



First in the water he sat alone for some time, nervously watching the waves peeling off from behind. His initial wave was solid, well overhead as he drew out the bottom turn. He propped in the pocket for the tube but once inside the eye raced away out of reach. On the next wave he worked up more pace but still got shutdown. The beatings were making him wary.

Then P73 arrived and this proved a real settler. P73's first wave was a beauty; shapely and clean. His second wave looked equally good, but as it walled up unmakeably, way, way ahead TC, who was paddling wide, called out "Don't!". Then, seeing an opportunity to prevent a hiding, TC spun around and took off on the outside shoulder, forcing his mate to cut out to safety. P73 paddled back out over the next two waves, and as he climbed up the third he looked back and caught a glimpse of his selfless friend still riding shoreward. Later only jelly legs forced TC to cut off. After a couple more rides each and a few massive paddles, the two came in to take stock.

TC advised in a predictably cautious tone. "Entry wasn't too hard. You walk round the beach, climb through the roots of this tree that's covered in crabs. Can't believe how it lives, rooted into the sand below the high water mark. When you're way inside the takeoff area, you wade out as far as you can, hold position and just wait for a lull. Then its a quick sprint paddle straight out for twenty or thirty strokes and you're right. All that's left is a lazy paddle back across the front of the reef to the zone."



Soon after, the others went out, and while Peck eased into a few, Hames almost immediately deposited reef tax off his back. Only the short john prevented serious injury but there was blood to be cleaned and bruising rapidly appeared. Later, the
BREAKFAST: Spring rolls were eaten with peroxide scented, Beta-dine stained fingers

The rest of the morning was spent settling in. Boards were unpacked and inspected for transport damage. All were OK.

Gusti explained the purchasing arrangements (essentially an honour system) for beer, soft drink, and sweets. She guaranteed to always have chilled lager available by sunset.

Nev, one of the losmen's owners and a genial surf guide, outlined the various local breaks. Essentially, it seemed, they were smack on the most consistent wave in the area; a swell magnet that handled the trades.

LUNCH: Vegetable curry laksa, rice and traditional Indonesian deep fried chicken so like KFC that it has to be the source of the so-called 'secret' recipe. It was tasty, filling and clean. No-one would have any gastric issues over the next three weeks.

Struck by the intense afternoon heat and set back by injuries Hames, Peck and P73 stayed ashore for the rest of the day.

TC paddled out about three o'clock at dead low tide. The wind was still light but slightly onshore, though the waves were glassing off as they got bigger down the line. He surfed alone until dusk, catching about half a dozen long ones. Everything seemed to be in slow motion. It was still about six foot. The water was clear and wave after wave cranked inboard as he spent long spells sitting at The Corner wary of wide peaks.