

Let's Play! EastSider

East Fort Lauderdale's guide to fun and leisure

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Part-time surf rockers mix the past
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Brainstorms Advertising & Marketing Inc. on Wilton Drive specializes in design work and Internet placements. It lists among its clients Seastrike Boats and SportCraft Boats, two local boat dealers. But Brainstorms may be the only ad agency extant with a drum kit in the conference room.

The drum kit sits in the corner because every Thursday evening, the owners push the big table against the wall and turn their office space into a rehearsal room. On those night, they're not ad men any more, they're Cutback, the South Florida surf band prone to twanging away with their reverb-soaked guitar sound and calling up memories of bands with names like the Surfaris, the Ventures, the Trashmen.

The ad men of Cutback are bringing their sound to the Molokai Lounge at the Mai-Kai restaurant on Sept. 7, in a showcase of surf music from the '60s to the present.

As for the four men who make up the band, they have been playing and surfing together for more than 30 years, as surf music went in and out of style.

"And it's almost happening for us," said 52-year-old lead guitarist Frank Ferraro. "We're on a number

of college radio stations around the country so we're suddenly getting invitations from Cocoa Beach to Melbourne."

In recent years, surf-style music has come back with a fury. A band known as Slacktone has been cashing in with their style of surf rock and ferocious drumming since 1995, and even made it on national T.V. Another band, Sonic Surf City, is known as the only surf band from Norway. Even for Cutback, things are looking up.

"We just sold a song to a Hollywood film production company," said guitarist Rich LaVoi. The group's new song "Witch's Rock," which be included on a soundtrack for the movie "The Unlikelys," starring William Forsythe. "That should give us a national link," LaVoi said.

Most of Cutback started playing young. Ferraro said he originally took up the guitar because his parents wouldn't buy him a drum kit. When LaVoi was 8 or 9 years old, his family had musician friends who would play "Tiny Bubbles." LaVoi said he was mesmerized by the guitar and the Polynesian feel.

The band's upcoming Mai-Kai appearance reveals Polynesian tiki music as one of the influences in modern surf music, which some like to call "neo-surf."

"Now it's more of an eclectic mix of genres," Ferraro said. "Like hot rod music, rock and lounge."

Ferraro seems to find surf rock in just about anything. The James Bond theme song is surf music, he said. And so is the music from James Coburn's "Flint" movie series, as well as "The Man From U.N.C.L.E" television series.

The band's name actually has a double-meaning. Primarily the word is surfing term, short for riders who cutback back against the force of the wave. But while surfers cut back and forth against the waves, their music goes back and forth through time, Ferraro said. Although their originals are contemporary in sound, the band often uses the past to guide them.

Although Ferraro said he prefers to stay in the present and produce more original songs since those are the ones the clubs and radio stations are latching onto, it isn't always easy or the band to spend a lot of time on rehearsals.

"The saying is: Don't quit your day job," LaVoi said. "But I'd quit it in a minute if I could do this full-time."

Cutback will perform at 6 p.m. Sept. 7 in the Molokai Lounge, 3599 N. Federal Highway in Fort Lauderdale. For information visit [www .cutbacksurfband.com](http://www.cutbacksurfband.com).

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