo (image 143) showing Márcio Freire in SURFER magazine, Bruno Lemos published the following article in “Waves” magazine:

WELL DESERVED RECOGNITION



Image 145 – *Marcio Freire showing his wave in double page published in SURFER magazine, v. 47, n. 6, p. 148-149, Jun, 2006 and posted by Waves website*

SOURCE:site da Waves, julho 2006

It reports the achievements of the Brazilian surfers who had been recently featured. In the first and second paragraph it talks about Márcio Freire. The photograph shown in image 144 is displayed next to the following text:

“During the last few months several Brazilian surfers have been featured in US publications.

The most recent and perhaps most significant of which is the double page spread in the June issue of Surfer magazine starring Márcio Freire from Bahia in Ma’alea Harbor, one of the rarest and most photogenic waves in Hawaii and considered the fastest wave in the world.

In this epic session the Brazilian was awarded one of the best waves of the day and he in turn provided a beautiful moment for the photographer Erik Aeder, author of the photo that illustrates a 14-page article on the island of Maui and the new generation surfers there.”

Now in OAHU Márcio shows his mastery and skillful technique when surfing at Rock Point, Oahu as seen in image 146.



Image 146 –*Marcio Freire- Rock Point, Oahu, Hawaii*
SOURCE: Site eppicsurf.com/wakamisurfpics

3.3 HAWAIIAN OUTRIGGER CANOE

Márcio Freire really was and remains a “waterman” because in addition to surfing and paddleboarding, he practiced and still practices Hawaiian outrigger canoeing at the *Hawaiian Canoe Club*, one of the largest Canoe clubs in the State of Hawaii, based in Maui. After surfing, his favorite sports are canoeing and paddleboarding.

Outrigger Canoeing is a very traditional and important sport in Polynesia. More than 100 canoes participated in the October 2006 event “Molokai Hoe”, including canoes from the Hawaiian Islands as well as countries such as Australia, Canada, Italy, Germany and a team from Brazil, of which Márcio Freire was a part. The event started at the island of Molokai and the finish line was on the island of Oahu where one of the most dangerous channels in the archipelago passes. The legendary Hawaiian surfer Eddie Aikau disappeared in this channel.



Imagem 147 – *Position of the canoes before the competition, 2006*
SOURCE: Márcio Freire’s personal archive.

In the photo displayed in image 147 above, the arrangement of Hawaiian canoes at the starting point of the competition is beautifully observed. The ritual before the departure of the canoes is framed by a fantastic cultural syncretism by the songs and prayers of the participants that concentrate to invoke peace, security and a successful crossing. This is what is seen in the image below, n.148, in which Márcio stands out in the foreground



Image 148 – *Márcio Freire, concentrated before starting the competition.*

SOURCE: “Mad Dogs” documentary – Chapter 8: *Márcio Freire*



Image 149 – *Márcio Freire and crew at the “Molokai to Oahu” crossing, 2006. Márcio is featured in front of the boat, in the midst of the competition.*

SOURCE: Márcio Freire’s personal archive.

The team from Tahiti won the competition, and the Brazilian team was among the top 30 of the 100 participants. The Brazilian team was made up of surfers who lived in Maui: Márcio Freire, Yuri Soledade, Rodrigo da Silva, Francisco Prado, Lívio Minelau, Gustavo Chaves, Erick Santana, Diego Pansa and Derren Silva.



Image 150 – *Márcio Freire and the Brazilian Crew, after arriving at the finish line, joy glowing on the faces of each of the team members.*

SOURCE: Márcio Freire's *personal archive*



Image 151 – *Márcio Freire receiving Paddleboard trophy on the M2O Race, 2006*

SOURCE: Bruno Lemos

The joy of receiving a prize for a paddleboard competition.

Márcio had no sponsorship in surfing, paddleboarding or canoeing. He spent most of his savings on these sports activities.

He has crossed the Channel of Kaiwi (between Molokai and Oahu) 12 times; he has participated in the most traditional Outrigger Canoeing Race in the world 'The Molokai Hoe', four times with a Brazilian team and eight times with the Hawaiian Canoe Club.

3.4 PERIOD from 2007 to 2010

YEAR OF 2007

On March 14th, 2007, a perfect and solid swell with an offshore wind came to the island of Maui. The previous day in Oahu, Danilo Couto, had checked the buoys and had sensed that a swell would arrive the next day on the coast of Maui and that it would be exactly the swell he had been waiting for to fulfill his dream of paddling into the ocean to face the big waves of Jaws, without the help of a Jet Ski. He called up Yuri Soledade and Márcio Freire and told them his plan.

The very next day Danilo arrived at the Maui Airport, where he met Yuri Soledade. Meanwhile, Márcio Freire and Patric were already on their way to Maliko, the port from where the Jet skis leave. That day Márcio had arranged to surf a tubular wave at a Maui secret point with Patric, but he had received a call bright and early from Yuri saying he was on his way to pick Danilo Couto up at the Maui Airport and that the team was gathering to paddle for waves at Jaws. If it were not for these two friends, Márcio would have given up.

The idea of paddling in to surf Jaws big waves was Danilo, and at first Márcio Freire did not want to go. His reasons are cited below:

“Surfing in a place full of Jet-skis, with no sand at the edge, full of slippery rocks and an irritating shore-break because of the rocks, was, in my opinion, a failed session. But I ended up going. That day, before reaching Jaws, I was totally upset to be going there, but as soon as I reached the top of the cliff, I was struck by the perfection of the waves. At that moment, on top of the cliff, I had already started concentrating because the waves were so incredibly big and perfect. My first session at Jaws was perfect.”

“They arrived at the cliff of Jaws at 7:33 am, Danilo and Márcio carried two “guns”: one 10'6" and another 10'2". They went down the bluff to enter through the rocks, the entrance is sinister, they waited for a calm and quickly entered the channel. The session began just after 7:33 am and went till almost 11:00 am. It was an extremely challenging session. *“Danilo was the most excited: he opened the session with two “bombs” that were enough to inspire me.”*

We were told that they faced a lot of obstacles including wipeouts and losing their boards, but finally they caught jaws paddling and they made it. It was a day of victory for Márcio Freire, Danilo Couto and Yuri Soledade, because they managed to tame the mountainous and dangerous waves of Jaws that, up till then, were considered impossible to be surfed by paddling in. Many surfers, including the American Laird Hamilton and friends creator and pioneer of the tow-in surfing, in the 90's, had said that what these three had accomplished could not be done. Hamilton invented tow-in surfing, catching waves of up to 70 feet. The modality boomed: the surfer was towed in by Jet-ski to catch the giant waves of Peahi. That place was known until then as the town-in spot, because it was thought to be impossible to paddle in to surf, when the big waves hit.

It was a historic and victorious day. When people on the cliff saw three bold surfers facing the giant and dangerous waves of Jaws without any safeguard, a brave and crazy attitude, many couldn't believe their eyes, and they wondered who these insane guys were. Most considered what they were doing to be completely crazy, and from then on they were known in the surfing community as the "Mad Dogs".

Transcribed below, is the last paragraph of the text **Historic Paddle-In** – a report by Danilo Couto.

11:00 AM: "The storm comes in with everything it's got. Thunder, lightning, rain. Pure manifestation of the Hawaiian Gods. The blessing came from the heavens, washing the soul of the warriors. Paddling in to surf, the way the ancestors invented, finishing of the largest and most special swell of the season in style."

Peahi is located on the north coast of the island of Maui in the state of Hawaii, it is home to one of the most gigantic and violent waves in the world, popularly known as Jaws. Jaws is difficult to access, there are only two ways to get there: by Jet ski or by the cliff. The Mad Dogs got to Jaws by way of the cliff.

Friends Danilo Couto, Marcio Freire and Yuri Soledade, risked their lives, courageously facing these waves with no safeguard. The access point to reach Peahi (*Jaws*) is a problem of its own, as you can see in image 151.

The cliff is steep and access is difficult: after descending a dangerous path, they reached a beach with no sand, in which the entrance and exit are very difficult, full of slippery rocks, and waves that move fast.

They waited for the exact moment to throw themselves in the water and paddling until arriving at the break to catch the waves. And as if this weren't enough, there is the added risk of the Jet skis towing in other surfers, which also pose a real danger to them. Today there is a law in place that prohibits anyone from entering the ocean with a Jet-ski (tow-in), if there's anyone paddling in.



Image 152 – *Combined fotos – Márcio dealing with the rocks on shorebreak*
SOURCE: Márcio Freire's Personal archive.



Image 153 – *Márcio surfing Jaws after paddling in for the first time.*
SOURCE: Mike Neal

Image 153 was taken in March of 2007, it is of a historical day, in Márcio's life, because it was the first time he surfed Jaws after paddling out and surfing without any safeguards, challenging the fierce nature that this famous wave embodies at its core.

From this day forward, Márcio has surfed Jaws alone or with friends every season, making him intimate with the how the waves at Jaws operate. This is well represented in images 153 and 154.



Image 154 – *Márcio's first bomb at Jaws, march 14th of 2007.*

SOURCE: Mike Neal

YEAR OF 2008

On February 14th, 2008, after paddling out to surf the dangerous and mountainous waves at Jaws, he left the ocean, smiling and happy as usual, because the day had been perfect with excellent waves and lots of excitement. These were the images I held on to in order to alleviate my anxiety as an afflicted mother regarding the risk that these waves pose to the surfers who challenge them.

On February 26th, later the same month, he surfed a 15 feet swell alone, and, as usual, without any safety measures.

Steven Allain wrote in an article in Hardcore magazine, n. 258, Mar / Apr, about this wave: *“In 2008 Márcio Freire surfed 20 foot waves alone, the images of the drop got a record number of views on Youtube and led to the creation of a new category at the Billabong XXL Awards, the biggest paddle-in wave. The world was beginning to notice the pioneering Brazilian in Maui.”*

During the intermission of the award ceremony of the traditional Billabong XXL, one of the most important surf events, the screen of the Anaheim Theater in California, featured the exuberant performance of the three largest waves surfed by Márcio at Jaws, highlighting his name. This scene “online” was seen by the more than three thousand people in attendance, including the most famous surfers in the whole world.

Márcio’s friend Aldo Tassara called him immediately to give him the news. Márcio was thrilled and right away remembered the great chance that he’d had to participate in Billabong XXL in 2007, with the wave he surfed at Jaws, but in the end he was left out. “SURFEMAG” disagreed with leaving him out and published a story about the “Monster Paddle at Jaws” not eligible for the XXL (as previously detailed). If he were not an “underground” surfer, maybe his name would have been featured in 2007. Regardless, the display of his image was a recognition of his value.

On the Surf Bahia website, in 2008, Márcio said:

“I’m an underground surfer, meaning I’m not in surf magazines, and I’m not paid to surf big waves. This is the best of part... it is all because of my passion for this modality of surfing that brings me so much happiness and the desire to continue living my life in search of great emotions, in the water”, says Márcio Freire

Soon after, he sent us an email with some big news.

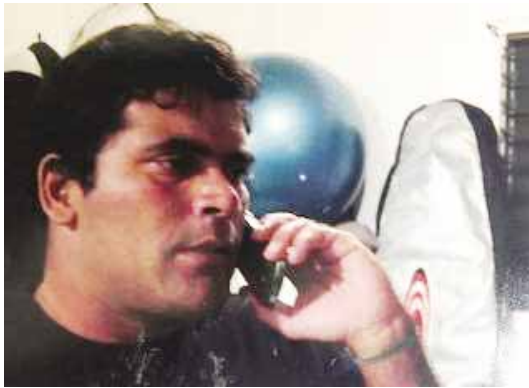
Hi! My dear parents, how are you?

Yesterday I received very good news. Last night at the Billabong XXL party I was one of the highlights. My image was shown on a huge screen, watched by a lot of people in a theater in Los Angeles and watched online by surfers from all over the world, through their website.

They showed three of my biggest waves surfed at Jaws. Also, they even showed a photo of me on the rocks ready to go into the ocean. All of that with my name added. My

friend from San Francisco, big wave rider Alex Martins, saw it all and called me, completely euphoric, saying that I had stolen the scene among the other big riders. He also said that he even thought they gave me a lot of airtime. In addition to Alex, another friend who went to the event, L.A. resident and Fluir photographer Fred Pompermayer called me as soon as he left the party and left a message congratulating me on the waves that were shown up on the big screen.

A big kiss and hug from your son Márcio.



Picture 155 – *Márcio Freire, 33 years old.*
SOURCE: Márcio Freire's personal archive

In image 155 above, we imagine him receiving the good news.



Image 156 – *Márcio Freire Surfing Jaws*

SOURCE: Mike Neal.

Paddle-in, February 14th 2008 swell, with no safety gear. In images 156 and 157, Márcio in great style facing the mountains of the ocean that are the waves at Jaws.



Image 157 – *Márcio Freire, the same swell, February 14th, 2008*
SOURCE: Mike Neal

The website WAVES (the virtual surfing community) referred to Márcio's performance in the following publication:

“Márcio Freire lavishes positive attitude: “I couldn't believe I had all those waves to myself... I surfed several “bombs”; I wiped out on two, it blew my mind, and I finished the session in ecstasy. The day was perfect: besides surfing huge waves at Jaws, I finished my day getting barrels in Honolua Bay”

Surf Bahia posted on its website: “***Bold Bahian***”, showing footage of Márcio Freire surfing several spots of Maui, Hawaii, including footage of February 14th, when he paddled in to Jaws. In another text called ***Márcio Freire remembers an unforgettable session in Jaws, Hawaii***, several complimentary comments were made about Márcio:

– **Lapo**: *“Aloha Márcio, you are undoubtedly one of the best and most radical surfers in the history of Bahian surf. It's a shame that you haven't yet been able to make your living off surfing with all your talent, in order to dedicate yourself totally and com-*

pletely to surf. I have followed your surfing, and have admired you from the first day you showed up at my home in Hawaii, completely lost and a little bewildered, and after which we lived together for many years. Just as Danilo and Yuri, your day will come, much peace and aloha.”

– **João Ferraro:** *“Márcio what really matters is the recognition of the people who like you and cheer for those “bombs” you catch at Jaws after paddling in. You do not need to prove anything to anyone who doubts your ability... Congratulations for the positive attitude and for representing Bahia and Brazil worthily. A big hug and god bless you.”*

– **Danilo Couto:** *This is my idol, inspiration and brother. He’s a character and the coolest guy on Earth.*

– **Yuri Soledade:** *“This guy is really nutcase, I would like to leave my testimony here. There are few people in the world like Márcio. He’s a soul surfer who breathes in the ocean not expecting anything in return. But from time to time, it is good to be recognized for your deeds. Here we notice, on Billabong XXL, yet another boycott of our true soul warriors. May God protect you. Next year we will be there again. A BIG THANKS TO YOU CHAMPION, I’M YOUR BROTHER AND FAN”.*

– **Armando Daltro:** *“To you, my friend Márcio, a strong hug. Keep on pursuing your goals, you deserve them. How did the end of this wave go at Jaws? How did you survive? I’ll take this opportunity to send you a big hug.”*

In December 2008, Hardcore magazine n. 232, published an article on Márcio, written by Tiago Candelot featuring photos by Mike Neal. It is transcribed below:

TAKING OFF

“Marcio Freire, a 33-year-old Bahian surfer, has been gaining more and more respect for his attitude on big waves. Despite having lived on the Hawaiian Islands for 10 years, he started paddle-in surfing Jaws not long ago. His first session took place in March of 2007, the day Surfer Magazine considered the first great session. Márcio, Danilo Couto and Yuri surfed waves of a considerable size. The trio took turns on the peak, catching one wave after another. Danilo and Yuri Soledade’s best waves were not registered, but Márcio was awarded a sequence of 12 photos.

Márcio Freire is an accredited big rider who, besides being crazy about Waimea, has lived in Half Moon Bay before to charge the feared waves of Mavericks. He later adopted the island of Maui as home, where he balances work with training as a waterman.

Márcio is also adept at paddleboarding, a modality that uses a huge board for oceanic crossings. I had the opportunity to be present during the last big swell of the season. Márcio was insane, dropped the “bombs” to the left, going to the end of them and was already back to the peak with lots of grit, seeking other one. A few tow-in’s stopped for a few moments, staying on the channel and watching the session, every moment of it.

Accounts by those watching from the cliff mention the lack of interest and excitement of spectators for waves caught with the aid of tow in. The ease in which the surfers are put on the wave with the help of a machine was starkly contrasted by the difficulty and sagacity of the surfers who paddled in, coming into harmony with such a phenomenon using only their own body. It is worth pointing out that surfing Jaws by paddling in is only just beginning, only a few swells have been surfed by a minority of surfers. However, particular conditions of wave and wind direction are needed to reduce the risk of falling. There are days that even with the help of a machine, it is extremely risky. On these days, paddle-in surfing becomes impossible, and the smaller boards with straps and the noise of the jets dominate the outside, and the tow-in dominate the lineup. Check out the chat we had with Márcio Freire and get to know more about him and the famous Jaws wave.

WHEN DID YOU HAVE THE IDEA OF FACING JAWS PADDLE-IN?

I never thought about surfing paddle-in at Jaws, and the idea wasn’t mine. On March 14th, 2007, I woke up at my friend Patrick’s house, because we had planned to surf one of Maui’s secret breaks. But we got an early call from Yuri Soledade, who said he was on his way to pick up Danilo Couto at the Maui airport and that the team was getting together to go paddle-in at Jaws. If it weren’t for Danilo and Yuri, I’d never have thought of surfing there. The first session surfing Jaws paddling was perfect. After that day I started thinking about surfing Jaws again almost every day and I still keep thinking about it.

WHAT WERE THE DIFFICULTIES?

It’s a struggle just to get in the water; there are a lot of slippery rocks. Sometimes I had to use the hand that was not carrying the board to support me and avoid falling. You have to be aware of everything, where you step, the movement of the tide, the small waves that break on the rocks, the exact moment to jump on the board, moving against the waves that breaks over all of those rocks. Once lying down, it takes a lot of strength to paddle past the shorebreak. Getting out is worse than getting in. You can’t

keep looking for the right timing. The current keeps pulling you out and the smaller shorebreak waves crash down on the rocks. The possibility of breaking your board while getting out of the water is high. The first time, because I was staring at the rocks, I stopped paying attention to what was behind me and I was by taken by surprise by a little bump that pulled the nose of my board, and me along with it, into the water. After the nosedive, the board came completely out of the water and almost hit me over the head. While getting out of the water on February 26, 2008 I fell on the rocks and ran into some problems. I almost got slammed. There are a lot of challenges to take on Jaws, but the desire is much greater.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF TOW-IN?

I think it has revolutionized the world of big wave surfing with the power of the Jet ski. Giant waves were first surfed thanks to the help of the machine. Big wave riders began to take advantage of monstrous waves that had never been surfed before. I think that's awesome! To be able to surf monstrous Jaws, catch those heavy tubes at Teahupoo, or surf on those bombs of the outside reef of Log Cabins. In my opinion, tow-in is only worth it if it's in monstrous conditions, but now there are surfers, who have never taken off on Hawaiian, solid 12 footers becoming big wave riders because of this machine.

HOW DO YOU TRAINING FOR BOMBS?

My official train is surfing itself. I'm always in the water catching waves. Even when it's almost flat out I paddle out on my gun and have a lot of fun. In addition to surfing, I maintain contact with the ocean by practicing and competing in Paddleboard and Hawaiian Outrigger Canoe races. These are my favorite sports after surfing. Also, I always do different things like paddling, biking, swimming, stretching and so on. Sometimes I just kick back and relax, just chill.

TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND IN BIG WAVES.

The waves of Bahia gave me a sound basis. The seasons in Noronha helped me a lot, too. But it was in Hawaii that I truly evolved in big waves. I have always surfed Sunset Beach and haven't missed a chance to surf Waimea. In my first four seasons I gave 100% to learn how to surf The Bay. At the beginning of my first season, I used to just watch and drop out at the critical part of the waves. But by the end of that season I had loosened up and had more attitude. It was really important to see André Rei and Danilo Couto giving it all at that time. They inspired me a lot at the beginning of my career as

an underdog. The years went by and in my fourth season, in 2002, I surfed a monstrous and uncrowded Waimea. I had surfed huge waves and now felt prepared to take the next step: Mavericks. So I packed my bags and set off for an unforgettable adventure in Half Moon Bay. I moved there because I knew that to surf huge, icy cold waves, I would have to get used to wearing a wetsuit. I had gained experience in Hawaii, so I set off to put big wave surfing into practice and enjoy one more big wave point break. That season was righteous. At the end of 2006, I went back, but only to surf the swell.

It was a long journey before Jaws without a Jet ski or lifejacket. I'm proud to have achieved all this without any support or sponsorship. All by surfing, with lots of grit and the attitude of a soul surfer.



Image 158 – *Márcio Freire at the Sean Ordonez Surfboard Factory – Maui.*
SOURCE: Photographer, Márcio Viana

That same year in June, Márcio Freire suffered an accident surfing a secret point in Hana, Maui. He lost his balance and hit his face on the reef, injuring himself in several places. The result of this accident left him with 40 stitches on his face, with no serious repercussions. He was surfing again after three weeks.

YEAR OF 2009

In 2006 Surfer Magazine, year 47, n. 6, June, published an article about the New Generation of Surfers on Maui Island including two photos of Márcio Freire (see picture n. 141 and 142) where his name was not mentioned. In 2009, this same photo (picture 141) showed up in an international circulation magazine, *The Surfer's Journal*, volume 18, issue 2, pages 110 and 111 April / May edition, in the article entitled: All This Useless Beauty – An International Surf Survey in Photo. This magazine also did not identify Márcio in the photo. The image 159 below displays a reduced version of Márcio's beautiful photo.



Image 159 – *The Surfer's Journal*, v. 18, n.2
SOURCE: Photographer, Erick Aeder

In 2009 Márcio Freire put aside surfing for some time in order to work full time in Waikiki on the island of Oahu in Honolulu, which would pay for his livelihood and self sponsorship for some time. No one lives only on dreams, and Márcio had to continue working hard to keep on fulfilling his.

This period he felt like a bird trapped in the cage. His situation suffocated him. He felt terrible being away from the ocean, missing the chance to be a big rider. He missed the freedom of the ocean, the waves that gave him everything that made him

happy. In this state of mind Márcio wrote two texts, transcribed below, in which he expressed his feeling and his experience with surfing.

In the first text “SWELL – HAWAII”, he emphasized: *“From a stout surfer to a responsible worker. It was corroding inside me. What’s the point of having money when you have no attitude?”* In the second text, called SURF, he said: *“I have to keep focused on what is most important: the freedom I have to develop my surfing, my health and my relationship with nature.”*

SWELL – HAWAII

One week before January 15, 2009, when I was working in Oahu, I got the call from photographer Fred Pompermaya who told me about the swell that was heading toward Hawaii. I wasn’t excited, I felt irritated. It upset me and thinking about it I even lost the urge to work. I realized I wasn’t ready to surf that swell. I was out of shape. I had been working hard for more than seven weeks with no time to get in the water. In two months, I had hardly surfed at all, and whenever I had a day off the waves were small. That feeling of freedom I had felt during every high season in Hawaii didn’t exist anymore. That season was the first that I put surf aside to work full-time. I had changed from a dedicated surfer to a responsible worker. It was eating away at me. What’s the point of having money if you don’t have attitude? Well, I had enough attitude to buy a ticket to Maui for a paddle-in session at Jaws.

On the day of the swell, early in the morning, I was already on the cliff analyzing the conditions. The wind was insanely strong and the waves were really hard to surf by paddle-in. At that moment, even though I wasn’t at 100% with my conditioning, I needed to get into the water. I hesitated at first, but after more than half an hour looking at it, I thought I could take the risk. I went down the cliff with my “magic gun”, walked carefully over the rocks, and paddled out. As I passed the channel on the right, I saw Danilo Couto, Alfredo Vilas Boas and Rodrigo Resende. As soon as they saw me, they gave me the greatest greeting and the three of them vibrated with my presence. I moved to the other side, in search of the waves breaking left.

It didn’t take long for the action to start, and before catching my first wave I had to escape two that forced me to ditch my board both times. That was scary. When I saw the first, my reaction was to paddle hard towards the channel. In the last few seconds before the first wave caught me, I took a huge breath of air and slid off my board, passing through the wave with my board thrown into the white water. Quick as I could, I pulled my board back, got back on and paddled as hard as I could again, trying to

escape the second wave that was already breaking, and coming in my direction. Unfortunate situation especially since I hadn't caught a single wave yet. With eyes wide open, I just kept thinking that this was happening because I was out of shape. I repeated the process again with the second wave and managed to get out of that unpleasant situation. After that, I made a huge mistake and was almost caught by a bomb. I tried to catch a wave but didn't make it, and immediately looked back and was scared by the huge wall of water coming at me. I started paddling with all my strength, sure I could get over the side of the wave. Danilo saw the whole thing from the channel and after the session was over he joked that that moment had made me even more bald. I was only thinking about surviving that wave, making it through at the last moment. Luckily, there was no other wave coming from behind, and my leash didn't break.

After two critical moments, I caught a wave and made a perfect drop. My wave of the day was intermediate, but it was worth it.

I returned to the outside pumped up and excited to have caught a wave and with my adrenaline under control after the rush of catching my first wave of the session. The next set was looking strange and the wind was strong making conditions a little dangerous. I decided to call it quits, and signaled to Alfredo who was near by. I asked if he could take me near the rocks so I could get out. He said he was leaving and that he could give me a ride to Maliko. The ride would be perfect to avoid the rocky edges that always break my boards and put me at risk of getting hurt. Leaving a big wave session without catching any big waves made me feel frustrated and disappointed. But, after thinking about it, I realized that I had a great experience and that it really paid off. If I hadn't surfing that day I wouldn't have lived and experienced those moments of pure adrenaline and thrill.

Below is the second text he wrote titled "SURF", on April 23rd, 2009

It's great to have the free time to surf when the waves are best, or at least some available time to surf at some point during the day. The worst is never being able to surf because of working overtime. This was my worst winter on the Hawaiian Islands, because I spent three months of the season in Waikiki working hard with no time to catch waves. Between November 18 and February 18, I hardly had a day to surf, and one of those days was my only paddle in session at Jaws, which I considered a failure. I was out of shape, my paddling wasn't as strong as it used to be, and my courage had also decreased. After 10 seasons in Hawaii I put surfing aside to work like crazy. From a stout surfer I turned into a responsible worker. Even so, when I was stuck in those three months of work in the middle of the surf season, I held on to the thought that the last

day of sacrifice would come and that I would still have the rest of the season to enjoy. And that is exactly what happened in the end. Of course!

I returned to Maui in late February and started surfing every day. I could not believe how I had lost my paddling strength and how fast I was getting tired. However, the waves just kept rolling in so I got in shape fast.

Márcio finished his work on Oahu and returned to Maui to surf, he returned to his world. He kept catching Jaws with no safeguard and no vest, using only his arm strength. We worried about the danger he faced by surfing without a vest, and I told him I would buy one for him, we were worried sick, but he wouldn't accept. He said he was about to get one as a gift.



Image 160 – Márcio Freire, paddle-in session at Jaws, November 2009

SOURCE: Ovi Banuta

YEAR OF 2010

Marcio Freire continued surfing unsponsored, not because he didn't have the ability to go after one, in fact quite the opposite as he has shown time and again his talent, mastery, courage and attitude. In our opinion, it is because he doesn't like to ask for anything.

As a mother, I hoped that he would make it because it would improve his life, particularly because he would get paid to do what he most loves in life.

I emphasize again his renunciation of the comforts of a home, the love of family, of studying, in order to live a simple life of sacrifice, risking his life in order to fulfil his dream.

In the 2009/2010 season at the end of November, he was injured again and was unable to surf for more than a month and lost many classic big swells. There was nothing more distressing for him.

On January 21st, a surf magazine referred to him on "Facebook": Brazilians Danilo Couto and Márcio Freire face off with Jaws on paddle.

"Bahians Danilo Couto and Márcio Freire once again surprised the big rider surf scene for, on January 18th, they paddled-in to surf gigantic waves at the terrifying point break, Jaws".

On January 22nd, Waves published: Bahians face Jaws.

This article refers to the swell of January 18th.



Picture 161 – *Márcio Freire faces the bombs of Jaws, paddling.*

SOURCE: Photographer, Bruno Lemos

After a memorable session paddling in to Jaws by Márcio (MF) and Danilo Couto (DC) going through life and death situations (Peahi), several interviews with them circulated on various sites, one was titled: “Pioneering Peahi” – Interview about the Peahi session Evan Valiere.

(Reliving the Peahi paddle-in session with Danilo Couto and Márcio Freire.)

When I first started my event I was hoping that someone would paddle Jaws. I imagine that a few hardcore surfers have paddled it before, but this is the first documentation I have seen of it. The level of paddle-in surfing has definitely been pushed this year

and this will be remembered as a historic session. Danilo Couto and Marcio Freire share a few words and some videos about their experience.

What was it like out there? Were you planning on paddling it or were you there to tow?

DC That day we planned to paddle since the day before. There were so many tow-in days by then, that all we wanted was to paddle. We checked the buoys and had an idea the conditions were going to be ideal.

MF It was nice conditions for Maui. Light winds and massive waves. I mean huge waves to paddle into. I felt a bit insecure to be out there with nobody around, without jet ski support, or water patrol to aid us. Spooky really.

I'm not a tow-in surfer. We were planning to paddle out since Friday. Danilo called me saying that Monday could be perfect, just what we were looking for.

Were you the only guys out?

DC Yeah, pretty much. A tow team left exactly when we walked down the cliff. Then we surfed by ourselves, until another tow team showed up, and stayed on the right, kind of far from us... not interfering at all.

MF It was a memorable session. Just us.

What size were your boards? Were they four fins or three fins?

DC We had 10'4" and 10'6" both four fins

MF Four fins.

Could you have been on bigger boards? How did your equipment feel? Where do you think big wave surfboard design is headed?

DC Definitely could have a bigger board. Like every outer reef, you need paddle power. Peahi is a really thick wave, but is also a down the line wave. You got to think about a bottom turn to make it to the channel after dropping in.

MF On a bigger day than that day, I would ride a bigger board, but not too big. I think an 11'0". My Sean Ordonez gun did a great job. I rode Jaws a few times before with my board, and I knew it very well. Dropping in a big wave with a four fin gun makes it faster than a three fin board. And you need this little difference in the speed in order to move forward past the section. It's not necessary to have too big of a gun like the old times. Also, the concave is very helpful to increase speed and hold on the wall.

The waves you guys rode were huge, what was it like dropping in at Jaws?

DC *It was a really special day for us, really peaceful session, no machines, helicopters, hassle or those kinds...Hawaii has so much energy itself, and Peahi has so much mana, power, and the level of respect for the place is so high, that makes a unique spiritual experience.*

MF *Indescribable emotion.*

That was a close call with the almost two wave hold down. What was going through your mind? Did you end up getting blasted onto the rocks?

DC *The hold downs were intense, especially the second wave. I knew I was under for a while and the second wave was coming, but luckily I got half a breath and never got hurt. Main thing, don't panic... and that's what I did. I would do it all over again. Somehow you get more alive and confident after going through those moments.*

MF *After I didn't get past the section I got sucked back and over. That is when my nightmare began. I was held down for a while. Right after I popped up and took my first breath the ocean sucked me back under, but not for long. The second wave broke and gave me another bad time under water. I survived the second wave but couldn't escape from the third one. At that point I was already going low on energy. The third wave had a lot of power and broke right on my head. I remember being dragged super fast under water for a long time. I thought I was going to pass out. Fortunately, without any more energy, I was pushed toward the little bay where the rocks are smaller than the rest of the shoreline. I then rode my board in the white water all the way to the little bay. I was so exhausted I didn't even try to save my board. I rode my board right up onto the rocks where consequently I broke all four fins & boxes off the board. I couldn't believe I was finally safe on the rocks.*

Is there anything else you guys would like to share about surfing Peahi and big wave surfing?

DC *Jaws is such a hard wave to paddle into. But there are days perfect for it. I hope, those days become more frequent with prepared surfers showing up, especially the locals and Hawaiians coming to surf. It's heavy, rocky, and dangerous for sure. That's what makes such a unique experience. The beauty of big wave surfing is paddling into bombs. More paddle, less tow!*

MF *Paddling in at Jaws is the real ultimate challenge. Surfing big waves is all about what you like to do. It's about your background and experience. It's all about the time*

that you have been spending in the ocean. It's about passion and respect. Don't go out there for pictures, or fame, or sponsors. Go out there to charge some bombs and be self-satisfied. And make sure you are ready to get pounded really hard.

Aloha & Mahalo.

On February 26, 2010, Waves published an article authored by Márcio: **Couto and Freire – Mad Dogs Baianos**. This article was the third that Marcio wrote. In it, he writes about their accomplishments in one of the biggest swells of the season, on January 18th, in which he and Danilo Couto went through life threatening experiences. His father Hagamenon, suggested the title “**THE TALE OF AN ADVENTURE OF MAD MEN**”. *Waves* magazine published the article with the title: “**COUTO AND FREIRE – MAD DOGS BAIANOS**”.

In this article Márcio describes in detail the difficult moments that they lived through at Jaws, in which he almost lost his life. These were truly terrifying and difficult experiences. He had to stay calm to save his own life, as it was almost extinguished. This word (“extinguished”) profoundly affected me, and left me with a tight and distressed heart. The thought that one day the very same wave that fascinated him, and still fascinates him, wanted to take his life, but receded. In that moment of agony, I believe that a divine force, unknown to us, possibly from the gods, the orixás or even the spirit of light that is always by his side, pushed him out of those waves giving him back his life.

COUTO AND FREIRE – MAD DOGS BAIANOS

“When we arrived at the cliff in the morning of January 18th, our first impression was that the waves had gotten smaller, but it was only an impression. Danilo had already told me that the waves were going to pick up, and they did. Only one tow-in pair were surfing the right at Peahi, but for some reason they left, and the peak was completely empty. From up on the cliff, we had no clue that that session would be one of the most intense of our lives. In true “Mad Dogs” style, we entered Jaws without a Jet ski, without safety gear and without a single tow-in pair in the water. It was a crazy move, made out of the pure desire and will of two great friends and big riders to get into that ocean and do what they love: drop into mountains of giant waves using only their own arm power and skill.

After going down the trail to the base of the cliff, we went straight to negotiate our crossing over the rocks with a violent and fearsome shore break. The entrance over the rocks was the first challenge, and to face it we used our experience and understanding of the ocean. Because a mistake on the rocks could ruin the whole session, we were patient waiting for the right moment to move forward. Sometimes we moved forward only to have to backtrack in order to avoid an accident. It took us half an hour to find the exact moment to get in. By staying calm, paying attention and a good analysis of the ocean we finally got into the waters of Peahi.

Paddling-in to the left was divided into three parts. The first began when we entered the water through the rocks and paddled to the channel where the rights were breaking. In order to make it, we knew had to be calm and analyze the conditions carefully. We knew there was no one around and we had to act safely. From our position there we observed two sets that showed how powerful the waves were from up close, although we were still in the channel. We saw a square tube, wide, heavy and beautiful. We commented on how much safer it would be if we had a Jet Ski in case of needing a rescue, or a tow-in pair that could step in if needed, but in the exchange remained nothing more than a comment, and we started paddling the second part of our way in. We paddled from the channel of the rights to the channel of the lefts. We paddled far out to the well outside of the waves to make sure we wouldn't be caught by a set. We stopped one more time to watch the waves from our new position. Now, the waves rolled to the left and were huge. We observed for some time and then went ahead with the third part of paddling-in, entering area of the waves. I mean area of the waves and not the point, and we did that intentionally. Unfortunately, there, there isn't a well determined peak zone as in Waimea or Mavericks.

When we got to the lineup, it did not take long for Danilo to catch his first wave. It was a gigantic wave that had a critical moment with an insane wipeout that definitely shocked him and really worried me. I just saw him standing on his board on that monstrous wave. Seconds later, while the next wave was passing I looked back and saw his board sticking vertically out of the water, from the deck to the tail underwater and from the deck the nose out of the water. That quick glance showed me that one of my best friends was still underwater in a very dangerous situation, and to make matters worse, the next wave was about to hit with him still under water. I didn't panic, but I was really worried. I kept my focus on the ocean in order to not get caught off guard by the next set of waves, and kept my thoughts positive that Danilo would make it out safe and uninjured. The risk of the new board I had lent to Danilo didn't matter to me. What mattered was seeing my friend safe. A few minutes passed and finally I

saw him, far off on the rocks. Actually, I saw the board because it's yellow, he was too far away to see clearly. From the outside of Peahi, at a distance, I felt a huge relief to know that that Danilo was fine.

Before a big wave session, you can't let nervousness, trembling, lack of focus, negative thoughts, or fear take over.

Alone in the water, I reflected on the session that hadn't yet begun for me. My thoughts drifted to Danilo. We have known each other since childhood and I was sure that if the board he was using hadn't broken he would come back out. After surfing my first wave and paddling back out, I saw Danilo on the other side paddling along the channel of the rights. Danilo is an ocean warrior, a member of the elite group of the world's extreme big riders, and he never gives up. That's how incredible of a surfer that he is. When we saw each other, we waved, shouting and smiling with joy.

My first wave was not the greatest, but it gave me confidence and courage. Right after seeing Danilo back in the water, I caught my second wave, which was much bigger than the first one. After surfing two exhilarating and successful waves, I stepped up my courage. I began to feel confident enough to move in on even bigger waves. Danilo, who had already recovered from his insane wipeout, paddled into his second bomb and his drop in was perfect, guaranteeing a thrilling ride.

We had each surfed two waves and we were delighted and full of emotion and in harmony with the ocean and with the big waves. Everything was going perfectly up to that moment, but everything changed after my third attempt. I paddled towards the wave coming towards me, that mountain of ocean, watching as it completely covered the horizon. I paddled hard against the wave, visualizing the exact place to stop paddling, I made all the right, cautious moves. I stopped at exactly the right place. I sat on the board right away, turning and directing the nose toward the direction I thought best for a perfect drop. The drop-in was long, intense and reminded me why I like to surf on days like this. When I reached the deck of the board, I found the right time to bottom turn.

With all that speed, I bent my knees to strengthen my base, crouching down and putting my left hand on the wave to give me support and stability for the turn. I tried to pass on the session at all costs in order to surf the wave to its end and reach the channel, but it wasn't possible. I didn't pass on the session, and the wave pulled me in without mercy. I've surfed Jaws multiple times and I've been through diverse situations, but this one got to me. I was sucked in by the wave and at the mercy of the ocean, and

at that moment I thought about my knee injury. I had stopped training for a month, and had only been out again a couple times before that day, I wasn't completely back in shape. In order to keep my knee stable, I was wearing a knee brace with metal lined sides wrapped in duct tape. After getting thrown around under the water a few times I was able to return to the surface. I breathed in, and to my surprise I was sucked back down again for a few seconds. After returning to the surface again, I pulled my gun back in to have its support and to prepare for the next wave. The second wave was powerful, strong, and worse than the first. In this second moment, submerged in the rough waters, I felt myself turning, tumbling in all directions. After a few seconds of suffering as the turbulence rushed over me, I held onto my leash that connected me to my board to know where the surface was. I started to pull the leash and then to swim up toward the surface. In difficult situations like these it's important to remain calm, keep you head cool and use your experience to be able to get through it.

*Orixás – An **orisha** or **orixá** in Latin America is a spirit who represents one of the manifestations of the supreme divinity Eledumare, Olorun, Olofi in the Yoruba religion.*

Finally I got to the surface with time to breathe a little and prepare for the next wave. I didn't expected the third wave to be so powerful. This third one overwhelmed me, dragging my body along at insane speed. I felt the leash beginning to wrap around my legs and quickly untangled myself. I was taken forward, but not to the surface. I thought I could breathe air, and even tried, because the desperation for oxygen was overwhelming, but I ended up swallowing salt water. In the midst of all of this, I felt an eternal peace coming over me, I knew I was close to blacking out. From deep within me the will to survive rushed out and with a few more breast strokes I managed to break the surface and breathe in.

At Peahi's shore-break anything can happen. By this point I was exhausted, I had no strength left whatsoever. I was being pushed by the ocean to a second bay where the rocks are smaller. I got hit by more white water and then I pulled my board in and caught the whitewater towards the second bay. Lying on the board, completely drained and gliding on that whitewater, I just hoped to reach the bay. It was crazy because I couldn't bear anything else. On the whitewater, I saw the rocks approaching, my safe harbor. I didn't even try to save the board from the rocks. Lying on the board and being carried by the whitewater I washed straight over the rocks, feeling as they crushed the fins and the bottom of my "gun" made by my shaper Sean Ordonez. When the white water stopped pushing me forward I was completely on top of the rocks and still lying

on my board. I looked at the cliff and all around me. For seconds, already on the rocks, my vision changed. For seconds I saw everything differently. I had never felt like that before. In my view, everything took on a yellowish tint, but as quickly as it came on it passed. I knew that this session had taken me to the threshold between life and death. Still exhausted, I began to walk on the rocks with my destroyed board. At that moment, I saw Danilo catching his third wave, it was huge and rough. With the strong foundation of a real big rider, he rode the wave all the way out to the second bay. We met, shook hands, and began our way up the trail. Once we reached the cliff, we put our boards on top of my little old car and went to eat at a simple local restaurant to recharge our energy that had been drained by the wipeouts.

As we were eating and talking about the session, Shaun Lopez walked into the restaurant to greet us. Local surfer, Gerry Lopez nephew and our friend, he came in enthusiastic and impressed with our feat. He shook our hands and congratulated us. He said he saw everything from the cliff and that it had been the session of the season.

For me and Danilo, who are real big wave riders and soul surfers, the memories of the bombs surfed and all of our experiences remain with us. We are proud of being Brazilian and humbly showing the world that we are alive and are part of the evolution of big riders.

Note from the editors: The insanity of the duo put the Bahians in dispute for the North Shore Big Wave Challenge, organized by Hawaiian big rider Evan Valiere. The winner would get a painting by the artist Steven Valiere (Evan's father,) worth 10 thousand dollars.



Image 162 – Márcio Freire surfing at Hawaiian spot, Dumps, 2010.
SOURCE: @Giora Koren.

On February 25th Silvio Mancusi wrote “**Great Banzai of the Year**” (*Banzai Bonzão do Ano*). The article was enriched with two fantastic photos of Marcio Freire by photographer Bruno Lemos. Below, the first and last paragraph of the text and the photos

“Last Friday, the biggest Pipeline of the season happened.” The 5-meter sets cheered up the hearts of the Big Riders’ who grabbed their “guns” and set off for an adrenaline rush at Pipelines’ famous and unique Banzai.”

The visual from inside the water was inexplicable. I waited for some sets next to Danilo and Márcio Freire, contemplating amazing visuals of the sets as they came in”



Image 163 –
Márcio Freire
surfing Pipeline's
Banzai, North
Shore of Oahu,
*Hawaii.**SOURCE:*
Photographer,
Bruno Lemos.

This photo gives the feeling that he's floating upon divine waves of an infinite blue that calms down our souls, giving us peace.



Image 164 – *Márcio*
Freire – Pipeline –
North Shore of Oahu,
*Hawaii.**Source*
Photographer, Bruno
Lemos

The second photo, n. 164, is a surreal picture of him on a wave that comes from above, that looks like a cloud of foam from heaven. We considered these two photos by photographer Bruno Lemos, two of the most beautiful, because they touched us, transmitting a very good feeling.

These two photos attest to Bruno Lemos' competence as a photographer of this fantastic ocean sport.

3.5 PERIOD: 2011 to 2013.

YEAR 2011.

The spread of paddle-in surfing at Jaws started in 2011. This caused a rise in the presence of surfers in Maui, far outnumbering previous years. Danilo Couto's victory at the Billabong XXL in 2011 must have been a determining factor.

In the first swells of January and February of this year, Márcio Freire surfed one of the biggest waves, thus emerging as a strong candidate for "Monster Paddle XXL Billabong 2011". One of those swells arrived unexpectedly and hit the Hawaiian Islands with fury. In Maui, Danilo Couto caught the biggest wave of the day.

This year Márcio was interviewed by the great journalist Eric Akiskalian. This interview was published by surflife as well as on several websites. In 2012 Akiskalian received the title of "journalist of the Year", for this interview: "Márcio Freire's interview: Maui's underground Big-Wave Charger". Another site published it with the title: "Outer reefs of Oahu & Maui home to Márcio Freire".



Image 165 – Márcio Freire surfing Jaws, 2011.

SOURCE: Eric Akiskalian.

From the various questions in Erik Akiskalian's interview, we selected the ones presented below:

When did you start surfing?

In the summer of 1985 when I was 9 years old. I remember I got my brother's old board because he had just got a new one. I can also remember how stoked I was to have my first board and I did not even care that it was an old one. I just wanted my own board and I wanted to learn to surf. I think we as surfers can always remember our first board and what happens at that moment! Very special feeling for me.

When did you start riding big waves?

When I first came to the North Shore of Oahu in the winter of 98'99'. I was just 23 years old and I was riding every big swell that season on the North Shore. I did not have any equipment back then so my friends loaned me boards. Danilo Couto, a very good friend of mine told me about this old 8'6" "gun" that was under his house, and nobody was using it, so I cleaned it and start surfing Sunset Beach with it. Then, my friend Lapo (ASP International Judge) let me use his 10'4" "gun" and that is when I started riding Waimea Bay.

What do you get from surfing big waves?

When the waves are big, the reward is just as big or bigger. The drop is the most critical part of the wave and yet it is the most fun part. If I don't fall from my board, the satisfaction and stoked feeling is a guarantee. It makes me feel so alive when I ride it. It is a special vibe when I'm going down the line fast on a monster wave. It is the adrenaline that runs thru my veins that keeps me wanting more. The wave that I dropped into on Jan. 16th, 2011 was so amazing I can't even explain to you unless you are a big wave surfer. My body was completely extended twice during the drop. I felt like I was free falling from a cliff and then I made it. Big waves don't happen very often, so when it's on, I like to get the pleasure and satisfaction which big waves provide for me. Also, it is a very spiritual and special moment. During the big days I feel very connected with the earth and universe. It is then that I feel most alive!

When you know there is a giant swell coming, how do you mentally prepare yourself for that day?

I prepare myself mentally with positive thoughts, over and over again. I visualize

myself making drops and being stoked. This way I can stay calm, and fearless but also remain respectful of Peahi and the punishment she is capable of delivering.

What is the worst situation you have been in while surfing Pe'ahi and how did you overcome it?

It was a swell in January 2010, when Danilo and myself paddled out by ourselves without jet skis, or anybody in the line up. It was my third wave of the session and I was feeling pretty good. On this one, I couldn't make it around the section so the wave blew up on me. Next thing I remember, I got pounded pretty good then held down pretty good until I finally popped up. Then the second wave I took on the head and it was nuts because I went down very deep under water, deeper than the first one. At that point, I had to start climbing my leash to get back to the surface. The second wave really took it out of me.

What are your big-wave surfing goals for the future?

I want to just keep playing in and around the ocean while living a healthy lifestyle. I want to grow stronger physically and mentally and I want to become even more confident than I am now. I want to be so prepared that when I paddle out on big days, I have no fear but only respect! This is the gift I wish upon all big wave surfers!

HARDCORE magazine of March, 2011, highlighted on its cover: *JAWS NA REMADA* (Paddling at Jaws) – Brazilian pioneering makes history and in the article, Steven Allan titled: "The Day — Brazilian pioneering makes history at Jaws" and thus describes the feat of these fearless Bahians:

"Last year – one of the most constant winters in history – Danilo, Márcio and Yuri paddle in surfed Jaws with waves over 20 feet. "We surfed alone without a Jet ski for rescue, without vests, no big production, no photographer, just feeling the surf" says Danilo.

"The succession of Brazilian attempts in those ten years – frustrated and not – culminated that winter. The Day finally arrived in February and our fellow countrymen did not disappoint us. Two weeks earlier, on January 16th, Márcio Freire, Danilo Couto, Yuri Soledade and Andrea Moller had already paddle in surfed some of the biggest waves ever seen. In doing so they redefined the limits of surfing. So much so that, two weeks later, on February 8th, an even bigger swell hit Jaws and this time, following the lead of those brave Brazilians, some of the world's most famous big riders

came to try their luck paddling in. Among them: Greg Long, Nathan Fletcher, Mark Healy, Ian Walsh and Sion Milosky. “After seeing pictures of the Brazilians, we had to try it, too”, explained Hawaiian Ian Walsh. “I would never have ventured to paddle in here if I had not seen the images of Danilo, Yuri and Márcio throwing themselves in the ocean, as they did in January.

But of course, the Brazilians dominated the epic session, which had the biggest waves ever surfed paddling throughout history. Danilo Couto even completed a suicide drop to the right – previously considered “off limits” to anyone without a Jet Ski. The wave has been nominated as a favorite to win the Billabong XXL award.” And as reported previously, Danilo did win the Billabong XXL for this wave.



Image 166 – Yuri Soledade, Andréa Moller and Márcio Freire at Jaws- Maui, January, 2011.
SOURCE: Hardcore Magazine, 2011. Photographer, Tracy Leboe



Image 167 – *Márcio Freire at Jaws, swell on the 16th of January 2011.*
SOURCE: Tracy Leboe.

Riding the feared wave of Jaws, Márcio Freire goes down the line, as Jet ski driver observes the spectacle – swell on the 16th of January.

Felipe Cesarano in SURFAR magazine of March / April of 2011 – refers to Márcio Freire in his article.

“... And this season I had the pleasure of meeting Freire, who is really good-natured, humble and even though he lives in Maui, he has never done tow-in. He paddles in and charges it! That’s real surfing! Nothing against the tow in, because I’m starting to practice and getting addicted to it. But there’s no way around it, the real essence and the real challenge way to surf is paddle in, period!”



Image 168 – *Márcio Freire preparing to face Jaws paddling.*
SOURCE: Surfar Magazine, Mar / Apr, 2011. Photographer, Bruno Lemos.

Background picture 168, the famous Peahi point where the gigantic waves of Jaws take form.

In the excellent article, by Pedro Tojal – “*War in Hawaii, part 2 – D-Day*”, in *Surfar* magazine, Mar/Apr, 2011; photographer/journalist Bruno Lemos describes the remarkable surfing day at Jaws in which Danilo, Márcio Yuri and Francisco Portela were protagonists:

D-DAY.

REGISTRATION: Bruno Lemos

OFFICIALS IN ACTION: Danilo Couto, Márcio Freire, Yuri Soledade, Francisco Porcella.

BRIEFING: Jaws is the point with the most powerful waves on the planet, so powerful and perfect that after a long time of being observed the surfers had to find a way to surf them. It is due to these waves that tow-in was invented. And the very inventor of tow-in surfing, Laird Hamilton, once stated that “in Jaws it was not possible to surf paddling” but what is impossible for some, may be possible for others. In 2004, Eraldo Gueiros caught a wave to the right, paddling. Since then, Bahians Yuri Soledade, Danilo Couto and Márcio Freire along with Rodrigo Resende from Rio de Janeiro have also paddle-in surfed lefts at Jaws.

PURPOSE: To open a new route to surf Jaws without using a Jet Ski, going down the hillside through the woods, passing over the rocks carrying “guns” and paddle in surfing the biggest waves ever surfed at Peahi, both to it’s left and right. Get home alive after rewriting paddle in surfing history.



Image – 169 – Danilo and Márcio in the woods, heading towards the most insane operation of the season.

SOURCE: SURFAR Magazine, Mar/Apr, 2011

BRUNO LEMOS' STRATEGY

With this title, Bruno Lemos describes the epic day of January 16th, 2011.

After monitoring the maps for a long time, on the morning of January 16th, 2011, conditions seemed to be propitious. The peak of the swell had already hit Oahu and would hit the island of Maui very early. Danilo and I left Honolulu at three in the morning and were picked up by Márcio at Maui Airport. We headed straight to Peahi. As the sun was rising, both of them were waxing their “guns”, while Bahian Yuri Soledade, Thiago Candelot, from Rio, and the windsurfer Francisco Portela were already in the water. After going down the cliff, and paddling past the shore break, on a true mission of war, the boys managed to make it outside safely.

SURVIVORS

With a westerly swell, the best waves of the day were the lefts. The first to drop in was Márcio Freire. Soon after, it was Yuri's turn and he got a good one. Besides being big, the wave was really long, like an Indonesia giant. As Yuri was coming back from the long paddle-in, Danilo Couto went with everything into the "bomb" of the day. It was a late drop with open arms. After he managed to keep balance on his board he passed the section of the wave to the bottom, and then was "blown up".

Next, it was the Italian's turn, who caught a beautiful left and made a successful drop. Thiago couldn't find a better place at the peak and got caught further down.

Just then, a bigger series tore in, proving again that at Jaws you're never safe. Thiago and the Italian were swept away by a mountain of water. Thiago escaped unharmed, but his comrade Francisco wasn't and he had to get out of the water. The session continued and one of the most bizarre scenes was about to happen. On a big wave in the series, which clearly seemed to be breaking right, Danilo and Márcio paddled together. Couto tried to enter, but the wind literally took him off the wave. Meanwhile, Freire taking no account of the consequences, stood up on his board and began the drop at high speeds. He came from behind the peak, turning the board to the left, making a really air drop. Soon after that, he was swallowed by the giant wall of foam. It was one of the most insane moments I've seen in surfing, the most incredible. Nothing happened to him. To end the session, the guys even caught an other wave together. Three childhood friends ending a historic session on the same wave. What a feeling! Our warriors were greeted as heroes at the top of the cliff. There were lots of people praising them, shaking their hands and taking photos. It was a really exciting time! It was obvious that after that session the future of that spot would forever be changed. The Brazilians proved to the world that it was possible to surf paddle-in waves of that size, which previously seemed impossible. The next day renowned big wave riders got in touch with Danilo Couto asking him to share information they gained in the "operation." They wanted to know how to get down the cliff, how to get through the rocks and how to position themselves on the outside. It was the elite army of big wave riders pumping our "colonel" for info on when the next paddle-in session at Jaws would take place.

MAKING HISTORY... SOME DAYS LATER

No one expected that season would bring another classic day. On February 8th, a more northerly swell hit hard on Jaws, and again the Brazilian squad was there only this time accompanied by a team of big wave experts, Ian Walsh, Mark Healey, Greg Long, Sion Milosky, Nathan Fletcher, among others. They just wanted get to know the break, but ended up starring in one of the best paddle-in surf sessions that the world had ever seen.

In this article Bruno Lemos, even includes Márcio Freire's statement about the waves.

"When the wave came up, I realized I had a chance to do the drop. I stood up on the board quickly, turning and directing the nose of the board to the left. I paddled hard even though I knew I probably would not pass the section. I have no doubt that was the craziest drop I've ever made to this day. My body completely extended twice, giving me the feeling of a free fall. Immediately afterwards, I controlled the board and headed straight to the bottom, trying to get out of the bomb blast. But because it closed out, I didn't have a chance and ended up wiping out hard!"



Image 170 – *Márcio in action*
SOURCE: Photographer, Tracy Leboe



Image 171 – *Márcio and Danilo in front of the spot from where they would paddle to the outside of Jaws*

SOURCE: Photographer, Bruno Lemos

In image 171, the surfers' joy before entering the ocean to surf the big waves at Jaws, the break seen in this photo above.

In April 2011, Danilo Couto won “The Rider of the Year at the XXL Big Wave Award”, considered the “The Oscar of Big Waves” at the Grove Theater in Anaheim, California, which earned him fifty thousand dollars. Shane Dorian won the “Monster Paddle” category. Márcio and Yuri toasting Couto’s win, full of joy and emotion, as seen in photo 172.



Image 172 – Danilo Couto with Márcio Freire and Yuri Soledade, victory toast.
SOURCE: Fluir Magazine, May, 2011.

With all the publicity about Márcio’s wave at Jaws in 2008, and then Danilo’s wave, in 2011, the surf media began intensively reporting big wave paddle-in surfers, aroused the interest of new surfers about surfing at Jaws. In the same year of 2011, the magazine ONDA Magazine, in its June / July issue, featured interviews by big wave riders around the world, and Márcio Freire had a featured interview, as seen in the following excerpts.

“Bahian Márcio Freire, one of the most respected Brazilians for his performances on paddling out at terrifying breaks like Jaws, talks about his life and the most extreme situations that the sea can deliver.

Onda Magazine – Where do you currently live and why did you leave Brazil?

Márcio Freire – I came to Hawaii when I was 23 years old, to spend six months, learn English and fulfill a dream. The surf spun my head, so I decided to stay for the next season, then one more, then another and I here am to this day.

OM – What were the worst situations you have ever faced? What happened?

MF – Even though I’ve done mostly paddle-in all these years, my worst surfing situation was actually in a tow-in session. I was with my friend Yuri Soledade, surfing the Kahului Bay in Maui, at Pier 1. There was a giant swell, hitting the island of Maui. Laird Hamilton said he saw a 100-foot wave that day, at an outer reef on the North Shore of Maui. At Pier 1 the waves were lined up, rolling in, and with 25 foot barrels to the right. It all happened after I caught a wave. I didn’t pass the section and lost my board, which got caught inside. We had to retrieve the board, and then the worst

situation that I've ever gone through in my life took place. After getting the board and trying to make it back outside, we were thrown by a crazy wave inside, which made us unbelievably and unexpectedly lose the jet-ski. Since it was a big day on the inside, the riptide was incredibly strong. Because of that, we were beginning to get taken by the current towards the channel and, consequently, towards the bay of Kahului. We started to swim against the rip current towards it. It was getting dark and I thought we would never get to the jet-ski, and that we would end up drifting in the middle of the bay. I also thought that we would be carried by the current to the high seas as night fell. In short, that we would never be found again, in that turbulent sea with enormous waves and in the darkness of night. On top of that, because there is a port in Kahului bay, that area is infested with sharks. Fear came over us. We had been swimming for more than half an hour. We kept swimming against the rip current because the jet-ski was also being pushed in the same direction. At this stage, it had already been turned upside down. Without giving up, with great faith, effort and lots of swimming, we reached the jet-ski. Then, the next mission was to get it upright. With great strength and grit we were able to flip over the machine. At the beginning of the night, Yuri got on the jet-ski, kissed the key to bring us luck and tried to start it. It started on first try. It was a total relief and the memory of that experience is in our minds.

OM – What was the biggest wave you have ever surfed paddling?

MF- Jaws in a paddle-in session. I surfed a wave that I believe has been the biggest wave I've ever caught to this day. It was about 25 Hawaiian feet. Once reaching the base of the wave, I started bottom turning to reach the wall. It was a monstrous wave. The whitewater that came down like a giant avalanche, reached the tail of my gun. I felt I was losing control of my board, which was carried out of control onto the top of the wall, with my feet still planted. Totally out of control on my 10'6, I made the right decision to throw myself against the wall to try to pop through "the bomb". Luckily, I was able to penetrate the wall of the wave without getting sucked back. I escaped from a hazardous situation, a wave that could have drowned me and dragged me to the rocks. I was even lucky my leash didn't break and that there weren't any other big waves behind that one that could have caught me.

OM – What advice can you give for those who want to surf big waves paddling?

MF – Experience with waves, knowledge of the peak and a good "reading" of the wave.

OM – Do you want to add something?

MF – I would like to congratulate your work and thank you for the opportunity. Aloha!

I close this chapter with Márcio in a spectacular barrel (image 173).



Image 173 – *Márcio Freire, an amazing ride in an amazing barrel, 2011*
SOURCE: Photographer, Giora Koren.

YEAR 2012

It was only after the path had been paved that the world took note of paddle-in at Jaws. After the Mad Dogs had broken new grounds in paddle-in surfing, taking on the terrifying and monstrous waves at Jaws on that memorable day in 2007. It was only after Márcio Freire dropped down one 30 footer in 2008, and after Danilo Couto won the Ride of the Year award in 2011, that the world began to noticing the importance and potential of those waves for big wave paddle-in surfing. From there all the big wave riders, mainly the famous ones wanted to paddle out at Jaws.

By January of 2012, there was actually broad sports media interest in Jaws. The goal was to show the world this spectacle of nature, these giant waves that previously had been considered impossible and unimaginable to surf paddling, and then the

pioneers, the “*mad dogs*” Danilo, Márcio and Yuri proved it was possible. This led many other surfers to enjoy the waves at Jaws – some for pleasure, some for commitments to their sponsors or for the prizes offered at the XXL Big Waves Award.

Bruno Lemos in an article in **Surfar Magazine** from Feb / Mar 2011, asked: “What will be the next step?” He emphasized the feat that this group of three childhood friends started in Hawaii:

“So far there are a lot of people who do not understand how the most powerful wave on the planet, which for years seemed only to be tamed with the aid of a Jet ski, is now being surfed paddling. The most interesting thing is that this “revolution” in the big wave surfing world happened thanks to a group of childhood friends who decided to test their limits and ended up proving to the world that the proverb “The Sky is the limit” is absolutely correct”. Bruno Lemos.

However, the session during the swell of January 2012 was a sad one for Márcio because he had a problem with his board and left the sea without catching a single wave. In this same article, “What will be the next step?” Bruno Lemos referred to the Brazilians and wrote about Márcio: “Of all the “*mad dogs*”, Márcio Freire was only one left who need to catch a wave. Unfortunately, that did not happen and he left the sea paddling.”

Márcio had to have had a good reason for getting out of the water, because it was not common for him to leave Jaws like that, without catching a wave. In the magazine article from Trip magazine “Do you know who Márcio is?” of Lima & Torturra, Márcio explained:

“I went into the sea, but I got all out of focus and I lost the board, trying avoid a wipeout, ” he said. He saw his new surfboard smash into the rocks and had to return to land before he dropped a single wave that day. And no money, sponsorship, no backup board, no vest with compressed air. “Marcinho is a case in point, he’s got lots of grit, pure love of this sport. He enters the ocean with heart and soul. He does not have a safety gear. How many times did he go out alone at Jaws? And he does as well or better than the others.”

“He became one of the greatest big wave riders in the world, one of three “Mad Dogs” who changed the sport by dropping down the giant waves of Jaws paddling.

“... At 36 he is a happy man. Resolved with the past, fulfilled in the present, simple plans for the future. But how can we call someone who decides to face alone, only with

arms and a board, mountains of water breaking with more than 20 feet humble? How can we understand the modesty of someone who decides to ride the biggest waves in Hawaii, paddling, waves so big they had never before been surfed paddling? The answer is simple: because Márcio Freire, as humble as he is, when returning to solid ground, is not concerned about showing the world what he did. That's why he's the world's biggest big wave rider in the world who has not received any fame."

"What's common among the three, most importantly is that they are in a really select group of big wave riders who, paddling, are able to paddle and drop on the really big waves of Jaws. And what's more, it was the three Bahians who, on the same day, pioneered this new frontier of surfing."

"When I came to Hawaii, I completely disengaged from competition. At the time I saw that I would only be a free surfer, working only to pay the bills, self-sponsored and going after the big waves."

"This strange detachment from the public image makes Márcio a rare species in the society of the spectacle, in this golden era of narcissism. Even more in a world like surfing. Even though the ego technically does not mean much at sea, it is not really that way. The fame usually means money in the pocket, as well as plane tickets and facilities to explore waves around the world. And if for many anonymity is a sign of failure, it is difficult to find someone at 36 as fulfilled as the "Mad Dog." "I miss the family, and of course I have to think about the future, about money. But I really love my life here, my lifestyle. Would it be cool to be famous? Of course. But I have to keep focused on what is most important. The freedom I have to develop my surf, my health and my relationship with nature. "

When I first differentiated myself, being a pioneer at Jaws, I started thinking about becoming a professional, but I never went back. I'm cool, surviving, surfing the way I like it", says Márcio Freire.

"Márcio, without false modesty, has expanded, even more, the meaning of that 2007 session." We opened the door not only to professional surfers, but also to a younger crowd in Maui who will enter Jaws differently from now on. That changed the minds of the new generation and it put Maui on the map in another way".

"Once a Mad Dogs, forever a Mad Dogs. He won't change. He is the true symbol of underground surfing "and I predict he will always be". Yuri Soledade referring to Márcio.



Image 174 – Márcio Freire in front of the organic warehouse of Paia, Maui.
SOURCE: Trip, May, 2012

Finishing the article, and as his mother it was touching and moved me because I found it to be very true. It described him perfectly, and deepened the longing in my heart. I felt proud of him. Even though his life had been full of comforts, he chose to live a life that required a lot of sacrifice, but for him it was no sacrifice. It was his choice of life and he did not and does not regret it. He is happy living a dream mixed with the reality of life inside a world called *Surf*. His father, in an email to Márcio, written in August 2002, for his birthday, describes Márcio best.

“This is it, we like you very much the way you are: you live the present without thinking about the future. You’re happy only in a pair of shorts, on a surfboard, on a big wave. You’re content with anything you have to eat. You’re able to sleep on the floor, on a mat, and wake up happy just by seeing the rising sun.”

That same year Red Bull organized a big wave championship at Jaws. The anticipation of participating by the famous surfers was growing. The list of names of the chosen surfers was slowly being released. The name Danilo Couto was announced on the main event list and the public expected the other two Mad Dogs, Márcio and Yuri, to be called, but this did not happen. After that, the organization of the event (Red Bull) announced Márcio and Yuri as alternates for that competition.

Everyone on Maui was clearly disgruntled by the organizers’ decision. Matt Meola and Albee Layer, some of the top talent of the new generation of surfers on Maui and in the world were the first to demand Márcio be added to the main event:

“Márcio Freire is the reason everyone is paddling today. He was one of the first Mad Dogs alongside Yuri Soledade and Danilo Couto, just for the love of it. I remember four years ago, on Christmas Day, there must have been at least 20 tow-in pairs out there (at Jaws). Márcio was the only one paddling. No vest, no Jet Ski rescue. Just determination and “balls” bigger than anyone there. I hope he is included in the event. Thank you, Márcio for encouraging and changing this sport forever, ” exclaimed Matt Meola.

Albee Layer also protested: *“I will personally give up my place if Márcio Freire is the first alternate not taking part in the event. He and some of his friends, like Yuri Soledade and Danilo are the reason we’re all out paddling today. He’s been doing it for five years, no vests, no cameras, just happy and doing it great. I’ve had some big waves out there, but nothing compared to their commitment.”*

Freire celebrated Red Bull’s invitation but made a request:

“I’m proud to have been invited to participate as an alternate in Red Bull, Jaws. I just hope I am the number one alternate after having surfed this break since 2007, while everyone else only showed up at the end of last year.

The opening ceremony of the Red Bull Jaws Paddle at Peahi happened in November 2012 and was held on the famous cliff of that break, with a spiritual celebration, bringing together traditional customs from the island of Maui and also summoning the waves through rituals created by the Polynesian ancestors, the first inhabitants of Hawaii. (Image 175: on the left, the surfers profiled in the previous ceremonial and on the right, the photo of the famous mad dogs Yuri, Danilo and Márcio alongside another Brazilian, also famous, Carlos Burle).



Image 175: joined *photos* – Red Bull Jaws Paddle at Peahi Championship, 2012.
SOURCE: Waves, December 10th, 2012 – Photos by Bruno Lemos.

That same year, to Márcio's surprise, one of his most fantastic waves at Jaws, recorded by photographer Mike Neal, was on display at the XXL Big Wave Awards home page, as well as spread in the January 2012 issue of FLUIR.



Image 176 –
Márcio Freire
surfing Jaws
SOURCE:
Fluir Magazine,
January, 2012.
Photographer,
Mike Neal

This photo 176 was released on the main page of the XXL BigWaves Awards website and also on display at the Gallery of Big Riders, 2012.

Another meaningful fact in Márcio Freire's life, was his debut, that year, in the documentary: **Jaws “Changing of the Game”**. It is the first movie on surfing that relates to Jaws on paddling. Director Wangdu Hovey gave him the opportunity to be the main star by naming him the “dark horse” of the film, (Dark horse is one of the pieces of chess game that easiest moves). Besides showing his performance as a big wave rider, Márcio explains the difficulties of surfing the waves and the obstacles that surround the fearsome waves of Jaws. The part that Márcio represented was considered by all who watched the film, the best, especially the message that he conveyed on the awareness of the importance and value of the environment to avoid littering beaches and also about always doing good things in life to attract good things.

In addition to Márcio Freire, other surfers also participated: Shaun Walsh, Danilo Couto, Jeff Rowley, Albee Layer, Matt Meola, DK Walsh.



Image 177 – Advertising poster of the documentary: “Jaws, Changing the Game in iTunes.”.

About the movie:

As surfers pray for waves in Maui during the winter to select few for the gut-wrenching 30 plus foot walls of water that only Jaws on the North Shore can provide. You may have seen surfers towed into the massive breaks behind a jet ski, but there is a group of riders who will only paddle into them, taking the sport to an even more extreme level that only a few years ago was thought impossible.

To close, the poetic greeting his uncle and godfather gave him on his birthday – 08/19/2012.

Even though the celebration of your birthday was held beforehand, as I am your godfather, I could not avoid sending a message this Sunday, the real day. It is a day that is more than a special date, because it symbolizes your philosophy of life to have the freedom to do what you like, achieving happiness through constant contact with nature and the sea, and that is what makes you a unique 37 year old man. As there is the logical complexity of mathematics, in its summation, it makes you, due to your simplicity, a hundred percent of an awesome guy. CONGRATULATIONS my great godson. We look forward to your arrival to your good homeland in 2013. An extended Aloha.

*Sea, sweet sea, mysterious sea,
 sung in verses and prose, you dazzle,
 When a giant tsunami-style wave hits the horizon.
 A defiant figure makes deference to your dwelling,
 Rides Jaws paddling, floats on the board with great ease,
 In an immensity and whirlwind of salt water*

*That bows in this endeavor, to the prodigal son Mad Dogs, our comrade,
And lets him interact with this inhospitable nature:
The heart beats in a mixture of intimacy, courage and pleasure,
The spirit calms down and provides in the magic,
Beautiful acrobatic maneuvers,
Under the enchanted and permissive gaze of Neptune, the king of the sea.*

Rivaldo Freire Costa.

YEAR 2013:

“Challenging Jaws paddling represents for many the greatest challenge of a big wave surfer”

Márcio Freire, one of the pioneers of Peahi –Jaws, is one of those great wave surfers whose fearlessness, courage and determination, that respecting the sea, challenges it with caution and prudence. Nowadays, he protects himself when surfing Jaws, using what is necessary for his safety, especially his vest. It's less worrisome for him to be out in the water now, but especially because he is one of the greatest experts on how the waves at Jaws operates.

In a clip released on internet on April 24th in that year of 2013: “Peahi Surf Media”, he talks about the first sessions, often alone at Jaws:

“Surfing Jaws alone was very difficult, mainly on positioning myself in the line up. I always made sure I would not stop on the “inside” with a big series coming to break on me. After a couple of paddling seasons, I thought all the professional surfers and big wave riders would surf paddling there as well, but it turned out that it took a few years for this to happen. I always focused on the lefts, because I thought that the rights would be impossible, very fast and dry... It opened my eyes when the big wave surfers arrived and began to drop to the right. The feeling of surfing the rights is even better because the chance of catching a bigger barrel is greater. I'm so grateful to have survived for surfing Jaws all these years.”

Márcio Freire

In 2013, Hardcore magazine highlighted Márcio Freire in an interview by Matias Lovro:

10 QUESTIONS – MARCIO FREIRE

“As the world noticed the first evidence of surfing in Jaws paddling, this 36-year-old from Bahia had already been a pioneer. He was not included in the main list on the Red Bull Jaws Paddle at Peahi, and saw locals as Matt Meola and Albee Layer protesting in his favor. In the following lines, one of the guys who redefined big-wave surfing talks about life on Maui, lack of sponsorship, and pioneering Peahi.

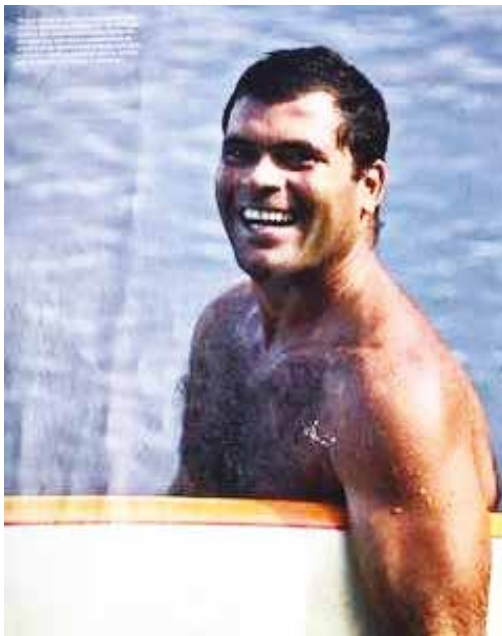


Image 178 – Márcio Freire – Photo of the interview with a nice smile.

SOURCE: Photographer, Bruno Lemos in Hardcore Magazine, n. 281, 2013.

When did you go surfing Jaws for the first time?

I never paid attention to the tow-in. When Brazilian surfers started to invest in this, I had just arrived in Hawaii and I thought: first, I want to develop my paddle-in surfing, then I'll think about tow-in surfing. I don't want to take a step further.

I wanted to show myself that I could evolve on paddling without losing focus on tow-in surfing. I did not even want to watch, from the cliff, the surfers pulled by Jet skis, I was going to catch waves in another spot – some Outer Reef, or Honolua Bay. My first four years I dedicated to the North Shore, in Waimea, Sunset. Even though I lived in

Maui, when Waimea broke, I always took a flight to surf there.

When did you first get Jaws paddling?

Danilo and Yuri would always catch tow-in there, but Danilo knew the place had potential for paddling. In March of 2007, when we saw there was going to be a big swell and with good wind conditions, we made our first session on Jaws, paddling. On that day, I thought, "I don't believe it, I've been here in Maui for several years and I, who am goofy, just surfed that big left from Jaws now." From then on, I embraced the cause. I decided to surf any swell that came there. But it's not as if we Brazilians were the first to surf Jaws paddling, because Eraldo Gueiros himself surfed there in 2005, Yuri and Rodrigo Resende the same year, Matt Kinoshita, Cris Bertish a South African, surfed paddling in 2002. But those weren't big days. On a Christmas, there was a swell that I paddled into. Danilo saw that it would be suicide and he caught me at the right time, took me to the channel and said: "Damn, look at those waves there first. Are you sure you wanna do it? This sea is not for paddling. That day, I gave it up. I was kind of inconsequential because I had been injured at Jaws on Thanksgiving a month earlier. After that period all doing nothing, just waiting for the knee to improve, I went to the water the first day thinking that I was going to get a "bomb". I entered the sea totally out of shape. What was worth the attitude of that day was that my friends here from Maui Kiva Rivers and his brother Tide said they would take me to the wave by tow-in. I caught a cool wave, but I realized I was not ready for that.

What did you think of tow-in?

I had done it a few times with Yuri. I never really liked it, but with the tow-in you catch a lot more waves than you would, paddling, which is cool. But for me, the greatest feat is catching waves paddling. To this day I feel like I have to train tow-in to solidify the learning. Being tow-in is nice, I know, but driving the jet ski, rescuing, putting my partner on the wave... I have to learn and practice that. After a safety workshop at sea, I saw how important it is to know how to ride a Jet ski and make a rescue. I've been thinking about it a lot lately.

– Do you feel, in a way, you were pioneering paddle-in at Jaws?

Dude, of course. Not that I'm the number one pioneer, but I know I was an important person in the history of paddling at Jaws. I was not the pioneer who surfed once and never came back. The first time I surfed in there, I thought, "I live here in Maui, I don't have the money to travel the world and catch waves all year long, " so I decided to focus on Jaws. Into several swells, I entered without Yuri, without Danilo.

– Do you think last October’s session took surfing in Jaws to another level?

Yes, especially on the first day. It was classic – smooth, no wind, conditions were perfect. It had a 20-foot series, with thick waves. By the end of the afternoon, when it was time for the surfers to have a blast in the sea, the bigger waves started to come. It was undoubtedly the best swell by paddling of all times. Everyone caught waves. Greg Long and Shane Dorian gave a show, they got the best ones. It was a historic session, given those conditions. It was two days of a lot of surfing.

– Do you feel wronged to be an alternate of the Red Bull Jaws?

If I do an honest analysis, I know it was for me to be there on that main list for my multi-year history. The surfers of Maui were indignant. But I do not feel wronged. I think I could, yes, be in a better situation than alternate, but this is the first year of the event and I still have not shown much going to the right, not yet possible to catch a wave like Danilo’s, who took the “Ride Of The Year “of XXL. So I guess I’m in a good position. I think I should be at the event, but maybe the time hasn’t come yet.

– Do you feel safe on the right?

I’m getting more self-confident, I think I’m on the right track. At the right time that wave will come, the wave in which I will show my worth, because I know that I have talent, that I ride well on the backside, that I have a good line – even because I learned to catch big waves backside.



Image 179 – *Márcio Freire with parents celebrating his birthday, Maui, 2013.*

SOURCE: Freire e Silva Family’s archive.

In Image 179, the joy of his parents and friend Yuri celebrating his 38th birthday.

3.6 2014 – 2016

2014 YEAR.

With the explosion of paddling surf at Jaws in 2014, Jet Ski lost its supremacy, the arena which only belonged to tow-in surfing, also became a paddle-in surfing arena and Maui became the world capital of big wave paddle-in surfing. It was generally also known as the capital of ocean sports such as canoeing, paddle board, windsurfing and tow-in surfing.

At each swell, the amount of surfers paddling in Jaws was increasing. In this January swell, around 60 surfers competed for waves at Jaws, thanks to the pioneering spirit of Danilo Couto, Márcio Freire and Yuri Soledade, who broke new ground surfing those monstrous waves paddling on a big day, opening the way for all big wave riders to enjoy Jaws.

“Surfing Jaws is pure adrenaline and each wave is a story that will never be repeated.... Surfing Jaws requires a good deal of experience... being strong and brave is not enough. You must be skillful to complete the wave... the pleasure of conquest remains within our souls forever” Andrea Moller.



Image 180 – *Brazilian Mad Dogs Márcio Freire, Yuri Soledade and Andrea Moller after surfing at Jaws. Andrea Moller was the first woman to surf Jaws paddle-in with the support of two mad dogs: Márcio Freire and Yuri Soledade.*

SOURCE: The Surfer's Journal, Brazil, year. 2, n.6, 2014. Photographer, Tracy Leboe

In Hardcore magazine, n. 293, photo of Márcio in which he says: *“It was great to go to Jaws by boat and with friends. We had backup surfboards and all the groceries at hand for an epic big-wave day, but the crowd got in the way a bit. It was difficult to choose and catch the right wave. Days like that are more dangerous too, but even so, we went there and surfed the same way.” Márcio Freire*



Image 181 – *Marcio Freire at Jaws, swell of 2014.*

SOURCE: Hardcore, year 24, n.293, Mar, 2014.

On November 14th of this year a large 30-foot swell marked the start of the Hawaiian season at Peahi, and *mad dogs* Danilo Couto, Márcio Freire and Yuri Soledade faced Jaws’ “bombs” in memorable performance. Picture 182 shows Márcio’s performance.



Image 182 – *Márcio Freire in Jaws, in a remarkable swell.*
 SOURCE: Hardcore, No. 302, Dec, 2014.

“Pioneer paddling at Jaws, Márcio Freire is another Brazilian who stood out in the 30-foot “bombs”. He has a lot of experience in Jaws. “It’s just the beginning of this Hawaiian season that’s really going to be thrilling.”



Image 183 – *Márcio Freire*
 SOURCE – Surfar magazine, in July.
 Photographer, Fred Pompermayer.

The SURFING Magazine, in the issue of February in that year, had an article, “Define Big”, in which there’s a photo with the world’s best big wave surfers in the world, among whom is Márcio Freire. He’s in the first row, crouched, and Danilo Couto stands in the second row, both on the right in image 184. For Brazilians, especially for us, seeing them in this famous group of Big Wave Riders, considered the best in the world, makes us extremely proud.



Image 184 – *The best big wave riders of the world*
SOURCE: Surfing Magazine, February 2014.

YEAR 2015

The great swell coming from the west towards the island of Maui. Everyone was looking forward to the biggest swell of the Hawaiian seasons. Initially, the swell arrived with a lot of wind and few waves by day, but at dusk the waves were growing with every series in Peahi. At that moment the buoys marked 23 feet with 17 seconds. The “bombs” were surfed paddling by the big riders who knew how to face and enjoy this phenomenon of nature, especially the mad dogs Márcio, Danilo and

Yuri. Other surfers were also surfing that break, confronting the waves: Albee Layer, Kai Lenny, Lucas Chianca, Pedro Scooby, Felipe Cesarano, Ian Walsh. It was an epic moment of surfing in Hawaii, the Mecca of this sport in the world.



Image 185 – *Márcio Freire surfing at Jaws, swell of January, 2015.*
SOURCE: DoomaPhotos

“Márcio Freire is part of the Mad Dogs that dominate the feared lefts, but knows how to face the right waves with insane drops.” As Bruno Lemos described it in February/2015.

In January, all the surfers waited anxiously for two major surfing events in Hawaii: **Eddie Aikau** in Waimea – Oahu, and **the Peahi Challenge**.

After so much expectation and speculation, these two events were canceled. Among the main reasons were the arrival time of the swell later in the afternoon, strong winds and timing.

For the local surfers and those who were not enrolled in those events, it was good news because the big waves of the big swell of January would be available to everyone.

Márcio surfed giant waves at Jaws, like the one shown in picture 185. That year he suffered a scary wipeout.

After recovering from the wipeout, he reported such terrible episode for Kevin Damasio of Hardcore magazine and that was published in an article under the title: “Prepared for chaos”

“In my mind nothing would stop me in that swell. I entered the ocean focused and with faith that I would catch a “bomb”. For twenty minutes I waited for the wave from the right, that one I wanted so badly. I paddled hard with no hesitation and dropped into the right. It was a completely air drop and I lost my balance on the “gun”. It was the beginning of the nightmare. I had the feeling that the worst could happen. I tried to keep calm and relax during the wipeout. When I fell off the board, I felt my body hit the wave wall for the first time. I protected my head with my hands to avoid a possible clash with the board. Meanwhile, the wave was rolling. I felt my body making a full rotation. It was a moment unlike any other wipeout I’ve ever had. In the air, I fell and spun at the same time.

I bounced in front of the wave, which afterwards “swallowed me alive” and despite attempts to relax, I was enveloped by Peahi’s submerged turbulence. I didn’t breathe for a few seconds or make sudden movements. The chaos lasted until I decided to activate the safety equipment to return to the surface and so take some air. That’s what helped me out of that unforgettable wipeout.”

The news of this terrifying wipeout made the news and ran worldwide on: TV, newspapers, magazines, national and international blogs. The photo (image 13) of this insane episode is in the opening chapter of this book.

With this wipeout he was among the five finalists of the XXL Billabong Award, Wipeout of the Year Category, but unfortunately may be fortunately the winner was Benjamim Sanches on the fearsome Nazaré beach in Portugal, which ended even more tragically.



Image 186 – *Márcio Freire, Márcio Viana and Cadu at the XXL Billabong Award, 2015, California.*
SOURCE: Personal Archive Márcio Freire

In image 186, Márcio Freire and his friends anticipate the results of the “Wipeout of the Year” Award 2015 in good humor.

Márcio Freire dedicated his whole life to surfing. He was facing and challenging giant waves of more than 15 meters, paddling out at Jaws, the most dangerous and violent spot in the world and due to that he became a reference in paddle-in surfing. Not making money as a surfer, he has always tried to get by on his own in Hawaii. “When I moved here that dream of becoming a professional surfer changed too. I just wanted to work to survive and sponsor myself to surf... the only money I ever earned as a professional surfer was at this season as a Wipeout of the Year finalist. “For me, surfing and money have never been related. I’m a Soul Surfer “. He reiterates.



Image 187 – *Márcio Freire at the HAWAIIAN CANOE CLUB, 2015.*
SOURCE: Márcio Freire’s personal archive.

Life for Márcio continued in a positive flow with the release of the documentary “Mad Dogs”, which made lifted his spirits as he was a protagonist along with Danilo Couto and Yuri Soledade.

This documentary premiered in Brazil on October 17th, 2015 and the series on the 23rd of this month on Channel OFF n. 36 on SKY, closed captioned television.

The 8th episode, which relates to Márcio, was excellent and highly praised. Roberto Sturdart, director of the movie, captured the pioneering essence of the Brazilians from Bahia in Hawaii began the paddle-in tradition on some of the biggest waves in the world. It is a fantastic work, especially the chapter relating to our son, Márcio. We were extremely moved and could barely contain all the emotion. Márcio, one of the pioneers at Jaws, got his well-deserved recognition after the long years of sacrifice in chasing his dream, which has finally come true through his efforts.

“The documentary Mad Dogs tells the life, story and career of Márcio, Danilo and Yuri known as Mad Dogs who revolutionized the history of surfing by challenging Jaws, the most massive and heaviest waves in the world, only paddling, without the aid of a Jet Ski or of any other safety equipment. “It is a documentary of 75 minutes, with 10 episodes of 30 minutes, narrated by the Bahian actor Vladimir Brichta, friend and countryman of the protagonists; Directed by Roberto Sturdart, also from Bahia. It’s a CIA Primitivo production. The scenes were recorded in Hawaii, Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Santa Catarina.”

The interview of image 188, on the website of the Santa Barbara INDEPENDENT online magazine, the interviewee was Roberto Studart, director of the series OS MAD DOGS and the interviewer was Ethan Stewart.

How did you find this story and what made you want to tell it?

I’ve known Marcio and Danilo (two of the film’s stars) for over 20 years and since they moved to Hawaii, I’ve been following their steps. When Danilo won the XXL “Ride of the Year” award in 2011, my producer and I had a meeting and came to the conclusion that we had a great story beyond what the mainstream media was telling.

What is the origin of the nickname Mad Dogs?

From what I found out, when shooting the film, Maui locals started to call them that way, after the earliest sessions in Jaws. At that time they were climbing down the unexplored cliff and jumping in from the rocks with no rescue team, no safety, no vests, no plan B. Insane.

What do you think it is that drives the film's stars Danilo and Yuri and Marcio?

These guys are not normal people. They have an appetite for some feeling that only they themselves can explain. I believe they belong to a group of people to whom money is just not enough. They need more than just a regular life based on work, family, and things. And they are ready to give their lives for it.

Do you think the boys are more respected in Hawaii than they are at home in Brazil?

They're more known in Hawaii. They've been living there for many years and, plus, we don't have huge waves in Brazil so this whole thing seems a little distant from the Brazilians day-to-day life. But the Mad Dogs story is bigger than big wave surf. It's about three human beings who have risked their lives for years, with absolutely no support, in the name of a dream. And as soon as the Brazilians realize what they have accomplished, they will love them. Many already do.

Why do you think the mainstream surf media has largely ignored the role these guys played in bringing back paddle-in big wave surfing?

Because mainstream surf media is compromised of sponsors, brands and certain surfers who better fit the media's desired profile. We all know that, right? They want to sell the show, not the truth. They had 6-foot-tall-blond-hair Laird Hamilton towing into 20 waves in less than 10 minutes and suddenly three guys from the northeast of Brazil jump in and say "Get the fuck out, we're paddling this shit". They had no sponsors, they don't like cameras, and they had nothing to offer in return... Nothing but the revolution.



Image 188 – Image from Santa Barbara California Journal. *The Independent*, Roberto Studart interviewed about the MAD DOGS.

SOURCE: STUDART, Roberto. Mad Dogs, 2015.

THE YEAR 2016

Another season of giant waves rolled in, and this time caused by El Niño. In January there were four bombshell waves at Jaws that took place on the 4th, 10th, 15th and 27th of that month. However, on the 25th of February, the largest swell appeared, and the most frightening wave ever to be seen. The Mad Dogs were present at all of those sessions, paddling, except for the swell on the 25th of February. Due to the monstrous size of the waves that reached from 60 to 80 feet faces, equivalent to approximately 20 to 23 meters of height, Márcio and Yuri entered the sea with the aid of Jet ski. The scene was frightening due to the gigantic and terrifying size of those mountains of moving water, which spectators on the cliff witnessed. The surfers who have successfully challenged them surely have reached the desired and pleasurable level of stress that only they know and feel. It has to do with what Márcio, in the series MAD DOGS, said in his special chapter, the 8th. He said that it is not to get famous in the media, to make money, or to be praised, but what really matters is to feel that dizzying mountain of raging water drawing him closer to nature that makes him feel free and happier.

Márcio, in the Hardcore magazine article, talks about that swell on the 15th and the 17th.

“The swell on the 15th was absurdly big. A group was positioned right outside; another group was positioned at the inner side, in the West Bowl. I placed myself between the two groups and the greatest right of my life came to me. The drop took a long time and the wave grew a lot. As I dropped, I was worried that I could not make the bottom turn soon enough, only at the last minute. Unlike that, on the 27th, from the boat, I analyzed the left side waves and, in my opinion, was not able to paddle into the biggest of the series. But at the end, I was with the right board, a 10’6”. I far out from the outside there and moved closer to the side of the channel – as a matter of safety. I was looking at the cliff and the valley. I kept my breath calm and let my body be prepared in case I fell off the board. The sets came in and I paddled into the second. I had never made such a scary drop. On the way down. I felt my body extend all over and I had the impression that I would fall off. But I kept balance and I kept going down. I reached the base, took two little steps forward, and the whitewater caught me. Without any doubt, it was the biggest and best wave I’ve ever surfed in my life. It must have been about 30 Hawaiian feet or 50, 60 feet face”.



Image 189 – Márcio Freire in the swell of the 15th of January, 2016.

SOURCE: Fred Pompermayer



Image 190 – *Márcio Freire in the same swell of the 15th of January, 2016.*
SOURCE: Jimmie Hepp



Image 191 – *Márcio going down at jaws and facing the rocks, 2016.*
SOURCES: DoomaPhotos and Erik Aeder

Márcio considers the swell of January 27th the most massive and best wave that he has ever surfed paddling. With that wave he entered the wave list recognized by the WSL.



Image 192 – *Márcio's wave from the January 27th, 2016 swell.*
SOURCE: Jorma Rodieck



Image 193 – *The wave from the swells on January 27th.*
SOURCE: Photographer, Jorma Rodieck

SWELL OF FEBRUARY 25th, 2016.

On February 25th, 2016, on the island of Maui in Jaws, the biggest swell in years rolled in, with the hair-raising, monstrous, heavy waves previously described. While Márcio and Yuri faced Jaws on that day, Danilo Couto competed in Oahu, at the Eddie Aikau, one of the most famous surfing events in the surfing world. However, the victory went to American John John Florence.

In Peahi the scene was monstrous, uncrowded, windless, with few surfers because the Oahu event drew the big wave riders there, leaving the Jaws practically empty. It was hard to defy those waves, impossible to tame them with the arms due to their gigantic size, so Márcio and Yuri faced them with the support of a jet ski (tow-in). The beautiful wave that Márcio surfed on the right side is shown in Image n. 196, where you can see the impressive size of the wave. On surfing those waves by jet ski, Márcio said: “*It’s so cool, tow-in surfing, I mean surfing waves you can’t surf paddling*”. According to Yuri: “gigantic waves like that one on the 25th are only possible to surf by tow-in: “Paddling and tow-in are two totally different ways and each has its place and its right moment”.

Rosaldo Cavalcanti, in the article about Andréa Moller *Mulher do Mar* (“Woman of the Sea”), discusses the difference between tow-in and paddle-in surfing:

“There are two basic differences between tow-in and paddling. In tow-in, the surfer counts on the speed of the jet ski and is already standing on the board before entering the wave. Contrarily, with paddle-in surfing the surfer is forced to adjust the drop, paddling, lying on his board. The second difference is that in tow-in surfing, the surfers wait for the waves behind the break line (linha de arrebentação); different from that, the paddling surfers position themselves just before the impact zone. One of the biggest dangers of paddling surfing is paddling into the wrong wave, not being able of getting into it and the whole series hitting you – a situation that hardly ever happens in tow-in surfing”.

This technical information clarified to us just how dangerous paddle-in can be as opposed to tow-in, and the ferocious strength required to get enough speed paddling to accompany the velocity of the wave and do the drop successfully, without getting thrown over by the lip or caught somewhere on the face.



Image 194 – *Márcio's biggest wave: swell on February 25th, 2016.*

SOURCE: Aaron Lynton

On February 25th, Yuri Soledade surfed a gigantic wave, and with that wave he won on April 24th the award in the category “Biggest Wave” at the XXL Billabong Award event in Anaheim, USA. This award also filled Márcio with joy, who considers Yuri one of his best friends or rather a true brother and soul brother at surfing.



Image 195 – *Yuri Soledade, “Biggest Wave”, 2016.*
SOURCE: Photographer, Fred Pompermayer

In 2016, the documentary “Mad Dogs” reached a wider audience, having been shown in five film festivals in the United States, as previously mentioned – in California: the Santa Barbara Movie Festival and the Newport Beach Movie Festival. In Hawaii, it debuted in June at the Maui Film Festival, and on August 1st at Surf Movie Festival at the Honolulu Museum of Art – Oahu and at the Waimea Ocean Movie Festival, Big Island, in January, 2017.

After the exhibition of the documentary, *Mad Dogs*, in Santa Barbara, the film and its crew were highly praised and applauded. The protagonists Márcio Freire, Danilo Couto, Yuri Soledade and the director Roberto Studart, during the opening ceremony of its release, thanked the presence of all.



Image 196 – *Interview and thanks from Márcio, Danilo, Yuri and Director Roberto Sturdart at the Santa Barbara Film Festival – California, April, 2016.*
SOURCE: Márcio Freire's personal archive.

This image shows the “MAD DOGS” with director Roberto Studart at the meeting of the Santa Barbara International Film Festival – California.



Image 197-Márcio Freire in Ventura – California – 2016. *Márcio Freire after surfing in Ventura, California during the period of the Santa Barbara Film Festival, documentary showing of “Mad Dogs”, 2016.*
SOURCE:Photographer, Márcio Viana



Image 198 – Danilo, Yuri Soledade and Márcio Freire at the Maui – Film Festival, June, 2016. The joy of the Mad Dogs for the success of the opening at the Maui Film Festival.

SOURCE: Márcio Freire’s personal archive.



Image 199 – The Mad Dogs embrace Felipe Cesarano (Gordo); Pedro Calado in the Newport Beach Film Festival.

SOURCE: Márcio Freire’s personal archive.

Felipe Cesarano (“Gordo”) and Pedro Calado: surfers of the new generation went to the release of the documentary Mad Dogs. This event happened at the Newport Beach Film Festival in California. In Hawaii the release of “MAD DOGS” was at the Maui Film Festival and had the biggest audience of all festivals held there, receiving the Audience Award.

Márcio is a true “waterman”, as he is sometimes called. He is a man of the sea, a definition he identifies with and deeply lives in a relationship with the sea that resembles friendship and with the utmost respect. His whole life has been near the sea

and living in the sea, which dominates his mind, body and spirit. Water sports have always been his reason for living, and mainly surfing, which has become the overriding passion in his life. There is nothing in the world that fulfills his life as much as surfing. The happiness of his contact with the sea, nature and the universe is always reflected in his jovial and friendly smile. His happiness is contagious and the friends who share his life brim with happiness too. In our journeying with him through various places on Maui, we see and feel just how much he is really loved and celebrated. People greeted us everywhere and he always replied with satisfaction and that charismatic smile showing his great affinity with the locals and their affinity with him. We saw how surfing fulfilled him and still fulfills him, but in the core of his being we questioned where there was something lacking, something that would complete his dream: to be a professional surfer and to make a living from that work. We know finding a strong sponsor is the only way to professionalize in surfing, and because Marcio is such a humble person, many opportunities slipped through his fingers. It is challenging and difficult to reconcile the two things the way he did it and has been doing it. Nowadays, regret for the lack of a sponsorship no longer exists. The past is past. He survived and with his dreams fulfilled, he achieved his goals –the goals of a soul surfer. And in spite of him having had to make it on his own, or maybe because of all of that, we felt him strengthened and happy.

Besides surfing he has four jewels in his life: the nephew Pedro and niece Isabela who live in São Paulo, his brother Bruno and Patricia's children, who have been with him twice in Hawaii; And the twins Moana and Tainá, his sister Itana and Jefferson's daughters, who also live in Hawaii and interact with him in their games, songs, walks, singing, in the sea, with much love and affection calling him by: UNCLE MÁRCIO. The joined photos in image 203 shows the jewels that make him really happy.



Image 200 – *Márcio Freire and his nephew Pedro and nieces Isabela, Moana and Tainá.*

CHAPTER 4

MÁRCIO FREIRE'S ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION EFFORTS ON MAUI

Márcio's relationship with nature is very strong. On the island of Maui, where he lives, in the Hawaiian archipelago of paradisiacal volcanic islands, he contemplates this delicate, beautiful and exuberant ecosystem and its colorful vegetation. Concerned about all its diversity, fauna and flora, all the fish species unique to this region; he is vigilant about preserving this delicate environment.

With this goal, he has implemented an informal recycling program in which he recycles the garbage that affects the local ecology. He has tentative plans to start a garbage recycling company: "Big Wave Recycling". Although he has not officially implemented this program, he carries out a kind of pilot version, systematically driving his old remodeled pick-up truck to several key areas, collecting trash, that can be recycled, from homes. After the collection, he takes it all to the recycling centers where they are separated and go through pre-processing. Later they are sent to sites for processing to be turned into material for remanufacturing or sites where they will be reused as is. Committed to preserving the natural environment, he takes this responsibility seriously and translates it into concrete actions that serve to care for the natural world around him.

In the documentary, MAD DOGS, his concern for environmental preservation is clear, showing footage of Márcio engaged in this philanthropic activity. The film presents scenes from his life, working on garbage collection while Roberto Studart, the film director, comments on what brought Márcio to this activity. Márcio describes it in his own words as well. *"Recycling is very important to me. Currently I don't charge anything for this work. I just collect the items to recycle and feel gratified for helping others. Big Wave Recycling is a way for me to act autonomously, and not depend on anyone else. It's a cool activity and gives me the greatest personal pleasure and*

satisfaction since I am helping the environment, and helping families. Unexpectedly, recycling has also promoted me personally as well, without private sponsorships, which is a surprising and special collateral reward. “

Those who know Márcio, know that this sentiment of joy in his words are true. In this activity, in his marriage with the Island of Maui, in his enchantment with Jaws, in his aura, in his joy to be with his Hawaiian and Brazilian friends, he leads a life of happiness.

In the image of nature, Márcio prepares for another day of environmental preservation activities, caring for nature.

Keep it up, son!!! I'm proud of your commitment to this work.

CHAPTER 5

HAWAIIAN CHARM

The people living in the Hawaiian archipelago, mainly on the island of Maui that enchants with its natural beauty, which enchants with the energy it breathes, are spellbound and never want to leave. It is this energy of nature that holds sway over Márcio in that fantastic archipelago of the Pacific, bringing him deeper and deeper into surfing, in the great waves of Jaws, and in the good friendships he has developed. I know that his happiness is there. The hope of his return to our home where happiness also reigns has vanished like smoke in space and time.

Márcio showed courage, persistence, attitude, and determination in achieving the dream of being a great surfer. He has always lived the “HERE” and “THE NOW”. The future does not exist for him. He had every opportunity to continue his studies in Hawaii, having our support as he has, but surfing is his reason for living. Despite many obstacles and difficulties confronted along the way, his will prevailed, his love for surfing wins, even though he has never had any sponsorship, which could, at least, have given him a great initial boost in a professional surfing career. This has never happened, but he continued and continues to move forward in life, working on surfing and simultaneously practicing another sport that he also loves: Outrigger Canoe Paddling. With that, he is fully integrated with Hawaiian culture. Sometimes I even believe that his spirituality has something to do with “past lives”, which has something to do with the Polynesian origin of the people who inhabit the Hawaiian archipelago. I have never seen anything as strongly embedded in his ego as the qualities of these great people. Simple life, freedom, nature, sea, and forest –they are all an integral part of his life, and all that’s needed for him to be happy! Hence, the eternal smile on his lips never fades.

Today, analyzing Márcio’s life, I can conclude that he really is an enlightened person. He deeply followed his ideals and achieved his goals, always protected by the

gods, over the many years surfing big waves, especially at Jaws. He has never suffered a serious accident. He had many terrifying wipeouts, but always managed to get out of them without serious injuries. Despite many difficulties, he was able to live out his dream, up to the end, getting where he wanted to go. In the competition for getting the biggest waves, many have surpassed him, but he takes it in stride, as normal, knowing that these things often depend on the surfer's luck. For him, catching waves is not a competition, but an eternal satisfaction, and the victories of others fill him with joy, especially when those victories are of people he considers brothers, such as Yuri and Danilo, and his cheerful smile always radiating his jovial face.

Now that Márcio and my other children are far from home, the rooms seem larger and emptier. Waiting for his return, is painful as well as for the return of my other children (Bruno and Itana) and grandchildren. My tears flow in the ache of longing, especially when I go to their bedrooms, newly renovated, displaying in each corner, on each wall, remembrances of them through objects, trophies, pictures, medals.



Image set 201 – *Márcio's bedroom before and after being renovated.*

The first picture shows his former room – extremely messy – which he shared with his brother Bruno. By the headboard, there was a nightstand that separated the

two beds and on the wall there was a bulletin board with photos and shelves with Bruno's trophies, similar to Marcio's. The following three photos, show the renovated room. presenting in the first photo a panel with two waves at Jaws and one at Mavericks-California, next to the glass-topped desk displaying his collection of medals; In the second picture a surfboard, a magazine rack with surf magazines with articles and photos of Márcio next to a bookcase with glass and wooden shelves, with its collection of trophies won during his surfing period in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, some souvenirs and finally the third picture with three plaques on the wall, one of them in silver, in his honor, thus engraved:

“SURF TALENTS”

**Mr. Márcio Freire for the
Participation in development
Of sport in the State of Bahia.
Salvador, April 16th, 1998.
Real Spirit of Surf**

Now we come to the end of this “book”, though I don't know if I can call it that. It is actually more a pastiche of reproductions of texts and original photos from magazines, newspapers, websites, that echo what I have written, which translates the life of a child, of a teenager and an adult named Márcio. At different times in his life he was called: *Massarico*, *Pancinha*, *Bolha*, but for me, he will always be Marcinho, who brought us much joy and happiness, but also sadness and longing for the long years of his absence.

Today he is a reference in Maui, Hawaii where he has inspired and influenced dozens of surfers of this new generation. He is also a very respected and much loved person in Maui, still carrying in his heart that passion called SURF, which gave him the most noble title of his surfing career: “Pioneer of Jaws paddle-in” along with Danilo Couto and Yuri Soledade. Their feat and title are and will forever be recorded in the world history of Big Wave Surfing, as shown in the documentary “THE MAD DOGS” by the great Bahian filmmaker, resident in São Paulo, Roberto Studart, to whom we pay homage and congratulations on the great legendary work. It also shares the story of this humble human figure, courageous, and a person of unique character, the soul surfer named Márcio Freire. On the other hand, in this work, we have also registered the presence of his companions, his childhood friends,

Danilo Couto and Yuri Soledade, winners of one of the most noble prizes in Big Wave Surfing: “Biggest Wave Surfed” won by Danilo in 2011 and Yuri in 2016.

Finally in 2016 in the TOP RANKING of “WOOHOO” program, Márcio Freire is among the ten greatest surfers of Big Waves History of Brazilian surfing. This remarkable achievement of Márcio was also announced online at Woohoo on April 26th, 2017. In this same year, the newspaper Maui Times published the BEST OF THE YEAR OF MAUI HAWAII and in the category of the Best Big Wave Surfers, Marcio Freire won 3rd place and was very happy with what he considered another great victory achieved



Image 202 – *Márcio is doing everything to keep his way down the line at Peahi. He completed this drop on a monster wave on 01/13/2018. He still charging big waves these days.*

SOURCE: *DoomaPhotos*

With the words of Márcio’s uncle Rivaldo, we end this book, which has presented an important part of Márcio’s life, which we hope and are certain is going to

be long, and beautiful as the following homage, on the occasion of his birthday on August 19th, 2016, describes.

“Today August 19th, special day, my great godson Márcio Freire is celebrating his birthday. In his honor, I write these verses that express all of his sense of challenge, adventure, real contact with nature, a sense of full freedom, as well as synthesizing the pleasure of doing and practicing what he enjoys, the air he breathes, respect for the sea and love for life. A lot of surf, health, peace and happiness. CONGRATULATIONS. Surfing is to sprout within your being the feeling of full freedom, Surfing is challenging and uprooting the mysterious and dangerous sea, Surfing is always being in touch with nature and learning to love, Surfing is to confront and join with waves that swell at any time and place, Surfing is an exalted feeling of excitement and adventure to cope with, Surfing is finding your self and your peace of mind without blinking, Surfing is dedicating a true love for people and life. To surf is to be Márcio Freire who is the synthesis of all these verses.



Image 203 – *Márcio facing the shorebreak at Peahi.*
SOURCE Mike Neal

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