

Coconut Wireless

Kelly Slater Book Signing in Malibu

By Avra Kouffman

I'm really impressed with Kelly Slater, and not for the usual reasons. Sure, it's phenomenal that he's a 9-time world champion and he's certainly a handsome guy, but there's a whole lot more to him than talent and a tan.

For starters, he has the patience of an angel. I've seen him be extremely gracious to hundreds of people hounding him for photos and autographs – including me!

At a Surfrider party, he tried (in vain) to eat hors-d'oeuvres with his friends. Three hours later, he hadn't finished a bite, since fans kept tapping him to ask, "Kellyyyyy! Will you take a picture with me?!!!"

No one seemed to care if he was tired or hungry. They just kept poking at him. Meanwhile, he posed quietly with stranger after stranger and stayed calm and pleasant.

Recently, his Malibu book signing was jammed solid. People were cutting the line: It was a mess. Kelly took it in stride, though, and cheerfully signed at least 100 books in a row. Since each person wanted a different inscription, this took ages.

Imagine a surf legend whose favorite place is outdoors in the wide, open ocean. Now imagine him stuck in the back of a hot, cramped, narrow room on a Friday night, writing his name in book after book – literally, for hours. It wasn't a fun place to be, even for fans. Also, his girlfriend was waiting for him to finish signing and leave. Still, he tried to oblige everyone and took extra

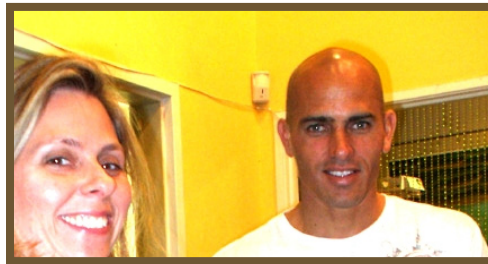
time to chat with an elderly couple who'd braved the line to meet him.

"Well," said my friend, "He's paid to be at these events." Maybe, but he must be wealthy already, and unlike a lot of celebrities, he seems to make a conscious effort to treat everyone he meets with respect.

He also seems to want the best for the public. In the Q&A, he urged us all to eat organic: "I know it costs a little more, but you'll find you don't

need as much." He said he'd "just come off a nine-day Master Cleanse" that he'd wanted to try for years.

In person, Kelly Slater came across as very intelligent, very thoughtful, and --what's most noticeable-- very deep. You can see the entire ocean in his eyes!



HOLLYWOOD CALLS...

Women's surf clubs have become very popular in Hollywood recently, based on the three emails I received in September from Hollywood Casting Agents looking for female surfers.