

ksurf

ISSUE 101

NOV/DEC 23

WELCOME TO IKSURFMAG

Welcome to Issue 101 of IKSURFMAG, the World's Number One Kitesurfing Magazine! Seasons are changing, and you know what that means: new gear, new kite spots, and an exciting new look for IKSURFMAG! In this issue, Crystal Veness rounds up the biggest news in big air. Experience kiteboarding nirvana in Europe with Rou Chater, travel to Mauritius with the Airush team, and explore Ireland's rugged coast

with Prolimit. Christian and Karine have two tasty new techniques for you and the Swiss Foil Couple give you the intro to foil freestyle. Go behind the scenes of Laci Kobulsky's new film, read about some of the latest gear from your favourite brands and check out interviews with photographer Svetlana Romantsova and America's Cup winner Nils Frei. There's plenty more to discover inside Issue 101!

ENJOY THE LATEST ISSUE



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INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

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101
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- KITEBOARDING NIRVANA -

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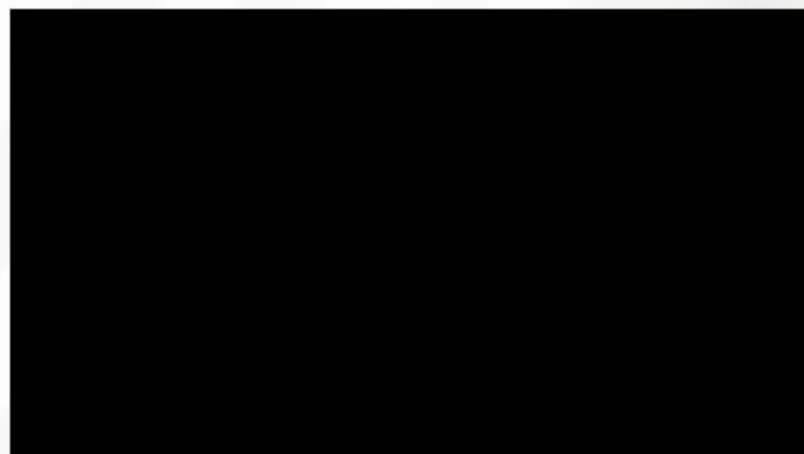


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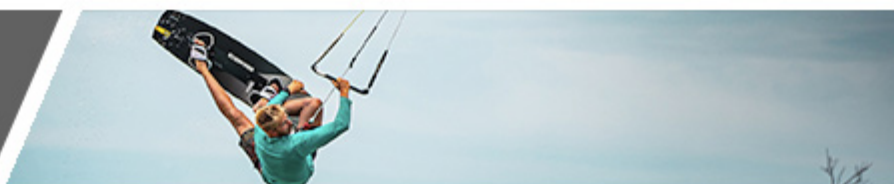
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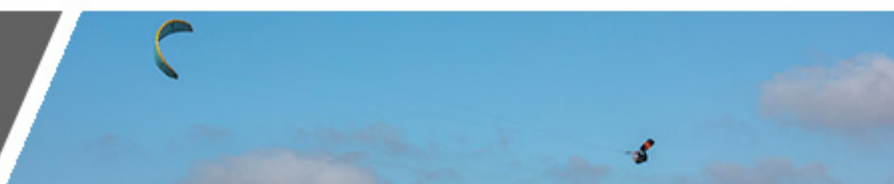
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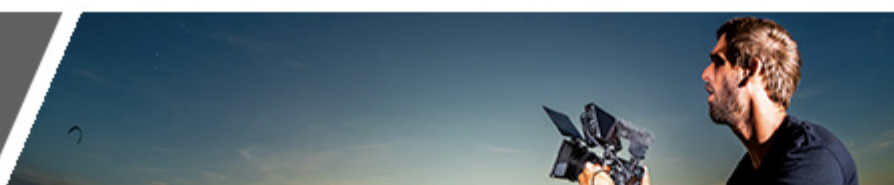
BIG AIR, BIG NEWS



KITEBOARDING NIRVANA
IN EUROPE



ALL IN



TECH FOCUS



MISADVENTURES IN
MAURITIUS



THE INTERVIEW: NILS
FREI, ALINGHI RED BULL
RACING



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FOLLOW THE
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HARLEM: CHANGING
THE GAME



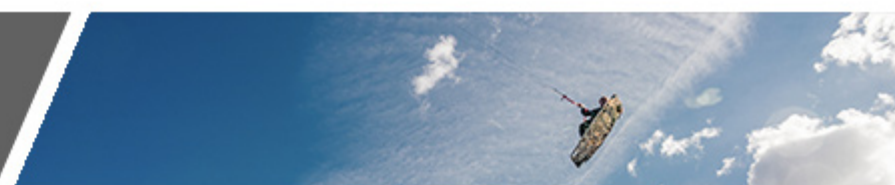
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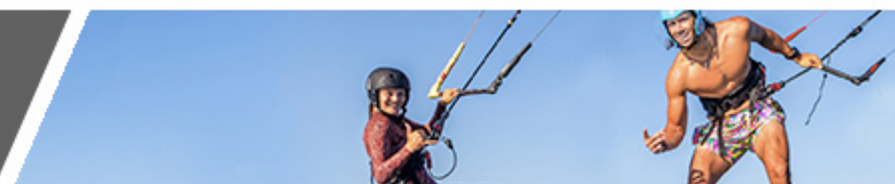
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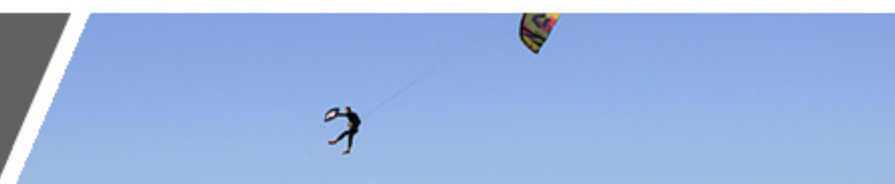
FOIL FREESTYLE:
HOW TO GET STARTED



ON THE FLY



LIGHTROOM



MOVIE NIGHT



FRONT COVER RIDER ALBY RONDINA PHOTO LACI KOBULSKY

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SENSI GRAVES SHOWS OFF THE LATEST RELEASES FROM SLINGSHOT
AND RIDE ENGINE AT AWSI IN HOOD RIVER, OREGON!
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH





RUBEN LENTEN PUTS CUSTOM FLAVOURS ON HIS OZONE TORQUE TWIN-TIPS. YOU DON'T NEED TO BE AN ARTIST AND THE PROCESS DOESN'T HAVE TO BE DIFFICULT. JUST FIND A LOOK YOU LIKE AND THE RESULTS CAN BE SPECTACULAR!

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GET REEL

Social media has changed the kiteboarding industry - there's no denying it. With Facebook becoming publicly accessible in 2006 and rival and soon-to-be subsidiary Instagram hitting the app stores in 2010, it didn't take long before the media consumption habits of internet and mobile users began to shift. Now, with access to immediate information, quick updates from our networks, and addictive algorithms that keep us coming back, social media is thoroughly entrenched in our everyday lives.

Having a strong social media presence has become an essential component in the success of a pro kitesurfer. The best rider in the world doesn't offer a brand much marketing value if they are invisible, while a talented but non-competitive rider with a huge social media following can make a significant impact. There are many "brand-supported influencer athletes" in the industry simply because these riders can reach so many people and relate to their following in their own unique way. These days the industry needs athletes who are on the podium and athletes who are capable of producing excellent media and content.

While we are unaware of any specific Instagram incentives in rider contracts, though we're certain they exist in some form or another, many contracts require being active on social media. When sponsor hunting, a rider that can show high engagement and vast social reach will have a much easier time sealing the deal than a rider that doesn't - barring the very best riders in the world, of course. After all, winning an international kiting event is only possible by being the best on the day. That said, you can be both the best rider in the world and go viral on social media, as Andrea Principi's unforgettable performance and personality, displayed at the recent Red Bull Megaloop, proved!



RIDER STEVEN AKKERSDIJK
PHOTO JULIETA PEREYRA

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EDITORIAL

RIDER ELLIE DIMITROVA
PHOTO ANDY TROY



Video production in kiting also looks very different than it used to. Back in the days of VHS and DVD, kite films were hour-long epics, but viewers' attention spans have become progressively shorter and shorter. Occasionally, we still have the pleasure of watching a new feature-length film, like Laci Kobulsky's ALL IN starring Gianmaria Coccoluto, but most kite videos are made-for-YouTube exclusives. Pro kites like Kevin Langeree, Hannah Whiteley, and Steven Akkersdijk have built impressive YouTube followings to connect with their subscribers and can even earn

money from YouTube and through sponsor incentives. Today, we have instant access to video tutorials, vlogs, action edits, and short and sweet kiteboarding videos that can transport us to our dream kite spot or into the world of our favourite riders, in just a few short minutes. The shift towards social media has had a massive impact on the magazine industry, too. We've seen several print publications shut their doors over the past couple of years and noticed clear trends in the viewing habits of our online readers, too. While our magazine is best viewed on a laptop, computer,

or tablet, our team has built an excellent mobile app so that our mobile-only users can enjoy our content, too. Around 75% of all our traffic comes from mobile and we were very early to adopt this platform and create content specifically for it to ensure a good user experience.

However, how content is recorded and produced has made finding fitting content for our magazine more of a challenge than ever. While the golden days of action sports media featured high-resolution photo spreads with jaw-dropping action starring your favourite athletes, these days, most photos go straight to the socials. Many kites and kite photographers have ditched shooting in landscape/horizontal orientation in favour of capturing images and videos exclusively in a portrait/vertical format because they are so Instagram-friendly.

Instagram's Reels, modelled after TikToks, have further accelerated the shift in kite media. These short, snappy, and easy-to-swipe bits of content have made it possible for any pro rider to reach their following with only a mobile phone. One epic trick captured on an iPhone with a cleverly chosen song to go with it can get tens or even hundreds of thousands of views in a flash, unlike your average YouTube video. As an example, [one of Ellie Dimitrova's recent reels](#) captured at the Windseekers KiteFest in Egypt has had 9.7 million views and more than 450,000 likes in just two weeks. These numbers are unprecedented, and with numbers like that, it's not hard to see why athletes and content creators have embraced social media wholeheartedly.

However, it's worth remembering the demographics for kitesurfing is predominantly an older crowd. It's an expensive sport and you need some cash behind you to be able to afford equipment and lessons.

If you speak to the schools, shops and distributors, you'll learn the average customer is between 40 and 55. That's a demographic that isn't embracing social media in the same way as the youth of today. They certainly aren't on TikTok.

Going viral on social media doesn't mean reaching millions of kitesurfers, because there aren't millions of us out there. It means reaching out to an audience that doesn't kite and probably never will, but they are addicted to the never ending scroll and the algorithm that decided it was worth pushing to keep eyeballs addicted to the screen.

This over-reliance on social media by many of the brands could be seen as a mistake. Investing budgets into an audience that delivers likes and shares, but doesn't deliver sales is surely chasing a demon that won't ever deliver. An over-reliance on the youth alienates the kilters out there with the cash to walk into the shop. Even when the kids are kiting, it is likely the parents who are paying the bills.

This is all before we even get into the fakery of social media, too. It's a few clicks and a few hundred dollars to employ an army of eager click farms to make you look like a big thing. That constant engagement that brands see as a key measure is an easy buy, too, and for a lot less than you might think. It's not the brands fault if they get sucked into this trap. In a world where metrics are hard to come by, likes and shares can feel like a good form of value.

When the accountants come knocking, though, it's harder to justify. Social media is, these days, a necessary evil, and one we have wholeheartedly embraced since 2006. We post more on social than just about anyone, but we recognise we are all slaves to the algorithms and powers that be.



THE LEGENDARY RUBEN LENTEN WAS ALREADY BLOWING UP
ON YOUTUBE BEFORE INSTAGRAM WAS FOUNDED!
PHOTO SAMUEL CARDENAS



It's an entity you have no control over and one that could switch off the taps with a tweak of the algorithm at any moment. Today's hot viral vid very quickly becomes yesterday's news. What's hot right now becomes colder than ice in a week.

We, and many of you, are not quite ready to let go of long-form content! We still love kicking back and watching a carefully created kite film and flipping a magazine's physical or virtual pages as we enjoy stories from our favourite riders. Yes, swiping, scrolling, and tapping have become one of the easiest ways to stay in the know in the kite industry, but quality content will always have a home as long as people are willing to consume it.

When people say we have a short attention span and

only want a 30 second clip, consider the last time you watched a series on Netflix with 10 episodes at an hour each; that's a serious investment of your time. Think of the latest podcast that kept you entertained while you spent hours battling with traffic on the way to your favourite kite spot. It's easy to hear the social bigwigs scream and shout about short format portrait viral gold, but there is a strong undertow for the longer form of media. And, guess what? If you've read this far, that's likely to be you, and you'll be part of the crucial buying demographic the industry needs to tap into but seems in danger of forgetting...

Social media is definitely part of the mix, but it isn't a magical unicorn that will cure a brand's woes, and far from it. Somedays, it feels more like the emperor's new

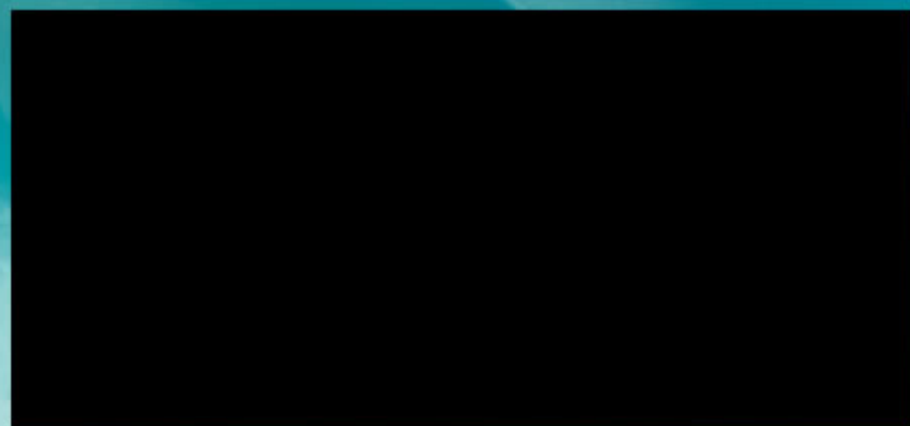
clothes than the golden messiah. As much as Mr Zuck tries to be cool foiling and flying an American flag, he's not the kind of guy who's gonna chat to you at a demo on your local beach, so why the rush to fill his pockets over the hardworking people of the kite industry?

What do you think? What kind of content gets you excited? Do you prefer short or long-form content or a bit of both? What kind of stories do you want to read, and what kind of videos do you want to watch? Let us know so we can keep working to bring you the content you want to see in future issues of IKSURFMAG! Slide into our DMs or shoot us an email at editorial@iksrfmag.com. We want to hear from you!

Crystal Veness & Rou Chater
Editor & Publisher

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WORDS CRYSTAL VENESS

All eyes are on the big air scene, and this year, we've seen another leap forward in tricks and technicality. With the young guns leading the charge, the level of competition is unbelievable. Read on as Crystal Veness recaps the biggest news in the world of big air!

BIG AIR BIG NEWS

“WHILE HIS IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE ON THE WATER MADE HIS WIN UNDENIABLE, HIS ACTIONS ON THE BEACH HAVE FIRMLY SECURED HIS STATUS AS AN ABSOLUTE F*CKING LEGEND!”

Big air stocks continue to rise, and they're showing no signs of stopping! The popularity of the big air discipline has every brand racing to produce the best gear, riders chasing wind around the world, and epic battles at all the big air hotspots. Here at IKSURFMAG, if it's an event day, you'll find us glued to the livestream - if we can't make it to the beach, that is! We've been spoiled for choice over the past few months with a BAKL event in Hood River, the long-awaited return of Red Bull Megaloop, and some surprises at Full Power Tarifa. Here's our top takeaways from these events!

ANDREA PRINCIPI ENTERS THE BIG AIR HALL OF FAME

Is there a Big Air Hall of Fame, you ask? Not that we know of, but if there is one, Andrea Principi's win at the Red Bull Megaloop on the stormy beaches of Zandvoort punched his ticket in. While his impressive performance on the water made his win undeniable, his actions on the beach have firmly secured his status as an absolute f*cking legend! If you didn't watch the event or haven't seen the clips of his interviews going viral on social media, you are missing out. Andrea is a force to be reckoned with, and we think he's one to watch for at the Red Bull King of the Air! Brrrrrr!

BURLANDO MAKES A BREAKTHROUGH

Jeremy Burlando has been on the edge of glory for a while, winning his first BAKL event in 2022 in Tatajuba and making his debut in the 2022 Red Bull King of the Air. Up against Andrea Principi in the Megaloop final, he missed the podium by a hair,

BIG AIR NEWS





“WE WERE MORE THAN A LITTLE SURPRISED TO SEE CHARLES BRODEL RIDING INTO THE COMPETITION ZONE OF FULL POWER TARIFA ON HIS HYDROFOIL!”

finishing the event in 4th place. But, when the Levante hit Balneario, Tarifa this September, the stars aligned for the Spanish youngster, who went massive on his Slingshot prototype. He had some of the highest jumps of the day and looked in perfect control throughout his heats. Congrats on the win, Jeremy! We can't wait to see what's next...

THE FUTURE IS... FOIL?!

It was bound to happen eventually, but we won't lie; we were more than a little surprised to see Charles Brodel riding into the competition zone of Full Power Tarifa on his hydrofoil! We were even more surprised to see how extreme his hydrofoil big air tricks were! He put on an excellent show, nearly beating Arthur Guillebert for a spot in the semifinal. The pairing of foiling and big air is inevitable, and many big names in big air have been spotted training on foil (ram air) kites, using that extra hangtime to practise

rotations. Who will be the first athlete to ride a foil kite in a major big air event? Our money is on Jamie Overbeek!

WHEREFORE ART THOU, LORENZO?

After a surprise separation from the Cabrinha team earlier this year, we've been awaiting the comeback of Lorenzo Casati, our current King of the Air, defending his title this November. He chose not to compete in Red Bull Megaloop and Full Power Tarifa, so we'll have to wait a bit longer! In fact, a few big names skipped out on Full Power, including Liam Whaley and Andrea Principi. It's clear they have their targets set on achieving glory in Cape Town.

BIG AIR NEWS



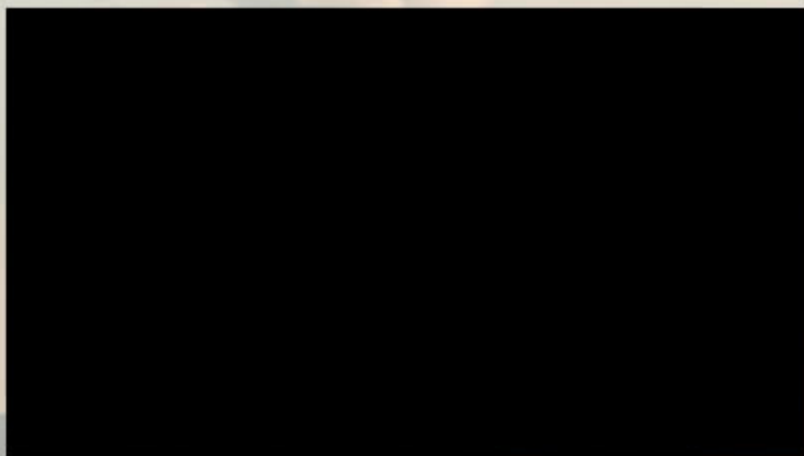
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**“THE EYE-CATCHING NEW HARLEM FORCE,
USING BRAINCHILD TECHNOLOGY, WAS DEBUTED
BY SCOTT BARENDSEN AT FULL POWER”**





“ IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT THE CAT IS OUT OF THE BAG. WE'LL BE SURE TO FILL YOU IN ON THESE NEW PRODUCTS ONCE THEY'RE OFFICIAL ”

Will Lorenzo return to the scene to defend his title? What will he ride during the upcoming Red Bull King of the Air?! All eyes are on the Italian shredder while we await his next move...

I SPY WITH MY LITTLE EYE...

There was a lot of new technology on display in these past few kite competitions! The eye-catching new Harlem Force, using Brainchild technology, was debuted by Scott Barendsen at Full Power, and boy, does that kite look stunning! Back at the BAKL event in Hood River, we spotted a very interesting Naish prototype in the hands of Ewan Jaspán, which we can't wait to hear more about. Over in Europe, Evan Klijn has been dropping some sneaky videos on an unreleased FLYSURFER big air kite. Jeremy Burlando rode his unbranded Slingshot prototype with that telltale golden leading edge all the way to the top of the podium. And, most of the North team was riding the yet-to-be-announced Orbit Pro. Considering there are a few hundred photos of it online, and some retailers already have it listed on their websites, it's safe to say that the cat is out of the bag. We'll be sure to fill you in on these new products once they're official, but you can read more about the Harlem Force later on in this issue!

LADIES IN THE LEVANTE

While we have yet to see much from Red Bull on the topic of ladies in big air, Full Power Tarifa was the perfect opportunity for the ladies to show their stuff.

“ WITH NEW RIDERS SENDING IT HARDER THAN EVER, WE’RE EXCITED TO SEE A CONTINUED SHAKEUP IN THE WORLD OF PROFESSIONAL BIG AIR. ”

Zara Hoogenraad has been riding with more power than ever, taking that top step on the podium. But, it was a hard-won fight against finalists Francesca Maini and Elsien Zijlstra, the latter of whom took 2nd place. Elsien's progress over the past year has been rapid, and we're excited to see her fighting for 1st. Will we see any attention on women's big air at the Red Bull King of the Air? Or will we have to wait for the season-ending Big Air Kite League event in Cape Town to see more strong performances from the ladies?!

BROKEN RECORDS

South African Joshua Emanuel showed us that he's still got that something special by claiming the WOO World Record jump of 36.2 metres after chasing an August storm to Denmark. Teammate Maerten Haeger had posted a score of 35.7 earlier that day, but sharing the spot seemed to provide some added motivation for Josh to get out there and claim the record on the new CORE XR Pro. Another record broken this month was on a hydrofoil, with Borja Vellon jumping off flatwater on his FLYSURFER Sonic 4 and achieving a record-breaking 28.2m jump with 24.4 seconds hang time. What's next?!

HERE COME THE KIDS!

Hardly a big air competition goes by these days where we see some names we don't recognise! With new riders sending it harder than ever, we're excited to see a continued shakeup in the world of professional big air.

BIG AIR NEWS



MASTER EVERY RIDING STYLE

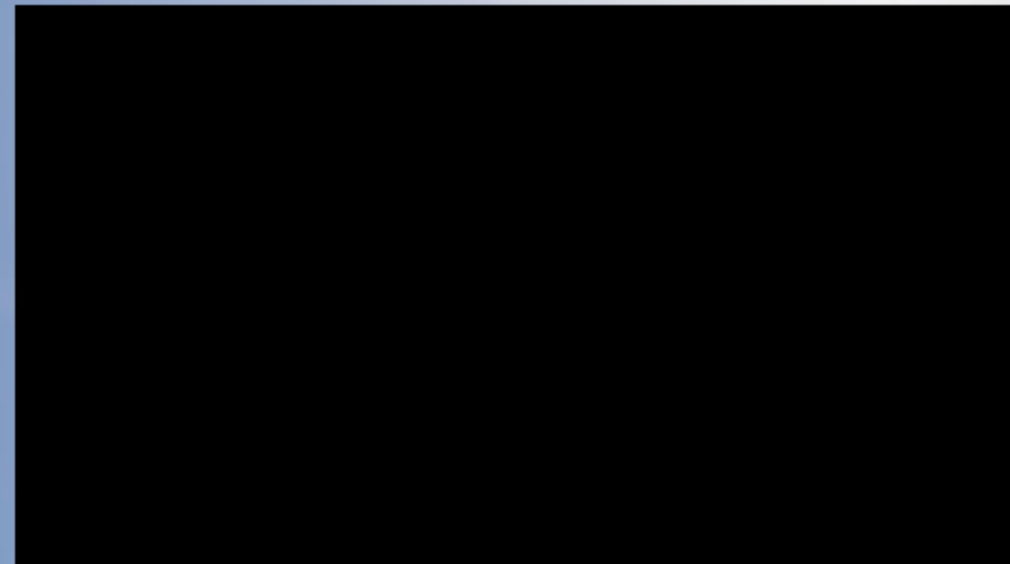
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BIG AIR NEWS

“ IF THERE WAS ANY COMP THAT WOULD SHOWCASE A SHORTLINE MEGA PERFORMANCE, THIS WAS IT. NO FANCY BALLET MOVES; MY KIND OF DAY AT THE OFFICE. ”

At Full Power, Julian Huynh showcased some insane height and technicality, achieving a dominant win in Div 2 and landing a spot in Div 1. On the changes in the big air scene, Julian says, "It has been crazy. Without even talking about doubles and triples, it's like now people are creating tricks every week. Everyone's doing their tricks differently with their own style, using different settings on kites,

from big kites to small, short lines to long; it's crazy now. It's like anything is possible." We can't wait to see what's next for Julian and the rest of the up-and-coming riders breaking onto the big air scene!

HOW LOW CAN YOU GO?

Jett Bradshaw and Jason Van Der Spuy put it all on the line at Red Bull Megaloop by taking out short lines, allowing them to do alarmingly insane kite loops with their kites well below them, almost touching the water! Jett shared his thoughts after the event:

"Red Bull Megaloop was definitely a "bucket-list" experience for me. I couldn't believe how fortunate I was to be selected for this iconic event. If there was any comp that would showcase a shortline mega performance, this was it. No fancy ballet moves; my kind of day at the office.

"I always feel slightly isolated riding short lines in a competitive environment. I don't have the luxury of bouncing options or ideas off other riders with similar setups. I feel sort of like the poor cousin arriving at a family lunch! My first heat was surreal; this is what I live for, the counterculture of big air.

"IT'S SOMETHING I'VE TRAINED VERY HARD FOR, SO IT WAS VERY, VERY REWARDING TO BE IN MEGALOOP FOR THE FIRST TIME AND GETTING THIRD."

Showcasing short lines to the megaloop audience was unbelievable. There's definitely a beach appeal to a low shortline loop, and I'm getting goosebumps just thinking about it! I feel, without sounding arrogant, that we've started developing a short line following at these events, and it feels awesome."

Jason Van Der Spuy promises to bring his short lines out at KOTA if the wind is strong enough, and we are sure that the roaring crowd on Cape Town's Kite Beach will be going nuts if these two South African short line senders get another chance to put on a proper show!

NORTH VS NORTH

The battle between the North boys raged in Zandvoort, with Cohan van Dijk, Luca Ceruti, and Marc Jacobs duking it out at Megaloop. While Luca edged out a win over Marc Jacobs in Round 2, a crash resulting in a concussion meant he had to step aside, and Cohan Van Dijk went on to take the 3rd place spot. In Tarifa, it was Cohan vs Luca once again, and this time around, Luca came out on top, knocking Cohan out in the semifinal and ending up in 2nd place overall. We checked in with both riders to find out if they are friends or foes!

Cohan weighs in after the events, "It's something I've trained very hard for, so it was very, very rewarding to be in Megaloop for the first time and getting third... It's crazy. With Luca, I don't think we're rivals. I think we're friends. We train together, we're a team, and it's cool to compete together."

“NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, WE'RE JUST GOING TO GO INTO THE HEAT, HAVE FUN, AND WHOEVER WINS, WE'LL SUPPORT EACH OTHER TO THE MAX”

Obviously, against North riders, you don't want to win or lose, but you've gotta be cold-blooded and just go for it. It's an individual sport. We're all doing it for ourselves, and we all want to win. Teammate or not, you gotta go for the kill. But outside of that, we're friends, having the best time, training hard, and working hard together to create the best kites and conditions for ourselves to win. You never know who you're going to meet in those competitions. So you need to have a nice heat ladder, be seeded well and ride well, and if it's not your day, it's not your day. It's a competition. You never know what's going to happen!”

Luca gives us his take, "Going into the heat against Cohan, it definitely felt like there was a lot of good energy. Before the heat, we just had a chat and agreed that no matter what happens, we're just going to go into the heat, have fun, and whoever wins, we'll support each other to the max and fly that North flag as high as possible. It was really cool at the start of that semifinal; we were both cheering each other on, and it was not like any other heat I'd ever rode. It was purely fun, like a normal session, which helped me a lot in my confidence on the water to pull off new tricks. It was just such an awesome heat. And yeah, I'm definitely stoked to pull it out of the bag and take the win against Cohan in Tarifa. I'm very keen to battle it out against Cohan again in the French KOTA qualifiers and in KOTA. I think it's going to be the same - whoever does it on the day will win. I can't wait for those events. Fingers crossed!”



Alessandro d' Ambrosio

Freedom
when
I enter
the water



Peace
when
I exit



“THE FORMAT OF THIS EVENT REALLY ALLOWS THE RIDERS TO FOCUS ON NAILING THE SICKEST MEGALOOP, AND WOW, WHERE DOES IT END?”

BIG AIR ISN'T GOING ANYWHERE

The evolution of big air continues, and Ruben Lenten summed it up perfectly after Megaloop, saying, "Megaloop was a great event for sure. The conditions and the new tricks definitely remain a great challenge for the riders and an epic show for the spectators. One for the books! The format of this event really allows the riders to focus on nailing the sickest megaloop, and wow, where does it end? From the most gnarly short line megaloops, double, triple loops to s-loops, all in combination with boardoffs and multiple rotations. Hats off to the new generation!!!"

This year has been a wild ride in the professional big air scene, and the carnival continues! As we count down the days to this year's Red Bull King of the Air, we expect it to be the most competitive, extreme event we've seen this year. There are a lot of young riders with a lot to prove and some legends that aren't ready to go down without a fight. Whatever happens, we're here for it! Stay tuned...



UFO V3 - UFO V3 - UFO V3 - UFO V3 - UFO V3 - UFO V3 - UFO V3 - UFO V3 - UFO V3

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WORDS ROU CHATER

KITEBOARDING NIRVANA IN EUROPE

Rou Chater travels to Sicily to revisit one of Europe's premier freeride and freestyle spots, which is also one of the best places to learn our incredible sport.



RIDER ALBY RONDINA
PHOTO LACI KOBULSKY





“AN EXPANSE OF A LAGOON THAT CAN HANDLE HUNDREDS OF KITERS AND STILL DELIVER ENOUGH FLAT WATER TO MAKE EVEN THE PICKIEST OF FREESTYLERS HAPPY.”

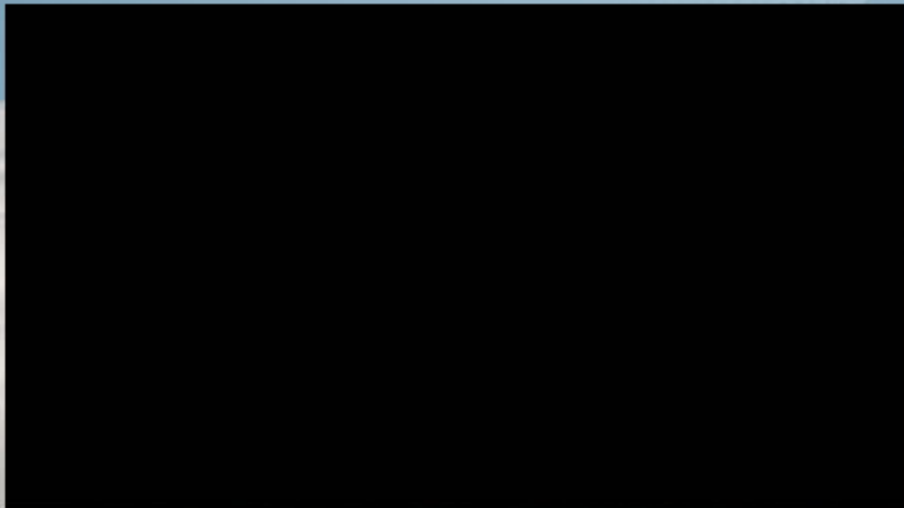
As kiteboarders, we often look for perfection; as our skills improve, we become fussier about the conditions we ride in. We always want more wind, less chop, and bigger waves, but we aren't often truly happy. This is especially true for those of us who live in places where the wind is frontal and not a classic trade wind or regular sea breeze.

For Europe, that is a lot of us, but some spots enjoy incredible conditions, and some are just simply better than the rest. I first went to Sicily on a Cabrinha young rider camp with James Boulding (Cabrinha Marketing Manager) back in 2018. I was there in a media capacity and spent a lot of time shooting, but I did get to see the potential of the place.

Fast forward to 2023, and my girlfriend, Susie, was telling me about some kite lessons she had had in Agadir, Morocco. The school sounded a bit shady to me, and the conditions were more than challenging; big waves and light winds meant she hadn't learned a lot.

Back in the day, I had one of the first kite schools in the UK. I also have a long history of teaching water sports and know the importance of having the right conditions and the right instructor.

I've often recommended that people keen to learn to kite should take a trip to Egypt, famous for flat water and consistent wind. However, if you want a bit of culture, some great wine and incredible food... Egypt won't cut the mustard. But there just so happens to be a spot in Sicily with some of the flattest water in Europe, an expanse of a lagoon that can handle hundreds of kites and still deliver enough flat water to make even the pickiest of freestylers happy. The wine and food are pretty good, too!



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Enjoy the thrill of big air – with the new XR8!

Cross the line, break the rules,
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— Angely Bouillot



“THIS INCREDIBLE PLACE IS PART NATURE RESERVE, PART SALT FLAT, ALL KITESURFING HEAVEN.”

Welcome to Lo Stagnone in Sicily! This incredible place is part nature reserve, part salt flat, all kitesurfing heaven. With thermal winds that blow consistently throughout the summer, you're guaranteed a good time all the time.

Alby Rondina is no stranger to this place; one of the first kites to set up a school here, the Alby Rondina Pro Centre is now a fully-fledged kite resort with accommodation, bar, restaurant, and one of the best spots on the lagoon to launch from. If you haven't come across Alby, he's Italy's Mr. Kitesurf, Cabrinha pro rider, four-time Italian champ, and now the distributor for Cabrinha in Italy too. He set up the Pro Centre with his lifelong friend Riki in 2016 and has been growing it ever since.

Over the years, the centre has grown to what it is today, now offering both villas and hotel rooms with a full breakfast service; there are also kite lessons, kite rental and the option to bring your own gear too. Alby is usually on hand for any pro-level training, and his team of experienced staff and instructors are there to look after your every need.

The accommodation is stylishly designed, and there is air con in all the rooms, which was a welcome relief as we visited during the infamous European heat wave. I love that when you stay here, it's just a short walk from the rooms to the large grass rigging area and the kite centre and school. This is the ultimate in waking up, stepping out of bed and having the best conditions on your doorstep.

PRO KITE ALBY RONDINA PHOTO LACI KOBULSKY





RIDER ALBY RONDINA
PHOTO LACI KOBULSKY

“ THE LAGOON IS FAIRLY SHALLOW, THE BOTTOM IS SANDY, AND IN SOME AREAS, THERE ARE LARGE AMOUNTS OF WEED JUST BELOW THE SURFACE. ”

Those conditions are exceptional, too; Marsala, the nearest town, is known as the windy city of Italy and boasts impressive wind stats that ensure plenty of time on the water throughout the summer months. As the wind is thermal, summer is the best time to visit, but it can still deliver in the spring and autumn.

The most frequent wind direction is from the northwest and, sometimes, in the summer, the southeast; these are the two main thermal winds that hit the area. It can still be windy during the winter, but it is usually more a case of storms coming through, which can hit from any direction.

The lagoon is fairly shallow, the bottom is sandy, and in some areas, there are large amounts of weed just below the surface; this weed helps keep the water mirror flat. When the wind blows from the north, it can push water out of the Marsala Gate and make the lagoon even shallower. It's usually knee to waist-deep in most places; just make sure it is deep enough to crash if you are learning new tricks in a particular spot.

There isn't anything to worry about in the lagoon. I went barefoot the entire week, and the instructors taught barefoot, too. Just watch out for the body dragging through the weedy spots, as this can sometimes cause a rash on any exposed skin. It's nothing some antihistamines can't fix, though... and you definitely won't find any sharks here, haha.

PHOTO: N. BALABOV / INTER. COTOMINA. D&A

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“ WITH OVER 20 BARS AND PUBS ALL NEXT DOOR TO EACH OTHER IT'S A HELL OF A WAY TO SPEND AN EVENING AND NOT TO BE MISSED. ”

Getting to Lo Stagnone is pretty easy. There are lots of flights from all over Europe. The closest airport is Trapani, and you only have a 30-minute transfer if you land here. Also consider Palermo, which is just over an hour away by car. On the car front, you don't need one, but without one, you are pretty limited to exploring the immediate area

around the lagoon. There are a few great restaurants and bars nearby, and technically, you could travel here without a set of wheels. However, one of the delights of Sicily is the culture and the food. Being able to get to some of the wineries to sample the popular Nero d'Avola wine that the island is famous for, or the fish market and old town of Marsala, is a real bonus, especially if you have a windless afternoon or morning to fill. We rented a car and used it most days, whether that was for supplies from the supermarket or to head out to dinner.

It was useful and not too expensive if you booked in advance.

The nightlife in Marsala is also worth sampling at least once during your trip; once the sun sets, the fish market transforms into a popular place for people to get together and party, with over 20 bars and pubs all next door to each other it's a hell of a way to spend an evening and not to be missed.

Staying on the lagoon at night, there is always some sort of beach party happening at one of the centres, bars or restaurants. With an eclectic mix of kites from all over Europe and further afield, you are guaranteed to have a good time whatever you decide to do.

RIDER ALBY RONDINA
PHOTO LACI KOBULSKY



The sunsets are also magical here; kicking those off with a beer on the beach is a great way to start any evening.

What I love about Lo Stagnone is how it offers something for everyone, no matter your ability. Susie was having a blast getting lessons from Alby's incredible team just out in front of the centre, while I enjoyed busting out some old freestyle tricks and touring around the lagoon, exploring different spots. At the same time, Gianmaria Coccoluto was busy training to defend his freestyle world title.

**"IT OFFERS
SOMETHING FOR
EVERYONE, NO
MATTER YOUR
ABILITY."**



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“ GREAT FOOD, AMAZING CONDITIONS, ICE COLD BEER, TASTY WINE AND SUNSETS THAT LEFT YOU FEELING WARM INSIDE ”

In between, there were loads of kites enjoying what the place offers. As a dedicated wave head, foiler and winger, I was a little dubious about how much I would enjoy the riding there. I was mainly going as I was keen for Susie to get some decent lessons after her below-par experience in Morocco.

I was surprised by how much I loved being back on a twin tip. That was largely due to the conditions; flat water kiting is always much better than hacking around in a bunch of chop. From speed runs in the flattest water you can imagine to riding upwind and out of the lagoon to explore further afield, I loved every session I had.

So much so I can't wait to go back next year. As for Susie, she progressed so quickly, the consistent wind and flat water making kiteboarding easy. She was ripping, and I was so proud of her. If you have a partner or loved one who's keen to learn, sell them on the culture and food of Sicily, and then let Alby's team transform them into a die-hard kiter in a matter of days.

It was genuinely one of the best kite trips I've been on. Great food, amazing conditions, ice cold beer, tasty wine and sunsets that left you feeling warm inside long after the heat of the sun had dissipated and memorable sessions that will stay with me for a long while yet...



PHOTOS ROU CHATER



RIDER ALBY RONDINA
PHOTO LACI KOBUSLKY



**“ I LEFT WITH AN
INVIGORATED PASSION FOR
TWIN TIPS AND DOING
THINGS IN KITING THAT I
HAD LONG FORGOTTEN. ”**

Lo Stagnone, I came to you so Susie could learn to kite, but thanks to the incredible set-up and the amazing conditions, I left with an invigorated passion for twin tips and doing things in kiting that I had long forgotten.

Alby and the team were incredible every step of the way, and I'd highly recommend you put a spot in your diary for next year if you fancy a European kite holiday that is hard to beat!



Every year for 20 years
it just kept getting better.

Stealth Harness





WORDS LACI KOBULSKY

Filmmaker and kiteboarder Laci Kobulsky has a passion for telling stories and capturing the most insane freestyle action out there! In his latest project, he teamed up with Gianmaria Coccoluto for a six week sojourn in Brazil to document his pursuit to become Freestyle World Champion. Go behind the scenes of the project in this exclusive article!



" MY BIG DREAM IS TO WORK ON LONGER DOCUMENTARIES, SPORTS FILMS, AND SOME SCIENCE-RELATED PROJECTS. "



PHOTO LACI KOBULSKY

My name is Laci Kobulsky. I'm a 34-year-old from Slovakia who loves kitesurfing and snowboarding. I currently live in Sicily in the summer and Switzerland in the winter. While I am still an active athlete on the kiteboarding scene, I am more passionate now about my work, which is filmmaking and photography. I do a lot of work within the kiteboarding industry but also outside of it. My big dream is to work on longer documentaries, sports films, and some science-related projects.

For now, I have two projects to my name. The first one is TWENTY with Aaron Hadlow, which came out in 2019. This 36-minute film documented Hadlow's incredible 20-year career as a pro kiter and was filmed over a whole year in multiple international locations. My latest project is ALL IN, featuring Gianmaria Coccoluto tackling his lifelong goal of becoming a Freestyle World Champion. ALL IN is available to rent or buy on Vimeo on Demand. While TWENTY was a bigger project due to the long filming period, ALL IN is my best work so far, as I have improved a lot in technical aspects over the years. There were a lot of mistakes in TWENTY that I can see when I watch it back... not that I don't still love the film, though!

How did the project come about? Gianma and I both live in Sicily, so we are in regular contact on and off the water. The inspiration was simple: I wanted to work on another passion project and make the best freestyle kiteboarding video possible, and Gianma wanted to become a World Champion. We decided to travel to Brazil together for six weeks, and I think somebody said as a joke, "Perfect, and we go all in!" and the name just stuck!

"NO MATTER THE OUTCOME, ALL IN WOULD STILL SHOWCASE THE BEST FREESTYLE ACTION ON THE PLANET."



There wasn't a clear ending or storyline in the early part of the project. Of course, I had a list of possible things I wanted to shoot, but I mainly wanted to follow Gianma and see what happened. I wasn't sure if we should include the GKA competition in the movie because his odds of winning weren't very high. But how can you not when it's his driving force? No matter the outcome, ALL IN would still showcase the best freestyle action on the planet. After all, you win some, and you lose some, and not all movies have a happy ending. This one, however... ;)

Why Brazil for the shoot location? That is pretty clear! It is the only place in the world where I never have to watch the forecast, and the açaí and Brazilian funk music are pretty great, too. In Brazil, it is simply windy every day. It's not always perfect, sometimes too busy and occasionally a bit gusty, but it is still the best place if you want to shoot the best freestyle tricks.

The ease of the kiting lifestyle in Brazil is unmatched. You come to the beach, pump your kite and ride with the world's best riders, which is really motivating! But it can be frustrating sometimes, too! I remember one evening session with photographer Andre Magarao.

We were riding for some photos with Gianma and Maxime Chabloz, and I was a bit upset about my riding since I was struggling with my grabs. Both of them were flying, but then I realised, damn, you are riding with the top two ranked riders in the world! Be happy that you are on the level that you can even share a session with such legends!

Working with Gianma, Maxime, and Noè Font made the six weeks of filming fly by. It's interesting to watch the dynamics between these different riders. With Gianma and Noè, it's pure friendship and passion, with both riders trying to do innovative grabs,

RIDER GIANMARIA COCCOLUTO
PHOTO LACI KOBULSKY

FLAXFUSION
CONSTRUCTION

AEROBAR
RS

"IT'S FANTASTIC FOR HIM TO HAVE
TWO FRIENDS AT OPPOSITE
SPECTRUMS OF FREESTYLE."



combinations and mega-stylish moves. With Maxime, there is a friendly rivalry and some "trash talk" like "Hey man, you need to send your kite lower!" It's fantastic for him to have two friends at opposite spectrums of freestyle. While Noè is pure style, Maxime is a competition machine, and Gianma is, thanks to them, in the perfect sweet spot between the two.



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Naturally, I spent most of my time shooting with Gianma, as this project was all about him. He's the best person to shoot if you want the most technical and stylish tricks out there. I love his tricks, and his riding is the vision of how I would love to be able to ride. However, perfection comes with its difficulties. Gianma isn't the type of person that you boss around. He is very focused on the mental side of his riding, and when he is pushing at the highest level, you have to leave him alone, which makes it more difficult to plan how to shoot. You have to imagine him as a wild beast and simply hide in the bushes and capture him in action. But when he delivers, it is so worth it! I am not talking about the easy tricks, though. If you want KGB5s and mobes, he can do them on demand, however, and wherever you want. But if you want NBDs (Never Been Done moves), you must follow the rules of the jungle and be patient.

From the artistic side, I loved to film during the sunsets. They are magnificent in Brazil, so there is also a long sunset section in the movie where I just let them play out in slow motion. It was also really fun filming from the water because we were both super stoked whenever Gianma landed something big and could share that moment in the water. From the whole project, the most memorable moments were behind the camera during the GKA quarterfinal round when he had the highest scoring heat in GKA history with two 10s and two high 9s; he was in absolute beast override mode, and it was great to see his stoke and domination first-hand.

One of the biggest challenges was figuring out how to tell a complex story with only one camera. People imagine a multi-camera set like you have on Netflix Drive to Survive, but this was a one-man show!

RIDER GIANMARIA COCCOLUTO
PHOTO ANDRE MAGARAO



" I LOVE HIS TRICKS, AND HIS RIDING IS THE VISION OF HOW I WOULD LOVE TO BE ABLE TO RIDE. "

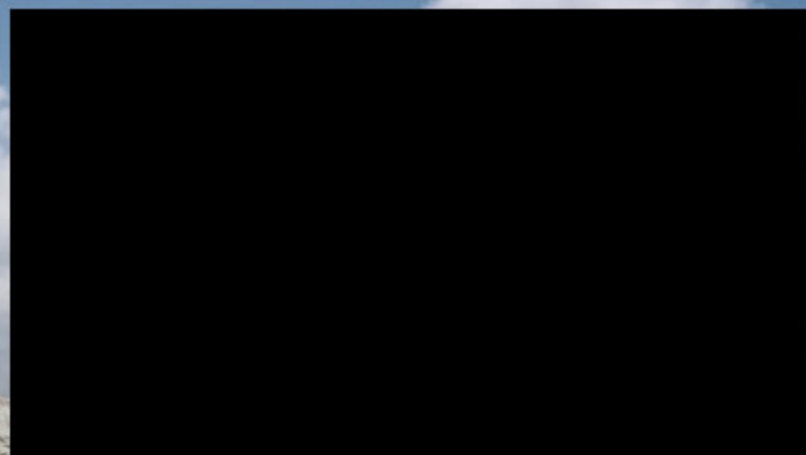
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Rider: Antoine Olivier
Picture: Laci Kobulsky



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RIDER GIANMARIA COCCOLUTO
PHOTO LACI KOBULSKY

RIDER GIANMARIA COCCOLUTO
PHOTO LACI KOBULSKY

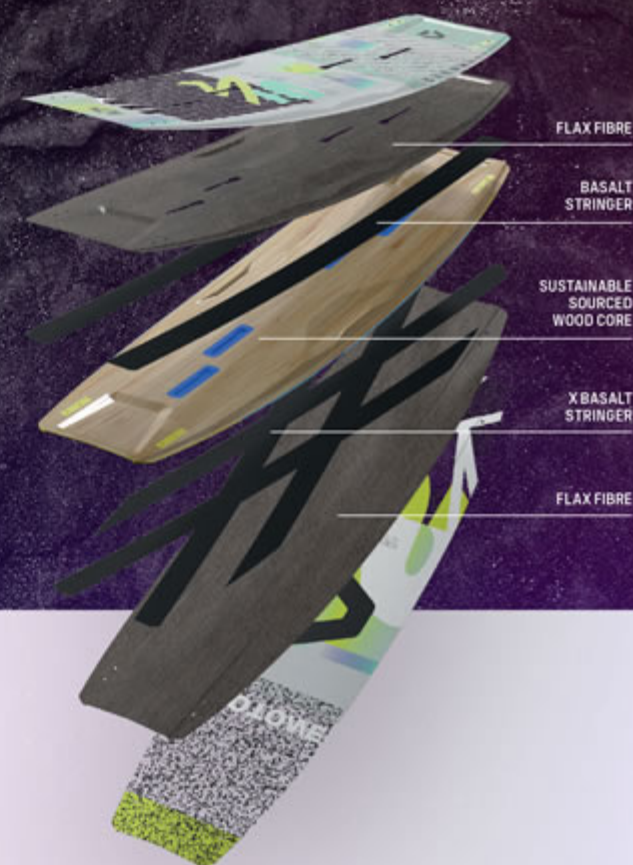
"PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER TO
CREATE A FLOWING FILM AT THE
END TOOK SOME CREATIVITY."

I was downwind on the long lens, but luckily, during the GKA event, I had some extra shots from Julien Leleu who was working for the GKA. I gave my second camera to Kinas to capture some reactions off the water, but all of this is not enough to tell the story, so putting it all together to create a flowing film at the end took some creativity. This is why I inserted myself into the beginning of the movie. First, I wanted to add some "comedy" elements, but I also wanted to narrate the story as it was needed from the editing room.



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" IF THE COMMUNITY WANTS TO SEE MORE PROJECTS LIKE THIS, THIS IS HOW THEY CAN SUPPORT IT. "



When you put your soul into a project, you are hyper-aware of any feedback, positive or negative. I can address some comments that I heard from people online. First, there was some criticism about how the end of the GKA competition was portrayed. In the final, there was quite an interesting situation when Gianma had finished all his tricks, and Maxime had one more try. He would win if he managed to get a decent score, something like an 8, which is very achievable for him. The title outcome hung on Maxime's performance, and he went for it but landed with his kite too high, so ultimately, Gianma won. I didn't include the events as they played out because it seemed like a weak ending for his movie, and really, the film was not supposed to be about the competition; the win was merely the cherry on top. You'll have to watch ALL IN yourself to see how that GKA World Championship win played out in the movie!

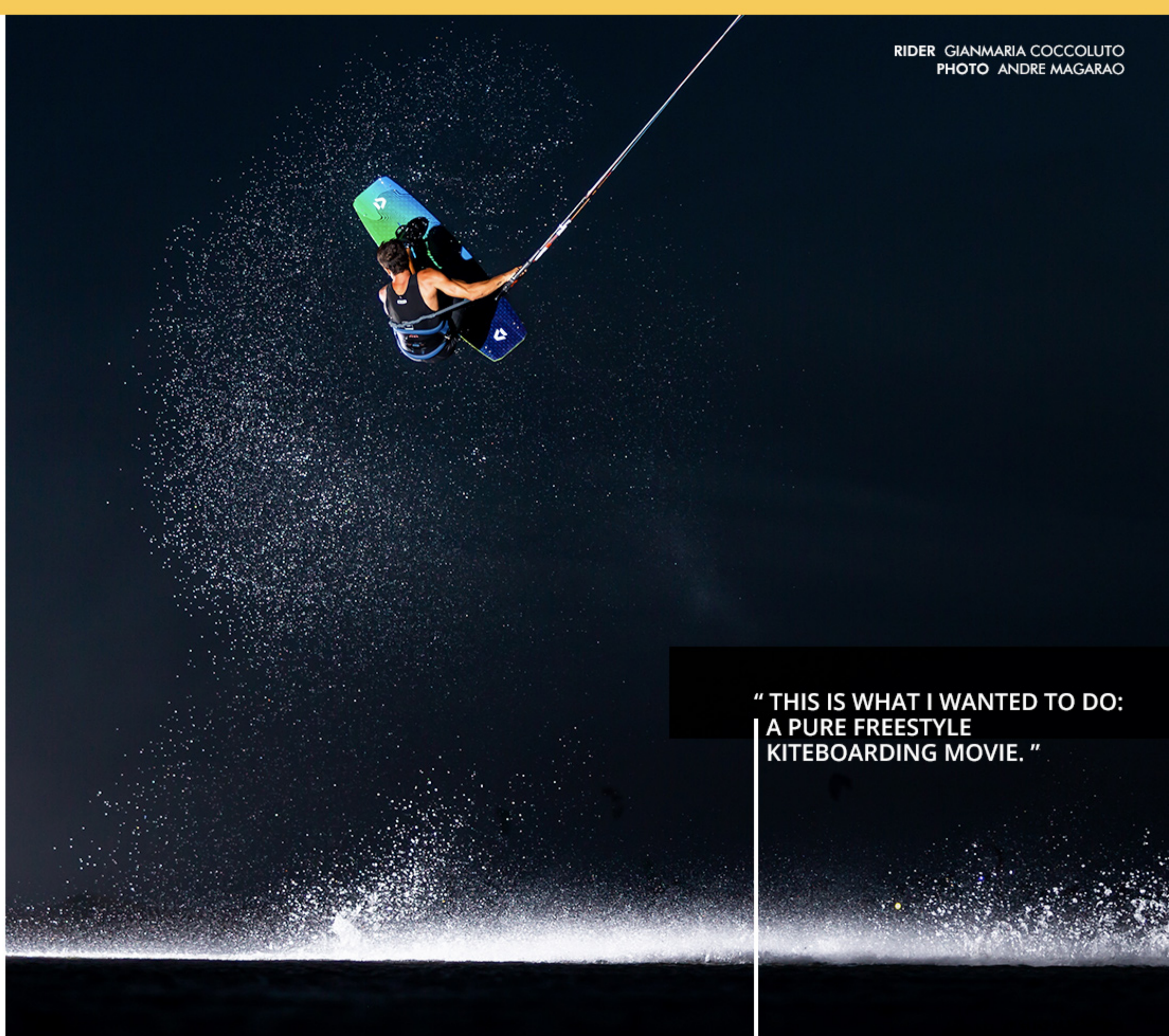
The second comments were about the decision to have the movie behind a paywall. It's on Vimeo on Demand, and people can either rent it to stream for 48 hours for USD 5.99 or buy and download it for unlimited watches for USD 11.99. We are all used to free content online, and one part of me would love to have ALL IN available for free so more people can enjoy it, but the other part would love to make more movies like this, which led to that decision!

If we want to see more high-quality independent film projects like this, they must be financially viable. My time is not free, my gear is for sure not provided for free, and travel is not free. So, the release of ALL IN is sort of an experiment. If the community wants to see more projects like this, this is how they can support it. If not, then message received, haha!

Our goal was to make a serious freestyle video. I grew up watching rollerblading and snowboarding movies that were trick after trick, and not much else. This is what I wanted to do: a pure kiteboarding freestyle movie. Simply put, if you don't enjoy watching freestyle kiteboarding, this movie is not for you. But if you want to get hyped for your next session, this should be the one to watch!

I would love to do a big kitesurfing movie with even more riders for my next project. If this film gets enough support, I can fund my next project. Of course, if an investor comes on board, it would be possible to put my next movie out there for free for the world to see, and that would be the best scenario! I hope you enjoy ALL IN, and I look forward to sharing the next action film with you...

Click here to see ALL IN on Vimeo on Demand!



" THIS IS WHAT I WANTED TO DO:
A PURE FREESTYLE
KITEBOARDING MOVIE. "

TECH FOCUS

MYSTIC STEALTH HARNESS

Q&A with Joost Hezemans,
Technical Product Designer

With the Stealth being a favourite in the Mystic harness range, kiteboarders have highly anticipated the release of the latest Stealth! Designer Joost Hezemans and the Mystic Pro Team give us the lowdown.

RIDER COHAN VAN DIJK
PHOTO VINCENT SCHAAP



Joost, what are the key differences between the previous model of the Stealth and this new release?

We've looked at pressure points and analysed our warranty cases. We discovered that the body needed more movement in all directions while doing all sorts of crazy tricks. During crashes, we noticed that the bottom of the harness could grab the water like a bucket, which feels really uncomfortable. This led to a new cutout of the plate, which has less material at the bottom and less plate height on the sides. Next to that, we updated the inner foam with a 3D shape that has improved 3D shaping and fewer nooks and crannies inside so it can stay clean.

The original Stealth harness was designed as a combination of the Legend and the Majestic X. Which characteristics of these two harnesses did you select to create the Stealth?

The Legend was non-water-absorbing but made with injection moulded foam; this was not soft enough and not very comfortable. We then looked into new production techniques and found that expansion moulding EVA gave much better results in comfort and increased grip. We took the carbon hardshell from our Majestic X and perfected it with the new 3D cutout shape. The EVA foam may need some riding in, but once you become one with the harness you do not feel like you are wearing one at all. This means all effort and training can go into doing what we love.



"ONCE YOU BECOME ONE WITH THE HARNESS YOU DO NOT FEEL LIKE YOU ARE WEARING ONE AT ALL."

"IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTICE THAT THE HARNESS IS STILL VERY STIFF WITHOUT COMPROMISING WEIGHT"



The Stealth weighs less when compared to competing harnesses, and this lightweight feature stands out when the harness is wet. What materials or build methods helped achieve this lightweight performance?

It is important to notice that the harness is still very stiff without compromising weight. Our patented thermoplastic carbon plates have proven to be a reliable support on the water over the years.

Tell us a bit about the safety features of this harness!

We took special care in designing a designated pocket for a safety knife, which is located at the right back of the harness. The knife also underwent a rigorous update to keep the cutting properties stable during years of use.

Which spreader bar does Mystic recommend, and what features on this spreader bar make it a perfect pairing?

The new Stealth harness is a bit lower on the sides for extra movement. We translated this into lower Stealthwings (the flaps that tuck into your harness) on the Stealthbar Gen 3. The recently updated Gen 3 has a much longer leverlock, which allows you to set your harness once with your webbings and then store them away. This led us to update the side covers that cover up the rolled-up webbing. We even added a custom locking system to keep those annoying webbings where they belong.

"THIS HARNESS REALLY EXCELS WHEN RIDING OVERPOWERED AND WANTING YOUR SESSIONS TO LAST LONGER."



We've seen several members of your international pro team riding the Stealth, and we've asked for their feedback! What characteristics make this the harness of choice for riders competing and performing at the highest levels?


Cohan van Dijk: You can feel the light weight of the harness while riding, and with the perfect stiffness, it's an amazing big air harness. It is perfect for my short in-between light travels. Because of the padding from the Stealth, your harness will be dry and light in no time. Plus, the print and graphic design is next-level.

Giel Vlugt: The combination of having incredible support but barely any weight is unbelievable. Even though it is very rigid, the lightness of the harness allows you to move freely and effortlessly. For me personally, the best thing about this harness is that I can ride overpowered for 4 hours straight and feel no pain in my back. The support is unreal, and it'll offer you more hours on the water than you're used to! So, no excuses for you to take a break!

Stiff harnesses and hard shells are loved by some kilters, but not all! Is there any type of kiter or style

of riding that may not fit the Stealth design? What would be a softer harness in the range that these riders might consider?

Giel Vlugt: If you're a wave rider and you need the harness to slide all over the place and get the most amount of freedom, I think you'll find this harness is a little too "extreme." This harness really excels when riding overpowered and wanting your sessions to last longer. When riding waves, you're generally riding a little underpowered, so there's no need for the stiffness.



" THIS MEANS IT CAN ACTUALLY BE
USED FOR MANY RIDING STYLES. "

Joost Hezemans: The cool thing about our patented production technique is that we can add stiffness in one direction by placing the carbon fibres horizontally on the outside of the carbon sandwich. The layers on the inside are 45 degrees angled, which gives just the right amount of flex. This means it can actually be used for many riding styles. If you do not need the plate stiffness to carry you 20 metres in the air but focus more on freestyle or wave riding, you should definitely check out our Majestic harness.



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Discover the First Track Lab, an innovative research and development facility nestled in the breathtaking mountains of Verbier, Switzerland. From design to prototyping and now production, they create exceptional products like Gin kite boards. Their collaboration with Gin ensures efficient, simple, and timeless designs that deliver premium quality and lasting style.

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"THE MOST EXCITING PART OF DEVELOPING THIS HARNESS IS THAT COMBINATION OF STIFFNESS, SUPPORT, AND A SLEEK DESIGN WHILE BEING INCREDIBLY LIGHT."

What is the team at Mystic most excited about in the release of the new Stealth harness?

Giel Vlugt: I believe the most exciting part of developing this harness is that combination of stiffness, support, and a sleek design while being incredibly light. To be able to combine all of that says a lot about everyone working at the office, in the factory and behind the scenes. This team is special and dedicated to always being at the top of engineering and designing the best of the best.

Joost Hezemans: We've collected a lot of feedback from all sorts of users riding the first Stealth harness & bar. We have worked closely with team riders but also spent hours searching for user feedback online. We believe we have filtered out the most important feedback to create the second generation Stealth Harness. Keep up the good work, and post your feedback online - it will eventually trickle down to the R&D team, who will definitely use it for future development!

TECH FOCUS

CABRINHA OPERATING SYSTEM

Q&A with James Boulding

The Cabrinha Operating System (COS, for short) was released just a few months ago and is a control bar packed with features designed to keep the rider safe and in control! James Boulding gives us all the details on Cabrinha's latest release in this Q&A...



"A QUICK AND EFFICIENT WAY FOR KITEBOARDERS TO RELEASE THE POWER OF THE KITE AND DEPOWER IT IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY"



Hi James, the COS is a significant change to Cabrinha's bar range, and the Click n' Go safety system is one of the most exciting developments in this bar. Tell us all about it!

The COS is a complete redesign of the control and safety system. The first key difference here is the safety system redesign, which consists of a simple push away release followed by an exceptionally easy push in and click reload. The loop can also be easily interchanged toollessly by pushing a lever on the side of the system. Different sized loops

can be used, as well as a slider.

The power lines are individually PU-coated and split as they pass through the bar. What are the benefits of this design?

The Dual PU Tubes keep the clean, smooth finish that Cabrinha riders are used to but allow for an independent chamber for the 1X Security line to pass through.

How does the Cabrinha 1X Security line work?
Is this system compatible with all 4 line kites?

This system is designed to provide a quick and efficient way for kiteboarders to release the power of the kite and depower it in case of an emergency or when they need to detach from the kite quickly. Upon activation of the safety system, the bar is released, and all tension moves onto the 1X line, completely depowering the kite with it coming down to rest in the water. It can be used with most kites on the market, but care should be taken around the knots that are used. Cabrinha's line attachments and pigtails on the kite are colour-coded to make sure the right line is connected to the right point on the kite.

The COS bar comes set with 22m lines, but the option of riding four different line lengths (18, 20, 22, or 24m). Do you find that kites prefer this level of customisation? For riders that have never experimented with alternate line lengths, what would change about the kite flying characteristics of a product such as the Switchblade if you shorten or lengthen the lines?

The new variable line lengths can greatly adjust your riding style and the kite's performance. The COS comes stock with 22m (18m + 4m extensions), which, for most instances, is the optimum. Reducing line lengths gives a more direct feel to the kite with a quicker turning speed. This can be very useful for learning or powering down the kite slightly. Increasing to 24m allows the kite to travel further in its arc, allowing more hangtime. It also helps the kite drift, which can come in handy for foiling or in the waves. It's a very easy adjustment, so we'd encourage anyone to give it a go and see which length they prefer!

The Overdrive bar ends on the COS provide another level of customisation. How does this impact kite performance, and is it possible to make these adjustments with your kite in the sky?

The Overdrive system is an incredibly simple and intuitive system that can be adjusted on the fly with the kite in the sky. Simply pop out the Overdrive piece at the end of the bar, rotate 180 degrees, and pop back in. This adjusts the virtual bar size by 8cm in length. This enables quite a bit of crossover of the two size options available.



" IT'S A VERY EASY ADJUSTMENT, SO WE'D ENCOURAGE ANYONE TO GIVE IT A GO AND SEE WHICH LENGTH THEY PREFER! "



"THE BEAUTY OF THE OVERDRIVE SYSTEM IS IT GIVES EACH BAR TWO DIFFERENT VIRTUAL BAR LENGTHS, GIVING LOTS OF CROSSOVER POTENTIAL."

The COS bar comes in two different sizes: S/M (42-50cm) and M/L (47-55cm). What should customers consider when choosing which size to buy? Is there a resource they can use to figure out which bar size suits which kite sizes or designs?

As a general rule of thumb, we recommend kites of 9m and bigger to be used with the M/L and then 9m and smaller sizes to be used with the S/M, but this, of course, comes down to some personal preference. For freestyle, a slower turning kite is often more preferable, so the S/M bar tends to be used with bigger sized kites, whereas for surf and big air, the M/L bar tends to be more preferable due to the easier turning. The beauty of the Overdrive system is it gives each bar two different virtual bar lengths, giving lots of crossover potential.

**Tell us about the TrimLite Cleat system!
What makes this depower system unique?**

We found that the general trend of both our trim options, the Recoil and TrimLite, was heading towards the more popular TrimLite system. Actually, one of the key reasons people liked the alternative Recoil was because the distance between the connection and bar away position was a lot closer. The new COS system actually cuts this distance down due to the new reduced length release system, so with this feature being incorporated into the new design, we've catered for both and put the best of each bar together into one with two different bar size options.



" FOR KITE LINES, THIS IS INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT, AS THEY PLAY A KEY ROLE IN NOT JUST SAFETY, BUT ALSO THE PERFORMANCE OF A KITE. "

What flying lines has the Cabrinha team chosen for the COS bar? What makes this line material the best choice?

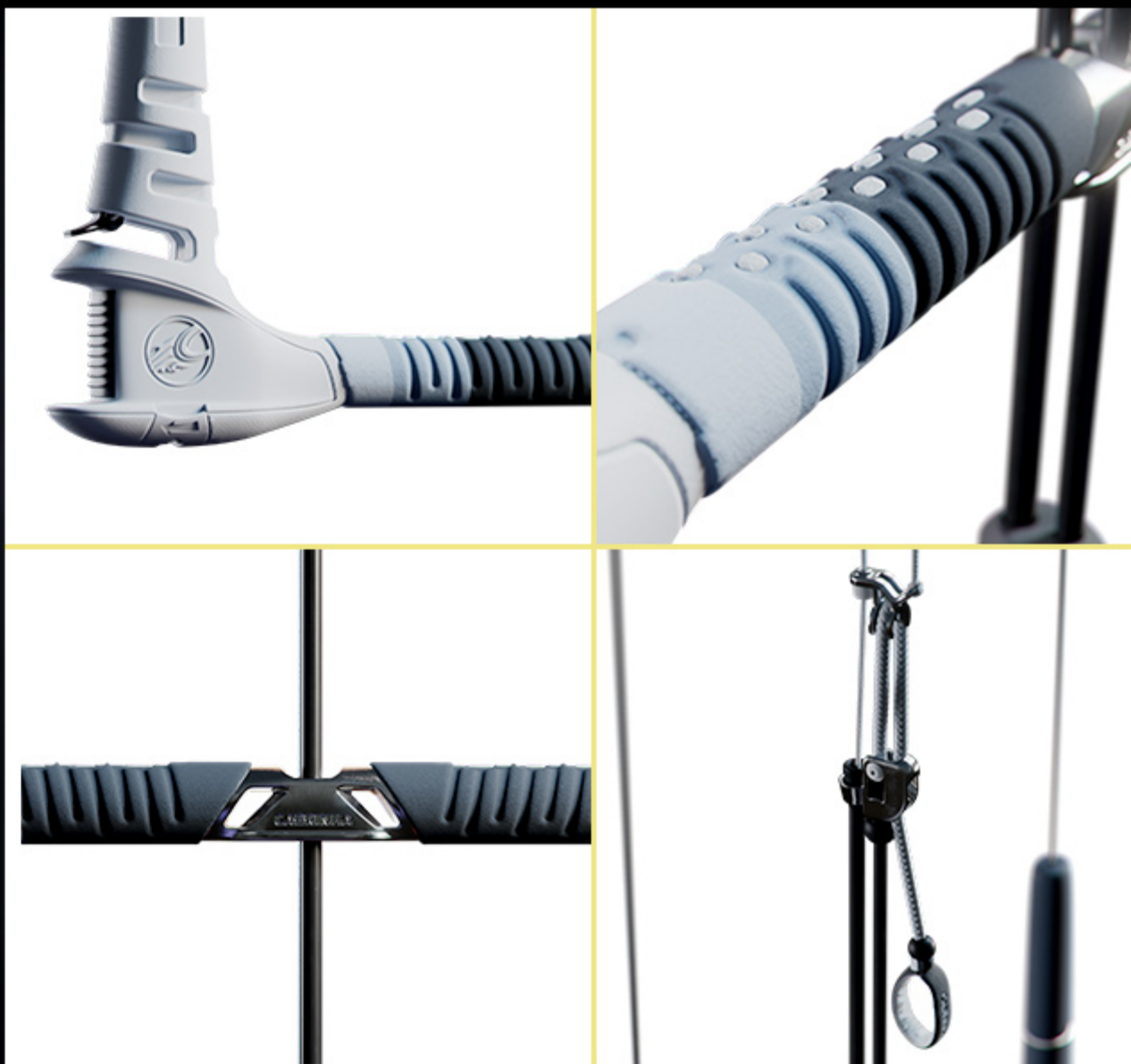
Cabrinha uses Bio-based Dyneema® for each line in the control system. This fiber boasts the exact same performance as conventional Dyneema® with a carbon footprint that is 90% lower than generic HMPE (high modulus polyethylene) fiber. We use a specific Dyneema SK76 Fiber Grade, which has a slightly higher performance compared to SK75 and SK78. Due to the special pre-stretching and heat setting technology we

have developed with our partner BraidTech, the maximum strength per weight (tenacity) is often on par with SK99 lines used by some other brands.

The main advantage Cabrinha's line has over other lines is that it has much better abrasion resistance. The diameter of a single filament SK99 is approximately half the diameter of the SK76 grade, which is a major reason our lines wear out slower. For kite lines, this is incredibly important, as they play a key role in not just safety, but also the performance of a kite. Every rotation, kitemove and relaunch causes

abrasion, so these characteristics are vital when it comes to making a durable product.

The coating used on our lines has been gradually improved during the last few years to achieve the right amount of line protection, stiffness and reduced shrinkage. The surface friction has been reduced, which directly contributes to the improved abrasion resistance. This is at the heart of Cabrinha's development goal, which is not only to make high quality, performance products, but to make these products last.



TECH FOCUS

ION BALLISTIC FOOTWEAR

Q&A with Michael Schuster,
Product Developer

ION's neoprene footwear range has been overhauled from top to bottom! In this Q&A, we catch up with Product Developer Michael Schuster to find out about all the key changes!



Hi Michael, thanks for taking the time to answer some questions! First, what inspired such a significant change in the ION Footwear range?

We constantly gathered feedback from customers and team riders in the past years. Whether good or bad, all feedback is valuable for product development. Parallely, we intrinsically strive to offer best-in-class products across all categories. Some time ago, it appeared that new materials were available. New materials also mean that you can adjust a product's cuts. Based on the previous feedback and the new materials, we took the chance to develop an even more advanced footwear range. We are excited to finally offer it to everyone!

The new range features Kevlar Aramid soles. What characteristics does this material have that offer such strong protection for the user?

Kevlar is synonymous with Aramid fibres used in bulletproof vests. The use cases Aramid fibres are famous for are impact strength, cut protection, low stretch, heat protection, abrasion resistance, vibration reduction, and relatively low weight. Except for the heat protection, all these properties are very useful for a sole on neoprene footwear.

Do these 'bulletproof soles' offer flexibility? How would you describe how wearing and using ION footwear with a Kevlar sole feels?

Despite the resistant outsole, the 3/2 Ballistic sock can be turned inside out. Frequent neoprene footwear users will know how valuable this is and what it says about flexibility. Kevlar soles are flexible because of the fibre alignment and the properties of Aramid.



" FREQUENT NEOPRENE FOOTWEAR USERS WILL KNOW HOW VALUABLE THIS IS AND WHAT IT SAYS ABOUT FLEXIBILITY "



" I BELIEVE THIS TO BE THE PERFECT COMPOSITION FOR AN OUTSOLE. "

It is flexible but doesn't stretch. I believe this to be the perfect composition for an outsole. You don't want the sole to stretch because that would make you slip inside your boot. The flexibility, however, offers a great board feel and an easier walk.

Plasma Plush 2.0, the inner lining material, and Max_Flex, the outer lining material, is used throughout the ION product range and in its wetsuits. What makes these materials the ideal choice for the ION footwear range?

Generally, the same arguments apply to wetsuits as well as to booties or socks. Max_Flex is especially an ideal footwear fit; it offers flexibility and comfort. Thanks to the combination of this new outside lining and a renewed pattern, getting in and out of the boots is very easy. On the inside, Plasma_Plush gives you this nice extra warmth on those crispy cold days.



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REO STEVENS



"THIS UNIQUE VELCRO SYSTEM ACTS LIKE A BRACE, STABILISING YOUR FOOT AND GIVING VERY GOOD SUPPORT. "

RIDER MATCHU LOPES
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH

More handy additions are the External Shoehorn and Pull Loop, located on the heels of the boots. What feedback were you seeing from the market that resulted in the development of these features? How do they work?

A pull loop increases the ease of entry; it's as simple as that. We designed the loop to be thicker and softer than other loops. Once you pull such narrow loops with freezing fingers, you'll know that a thick and soft loop is a very comfortable feature. The same goes for the external shoehorn. It also gives you extra support and stabilises your foot when you have sketchy landings.

What can you tell us about the Velcro system used on ION boots?

The Velcro and "harness" system is a really important feature of our boots. The Velcro is made from a thin and very flexible webbing, which adapts and wraps around the foot like no other. Further, the harness, located on the lateral side of your foot, is connected to the Velcro system, and the Velcro also runs through the heel pocket on your inside foot and runs again further up to the lateral side. This unique Velcro system acts like a brace, stabilising your foot and giving very good support. An additional benefit of the

thin Velcro is that you don't feel it when you are strapped to your board.

With so many different materials, components, and layers, we are curious about the construction. How is everything put together?

The boots are glued and blind stitched, like our wetsuits. This and the liquid power seams make them waterproof. We are lucky to produce in the best factory for wetsuits and neoprene footwear. They have the whole process and material production in-house, which makes it easy to keep and control the quality and consistency of our products.

TECH FOCUS

F-ONE DESIGNER SPOTLIGHT

Q&A with Charles Brodel,
Kite Designer

Charles Brodel has been a top-level rider on the F-ONE international team for quite some time! While he still maintains his status as one of the most talented kites in the world, especially on a foil, he's also got the job title of Kite Designer! We put a spotlight on his role in this interview...



" WE DEVELOP PRODUCTS THAT WE LOVE TO RIDE. WE DO NOT DEVELOP WITH THE IDEA OF PRODUCING FOR THE SAKE OF PRODUCING. "



What is it like making the step up to join the R&D team? What is your official role at F-ONE, and how long have you been in this position?

Joining the R&D team at F-ONE made me fulfil one of my dreams: becoming a kite designer. I have been a member of the R&D team since March 2022. In the beginning, my role was to learn to design kites. Now, I am responsible for the development of the TRIGGER V2.

Have you still been able to participate in competitions and events? What is it like balancing your aspirations as a pro kiter with your job behind the scenes?

Besides my work, I have managed to continue participating in events and competitions. The TRIGGER is a big air kite, so I can train a little while working. It's difficult to link the two activities because I often change kites, and therefore, I have to get my bearings again each session.

As a family-owned business, F-ONE has a unique approach to product development. Can you share some insights on what that process is like?

At F-ONE, we develop products that we love to ride. We do not develop with the idea of producing for the sake of producing. If we don't like a product, we won't sell it, and we will wait until we like the product first before we put it on the market. The levels in the companies are very homogeneous, but everyone finds products adapted to them, which means that we have a very wide range of equipment for all levels. During tests, we are very demanding of the expected performances, and we stop developing as long as the performance does not meet our expectations.



" WHEN I GO TO A COMPETITION, I LOOK AT THE DESIGN OF EVERYONE'S KITES WHILE LOOKING FOR SOLUTIONS FOR OURS "



The R&D team has a few members on it - including Raphael Salles himself - who have been on the team for a long time. What is it like working with designers with so many years of experience?

Working alongside Raphael is something extremely enriching. He is probably the most passionate person about R&D that I have met. Being passionate, he likes to talk about it, and he is meticulous in his settings, allowing me to learn many things very quickly alongside him. It's the same with Robert, who is just as passionate

about design. This knowledge is exceptional, and during a simple discussion, I learn so much information. I am truly lucky to be able to be trained by these two great designers, and that is why I give my all to each drawing I create in order to show them my desire to progress and my potential to maybe one day, be as good as Robert and Raphael for the design.

Does having ridden at a professional level in kite foiling, including big air and freestyle, change how you approach kite design?

When developing a kite, you don't just have to want to make it a competition kite. I would personally like to make the most efficient kite possible for competitions, but that is not what should be done. First of all, you have to say that the kite must be able to be used by intermediate riders as well. It's quite the opposite; when I go to a competition, I look at the design of everyone's kites while looking for solutions for ours or look at the negative criteria of others so as not to reproduce the same mistakes.

"IT DIDN'T WORK AT ALL, BUT I GAINED
A LOT OF INFORMATION FROM IT"



We know you've been hard at work on the development of the TRIGGER, the big air weapon in the lineup. Rumour has it that a V2 is coming out very soon; what can you tell us about the V2?

Indeed, the TRIGGER V2 will be released at the end of the year. We have improved many points on this version, such as lift, speed of loops, and a better recovery after kite loops. We have also gained in stability and high range. We also put the HITEX material from the new wings on this kite in order to gain rigidity on the leading edge.



NOBILE
COLLECTION
inspired by ocean

PHOTO: @shred_bus
RIDER: @janekkorycki

NOBILEKITEBOARDING.COM

Can you share any stories from the design journey so far with the TRIGGER V2? Any big wins or big challenges that you have been able to overcome?

My first prototype was disastrous; it didn't work at all, but I gained a lot of information from it, which allowed me to learn much more than when prototypes work well straight away. Missing this first sail taught me that even with a sail that does not meet our expectations, it has good points and plenty of information to create our next prototypes. I think that in research, there is no victory or defeat.

What are you most excited about for the release of this kite?

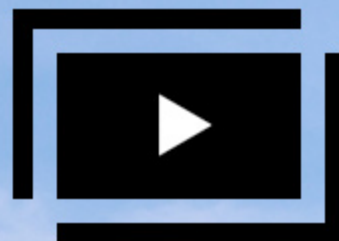
What motivates me the most in the release of this kite is that it is the first sail that I have developed, and I really want to show F-ONE and the riders that I have developed a product that will please everyone and on which pro riders will be able to perform in competition.

What other products and projects are coming up with F-ONE over the next several months that you are stoked to be involved in?

For the moment, I am focused on the development of the TRIGGER V2, and we will have the product released in the next few months. I would like the team to like this kite so they can trust me by giving me more models to develop next year. I also have many competitions coming up and I would like to perform with this new kite in order to show its capabilities.



"I WOULD LIKE THE TEAM TO LIKE THIS KITE SO THEY CAN TRUST ME BY GIVING ME MORE MODELS TO DEVELOP NEXT YEAR."



QUESTIONS CRYSTAL VENESS

TECH FOCUS

ELEVEIGHT RS+ V2 AND CS AUTO V1 BAR

Q&A with Robert Bratz

Innovation and technology are at the front and centre of Eleveight's latest release, with a new update to their RS+ and an all-new control bar dropping! In this Q&A, we catch up with their design team to learn about these premium products!





**" THE NEW DEEPER PROFILE ALSO
ALLOWS FOR AN EASILY ACCESSIBLE
AND BETTER LOW END "**

Last year, the RS+ made a splash with premium materials and top performance in the hands of Arthur Guillebert and the Eleveight Pro team. What's new with the RS+ V2?


Absolutely, our team performed very well on the new RS+, and we worked closely with them to gain their valid feedback for the new development of version 2.

The RS+ V2 has many incremental changes with general improvements in the low end and very predictable handling. More specifically, we changed the following parameters to include a more conical leading edge with increased diameter in the centre and thinner tips. This relocates the twist further outwards and allows for a more precise turn that exactly follows the rider's input. The wingtip sweep has been further adjusted for a linear load input when turning. These two changes harmonise the turn characteristic throughout the wind range and contribute to the overall impressive predictability of the RS+.

The bridle geometry has also been adjusted to the new leading edge diameter and shape to reduce the bar pressure while maintaining direct feedback. The new deeper profile also allows for an easily accessible and better low end with a more stable kite position in the wind window.

Are there differences between the shape and design of the latest model in the RS range versus the RS+ range?

The core DNA of the RS+ V2 is similar to our RS V8. Both models are high-performance freeride kites with a three-strut frame construction. The main difference is in the inflatable structure. The RS+ uses Dynea Tex for the Leading edge and XT light for the struts.



"THE RS+ IS MUCH LIGHTER, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE FLIGHT CHARACTERISTICS ARE MORE DYNAMIC WITH AN ULTRA-DIRECT FEEL."

The different material composition also requires some shape differences to distribute the load more efficiently. As a result, the RS+ is much lighter, but more importantly, the flight characteristics are more dynamic with an ultra-direct feel.

The RS+ V2 uses the exclusive Dynea Tex material. What are the performance benefits of this material, and what made it the clear choice for the RS+?

Dynea Tex is a highly specialised fabric engineered without compromise. While 32 times stronger than traditional Dacron, it's also 30% lighter, stiffer and

more precise than other standard materials used in inflatable kites.

Utilising the strength of Dyneema kite lines, we've taken the same Ultra PE Fibres and woven them into a lightweight fabric to give the optimum balance between responsiveness and long-term performance.

Dynea Tex's high structural stiffness has less deformation and, therefore, increased efficiency. The form stability under load has been enhanced by 80%, allowing the rider easier power development that's direct and responsive.

The beneficial character is also clearly shown in the weight reduction. Decreasing the weight extends the wind range, allowing you to get out in lighter wind and handle stronger gusts due to improved load-bearing capabilities.

Durability has always been a key component of Eleveight designs. What reinforcements have been included in this kite to help it withstand the elements?

For our whole Eleveight kite lineup, we use the same construction methods with quality and durability as key elements in our production process.



**" DYNEA TEX OFFERS THE OPTIMUM
BALANCE BETWEEN RESPONSIVENESS
AND LONG-TERM PERFORMANCE. "**

Aside from our prime materials, X4 ripstop, Dynea Tex and XT Light, we pay special attention to our Double Bond Canopy, where every seam is glued and stitched for maximum durability. We also use a triple-reinforced closing seam along the leading edge to make it practically indestructible. The centre segments have stronger reinforcements as the material load is much higher compared to the smaller diameter of the wingtips.

Our Ultra-Light Load Diffuser provides angled reinforcements along the trailing edge to diffuse the load and strain on the canopy, making it more durable while improving kite stability and longevity.

The 2 Step Force Transition helps with the load transition between the inflatable frame structure and the ripstop material, which is optimised for improved stability and durability. An extra layer of double ripstop also sits between the inflatable structure and the X4 ripstop to protect the load. Finally, we use additional leading-edge TPU reinforcements for further protection against wear and tear.

How does this kite balance lightweight materials with durable construction?

The advantages of most lighter materials are not only based on weight. In the case of Dynea Tex, we also have a significant improvement in structural stiffness,

which leads to less deformation and a much higher recovery of the material under load. In other words, we could also say that the durability is much better, and Dynea Tex offers the optimum balance between responsiveness and long-term performance.

The base RS model is more progression/freeride focused, while the RS+ version is oriented towards performance freeride, freestyle, and big air. What is it about the construction and shape that lends to this change in performance?

Our RS is a performance freerider with a great versatile character. The RS+ V2 is like a top-performing racing car that's light, direct and powerful.



" AS SOON AS YOU LOOP THE KITE, THE SQUARE DEPOWER SYSTEM TURNS AND SIMULTANEOUSLY UNTWISTS YOUR FRONT LINES "



To achieve this performance, the key element is in the stiffer frame structure and the use of Dynea Tex. But the secret is not only in the different materials but also in the adapted shape of the leading edge and the struts. A thinner profile makes the flying characteristic more agile, with very direct feedback and dynamic handling.

You've just released the new CS Auto Bar! The first thing we notice with this bar is the sleek depower system. Can you tell us more about this design and how it works?

Our focus in the development process was to create an intuitive performance control system. The CS Auto bar reflects our efforts by seamlessly blending simplicity with functionality, complete with intuitive controls and safety features.

The core feature is the auto swivel function, which untwists your front lines automatically, made possible by two key elements in the design. The square-shaped dual cavity tube houses both the depower and the safety lines, keeping them separated within the clean, unified system. As soon as you loop the kite, the square depower system turns and simultaneously untwists your front lines, meaning you no longer need to rotate the bar to untwist your backlines! We used a ceramic ball-bearing system in the swivel, so the rotation is friction-free, and the untwist is worry-free.

Let's discuss the lines, a hot topic amongst kitesurfers looking for longevity and safety in their bars. What lines are used with the CS Auto Bar?

We make no compromise on the quality of the lines. We use the highest level thermo-coated Dyneema lines made in Germany. The SK99 lines have minimum stretch and withstand the highest break load between 350 and 400 kg.

The Quick-Matic II is a click-in quick-release system. What improvements does the V2 have over the previous V1?

Our innovative Quick-Matic II safety system features an updated inner body to make assembling even easier. The low release resistance allows you to ditch the kite even with high tension on the lines. To reassemble the system, simply click the chicken loop back into place and go!

Eleveight has two key principles: Safety by Simplicity and Performance by Design. What safety and performance benefits do the critical design features of the CS Auto Bar offer?

The bar is our cockpit, and we want to have it as clean as possible so that the rider has no need to think and can simply enjoy the ride. The auto untwist function has a huge performance benefit as the rider has seamless control without worrying about twisted lines and keeps your kite in the correct setup at all times.

Our ergonomic EVA grip also offers more comfort and grip that prevents fatigue in your hands and forearms. The high-quality SK99 lines are stretch-resistant, with a high break load and long-lasting performance.

On the safety side, we stick to the single front-line safety, as once released, the kite will automatically flag out on a single front line. The kite will gently fall from the sky, providing instant loss of power while protecting the construction. The Quick Matic II is a very intuitive system with a low release resistance. The reassembling is simple by clicking back in the chicken loop.

"WE WANT TO HAVE IT AS CLEAN AS POSSIBLE SO THAT THE RIDER HAS NO NEED TO THINK AND CAN SIMPLY ENJOY THE RIDE."





WORDS ELIAS OUAHMID PHOTOS MITCHELL DOYLE MARKGRAAFF

What awaits the Airush Team on the island paradise of Mauritius? Join Elias Ouahmid as he takes us behind the scenes of the shoot, exploring unique spots and riding in the perilous waves of One Eye. Read about their epic adventure in this exclusive article!

MISADVENTURES IN MAURITIUS



“IT WAS JUST STUNNING, AND I COULD NOT WAIT TO GET IN THE WATER AND EXPERIENCE MAURITIUS WITH MY KITE.”

Mauritius has been on our minds for years, but to make the plan a reality was something of a challenge. It was a struggle to find the right time when I (Elias Ouahmid), Ozzie (Oswald Smith), Victor Hays, and photographer Mitchell Doyle Markgraaff could all be available. But we finally got the whole crew together a few months ago, and it was well worth the wait!

The team arrived a few days before I could fly in and were already shooting while I was sitting at the airport waiting for them to pick me up. I ended up taking an Uber to the famous kite spot of Le Morne. I was excited but, at the same time, nervous because I had never been to that spot before. What would I expect? Where do I need to go? Will it be dangerous? Once I got there – it was just stunning, and I could not wait to get in the water and experience Mauritius with my kite.

I met the rest of the crew at our rental house, and we started planning the next day immediately. We planned an early bird session to capture that glorious morning light. We chose a spot close to the airport because the AK Durable Supply Co product designer, Craig Tompkins, needed to fly back at the end of the first session. With the time constraint, we struggled to get permission to fly the drone and set up our kite gear, but gladly, it all worked out.

Early that next morning, we found ourselves in a small five-seater truck with local photographer Louis Arnaud Lavasier. Six full-grown men really do not fit in a small truck, especially with all of our kite gear,



camera equipment, and luggage! But we somehow made it work, and the morning drive was so much fun!

When we arrived at the beach, we started shooting kite foiling first. After that first session, we dropped Craig off at the airport and went back to shooting to capture more pictures of kite foiling and freeride. We spent the whole day at that spot, shooting until late before driving home in the dark.

**"WE SOMEHOW
MADE IT WORK,
AND THE MORNING
DRIVE WAS SO
MUCH FUN!"**

POWER UP!

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CARBON GLASS SERIES

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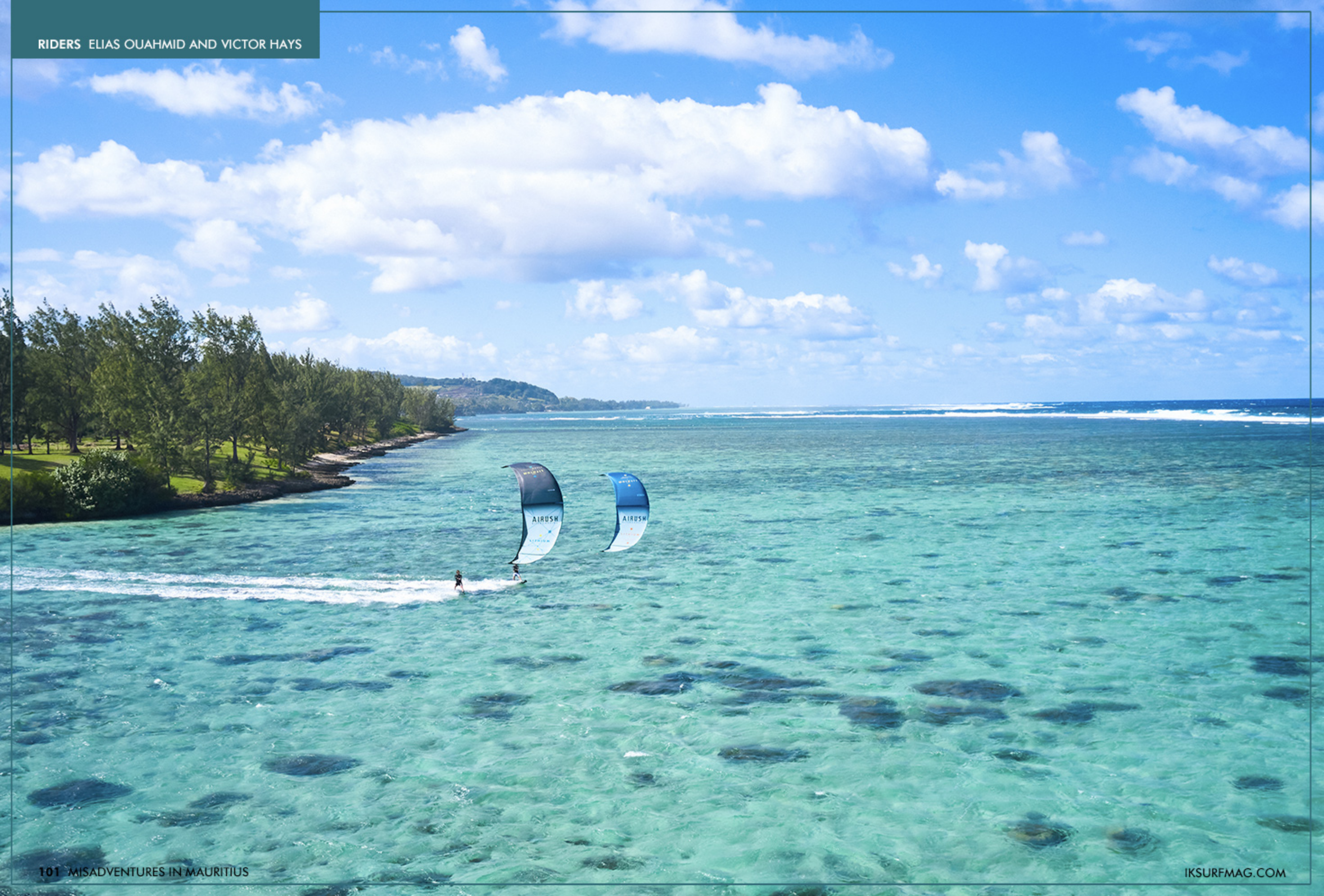
“WE CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF A BEAUTIFUL PIECE OF WATER WITH A LITTLE ISLAND IN THE MIDDLE AND MANGROVES EVERYWHERE.”

The next day, we discussed our options and made a call to travel to the northeast of the island, which was a two-and-a-half-hour drive. I was quite surprised at how long it took us to get from one place to another – this little island is actually quite big! Once we hit the coast road, we started scouting for

spots along the way, looking for that perfect spot to shoot. Suddenly, we caught a glimpse of a beautiful piece of water with a little island in the middle and mangroves everywhere. We knew, without a doubt, that this was the spot. During midday, Victor wanted to shoot some freeride action a few kilometres down the road. Ozzie used this opportunity to go for a session on his freestyle board, and I chose to go on the wing first and then later went on the freeride gear so we could shoot the Lithium and Lithium Team.

We had an extensive list of shots to get, and we tried to tick off each shot one by one and be as fast as possible. Once we finished the last shot, which was the campaign shot for the freeride range, we threw the gear in the vehicle as quickly as possible, jumped in the truck with our wetsuits on, and drove back to the first spot because the sun was about to set, and Ozzie was frothing to get shots of kiting in the mangroves during sunset.

The wind started dropping as we arrived back at the spot, but Ozzie and I gave it a try. I went on the wing foil gear, and Ozzie was on the freeride setup.





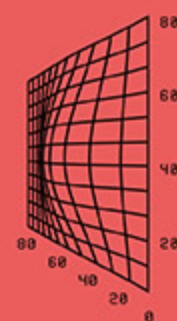
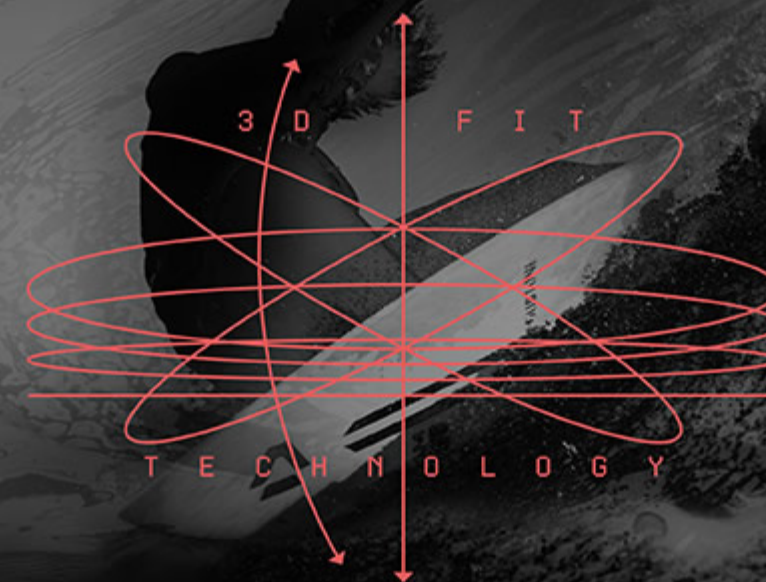
Everything happened so fast, and, as is often the case when you're rushing, everything seems to go wrong. We dropped the drone in the mangroves, and I crashed onto the reef on my way back to the beach and had cuts all over my body. But... It was worth it because the shots turned out so beautifully!

We'd already had a few big days of shooting, but, luckily, the next day began much more relaxed. We went for a midday session at Le Morne, quite close to where we were based during our time in Mauritius. The forecast for the next three days looked epic, so we focused on shooting flatwater action first, followed by waves.

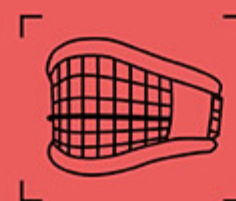
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RIOT CURV

SURFING ELEMENTS



“ IT WAS MY FIRST TIME RIDING OUT THROUGH THE CHANNEL AND AWAY FROM THE PROTECTED INNER REEF. ”

I felt like I had to improve my riding first because I am not used to going foiling in waves. I went out on the Lithium to get some training in, and had a lot of fun. The waves and the wind were ideal, and we were able to fill up the memory cards with even more beautiful pictures.

The next day, we knew it was all about waves. If you haven't been to Le Morne, you should know that the wave is quite a distance from the beach, behind the reef, and getting good shots there requires a boat or an extremely long lens. Luckily, we had both.

Mitchell met up with the boat driver to head out to the wave with the cameras, Louis was set up on the beach, and we had a second person there to fly the drone so we were covered from all angles.

Manawa, a perfect, rolling left-hand wave, was big! I have a huge respect for wave riders as it is, but I was a bit nervous when they sent me out on the wing foil gear! It was my first time riding out through the channel and away from the protected inner reef. I was surprised by how big the waves were once I got closer. I started on the shoulder and worked my way into the wave. At the end of the day, I started getting more comfortable, and I was glad to be riding the new foils because I felt in control in the tricky conditions.

We even went down to One Eye on wing gear, and it was amazing to watch the other riders that close. While I was riding my first wave on One Eye, I saw the boat struggling with their engine.

RIDER OSWALD SMITH







The boat had been quite close to the reef in the beginning, but the wind was strong enough to push them out to the open ocean. Mitchell started to panic, and he packed his SD cards into a waterproof case and contemplated jumping off the boat before it could get rolled into the reef by a wave. Just before he jumped, the boat started working again, and they went straight back to the beach.

“ THE WIND WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO PUSH THEM OUT TO THE OPEN OCEAN. ”

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“ I COULDN'T RIDE BACK UPWIND, SO I JUST SAT THERE, UNSURE WHAT TO DO, STUCK BETWEEN THE REEF AND THE HUGE WAVES AT ONE EYE. ”

Returning to the beach on our kites and wings to meet the camera crew, we were all a bit freaked out - it was an intense situation and could have been really dangerous! But, we were also disappointed that we had to cut the session short and miss out on some epic shots.

We took a few minutes to catch our breaths and get calm again before continuing the shoot - closer to the beach, this time!

The next day, we went back to Le Morne to get some kite foiling shots. I crashed and lost my watch on my third wave, so the bad luck from the day before continued, but we made the best of it and worked to stay in the moment, and began to really enjoy every session and every wave.

We had a lot of unforgettable sessions the

next few days. I learned how to wave ride with Ozzie in a fun session on our kites, and I thought it would be a great idea to swap gear so I could test the Session Team and see how he shreds my kite, the Ultra. Using Ozzie's gear, unfortunately, didn't come with his massive experience in wave riding, and I ended up being pushed behind the reef by the current. I couldn't ride back upwind, so I just sat there, unsure what to do, stuck between the reef and the huge waves at One Eye. I got smashed multiple times, and realised I had no choice but to ride over the reef to get out of the impact zone.

"MAURITIUS IS A PARADISE, BUT OUT BEYOND THE REEF, YOU ARE AT THE MERCY OF THE ELEMENTS."

Back at the beach, I met some friends who had also gone out to shoot at One Eye. They both came back that day without any gear. At that point, I considered myself very lucky that I'd lost only a single fin and a bit of pride!

We caught up with local hero Willow-River Tonkin at 5:00 the next morning for an early surf session before the wind kicked in. I suck at surfing, but Willow arranged a surfboard for me and took us out to One Eye, where I paddled out to meet Ozzie and Louis. Sitting on the surfboard, watching the waves, and getting smashed on every single takeoff I attempted was a great way to end the trip. I kissed the reef and paddled back in with a fresh cut on my leg, another scar to commemorate the trip on my last day in paradise!

We looked back on our trip as we relaxed on the beach and waited for our gear to dry. Mauritius is a paradise, but out beyond the reef, you are at the mercy of the elements. Despite the bad luck and stressful moments, this was one of the best trips of my life, and I can't wait to go back!



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THE INTERVIEW

NILS FREI

QUESTIONS CRYSTAL VENESS

In this edition of The Interview, we get to know professional sailor and America's Cup race winner Nils Frei! Find out all about his day job, why he loves kiting, and what happened when pro kiter Maxime Chabloz took to the race course with the Alinghi Red Bull Racing Team in Barcelona!

" IT'S ALWAYS BEEN FASCINATING TO FOLLOW THE DEVELOPMENT OF KITE FOILING IN MANY ASPECTS "



NILS FREI, HEAD COACH OF ALINGHI RED BULL RACING
PHOTO SAMO VIDIC, RED BULL CONTENT POOL



Nils, thank you for joining us for The Interview! With the Formula Kite World Champions being crowned a couple of weeks ago and the 2024 Olympics on the horizon, hydrofoil racing has become one of the most competitive disciplines in kiting today. As a 2x America's Cup winner and an avid kitesurfer yourself, are you a fan of the racing disciplines in kitesurfing?

Yes, it's super exciting. I've been following kite foiling for a while, and the evolution with the foils and sails is quite impressive since it's for the Olympics. The speeds these guys are achieving are very impressive - they're actually not that far from what we're doing with the America's Cup. It is not as fast but still very impressive, especially in the light wind. It's always been fascinating to follow the development of kite foiling in many aspects as they've been a bit more advanced in how they design the sails and foils. It's great to see.

What is your preferred kitesurfing discipline when you're going for a session? How often do you have time to get on the water?

I'm getting older, so I'm getting less into jumps and mainly doing kite foiling. I'm not racing, just foiling up and down, cruising on the lakes in Switzerland. It's good with the foil because you can go out in very light wind, which I like the most. Growing up in Switzerland, you are used to needing a lot of wind for kiting. Now, with the foil, you can double or triple the amount of sessions you can have. It's also good in the waves here in the Mediterranean; you can ride anywhere with the foil.



NILS FREI (HEAD COACH) AND NICOLAS CHARBONNIER (DRIVING GROUP)
 PHOTO SAMO VIDIC, ALINGHI RED BULL RACING



"WE HAVE A LOT OF YOUNG, TALENTED SAILORS, AND MOST GREW UP SAILING WITH THE FOILING GENERATION BOATS."

What is your go-to setup for kite equipment, and why?

I have kite gear from Gin Kites, a Swiss brand I've been following since the beginning. I like them and how they have developed their equipment. I'm using their inflatable kites, but also some ram air kites, which they have developed for Olympic racing - but not their latest developments, which are more race-focused and less tolerant. For me, the easy version is good enough!

You've been in competitive sailing sports for over 30 years! What has been your most exciting achievement over your years of competing?

It's definitely the America's Cup victories, especially the first one in 2003. It was kind of unexpected, as we had just started there as a fresh team. Of course, we had high expectations, but to come back and bring the Cup back to Europe was an amazing thing to achieve. That is something I will always remember, and, for me, it's the most important achievement in my sailing career.

Today, you are the Head Coach of the Alinghi Red Bull Racing Team, who you raced with for their 2003 and 2007 America's Cup victories. Do you believe the team has what it takes to win the 2024 America's Cup?

Yes, absolutely. We have a lot of young, talented sailors, and most grew up sailing with the foiling generation boats. They've been competing successfully in modern classes such as the GC32 and the TF35. These are good boats to get experience for the kind of racing we have today, and we have very good people on the sailing team. We have a very experienced design team as well, which is important to have a fast boat. I think we have the ingredients, but we missed the last Cup cycle, so we have a lot of catching up to do, but I think we're on the right path.

What does your role as a Head Coach on the team entail?

It's more about coordinating things in the sailing team and with the other departments to ensure we have the same priorities and the right programme at the right time. There are always a lot of things to do between racing, testing, and the simulator, and you never have time to do it all, so you need to identify the priorities. Trying to know the right thing to do at the right time is one of the biggest challenges, so, for me, it is more of a coordinating job than anything else.

How has the inclusion of foils on the America's Cup yachts changed things?

With the foil, the boats are going quite a bit faster. Also, the apparent wind angles are very different, so you won't see any more downwind sails like the gennakers or spinnakers that we had in the past. The wind always comes from the front because we're going so fast, and the sail shape has also completely changed with these new speeds. Now, the boats are getting more and more manoeuvrable, so you always see the boat stay on the foils in the tacks and jibes. The manoeuvres are less costly today than a couple of years ago, bringing match racing back into the game. I think we'll see a lot of pre-start manoeuvring and a lot of circles in the pre-start phases, and I think our teamwork will be very important, too.

PHOTO SAMO VIDIC, ALINGHI, RED BULL RACING



“ TRYING TO KNOW THE RIGHT THING TO DO AT THE RIGHT TIME IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES ”



Do you see many similarities between these foils and kitesurfing foils?

In some ways, but they're not the same size and don't behave exactly the same. There are flaps on the big boat foils, and no flaps on the smaller kite foils where your weight makes a bigger difference. But, in the shape and aspect ratio, and maybe also the flex, you can see some similarities in the way that both types of foils behave in the water. Even though the AC40 and AC75 are much larger than a kitefoil board, they share many similarities. We are constantly seeking the best foil shapes for takeoffs, optimising aspect ratio profiles, and enhancing water piercing ability, among other things. Both disciplines are fascinating and evolving rapidly.

"YOU CAN SEE SOME SIMILARITIES IN THE WAY THAT BOTH TYPES OF FOILS BEHAVE IN THE WATER."

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"WE TALK ANGLES AND BEST ANGLES TO THE WIND, SO IT'S BASICALLY THE SAME SPORT."



Rumour has it that the Alinghi Red Bull Racing Team has several kitesurfers and wing foilers! Is there a lot of crossover between these two sports?

Yes, of course, it's sailing, and we play with the wind. We talk angles and best angles to the wind, so it's basically the same sport. In one, you're sitting on a boat, and in the other, you're standing on the board, but you're trying to be as efficient as possible, so it's very similar!

Professional kiter Maxime Chabloz recently joined the team in Barcelona for some laps around the America's Cup racecourse! What was that experience like for the team?

It was great because he's quite famous in Switzerland. He's not only a super good kiter, but he is a super good skier, and he's very well known for that in Switzerland. He was named the Swiss Junior-Sailor of the Year in 2017 and 2018, and I think at that stage, some of the sailors became aware of him. Since then, he's been in quite a lot of sailing and kitesurfing magazines, which everybody likes to read. It was really nice to have him with us for a couple of days.

Maxime hit speeds of 25 knots on his F-ONE freeride foil setup, while the AC40 (the training yacht for the America's Cup) nearly doubled that speed. How competitive do you think the race might have been with Maxime on a Formula Kite setup?!

It's hard to say. He didn't have the racing gear, but it was still good to see him going so fast. Compared to the modern America's Cup boats, there is for sure a gap; he probably could have gone 5-7 knots faster with the racing gear, but still not achieved the speeds of the AC40. It's true that our machines today are very fast!



"YOU COULD SEE THESE BOATS' PURE ENERGY AND SPEED, AND IT'S JUST UNBELIEVABLE."



THE TEAM AT ALINGHI RED BULL RACING
PHOTO SAMO VIDIC, ALINGHI RED BULL RACING

Of course, we have to get Maxime Chablot's take on his visit to Barcelona! Maxime, what was it like sharing the water with an America's Cup boat? Do you think a professional foil racer could keep up?

Maxime: Sharing the water with the team and the America's Cup boat was super impressive. It was really, really incredible to see those boats going that fast. You could see these boats' pure energy and speed, and it's just unbelievable.

Although I wasn't on the fastest foil on the market and riding a tube kite and not a racing foil kite, I actually could ride pretty fast next to the boat. I'm sure the fastest kite foiler in the world could maybe match the top speed or at least keep up with the boat for a little while. Where I think there is a huge difference is that a kite foiler might be able to go at that speed for 30-60 seconds, whereas the America's Cup boat could probably fly for an hour at 40 knots and just keep on going and cover a lot of distance.

Last question, Nils! Many kites will be tuning in to see our sport on the big screen in the 2024 Olympics. If they enjoy watching kite racing, they will certainly appreciate watching the 37th America's Cup, scheduled for between August and October 2024. Could you give us a quick introduction to how an America's Cup race works for those who plan to tune in for the first time next year?

Nils: In America's Cup racing, the base of the race is still match racing. So, it's one versus one,

and they are pretty short races of maybe 20-25 minutes. It's going to be quite intense. A lot of things are happening in the pre-start phase where the boats try to position themselves as well as possible in relation to the wind for the next move, and then it's a bit like a chess game, and I think it's very fascinating to follow. It's not too long, it's intense, and it's an excellent spectacle. In Barcelona, the racing is close to the shore, so even from the beach, you can follow what's happening out there.

Click [here](#) to watch the video of Maxime Chabloz's visit to the Alinghi Red Bull Racing Team and don't miss the 2024 America's Cup!



RIDER MAXIME CHABLOZ
PHOTO JOERG MITTER, RED BULL CONTENT POOL



" IT'S NOT TOO LONG, IT'S INTENSE,
AND IT'S AN EXCELLENT SPECTACLE. "

" IF THEY ENJOY WATCHING KITE
RACING, THEY WILL CERTAINLY ENJOY
WATCHING THE 37TH AMERICA'S CUP "



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This month, we're excited to bring you Part 2 of our Learning to Loop series. Hopefully you've had plenty of time to practise, and you've got the downloop slide turn in the bag. Next on your journey of all things loop is the toe to heel downloop carve. It follows on perfectly from the last instalment, and as well as bringing a bona fide move in its own right, it's also a fantastic way to continue practising and gaining confidence with loops.

Then we're catching up with our old friend the Ole. It feels just so good and is such a wonderful way to come out of a blind. This time round, it's the icing on the cake following a toe side pop to blind. We're sure you'll agree, it is well worth the effort. Have fun, C&K.

New 2023 clinic calendar up on:
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1 / LEARNING TO LOOP #2



CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE

2 / TOESIDE POP TO BLIND WITH OLE



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LEARNING TO LOOP #2 ▶

TOE TO HEEL CARVE WITH DOWN LOOP

Cabrinha MotoX 8m

Cabrinha XO 133

If you've joined the ranks of under-turners and downloopers from our Learning to Loop #1, it's time to build more confidence, practise more, get more comfortable, and while you're at it, add another string to your bow. This time around, it's a veritable killer combo. Your mission, should you choose to accept, is to marry a toe to heel carve with your new best friend, the downloop.

We're starting with the toe to heel for a number of reasons. The toe to heel is the logical follow-on and extension of a slide turn. As such, it's the more intuitive carve. It's likely the first carve you learnt, perhaps even by chance, when a toeside attempt didn't quite go to plan. It's quite natural to relax your edge, flatten your board and start the carve from toeside. The real beauty of a toe to heel and the reason why it fits so well with your downloop is that you exit heelside. Should the kite pull more than expected, you'll be in a strong position to control it, finish your carve and ride out.

As you already have the know-how on the mechanics of the loop and practise with the slide turn, we'll be looking at the intricacies to make this a most smooth and satisfying transition.

When to loop? The downloop is all about timing; when to pull the trigger. The answer remains the same, both when you have less resistance from your edge and when you're in a strong position ready for the pull.



Kite Position. Rule number three from the last video still applies, and here it's pretty much identical to the slide turn. Your kite needs to be high, but it can't be at 12 because you're riding. You'll approach with your kite around the 11 or 1 o'clock mark.

Right, let's have a look at the finer points...

APPROACH & CHECK PIC A

To get yourself ready, you need to be on a good toeside edge. This way, you'll be in control of your board and your kite. Regardless of where you have your kite, pre-carve, you want to position it around the 11 or 1 o'clock mark. This way, the kite is high enough to downloop, whilst you'll still be able to edge. You also need to have your bar trimmed in



sufficiently that you can reach it with both hands. Before you do anything else, check that the coast is clear and that you've got enough space downwind. Once you're ready, you'll want to slow down a touch so that you're not rushed. Ease the bar out a little to control your speed. Here, Karine is on a good edge, weight centred and riding upwind. Her kite is at 1 o'clock, and bar is trimmed close even though she is riding with one hand. She's had a good look in her mirrors and has eased her bar out a touch to slow down.

KITE UP & RELAX PIC B

Now that you know there's space and you've slowed down a little, it's time to get the ball rolling. First thing is to get your front hand on the bar (if it isn't already),



as you're really going to need it for the downloop. As you reach for the bar, the kite will likely pull you up slightly over the board, which is no bad thing as it will relax your edge. In the early stages, once you've got both hands on the bar, you can then drift the kite up a tad higher to give yourself more room for the downloop. This will also help lift you over the board in preparation for your carve. In the photo, you can see that Karine has reached her front hand onto the bar and has drifted her kite up. This has brought her weight up over the board and relaxed her edge.

FLATTEN BOARD PIC C

To initiate the carve, your first job is to flatten your board. Rather than trying to get immediately from



one edge to the other, think of it as transitioning from your toe edge, over a flat board, before rolling onto your heels. This way, you'll have time to think. However, don't confuse flattening your board with turning it off the wind. Keep your weight centred and your hips facing forward. Karine has let the kite pull her up over the board and off her edge, flattening her board whilst maintaining the same body position.

CARVE PIC D

To get the board carving, sit back over your trailing foot. This will put weight onto the tail of the board and onto your heels. The curvy tail will steer your board into the carve. This doesn't have to be aggressive. As long as you weight your rear heel,



the board will turn. Look at your kite. This will turn your head, shoulders and hips so that you go with the board as it turns towards the kite. You can see that Karine has dropped her weight back over the tail of her board, bending her back leg and sitting onto her heels. Watching her kite encourages her to turn and face where the board is going.

THE FULL MONTY PIC E

The moment you've been waiting for. With the board carving downwind, you now have no edge and less tension. You also will have your weight back over the tail of the board, so you're in a strong position that will make the board turn and from which you can take some power. In short, you're ready!



It's time to loop. You know the score, exactly as you did for the slide turn, a committed pull with your front hand and push with your back hand to initiate the downloop, keeping your bar on the sweet spot. Karine has her weight back and is in a strong position, effectively the position that she will ride out in. She's got her eyes on the prize, watching her kite as she gives it the beans on the bar.

LOCK IN PIC F

Just as before, once your kite starts its downloop, you need to stay 200% committed. Keep the bar exactly where it is to keep the kite turning. Resist the temptation to dump power as the kite pulls and watch



the kite so that you know where it is and so that you can follow the pull. Your position on the board is already set, so as the kite pulls, you're able to keep your weight back and on your heels and as such the board will continue to carve. Karine is watching her kite, with her bar still giving it the full Monty whilst she carves with her weight back. Perfect!

KEEP WATCHING PIC G

As your kite comes through the loop, it will continue to generate power. Keep your eyes on it whilst turning your head to look where you want to go. The kite should be leading you out. Stay committed and keep your weight low and back to continue carving.



Karine is doing just that.

LEVEL PIC H

Following your slide turn practice, you should now have a better feel for the timing and position of when to level your bar so that the kite doesn't fly all the way back up to 12 o'clock, but rather pulls you forward in the new direction. The same applies here. As you carve around watching your kite, aim to finish your downloop by levelling your bar. If you get the timing right, you'll keep the kite flying forward so that you turn your head to look upwind, sheet out a touch to let the kite breathe, and fly to the edge of the window and then turn yourself and the board back onto your upwind edge.



You can see by her kite lines that Karine has not turned her kite all the way back up. She's levelled her bar as the kite starts to rise out of the downloop, she's looking upwind where she wants to go, and she's sheeted the bar out to get the kite flying forward. Job done. Remember, there's no rush; once you're settled, in control and comfortable, you can untwist your lines.

TOP TIPS

For your first few attempts, concentrate on getting the kite high and making sure that you flatten the board off to get rid of your edge.

It's easy to be so concentrated on the kite that you forget to carve and thus get way more power than may be considered appropriate. So, take your time, flatten, breathe, drop your weight and only then pull the trigger on the downloop.

Do make sure that you have plenty of space when you try this. You need room to fail as well as succeed,

so don't try this too close to anyone or anything.

You can learn this with very little power in the kite, which is preferable to both you and the kite for your first few goes.

Now, have a look at the sequence for the full run-through and check out the video...

COMMON PROBLEMS

If you find that you're getting pulled violently as the kite starts to loop, chances are that you haven't flattened the board. If you're off your edge, you won't have much resistance, and therefore, the kite won't pull too aggressively, and you'll go with it. If you're still edging against it, you'll be in for a surprise. The same applies if you loop too late! If you carve around onto your heels and then loop, you'll be edging against it.

Crashing the kite. With the kite high, the bar movement is more intuitive; however, as the kite turns, it is easy to twist your arms, try and follow the

kite with the bar and lose yourself. Remember to lock yourself in the initial push/pull position until you feel the power in the kite subside as it heads back up.

KEYSTONES

- Edge in
- Kite high and flatten the board
- Drop weight back over the rear foot and lower bottom to carve on heels
- The full push-pull, look where you want to go
- Finish turn onto heelside edge and let kite breathe



TOESIDE POP TO BLIND WITH OLE ▶

Cabrinha MotoX 8m Cabrinha Ace Hybrid 138

Back in Issue 96, we introduced you to the pop to blind with a cheeky Ole. Justifiably, we're sure you'll now agree, claiming that it feels oh so amazingly good! Well, as we often do, we'll discourage you from resting on your laurels and follow it up with this variation: the toeside pop to blind with an equally cheeky Ole. And yes, it will feel comparably delicious! There are two potential hurdles between you and this move. The first is popping from toeside, whilst the second is which side you should try it.

We'll have a look at the popping, but rest assured, the good news is that you don't need big pop or much air between the water and your board to get around to blind.

As for which side? For some, your stronger toeside and your blind will be on opposite tacks. Will you pop off your weak toeside to land on your good blind with a solid Ole already in the bag? Or would you prefer to pop off your strong toeside and gun for a new blind and Ole? This is a choice you can make or an experiment to try. Our preference is to pop off your stronger toeside and go for a new blind.

Let's start off by looking at the crucial moments, kicking off with how to pop from toeside, before moving onto the blind and a little Ole recap.

APPROACH THEN RELAX PIC A

Your approach toeside position is vital to your success. You don't want to be too powered as it will hinder



You don't want to be too powered as it will hinder both your pop and your Ole. Approach with your bar trimmed in enough that you can set up and gain speed using two hands, with your kite around 11 or 1 o'clock. You can then release your front hand, which will help face your chest and hips forwards. Keep your shoulders up, your weight committed upwind, and hips/weight centred so you can apply pressure against your edge with both feet. This not only allows you to set up but gives you the base from which to carve and pop. Once on a comfortable edge, you can relax a little to soften your edge. With your edge relaxed, you can stay in position, keep your speed, but release some tension. Depending on how much you relax your edge, your board will change course to more



across the wind or slightly off the wind. It doesn't need to be much, just enough to take the pressure off. Christian's back hand is centred on the bar, he's looking forwards, chest and hips are open, facing the nose of the board, knees and feet twist forwards, as he flexes his ankles. He's relaxed his edge and is ready to pop.

THE CARVE PIC B

The reason you relax is so that you're ready to carve. You're going to carve into your take-off, and as with all things carving, it's about compressing. At first, your carve doesn't need to be anything radical. In fact, if you carve too hard, you'll end up with too much tension and pressure against your legs, and it'll be impossible to pop.



Your aim is to carve back onto your edge and drift the kite up a tad. To carve back onto your edge, you want to use as much of the board as possible. This means keeping weight on both feet. Just like a fine toeside, it all starts with your ankles, flexing them so that you can get your knees across and turn the board. Looking at Christian, he's dropped his weight, pushed his knees across the board, dropped his shoulders forwards, and, as such, the board turns up back onto all of its edge, whilst he drifts the kite up by pulling gently on his back hand. You don't want your kite to go all the

all the way to 12, but a little bit higher will make things easier at the other end.

TAKE OFF PIC C

To launch yourself, you use both legs. You will automatically detonate the front leg a fraction of a second before the back leg (because there will be a bit less weight on it) - the popping equivalent of a heartbeat. As your front leg extends, it throws your weight back onto your back foot and the tail of the board, which will enable you to stamp off your back leg with very little pressure against it.

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Once you've stamped, you can pull the bar in to help you up and keep balance. In the pic, you can see that Christian's front leg is extending. This suddenly pushes his weight back before he extends his back leg, popping himself up and off the water.

ALL HANDS ON DECK PIC D

As soon as you're leaving the water, you need to be untwisting back towards heelside and then blind. The great news is that once you set things in action, it's one continuous motion. The simplest way to get things moving is to get your free hand back on the bar. As you reach forward for the bar, it will automatically turn your shoulders. Your hips and knees will follow, and eventually, the board will too.



As you grab the bar with your free hand, it will place you in a more upright position over the board, which will help with your rotation to blind. In the photo, you can see that Christian has reached forward to grab the bar, and as a result, he's now upright and the board is turning.

HAND SWAP PIC E

Once your front hand is back on the bar, it won't hurt to give the bar a little tweak, just to get the kite moving slightly forward and away from 12 o'clock. The great thing is that by doing this, you'll grip the bar with your front hand. With a solid hold on the bar, you'll feel free to keep turning. You can see how Christian has lifted his back leg, he's turned his head



to look back and is twisting his shoulders away from the direction of travel. In short, he's committing to continue his rotation to blind. The one advantage you have from toeside is that you already have the momentum to help you continue.

TOUCH DOWN PIC F

Push your bar out! The singular most important thing to remember. When you dump power from your kite, you can stay upright and balanced and use your momentum. Keep your back leg up as you come around so that you land slightly "new" tail first. Just like the other Ole, the landing comes first; don't rush into the Ole, or you'll stick the nose in and/or fall back. Land your blind upright and over the board.



Note how he hasn't yet turned his shoulders or head; he's very much in an upright blind stance, still facing back from whence he came.

HEELS AND HEAD PIC G

Now, before getting overly excited and pushing your depower main line across your face, you must dump all line tension. The first and most obvious port of call is to push your bar up as far as possible, quite literally depowering your kite completely. The second is to turn your board downwind. With your weight already on your new back foot, you can flex your legs to drop your weight lower and onto your heels and turn your head and shoulders to look forward. This will encourage the board to carve towards the kite,



releasing even more tension. You can see that Christian is turning his head and shoulders, he's flexing his knees, and the board starts to carve downwind towards the kite. As a result, there's no hint of an edge, and all tension has been well and truly dumped.

OLE PIC H

Here we go, the cheeky Ole. With no tension in the lines, you can turn your head and shoulders further to look forwards and push the bar upwind and across in front of your face to Ole. Don't forget to say it! :) Christian is carving on his heels, his lines are loose, and he's turned his head and upper body and can therefore easily push the bar across without rubbing his nose.



END GAME PIC I

As soon as you've got the bar across, get yourself set up to head out toeside. Dive the kite to get some power back on and move your weight across and upwind of the board so that you can carve onto your toeside edge. Brilliant.

TOP TIPS

For a move like this, flat water will really help you learn, as you'll keep more momentum on landing. With flat water, you'll have more glide from blind, and therefore more time to Ole.

Make this less complicated by trying on the beach first without a board or a kite. Practice a little hop 360



with a virtual hand swap to convince your body that this is a possibility.

For your first attempts, you can start with your kite high. This will rob you of some momentum, but it will potentially make the action simpler.

And remember you don't need much height. Less height with more rotation speed is key.

Now check out the sequence for a step-by-step visual and then the video for a real-time experience.

COMMON PROBLEMS

If you are struggling to kick off from toeside, trim your kite. With too much power pulling against your back leg, it'll be hard.

Landing on an edge. If you're used to blind, this is your default, so it'll take some concentration and practice to override your muscle memory. Approaching with less edge and keeping your body upright will help.

Stuffing the nose in as you land. This is the classic and most common problem. It's a result of trying to rotate all the way around straight into your Ole. If you throw your upper body around, your weight will move forwards, et voila, you'll bury your nose. Land blind, dump tension and only then Ole.

If you're landing over the board but catch your heelside edge and fall downwind of the board. This means that you haven't depowered the kite enough post pop. Make sure you push the bar out, and if that's not

helping, try trimming a bit. Being overpowered will not make life easy.

KEYSTONES

1. Dynamic toeside approach
2. Relax and compress to pop
3. Hand swap to rotate
4. Bar out to land upright over the board
5. First drop weight, turn head and shoulders, then Ole



MOSTAFA ABBAS PUTS ON A SHOW AT THE WINDSEEKERS KITE FEST ON EGYPT'S RED SEA!
PHOTO NOT PERFECT MEDIA

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Would you like to help IKSURFMAG to continue to bring you the best in kite journalism from around the world? Perhaps you enjoy Christian and Karine's technique, or our independent tests, or maybe you love the travel guides? Support us, win awesome prizes, get free stickers and much more.

FREE
STICKERS!

BECOME A SUPPORTER

Follow the Rugged Coast is part of Prolimit's project 'Follow the Current', an innovative and educational initiative that aims to follow ocean currents to understand how they affect water temperature and climate. Prolimit's aim is not just to do photoshoots but to tell stories, educate their consumers and riders, and take them on a journey.

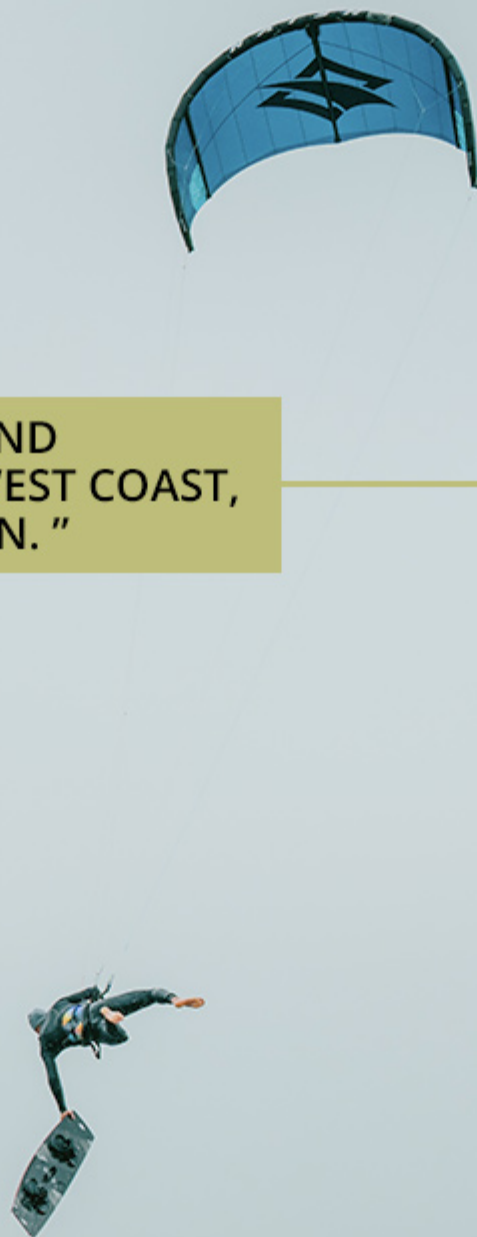
On the search for a location for their winter shoot, Prolimit's creative team scrolled through the world map to find a suitable spot...

FOLLOW THE RUGGED COAST

PROLIMIT MISSIONS



"WE ZOOMED IN ON IRELAND ON THE MAP AND PICKED ACHILL ISLAND, ALONG IRELAND'S WEST COAST, AS THE DESTINATION FOR OUR NEXT MISSION."



THE RUGGED COAST OF ACHILL ISLAND

When going over the world map and following the different ocean currents, one current in particular stood out, which has an impact on the climate close to our home base: the Gulf Stream. We followed the patterns and movement of the Gulf Stream, which transitions into the North Atlantic Drift once you get closer to the North of Europe. The North Atlantic drift runs along the coast of Ireland and is a powerful ocean current that carries warm water from the Gulf of Mexico northward. It plays an important role in determining the region's climate.

The Gulf Stream is regularly in the news these days. As the Gulf Stream weakens, Ireland is expected to face cooling while many other parts of the world warm up due to climate change. Interesting... we zoomed in on Ireland on the map and picked Achill Island, along Ireland's West Coast, as the destination for our next mission.

Achill Island has a unique geographical position, and the rugged cliffs and pristine beaches make it an unparalleled playground for water sports enthusiasts. Winter days on Achill Island range from mid-cold to cold temperatures, but the strong coastal winds make it feel a lot colder.

TIME TO EXPLORE ACHILL ISLAND AND GET THE SHOOT GOING

With the knowledge of Achill Island's allure and the dynamics of the Gulf Stream in mind, the crew and riders Stig Hoefnagel and Jeanne Vanderick gathered at Schiphol Airport. At Dublin Airport, we would meet with windsurfer Henri Kolberg. However, Henri's bags encountered an unexpected detour, getting stuck somewhere in Germany. Luckily, they would arrive the next day.

" REFLECTING ON OUR ADVENTURE,
OUR PROLIMIT MISSION WENT BEYOND
CAPTURING STUNNING VISUALS. "

After a four-hour drive, we arrived on Achill Island, eagerly anticipating the surprises the next morning would bring. We woke up to a stunning view of the tranquil lake, and despite encountering an angry farmer who disrupted our plans, we adapted and focused on capturing lifestyle shots for our winter collection.

BREATHTAKING LANDSCAPES AND RICH WATER WILDLIFE

The days unfolded with explorations of Achill Island's breathtaking landscapes, from the famous

White Cliffs to the secluded Mulrany spot recommended by Swiftie from Pure Magic Lodge. We witnessed the whimsical dance of dolphins and learned about the island's rich wildlife, including the possibility of spotting whales and basking sharks.

Keel Beach became our go-to spot for extreme action, and riders Stig, Henri and Jeanne braved the cold conditions to unleash their skills. We discovered the deserted beauty of the island during winter and early spring and relished the opportunity to enjoy the stunning landscapes Achill Island offers.



ADVENTURES, CHALLENGES AND MEMORIES

The trip was definitely not without its challenges, with rain-soaked days and soaked crew members... but it only added to the memories we cherish nowadays. We spent the nights in cosy bars like Lynott's Pub and at home in front of the fireplace, where we played some games.

Reflecting on our adventure, our Prolimit Mission went beyond capturing stunning visuals. It was an opportunity to unlock the secrets of the ocean, and to understand the interplay of currents, temperatures, and climate patterns. By undertaking these missions, we aim to raise awareness about the impact of climate change on our oceans and inspire individuals to protect and preserve these precious ecosystems.

The story of Prolimit's journey along the rugged coast of Achill Island will forever be etched in their hearts, reminding them of the power of nature, the spirit of adventure, and the importance of embracing and safeguarding our natural wonders.

WORDS FROM STIG HOEFNAGEL

Exploring new kiteboarding destinations has always been one of the most rewarding aspects of kitesurfing for me. From my early days as a little boy discovering local lakes to now travelling the world in search of the ultimate kitesurfing spots, the thrill of exploration never ends. While we typically travel to warmer locations, the idea of going to a colder destination rarely crosses my mind.

I had never been to Ireland before, but when Prolimit asked me to join them on their winter shoot, I was beyond stoked to join them. It's a place that I always wanted to visit due to its rough and raw nature.

"WE AIM TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON OUR OCEANS AND INSPIRE INDIVIDUALS TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE THESE PRECIOUS ECOSYSTEMS. "



"IT TRULY BECAME A PLACE THAT I WOULD LIKE TO VISIT AGAIN IF THE OPPORTUNITY ARISES."

This, combined with unpredictable weather and big storms, made it seem like the ultimate kite challenge and story to do a winter shoot.

The beauty of this trip to Ireland was that none of us had ever been there, so nobody could spoil the others with stories of the past, making it an authentic exploration for each of us.

The week we spent in Ireland created some unforgettable memories on and off the water, and it truly became a place that I would like to visit again if the opportunity arises.

"A true adventure, to say the least. Every day turned out to be so different from what we expected. The forecast seemed to be unreliable, and the rain and sun would appear whenever they wanted to."

- Stig Hoefnagel



RIDER STIG HOEFNAGEL

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// WORDS ALEX MORGENSTERN //

Discover how a passionate group of innovators, driven by a commitment to performance, sustainability, and customization, teamed up with BRAINCHILD production to reshape the future of kitesurfing. From high-tech kites to eco-friendly manufacturing, this is the story of a brand that's making waves in the industry, one ride at a time

HARLEM

CHANGING THE GAME





" A GROUP OF PASSIONATE INDIVIDUALS EMBARKED ON A MISSION TO CRAFT THEIR OWN KITES, DRIVEN BY A VISION TO REVOLUTIONISE THE WORLD OF KITESURFING. "

In the picturesque city of Haarlem, nestled in the heart of the Netherlands, an extraordinary journey began to unfold in 2016. It all started in a modest kite repair shop, where a group of passionate individuals embarked on a mission to craft their own kites, driven by a vision to revolutionise the world of kitesurfing.

Pooling our extensive knowledge and expertise, our group of innovators, who had played various roles as kitesurf school owners, IKO examiners, shop proprietors, and kite repair station operators, set out to create a kite that would exceed all expectations. Our objective was straightforward: to develop a

kitesurfing product that met our unique requirements and captivated the entire kitesurfing community.

In 2016, our relentless dedication bore fruit as we released our first kite, garnering enthusiastic reviews within our kitesurfing community. Buoyed by that success, we officially introduced Harlem Kitesurfing in 2018. From that point onwards, we have been on an unwavering quest for excellence, broadening our product range to include kites, kite bars, boards, and now wings - everything a wind lover could dream of!

One principle remained steadfast throughout

this journey: the unwavering commitment to durability and sustainability. At Harlem Kitesurfing, we have vowed to create products that deliver exceptional performance and stand the test of time. However, our team's ambitions have extended beyond mere product development; our focus has shifted more towards sustainability, recognising the urgent need to protect our precious environment. We are committed to pushing the boundaries of kitesurfing gear while maintaining a strong focus on durability and sustainability. And that sometimes comes down to small things: for example, we do not use new packaging, only recycled boxes. With our kites and wings we are not using any one-time use plastics as packaging. Everything counts.



" WE TRY TO LISTEN CAREFULLY TO OUR CLIENTS,
WHICH IS WHY PROVIDING THE BEST POSSIBLE
CUSTOMER SERVICE IS CRUCIAL TO US. "



Because we are small, we can be very approachable. I see us as a company of kitesurfers for kitesurfers. Every employee is a passionate kiteboarder who is part of the kitesurfing community. We try to listen carefully to our clients, which is why providing the best possible customer service is crucial to us. We are available 24/7 and maintain open lines of communication with our customers, ensuring that their needs are met promptly and efficiently.

As a small company, we can think outside of the box and immediately respond to new sustainable developments to push the kitesurfing industry in the right direction. This also allows us to make independent decisions without taking shareholders into account, for example. We were among the first to place an NFC tag on our boards to find your board quickly if lost. We were also among the first to use a fusion trailing edge in our kites. And now, we are the very first to support BRAINCHILD technology. This is truly a game changer.

BRAINCHILD production is a visionary company with an unconventional approach, and they captured our attention immediately. After a visit to Ralf Grösel's factory in Macedonia in 2022, we were first introduced to his special vision - and it fits ours perfectly. Firstly, he is obsessed with creating the most aerodynamic high-tech products on the market and wants to make every part of the production process more sustainable. By 2029, he wants to use 90 percent recycled materials. If you have visited the BRAINCHILD factory in Macedonia, then you know it's not just words. From solar panels on the roof, the economical use of mainly recycled materials, and the low waste percentage, it's all next level.

We immediately moved our kite bag production to BRAINCHILD and began the process of moving our kite and wing production, too. Our team at Harlem designs the kites and wings, and BRAINCHILD produces them. We call them the Game Changer Lineup. Our first release is a high-performance freeride and big air kite, the Harlem Force, and a high-performance freeride wing, the Harlem Pace.

Combining sustainability with innovation was the biggest challenge. BRAINCHILD has a clear understanding of the needs of the industry and brands and paired with our experience and designs, we were ready to tackle the challenge.

Matching our kite design to the new production technique and having the kites perform at the highest level took some time. The initial stages of the process proved to be quite complex due to the numerous unfamiliar parameters that needed to be considered. There were several intensive calls and meetings and many prototyping rounds. Getting all the resources and the right material together has been a test. Although the beginning was arduous, we made significant progress. Ultimately, the final outcome is highly impressive.

Apart from the environmental aspect, the Force is an excellent performance kite. The aerodynamics and durability are greatly improved by a new welding technique. The leading edge panels are welded together instead of stitched, saving weight and making the kite more dimensionally stable. Sewing and stitching create holes that can make the kite weaker, and to fix that, more material is added, making it heavier. Because we are not sewing and stitching,

" MATCHING OUR KITE DESIGN TO THE NEW PRODUCTION TECHNIQUE AND HAVING THE KITES PERFORM AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL TOOK SOME TIME. "



RIDER SCOTT BARENDSEN



" THIS NEW COLOUR AND PRINTING TECHNOLOGY USES FOUR TIMES LESS WATER AND MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO FLY A KITE WITH YOUR OWN DESIGN. "

we have an air frame that is 20 percent lighter and has 30 percent more torsional stiffness than that of traditional kites. That results in performance close to materials like Aluula air frames, but using a proven dacron airframe that has proven to have the best durability over a decade.

The other, most immediately noticeable feature of the Game Changer Lineup is the possibility for customisation through a process

called digital printing. This new colour and printing technology uses four times less water and makes it possible to fly a kite with your own design. Everything is possible, whether it is a photo, an advertising slogan or a cool graphic design. There will be a 3D configurator on our website this week so you can create your own designs! This has been an incredibly exhilarating process, and we are really excited about these new products.

Our vision for the future of kitesurfing is perfectly aligned with the mindset of the BRAINCHILD team. This shared vision has only fuelled our motivation to push even further in shaping the future of this sport. High-performance gear, customisation, and sustainability are the pillars which Harlem Kitesurfing stands for. With an unwavering vision for the future, we invite all who share our passion and commitment to join us on this extraordinary journey.

" BY LEADING THE CHARGE IN SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES, WE HOPE TO INSPIRE OTHERS TO EMBRACE GREENER ALTERNATIVES. "

Harlem Kitesurfing is now pioneering the concept of performance, sustainability and customisation in the kitesurfing industry. By embracing cutting-edge production technologies, a new era of possibilities has dawned. As we look ahead, we are driven by a shared passion for kitesurfing and a commitment to preserving the natural environment. By leading the charge in sustainable practices, we hope to inspire others to embrace greener alternatives.

The future of kitesurfing lies in our hands, and with the Game Changer Lineup as our platform, we are ready to revolutionise the sport, one wave at a time.



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Thinking about upgrading your kit? We know it's hard to get your hands on demo gear, especially those of you who aren't living in a kitesurfing paradise. Luckily, the IKSURFMAG Test Team is on the case! We've been spending as much time on the water as we can to try out some of the most exciting new products on the market. In this issue, we're testing, not one, but two of the newest kites from Naish! Find out all about the innovative Airwave Alma, the new Cabrinha kite from Pat Goodman, and the latest version of the Duotone Evo SLS. When the wind is light, we foil, and we were lucky enough to test out the new medium aspect wing from Armstrong. There's a brand new harness on the market from AK Durable Supply Co, and even some wetsuits on test! Turn the page to dive into Tried & Tested Issue #101!

KITES

Naish Boxer
Naish Pivot
Airwave Alma
Cabrinha Nitro
Duotone Evo SLS

ACCESSORIES

AK Method RS Flax Fusion
Manera Seafarer Steamer 3/2
Mystic Jayde 3/2

FOIL

Armstrong MA625 &
Performance 1035 Mast

TRIED & TESTED

BRAND NAISH

MODEL BOXER

SIZE 12M

YEAR 2023

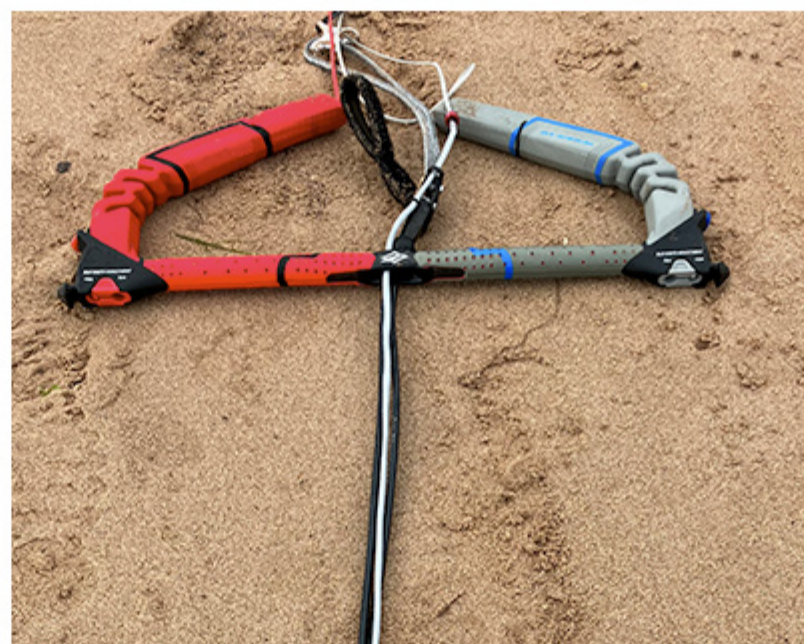


"THE BOXER TICKS ALL OF THE BOXES WHEN IT COMES TO A FOILING AND LIGHT-WIND FREERIDE MACHINE"



TO SEE MORE PHOTOS, [CLICK HERE](#)

TO VISIT THEIR WEBSITE, [CLICK HERE](#)



AT A GLANCE

The Naish Boxer has been a light wind and foiling favourite here at IKSURFMAG for some time, but it's been a couple of years since we've had our hands on one. You can definitely tell that the kite has been tweaked! Unsurprisingly, many of the changes that Naish has implemented are part of an ongoing mission to reduce the weight of the Boxer as much as possible. As a kite optimised for foiling and lighter wind free-riding, it is positioned to greatly benefit from any possible weight savings.

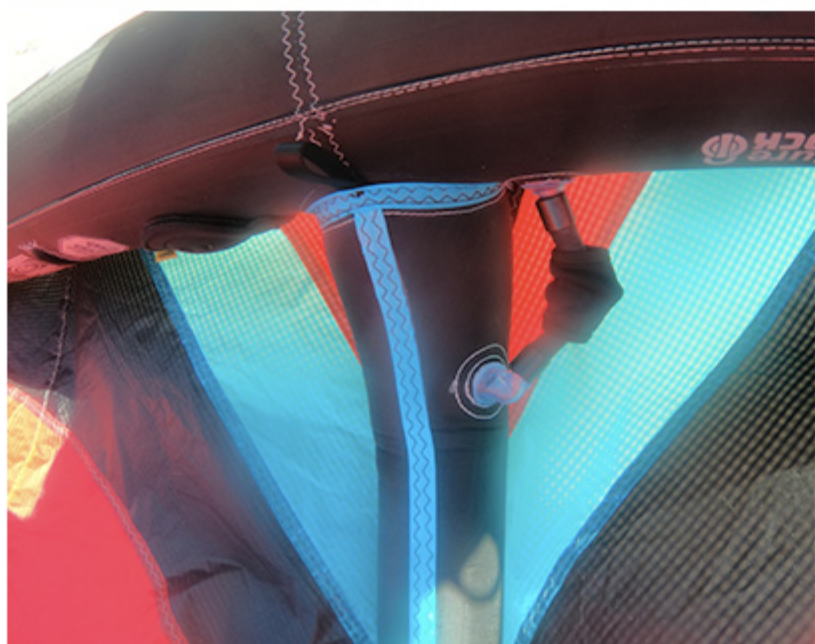
The most obvious of the many weight-saving measures are the new 'Swift Tips.' Instead of a traditional Dacron wing tip, the Boxer's canopy material extends right to the end of the wingtip. To replicate the increased stiffness of Dacron, there are multiple staggered, overlapping plies of quad-tex canopy material where the Dacron would have been. Naish is promising both reduced weight and increased wingtip stiffness, resulting in a more immediate turning response and direct connection feeling through the bar.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)

BRAND NAISH MODEL PIVOT SIZE 12M YEAR 2023



"AN EASY TO USE,
FORGIVING AND
VERSATILE KITE
THAT HAS
BAGS OF
PERFORMANCE
FOR ALL
DISCIPLINES"



AT A GLANCE

The Pivot has been a highly regarded kite ever since its introduction, but it has since gone on to cement itself as one of the standout model names within the whole industry. This may only be the 7th generation, but its status is comparable to competitors that have been around twice as long thanks to its prolific use in the Red Bull King of the Air (2 times of which it helped its King win it!). As the KOTA 'go-to kite' for the Naish team over the years, it has received a significant amount of Naish's R&D efforts, unlocking as much performance potential as possible. But, thankfully, for our sake, it never lost its 'high-performance freeride' roots.

The 3 strut platform retains its progressive profile and now features the 'Power Lock Bridle'. The progressive profile refers to the difference in profile between the middle section of the kite and its wingtips. The profile thickness is greatest around the centre strut to maximise lift production, while the profile is flattened nearer the tips to reduce drag and improve turning speed.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)



TO SEE MORE PHOTOS,
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BRAND AIRWAVE

MODEL ALMA

SIZE 6M

YEAR 2023



"FAST THROUGH THE SKY, PLAYFUL, HAS SOME CRAZY DRIFT ABILITIES, AND DOESN'T PUNISH YOU IF YOU GET A BIT CARRIED AWAY AND PUT IT IN THE DRINK"



TO SEE MORE PHOTOS, [CLICK HERE](#)

TO VISIT THEIR WEBSITE, [CLICK HERE](#)



AT A GLANCE

The Airwave Alma is a new generation of hybrid foil kites and the outcome of the ongoing collaboration between Airwave designer Tom Lories and multiple kitefoil world champion Maxime Nocher. Its design is radically different from what we're used to seeing on the water. It is a super lightweight hybrid foil kite (only the leading edge half of the kite has ram air inflated cells, while the trailing edge half is a single skin of bridle supported material). Where the Alma differs from the few competitor hybrid foil kites on the market is the inclusion of five closed cell inflatable struts, which are full chord length and distributed across the arc of the kite.

The natural material savings of the hybrid foil design, in combination with the super simple bridle arrangement, result in a very lightweight product. I've used plenty of traction kites in my days of teaching kitesurfing lessons, but never have I gotten a kite out of the bag to go riding on the water that has weighed 1.18 kg!

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)

BRAND CABRINHA

MODEL NITRO

SIZE 9M

YEAR 2023



"THE NITRO IS LIVELY, PROVIDES PLENTY OF FEEDBACK TO THE RIDER, DELIVERS EASILY ACCESSIBLE LIFT, AND HAS HEAPS OF HANGTIME."



TO SEE MORE PHOTOS,
CLICK [HERE](#)

TO VISIT THEIR WEBSITE,
CLICK [HERE](#)



The rebirth of the Nitro name and the release of this all-new kite seems very appropriately timed to me. It coincides with the return of Pat Goodman (kite designer) to Cabrinha, the release of the '03' collection, the signing of new dedicated big air riders to the team and the continuing growth of the discipline as a whole. Cabrinha has assigned the Nitro to both the 'performance freeride and big air' disciplines, but their marketing is pretty big air focused. So, is this kite just for a select few hard pushing riders, or does it deliver performance that will be appreciated by a wider audience?

AT A GLANCE

As soon as you get the Nitro out of the bag, you are presented with construction materials that differ from the rest of the Cabrinha range. The Nitro is the only kite featuring the 'Apex Frame', which utilises Cabrinha's Ultra HT material. This is even lighter than their HTD Lite material and, in combination with 'ultralite bladders', results in the 9m weighing just a few grams over 3kg! This is very impressive given that the Nitro is a 5 strut platform. The Nitro has a relatively high aspect outline and a dynamic profile, which makes sense for a boosty big air machine.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)



BRAND DUOTONE

MODEL EVO SLS

SIZE 9M

YEAR 2023



"THE EVO SLS IS A SERIOUS CONTENDER FOR ANYONE LOOKING FOR A DO-IT-ALL KITE."



TO SEE MORE PHOTOS, [CLICK HERE](#)

TO VISIT THEIR WEBSITE, [CLICK HERE](#)



AT A GLANCE

It has been three years since the Evo got its first dose of the SLS treatment (Strong, Light, Superior). Thanks to the use of new premium materials, the performance difference was clear from the start and really enhanced Duotone's sporty 3-strut all-rounder. With the Evo family now growing even further this year to include a D/LAB edition (review coming soon!), we'll do our best to help you choose which one is right for you.

The principle difference between the Evo and the Evo SLS is the use of Duotone's Penta TX instead of traditional Dacron for the majority of the airframe of the kite (leading edge and central strut). This results in a noticeable difference in weight straight out of the bag (SLS kites are up to 15% lighter than regular models). The Penta TX is also stiffer and therefore provides a more rigid airframe. The difference in performance is obvious once you put it in the sky, but we'll get to that...

The outer struts ('Flex Struts') are intentionally excluded from the Penta TX replacement to make the steering response as dynamic as possible.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)



"THE MA625
SETUP IS COMFY,
FORGIVING, FAST
AND REALLY
PLAYFUL ALL
AT ONCE!"



TO SEE MORE PHOTOS,
CLICK [HERE](#)

TO VISIT THEIR WEBSITE,
CLICK [HERE](#)



AT A GLANCE

After testing the Armstrong WKT board and the carving specialist, the CF950 V2, we were eagerly awaiting the delivery of one of the newest releases in the Armstrong range, the MA625. From our past experiences on Armstrong gear, we had a feeling the MA625 front wing would be something special.

Unpacking Armstrong kit is always such a treat. There is a lot of attention to detail, not just in the product itself but also in the packaging. There is literally no expense spared on these foils; from the matte finish to the titanium electroplated screws and toolbox, the team doesn't hold back!

What stands out most is the unique look and style the foil has, which is instantly recognisable. If you ever see a black and white striped foil on the water, you are almost guaranteed that it is an Armstrong foil!

When we unboxed the MA625, it looked like a blade that wanted to go fast! In case you're new to foiling, the MA stands for medium-aspect! We paired the MA625 with the Dart 140, a super fast and slim HA (high-aspect) stabiliser.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)



BRAND AK DURABLE SUPPLY CO

MODEL METHOD RS FLAXFUSION

SIZE M

YEAR 2023



" WITH THE
FLAXFUSION'S RS
RATCHET
SYSTEM, YOU
CAN EASILY
LOOSEN OR
TIGHTEN THE
HARNESS ON THE
FLY WITH ONE OR
TWO CLICKS "



TO SEE MORE PHOTOS,
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TO VISIT THEIR WEBSITE,
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AT A GLANCE

AK Durable Supply Co. is not the biggest kite accessory brand on the market, but they are quickly becoming an important player in the industry, which is pushing innovation in design. Although they are a smaller brand, the South African based AK Durable Supply Co. continues to release exciting new products, offering a fresh take on accessory design.

We were sent the AK Method FlaxFusion RS to try out, which comes stock standard with their low-profile AeroBar RS spreader bar. While it may look like carbon at first glance, the FlaxFusion construction actually uses an ampliTex™ natural fibre reinforcement. Their new RS range also brings the ratchet tightening system to the market.

The flax material stands out like nothing you have seen before. We are so used to carbon harnesses, but AK has gone an environmentally friendlier route while working with Bcomp using a composite flax material. The harness and spreader bar looked like a work of art!

Sizes: XS, S, M, L, XL

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)



BRAND MANERA

MODEL SEAFARER

SIZE 3/2MM

YEAR 2023



"THIS MAY BE AN ENTRY-LEVEL WETSUIT, BUT THE QUALITY OF THE MATERIALS AND FINISHING IS EXCELLENT."



TO SEE MORE PHOTOS,
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TO VISIT THEIR WEBSITE,
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AT A GLANCE

The Seafarer is Manera's entry-level wetsuit and is available in various configurations, including the Steamer, short-sleeved, hybrid (long arm/short leg), 3/2, 4/3, 5/3, front zip, back zip, women's, and men's, which means almost all conditions are covered by this range. Today, I'm testing the Manera Seafarer Steamer Front Zip in a 3/2mm.

It's well known that the manufacture of neoprene is not planet-friendly, and the industry as a whole has some way to go to solve the problem, but I like that Manera is trying to reduce its impact by doing what they can in a number of areas. Waste off-cuts are recycled, recycled nylons are used for the outer and inner layers, and like other leading wetsuit manufacturers, the neoprene is derived from limestone sources rather than petroleum. I also really liked the packaging. The wetsuit comes in a nicely designed minimalist cardboard box, which can best be described as a pizza box.

What you really notice when you first hold the wetsuit is how well-made it is. The quality of the stitching and the glued seams is as good as I have seen.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)



BRAND MYSTIC

MODEL JAYDE FULLSUIT / FRONTZIP

SIZE 3/2MM

YEAR 2023



"MYSTIC'S
HIGHEST-
PERFORMING
WETSUIT FOR
WOMEN"



TO SEE MORE PHOTOS,
CLICK [HERE](#)

TO VISIT THEIR WEBSITE,
CLICK [HERE](#)



AT A GLANCE

When the water temperature has a bit of a bite, but it is not quite cold enough for that winter wetsuit, the Jayde Fullsuit 3/2mm from Mystic will be your perfect choice.

This front zip wetsuit is Mystic's highest-performing wetsuit for women, featuring updated streamlined graphics. My test model came in the navy colour with a lilac tie-dye print on the arm. I do love a bit of colour in my wetsuit, so for me, this design is perfect, but for those girls who are not keen on this colour combo, Mystic produces this wetsuit in plain black, too.

The Jayde is crafted from top-grade neoprene, specifically MX4 Yamamoto. This material has a smaller environmental footprint compared to conventional wetsuits yet provides amazing insulation and flexibility.

Flaremesh+ material is used in the chest and back for that extra warmth, and the geometrical pattern allows the water to channel through the fabric for faster drying. The faster drying of the suit is even further improved by the use of Fox Fleece in the lower part of the wetsuit.

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RIDER MICHAELA PILKENTON
PHOTO AMANDA CANTOR

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QUESTIONS JEN TYLER PHOTOS SVETLANA ROMANTSOVA

INSIGHT

SVETLANA ROMANTSOVA

She's been on the kiteboarding scene for a while now, and if you've been following the GKA Kite World Tour, there is no doubt you've stumbled upon her unbelievable talent. Svetlana is known for capturing the perfect action shots time and time again. It doesn't stop there; Svetlana's portfolio showcases her love for watersports, snowboarding, nature, fashion and more! We were in awe and couldn't wait to uncover her incredible story.

Check it out now, exclusively in IKSURFMAG!

Svetlana, it's great to have you featured, finally! Let's start from the beginning: What or who inspired you to become a photographer?

Hi Jen, thank you! My love for photography began during my first trip to Elbarus in 2004; I was so impressed with the majestic and beautiful scenery but frustrated that my point-and-shoot camera couldn't capture what I was seeing. It was then that I realised that my camera wasn't up to the task, so I invested in a Canon 5D Mark II and a few lenses and signed up for a photography school.

I've always been a fan of extreme sports magazines, and growing up, I had tons of snowboarding, skating and kiteboarding magazines and admired the amazing photos of incredible tricks and places. I could not even dream that one day I would see my photos in those magazines and even as cover shots!

Was there one photo you took that made you realise that this was your passion and you would want to become a professional photographer?

I've always been passionate about snowboarding and travelling to the mountains, and I always have my camera with me. Trip after trip, I started receiving invitations to join as a photographer. However, the problem was that I worked in a big company office in Moscow as an engineer, and my vacation days were always limited. I think the highlight wasn't just a single shot; it was the trip with the Russian snowboard team to Les 2 Alpes during summer when I witnessed an incredible snow park and saw riders from around the world showing off their insane skills!

" I WAS SO IMPRESSED WITH THE MAJESTIC AND BEAUTIFUL SCENERY BUT FRUSTRATED THAT MY POINT-AND-SHOOT CAMERA COULDN'T CAPTURE WHAT I WAS SEEING. "



"IT IS PERFECT FOR KITEBOARDING AND PHOTOGRAPHY, AND MANY RENOWNED RIDERS ARE ALWAYS THERE."

RIDER ALEX NETO



Eventually, a friend asked me to start an online shop for snowboard equipment with them. At that moment, it was a pretty crazy decision to quit well-paid work and begin something super unstable. In the meantime, I was also interested in shooting in a studio, experimenting with flash and ideas there. A little later, I opened my own photography studio. It was not an easy time because I have always dreamt of more trips (I had also just started kiteboarding) but got quite stuck again in the city. At that time, sports photography was more of a hobby.

Tell us a bit about your background! When did you first leave Russia and 'hit the road'?

At the end of 2011, I was overworked and tired of all the studio business routine and boring shoots in the city, so I bought my first one-way ticket to Mũi Né, Vietnam. I planned on spending the winter season kiteboarding and taking pictures there. After four months in Vietnam, I decided to venture to Bali.

There were many emotional and thrilling adventures along the way (for instance, losing all my money on the way to Bali and arriving there with nothing in my

pocket, haha!) and meeting some incredible people. When I returned home, I realised that I didn't want to live in Moscow; I craved nature, and at that time, I just wanted to travel and discover amazing new places.

Tarifa is one of my favourite locations. I used to spend a lot of time there for several years. It is perfect for kiteboarding and photography, and many renowned riders are always there. However, during winter, I always wanted to go snowboarding. Eventually, I bought an apartment in the mountain resort in Sochi, considered one of the best places for free riding in the world.

" I TOOK LOADS OF PHOTOS BUT ALSO HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF MEETING INSPIRING PEOPLE WHO GREATLY CONTRIBUTED TO MY PROGRESS AS A KITE PHOTOGRAPHER. "



RIDER HANNAH WHITELEY

Since last year, I have been back on the road - starting from September onwards, I have visited Morocco, Turkey, Brazil, Mauritius, Egypt, Bali, Georgia, and Armenia. At the moment, I do not have any solid plans for a home base; I'm just enjoying the journey!

Kiteboarding came into your life after photography but has become one of your primary subjects! What was your path into the kiteboarding industry?

I decided to give kiteboarding a try, and after just two weeks, I quit my office job! One of my friends proposed a deal where I would photograph him, and in return, he would give me kiteboarding lessons; he was the owner of a kite school and used to compete professionally. So, I started attending many events and championships around Russia.

While I was in Bali, I made a new friend named Ksenia. Around one year later, she invited me to shoot a kite camp featuring Alex Pastor and Mallory de la Villemarque at Dakhla Spirit. I couldn't believe that such an incredible opportunity had come my way. Needless to say, I was extremely nervous and desperately wanted to capture the perfect shot!

Little did I know that instead of staying for two weeks, my trip would end up lasting two months. During this time, I took loads of photos but also had the privilege of meeting inspiring people who greatly contributed to my progress as a kite photographer. A special shoutout goes to Mallory de la Villemarque, who allowed me to improve and kickstart photography for the World Tour!

**When did you first join the GKA and GWA Tours?
What is it like shooting in a competition environment?**

I was already involved in freestyle tours before the GKA, but when it became a part of the GKA, I was thrilled to continue photographing the competitions and, later, the GWA events. Being a photographer at these events is not easy work. It requires a lot of energy to shoot all day, edit immediately, and deliver the material quickly for social media, organisers, and the riders. But it's incredibly rewarding to be a part of it, capturing pure emotions on the beach and incredible action on the water! And, of course, it's amazing to work with such a talented professional team and photograph the best riders in the world - that's what I love!

What makes photographing kiteboarding so different from your other subjects?

Photographing kiteboarding on camera is often more complicated than other sports. Some shots require capturing both the rider and the kite. When shooting from the water, the conditions are not as smooth due to the wind and choppy waves. At the beach, flying sand, dust, and salty water can damage your camera and lenses, causing faster deterioration. Despite these challenges, I find this sport incredible! It is so cool to feel the energy of the water and wind and to show how the riders can use those elements. And, of course, I'm inspired a lot by the riders! It's unbelievable what tricks they can do, how high they can jump, and the size of waves they can ride - with the power of the wind!

**" IT'S INCREDIBLY REWARDING TO BE
A PART OF IT, CAPTURING PURE
EMOTIONS ON THE BEACH AND
INCREDIBLE ACTION ON THE WATER! "**





PHOTO SVETLANA ROMANTSOVA

" I LOVE SHOOTING WITH A WATER HOUSING;
THE BEST THING IS THAT THE RESULTS CAN
ALWAYS BE UNPREDICTABLE. "

RIDER AIRTON COZZOLINO

You do a lot of in-water photography! What does it take to capture the perfect shot from the water?

I love shooting with a water housing; the best thing is that the results can always be unpredictable. Random splashes or reflections on the water can make the photo very unique. I enjoy capturing photos during the golden hour of sunset or sunrise, particularly when shooting against the sun; it always creates magic!

How do you balance staying true to your unique

style while adapting to different clients and projects as a photographer?

The most effective way to understand what the client wants is to have a briefing. Then, I can try to blend my perspective with the client's requirements. I would hope that most of my clients are familiar with my style, which is why they choose me!

We can only imagine how busy you are when you're working in these stunning locations. Do you ever find time to squeeze in a kiteboarding session yourself?

Typically, when I have to work, I don't have enough time for a kite session. But I really do take pleasure in being in the water with my camera; it might be one of the reasons why my passion is for kitesurf photography instead of snowboard photography - because riding in the mountains is something I genuinely crave! During my recent trip to Mauritius, we stayed for four months, and I had the chance to kite a lot after a long time. I also recently started surfing and visited Manawa, and it's been a new experience and a lot of fun!



" I AM ALWAYS EXCITED TO EXPLORE NEW PLACES AND LANDSCAPES, PARTICULARLY THOSE NEAR THE WATER! "

You're packing for a shoot but aren't 100% sure of the conditions; what do you pack?

I would take my Canon 5D Mark IV Camera (usually 2 of them) and several lenses, including a 50mm, 85mm, 17-40mm, 24-70mm, 70-200mm, 100-400mm and a 1.4x lens extender. I also bring the Aquatech and Outex water housings.

Favourite location and backdrop you've photographed at?

I love Le Morne in Mauritius, the palm trees of northern Brazil, Table Mountain in Cape Town, and Balneario in Tarifa; they are my favourite backgrounds. But I am always excited to explore new places and landscapes, particularly those near the water!

Any tips for aspiring kite photographers out there?

Learn the rules of photography! Try experimenting with different angles and distances. I often notice that beginners tend to stick to close-up shots when photographing kiteboarding. While these shots can be nice, it's also interesting to capture the height of the trick and the surrounding landscape. By including foreground elements, you can draw the viewer into the image.

Don't be afraid to approach riders and ask to photograph them. It will be a valuable experience for you, and they can use the content for their social media platforms!

Thank you so much, Svetlana!


Thanks, Jen!



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WORDS MAKS STĘPNIEWSKI PHOTOS ALEKSANDER MARTYNIAK

Two young brothers from Poland, Maks and Marcel Stępniewski, share their passion for kiteboarding! While pursuing different disciplines, they share the same stoke every time they're on the water together.

Get to know Maks and Marcel, and find out more about their upcoming adventures in this article!

THE STĘPNIEWSKI BROTHERS



"I HAD TO TEACH MYSELF, WHEREAS MY BROTHER HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM THE GROWING KITE COMMUNITY."

For the past two decades, our family has shared the kitesurfing stoke with everyone we've met. My brother Marcel and I (Maks) started learning about the sport when we were eight. Our father, Tomasz, was one of the first kitesurfers in Poland and slowly introduced us to this sport as we grew up. Like many early kites, he was a windsurfer, but in 2004, a hail storm came and destroyed all of his sails. His friend Sebastian, a kite instructor, taught my father to kite, and that's where it all started. The stoke was so strong that he never stopped from the moment he started.

I remember those windy days I spent on the beach, watching my father having the best time of his life, and I knew that would be me one day. When I was a little guy, I always went to the friendly kite school and listened to all the kitesurfing basics. Once I was old enough, my father instructed me on how to properly set up kite gear. Shortly after, I was learning how to steer the kite. I will never forget those long walks after body drags! Marcel had a special passion for this sport from a young age. He started at the same age as me, at eight years old, and everything he tried for the first

time just clicked. The moment my brother and I had the opportunity to try this new sport, we went all the way; we have dedicated all our spare time to being on the water, always practising new moves.

Now, I'm 23 years old, and my younger brother Marcel is 15 years old. When I first started, the kite community was totally different. Almost everything I learned, I had to teach myself, whereas my brother had the opportunity to learn from the growing kite community. My generation has started a movement for younger guys to learn this sport and push their limits.



"HE IS SO YOUNG AND HAS SUCH POTENTIAL FOR BEING ONE OF THE BEST, WHEREAS MY STRONGER FIELD IS BIG AIR."

I spent the early years of my journey doing freestyle, then I moved to Formula Kite, and finally, I landed in the big air discipline, where I feel the most comfortable. I just love the feeling when everything turns upside down, the adrenaline rushing, and the wind in my hair. My brother joined me in these activities eight years after I started. We both had a slightly different approach to our final destination. Marcel has vigorously pursued Formula Kite and freestyle, while he treats big air more as an addition to this sport.

He is so young and has such potential for being one of the best, whereas my stronger field is big air. However, soon enough, Marcel will surpass me in this discipline, too. I once won the Polish championship, while my younger brother has already managed to collect national and international titles, both in freestyle and foil.

The best thing about being brothers is that we always go together for a session, training and having lots of fun whenever we can. In Chałupy, we have plenty of kite schools and a big kite community during summer. There's a lot of hype and stoke for each and every session. We just love the feeling of pushing each other! Every time one of us lands a new manoeuvre, quickly after, the other one catches up and sticks something more radical or technical.

Our spot is called Zatoka Pucka, "Puck Bay". It's a big bay, and there are many spots around it, offering something for everyone. There is this huge peninsula that divides the bay into two, and there are areas with shallow water, waves, and kilometres of perfectly flat water in the middle of the bay. Our favourite spots are Chałupy and Rewa. The conditions are wonderful; you can do it all as long as there is wind.

We have many strong, windy days in winter that deliver great big air conditions, whereas, in summer, there is more for freestyle and foil.

The stoke and hype around the kiting community is what drives us the most. We want to push ourselves and the community to grow and develop better skills. My friends, Marcel and I came up with the idea of pushing everyone to share their passion. In 2020, we created the @surf_ziomki Instagram account to share our progression and love for this sport throughout the years.

With every passing year, we are more stoked than ever. Each year and month comes with exact planning of what's next. We are discussing what tricks we dream of and where we want to land them. Every year, we take several trips, some long and some short. Each is different and is supposed to develop a different set of skills. Every time we go on the water, we know we will make some progress.

Our favourite spots are El Médano and Hel peninsula. El Médano is the most diverse spot we've ever been to. You can surf, kite and foil. We can ride with the best riders in both big air and freestyle. Hel peninsula is a place where our life changed, because we started our adventure with kitesurfing there. Thanks to our parents, who are passionate about this place, we can spend every summer vacation in Chałupy, a small village that is visited by many tourists every year. This place allowed us to create a family of friends that we only see here. This spot offers the same diversity as El Médano.



"EL MÉDANO IS THE MOST DIVERSE SPOT WE'VE EVER BEEN TO. YOU CAN SURF, KITE AND FOIL."



" THIS TRIP WILL TAKE ABOUT TWO MONTHS, MORE THAN 10000 KILOMETRES, AND BE FULL OF ACTION AND PROGRESS. "

The conditions in El Médano are tough; there is this specific gusty wind and wavy water, but when you get everything right, you can go huge. This is where I first landed my board off kiteloop and several airstyle rotations with board offs. I'm still extremely stoked about that, and I can't wait to get back to those waters.

The moment we started progressing, Marcel and I became part of the Liuwe and Prolimit families, which allowed us to focus more on improving our skills. As a technical school student, I am more open to new material, so I am in love with D/LAB Aluula technology from Duotone and the new Falcon board from Lieuwe. Marcel, as the representative of new school freestyle, surprisingly prefers the classics such as Eleveight FS9 (the best c-shaped kite in the world!) and the God of all twin tips, the Lieuwe Shotgun. We both use Prolimit wetsuits and harnesses; they support us with the best materials and technology.

This year, once again, we will be travelling in a blue T5 van across Europe. We are planning on visiting places like Leucate, Saint Pierre la Mer for competition, Gruissan, Sant Pere Pescador, San Sebastian, Galicia, Peniche, Porto and Tarifa. This trip will take about two months, more than 10000 kilometres, and be full of action and progress. If you see us on the spot, hit us up!! You can follow our journey on Instagram at @surf_ziomki... See you out there!



FORTALEZA

MANCORA

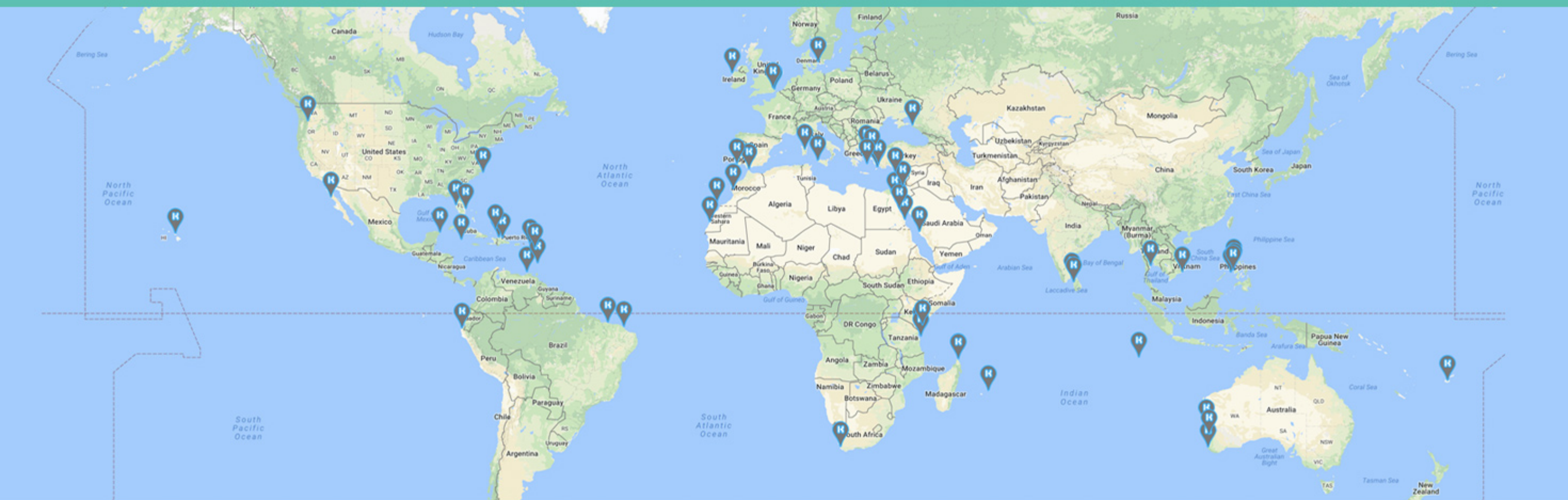
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MAUI

FOIL FREESTYLE: HOW TO GET STARTED

WORDS THE SWISS FOIL COUPLE (ANDREA ZUST AND PEER SCHNYDER)
PHOTOS HARRY WINNINGTON

Thinking about trading in your twintip for a hydrofoil? There are a lot of tricks that you can carry over, and if you're wondering where to start, you won't want to miss this helpful guide to getting started with hydrofoil freestyle from the Swiss Foil Couple!



Every kiter has experienced it before: Struggling to fit all of the gear into one board bag that weighs exactly 23 kg, travelling for many hours, and finally standing at the perfect kite spot... with no wind - at least not enough for your biggest kite and twintip! And, there he is, the one guy on a hydrofoil having the time of his life alone on the water while you are frustratingly drinking your beer under an umbrella.

Now, imagine the possibility of suddenly being able to train your back rolls, one footers, and board offs in under 15 knots. Many of you are intrigued to try this relatively new discipline in kitesurfing but don't quite know how to get started or are a little afraid of hurting yourself after having heard horrible stories of foils cutting through legs and hitting heads. So, to make things easier for you, we will help you understand how to get started with hydrofoil freestyle.

FIRST STEPS INTO KITEFOIL FREESTYLE – TIPS & TRICKS

To start with hydrofoil freestyle, you should be able to ride safely on the foil. Once you can do some jibes and feel more confident, it is time to unlock the next level of "hydrofoil freestyle". Before you start doing different manoeuvres, be sure to read and follow our quick safety guide:

1. Wear protective gear: a wetsuit that covers both arms and legs, helmet and impact vest will help you avoid bruises and cuts.
2. Never try learning new tricks in challenging conditions such as strong, gusty winds, chop or bigger waves.

“THERE HE IS, THE ONE GUY ON A HYDROFOIL HAVING THE TIME OF HIS LIFE ALONE ON THE WATER WHILE YOU ARE FRUSTRATINGLY DRINKING YOUR BEER UNDER AN UMBRELLA”





“THE KEY IS TO FIRST LEARN HOW TO POP OUT OF THE WATER AND DO SMALL JUMPS WITH A HYDROFOIL.”

3. The moment you notice your trick will go wrong and you know you won't land it, pull hard on the bar so that the kite pulls you away from your board in order to avoid crashing into it. Train this first so that it becomes instinctive to you.

4. Look around! You are not alone on the water.

5. Use smaller wings. We recommend a maximum 850cm² Armstrong front wing) as they are easier to pop, and there's less

impact area on the landings. This way, you avoid breaking your gear and injuring your knees and ankles when coming down harder.

6. Keep in mind that the warranty from most foil manufacturers/brands is not valid when you start jumping with the gear.

Initially, the key is to first learn how to pop out of the water and do small jumps with a hydrofoil. For this, it is essential to have enough speed. Steer your kite up as you would for a jump with a twintip. Before your kite

reaches 12 o'clock, put all your weight on your back foot and give a small "kick/pop" to the tail of your board while reducing pressure on your front foot by pulling your knee upwards.

While doing this, pull hard on the bar to gain the maximum power from your kite. Leave the bar shifted in until you reach the highest point. Whilst in the air, bend your knees so that you are as tiny and compact as possible to keep your balance and avoid the extra weight of the foil starting to rotate you. As soon as you start to come down, shift out the bar and prepare for landing.



「DON'T BE SCARED OF THE HYDROFOIL,
BUT RATHER SEE IT AS A NEW CHALLENGE.」

When landing, make sure to put pressure on the back foot especially and point the nose of your board downwind to get onto the foil again and start gliding. Don't forget to counter pressure with your front foot; otherwise, you'll do a dolphin jump! If you're scared of crashing, lean backwards a bit; this way, if you fall, you won't fall over the board and get hit.

Once you've mastered the take-off and landing techniques, you can try the tricks you know how to do on your twintip. Back rolls are great first tricks to try on the hydrofoil, for example. Unfortunately, there are not many "how to" videos for kitefoil freestyle on YouTube yet. So, if you are looking to learn more advanced tricks, just have a look at the twintip videos - the main principle is the same. Or, you can message us on social media! Like everything else, hydrofoil freestyle just takes time to learn. The more you practise, the more technique you'll gain and the less you'll have to do with your own muscle strength. Don't be scared of the hydrofoil, but rather see it as a new challenge. Just stick to the above-mentioned rules, and you'll be fine!

LEVEL 1 – BACK ROLL / FRONT ROLL

Let's start with one of the basics! Before you attempt this trick, make sure that you go through the complete trick in your head before you get onto the water. Practising the rotations, in theory, is the key to not hurting yourself and not getting frustrated on the water. Gain some average speed (20km/h) for your first attempts. Steer your kite up to 12 o'clock slowly and pop your board out of the water.

After popping, turn your head in the rotation direction and try to get into a compact position for your first tries. It is imperative to hold your hands in the middle of the bar to not lose control of your kite. The kite should stay between 11 and 1 o'clock during the whole manoeuvre. When you've completed the 360-degree turn, it is time to spot your landing. Make sure that you set your board downwind and try to dive in first with your foil front wing.

The most difficult thing about a back roll or front roll is to keep your orientation up in the air so you end up with a 360-degree spin rather than only going 180 degrees and falling onto your back. It is part of the game to have some crashes while you work your way towards a proper landing. Don't be discouraged!


LEVEL 2 – THE ONE FOOTER

This trick looks really stylish, and you can impress your friends massively with this trick. Before you start, again, make sure you go through the complete trick process in your head before practising it on the water. The trick itself is not really difficult, but without a good step-by-step tutorial, it can become a real challenge.

Try to gain as much speed as possible, and keep your upcoming steps in mind before you pop off. When you are ready to fly, push your back foot hard into your board and give it a pop. Try to go for maximum airtime to have enough time for your airstyle trick. When you reach the highest point of your jump, it is time to take your foot out of the back footstrap while holding your board with your back hand, either on the strap or the tail of your board. Try stretching your leg as much as possible to get a really cool looking shot!



「THE TRICK ITSELF IS NOT REALLY DIFFICULT,
BUT WITHOUT A GOOD STEP-BY-STEP TUTORIAL,
IT CAN BECOME A REAL CHALLENGE.」

A foilboarder wearing a blue helmet and colorful shorts is captured mid-air, performing a 'board off by board rail' trick. The rider is holding the front rail of the board with their front hand and the bar with their back hand. The board is tilted, and the foil is visible. The background shows a clear blue sky and the ocean surface below.

“YOU WILL NEED TO GAIN A LOT OF SPEED TO GET AS MUCH AIRTIME AS POSSIBLE; AIRTIME IS THE KEY TO THIS TRICK.”

When doing this trick, it is important to spot your landing during the whole jump to avoid losing balance. Your stretched out leg does also help you to avoid going into a twist. Right before the landing, put your foot back into the strap and let go of the board with your back hand. Put your board on a downwind course, keep your balance, and dive in the foil to not lose your speed so that you can land and continue your riding.

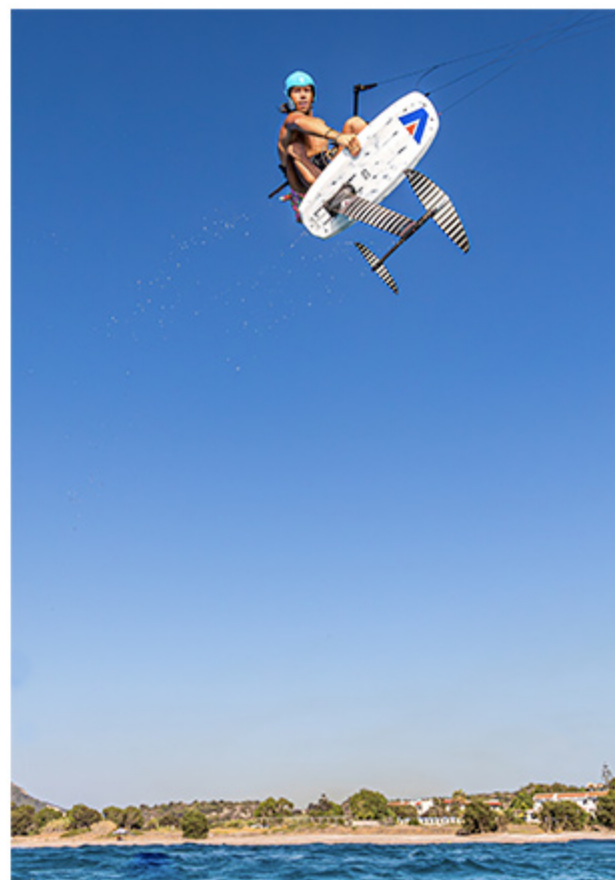
LEVEL 3 – BOARD OFF BY BOARD RAIL

During the first steps, a board off by board rail is similar to a one footer. Again, you will need to gain a lot of speed to get as much airtime as possible; airtime is the key to this trick. The longer you stay up in the air, the more time you have for this trick, and the easier it will be to land it properly. You must be able to do a one footer without any struggles and practise the "board catching on the rail" on land. Gain as much speed as possible and give a hard pop with your back foot after edging to reach your maximum height.

Before you reach your highest point during your jump, it is time to get into a "package" position. Make yourself as tiny as possible, grab your front board rail with your front hand, and hold your bar with your back hand in the centre, leaving your kite at 12 o'clock. When you are holding your board rail with your hand, take both feet out of the footstraps and stretch your legs into a vertical position.



「A FEW HARD LANDINGS ARE
PART OF THE PROGRAM!」



At the beginning, you may find it easier to just take your feet out quickly and not stretch out completely. When putting your feet back into the straps, it helps to first put in your front foot, followed by your back foot. It is normal to miss the straps when trying to put your feet back in while you are learning; a few hard landings are part of the program!

If you want to share your progress or get more foil freestyle tips, connect with the Swiss Foil Couple (@swiss_foilcouple) on Instagram!

On The Fly

PHOTOS TOBY BROMWICH

INSIDE THE INDUSTRY // AWSI BOARD SPORTS EXPO 2023

Every year, around September, the Associate of Wind & Water Sports Industries (AWSI) puts on an industry event that brings the wind community together on the Columbia River's banks. Brands display their latest gear and showcase pre-release equipment, and dealers and shops have the opportunity to see and session on the latest technology. With pro riders on the scene to put the gear to the test and fun events and challenges throughout, a visit to the AWSI is a must-do for any industry insider!



AWSI FROM ABOVE



NORTH'S MARLEY FRANCO AND JESSE RICHMAN SHARE THE STROKE

ERIC RIENSTRA AND STEVEN AKKERSDIJK REPRESENT CORE





NAISH DESIGNER AND
PRO RIDER EWAN JASPAN



GARY SISKAR SHOWS OFF RIDE ENGINE'S NEW AIRBOX ELECTRIC PUMP

PHOTOS TOBY BROMWICH

On The Fly

INSIDE THE INDUSTRY // AWSI BOARD SPORTS EXPO 2023

With 60+ brands showcasing and demoing their latest gear over 3 days to 1000+ attendees, our 2023 Expo in Hood River demonstrated why the annual AWSI Board Sports Expo is the most anticipated event in the wind and water sports industries.

Learn more about the AWSI and find updates on the next event at windkitesup.org. Don't forget to subscribe to Tonic Mag to get more insights on the latest wing and foil products!



BRANDON SCHEID TAKES TO THE SKY
IN HIS HOME SPOT

On The Fly

NEW COLLAB // PIGS CAN FLY

The Duotone X Porsche collaboration continues with a new campaign: Pigs Can Fly. This limited edition special livery, based on the latest Evo SLS and Select Concept Blue, is limited to 360 units, an homage to the top speed of 360km/h of the 1971 famous race car on which it's based.

"In Porsche history, known as the "Pink Pig", "Big Berta", or even "Truffle Hunter" the 917/20 takes a special place among the various 917 versions. It was the fastest car during the Le Mans pre-race qualification session and a crowd favourite at the 1971 Le Mans race."

Find out more about this campaign on the Duotone website!

DUOTONE PINK PIG



On The Fly

NEW RELEASE //

OZONE EDGE V12

The team at Ozone has been busy with an exciting new update to an iconic kite, the Edge. Click to watch the video and read on to find out more about the just-announced Edge V12!



RIDER JAMIE OVERBEEK



RIDER RUBEN LENTEN PHOTO SAMUEL CARDENAS

"Since inception in 2007, the Edge has been purpose-built to provide the ultimate freeride experience, capable of heartstopping riding speeds and gravity-defying big air performance.

"The Edge V12 continues to deliver adrenaline-fuelled sessions to riders who crave real power, speed and insane lift. After 16 years of refinement, the handling quality will supercharge the sessions of any intermediate twin-tip rider, not just the super high-flying renegades!

"The smooth combination of speed and power will amplify the enjoyment of any freerider looking for the ultimate sensation of escape. In the hands of riders like Jamie Overbeek, however, the Edge is also a verified 36 metre boosting behemoth capable of reaching for the stars."

MATTHIAS, JACOB AND YORICK LARSEN
WORDS MATTHIAS LARSEN



On The Fly

SHARING THE STROKE //

THE LARSEN FAMILY

After I separated from the mother of my 7-year-old twin boys, I took them to the beach and taught them how to take pictures with my big Sony camera. They love to sit there together, swap the camera, and catch the action on the water!

It is unbelievable how they have managed to learn the fine techniques of photography at such a young age, using the zoom and focus. With a little editing, their photos have turned out great!

Now, they are always with me, and I can keep them busy on the shore while I'm having a quick session. What is also funny is that they are like my caddies who help me with the setting up, pumping of the gear, and even screwing on the foil!

When the wind is stronger, they love to join me on my twintip and get some airtime. Their screams and laughs are priceless! They are so addicted to this sport already, and recently did their first body drags with a trainer kite. It's time to find small harnesses for them so they can get out there on the water with me!

On The Fly

RACE REPORT //

2023 FORMULA KITE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Paris 2024 Olympics are drawing ever nearer, and the race scene has been ablaze with events around the world. Olympic qualification is the goal, and several countries earned their tickets to the main event during August's Sailing World Championships in The Hague, Netherlands.

ON THE RACECOURSE



LAURIANE NOLOT COMES OUT ON TOP!



In the 2023 World Championship event, it was Singapore's Maximilian Maeder and Lauriane Nilot from France who stood atop the podiums, proudly representing their sailing teams.

As of today, there are 17 nations qualified to race in Paris 2024's Formula Kite category, with Spain and Thailand joining the list after the recent European Championships in the UK and the Asian Games in China.

Click [here](#) to find out where to watch the last few events of the season!

World Sailing		PARIS 2024	
		Qualified countries after the Sailing World Championships 2023	
		*PENDING WORLD SAILING CONFIRMATION	
FORMULA KITE, MEN		FORMULA KITE, WOMEN	
	FRANCE (HOST)		FRANCE (HOST)
	AUSTRIA		AUSTRALIA
	BRAZIL		CHINA
	CHINA		ITALY
	CROATIA		ISRAEL
	CYPRUS		GERMANY
	ITALY		GREAT BRITAIN
	SINGAPORE		NETHERLANDS
	SLOVENIA		UNITED STATES

RIDER MOSTAFA ABBAS
PHOTO NOT PERFECT MEDIA



PHOTO ANDY TROY



WORDS MOSTAFA ABBAS

On The Fly

EVENT UPDATE //

WINDSEEKERS KITEFEST

The concept of the KiteFest was to bring people from all over the world to experience and enjoy kiting together in the Middle East. We had 20 nationalities, many different cultures, and many different peoples, all of them seeking to kite in beautiful conditions around the Red Sea. As we are Windseekers, we are experts on the Red Sea; we know where to go and how to make the trip special and unique for everyone!

RIDER MARC JACOBS PHOTO ANDY TROY



RIDERS MOSTAFA ABBAS AND ELLIE DIMITROVA
PHOTO NOT PERFECT MEDIA



On The Fly

EVENT UPDATE // WINDSEEKERS KITEFEST

The KiteFest was not only about kiting! We brought legends on board like Ruben Lenten, Marc Jacobs, Baptiste Bourdoulous, and Ellie Dimitrova. Instead of just enjoying a regular holiday, visitors could learn something and improve their level and skills on the water.

Another key component of the KiteFest was the demo week, where we had the latest Cabrinha, Ozone, North, Mystic, and Duotone gear available for testing throughout the week. With riders able to use the equipment freely for 45 minutes per day, it allowed attendees to figure out what gear worked best for them!

The last part of the KiteFest were the parties! During this year's event, we brought all the boats together and had an unforgettable party on the main boat. We also hosted beach parties - planned around the wind forecast, of course! There were barbecues and meals on all three boats with three different chefs and three unique ways of cooking.

After a year of organising, we were proud to put on this first-of-its-kind event in the Middle East. The Windseekers KiteFest was a great success, and we can't wait to welcome everybody back next year for an even bigger and better event! Stay tuned!

PHOTO ESLAM PIKO



LIGHTROOM

SOMEWHERE IN AFRICA... AARON HADLOW IS CAPTURED IN ACTION WITH A STYLISH BOARD OFF KITE LOOP!
PHOTO CRAIG KOLESKY



Lightroom

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

LIGHTROOM

KATIE POTTER IS LIVING THE HAWAIIAN DREAM, WITH THE PERFECT COMBINATION OF WARM WATER AND WAVES!
PHOTO AMANDA CANTOR



Lightroom

LIGHTROOM

A CLASSIC GOLDEN HOUR IN CAPE TOWN, WITH KENAN AZZAM SENDING IT DURING A SOUTHEASTER ON THE CORE XR8
PHOTO THOMAS BURBLIES

Lightroom



Lightroom

LIGHTROOM

TANGUY ALBRICI SAILING OVER A SNOW-COVERED MEADOW AT SUNDOWN ON THE GIN INSTINCT HB...
PHOTO SERGE ALBRICI



Lightroom

LIGHTROOM

OMAR AHMED SHOWS OFF SOME OLD SCHOOL AIRSTYLE OVER THIS BLUE LAGOON DURING KITEFEST!
PHOTO ANDY TROY



Lightroom

LIGHTROOM

THE RED SEA WAS FILLED WITH ENERGY DURING THE WINDSEEKERS KITEFEST,
AND RIDER AGLIKO TOOK TO THE SKIES...
PHOTO NOT PERFECT MEDIA

Lightroom

LIGHTROOM

FULL POWER TARIFA SAW EIGHT TALENTED WOMEN INCLUDING ELSIEN ZIJLSTRA,
PICTURED HERE, GOING TO THE EXTREMES!



Lightroom

LIGHTROOM

THE FAMOUS, WINDY PARADISE OF HOOD RIVER, OREGON IS BROUGHT TO LIFE DURING AWSI,
WHERE ALL OF THE TOP RIDERS AND BRANDS SHOWCASED THEIR NEW GEAR
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH



Lightroom

LIGHTROOM

16-YEAR-OLD HUGO WIGGLESWORTH SENDS IT ON THE FLYSURFER SONIC IN STORMY CONDITIONS IN SOUTHBOURNE, UK.
PHOTO HENNING VON JAGOW



Lightroom

The IKSURFMAG website is crammed with the latest news and best videos from the kitesurfing industry. With so much to see, where do you even start?!

These are the 4 most popular videos that have been viewed on the site as voted for by you with your thumbs up likes over 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!

Put the popcorn on, it's Movie Night!

MOVIE NIGHT

#1

SELF RESCUE IN KITESURFING – EXTRA TIPS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Petar Pavlovic's latest vlog about self-rescuing, focusing on rolling and securing your bar, has earned the top spot on our Movie Night list! Petar's popular tips are not to be missed!



563 votes



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#2

IN CONTROL, THAT'S WHY FOIL KITE TRAINING PAYS OFF

Call it old school, airstyle or air ballet, 'In Control' shows kite control's boundless possibilities when fully attuned to your kite! Jamie Overbeek's snags #2 on our Movie Night list with this video!



555 votes

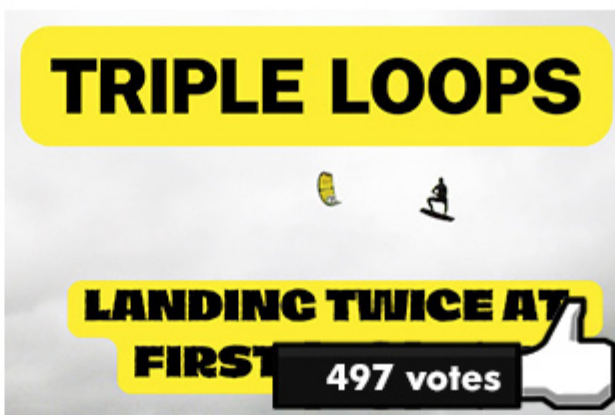


[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#3

TRIPLE LOOPS LANDED AT FIRST EVER ATTEMPT

Jamie Overbeek has done it once again and grabbed the #3 spot on our Movie Night list! When Lorenzo Casati dropped the 'first ever' triple loop news – Jamie Overbeek couldn't wait to give it a go... not once, but twice! Watch this!



497 votes

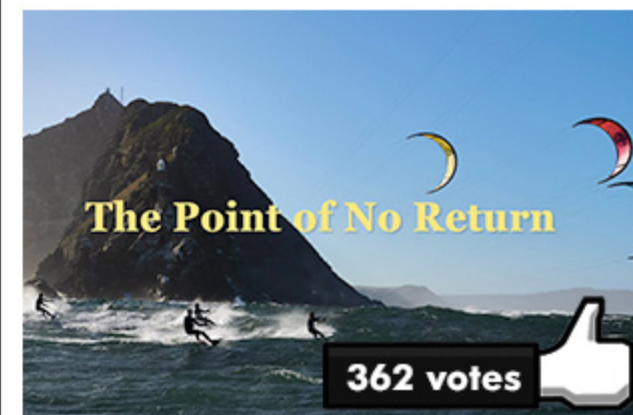


[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#4

THE POINT OF NO RETURN

A photo shoot at the treacherous Cape Point is sure to be an experience. Did the North team riders anticipate the full extent of the adventure that awaited them? Find out in this video! Don't miss 'The Point of No Return'!



362 votes



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

RIDER ANTON CHERKASHIN
PHOTO SVETLANA ROMANTSOVA

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