



PLAYGROUNDS IN PARADISE

by Alan Rich

Alan Rich's new film is going to make an unnecessary dent in your pocketbook. Save your cash for a downpayment on a sailboat or for that business suit mom's wanted you to buy for a long time. If you have a low resistance to perfect-point waves, avoid this film.

I don't mean saving the cost of admission—that's nothing. I refer to the cash you'll lay out for the next flight to South Africa. The right-point footage of Barry Kanaiapuni, Shaun Tomson, Jonathan Paarman and assorted other rippers is enough to give any point lover itchy feet. It's a long familiar story of moral decay, friends . . . more than one promising young executive's career has gone "down the tube" in similar fashion.

If, however, you're in need of a little ocean entertainment and you've got a good grip on your impulses, then by all means see *Playgrounds in Paradise*. What is offered is a remarkably similar formula to the old Bruce Brown style of filmmaking. An extremely wide vari-

ety of wave types are presented, ranging from a tidal bore running up river in England to an eye-popping bird's-eye view of fifty-foot perfect waves wrapping in off a headland on _____ island. Watch for this sequence—its short, but effective. Combine this visual formula with a mellow sound track handled by Hawaii's Olamana and South African surfer/musician Brian Finch, and you have the essence of Alan's approach to surf filmmaking.

If you're addicted to pipeline tube sequences and primal jungle rhythms of hard rock sounds, then this film will leave you shortchanged. I, for one, tired long ago of the remarkably similar footage every film for the past three years has shown of Kodachrome Reef. At times, the film sequences Alan has chosen are a bit too tame for the avid, tear-'em-up film viewer, and this is my strongest objection to the work as a whole. There are some memorable sequences of Sunset and Ala Moana with Michael Ho and Buttons flying through the bowls, but the pace drops off considerably for some skateboarding and California surfing. Some more good,

small-wave surfing would have helped here. Although the Rincon waves are clean and crisp, the surfing is decidedly wilted. One of these days a photographer is going to get some really hot California surfers in their element, but not this time. Some nice, rarely photographed waves are shown south of the border, but again, the surfing rarely exceeds competence. This, however, is a minor complaint when viewing the film as a whole.

The music and narration are excellent, especially if you like poetic lyrics and soft-toned guitar instrumentals. Musical crescendos are rare in this film, but subtle good-feeling sounds are ever present.

All in all, *Playgrounds in Paradise* looks like a very complete evening's entertainment for the surfer, his girlfriend . . . and anyone else interested in the ocean life. As I warned in the beginning, the film ends with some of the best point-surf footage on film to date, combined with a spirited musical score, that'll have you down at the travel agency . . . knockin' at the door.

—RICHARD CASPERSON



"All in all, Playgrounds in Paradise looks like a very complete evening's entertainment for the surfer, his girlfriend . . . and anyone else interested in the ocean life."

