NOT BAD FOR A “SURE BUM”
Jim Westling Rides the Waves In and Out of Irvine Spectrum

I was driving in Irvine Spectrum with my wife the other day,” Jim Westling recollects, “and I was able to point to a block and say, ‘I helped build those four buildings, and the six behind them. It’s really a gratifying feeling to have been a part of that.’

It would take a lengthy drive for him to point out all the buildings he’s had a hand in. Since 1984, Jim has assisted The Irvine Company as an executive developer, contract developer or consultant construction manager. Whatever the job description, he says “I’m basically a problem-solver.”

For the past decade-and-a-half, he has specialized in constructing the versatile flex-tech buildings The Irvine Company pioneered in the early 1990s, designed to suit the changing needs of business. Since the first of those buildings sprouted, Jim has helped usher some 60 of them into being. It’s a source of pride to him that they’re providing homes for some of the most innovative businesses around.

Irvine Spectrum was a long way from even being imagined when Jim and his parents first drove through the bean fields here in 1960. “Our family had a weekend cottage at El Morro Beach, and surfing was all I cared about,” remembers Jim. “My mother was convinced I was going to grow up to be a surf bum. I’ve just turned 60 and I’m still surfing three to five times a week, though the bum part is questionable,” Jim says with a laugh.

He and his wife Carol live on the bay in Newport Beach. He first met her at the then-newly-opened Fashion Island in 1968, when she was a sales clerk and he was in the Air Force. They have two children, and son Joshua recently joined Jim as a partner in Westling & Associates.

It’s not a bad life. Some mornings he jumps off his dock, paddles his long board up the bay, carries it across the peninsula and spends the morning surfing.

“You’ve got serenity, the water’s glassy, dolphins are swimming by. It’s a National Geographic morning. Then I drive 20 minutes to the best real estate on earth and work with great people to make quality buildings we can be proud of.”