

Stephanie Gilmore

This voracious competitor and fierce style icon is bridging the gap between athleticism and artistry for the surfing world at large

There is no music without pause. Silence allows individual notes to sing out. Pause allows for articulation and anticipation, like a deep breath. Any great orator uses the weight of pause to build strength around their words.

Similarly, space between maneuvers punctuates them on a wave. This is part of what makes Stephanie Gilmore's surfing so beautiful to witness. Even in high-pressure competitive settings, she maintains a spacious ease in her surfing. And her freesurfing moments are the very definition of timeless, good surfing: hip-forward trimming and restful hands before she displaces the lip with her signature forehand carving snap.

Seven-time world champion Stephanie is an icon of the sport. Building upon the fluid power-surfing of women like Lisa Andersen, Stephanie merges strength with femininity, technical tube riding with smiling high lines. "She has this free-spirited approach to surfing. She's kinda old school, yet new school, and has that traditional style of surfing down," Lisa Andersen reflected in the biopic *Stephanie in the Water*.

Stephanie grew up near Australia's Gold Coast, the youngest of three sisters. Like many Aussie kids, she surfed because her family surfed. In a country where 85 percent of the population lives within 30 miles (48 kilometers) of the coast, Australian culture is beach culture. Stephanie basically started surfing daily from age 10, along with her dad and sisters. At 12, she began entering local contests and developed a taste for victory.

At age 17, she took a day off from school to compete as a wild card in a world championship event, the 2005 Roxy Pro Gold Coast, and won. In 2007, she qualified for the tour, and became the first surfer ever to win a world title as a rookie competitor. Stephanie followed up with three more consecutive titles. In 2010, Stephanie took home the prestigious Laureus World Action Sports person of the Year award and

