

JP Van Swae



Jaws of the Beast: Mavs

So forget it, right? Well, not so fast. The King brothers, Kenny and Ed, have twice tested Mavs' inside bowl, where the mighty wave reforms into a smaller, slightly less fearsome version of itself. And Rasyad Chung rode the Northern California giant from the outside, once, many years ago.

There are no photos of this feat. No contemporary news reports. Chung isn't one to boast of his accomplishments, or to press the point if you doubt his claim. But he still has the waveski he built for that one wild ride, and a witness. Veteran Mavericks surfer Grant Washburn was in the water that winter day in 1991, and told McHugh that Chung had scored "a legitimate Mavericks ride."

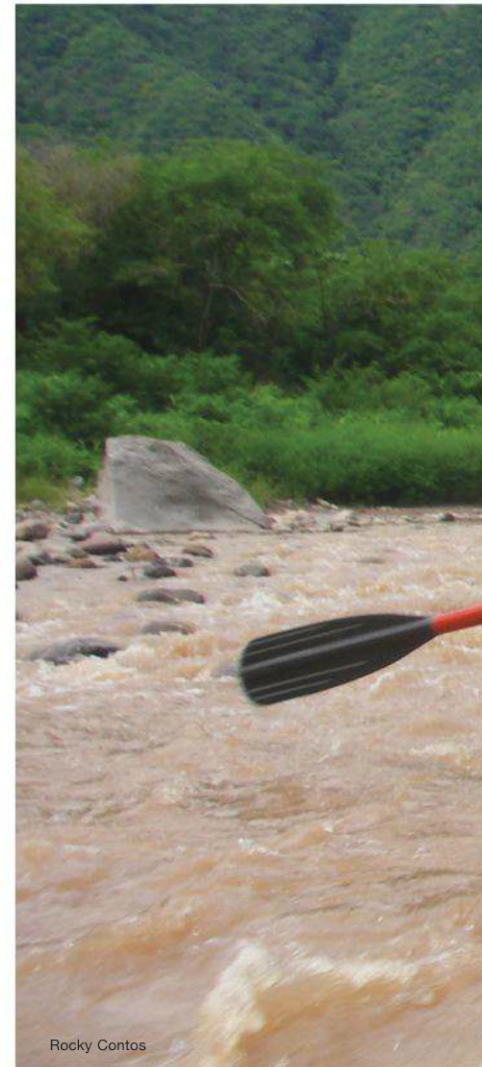
For Chung, that wave was the culmination of a year of preparation. He built the 'ski himself from a 10-foot windsurfer blank, equipping it with a steerable skeg because it would be impossible to steer with his paddle while charging down a 25-foot face. Chung made the two-mile paddle out to Mavericks several times just to watch the wave.

"I hung out there for a whole season, but there's a certain point you just have to go do it," Chung says. Just sitting on the edge of the lineup was terrifying. "Way out on the shoulder, you know rationally that you're completely safe. But the scale of it is just so different. As the wave passes underneath you, it feels like a zero-to-60 acceleration on some sort of superbike."

Chung finally made his move on a medium day at Mavericks, with wave faces about 20 to 25 feet high. A small clutch of board surfers was at the pit, the spot where the wave rears up most abruptly. Chung, with the faster craft, wisely waited about 30 feet outside and south of that critical spot. His strategy was to pick off a wave that was just a little too big for the board-riders, and catch it on the shoulder.

After more than an hour and several false starts, that wave came. "You can't second guess it," Chung says. "You have to go as if your life depends on it." The big wave lifted him violently, spit him into the air for one long, weightless second, and then set him down onto its steepening face. "I'm going straight down like a bat outta hell, and I just feed in a little bit of right rudder and it just carves this big arc," Chung says, "It set the boat on edge and my paddle's bracing, and I go right up and set up for the pocket on the reform.

"I was completely wrung out—wasted," says Chung. He paddled straight to the beach, drove home and hung the 'ski in his garage. Mission accomplished. — *Jeff Moag*



Rocky Contos

**ANDERSON AND HER  
TEAM WERE MISTAKEN  
FOR CORPORATE DAM  
MEDDLERS AND HELD AT  
GUNPOINT. VILLAGERS  
THREATENED TO BURN  
THEM ALIVE.**



## ⊕ THE RIVER GYPSY

When Lacey Anderson was held captive by an angry mob in farthest Guatemala, she came to a stunning epiphany. "I realized," she recalls, "that this could be my last day." For Anderson, the cold confrontation with mortality came with more irony than most. She grew up in Southern California as a "wild child," she says, reared through the foggy lens of addiction, eventually becoming another in a family line of high school dropouts. Fortunately, an innate connection with nature provided some peace. She read how-to books on camping, and took her first backpacking trip at 16. Nature's solace led her back to school, where she earned a GED and a teaching degree, and eventually her own classroom of sixth-graders. She had two daughters. Life went on.

Then, Anderson took a raft trip on the

South Fork of the American. Her guide was female, and Anderson thought, "I can do this." A part-time guiding career followed, both on rivers and trails, but it wasn't until her two daughters were grown and she tired of education's bureaucracy that Anderson made rivers her life. Since 2009, Anderson has lived primarily out of her tricked-out Toyota camper truck, following runoff seasons from Idaho's snowmelt to Mexico's monsoon. In the extra cab of her truck rides a custom built SOTAR cataract, perfect for the small and obscure rivers Anderson seeks.

She crossed paths with kayaker Rocky Contos a couple years ago, and the duo has since completed more than two-dozen multi-day rivers throughout Mexico, from Sonora's Aros to Oaxaca's Atoyac. Several were first descents, not an endeavor normally associated with rafts. Anderson's

extra small cataract is relatively easy to portage, though, and she knows how to go light. (She even published a book, *Camp Cooking Without Coolers*.)

Her backpack-inspired boating style has helped Anderson go deep in search of jungle rivers such as Guatemala's revered Copon, where her river crew was mistaken for corporate dam meddlers and held at gunpoint while villagers threatened to burn them alive ("Access Denied," *C&K* June 2012). After hours of tense negotiations, the villagers released Anderson and her companions. It wasn't Anderson's "last day," after all. It was just another life lesson, one she'll hopefully not have to employ on Peru's Marañon, a storied Amazon source river that she hopes to row next winter. It's a long way from her Southern California roots, but for Lacey Anderson, maturing river gypsy, it's home. — Tyler Williams