



# Take on Board

Surfer Easkey Britton talks to **Shana Wilkie** about balancing study and competition and how Irish surfing deserves respect as she prepares for the European Surfing Championship

**What does it mean to you to be representing Ireland in the European championship in France?**

I'm really excited to be going to France with the Irish team. The very first time I surfed for Ireland was at the Junior Europeans in France when I was 12 and I've had the opportunity to travel the world with the team to international events for the last nine years. My best result to date is 3rd in Europe in the U-18 girls. I love Anget, where the Europeans will be held, it's a powerful beachbreak and the water will be warm! I'm really hoping to make the finals this year, give it my all and see if I can reach the top. Surfing in Ireland is really exploding and I'd like to see it get the respect it deserves from the rest of the European surfing community, to be recognised as a force to be reckoned with.

**What's next for you in 2007?**

I'm studying environmental science and psychology so I'm juggling university with my surfing. It's going really well and I'm getting great support and encouragement from the University of Ulster to travel and compete and pursue my surfing dreams, as long as I can keep up with the work of course! In between surfs I'm studying for my exams in May. After the Europeans I'm going travelling this summer with my little sister Becky-Finn. She's 16 and a really talented all-round surfer, she's going to the World Juniors in Portugal next month. I've spent years travelling and she's been stuck at school so I promised her we'd do a trip together. We're going on a sister-surfari to Costa Rica. After that we're coaching at my cousin's surf school, Fin McCools in Rossnowlagh.

**The lowdown: Easkey Britton**

**Home:** Rossnowlagh  
**Age:** 21  
**Passions:** yoga, surf lifesaving, scuba diving, aikido, painting, flute, writing, dancing, laughing, smiling.  
**Study:** Environmental Science & Psychology  
**Heroes:** Rell Sunn, Kelly Slater, Mick Fanning, Eddie Aikau  
**Dreams:** I dream of surfing in the moonlight and a world of compassion  
**Best Trip:** The Galapagos Islands  
**Fav Wave:** a powerful, uncrowded reef break with fast, hollow right sand lefts...  
**Rides:** 5'11x18x2 1/16 JP

Sitting pretty: Easkey Britton on Rossnowlagh Beach. PHOTOGRAPH BY

my travels, writing and playing my flute. To keep fit I train with the local boxing and aikido club, practise yoga and salsa dance. I'm not very good at stopping and being still, I'm always on the go!

**Do you have a favourite surf movie and/or book?**

Oh, there are so many great surf movies... my all time favourite is *A Broke Down Melody* and I love watching *Mick, Myself and Eugene* to get amped for a surf! I'm reading *Monkey* and *The Soul's Code* by James Hillman at the moment

**What advice do you have for the groms?**

Stay in the water and surf as much as you can. Always surf with someone else, it's safe, fun and helps push your surfing. Know your abilities and learn all you can about where you're surfing and how the ocean works. Stay stoked!

**As a dedicated professional surfer how do you spend your days when there are no waves?**

Some people say my bio should read, 'never here and no time for picking daisies!' I keep myself busy training with my surf life-saving club, painting and sketching