

The New York Times

JOURNEYS; In Puerto Rico, Discovering a Surf Mecca

By JULIA CHAPLIN

Published: Friday, January 30, 2004

ON a warm afternoon in mid-January, the sunset happy hour was revving up at the Calypso, a wooden open-air bar perched on the side of a hill overlooking Maria's, the main surf break in Rincón, P.R. Throngs of buff surfers in sandy flip-flops, board shorts and T-shirts were sipping \$2 Coronas and exaggerating their day's surf triumphs when, suddenly, all heads turned to watch the action about to unfold in the water... Just another idyllic day in Rincón, a small fishing village on the western-most tip of Puerto Rico, with chickens wandering in the streets and rich thickets of bougainvillea framing the narrow roads... It's easy to feel the pull. Cheerful, brightly painted concrete homes dot the green foothills of La Cadena mountains, salsa and Puerto Rican rap wafts from car radios, and friendly shopkeepers often address you by the Spanish version of your first name after just two days.