

WHEN HOBIE MET PHIL, IT HAPPENED AT DOHENY



Lewis and Clark, Abbott and Costello, Learner and Loewe; there are many famous couples across history who, because they chanced to find each other, had a greater impact in the world they lived in than if they hadn't met at all. In surfing, probably the two most linked together names are surfboard builder / boat builder **Hobie Alter** and surfing legend / board shaper **Phil Edwards**, whose combined skills, genius and vision, shaped the worlds of surfing, skateboarding, sailing and more. So how did these two



“surfer guys” happen upon each other? Here’s the story found in **Bruce Beal’s and the Dana Point Historical Society’s Oceanic Heritage Outline Project**.

Let’s Talk Story

Paul Holmes writes that “shortly before Hobie made the move to Dana Point he’d had several boards stolen from the rack he’d set up out back of the family house in Laguna Beach. It was a big loss for his fledgling business, himself personally, and for his friends who stored their boards there. Hobie put out the word on the coconut telegraph and he heard there was some kid down at Doheny making surfboards in the State Park (Doheny). Not just that, Hobie learned, the kid wasn’t using new blanks, he was stripping down existing surfboards, reshaping and re-glassing them so they looked different. It sounded suspicious. Hobie went down there to check it out.

That kid—Phil Edwards—was not hacking on Hobie’s stolen boards. In fact, Hobie discovered, Edwards wasn’t “hacking” at all. Hobie was impressed at the workmanship he saw:

‘If ever you want to do some work for me, come and see me,’ Hobie told Edwards.

‘Well, that’d be great,’ Edwards replied, ‘But I’ll have to get transportation first and I don’t have my driver’s license yet. My folks live in Oceanside, see? I’ve been hitch-hiking up here and camping out here at the park and making these boards. I know the lifeguards from surfing. They’ve been pretty cool about the whole thing.’

Shortly after, Edwards resolved his transport problem, passed the driving test and bought a car. He drove to the Dana Point shop and took Hobie up on his offer. Thus, Hobie took on his second employee—at piecework rates, not hourly, of course. But that was fine with Edwards, who wanted the freedom to surf whenever the waves were good.”⁷

This chance encounter resulted in a close partnership that would last a lifetime, wherein together Hobie and Phil would go on to design and build state-of-the art surfboards and skateboards, a surf team of the finest surfers, the Hobie Cat, the Hobie Skiff, and several other advanced boats, all in the area now known as Dana Point, the origin of the world’s modern surfing and sailing culture and industry.⁸

⁷ *Hobie, Master of Water, Wind and Waves*, Paul Holmes, 2013, p.25 ⁸ The author’s perception.

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