

KSURF!

ISSUE 47

Oct/Nov 14

Welcome to IKSURFMAG

Welcome to Issue 47 of the World's Number One Kitesurfing Magazine! It's the biggest edition of IKSURFMAG ever and the biggest magazine in the world! There is so much inside you'll have to check it out with a cup of tea and some

biscuits... Highlights include Tahitian Dreams, Railing Russia, Behind the Brand with Blade and a trip to Greece with Epic. That's not all though, there is a lot more inside, it's bursting at the seams, literally!

Enjoy the latest issue!



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INTERNATIONALMAGAZINE
KSURF!

047 // OCT/NOV

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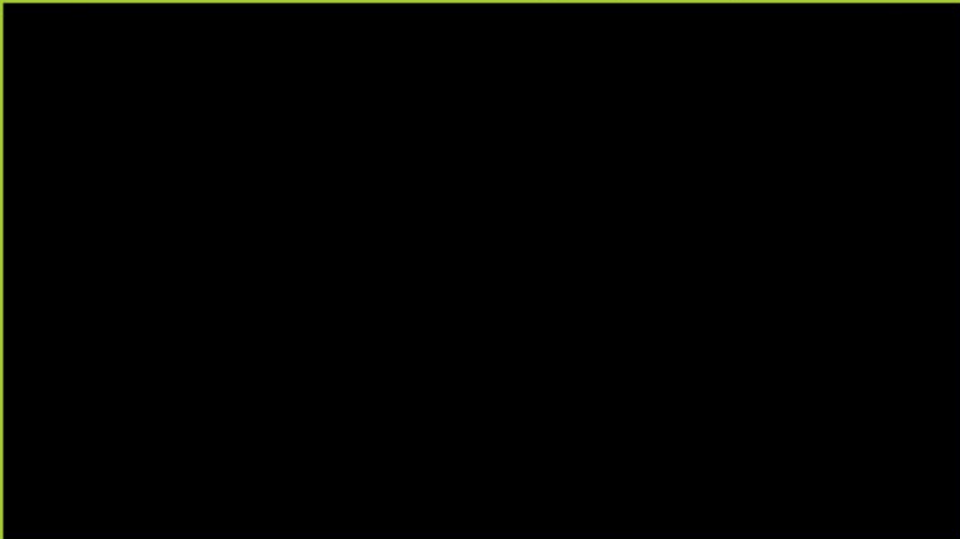
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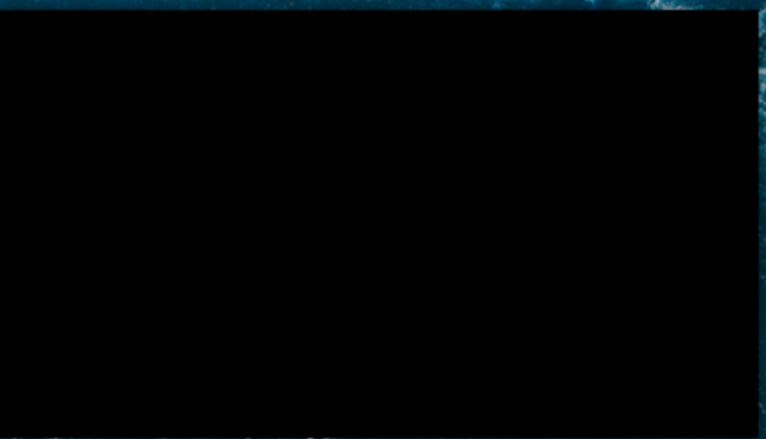


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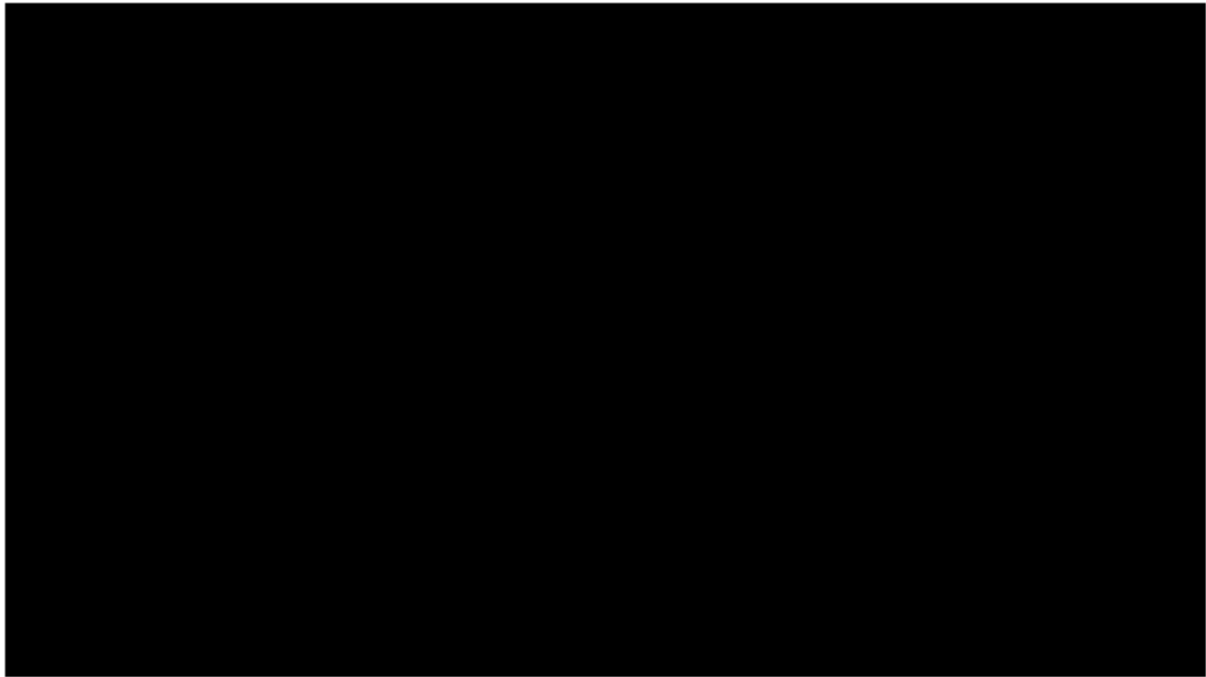
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15 COMPETITION



17 EDITORIAL



21 TAHITIAN DREAMS



47 RAILING RUSSIA



71 BEHIND THE BRAND



91 TECHNIQUE



115 TEST



139 SURF SANCTUARY
PRESENTS...



151 GREECE –
LAND OF THE GODS



163 TEN QUESTIONS



171 MOVIE NIGHT



173 LIGHTROOM



199 FEMALE FOCUS



207 READERS GALLERY

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Core Kiteboarding have teamed up with us this issue to offer an awesome Core GTS3 8m kite to one of our lucky subscribers. New for 2015 the GTS3 features a three-strut design and, of course, the fantastic Core build quality riders have come to love. It's a responsive and direct wave, kiteman and freestyle machine with C-kite characteristics and lots of depower.

We tested the kite last issue and were hugely impressed with its performance, it's the perfect tool for the rider out there that likes to throw huge jumps and kite loops. It's also fantastic unhooked and will suit freestylers and wakestylers looking for the ultimate in performance. The direct responsive nature makes it exhilarating to fly and the more advanced riders out there will love this kite.

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OK own up, who's bought new kites? After what seems like the biggest windless patch in Northern Europe for some time there can only be one conclusion. Somebody, somewhere got excited and bought a new quiver, jinxing it for the rest of us. It's this kind of selfish behaviour that spoils it for everyone else out there you know!

We can't really blame you of course; there have been some fantastic innovations amongst the new 2015 ranges across the board. Personally, we're huge fans of the easy inflation systems that are becoming more and more common - anything to get us on the water faster than the next man (or woman) gets the thumbs up from us. Maintenance free frictionless pulleys also get a nod of approval along with more durable canopy materials and vastly improved bar systems.

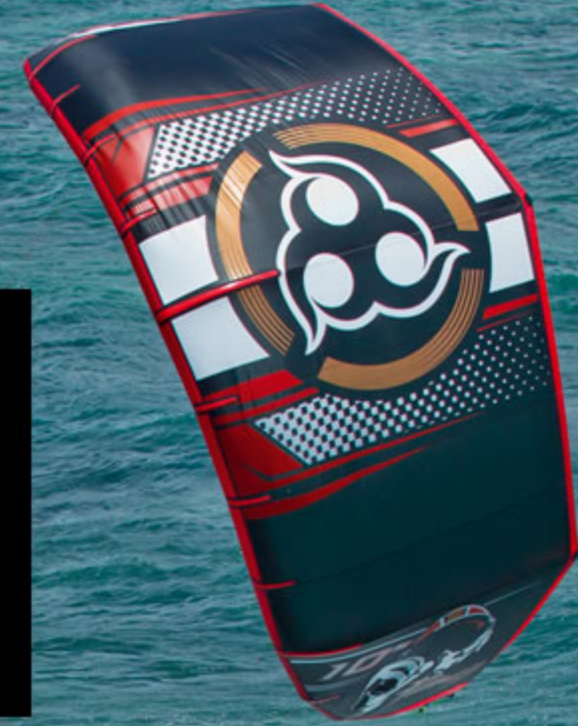
It would be safe to say that it's a great time to be a kiter right now, except it's not, something is broken, and that is the wind. No matter how good the kit is; we are all slaves to this merciless mistress who arrives without warning and disappears (sometimes for months on end) with no thought for our sanity.

Then, as if to add insult to injury, she shows up and thunders in a low-pressure system right on deadline week. I think kiting ranks as the most addictive, most frustrating, and most exhilarating sport all at the same time.

I love it and I hate it, but perhaps that is where it's real appeal lies...

Rou Chater

Rou Chater, Publishing Editor



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Tahitian Dreams

PHOTOS // GILLES CALVET
WORDS // IKSURFMAG

There is more to Tahiti than Teahupo'o...

Tahiti has perhaps become a victim of it's own success; years before the big wave gladiators arrived it was known as a tropical paradise in the Pacific. Since the meteoric rise in fame of the world's heaviest wave however it seems that Tahiti sometimes struggles to shake off those shackles...



Whenever anyone mentions Tahiti to me, I instantly think of Teahupo'o and not much else. Ever since Laird Hamilton towed into what was the biggest and heaviest wave ever surfed on August the 17th in the year 2000, (was it really that long ago) Tahiti has become famous for more than its idyllic beaches.

We've been party to viewing these monstrous swells from afar, even more so over the last ten years.

The Internet has spread viral video after viral video featuring riders getting insane waves and even worse beatings at perhaps the scariest place on the planet to be a waterman. The spot certainly attracts a huge level of voyeurism; there are often more boats and spectators in the channel cheering than there are surfers...

I'm sure the Tahitian tourist board has revelled in the free publicity, equally though it must be struggling to get its message out there when anything they do instantly gets overshadowed as soon as a big swell comes along... Lets set the record straight right now; Tahiti is far more than a one trick pony!

The island is the largest in French Polynesia and it sits on the 17th parallel right in the middle of the South Pacific Ocean. It's a green and lush island split into two parts by it's natural geography, Tahiti Nui (Big Tahiti) lies to the northwest and is as the name suggest, larger than Tahiti Iti (Little Tahiti). The terrain is mountainous and covered in lush rain forests and rivers.

The interior of Tahiti Nui is largely uninhabited, at the coast though a road encircles the island and allows the Tahitians to get around. When you get to the south-eastern tip of Tahiti Iti however the road stops and this part of the island remains isolated and only accessible by boat or on foot.



*"Lets set the record straight right now;
Tahiti is far more than a
one trick pony!"*

MARIE SWITALA ENJOYING THE FLAT WATER!

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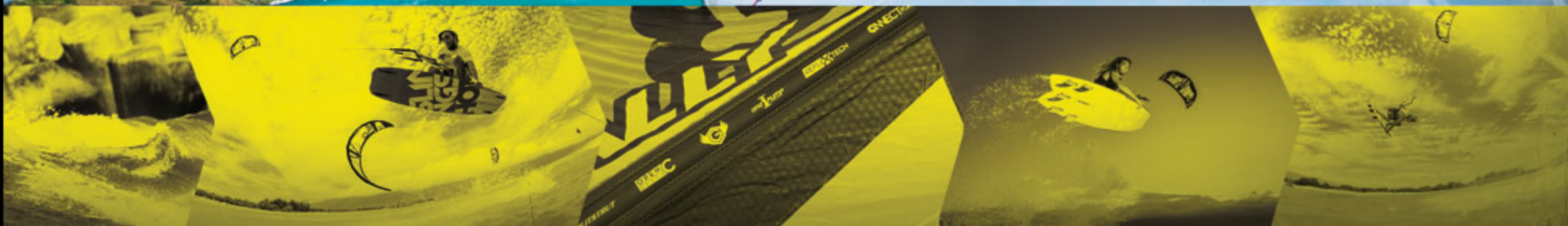
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"The reefs around Moorea and Tahiti provide amazing lagoons and flat-water locations perfect for freestyle."

The closest island to Tahiti in the chain is Moorea; it is much smaller and flatter than Tahiti but is surrounded almost entirely by reef. The reefs around Moorea and Tahiti provide amazing lagoons and flat-water locations perfect for freestyle. The numerous channels in the reefs offer up some of the best surf spots on the planet, and you may be surprised to know they aren't all like Teahupo'o!

Getting to Tahiti is easier than you might think, Fa'a'a International Airport has links with the US, Australia, and New Zealand. From Europe you can fly to the US

and make a connection from there. What you do when you arrive is up to you, there are lots of spots to go and check out, both on Tahiti and neighbouring Moorea, you might want to give it a few days of acclimatisation before you head to Teahupo'o though!

The weather on these islands is largely governed by the trade winds, which bring cooler dry air from April to October, and warmer, wetter conditions from November to March. The best time to go is in the dry season; there is far less chance of heavy rain and the

best winds blow consistently from the south east. Temperature wise French Polynesia is consistently warm, around 25-30 degrees Celsius the year round. The sea temperature is about the same too; so don't expect to take anything other than board shorts and some sunscreen!

You have a few options when you arrive, you can either stay on one of the islands near one of the kite spots and get your fill that way, or you could rent a car and drive around the island depending on where the best conditions are for the given day.

The wind can be blowing in one spot and not another, so to make the most of it we would suggest being prepared to be mobile.

Of course the ultimate option is to stay on a boat, there are plenty of boat charter companies in Tahiti. For a fee you could find yourself aboard a catamaran (preferred due to more space and less draft allowing them to go places mono-hulled yachts can't). This will allow you to get to whichever location you desire depending on what the conditions throw at you.

Many of the boats have experienced skippers and crew and a few of them actually kitesurf too. It's worth shopping around before you go to ensure you end up on the best boat. Launching from a cat is easy enough but far simpler when the crew have some experience of it.

Whatever you decide to do, you won't be disappointed, the island is stunning both from the sea and the land. You'll be immersed in a South Pacific adventure whatever you decide, although the boat option certainly gets our vote, if you're going to come all this way, you may as well go all out right?

The Spots:

Tahiti

We'll look at the main island first; this is where you will fly into after all!

*"the ultimate option
is to stay on a boat"*



PHOTO: TORRIN BRIGHT
RIDER: MATT TAGGART



All the main spots are accessible via the main road, which runs around the circumference of the Big Tahiti and most of Little Tahiti.

The main spot on Tahiti is Hitimahana, just in front of Motu Martin in the north of the island. It works well with ESE to E winds and offers flat water, beach breaks and also reef breaks of course. There isn't a traditional lagoon here, but there are two reefs offshore sheltering a horseshoe bay. These features offer a variety that should satisfy just about everyone, with smaller waves breaking on the black sand beach to the west, flatter water to the east behind the reef and fun waves to play with on the outside.

Don't go too far downwind here, the headland to the west is the last bit of land you'll see for some time. It's a safe enough spot as long as you bear that in mind and one of the most popular spots for kitesurfing on the island. You'll find riders of all abilities and a good mix of kites from all over the world. It's definitely a good spot to start out at if you have just arrived on the island.

On the south of the island there are a few more options for places to ride. Freestylers looking for perfect flat water will enjoy the lagoon at Punaauia on the west coast. It works in SE and NE winds and offers stunning scenery and smooth water. It is worth noting that at the weekends this spot gets popular with beachgoers and gets very busy so it isn't advisable to ride here during those times.

Phaeton Bay is another beautiful spot on the island; it works best in SE to E winds and again offers perfect flat-water conditions for freestylers. Just be aware of the weather here, there is a localised effect that causes rain clouds to build up and it is the wettest place on the island so be sure not to get caught out if it looks like a cloudy day at this spot.

"You'll find riders of all abilities and a good mix of kites from all over the world."



ROBINSON HILARIO SPOTTING HIS LANDING AND COMING IN HOT.

MITU MONTEIRO GOES BELOW SEA LEVEL ON A BOTTOM TURN,
MANERA HAD TO MAKE HIM A SPECIAL WETSUIT TO FIT HIS BALLS IN.



"when you are at the bottom of the wave you are technically below sea level. Behind you will be a wall of ocean waiting to destroy you."

The last main beach on Tahiti for kiting is Maraa, you'll find it in the southwest of Big Tahiti and it is perfect in the SE to ESE trade winds. There is a lagoon here offering flat water but more importantly for the wave hunters out there you'll find some world-class left-handers on the reef. They are fast and hollow and the reef is very sharp, at low tide this is a dangerous wave for experts only. If you have the skills then you will really enjoy this spot!

This article wouldn't be complete without mentioning Teahupo'o, you can't really kite here from the land, the wave breaks out in the channel and is best accessed by boat. I'd wager out of our entire readership of 38,000 perhaps only a handful of you will ever want to, or even get to ride this spot...

It's pronounced cho'pu and translates roughly as broken skulls. The wave is a freak of nature unlike anywhere else on earth. About fifty yards out from the reef the water depth is around 300 foot. This means the swells that roll in from the South Pacific get thrown upwards with such velocity it allows the lip to spit way out in front of itself.

It's so ferocious nature actually causes it to suck water off the reef so hard that when you are at the bottom of the wave you are technically below sea level. Behind you will be a wall of ocean waiting to destroy you. It's a mythical surf spot frequented by the best and gnarliest surfers on the planet.

If you think you are going to jump off the plane and dazzle someone here you'll be very much mistaken. As far as kites go, in my opinion it's not really a kitable wave. Aside from the pictures of the F-One crew here I've not seen many pro riders make it look good.

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"unless your name is Reo, Mitu, Ben or Pedro and you have a pro deal from a major brand this isn't a spot to ride."

That's not meant to offend, but it's so offshore the kite is usually flying off behind the wave with the rider in a freakish position looking uncomfortable on it.

You have to be really really lucky to score Teahupo'o working with the right wind to make it look good on a kite, these images are probably the biggest and best I have seen from the spot and that isn't for want of plenty of guys trying it with kites.

Just remember that unless your name is Reo, Mitu, Ben or Pedro and you have a pro deal from a major brand this isn't a spot to ride. That said, if it is

breaking while you are on the island (it needs to be over 8 feet to really get working) be sure to head out in a boat and watch the best surfers in the world get shacked off their brains, and put straight into traction!

There is much more to Tahiti than these spots, and in fact there are plenty of virgin beaches that have never been kited. However, before you run off kiting all over the place, please respect the local beach access. The spots we have mentioned all have good beach access and many of the beaches around the island are private with little or no access for the public. Remember to be respectful and abide by the local

rules and if in doubt ask someone, you'll find the locals really friendly and helpful people.

Moreea

This small island is right next door to Tahiti and whilst the beaches on the bigger island are mostly black sand, the sand on Moreea is white! It's only about 60km in circumference so all the spots here are really close together. Again there are a few options that work in different wind conditions and it is worth checking each one out to ensure you get the best spot for any given day.

The most popular spot is at the Beach Club near the Tipanier Hotel in the northwest of the island. It's one of the most picturesque beaches on the island with the white sand turning the water a beautiful turquoise. The best winds are the easterly trades which blow cross shore from left to right. It will work in anything from an ESE to NE though, which rings true for the entire north shore of Moorea.

There is a flat sandy beach to launch from here and perfect flat water inside the reef. During the summer swells from the North can create some great waves on the reef. There is a pass upwind, which offers both left and right-handers; it's truly a spot that has something for everyone. If you want to learn to kitesurf this is the place to do it and where the local kite schools are based too.

Temae Beach is another stunning spot to ride, arguably the most beautiful one on the island for kiting. It works in a south wind and offers amazing flat water for freestyle and freeriding. At the weekends the beach can get crowded so be sure to avoid it when it is busy, there are so many spots along the coast of Moorea it will be easy to find another one.

For the wave riders the best place is Haapiti, there are several reef passes around the island with great waves depending on the conditions. This spot works the best in the SE trade winds that the island enjoys during the best period for kiting April to October. All the reef breaks on Moorea are some distance from the shore, so use your common sense and don't ride them alone, always take someone else with you and look out for each other.

Wherever you decide to ride on Moorea, and with stunning lagoons surrounding the entire island there are plenty of spots, be aware of beach access.



"always take someone else with you and look out for each other."



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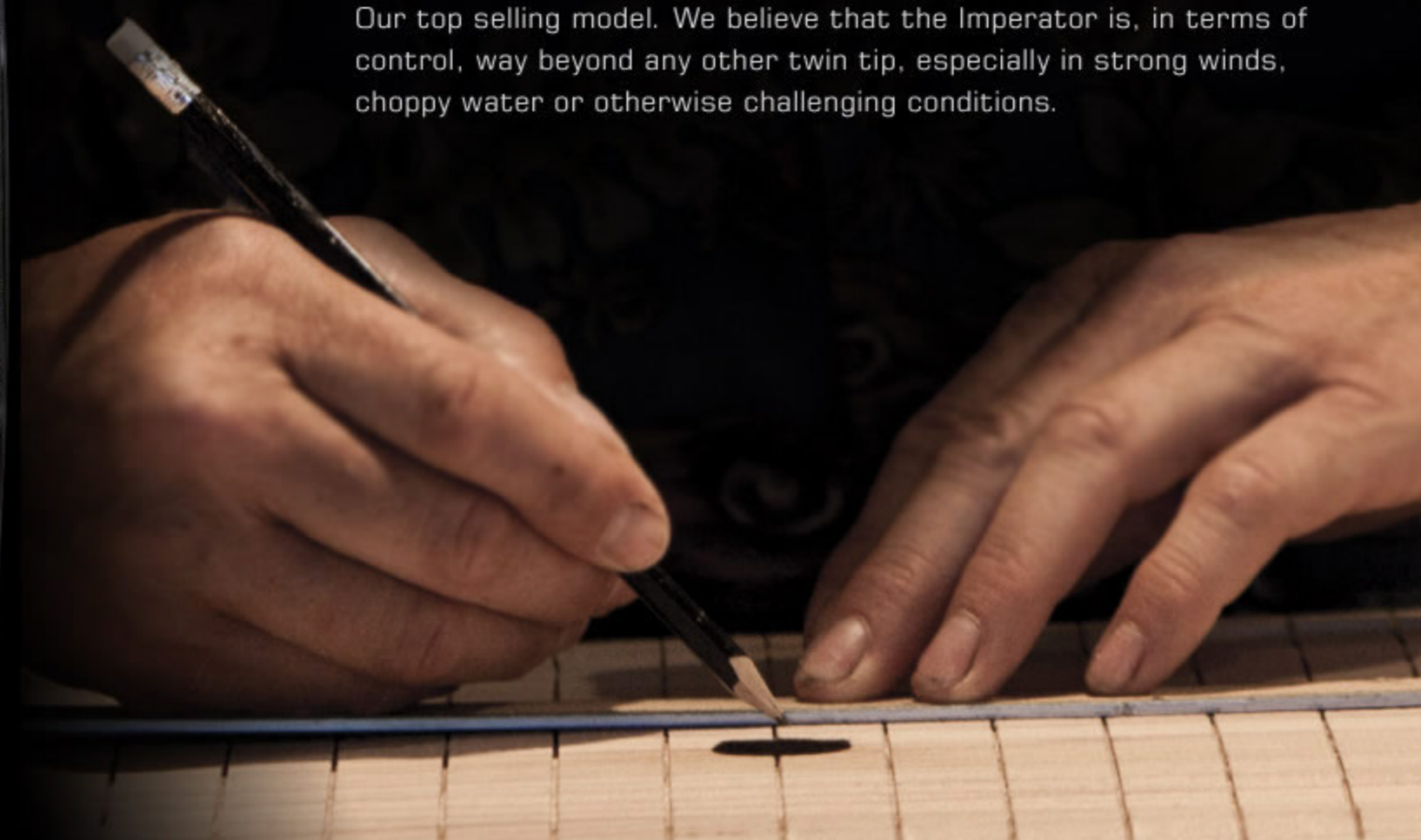
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MITU WON'T FORGET THIS DAY IN A HURRY!

Some beaches are private and of course respect the local rules and people wherever you go.

Tahiti and Moorea are one of those rare jewels in the crown of kitesurfing; they both offer fantastic riding and an amazing variety as well. It's not often you find spots where freestylers and wave riders alike can have fun at the same beach. If you've been to Mauritius and loved riding there, then consider the Pacific Ocean rather than the Indian for once, it's less crowded, the scenery is just as stunning and it's a little bit different... It's not all about Teahupo'o either!

Fact Box

- Tourist Board
- Accommodation Tahiti and Moorea
- Boat Charter
- Tahiti Kitesurf Information

"It's not often you find spots where freestylers and wave riders alike can have fun at the same beach."



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RAILING RUSSIA

Kiteboarding in Russia is thriving, yet it often goes unmentioned in the mainstream media. Riders like Sergei Borosov and Victoria Soloveykina have broken into the mainstream on the PKRA tour, but other than that we haven't heard much about the kiteboarding scene over there...until now...



I first heard about the Rail Masters in Blagoveschenskaya, Russia a few years ago and from small acorns it has grown into one of the biggest wakestyle events on the calendar. We spoke to Konstantin Bobovik about the event and its origins...

How long has the kite park been in Blagoveschenskaya (Blaga) and who set it up?

The first obstacles in Blaga were set up in 2005 by Alexander Musatov, the first Russian champion in snow kiting and the man who came up with the name for the event. Having seen lots of videos featuring Andre Philip, Alexander and a few members from the South-Russian kiteboarding community "Naoba2" made the first attempts to install and ride features at Blaga.

"THE RAIL MASTERS WAS HELD USING SEVEN KICKERS AND SLIDERS."

The kite park as it is now began to take shape in 2008, when local rider Gennady Kirillov built the flat bar. Then in 2010 a few more riders from Naoba2 built an A-frame using money given by Dmitry Evseev (one of the founders of a major Russian kite portal www.kites.ru) and the first kicker, sponsored by NP Russia. We ran the first Rail Masters in 2010 on these 3 features. In 2011, pushed by some big ideas, Dmitry sponsored for building a kicker and as a result of negotiations with other Russian sponsors, received cash for a building rooftop feature (Takoon) and dance-floor (Liquid Force).

Meanwhile, Nikolai Rakhmatov (first place RM2010) built some more features with his own money. In 2011, the Rail Masters was held using seven kickers and sliders. Over the years the park has been built and installed by the joint efforts of the riders, kiteboarding organisations and commercial sponsors.



Who is responsible for building the features and maintaining them...

Since 2012 the responsibility for the storage and maintenance of the kite park and the organization of the competition lies with myself as the chief organizer of Rail Masters.

“ALEXANDER WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO WAS ABLE TO RIDE ON THEM”

Who's idea was it to start holding competitions there?

It was Alexander Musatov, who was one of the first to discover the spot at Blaga, the first guy in Russia to wear bindings and the first to began to hit the sliders in Russia. In May 2005, there were several sliders in Blaga, but Alexander was the only one who was able to ride on them and thus in the absence of any competition Alexander Musatov, nicknamed the Butcher, became the first winner of the Rail Masters!

I think it was Sam Light who first came over a couple of years ago, putting the event a little more into the eyes of the Euros, how important was that relationship in getting the event to where it is today?

Yes, Sam Light was the first foreign rider who participated in Rail Masters. Sam found out about this event back in 2010, when we did a number of publications about it on the kitescoop.com forum.



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He decided to come over to the event in 2012, after watching the Internet teaser for it. Three weeks before the event Sam commented the video: "Can I come?" I was very glad that Sam decided to visit Russia and to participate in RM12, because I think Sam is the strongest and most stylish park rider on the planet.

Sam Light's participation in our competitions in 2012 became a cornerstone of the development of RM as an international event. Sam's example showcased the event to the international kiteboarding audience, that travelling to Russia is neither dangerous nor cold, because Blaga is one of the southern points of Russia. Plus Russians are quite friendly with foreigners, though mostly we don't speak English!

In 2013, Sam Light came to Rail Masters with the rest

of the UK crew. Some other international riders also took part in competition; Craig Cunningham, Tobias Hölte and Maciek Lewandovski. Rail Masters 2013 became an unprecedented event in the Russian kiteboarding scene and has attracted much bigger attention from ordinary spectators and the kite community than all the previous Russian kite competitions put together!

" HAS ATTRACTED MUCH BIGGER ATTENTION FROM ORDINARY SPECTATORS "

Sam helped us to make contact not only with international top riders, but was also one of the main links in negotiations with Brian Wheeler on his participation as the main judge for RM14. As we know, these negotiations ended successfully and Brian

Wheeler worked with us in 2014, thereby giving us a vast experience in organizing events with the participation of judges. So in essence, the success of RM on the international kite scene owes a lot to Sam and the rest of the riders who supported RM13.

How easy is it to get to the kite park?

It is really simple to reach the kitepark. It is located 30km from the airport of the city of Anapa, and 7km from the village of the Blagoschenskaya.

Can riders visit outside of the contest in order to ride?

The kite park is available for all riders during the summer season from May until the end of September. In 2013 and 2014 the park was exposed only for Rail Masters. In 2012, the Bugazskaya spit,

WARNING DO NOT BUY ANY OTHER KITE UNTIL YOU EXPERIENCE AN EPIC KITE



PHOTOGRAPHER: RADEK "SKY" ZEUS RIDER: DIMITRI MARAMENIDES



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which is the place where the park is located, got a new management crew, who prevented the installation of the park for the entire season. However, this issue has been resolved, and in 2015 the park will be in the water for five months, come and say hello if you fancy it!

“ WE MOSTLY RIDE WEARING WETSUITS FROM 3.2 TO 5MM DEPENDING ON HOW WARM YOUR BLOOD IS! ”

What's the set up like at the park, are there places to stay nearby, food and bars etc?

The park stands on one of the biggest and the most significant kite spots in Russia. In summer a lot of kiteboarders from all over Russia come to ride in Blaga and, of course, all of these people demand such services as bars, cafes and hotels. There are three restaurants and bars right on the spot, including a nightclub! There is also a hotel on the Black Sea near the spot, but as the price of the room in it varies from 80 to 120 USD, the kites choose to live mostly in hotels situated in the village of Blagoveschenskaya, which is 6km away from the spot, or they simply camp right on the beach!

What kind of wind and weather conditions do you get there?

Weather conditions that are suitable for kiteboarding take place from May to the end of September. In May and in September we mostly ride wearing wetsuits from 3.2 to 5mm depending on how warm your blood is! In the summer months a wetsuit is not required. As in any continental country, the wind statistics are average, but in most of the seasons I have spent in Blaga, we have had 3-4 fully windy days each week!



The prevailing wind in Blaga is a northeast wind called the Bora, this reaches Blaga after going through the whole of Russia, forming in Murmansk on the Arctic Ocean. The most wonderful thing about Blaga is that you have the sea on one side and a salt lake on the other; you can find flat water in any wind direction. During the south wind, waves roll in from the Black sea, and it is possible to surf on them with a kite.

“BEECAMP IS A SPORT AND MUSIC FESTIVAL, WHICH BEGAN ITS HISTORY IN 2007”

This year you teamed up with Beeline/BeeCamp for the event, what's that about and what do they do?

Beeline is a mobile network company, one of the three largest companies of its kind in Russia. We have cooperated with them since 2012. BeeCamp is a sport and music festival, which began its history in 2007 and was organized by Beeline in Blaga and in St. Petersburg. As I have already said, we run RM within this festival. If I was asked a question about whom RM owes its success to aside from the fanatical organizers, the design, photographers, video operators, and of course Sam Light, I would say without thinking that it is Beeline Company that provides everything for the Rail Masters!



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They help with the prize money, the accommodation and tickets for some foreign and local riders, money for maintaining the park, its installation and the purchase of new features. For example, the Beeline Company bought floating fan boats for our park in 2014. If I am not mistaken Triple S also has such a partner, and it is also a mobile phone company. Therefore, as in our case, the organizers of the Triple S often write the name of Event Venyu Triple S, as we write BeeCamp / Rail Masters.

The level of the local guys and girls seems to be getting better, how long do you think before we see them on the podium?

Yeah! The level of Russian riders is pretty good, though it could be much higher. The main point is in the fact

that they have no opportunity to train, because in 2013-14 the park was in the water only for competitions. I am sure in 2015, when the park will be in the water from May, riders like Artem Garachenko, Sergey Belmesov and local riders like Gena Kirillov, Jan Valiev and Ilya Iskhnopilo will be able to fight for a place on the podium.

“ RIGHT NOW WE ARE FINISHING THE POST- PRODUCTION OF RM14 FILM ”

Will the event be on next year and how can people get involved if they want to come and ride or hang out?

Right now we are finishing the post-production of RM14 film and are about to start working on the

organization of RM15. In order to come to our event or just to ride in the park kites should contact me by an email, it can be found on Rail Masters official facebook page or on our website railmasters.ru.

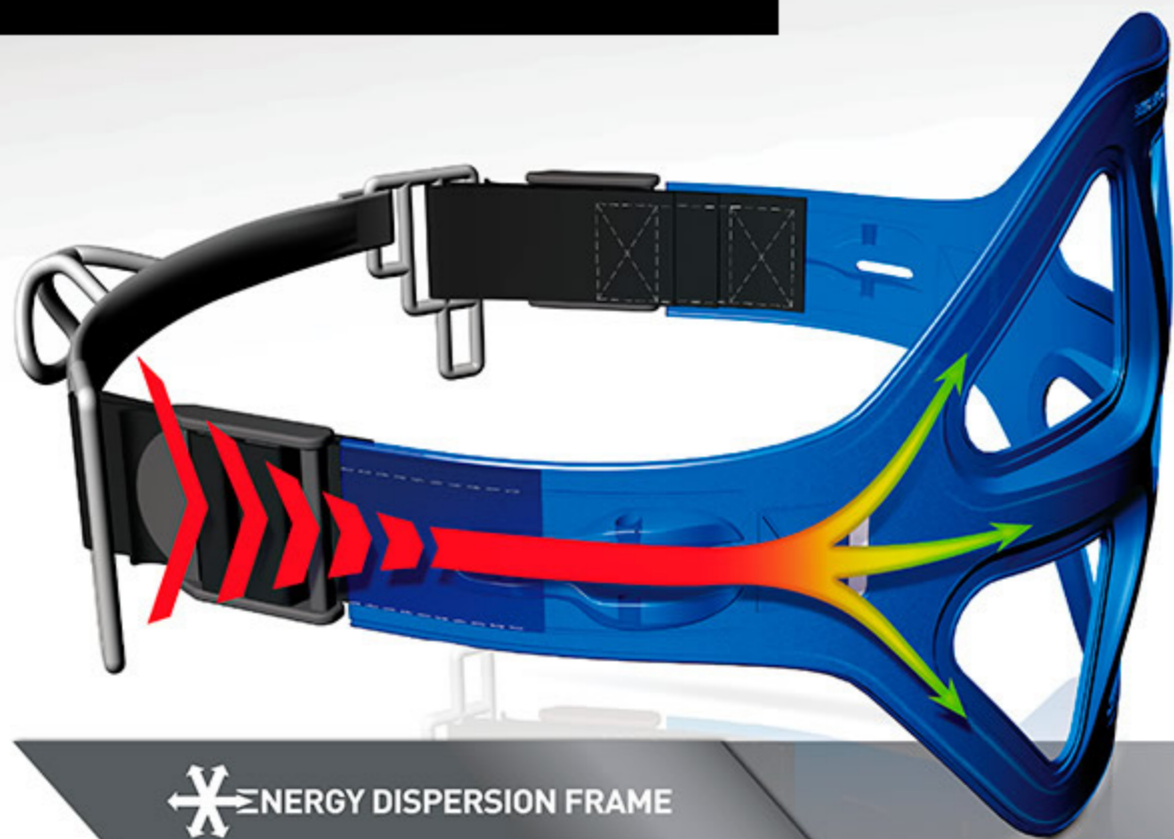
Awesome thanks Konstantin for taking the time!

RAIL MASTERS 2014

Write Up By Craig Cunningham

Once again the Blaga Crew from Russia put on an amazing event at the largest kite park in the world! The 2014 Beeline Rail Masters featured two kickers, a 50ft dance floor, a 30ft incline ledge with a bank, a 40ft 6 inch wide flat bar and a massive transfer box with an A frame ledge.





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With this park situated along Russia's southern boarder in the Black Sea, the common preconception that Russia is cold is far from reality. With the temperatures pushing to 30+ Celsius, Blaga (Blagoveschenskaya) has become a tourist hot spot and the perfect place to host this event. International riders from all over the globe came this year including Eric Rienstra (USA), James Boulding (UK) Tobias Hölte (Germany), Jake Kelsick (Antigua), Maciek Lewandowski (Poland), Craig Cunningham (Canada) plus a dozen or more Russian riders who were eager to knock off the international pros.

“ YOU COULD FIND YOURSELF KNOCKED OUT OF THE EVENT EARLY ”

This is one point that is definitely interesting to see. The Russians have a solid crew growing far into the double digits and they're pushing each other hard. Make one mistake and you could find yourself knocked out of the event early by the locals.

It would not be a surprise to see a Russian take a wildcard spot next year for Triple S. Notable riders like Artem Garashchenko, Sergey Belmesov, Yan Valiev, Anton (Rampage) Uzhegov and Gena Krillov, could easily hold their own in Cape Hatteras next spring alongside female competitor and 2013 Triple S Wildcard Victoria Soloveykina. That being said there were definitely some upsets throughout the event.

With a 10 day holding period the organizers would wait for the best conditions and allow for free ride time / training as well as the ability to party hard at the increasingly legendary Blaga beach parties! The wind came early in the holding period though and the event was able to start at the beginning of the week with some solid conditions.

This year we saw a big change in the "Riders for Riders" jam style format used at Rail Masters in the past years. Head judge Brian Wheeler (USA), alongside local judges Alan Sanakoev and Egor Morozov, would be putting the riders through a slopestyle format similar to the Triple S Invitational format. Two runs through the park with the best trick on each feature being scored. With 6 features each was worth 15% and 10% added in for "Overall Impression."

After a full day and a half of heats the wind died right as the finals were getting underway. In the finals was a mix of international riders alongside some of the top Russians. Eric Rienstra, Craig Cunningham, James Boulding, Tobias Holter, Sergey Belmesov and Artem Garashchenko would be battling it out. After the finals took place the riders had a quick break before heading into 30-minute best trick jam heats for Slider and Kicker. With a lot of big tricks going down it was going to be a tough call and a late night for the three judges to pick who had laid down the biggest hammers.

RESULTS:

- 1st – Eric Rienstra (Slingshot)
- 2nd – James Boulding (Cabrinha)
- 3rd – Craig Cunningham (North)

- Best Trick Kicker – Jake Kelsick
- Best Trick Slider – James Boulding

The 2014 Rail Masters was a huge success! Good times, heavy hits, massive parties, new friends... basically high fives all around! Nostrovia, see you next year.



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YARON BARLEV THE BRAINS BEHIND BLADE
PHOTO // RLP

WORDS // ROU CHATER



Yaron Barlev / Blade

In a new series we talk to the people behind some of the brands in the industry, first up it's Yaron Barlev who is the driving force behind Blade...

BEHIND THE BRAND

When did you launch the brand Yaron?

Blade was founded in February 2005 and the first kites came out one year later in March 2006. Next year is actually going to be our 10-year anniversary, so that's something to look forward to.

How did the idea come about?

I began kiting back in 2000, while studying for a computer science engineer degree at Technoyn (Tech University of Israel). At that time the idea of kitesurfing had just reached Israel, there were no repair shops. I decided to open my own repair shop and over the years have repaired about 80% of the kites in the country.

" From the beginning we always felt that we needed to keep the fun factor at the maximum level. "

In 2003 the owner of one of the biggest paragliding companies in the world was looking for somebody to head the new kiting division of his company and because of my technical background and kite repairing experience, he wanted me to join his team. He knew nothing about kites but a lot about production. For over a year we worked on producing a kite in-house from A to Z, which was an amazing experience. Just when we were about to enter production, he decided that kites were too big of an investment and decided to close the kiting division. I decided to look for an investor and create my own brand.

One month after I finished my Engineering degree, I founded created Blade Kiteboarding.

The product has changed a lot over the years, what was the driving force behind that?

From the beginning we always felt that we needed to keep the fun factor at the maximum level.

ORYAM NEHORAY RIDING THE BLADE MIST
PHOTO // RLP



Having quick and direct kites always came before many other parameters and that has always been our driving force.

The change to our products started when we realised that creating products that pleased everyone results in kites that are good but don't have any particular perfect characteristic. So we changed our concept into what it is now: giving different types of riders different type of kites, providing each kite with attributes that are best for its discipline.

" we took it up a notch and began working on very specific kites for specific disciplines. "

You recently decided to stop making boards, why is that?

From the day we started Blade in 2005, we have concentrated mainly on kite design. In recent years we took it up a notch and began working on very specific kites for specific disciplines. To be honest, we believe that we've been doing a great job! This began with the Fat Lady, followed by the Mist and most recently the Skinny Boy.

The board production has always been more of a compliment to our kites and thus provided a "kite package" to our customers, but that has been something that takes a lot of resources away from focusing on what we do best; creating the best kites for our customers.



TESTING THE SKINNY BOY
PHOTO // RLP

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Rider: Dom Moore, Photo: Josh Coombes

We now have a lot more time to work on new kite designs and to really be a truly dedicated kite brand that spends 100% of its resources to make the best kites out there.

You still have kites like the Trigger in the range, what makes it so popular do you think?

The Trigger is a great kite that people never get tired of riding. You can begin riding this kite during your first kite lesson and still have fun with it after 10 years of riding. It is the ultimate multi-purpose kite, allowing you to get big air, ride waves, or just cruise. It's quick, dynamic and very direct which makes it a really fun kite that does it all.

" we try to maximize the kite's abilities for this discipline, and that's exactly what we did with Skinny Boy. "

The Skinny Boy is a new wave kite, why is it important to have a dedicated kite for the waves?

Every discipline has its own unique characteristics that are great for that discipline but just OK for others. For example, making a pivot turning kite is very important for wave riding as it lets the kite turn with minimal power, which is a basic necessity in wave riding. On the other hand it's something freestyle riders would not appreciate very much.

The same goes with power compared to depower. As a wave rider, it is far more important that the kite will depower to a maximum rather than give the rider lots of power for high jumps.

When we are designing a kite for a specific discipline, we try to maximize the kite's abilities for this discipline, and that's exactly what we did with Skinny Boy.

ORYAM NEHORAY RIDING THE BLADE MIST
PHOTO // RLP



ORYAM NEHORAY RIDING THE BLADE MIST
PHOTO // RLP



How long did you spend developing the kite?

We have been working on a specific wave kite for a few years. We began with a special Trigger for waves back in 2011, but we weren't completely satisfied with the results. So we started working on a dedicated kite and in 2013, after numerous prototypes, we felt we had a big breakthrough with the Skinny Boy.

" we fine-tune it and keep testing and tweaking the design to make sure it is just perfect. "

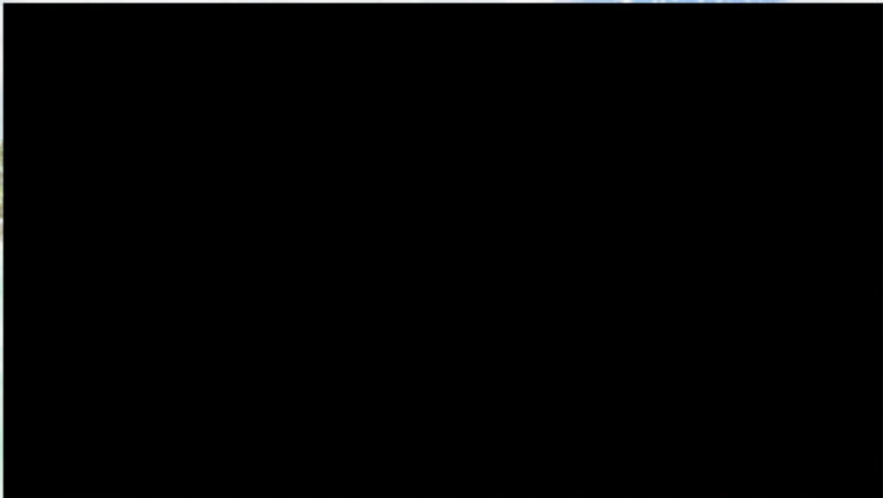
Who gets involved with the development process?

The development process begins with the R&D team: Momi the designer, Amit Perry the lead tester and myself. If it's a completely new kite we talk about the characteristic that will be best for its purpose and if it's a newer version we talk about which elements need to be changed and which ones we have to keep.

After Momi draws the kite, we send the CAD drawings to the factory and get our first prototype. Then, Amit and I test it at our beach and we fine-tune it and keep testing and tweaking the design to make sure it is just perfect. Once we are satisfied with the kite, we give the local team a chance to try it out and give us feedback.



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// RIDER: TOMMY GAUNT



Since we want to make sure every kite is really at the top-level that we have in mind, we also give it to various riders who are not associated with Blade so we can get a non-biased opinion from experienced riders.

What makes it different from the other wave kites out there?

Most wave kites out there offer drift and depower. That is definitely important but I feel wave riding still needs turning abilities and the power attributes. Both of these things are super important and both of them we have on the Skinny Boy and that's why it takes the wave riding experience to a whole new level.

“ One of the studio's associates is an extraordinary kitesurfer, so of course it was his passion to come out with the best bar possible. ”

The Uni Bar is a great bit of kit, one of our favourite kite bars in fact, who worked on that and how long did it take to get it right?

This bar took two years to develop as we changed everything we could to ensure it was perfect. We came out with a new bar design, new QR mechanism, new swivel, new depower cleat, new lines, and so on. For the bar we worked with “Zuckers” which is a very talented product design studio. One of the studio's associates is an extraordinary kitesurfer, so of course it was his passion to come out with the best bar possible.

For you what is the most important feature on a kite bar?

The Quick Release mechanism is the most important part; it has to work 100% every time and leave no margin for even the tiniest of errors.



MAURICIO PEDREIRA SHREDDING ON THE SKINNY BOY
PHOTO // HUGO VALENTE

Besides the QR, I would say the adjustable clam cleat as it gives riders the ability to determine how they want the kite to be depowered. It is a great feature that can be found on our bar.

“ Kitesurfers around the world will definitely look forward to our next kites ”

Where do you see the future of kitesurfing heading?

I feel the different disciplines in the industry will be even tighter in terms of the followers around it. Wave-riding, racing, wakestyle, low wind, just to name a few, they will each have their own competitions, groups, forums, equipment, etc. This will make each discipline feel as it is a sport of its own.

What's next on the design table for you guys?

After coming out with the Fat Lady, Skinny Boy and Mist kites, we are continuing to focus on designing very specific kites for each discipline. Kitesurfers around the world will definitely look forward to our next kites, which will be a perfect fit for specific groups that we feel are being neglected.

Cheers Yaron, thanks for taking the time...



YARON BARLEV TESTING THE SKINNY BOY
PHOTO // RLP



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TECHNIQUE

It's a great time of year to be a kite surfer here in Northern Europe. The autumnal winds start blowing, the swells start rolling, the sun is often shining and the water is still warm, at least by our standards. No excuses then, what better way to get over the summer calm than indulging yourself with a few new tricks...

We kick October off with some back loop/back roll polishing, which will look good in straps or boots, adding the Indy grab to a sent rotation, plenty of style on tap. Moving on you can get your head around the Triple F, the front foot one foot – a joy to perform and a good reason to use straps! Then we finish up with the wonderful unhooked Popped Front to Toe side – which just so happens to be the base move of a world of new tricks.

For more on coaching upcoming clinics and the expanding 2015 Calendar:

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SENT BACK ROLL INDY GRAB



FRONT FOOT ONE FOOT



UNHOOKED POPPED FRONT TO TOE SIDE

SENT BACK ROLL INDY GRAB

Board: Siren XO 133

Kite: Chaos 7m

Here's another grab that'll keep your back rolls/loops feeling fresh. The Indy is a good variation as it requires both legs to be lifted, and thus is a very different style to your boned out tail variant. The other beauty about an Indy is that if you're riding boots it's still easy to reach the grab, as you're not trying to flex too much material. And if you're not riding boots the Indy can be the first step to such glorious moves as a back roll board off. That's surely more than enough motivation for everyone to give this puppy a go.

Many of the principles to the other grabs that we've covered in our sent back rolls still apply. You need to be able to perform a sent back roll, and to make this easier it'll need to be slowly rotated with a bit of height and some confidence building float, giving you time and space to perform a solid grab before you land. So let's break down some of the crux moments in order to work on this effectively.

1. The Approach and Take Off

Approach wise Karine comes in resisting on a good edge heading solidly upwind with the kite either at 11 or 1 o'clock, no higher. Her front leg is extended and pushed forwards, her hips are forced back towards the tail of the board, her shoulders are leaning back and even though her back leg is bent, Karine keeps it solid to resist the power.



Pic A Here Karine has resisted with a good edge and sent the kite quite hard from 11 o'clock so the pull up will come early, at about 12 or just after. As soon as Karine feels the pull she will stamp up off her back leg in a popping motion and pull the bar in. By popping up into the back loop off her back leg she can't lean too far back or bend both legs and therefore can't carve too hard into wind under the kite, so her rotation will be slower. Karine pulls the bar in to immediately freeze the kite above her, preventing it from continuing back as is often the way in sent back rolls. And although Karine has carved into this rotation she has not thrown her head over her front shoulder, she is looking forward through the lines.

All this should help you get a mellow rotation rather than an uncontrolled spin.

2. Knees Up **Pic B**

Extend then lift! We say it all the time but it's the same for most grabs and so many tricks, you have to get your body in position as soon as you leave the water, the longer you wait the further you'll rotate and the less time you'll have. This doesn't mean that you have to be holding the board as soon as the fins leave the water but if you get your body in position the grab will be easy to reach. However you need to extend up into the rotation before thinking grab. In the photo as Karine gets airborne she is staring right at the board



D

where she'll grab it. She lifts both knees up towards her, work that tummy! This will help with slowing the rotation down - if you're looking for the grab you can't throw your head around into the rotation.

3. Lift to Grab Pic C

If you bring both knees right up into your chest the grab should be a doddle. The obstacles with the Indy are your harness and the kite. The harness is supporting you, the kite is lifting you, and you're aiming right for the middle of the board, so it's all in your way. You can't bend down with that force, so let your stomach and legs do the work and bring the board

up towards your outstretched hand. As your knees come up allow your head and shoulders to rock back into a relaxed sitting position. You can see that Karine hasn't rotated much since the last photo, so she's being quick to get the board up and she's rotating slowly. Again, looking for the grab keeps your head between your shoulders, keeping the rotation slow. This is probably a good moment to mention the advantage of giving the kite a decent send for the jump. It's not just about getting height, but because you'll spend a considerable amount of time keeping the bar pulled in with only your front hand, the kite will merely move from behind you

2014 WAVEBOARDS



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to slightly in front of you. If you gingerly drift the kite up and it barely gets to 12, by the time you come around your back roll the kite will be way too far forward and pulling you off balance.

Hold It Pic D

Once you've got the grab, hold it. You want to try and hold your grab for as long as possible and the slower your rotation, the easier this is. You can see that Karine's position in the air is almost as if she was sitting on the beach – it's comfy so enjoy it. If you've sent the kite hard and frozen it above you on take off you should be able to relax and unless you feel the kite pulling too far forward resist the temptation to look over your shoulder. By eyeing up the camera Karine is stalling her rotation. If the kite does pull you can sheet out slightly and move on to the next stage, if not just wait until you start to float down, then think about the landing...

Turn and Land Pic E

If your rotation is controlled and the kite is not too far forward you can hold the grab until just before touchdown. However to make sure that you complete the 360° and get far enough around to land perfectly you will eventually need to turn your head over your front shoulder to see where you're going, spot your landing and get the board pointing downwind.



E



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Passion makes us fly

When you do release the grab, aim to get both hands on the bar and give it a good dive to help you land downwind. As you turn your head focus your eyes downwind, rather than around towards where you'll go, otherwise you'll land on too much of an edge.

Top Tips

Start with some back rolls, concentrating on the send, upward take off and slow rotation. Then start to bring your knees up and roll back in your harness.

If you're struggling with the slow rotation, try approaching it as you would for a back roll transition, as with less speed you'll find it easier to go up into the back roll and rid yourself of the spin.

Now have a good look at the **Sequence** and **Videos**.

Common Problems

If you are over-rotating your back roll and either landing across the wind on an edge or starting another rotation make sure that you don't carve up excessively during your take off. You should go from the edge that you've approached with, and then kick up and around. Also make sure you dive the kite for the landing as this will stop your rotation and pull you off down wind.

If you're getting pulled forward and off balance by the kite in the air, either crashing or landing nose first. This is a result of the kite flying forward of 12 o'clock, so in Karine's case towards 11, and can be due to a number of reasons. Firstly make sure your hands are centred on the bar, keep the bar in



Sequence

with one hand without yanking it forward. Make sure you send the kite, the further it goes back, the further it needs to return, so there is a perfect balance depending on your height and kite size.

Keystones

1. Good solid edge with straight front leg and back leg resisting
2. Send kite positively

3. Pop up into the back roll (not around), extending.
4. Lift knees and rock back, ready for the grab
5. Turn head and dive to complete rotation



FRONT FOOT ONE FOOT

Board: X Caliber 138

Kite: Chaos 9m

This is one fun move for sure, you'll confuse your peers, and most likely yourselves at first, but rest assured that the Triple F is surprisingly easy and is guaranteed to put a smile on your face – it's show boating with a sense of humour. Just watch Nick Jacobsen to remind yourself why we kitesurf – it really should make you smile. On a slightly more serious note though, what do you need to bash out one of these? Realistically if you can jump with a tail grab and loosen your straps you are well and truly ready to rock and pose.

Preparation

Before you hit the water get yourself ready. To free your foot temporarily from the confines of your front foot strap you may want to loosen the strap a tad so that your hoof can slide out, and possibly more importantly back in seamlessly without hindrance or interference. And if you're going to loosen the front one you best loosen the back one a touch too. This way if you don't get the front foot back in it'll be easy to ditch the board pre splash.

The Jump **Pic A**

Unless you're as quick as an amorous Yorkshire Terrier, getting some height and float from your jump is paramount so that you have time to grab, free your foot, get it back in without stubbing your toe and land. Ideally you'll want some power in the kite, a jolly good edge and some space. Start with your kite no higher than 11 or 1 o'clock. Once you know it's there,



A



B



C

look upwind and drive against your edge, pushing against your back heel ready to resist the extra power that you're about to create. Now wiggle your front foot slightly out of the strap so that it is not wedged in and send the kite hard with a decent pull push action, keeping the bar on the sweet spot. Keep edging, keep the bar in and wait for the kite to launch you. If you edge well and send hard you will get the up earlier and the kite won't fly too far behind you, making it easier to concentrate on the task in hand. We're looking for an elevator jump here, so more up and down, not flying at mach 10 downwind.

Knees Up **Pic B**

As with any foot out and board off you, need to get

everything in position ASAP so that you've got plenty of time. If you only manage to get the grab in on the way down your chances are getting slimmer. Here you can see that immediately after take off Christian is getting his knees up towards him. This requires the most effort as the lift from the kite is straightening you out, so you'll need to pull hard and it's probably why Christian doesn't look too happy. Also have a look at his bar – Christian has pulled it in and is levelling it. This way he gets the kite settled just behind 12 o'clock with two hands before getting on with business.

Look for the Grab **Pic C**

Get focused on where you intend to grab the board, as this way you'll get there quicker. Turning your head



D

to look at the tail will also turn your body and the board, which is a good thing. By turning the board back you have more room behind your harness to lift your back knee and get the board nearer to you. Lifting the back knee and the back of the board towards you tilts the board which helps un-weight your front foot and makes it easier to slide out. You can see that everything is happening behind Christian, so he has plenty of room to manoeuvre.

Make It Count Pic D

This is your moment of glory, so

make it count. Once you have the tail of the board pull it up and in towards your bottom, as this will help twist the board off your foot. At the same time lift your front foot towards you, et voila; your foot will now be dangling in mid air. Keep your grip tight on the board and keep your bar in for float. From here you have a plethora of options to show off, the most important of which is to get your front leg extended as Christian has in the photo. As you get confident you can play with board angles and leg positions. As per any reasonably high and floaty jump,

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aim to keep the kite just behind 12 o'clock so that you don't get pulled forwards and off balance whilst in flight.

Eyes and In **Pic E**

Whilst learning this, once you feel that you're dropping it's your cue for front foot in. This way you'll have ample time. Once you get more proficient and confident you can wait until millimoments before touch down. To make life easier and give you a bit longer you should start to pull gently on your front hand. This way the kite will fly over 12 o'clock and you'll be rewarded with a little extra lift, and therefore time. If you don't do this you'll drop much quicker. Fix your gaze on the front strap and pull your back knee up, which will tilt the nose of the board down. Bend your front leg to bring your foot up and if your strap is loose it should be a fairly simple procedure. Once your foot is in give it a wiggle whilst you still have hold of the tail to make sure that it's secure.

Both Hands and Dive **Pic F**

All that's left is to land this with panache and you'll feel pretty chuffed. Once your foot is in release the grab and get you back hand on the bar. You'll need to dive the kite hard for landing because you gave it a little pull forward for support whilst replacing the front foot, so if you're not aggressive now you'll get pulled off balance as the kite flies around the edge of the window. You can see that Christian is giving the bar a fair yank down to dive the kite and as it pulls he angles the board off the wind for a soft downwind landing.



E



F

Top Tips

Approach your first few attempts with an aggressive jump, a boned grab and a subtle look back to get your confidence up. Then loosen the straps and give it a go. You'll be surprised how both the grab and the back foot act as anchor points, making this feel far more solid and controlled than you would expect.

Now have a good look at the **Sequence** and **Videos**.

Common Problems

First off, struggling to get the foot out. Assuming that you have loosened the strap or straps the primary cause of this will be your legs. If you bring your front knee right up into your chest you'll have no room to lift your foot out. Similarly if you don't lift your back knee enough you may have the same problem. Make sure you get a decent tilted angle on the board, as this will make a world of difference.

If you're getting stuck looking back and then dropping down into the drink. Chances are that you're being a bit ginger on the front hand and leaving the kite too far behind you after take off. Remember to fly the kite back up to just behind 12 o'clock with two hands as you bring your knees up. Don't go for the grab until you have the kite settled.

When you're having problems getting the foot back in it's either going to be lack of time and height, so make sure that you pull gently on the front hand as you slide it back in. It could also be the knees again, so make sure the board is tilted.

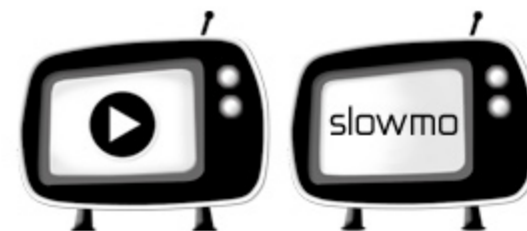
Keystones

1. Elevator jump
2. Control kite with 2 hands



Sequence

3. Tilt board, back knee up into chest and grab
4. Pull board in and lift foot out
5. Tilt, look at strap and slide foot in



UNHOOKED POPPED FRONT TO TOE SIDE

Board: Siren XO 133

Kite: Chaos 7m

Finally the homework for all you unhooked and unhinged riders out there. In it's most basic form we have the unhooked popped front to toe side. Once you have it nailed you could add a cheeky pop out to wrapped, or flick more on take off for a bone fide S-Bend to toe side, a front to wrapped, an NIS, a KL Slim, crikey you have to have this one in your box of tricks if you want to progress. We'll assume that you have a preferred toe side, and hopefully it's the opposite of your blind side. For us mortals learning blind tricks one way and toe side and wrapped tricks the other keeps things simple. Lets agree then to learn this on that happy toe side tack.

Set Up **Pic A**

If you want pop you need to approach in the right way, as it will not only help in getting you up and off the water, but also the rotation and the landing. Karine is perfectly set up for some hefty pop. With her kite parked just below 1 o'clock she pushes the nose of the board off the wind and flexes her back leg to flatten the board, increase speed and move towards the kite, allowing it to drop back a bit in the window. At the same time she has all her weight, hips, head and shoulders dropped back towards the tail of the board behind her back foot. Her hands are centred and she has her bar trimmed in enough so that she can easily unhook.



A



B



C

The Pop **Pic B**

Going into a popped front rotation it is all too tempting to drift the kite up and wait for something to happen, which will inevitably lead to a dangly and uncontrolled spin under a very high kite. It's a must to keep the kite flying forward and get your height from a very aggressive pop. If you concentrate on going up before throwing your head around and shoulders down you will get enough height. If you dive straight into the rotation you'll not extend up and rather fire yourself down towards the water. Here Karine is popping up hard. Having carved quickly back up onto her edge with her weight still back, she has now stamped down hard, pushing her back leg down

against the edge of her board and extending her body upwards for maximum pop. She keeps her front elbow tucked in and bent to steer the forward and prevent it from drifting up, and the bar is still angled towards the kite as if she were riding. Although Karine is initiating her rotation with the kick, she concentrates on fully extending her back leg before throwing her head and shoulders down and around.

The Rotation **Pic C**

Once you know that you're on the way up you need make sure that you keep rotating. You're aiming to get your head around far enough that you'll be able to see the water and where you want to land, and then you'll be able to focus on the toe side bit.

All the time Karine keeps her arms in and bar close, so she can keep the kite moving forwards. With the bar close she can keep the bar turning with her head and shoulders rather than leaving it behind and losing control on straight arms. Getting around is all in the head and hands, look and your body will follow, push your hands through and your shoulders will come through quicker. If you just wait and expect to get around you'll likely stop. You can see that Karine is leading with her head and hands – once she can see her landing she knows that it'll end well. Interestingly you can see from here Karine could rotate fully to heelside or she can choose toe side – the point being the take off and rotation is the same.

Drop to Toe Side Pic D

So this is the different bit! If you were going for a full rotation you would push your hands around and down, bringing your shoulders around as if they were attached to the bar, whilst you look through the bar, dead downwind. This downwind focus would then force your hips to follow, in turn bringing your legs through and resulting in a heelside landing. You want to block this so the first thing to do is look forwards in the direction you are going as you push the bar around. This way your head effectively finishes its rotation and stalls the rest of your body.



D



E

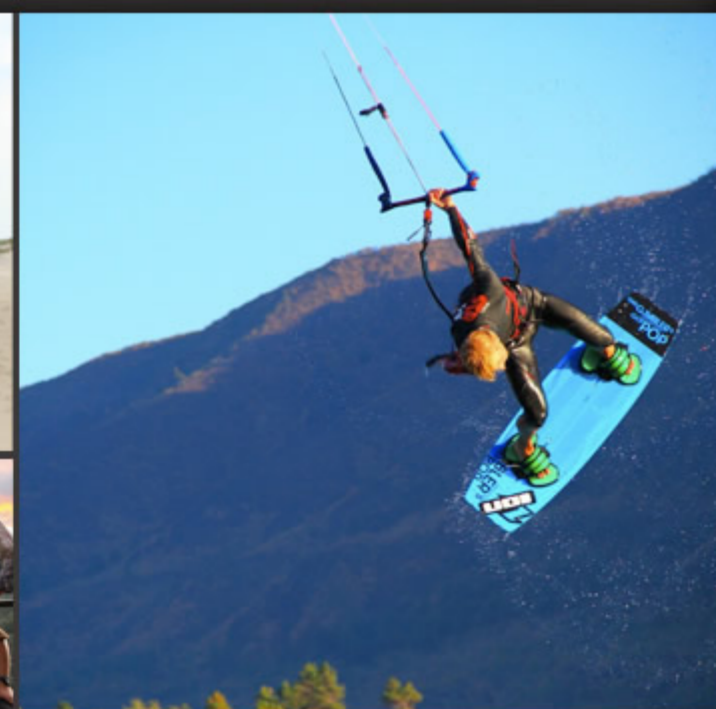


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If you have something to focus on that'll make it easier. As your body stalls it will still naturally start to fall under the bar. You can see in the photo that Karine is looking forwards, so her rotation has stopped and her feet are dropping. In short where you spot your landing is different, it needs to be in front of you, not down wind of you.

The Landing **Pic E**

This is why it's going to be easier to do this on your preferred toe side. In the previous picture you could easily imagine Karine losing her balance, catching the board and falling backwards, but she doesn't because she's happy toe side. With practice most of us become proficient at toe side both ways, but with speed and power it will be more natural and achievable one way at first. The result is this picture. Having stalled her rotation, Karine now looks downwind, keeps the bar in close and points the board down wind with her toe side front foot for a smooth tail first landing. If you feel off balance, pull the bar towards your bum as this will help turn you enough downwind.

Top Tips

Getting yourself ready and prepared for the separate steps will help no end. Before attempting this practice some popped front rolls and then some pops to toe side, this will get the muscle memory going and then you can marry the two together.

Time to check the **Sequence** and **Videos** for a real time run through.

Common Problems

If you are landing and then falling, getting pulled over your heel edge, chances are that you are not landing



Sequence

downwind enough. As with all pop tricks make sure that you point off downwind enough before carving back up to pop.

If you are landing downwind but are still getting pulled off balance, check your arms. You must keep your elbows in close – as soon as your arms extend your shoulders will get pulled forward and this will lead to unbalanced landing. If you feel that your arms extend during the rotation then yank the bar in towards your bottom/

back hip as you drop down to land.

Keystones

1. Approach as for any hard popping trick
2. Extend up before throwing down
3. Push hands and head around
4. Look in front of you to stall rotation
5. Land downwind on a flat board



TRIED AND TESTED

Kites, boards and wetsuits get put through their paces this issue, a good thing too, winter is coming!

KITES

2015

CrazyFly Sculp 9m
Liquid Force Envy 9m
Peter Lynn Escape 9m
Ozone Reo 9m

BOARDS

2015

Brunotti Yuri Pro 135cm
Carved Imperator LW 144cm
Core Choice 137cm

WETSUITS

Men's 2015

ION Strike Amp 5/5mm
ION Onyx Amp 4/3mm
Mystic Crossfire 5/4mm
Mystic Legend 5/3mm
NP Mission Front Zip 5/4/3mm

Women's 2015

ION Isis Amp 4/3mm
Mystic Diva 5/3mm
NP Serene 5/4/3mm

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CRAZYFLY SCULP 9M 2015

At A Glance

The Sculp has been in the line up for a few years now at CrazyFly, they bill it as "One World, One Kite". It's firmly aimed at the all round rider looking for a great kite that can perform whatever their style. It's a light three-strut design with wide wingtips. The plan shape is "delta" with a flat arc to make it user friendly and easy to relaunch. The wide wingtips keep the kite agile in the air and the deep profile generates lots of power.

CrazyFly have ditched the pulley on the bridle this year and are instead utilising a low friction O-ring, these are much more durable and provide a more direct feeling in the air. The one-pump valves are also new; they are now manufactured in Europe and use the best materials available. In addition to that a new turbo inflate valve has been added, we're big fans of this as it makes pumping the kite up much easier and faster.

The Bar

The Sick bar is one of our favourites, and it has been improved for 2015! It is one of the best bars on the market and it's 100% made in Europe. The one-piece carbon bar is solid, lightweight and incredibly comfortable to use. The bar is simple, clean and safe, yet delivers a high standard of performance. A new trim cleat has been added this year, it is smaller and easier to use. In addition a PU tube had been placed over the depower line to eliminate any wear. The push-away chicken loop mechanism has been tweaked. Each chicken loop is tested at the factory under load before it is released onto the market. It's easy to use and

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LIQUID FORCE ENVY 9M 2015

At A Glance

Last year the Envy took a leap forward in terms of design, the kite has been in the line up for 6 years now and Liquid Force promised even more changes to the latest addition to the family. The focus for this year was to make the kite lighter and even more responsive. Miraculously they have reduced the overall weight of the kite by a quarter! The struts and leading edge are thinner to make the kite lighter and faster and there is increased sweep in the wingtips to help with turning and relaunch.

Whilst the kite is lighter, it is still built with the usual high quality materials we have come to expect from Liquid Force. The canopy uses their new Dura X material, which is double laminated for durability. Their Layered Frame construction puts added protection at stress and wear points, and internally they have used a 0.1mm TPU bladder material that is the strongest on the market. All this is topped off with the fantastic Max Flow inflation system that ensures you will be one of the first riders off the beach.

The Envy is a three-strut kite with a shortened minimal bridle with no pulleys - there is a direct connection on the rear of the kite. It's aimed at the rider looking for a do-it-all kite that can handle itself in whatever conditions you throw at it. Used by the likes of Brandon Scheid for wakestyle, freestyle, waves and foiling it's a kite that a lot of riders should enjoy.

The Bar

There is a new bar for 2015, but sadly it wasn't available at the

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BRAND // OZONE
SIZE // 9M

MODEL // REO
YEAR // 2015



KITE TEST



OZONE REO 9M 2015

At A Glance

The Reo was introduced in 2012 as Ozone's first full-on wave kite. During the last couple of years it has won fans the world over, and rightfully so. It's a lightweight kite with a simple three-strut design and quite a low-aspect ratio. For 2015 Ozone have utilised the new Technoforce D2 canopy material which is a double Ripstop nylon fabric that is much stiffer and hard wearing than traditional canopy materials.

There are various tuning options on the kite so you can set it up for either hooked, or unhooked wave riding. In addition you can tune the tuning speed and bar pressure too. Ozone's high volume inflate/deflate valve makes a welcome return and this will ensure you are the first one of your mates out playing in the waves.

Whilst the kite isn't covered in rubber bumpers and reinforcements Ozone have taken care to ensure a high quality construction teams up with superior materials to make the kite strong but exceedingly light. The simple bridle doesn't have any pulleys and there is a direct connection for the rear lines.

The Bar

The Contact Control System from Ozone is a 4-line set up with a push-away quick release. The mechanism is very clever and really easy to operate even under high load, it is also very simple to reconnect when you want to get riding again. Top marks for calling it the Megatron too, which instantly makes it even better, it can be set up in a standard safety mode, or a suicide mode.

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BRAND // PETER LYNN
SIZE // 9M

MODEL // ESCAPE
YEAR // 2015



KITE TEST



PETER LYNN ESCAPE 9M 2015

At A Glance

This is the third generation of Escape kites from Peter Lynn, each incarnation has seen tweaks to the design rather than radical changes and the latest version is no different. The team have sought to improve the overall performance of the kite by adjusting the shape and profile, whilst still retaining the kite's legendary user friendliness.

It's a four strut design with the traditional middle strut absent which helps it to deliver excellent low-end power. There are trim options to help you tune the bar pressure and handling of the kite. The kite is aimed to appeal to a wide variety of riders, but with a firm focus on user friendliness and ease of use it should definitely get the less experienced riders out there excited!

The wing tips have also been tuned this year to be lighter and also more efficient, this has been done to improve the kite handling. A new "efficient" inflate valve has been added to speed up the process of pumping up and Ronstan Shock Block pulleys, which have no moving parts, have been used on the simple bridle.

The Bar

The Navigator SL bar is clean, simple and user friendly. It seems to be as simple as possible without losing any comfort or safety. The quick release is an easy push-away system, and the kite has two safety system options either attaching the safety line to both top lines, or just one. The bar and line length package comes in

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BRAND // BRUNOTTI
SIZE // 135X40CM

MODEL // YOURI PRO
YEAR // 2015



BRAND // CARVED
MODEL // IMPERATOR LIGHTWIND

SIZE // 145X44CM
YEAR // 2015



BOARD TEST



BRUNOTTI YOURI PRO

At A Glance

Youri Zoon has had a longstanding relationship with Brunotti and he has ridden their boards to World Championship victory on the PKRA World Tour. This is the board he rides, and it's no compromises in terms of its shape and design. Brunotti have focused on keeping the board light, to negate the additional weight of wearing bindings, whilst at the same time they have made the board as bombproof as possible, and if you have seen Youri ride you will know he goes big and hard!

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CARVED IMPERATOR LIGHTWIND

At A Glance

Carved are a very high end custom board manufacturer from Germany, and they've been making exceedingly light and fast boards for some time on a bespoke basis for their large customer base. Now though they are making limited production runs of some of their most popular shapes and sizes. They make two lightwind boards, a larger 151x45 and this smaller 145x44. Both are built using their unique CARTAN® carbon construction

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BOARD TEST

BRAND // CORE
SIZE // 137X41.5

MODEL // CHOICE
YEAR // 2015



BOARD TEST



CORE CHOICE

At A Glance

The Choice from Core is a full on high tech freestyle and freeride board for demanding riders who are looking for the ultimate in performance. It is built using CARTAN® carbon which provides unrivalled torsional stiffness whilst also being exceedingly light. The Choice has been designed with bindings in mind too, special inserts have been used to cope with the extra stress and ensure they never pull out. The tips of the board are certainly eye-catching, the concertina

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FREE SERVICE

BRAND // ION MODEL // ONYX AMP
THICKNESS // 4/3MM YEAR // 2015



BRAND // ION MODEL // STRIKE AMP
THICKNESS // 5/5MM YEAR // 2015



WETSUIT TEST



ION ONYX AMP

For 2015 the ION range of kitesurfing suits have been split into two distinct styles, the front zip Onyx range and the back zip Strike line. Like the Strike range the Onyx series features three different levels, the Onyx Select, Onyx Amp and regular Onyx, and there are a multitude of options within the range.

It is worth noting the Onyx series features a 6/5 suit with built in

hood in both the Select and Amp ranges. These would offer the ultimate in warmth should you want to keep riding right through the winter. We decided to check out the 4/3mm Onyx Amp, perhaps not a typical choice for winter, but with modern wetsuit technologies, could this suit keep us warm and flexible for the next few months at least?

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ION STRIKE AMP

As we have already mentioned, the ION kite range is split into two distinct lines this year, the Strike series, which is a back zip, and the Onyx series, which features a front zip. Within the Strike line all the suits feature a back zip and there are three price points in the range; the Strike Select is the top of the range with the best materials, the Strike Amp is in the middle and the regular Strike is aimed at the more price conscious rider.

Within each of these ranges there are various combinations of thickness so there should be something for everyone. It is worth noting there are summer suits as well in this line up, so ION have you covered for the entire season. We opted for the middle of the road Strike Amp 5/5mm suit to test, which should be plenty to keep you warm through the coldest of months.

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WETSUIT TEST

BRAND // MYSTIC
THICKNESS // 5/4MM

MODEL // CROSSFIRE
YEAR // 2015



BRAND // MYSTIC MODEL // LEGEND
THICKNESS // 5/3MM YEAR // 2015



WETSUIT TEST



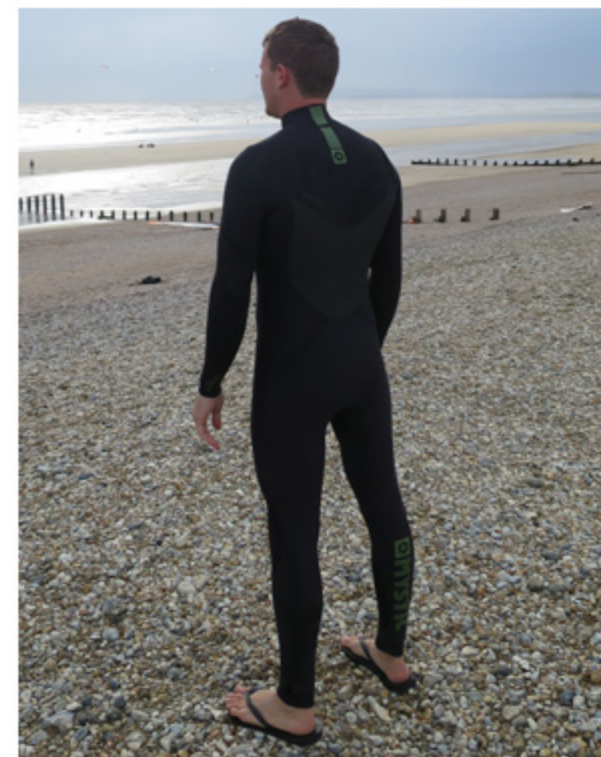
MYSTIC CROSSFIRE

The Crossfire has been in the line up for a few years now, it's a high spec suit at a great price, aimed at the rider looking for a decent winter suit, without having to pay the earth. This year Mystic have gone for some bright colours to keep the suit at the front of the crowd in the fashion stakes. It's certainly a statement and looks great on the water too. Using 70% M-Flex Neoprene, their most flexible material, ensures the

suit isn't restrictive when you wear it, and the classic back zip is familiar and easy to get into and out of.

To keep the water out the suit is fully glued and blind stitched, with critical seams taped on the inside. Kite specific features include Aquaflush sections on each ankle, shin pads and leg straps.

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MYSTIC LEGEND

The Legend is a new suit for Mystic for this year, it's their highest spec suit and is basically the Rolls Royce of wetsuits in their range. The biggest news is their new Quick Dry lining, this is used on the inside of the suit and it ensures that your suit drains water much faster than traditional linings. This means that after a long session on the water, your suit will drain out any water that got in really quickly allowing you to jump into a dry suit for the

next session.

In addition to this new material the Legend features 100% M-Flex neoprene, their most flexible material, combined with 100% waterproof internal taping on the inside of the suit. There are Aquaflush panels on the ankles, as well as straps to stop any flushing of water when you land big tricks.

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WETSUIT TEST

BRAND // NP

MODEL // MISSION FRONT ZIP

THICKNESS // 5/4/3MM

YEAR // 2015



WETSUIT TEST



NP MISSION FRONT ZIP

The Mission Front Zip from NP is aimed at the rider looking for unrestricted movement and extreme warmth. The range features a 6/5/4 full hooded suit as well as a couple of thinner summer suits. In addition, for the more traditional kites, there is a back zip version too. The suit comes in three colour ways; all black with a camo detail on the shoulder, grey and green, and blue and red.

It's towards the top of the price range and is one of the highest quality suits that NP make. At the heart of the Mission FZ is NP's own Apex-Flex neoprene, this is a super soft and stretchy material that offers up to 25% more stretch. You really notice this when you first put on the suit, it fits like a glove and feels great against your skin.

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Photo: Lewis Crathern / Best Kites

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BRAND // ION MODEL // ISIS AMP
THICKNESS // 4/3MM YEAR // 2015



BRAND // MYSTIC MODEL // DIVA FRONT-ZIP
THICKNESS // 5/3MM YEAR // 2015



WETSUIT TEST



ION ISIS AMP

The choice of ION wetsuits is astounding, and that goes for the women's range too! Each year more technology and features are built into the suits, and invariably a new design is introduced to the line-up. Last year the Isis Amp was the newcomer, and it's proved to be popular. Having now tried it out personally, it's easy to see why.

The Isis range is a series of front-zip wetsuits, with the Amp

being the higher-end model with features such as elastic liquid sealed seams, Flex Control panel construction, Hot Stuff lining, rubber seals around the wrists, Glideskin around the collar, resistant rubber protection print on the knee panels (ION's new L-Tex Protection), and Ninja Knees. How could anyone not want Ninja Knees?!

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MYSTIC DIVA FRONT-ZIP

Fresh for this year, the Diva Front-Zip wetsuit is another addition to the Mystic wardrobe. It's great to see the technology, style and designs improving across women's neoprene products, and Mystic have always been ones to lead the game for the ladies.

Front-zip wetsuits have had a bit of a reputation in the past for being a menace to get into, rather like getting toothpaste back into the

tube, however the super stretchy and flexible M-flex neoprene, combined with the design of the suit meant it wasn't a Krypton Factor Challenge and went on very easily.

On appearances alone, the Diva stands out from the crowd. Mystic have really gone for some funky colour ways and designs this year,

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WETSUIT TEST

BRAND // NP

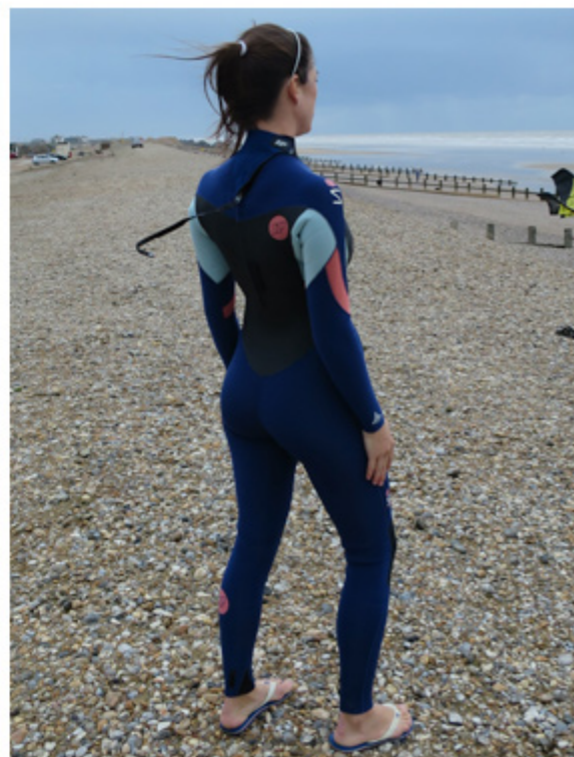
MODEL // SERENE BACK ZIP

THICKNESS // 5/4/3MM

YEAR // 2015



WETSUIT TEST



NP SERENE BACK ZIP

Neil Pryde have a long history in the watersports industry, and the NP accessories brand is the more recent, edgy side of the brand aimed at a variety of watersports enthusiasts, in particular kitesurfers.

The Serene Back Zip suit (there is also a Front Zip version of the same name), is the women's premium offering. It's a classic looking wetsuit, with a smooth

skin chest panel, regular seams and styling and is available in two colour options, the navy/soda/pink we have on test here, and a more demure grey and mint green choice.

Before you even make it as far as getting a leg into the suit, you will have noticed the plush, smooth feel of the neoprene. This is down to the Apex-Plus neoprene that NP have used. It's super-stretchy

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SPECIFIC ADAPTATION TO IMPOSED DEMANDS #3:

Kite better in three months with this one weird tip (personal trainers hate him!)

Last issue we looked at becoming better at kitesurfing in the short term by improving our balance. This time, we're going to look at conditioning for that dream trip that's booked some months into the future... This could be a fortnight all-inclusive to Barbados, a six month tour of South America, a year in Western Australia, or even a stay-at-home winter slaying cold grey giant waves; the commonality is that you want to be in peak match-fitness when it arrives.

Speak to Dom at www.facebook.com/thesurfsanctuary
www.surfsanctuary.co.uk

Isn't it funny how we know that everything decays and breaks down with time, yet as humans we still believe that our future selves will be stronger and better? We're not so crazy to believe this you and I; even geriatrics will respond very well to strength training under medical guidance so the entire readership of IKSURFMAG can consider themselves safely in the category of 'rapid responder' when it comes to building a better kitesurfer.

" FIX THE DATE THAT YOU WILL BE LANDED, REFRESHED AND READY TO KITE "

Long journeys start with a single step

It's going to be dark after work by the time this article is published so let's assume those of us in the northern hemisphere are going to be training on land or in a swimming pool. How very dull, hmm? Maybe, but taking a forced break from kitesurfing (as if the least windy summer of all time hasn't already done that for us) can be one of your greatest allies in becoming better and stronger. Think of it as a fallow period, a chance for any kite related repetitive strain injuries to calm down, a time for the mind to consolidate what it has learned and to let any bad habits or boring default behaviour (such as only doing 'safe' tricks) to grow over.

The first thing to do is to fix the date that you will be landed, refreshed and ready to kite on day one of your trip, and then work backwards three months from there. If your trip is longer than three months away, take it easy till it is just three months away, you don't want any of this to become stale.



Then split the three months into a month prep phase, a month peak phase and a month simmer down phase. This is the best way to avoid injury and to get you frothing right before your trip.

Acknowledge your weaknesses

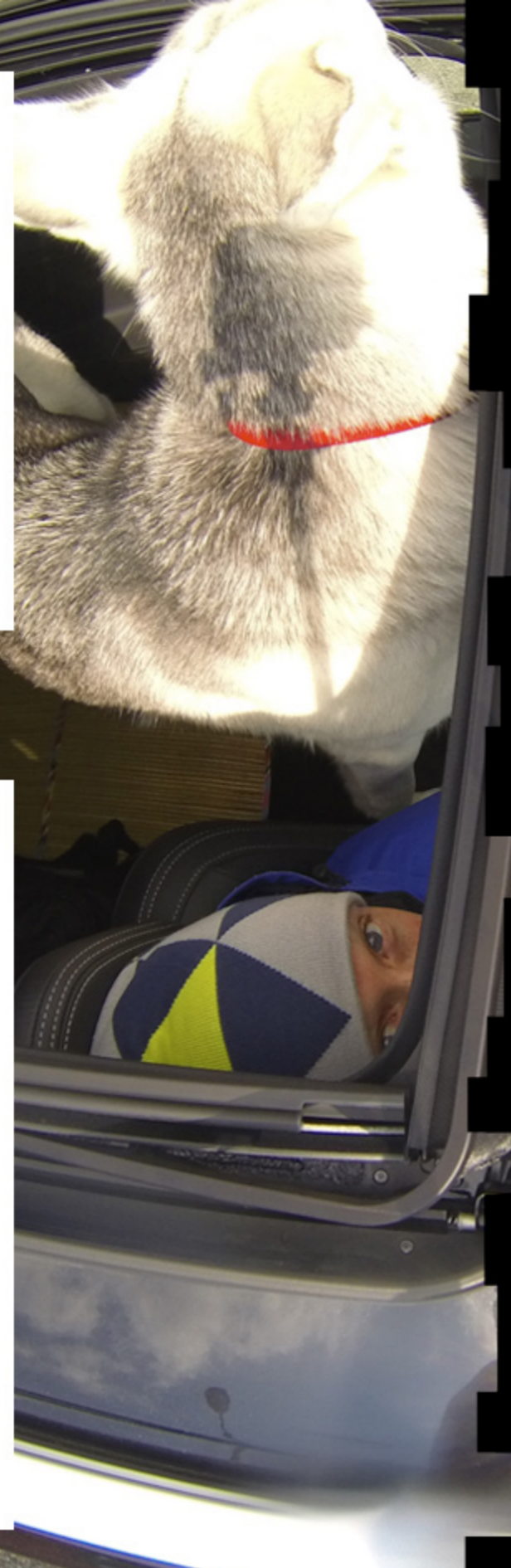
Now we have to do an inventory of what we're good at, and what we'd like to get better at. You want to make sure you don't hide behind the stuff you can do and are instead devoting time to what needs working on.

" GET ALL THE WAY DOWN SO THAT YOU ARE RESTING ON YOUR HAUNCHES "

Mobility

One of the most important mobility tests for a kitesurfer is their ability to do a 'primal squat'. Being able to 'primal squat' will make everything from water starts to floaters to sucking the board up under you during an air much easier.

To test, it's really simple: stand with your feet parallel, about one foot apart. Keeping your heels flat on the ground (very important!), squat down till you are as far as you can go. This tests your ankle, knee and hip mobility. If you can get all the way down so that you are resting on your haunches, great! If you can't make it all the way down, there is a mobility issue somewhere.



THE WORLD'S NUMBER ONE KITESURFING MAGAZINE



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You can easily work on this by using the back of a chair to support your weight and performing these squats as stretches in sets of three, a few times a week.

Upper back and neck mobility are crucial to kitesurfing; does your head turn as far to the right as it does to the left? With your pelvis facing forward, can you rotate your shoulders as far in each direction? Put all your joints through their full range and look for imbalances, then work to improve each particular area until you're as mobile as you can be.

"YIELD THE NET RESULT THAT YOU HAVE TO WORK LESS TO DO MORE"

Cardio

Are you as strong as an ox and able to hold down truckloads of power but fatigue easily or find the next day you are 'wiped out' after your sessions? Could be that you might benefit from increasing your cardio respiratory efficiency. A very simple slow cardio routine, a few times a week keeping your heart rate in zone 2 (easily monitored on modern gym equipment) will yield the net result that you have to work less to do more and allow your body to spend more time in a rest and digest state, which is vital for repair and replenishment after the abuse meted out by a marathon kite session.

Kitesurfing doesn't typically leave us winded and washed up on the shore panting. Instead it steadily erodes our energy till we start making mistakes, it's quite insidious. Don't worry about trying to increase VO2 Max with high intensity interval training but build up your base fitness instead.





Muscular Strength

Have you ever kited after a lay-up and then ached like hell a couple of days afterwards? It hits me in the hip flexor and lower abdominal muscles every time I unhook on a twin tip. This is a bi-annual event mind you and I am incredibly de-conditioned to it! Think about how a harness rides up in times of boosting and think of the muscles that are left below the harness and how much shock they are absorbing trying to prevent your legs and board from being left behind. You can steadily develop the strength and endurance of the hip flexors and core muscles with sequences of leg raises, planking and its variants and seated or hanging leg raises. Forget about chiselling a six-pack with ab crunches, this is a kite trip we're going on and not a beauty pageant.

Skill

For the kites that have part-time hobbies in mixed martial arts or freestyle rock climbing, their mobility, endurance and strength are not likely to be called into question through the rigours of a kitesurfing holiday. Such people may wish to instead start to research the tricks or styles they want to learn and begin a program of mental rehearsal and simulation. Whenever I want to work through something I apply this three phase method:

1. Find a very good video example online. If you're a freestyler, you'll be spoilt for choice with a myriad of kite specific video examples. If you're a wave rider, definitely look at traditional surfing examples as well as kite related ones. Study the move, look for the entry, apex and exit and note well the body language of the rider you are watching.

2. Draw the move out on a piece of paper. This proves that you can lead yourself through the move. Take for example a cutback. Draw a wave, show the wind direction. Sketch three stages of the move – heading away from the pocket, creating the turn, heading back to the pocket – and make a few notes on what is happening at each stage.

" THIS IS A KITE TRIP WE'RE GOING ON AND NOT A BEAUTY PAGEANT."

3. Simulate the move. Find an open space with a feature that represents a wave, for example standing at the bottom of a sand dune. Physically walk through the move, let's say a cutback, pretending to hold the bar, pivoting around your trailing hand through the turns. Build up the plan so that it becomes instinct.



My advice

Training is individual to everyone, as I hope I've indicated by suggesting you identify your own strengths and weaknesses. One thing that unites us though is the chance of fatigue or boredom or injury from blindly thrashing away on exercises of ever increasing load. If you decide you will primarily concentrate on mental rehearsal of moves I would still build up lightly for the first month, go super nerd for the next month, then taper off for the third month to give your mind chance to clear and to sort through the conflicting info and questions that will no doubt accrue!

" YOU ARRIVE ON DAY ONE OF YOUR HOLIDAY FULLY RECONDITIONED AND INJURY FREE."

If your regiment is biased towards the physical, again build up steadily for a month, listen out for niggles, aches and pains, things that hurt in the wrong way. Give tendons and ligaments a chance to adapt before piling on the load in month two. And then simmer down for the final month to ensure that you arrive on day one of your holiday fully reconditioned and injury free.

This is an absolutely massive subject and one we can all get lost in but hopefully I've given you a few little ideas to create your own training plan this winter. Remember, the best practise is to keep it simple and enjoyable; conditioning should not be a chore so if the thought of pressing weights in Globo Gym Corp. doesn't appeal try lifting logs in the forest at midnight, whatever you do, get that workout!

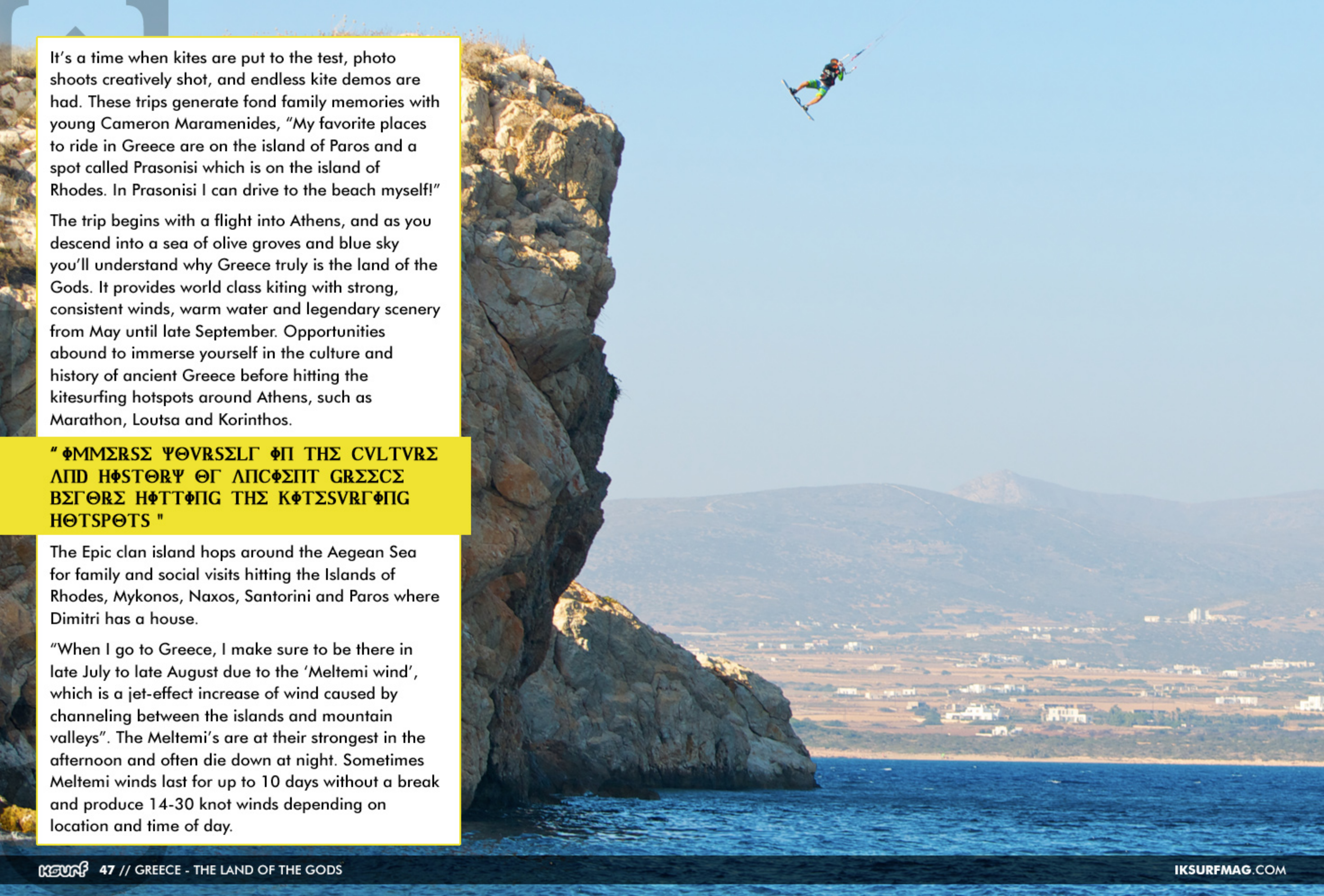
WORDS // BRIAN READY
PHOTOS // HELEN TROTMAN

CRASH



THE LAND OF THE GODS

If you haven't put a pin in Greece as a kiteboarding destination, you may want to reconsider. The ancient Gods may not have been kitesurfers, but they did create some breathtaking scenery, steeped in culture and surrounded it with some of the best riding spots on the planet. The people of Greece are a patriotic and passionate group, which shows in their spirit and riding. This heritage and passion keeps Dimitri Maramenides and the Epic Kite family returning biannually to soak up all that Greece has to offer.



It's a time when kites are put to the test, photo shoots creatively shot, and endless kite demos are had. These trips generate fond family memories with young Cameron Maramenides, "My favorite places to ride in Greece are on the island of Paros and a spot called Prasonisi which is on the island of Rhodes. In Prasonisi I can drive to the beach myself!"

The trip begins with a flight into Athens, and as you descend into a sea of olive groves and blue sky you'll understand why Greece truly is the land of the Gods. It provides world class kiting with strong, consistent winds, warm water and legendary scenery from May until late September. Opportunities abound to immerse yourself in the culture and history of ancient Greece before hitting the kitesurfing hotspots around Athens, such as Marathon, Loutsas and Korinthos.

**" ΦΜΜΕΡΣΕ ΨΘΥΡΣΕΛΓ ΦΠ ΤΗΣ CVLTΥΡΣ
ΑΠΔ ΗΦΣΤΘΡΨ ΘΓ ΑΠΦΣΠΤ ΓΡΕΣΣΕΣ
ΒΣΓΘΡΣ ΗΦΤΤΦΠΓ ΤΗΣ ΚΦΤΣΥΡΓΦΠΓ
ΗΘΤΣΡΘΤΣ "**

The Epic clan island hops around the Aegean Sea for family and social visits hitting the Islands of Rhodes, Mykonos, Naxos, Santorini and Paros where Dimitri has a house.

"When I go to Greece, I make sure to be there in late July to late August due to the 'Meltemi wind', which is a jet-effect increase of wind caused by channeling between the islands and mountain valleys". The Meltemi's are at their strongest in the afternoon and often die down at night. Sometimes Meltemi winds last for up to 10 days without a break and produce 14-30 knot winds depending on location and time of day.

Paros is located in the central Aegean Sea and is part of the Cyclades island group. It lies just west of Naxos, and is where the team spends a good deal of time. It's the backdrop to several photo shoots, including a famous cliff-jumping scene from a recent ad. Dimitri says, "Greece offers so many different locations, conditions and scenery, that capturing stunning photos is easy".

The day starts with an early 7:30 am session lead by steady strong winds. The morning is the best time for some serenity before the crowds move in; everyone is usually still asleep from the late night parties. Afterwards, it's off to lunch with his wife and business partner Helen, before resuming demos in the early afternoon.

" THE ΚΑΤΕΣ ΔΟ ALL THE TALKING ΓΟΡ ΜΣ "

"Before letting people demo the kites, I usually go out and put on a show so people can notice the kites and that gets everyone excited to come out and try them. This is when everything starts. While I'm on lunch I leave the kites with people to try and when I return I'm always excited to hear what they have to say. The kites do all the talking for me, and the feedback has been really impressive. What I love the most about this job and process is the interaction with the riders. I thrive on the comments and the look on their faces after trying a kite or board"



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After an exciting day of riding and hosting demos, the group retires back to their home for some R and R and a check of emails and other work tasks before dinner. Greece is covered in hot spots and vibrant nightlife is everywhere. Dimitri says, "Usually we go out for dinner around 10 pm and then return around 1 or 4 am depending on what's happening in town. If it's going to be a really windy morning I make sure to get back earlier though, so I can be the first one on the water".

To the west is Naxos, a neighboring island to Paros and equally as beautiful. "Naxos is a very nice place and you can actually kite to Paros from there in 22 minutes! I've done it." Dimitri says. You can expect choppy kickers and some gusty conditions making it ideal for some great boosting sessions, but you have to work at it given the variable conditions.

Another great spot is the island of Rhodes, which is in the eastern Aegean Sea and is the largest of the Dodecanese islands in terms of both land area and population. There are a couple of options; you can take a 15-hour ferry ride or take a short 2-hour trip by plane. Dimitri says "Personally I would recommend the ferry boat because of the gear you will be carrying plus you can sleep on the boat all night and arrive around 9 am the next day fresh and ready to ride.

' JUST PUSH YOUR LIMBS ON THE WATER ΒΕΓΟΡΕ ΒΕΛΑΧΦΙΓ ΦΙ ΘΠΣ ΘΓ ΤΗΣ ΜΑΠΥ ΒΑΡΣ '

For comfort, be sure to rent a cabin if you have a party of four or more." Prasonisi is positioned on the southern tip and is one of the most famous

windsurfing and kitesurfing centers in Europe as strong winds always blow on one of its two beaches. The western side of the point is the predominant side for kiting while the eastern side is more calm and popular with families and beach goers.

Prasonisi is an ideal spot with aqua marine colored waters and good waves. On this leg of the trip, Jeoren Tump, Epic's graphic designer joined us to listen to rider feedback and to discuss the look and feel of future kite and design needs. Dimitri says "Jeoren loved Greece, he didn't want to return home!"

Korfos beach on the island of Mykonos usually enjoys steady 20-30 knot on shore winds and is also popular spot. There is a great kite club and school, Kite Mykonos, on the beach that can provide location details, lessons and any other assistance.

With the proximity to town, you can enjoy a short ride to do some site seeing or just push your limits on the water before relaxing in one of the many bars and restaurants after your session.

“ ΟΥΦΤΣ ΑΤΤΡΑΚΤΟΦΝΣ ΤΘ ΣΧΡΣΡΦΣΠΣΣΟ ΚΦΤΣ ΣΥΡΓΣΡΣ ΥΦΤΗ Λ ΠΑΣΦΘΠ ΓΘΡ ΥΑΥΣΣ.”

A spot not to be missed on Mykonos is Ftelia beach, it's a 30 minute drive from the town of Mykonos. You'll be rewarded with big waves and strong winds, which makes it less ideal for new riders, but quite attractive to experienced kite surfers looking for something other than flat water. It's a large beach with very little around it making it a great day trip spot, there is a nice restaurant right on the beach if you need to refuel.

While in Mykonos, make sure to check the very small island of Delos, one of the most important archaeological sites in Greece and only 30 minutes away by ferry. It has historical significance and is uninhabited. Dimitri says “Kiting there is breath taking but you have to be very careful because of the tourists going in and out on boats visiting this very small rock island.

When you are kiting there you can look down and see an ancient submerged city under you!” Getting there requires a private boat if you want to kite and Paros Adventure can provide this to you for a fee.



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CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE

CLICK HERE

Updated daily with news and videos. You'll also find easy access to all of our content with searchable databases for all the reviews, technique and travel, plus every back issue available for free.

However, if you are an Epic kite owner, join the group for free a personal guide is included!

If you're a rider looking to travel to Greece, there are a few words of advice to be shared. Firstly be sure to plan your trip around the windy season, and make sure to take some time to immerse yourself in historical sites such as the Acropolis, Korinthos, Poseidon's Temple, the new Athens museum and the Olympic stadium in Athens to name a few.

**" ΤΣΕΤ ΑΛΛ ΤΗΣ ΕΡΦΚ ΠΡΟΔΥΚΤΣ ΑΠΔ
ΑΥΘΦΔ ΤΗΣ ΒΑΓΓΑΓΣ ΧΑΡΓΣ
ΑΛΤΟΓΣΤΗΣΡ ΑΤ ΘΠΣ ΘΓ ΗΦΣ ΧΣΠΤΡΣ"**

When you're ready for the kite adventure of your life, you can board the ferry from the Port of Piraeus or Rafina, but be sure to rent a car first. Car rentals on the islands are considerably more expensive. You can also fly from Athens to the islands, but there are restrictions on kite gear, and renting a car will give you more freedom to explore various spots.

While the Greek food is amazing, most restaurants don't accept credit cards, so be sure to have cash on hand, and beware of additional items on your bill that weren't ordered. If you don't have room for your kite equipment, why not drop Dimitri a line and test all the Epic products and avoid the baggage charge altogether at one of his centres.

Greece and the many islands are loaded with amazing riding spots, but don't expect anyone to offer up the secret stash. "There are lots of beautiful, secret and secluded spots... If you're an Epic customer I'd be happy to share that information, or even take you there with me" offers Dimitri.





QUESTIONS

A new series of interviews where we do just that, ask ten pertinent questions to some of the movers and shakers in the kite industry...

FOREST BAKKER

WORDS // ROU CHATER
PHOTOS // NICK HALL



You just recently switched to the Wainman Hawaii team, what brought about the move and why was it the right time to change?

Pretty much since the start of my kiting career I've been riding Flexifoil kites, or more specifically the Hadlow's as everybody knows them. The kite was so different from anything else out there that it was difficult to let it go, also my relationship with Flexi was great and being in a team together with the 5 times world champion was even better. After several years Flexifoil was going thru some hard times, Hadlow left the company and together with him went the beloved Hadlow C kite. At that point it was pretty clear to me that I had to start looking. One day during the PKRA in Leucate I received a mail from Wainman Hawaii as they had an interest in me, after several Skype meetings I was pumped and ready to start this new adventure with them and so far it has been going great!

How quickly did you adapt to the new kites and boards?

The first sessions were a little difficult I must admit, coming from a completely different kite design and riding Flexi kites for over 6 years definitely brought up a little challenge when adapting to my new gear. I went to Egypt to train on the new gear and after a short time I got to grips with the kites and boards. I've been improving my riding ever since, winning two consecutive heats in my first PKRA competition riding Wainman Hawaii.

What's the biggest difference that you have noticed with the new team?

The Wainman team is formed by a group of legends... I mean, how cool is it to be in the same team as the first man to pull a kite loop,



QUESTIONS

"RIDING FLEXI KITES FOR OVER 6 YEARS DEFINITELY BROUGHT UP A LITTLE CHALLENGE WHEN ADAPTING TO MY NEW GEAR."



"EXPOSING YOUR THOUGHTS IN THE MOST VISUAL WAY POSSIBLE"



one of the first to surf Jaws with a kite. For the ones that don't know, Jaws is a little wave that forms when the wales swim past the Hawaiian coast... just kidding! These legends have done incredible things for this sport, not just incredible, they pretty much brought a part of kiting to where it is today.

You had two major knee surgeries last year, what did you do with your downtime?

Injuries in kite boarding are similar to a footballer faking his when he gets tackled, if you are in this sport professionally you might as well get ready for it! With the power of the moves we are now performing at the top level of the sport injuries are sadly inevitable, the difficult part is trying to avoid it.

How is the rehab going, are you back to full strength now?

The rehab is doing great! I feel rejuvenated and motivated to push it further than ever. I guess that's one good thing about injuries, it gives you the time to think through life decisions, and if that time gives you the strength to keep on going, you know that kiteboarding is part of the long game.

You are really into your filming and editing, what is it you like so much about cameras, lenses and editing videos?

Filmmaking is exposing your thoughts in the most visual way possible, technology has given us the opportunity to "see what we think" by creating. For me it's like getting your dreams out there. It's very difficult to explain and I've got some deep explanations about it, but now is not the moment haha!

Where did you learn to film and shoot movies?

Since a very young age I've always liked asking questions when watching a movie, yes, I was the annoying kid in a cinema that wouldn't shut up.... However by asking questions I learned a lot, and this led me to know what editing software was, a super 16mm, lens, etc. Everybody knows what those are now, but for a 7-year-old boy I knew quite a lot. My curiosity at the age of 13 was killing me and I needed to get my hands on some footage, at that time kiting was one of my passions so I decided to get my father behind a camera and start filming. This first movie I made was the one that led me to getting my biggest sponsors at the time, Flexifoil and Movistar. Filming and kiting for me are pretty much Yin and Yang.

You spend a lot of time in Tarifa, what's so special about that place?

Tarifa has this historical vibe; mix it with some wind, beautiful beaches, nice girls, fun parties and lots of wind and you got the definition of a paradise for kiteboarders.

Where else do you love to kite?

Brazil is definitely on the top of my list, it's not a very original choice but there is a reason for that! Afterwards I love Dakhla for its strong warm winds, Cape Town for its roughness and New Caledonia for its tropical conditions.

Last one; lets make it tough... Your "Eyes." movie has had over 47k views now, it was quite graphic in it's bikini content. In a sport where women are trying to be seen as equal to men was it necessary to dedicate so much screen time to a chick in a bikini not kiting?

It's definitely a tough question because there are so many points of views on this matter... In regards to the Eyes. video I was relating to the powerful look of the kite and giving it a balance between the eyes of the model, just like the Yin and Yang I talked about earlier. I always want my videos to have a deeper meaning than what may appear at face value.

The model in question of course loved the video and enjoyed the opportunity to be part of it. I guess some people didn't see the deeper meaning to the movie and in some instances I agree that blatant placement of women, or men for that matter, as sexual objects can be negative. However, there was much more than that at play in the making of this film.

Cheers Forest! Thanks for taking the time!

No worries! Thanks for letting me express my self. Peace and love!

"I ALWAYS WANT MY VIDEOS TO HAVE A DEEPER MEANING THAN WHAT MAY APPEAR AT FACE VALUE. "





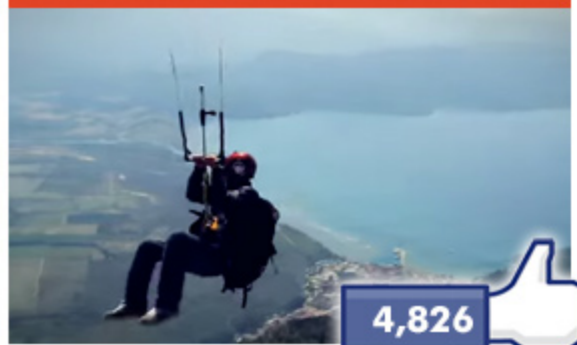
MOVIE NIGHT

The new IKSURFMAG website is crammed with news and videos everyday, we only show the best videos, so to make it onto the site is an achievement in itself. These are the 4 most popular videos that have been viewed on the site as voted for by you with your thumbs up likes in the last 2 months! Check out the full list [HERE](#), and if you see a video you like on the site, give it the thumbs up, it might just help to push it onto this page!

#1 JUMPING FROM A 909M CLIFF

Arguably the maddest thing we have seen all year, Marek Zach Murphy hucks himself off a cliff in Turkey and flies above the town of Gokova to land on kite beach. He uses his 14m Ozone C4 some thermal winds and a gigantic pair of balls to complete the task, which is utterly bonkers.

[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)



#2 KITE SAILING THE ISLE OF WIGHT — KITE TENDER

The Kite Tender is a new kind of kite boat, purpose built for cruising around. In this clip Sophie Mathews and Tom Court take it for a spin around the Isle of Wight. It's fast, fun and gets going in hardly any wind, could it be the ultimate bit of kit?

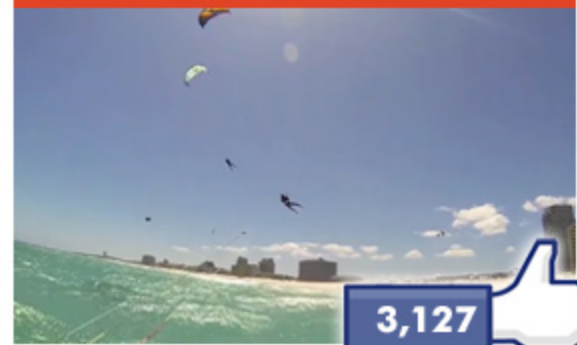
[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)



#3 2UP1DOWN

You can rely on Nick Jacobsen to be pretty ridiculous when it comes to ideas, and this one is no different. He ropes in Yuri Zoon and Kevin Langeree to this stunt involving three kites, two kites and just one board. Yuri is the man on the water, Kevin is in the middle and Nick is flying high, enjoy!

[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)



#4 ON BOARD KITE LOOP WITH TOM

Tom Charlton is a pro rider from Greece, he rides for Best and has obviously taken a few tips from fellow team mate, Ruben Lenten. Jump aboard for a POV ride with him as he bangs out a seriously huge kite loop and gets waaaay above his kite and everything else around him...

[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)



Lightroom

More shots with no particular place to go this issue, feast your eyes!



CHRIS BOBRYK GETTING SOME STYLE POINTS IN PARADISE...

A man is kitesurfing on a large, curling wave. He is shirtless, wearing black shorts with yellow accents, and is holding onto a yellow and black control bar. He is leaning back, and a large splash of white water is hitting him from the side. The water is a deep blue-green color. The overall scene is dynamic and action-packed.

Lightroom

HE'S STILL GOT IT! ROBBY NAISH THROWING SOME BUCKETS ON THE NEW NAISH GEAR!
PHOTO // QUINCY DEIN

Lightroom

DIETMAR STIPLOVSEK CRUISING ABOVE THE WATERS OF LAKE CONSTANCE IN AUSTRIA.
PHOTO // COURTESY OF PETER LYNN



Lightroom



GISELA PULIDO GETTING RAD AT THE PKRA IN TARIFA...
PHOTO // TOBY BROMWICH

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TOMMY GAUNT ENJOYING A BIT OF PARADISE...
PHOTO // COURTESY OF CRAZYFLY





Lightroom

ALBERTO RONDINA IS USUALLY BUSTING OUT THE FREESTYLE ON THE PKRA, HERE IS AN INTERESTING ANGLE OF HIM IN MAURITIUS GETTING HIS SURF ON.
PHOTO // STEPHAN KLEINLEIN

Lightroom



BRANDON SCHEID MAKING SOME BOLD STYLE DECISIONS IN THE CARIBBEAN!
PHOTO // VINCENT BERGERON

YOURI ZOOM IS BACK FROM INJURY AND SEEMS TO BE RIDING BETTER THAN EVER,
HERE IS A SHOT OF HIM AT THE RECENT PKRA IN TARIFA...
PHOTO // TOBY BROMWICH



Lightroom

Lightroom

WINTER IS COMING, WHICH MEANS IT IS SNOWKITING TIME!
PHOTO // WARECK ARNAUD / SNOWKITEMASTER.COM



Lightroom

RICK JENSEN DROPPING THE SEA LEVEL BY A FEW INCHES!
PHOTO // LARS FRANZEN



Lightroom

ALEX ROBIN RIDING AT THE SNOWKITE MASTERS, IT SHOULD BE ANOTHER GREAT EVENT THIS YEAR!
PHOTO // WARECK ARNAUD / SNOWKITEMASTER.COM



PHILIPP ZACH KNOWS A THING OR TWO ABOUT THROWING A KITE LOOP!
PHOTO // THOMAS BURBLI.ES

Lightroom

Lightroom

KAROLINA WINKOWSKA IS HOLDING ON TO A NARROW LEAD ON THE PKRA AT THE MOMENT...
PHOTO // TOBY BROMWICH



TARIFA PRO KITE TOUR 2014



PHOTOS // COURTESY OF NOBILE

FEMALE FOCUS

KATARZYNA LANGE

Hailing from Poland Katarzyna Lange has been steadily working on building up her career in the kite world. She won the Polish Championships in 2013 and is currently 7th on the PKRA World Tour. The Nobile Global Pro Team rider has a style and grace about her riding that hasn't gone unnoticed. We decided to find out a little more about the girl they call Kasia...





Hi Kasia, where do you call home?

I'm a seaside girl; it has to be that way. I was born in Władysławowo, Poland, which is just a stones throw from the Hel peninsula. Here you can't live without being part of the waves, the sea and the wind. My family home and my parents are here, even though I really feel like a citizen of the world. I live where I ride and train. Whether that is Spain, Australia, Brazil or Poland – it's the time, the wind and the World Cup starting schedule that decides.

What attracts you to kiteboarding, and do you do any other water sports?

I keep kiting because I love it. I'm still learning new tricks; I'm good at it and want to be the best one. I think it's a natural need of every human being,

if their passion is also their everyday work.

Kiteboarding for sure occupies the biggest space in my heart, but there's also surfing, which I enjoy and it relaxes me as well. If I have a chance, I also like to ride on a wakeboard. Last but not least, let me say that my first water sport was windsurfing.

" A KEEN EYE CAN QUICKLY SPOT AND CORRECT THEM, HELPING YOU TO LEARN MUCH FASTER. "

You run a kite school and are a kite instructor, is it really true that people can learn to kite in a matter of days?

Yes, that's true. A week is enough to become truly independent with a kite on the water. While running

my own kitesurfing school I meet hundreds of beginners and I see in practice how easily the smile can be put on their faces. However, it's good to remember about proper training and an instructor. When we are learning each of us has different difficulties, and makes various mistakes, a keen eye can quickly spot and correct them, helping you to learn much faster.

Can anyone learn to kitesurf?

Of course! I have trained a seven-year-old and a sixty-year old, and they both still ride. The mental barrier is much worse than the physical one. If someone feels anxious, it would be hard to overcome his or her own weakness. It's a sport, just like any other – you have to gain some discipline, perseverance and love what you do.

What did you have to give up to pursue your dream of following the World Tour?

I had to fully devote myself to kiteboarding. Thus, my life has changed a lot since I graduated from college. I can't train the whole year here in Poland, so I spend many months in countries where the proper wind conditions are and the World Cup competitions are held. It means that I don't come back home every day, and I stay in touch with my family and friends mainly thanks to the Internet. My wardrobe fits into two suitcases, I wanted that though and I still do. Places where I train are truly beautiful and I usually try to leave with my boyfriend, who is a kitesurfer as well, which helps me a lot. I have also a great advantage over some of my competitors, because I don't have as many house duties as them, so I can train more. I can say that kiteboarding is my way of life and I follow it religiously.

" IT'S THE DISCIPLINE AND EXPERIENCE THAT COUNTS IN THIS SPORT. "

What does it take to get into the top ten on the PKRA?

Some competitors surprise with their sudden appearance and results, but it's the discipline and experience that counts in this sport. Apart from physical training, which is very important, you also have to be prepared mentally, because stress can spoil everything. That's why there are so many talents and I love it, but only systematic work on the water teaches humility and brings better results.

You ride for Nobile, what do you like about their equipment and the brand?

Nobile has a wide range of boards and kites, for 2015 it is all part of the Saudade collection.





These products have been well known and highly valued around the globe for 10 years, thanks to implemented technologies, durability and resistance. The equipment is continuously improved and evolves together with a kiteboarding development. Nobile gives you a superb choice – you can adjust the equipment to every kiteboarder, regardless of the riding style they prefer.

Which is your favourite board and kite? Do you ride different gear for competitions and freeriding?

My favourite set up is the 50/Fifty 134 cm board with bindings and the 50/Fifty kite. It's a perfect match for freestyle progress. While for recreation and old school

I use Beleza NHP board, which strongly emphasizes the rider's femininity. The female Saudade Beleza collection is breath taking!

“ GOOD WIND, VARIOUS CONDITIONS AND DIFFERENT SPOTS NEARBY OFFER A LOT OF POSSIBILITIES. ”

What are your favourite places to kitesurf around the world?

I don't get to ride much in Europe sadly, I like Tarifa though – it's a great spot and also a very beautiful place. Good wind, various conditions and different spots nearby offer a lot of possibilities. Further afield I would choose Brazil and recommend it to everybody.

I haven't found consistent wind like it anywhere! You can ride and train there with no limits. Australia is great too, there are great conditions for surfing there, and they have some really huge wakeparks too, which suits me!

What are the dreams of the future for you?

The realistic ones... To be the best in the world, and privately and perhaps not very realistic... to own a small Pacific island, but only one with wind! Hahaha!

Finish this sentence: Kiteboarding is...

...the best thing you can try.

Thanks for taking the time Kasia!

Winner! 

Harry Winnington shared this shot of Nicolas Falcou havin' it at Le Morne, Mauritius

IKSURFMAG Says: Thanks for sharing Harry, great capture.



readers
gallery

Thanks for all your contributions to the Facebook page these last two months. Once again we were inundated with pictures, so if we didn't pick yours we are very sorry, but thanks for sending it to us...

Turn the pages though maybe we made you famous?

This issue's winner is Harry Winnington. Well done Harry, get in touch and we'll send you the t-shirt!

CLICK HERE FOR A CHANCE TO WIN NEXT ISSUE...



During an amazing week of kiting Chris Moore was snapped busting out the moves at Whitehaven Beach in the Whitsunday Islands, off the central coast of Queensland, Australia. Photo credit to Peggy Cuthbert.

IKSURFMAG says: Great shot Peggy, with conditions like that all week it's not surprising you had an awesome time!



Jen Dupuy avoids a precarious situation with the exposed reef at Little Bustard, Marshall Islands. Photo credit to Jake Busby.

IKSURFMAG says: Ooh, you wouldn't want to mis-time that jump, or landing for that matter! Great colours and nice depth of field in the photo, thanks for sharing!



"Nothing says summer like a sunny and super flat day in Habo Ljung, Sweden." Martin Ohlson trying out some new camera angles and tweaking jumps.

IKSURFMAG says: This one's certainly a keeper Martin! Conditions look epic too.



Coco Trigo riding at La Bomba in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Photo credit to Ricky Fountain.

IKSURFMAG says: Chucking buckets like a boss! Nice one Coco!



Just 11 years old and Tom Seager, from West Sussex, UK, is already throwing down S-Bends. Thanks to Piers Fearick Photography for the shot.

IKSURFMAG says: Amazing skills Tom! Keep it up and I've no doubt we'll be seeing you on world competition podiums in a few years.



Jeff Marois shared this photo, taken at the Dakhla speed spot in Morocco in August during a jump. It was blowing 30 knots and they were the only ones there!

IKSURFMAG says: Flat water, an empty lagoon, wind, sunshine...I think that classes as a 100% happy day!



End of summer session in Landes, SW France for François-Xavier Bfs.
IKSURFMAG says: Smashing it on an empty and smooth right-hander, we're slightly envious!



Odd André Varhaugvik is island cruising with the seagulls in Norway.
IKSURFMAG says: Looks like a quite a maze to carve through. Good capture by the kite-cam!

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NAISH TEAM RIDER SHAWN RICHMAN CATCHES THE LAST OF THE DYING LIGHT ON MAUI!
PHOTO // STEVEN WHITESELL