

The Portable Surfboard

As many jet-setting longboarders now know, you have to be very careful these days selecting which airline you choose to fly with. Jetstar domestic will not take a board if it's over two metres. That's 6'6" in the old money, so no chance of taking a longboard! Some Jetstar international routes will take a longboard, but even then it is capped at 2.77metres, or 9'9". Virgin Blue's policy depends on the type of aircraft being used on a particular route at a particular time. Their smaller Embraer aircraft has a limit of 2.4metres (8'0") and their Boeing aircraft limit is three metres (10'). How do you find which type of aircraft is operating a particular sector? Who

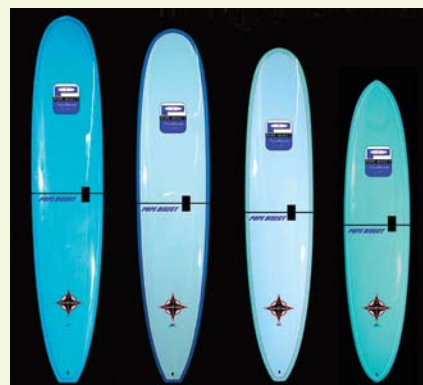
knows, but you would want to be pretty sure before you fronted the check-in counter on the way to your dream surf trip! And last year British Airway brought in a blanket ban on carrying all surfboards, saying it was due to their "large size and handling complexities". This short-sighted airline (when you consider how many surfers travel these days) has instructed surfers to transport their boards using freight instead! Of course, airfreighting an item like a surfboard is not cheap! And what do you do for a few days while you wait, and hope, that your board/s arrive? If any other airlines start following BA's example, then surf trips overseas are going to become very difficult indeed.

One solution to this dilemma was first conceived way back in 1964. Karl Pope was half of the famous Morey-Pope team that gave us Slipcheck ... and then later Morey of course invented the bodyboard ... that in turn gave us softboards, etc etc. So, over 40 years ago, Pope had the idea of building a surfboard that could be reduced to a more easily portable size, then reconstructed when the surfing destination was reached. That first design was of three pieces, and the early "Trisect" would evolve into the current-day two-piece "Bisect".

The modern epoxy surfboard presented Pope with the technology to mass produce the first true travel-board package. The strength to weight ratio



DAVID QUON TESTING THE POPE BISECT IN BALI.



of epoxy and the ability of the material to take the knocks and bumps of airline travel look like making these boards the craft of choice for many travelling board riders.

David Quon is a Tasmanian surfer who has been fronting up to check-in counters with a longboard for years. Many surfers will remember Dave from his popular Mexican restaurant in Bali, Poco Loco. He was so impressed by the new Bisects that he has begun a partnership with Mike Vecchione, and they are now importing them into Australia. Dave had this to say after returning from a month in Indo testing the products: "I can't tell you how much easier life was travelling with a nine-foot mal tucked away in a 4'6" suitcase!! The guys at Pope in the USA have been working on this concept for ages and have finally nailed it!"

Bisect Australia has two-piece longboards, and three-piece SUPs, but they are not cheap. The prices are printed on their website, and as David points out, once you take into account the saving on board racks (Bisects go in the boot) and lockable straps, plus a boardbag (which comes included with a Bisect) then you are not so out of pocket. (Remember also those "extra charges" that add up over time, like double the taxi rate from the airport in Bali if you have boards, etc.)

Bisect Australia will have their latest designs on display at the Noosa Festival, so you can either check them there, or find them online at: www.bisectaustralia.com.au

