

# Paddleboarders are real stand-up guys

Van Vuuren loves riding the waves, as does his son

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**I**T IS the feeling of the cool summer breeze caressing his skin and the playful splashes of the ocean that makes Ivan van Vuuren feel at home. That, and the feeling of “total freedom and adventure” that envelopes him whenever he mounts his stand-up paddleboard (SUP) at the Bloubergstrand beach close to his home.

Van Vuuren fell in love with the ancient sport that he helped to bring back to the fore as a professional surfer in Hawaii.

He was only 17 when he served in the South African Army.

While in active service, he represented the country as a professional surfer and later, windsurfer, in 1985.

He became a four-time champion.

The 48-year-old first conceived the idea of bringing SUP into the mainstream while on tour in Hawaii.

At the time, the sport was unlike traditional surfing.

Stand-up paddleboarders maintain an upright position on their boards and use a paddle to propel themselves through the water until they gain momentum.

They would then balance themselves on their boards as they rode the waves.

Van Vuuren said: “We did not have surfboards especially made for SUP purposes.

“We used tandem surfboards initially.

“We took windsurfing boards and removed the sails.

“We wanted to make the sport more



**AT EASE AT SEA:** Stand-up paddleboarder, Ivan van Vuuren, and his son, junior champion Nathan, make their way out to sea to have some fun. PICTURE: WILLEM LAW

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about out performance. We knew the sport would develop further eventually.”

He spent 20 years in Hawaii before he brought the sport to South Africa in 2007.

“In the initial stages, people said it was a fad and was going to last for a few days and die out, but I believed it would take off.

“I was trying to get hold of manufacturers to create a special board for the sport.”

Famous Hawaiian surfer, Jimmy Lewis, shaped the first boards, while American big-wave surfer and action-sports model,

Laird Hamilton, was the personality who helped catapult SUP into the mainstream.

“It was an advert for American Express that Hamilton did, that shot the sport into the spotlight.”

The SUP legend and his son Nathan, 13 – who is the current South African junior champ – will be participating in the Cape Argus Sport Show at Sandringham Farm between March 19 and 21 next year.

Tickets for the Cape Argus Sport Show go on sale today at all major ticket outlets.