

# ksurf

ISSUE 111

JUNE/JULY 25

## WELCOME TO IKSURFMAG

Issue 111 is here! We've got Rou Chater's editorial on the state of the industry, a deep dive into Ozone's Parapex factory, we catch up with legends Alby Rondina and Alvaro Onieva on their emotional return to Brazil 20 years later, chat to Giel Vlugt about overcoming injury and chasing limits, and spotlight Posito Martinez as he builds a new legacy in Cabarete.

We also met creative powerhouse Isabelle Kaiser, explored Harlem's PEAK + ASCENT with Aaron Hadlow, and broke down Eleveight's XS V6 and Stellar V2 with the design team. We learn more about WOO's Code Purple, which Ride Engine robe suits your next adventure, and share fresh technique tips, tested gear reviews and much more. It's a good one - dive in!



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INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

# ksurf

111

JUNE/JULY 25

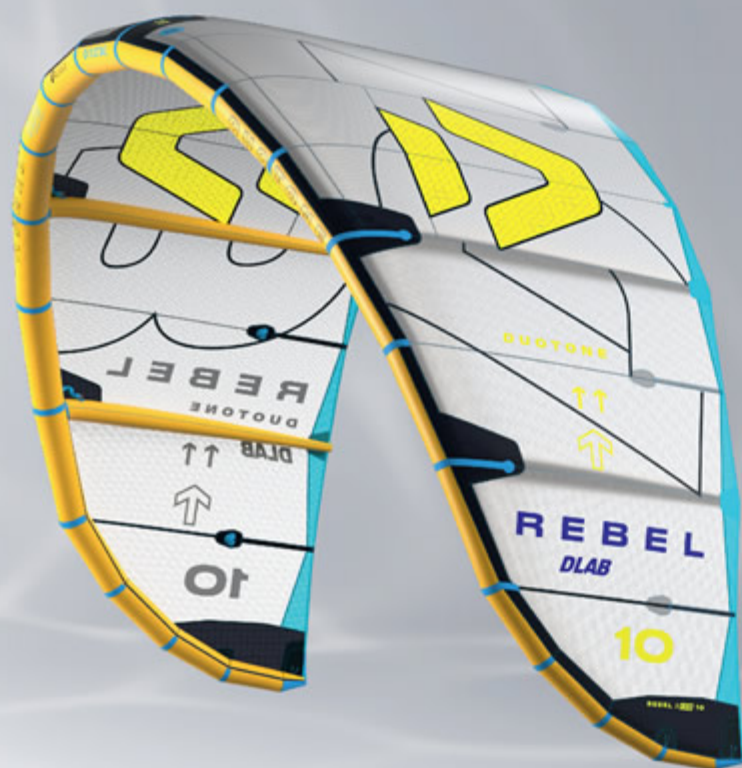


## IS WINGFOILING TAKING OVER?

BACK TO BRAZIL // THE PARAPEX FACTORY  
TECH FOCUS // INTERVIEWS // TECHNIQUE & MORE INSIDE!



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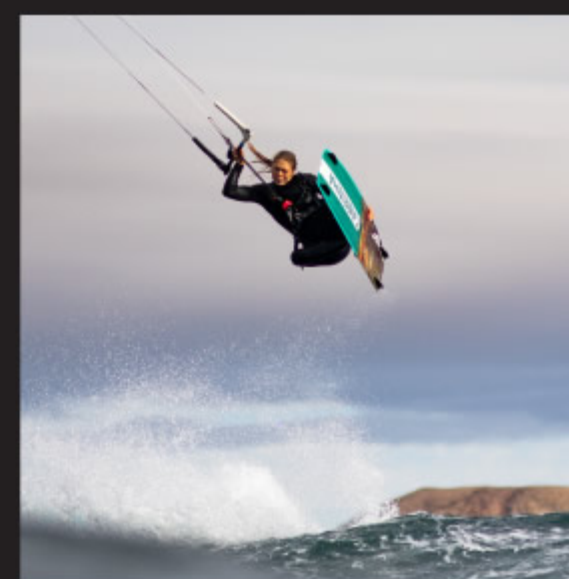
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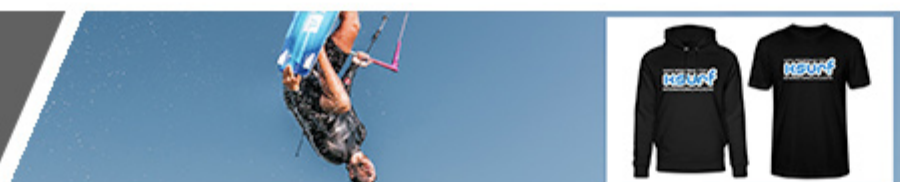
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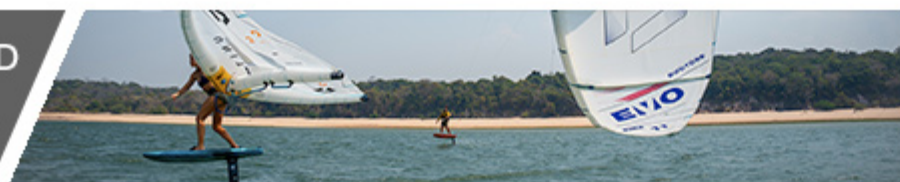
EDITORIAL



COMPETITION



SHOULD WE BE WORRIED ABOUT THE RISE OF WINGFOILING?



OZONE'S NOT SO SECRET WEAPON: THE PARAPEX FACTORY



BACK TO BRAZIL: 20 YEARS LATER



FEAR OF MISSING OUT



INSIGHT - ISABELLE KAISER



POSITO'S PARADISE



WOO SPORTS - CODE PURPLE



TECH FOCUS: HARLEM KITESURFING PEAK + ASCENT



TECH FOCUS: ELEVEIGHT XS V6 KITE AND STELLAR V2



TECH FOCUS: RIDE ENGINE'S SHELTER, BONFIRE & TECH ROBES



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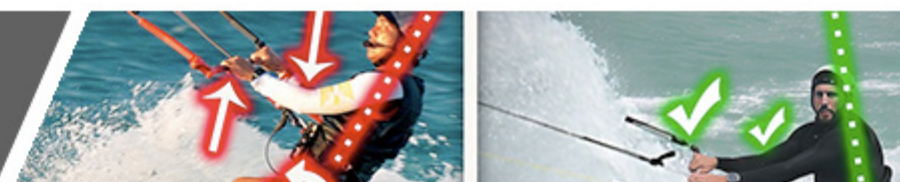
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RIDER WILLOW RIVER TONKIN & ERICK ANDERSON  
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# EDITORIAL

Finally, after what feels like the worst year for my kitesurfing career in living memory, the wind came back... It's been a strange start to the season across most of Europe. A persistent high-pressure system gave us glorious weather, even here in Wales, but not a lot of wind. Last issue, we were talking about the Trump tariffs and their effect on the industry, but now it seems like he's reneging on those, and his attention is elsewhere.

With this, hopefully, a positive step for the American industry and the wider machinations of the sport as a whole, coupled with a bit of decent wind, is there, dare I say it, a bit of positivity in the air? After two years of perhaps the most torrid time I can remember in my storied history within the watersports industry, is that a bit of light at the end of the tunnel?

A good friend of mine would argue it's likely a train coming the other way, but I hope not. Many people

work hard in this industry, for not much reward other than the passion of being involved and a bit of extra water time. I genuinely hope that this is the moment of change we all need. After all, kitesurfing is one of the best sports on the planet, and it deserves to be back in a healthier place than it has been for the last two years.

Of course, I'm talking about the industry. Regardless of the goings on behind the scenes, kiteboarding will always be awesome. It's important to stay grounded, though. After all, look at what happened to rollerblading. Sports come and go, and turbulence behind the scenes is never easy to navigate. I think we are well and truly past the worst of it, despite the crazy world we seem to be living in.

All that said, I've kited more in the last month than the rest of the year put together. A few glory wave sessions in cross-off conditions, plus a couple of onshore ones that were great fun. This week, I went kite foiling for the first time in far too long and reminded myself just how incredible that aspect of our sport is. Barely a breath of wind and flying around at Mach 10, intoxicating stuff! Hopefully, you've been getting plenty of time on the water too, and if, like me, you partake in some other foiling sports and haven't been out on a kite foil for a while, do it; it's easily one of the best ways to enjoy the ocean.

I'm keeping my fingers crossed for more wind, a bit of stability in the world order, and the continuing recovery of the industry, too.

Until next time...

*Rou Chater*  
**Publishing Editor**



RIDER BAPTISTE BOURDOULOUS  
PHOTO ARIS GIANNOUKOS



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Should we be worried about the growth of wing foiling? Are lots of kitesurfers making the switch? Is it going to take over kitesurfing? In this feature, Rou Chater dives into decades of water time to ask: Is kitesurfing being replaced, or is this just the latest wave in our sport's evolution? Let's find out!

# SHOULD WE BE WORRIED ABOUT THE RISE OF WINGFOILING?





**"THE PRO RIDERS AT THE TOP WERE CONSTANTLY PUSHING THE EVOLUTION OF WHAT WAS POSSIBLE, THE IDEA THAT ANYTHING BETTER COULD EVER COME ALONG WAS UNTHINKABLE."**

RIDER RENO ROMEU  
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH

Does anyone reading this remember the phrase "windsurfing is cancelled"? If you were lucky enough to be one of the pioneers of our sport back in the day, it's a phrase you will know well. Most of us were windsurfers back then, and at first we looked at kiting as a bit of a whacky upstart in 1998. But by 2000, the phrase "windsurfing is cancelled" was born.

I started windsurfing when I was 7 years old, so a mere 42 years ago, which is a number many younger readers will struggle to comprehend. Back then, windsurfing was the most incredible sport. It took the world by storm. There was a period during the 80s when pretty much everybody was windsurfing. I remember images of Hayling Island beach on the south east coast of the UK, and you couldn't even see the sand because of all the windsurfing equipment lying on it. It was the coolest thing to do and remained that way for many years.

As windsurfing progressed, the equipment improved, and the sport became even more dynamic. As more disciplines became prevalent, it was hard to see how this sport could ever be improved. While the pro riders at the top were constantly pushing the evolution of what was possible, the idea that anything better could ever come along was unthinkable.

When we first saw kitesurfing in the late 90s, it looked kind of stupid, and no one really thought it would ever take off. I remember seeing the late Chris Calthrop struggling with a Flexifoil Blade ram air kite







**“EVERYBODY WAS KITESURFING, AND IT WAS TOUTED AS THE FASTEST-GROWING WATER SPORT IN THE WORLD.”**

RIDER JESSE RICHMAN  
PHOTO FISH BOWL DIARIES

at one of my local spots, he ended up miles downwind with what can only be described as a bird's nest of lines while the rest of us were pulling forward loops, back loops and having an absolute blast in what was perfect windsurfing conditions. We couldn't really grasp what he was doing to himself!

As with any new sport, the development is really fast, and kite surfing was no different; it was only a matter of time before the sport started to make sense. It was early in 2000,

and I was queuing up at the windsurfing shop to buy my first kite. Kitesurfing exploded around that time, and by 2004, it was really dominant on the water sports stage. Everybody was kitesurfing, and it was touted as the fastest-growing water sport in the world.

Many of those early kite surfing adopters were ex-windsurfers like me. At first, we mostly kept our windsurfing gear and used the kite to get out in lighter winds, but as the equipment got better, the windsurfing gear

gathered more dust, and the phrase “windsurfing is cancelled” became real.

There are a lot of similarities here with wingfoiling. For many years, we've considered kitesurfing the absolute pinnacle of water sports, especially as it offers a diverse way to enjoy the wind and the ocean. Originally, we used boards that didn't work, and then the twin tip arrived, transforming the sport. Followed by the surfboard and the foil board, throw in a little bit of niche like a skimboard and the wake skate and even a McDonald's tea tray, yes that happened once,



RIDER ALBY RONDINA AND HANNAH WHITELEY  
PHOTO LACI KOBULSKY

“IT WAS HARD TO CONCEIVE OF ANYTHING  
BETTER THAN WHAT WE WERE DOING THEN.”

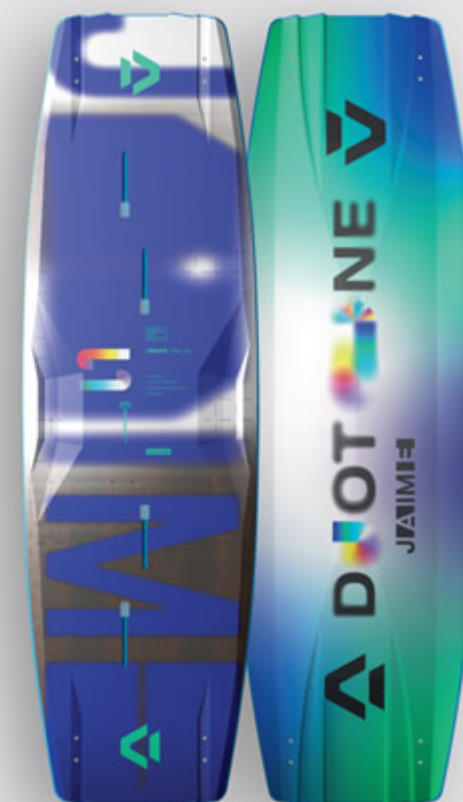


and you get an idea of how diverse kitesurfing is in the number of craft that you can enjoy time on the water with. Kitesurfing can be so many things with many different ways to enjoy it...

If you had asked any of us in 2017 or 2018 whether we thought a better sport could come along to rival kitesurfing, the answer would have been a straight no; it was hard to conceive of anything better than what we were doing then. Kitesurfing held numerous world speed records, was faster around a race course than any other craft and could get you jumping higher than anything else on the water. The amount of fun and joy it gave was part of the addiction that led to it becoming so popular, and let's not forget you can pack it all up in a small car, drive home and store all the gear in a small flat. Kitesurfing was as unique as it was incredible.

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**“ I WAS AN ACCOMPLISHED KITE FOILER, SO I ALREADY HAD THE FOILING SKILLS, AND MY EX WINDSURFING TALENTS HELPED TOO; IT FELT LIKE THE TWO SPORTS WERE COMING TOGETHER. ”**



It was almost impossible to think it could ever get any better until it did.

Robby Naish launched the first “Wing Surfer” in 2019 to a slightly bemused audience at the Naish dealer meeting in Tarifa. There were only a couple of setups available at that meeting, and many people were in attendance, so it was quite hard to get a go on this new contraption that Robby had been so enthusiastic about.

Towards the end of the week, I still hadn’t managed to have a go, and I felt that if I didn’t get one, I would be letting myself and you, our readers, down if I hadn’t tried this new water sport. At the time, no one could even decide what to call. Naish favoured wingsurfing, but now it is known as wingfoiling. My first attempt didn’t go that well. I was underpowered as the wing was only a four-meter wing, and the big board and foil weren’t quite enough to get me up onto the foil. As anyone who’s tried winging knows, it’s incredibly hard work when you aren’t foiling.

I persevered and did manage to get a couple of runs up on the foil. I was an accomplished kite foiler, so I already had the foiling skills, and my ex windsurfing talents helped too; it felt like the two sports were coming together. However, all of the effort that I put into it had exhausted me, not to mention the fact that I drifted miles downwind. My session ended with a long walk back up the beach.



**"THE PRO RIDERS AT THE TOP WERE CONSTANTLY PUSHING THE EVOLUTION OF WHAT WAS POSSIBLE, ALONG WAS UNTHINKABLE."**

RIDER RENO ROMEU  
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH

I was left wondering whether this sport would take off. I'd only had a quick experience of it, I was pleased that I'd given it a try, but in no way did I think it would rival kite surfing. Let alone come close to the feelings I got when flying a kite on the water with a surfboard, a twin tip, or a hydrofoil. It didn't take long for other brands to follow suit. Robby Naish is often way ahead of the curve in these new water sports, and nobody wanted to miss out.

As wing foiling became more popular in 2020, I managed to get hold of some equipment and put some time into trying to learn this new sport properly. I'm one of these riders who likes to learn new things. I get my most enjoyment when I'm being challenged and trying to master something on the water, whatever that might be. The challenge of trying to learn to wingfoil when nobody was around to teach you was pretty hard, but this challenge kept me coming back for more.

As kilters, we avoid certain conditions when the wind is offshore or super gusty. I was quickly discovering these conditions were perfect for the wing. As with any new sport, it quickly took over from kitesurfing, as I was trying to log the hours to crack it. I'd discover new beaches where kiting couldn't take me and had more sessions on the water than ever before.

I'm sure you've heard similar stories and perhaps had a similar experience. The thrill of riding long unbroken waves, the fun of being on the water when the conditions weren't suitable for kite, and wing foiling had me hooked. I certainly wasn't alone.



Don't get me wrong, I still enjoyed kiting when the conditions were good, but wingfoiling added something extra to my trips to the beach, I was getting skunked less, and I was logging more water time than ever. Before you stop reading and decide I've taken leave of my senses and become a full-time wingfoiler, stay with me...

It was definitely taking over in that early honeymoon period, but like any good relationship, the buzz soon fades... Once I'd cracked it, the thrill of learning

went. As soon as I'd mastered all the tacks and gybes and was confidently riding bigger and bigger waves I suddenly found that those crappy conditions I was stoked about before were no longer doing it for me. Suddenly, wing foiling, like kiting, needed a specific set of circumstances to get me really excited! I log every session I do on the water. I like looking back and gauging the success of the year by the amount of water time I get. This also lets me know how much time I spend winging and kitesurfing each year.



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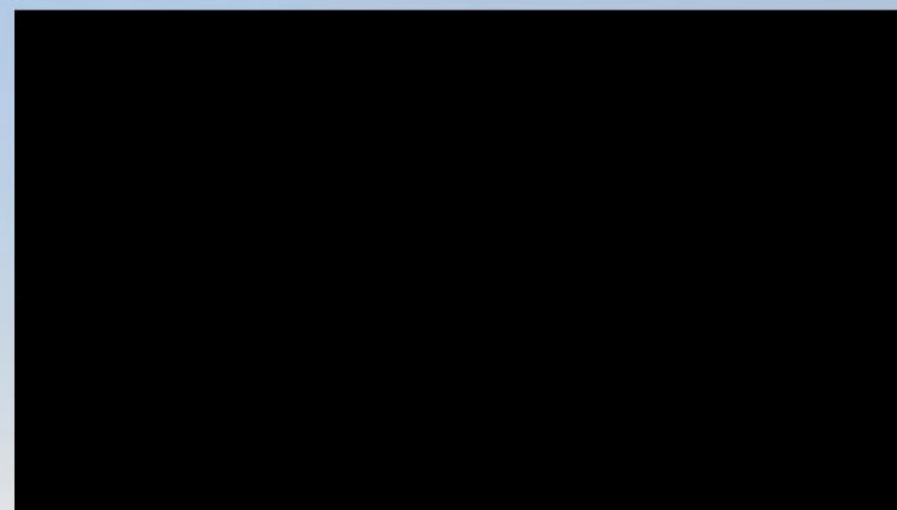
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**“WHenever I launch a kite, I get a buzz that isn't there when I hold a wing.”**



I checked the stats for this article and was surprised myself. I had winged more than kited for at least two years while learning and enjoyed winging. However, it turns out the only year where winging has beaten kiting is this one, 2025, and that's only because it's been the worst year for wind in recent memory, and I've barely done either sport but marginally winged more than I've kited.

The purpose of this article was to address the sometimes genuine worry of readers that kiting is being cancelled by wingfoiling. I know a few kites who sold all their gear and just winged full-time. There are plenty of beaches around the world that used to be full of kites and are now flooded with wingfoilers. It's a concern many of us have. We love this sport, and we don't want it to go away.

What might surprise you is that kiting is very much not being cancelled by wingfoiling. Most brands still sell way more kite products than they do wing gear, a fact that surprises many people. Kiting is what is keeping the watersports industry going globally at the moment, and there are plenty of places where kitesurfing is still very much the number one watersport on the beach.

What matters, though, and I say this with all my heart, is that kitesurfing pulls the pants down on wingfoiling any day of the week. Whenever I launch a kite, I get a buzz that isn't there when I hold a wing. When I hit the water, the speed and power cast a spell over me that is hard to shake off. Boosting a huge air when it's howling, smashing the lip of a wave and throwing a load of spray, even kitefoiling feels much faster, more dynamic and more exciting than wing foiling.



**"KITESURFING IS JUST LEAPS AND BOUNDS AHEAD REGARDING THE FUN FACTOR."**

RIDER EDGAR ULRICH  
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH

If you used to kite and now just exclusively wing, I urge you to revisit our incredible sport. If you kite and wing, then I know you will feel the same way as me, perhaps the most telling fact is this...

Look at the top pro riders within the sport; most came to it fresh or from a windsurfing background. Many of them can't kite and probably won't ever kite. Those riders frothing on a parawing will probably never know the feeling of kite foiling and how awesome that is. The ones sending massive jumps on wings will never really appreciate what it's like to throw a mega loop when it's howling... And the wing foilers who are now shredding in the waves, will they ever really appreciate the feeling of carving huge hacks on a surfboard?

In most cases, there are a few exceptions, but when you think of all the pro kitesers who are still pro kitesers and didn't switch, it backs up my point. Wingfoiling is here to stay, but kitesurfing is just leaps and bounds ahead regarding the fun factor. One thing we can all probably agree on, though, is that windsurfing is most definitely cancelled, most of them these days are on the wing, which is why it might seem like they are taking over...

Ask yourself not when you last saw more kitesers than wingers at the beach, but when was the last time you saw a lot of windsurfers...

As a kiter, you are one of the privileged few human beings on this planet who will ever know the true feeling our incredible sport gives us. There is nothing else quite like it. Other sports come close, but give me some good waves, a kite, and a surfboard any day of the week!





# OZONE'S NOT SO SECRET WEAPON: THE PARAPEX FACTORY

WORDS ROU CHATER

In this feature, Rou Chater takes a look at how having full control over design, manufacturing, and innovation has allowed Ozone to build some of the most reliable, high-performance gear on the market. From custom orders to lifetime spares and sustainable practices, this is what happens when a brand puts riders and quality first.

SNOWKITES TAKE YOU PLACES! ØYSTEIN WALLE, NORWAY  
PHOTO STEINAR BLEKEN / HEMSEDAL KITEKLUBB





Our sport is often defined by the products that come to market; new kites, boards, bars and foils all have their day in the limelight. Looking back, plenty of moments in time have defined the era and changed the sport in ways we couldn't imagine. The rise of the bridled "bow" style kites in 2006, improvements to bars and safety systems, and iconic kites and boards have captured the imagination along the way.

One thing that is often overlooked is where and how these products that bring us so much joy are manufactured. We all bemoan the seemingly ever-increasing costs of our favourite toys, but do we ever look under the hood at what happens to bring them to us? For the most part, brands will outsource their production, often sharing factories with other brands. This might surprise you, but 90% of the world's wetsuits, including all the brands you love, bar Rip Curl and a few boutique options, are all made in the same factory.

It's the same with kites and boards. Cobra is a behemoth in the board manufacturing world, having near total market dominance. And there are plenty of brands that perhaps wouldn't want to sit next to each other in a restaurant, but who rub shoulders sharing the same kite manufacturing facilities. The hard and fast fact is that all these factories require huge investment, not to mention a vast pool of skilled labour.

For most brands, this is impossible even to consider, especially when they first start out, but for one brand in our industry, it became a way to improve their equipment and stay ahead of the game.

"ONE THING THAT IS OFTEN OVERLOOKED IS WHERE AND HOW THESE PRODUCTS THAT BRING US SO MUCH JOY ARE MANUFACTURED."



JESSE RICHMAN RIPPING ON HIS CUSTOM COLOUR ENDURO V5 ULTRA-X, MAUI  
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH



“WHAT HAD STARTED OUT AS 20 SEWING MACHINES IN A SINGLE ROOM, PARAPEX WAS EVOLVING TO BECOME ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST EXTENSIVE PRODUCTION FACILITIES”



Ozone was founded in 1998 by David Pilkington, Mike Cavanagh and Rob Whittall, passionate paragliders who soon developed a love for kite sports. Ozone set out to create some of the best equipment for paragliders and kites around the world. It wasn't long before the team realised that if they wanted to set themselves apart, having total control of their production would be an absolute must.

#### THE FACTORY

David Pilkington travelled to Vietnam in 2000 to set up a production facility. In 2001 the team's passion for kites was boosted by the energies and vision of Matt Taggart who joined Mike, David and Rob as a fellow founding partner of Ozone Kites LTD. Blood, sweat and

devotion were poured in to push Ozone into the hearts and minds of kite shop owners and their customers. Meanwhile, behind the scenes in Vietnam, what had started out as 20 sewing machines in a single room, Parapex was evolving to become one of the world's most extensive production facilities for paraglider and watersports equipment. The site now spans an area equivalent to two football fields and employs over 1,000 people.

Parapex is more than just a factory; it's a statement of intent from one of the world's most popular brands. It represents total control over quality, innovation, and customer support in an industry where most brands are at the mercy of external supply chains.

For riders, this has real implications: cutting-edge products built to exacting standards, faster product evolution, exceptional spare parts availability, and gear you can count on year after year.

Running a factory is a massive logistical and financial undertaking; there are numerous factors to consider, from wages to energy supplies, not to mention the location of the factory within a global supply chain. You need to consider not just the raw materials coming in but also the finished products heading to customers. For Ozone, while the costs are substantial, the payoff is enormous, from prototyping and developing new products to creating unique production techniques that reduce waste and costs, not to mention being able to create new products quickly within their own timeframe.



MORE VORTEX KITES, HEADING OFF TO HAPPY HOMES  
PHOTOS ALVARO RODRIGUEZ / OZONE



THERE ARE 35 LASER CUTTING MACHINES IN PARAPEX, EACH ONE WORKING FULL TIME. THIS ONE IS BUSY WITH THE INTERNALS OF A PARAGLIDER

“WE ALWAYS FEEL THAT QUALITY AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL ARE EVIDENT WHEN WE UNBOX ANYTHING THEY SEND US.”

This means there are no compromises. No “close enough” tolerances. No waiting for third-party suppliers to prioritise their orders. Every kite, wing, board, foil or harness that leaves Parapex does so only when it meets Ozone’s exacting standards. In our vast experience of testing Ozone products, we always feel that quality and attention to detail are evident when we unbox anything they send us. Hold up the stitching on an Ozone kite to a competitor and you’ll often see a marked difference in accuracy and workmanship.

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▲ 18.6m



WOO LEADERBOARD Misty Cliffs, ZA		
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3	AARON	26.7m
4	JAN	26.6m
5	STIG	26.2m
6	STIJN	25.1m
7	ANDREA	24.5m
8	VAL	24.4m

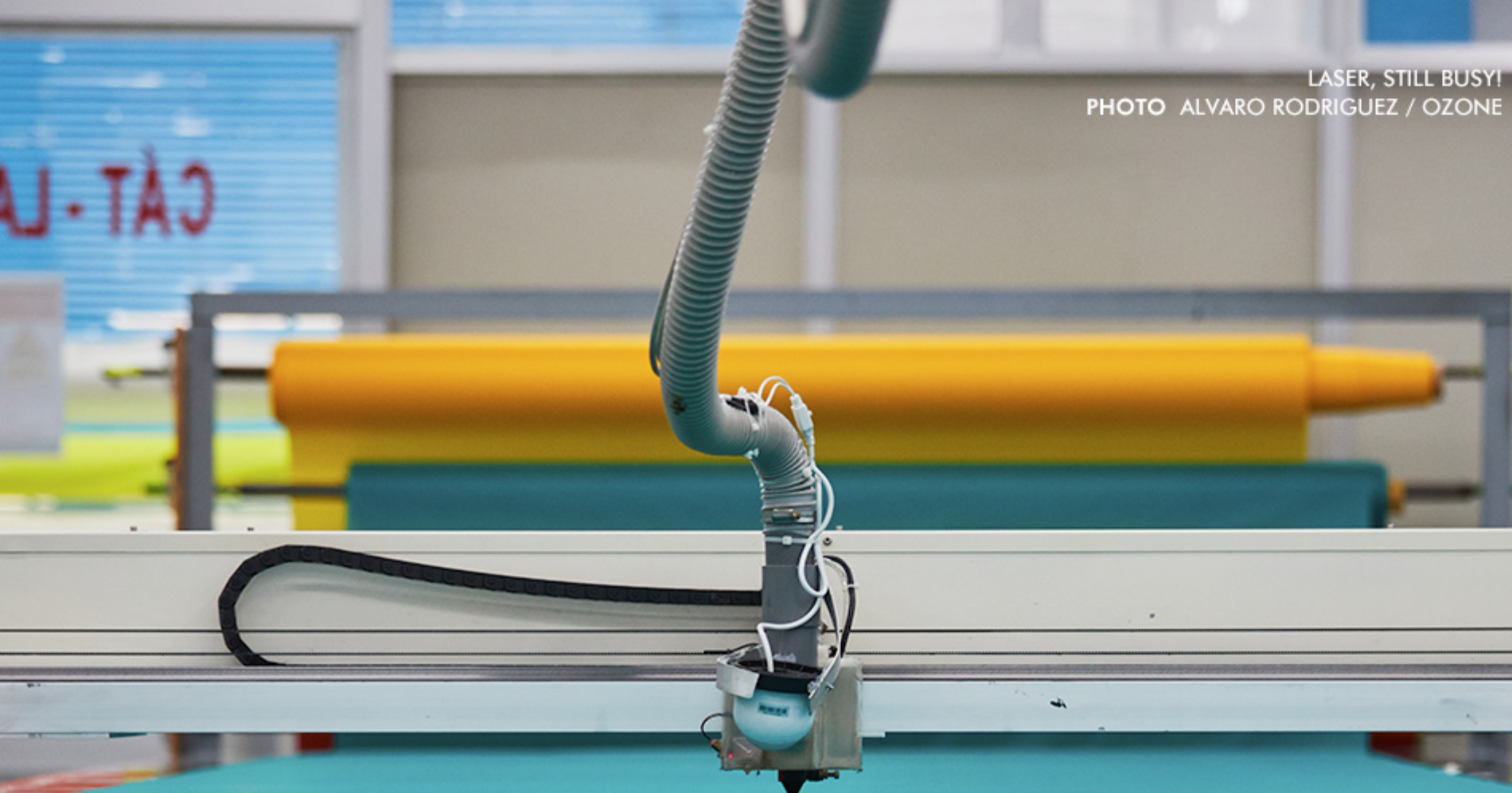
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FINAL INSPECTION PHASE  
PHOTO JORGE ATRAMIZ  
/ OZONE

“FROM FOOTBALL MATCHES TO BEACH PARTIES, OZONE REALLY FOSTERS AN EMPLOYEE DYNAMIC THAT SHOULD BE APPLAUDED.”

Because Ozone owns Parapex, there's no need to compromise on materials or processes due to supplier constraints, either. They choose the best fabrics, threads, and reinforcements because they can. And if a prototype reveals a new way to strengthen a seam or reduce drag, it can be implemented immediately without waiting for a third party to adapt.

For you as a rider, this translates to polished gear that works exceedingly well and comes with some of the best customer service backup you can imagine.

Kitesurfers know the details matter. Stitch patterns, panel tension, reinforcements, and valve placements affect performance, durability, and even safety. At Parapex, every kite is built by a team of highly skilled technicians, many of whom have years, if not decades, of experience. These aren't underpaid workers on a production line, however. Ozone has invested in training, facilities, and a work culture emphasising pride and precision.

Even though over 1,000 people work there, it's more of a family than a workforce. With out-of-hours social gatherings, from football matches to beach parties, Ozone really fosters an employee dynamic that should be applauded. Khanh is the Factory Manager, and a keen kitesurfer; he really fosters this family ethos; his daughter is now learning to kitesurf too, on an Ozone kite, of course!

#### MADE JUST FOR YOU

Perhaps one of Ozone's most forward-thinking innovations is its manufacture-to-order system. This is highly unusual in the kitesurfing industry. While most brands forecast demand months in advance and produce large batches of gear that sit in warehouses,





“WHAT STARTED OUT AS 20 SEWING MACHINES IN A SINGLE ROOM HAS EVOLVED INTO ONE OF THE WORLD’S MOST EXTENSIVE PRODUCTION FACILITIES”

Ozone operates on a lean, responsive model. Kites are only manufactured when a customer or distributor places an order.

It’s no secret that the industry is in a total bind because of the oversupply caused by some brands thinking the gravy train wouldn’t ever stop after the COVID boom. There is a glut of gear still out there that has seen brands, distributors, and shops go under. It’s been a real blight on the industry for the last two years. However, Ozone can proudly say they weren’t part of it.

Their manufacture-to-order system is unique

and has many benefits, but it also has some drawbacks. If you order a kite today, it should be with you within four to six weeks, which can be off-putting for some customers. While they have had no part in the overstock issue, they are still affected by it, with kites on 70% off discounts that make it hard to compete when you only ever sell at full retail.

That’s arguably where the downsides end, though, and if you are prepared to wait, and let’s face it, good things come to people who do, then you are in for a treat. Fortunately for Ozone, the unique offering from their

lineup means a loyal customer base is always keen to get their hands on Ozone’s latest products.

From an eco perspective, this system reduces waste; there is no overstock, and they only produce what has already been sold and paid for. As a rider, there are benefits too; your gear holds its resale value, as there are no close-out deals or 50% off moments at the end of the season that would hammer your second-hand value. Ozone doesn’t do an annual overhaul colour change for the sake of it either, their vast range gets updated when it is good and ready, usually staying in current production for up to two years and sometimes longer.



They won't ever release a new product unless they feel the benefits of the new design totally warrant it. This means there is no rush to meet a production deadline, which allows the designers to refine the gear to the pinnacle of performance. Again, this helps maintain your resale value for longer; your gear stays current rather than being tied to the industry's annual ticking clock.

Of course, the other huge benefit of manufacturing to order is that you can choose the colours you want. We've all been there in the shop, wanting the red only to find that they only have black. With an Ozone order, you can pick from a standard set of production colours or select your own and easily build your unique colourway on their website. Check out the Custom Colour Chooser on every product page under the 'Colours and Availability' tab. This tool allows riders to personalise their kite's colour scheme and provides real-time insight into factory stock levels and estimated lead times if a custom build is required.

More than this, though, Ozone offers a full custom design service. We've all seen Kai Lenny riding his Red Bull-branded gear; Ozone made that. Whatever you want on your kite, they can do it, and you won't be waiting forever either; they are made in a similar time frame to the standard and custom colour options.

It's a business model that requires confidence in your logistics and supply chain, which wouldn't be feasible without owning the factory. Ozone makes it work, and the riders benefit directly from it.

**SPARE PARTS? NO PROBLEM.**

As equipment costs have gone up, many of us are keeping our quivers for longer. Ozone offers a comprehensive lifetime spares program,

JESSE RICHMAN, FOIL KITE STYLE, ON THE HYPERLINK V4. MAUI  
PHOTO FRANKIE BEES



**"YOU CAN PICK FROM A STANDARD SET OF PRODUCTION COLOURS OR SELECT YOUR OWN AND EASILY BUILD YOUR UNIQUE COLOURWAY ON THEIR WEBSITE."**





# HYPERLOCK

The Most Advanced Harness System  
created by Ride Engine

# The Hype is Real



[RIDEENGINE.COM](https://rideengine.com)



“IT ALSO MEANS MORE  
CONFIDENCE WHEN  
BUYING A KITE: IF  
SOMETHING GOES  
WRONG, YOU WON'T EVER  
BE LEFT STRANDED.”



meaning you can obtain a bladder, valve, or any other part you might need to keep you on the water. One of the biggest pain points in kitesurfing is what happens after your kite gets damaged. Need a replacement bladder for a five-year-old model? Good luck. A replacement valve for a discontinued kite? Maybe on eBay, if you're lucky.

We often don't talk about the ability to get spares in our industry, and perhaps we should. As we strive for a greener footprint, keeping kites running for longer is ever more prescient, especially when they are so damn good nowadays.

Because they control the manufacturing process, Ozone offers lifetime spare parts support. That means they can fabricate any part for any kite they've ever made. Bladders, valves, canopy panels, strut sections—whatever you need, the factory can produce it, often with the original materials and specifications.

This is an incredible advantage for riders who want to maintain their gear for the long haul, rather than treating it as disposable. It also means more confidence when buying a kite: if something goes wrong, you won't ever be left stranded.

It's a circular, sustainable approach to gear ownership that fits perfectly with the sport's growing emphasis on responsibility and stewardship of the natural world we ride in. "Inspired by Nature" is, after all, one of the brand's key mottos.

#### FASTER INNOVATION, BETTER PERFORMANCE

Owning your own factory doesn't just help with quality and logistics; it accelerates innovation.

When Ozone's design team develops a new idea, they can prototype it in-house, test it, refine it, and push it into production without waiting for external partners.





RUBEN LENTEN DOING HIS THING  
WITH THE VORTEX IN BRAZIL  
PHOTO ANDRE MAGARAO /  
LEN10 EXPERIENCE

“THE DESIGNERS CAN TRIAL  
NEW IDEAS, DESIGNS, AND  
MATERIALS AND HAVE THE  
PROTOTYPES BACK WITH  
THEM WITHIN A WEEK.”

This feedback loop is fast, efficient, and entirely within their control.

It also means they can be more experimental. Want to try a new bridle layout? A different Dacron configuration? A lighter bladder material? No problem. The designers can trial new ideas, designs, and materials and have the prototypes back with them within a week. More than this, though, the factory can look at how they will mass produce these developments right away, meaning a much faster route for the product to get into your hands.

This agility is one reason why Ozone continues to produce high-performance kites that dominate across disciplines, from wave riding and freeride to race, hydrofoil, snowkiting, and paragliding, where they are also a dominant force.

#### BUILT BY RIDERS, FOR RIDERS

There's another intangible but essential benefit to owning your own factory: ethos.

Ozone's team is made up of passionate riders, many of whom are deeply embedded

in the sport. They understand what matters to kitesurfers because they are kitesurfers. And that passion filters through every part of the business—from design to manufacturing to customer service.

Parapex isn't just a production facility. It's an extension of that ethos: a place where rider-centric innovation is encouraged and built into the operation's DNA.

#### WHY IT MATTERS TO YOU

As a reader of IKSURFMAG, the chances are you know your gear. You know that when heading out in marginal wind, launching off a reef break, or boosting a huge mega loop, you want to be riding equipment you can trust.

Here's what choosing Ozone gives you:

- **Reliability:** Factory ownership means fewer failures, tighter tolerances, and more durable products.
- **Support:** Lifetime spare parts mean you can repair, not replace, and stay on the water longer.
- **Performance:** Faster innovation cycles mean you get the best designs, constantly refined and tested.
- **Sustainability:** Less waste, less overproduction, and longer product lifespans mean a smaller footprint.
- **Transparency:** You know who makes your gear, where, and how.



Ozone's model stands out as something genuinely different. They're not just building kites; they're building a better way to support the sport and the riders who live for it.

#### SHOULD YOU CARE?

Not every rider will care about who owns the factory that makes their kite. But maybe they should.

When your kite flies more smoothly, lasts longer, and can be repaired years down the line, that's not just luck. It's the result of a deliberate choice to do things differently. Ozone has made that choice, and the result is a brand that prioritises quality, support, and sustainability in ways that few others can match.

So the next time you launch an Ozone kite, know this: it didn't come off a generic production line. It came from Parapex, a factory built by riders, for riders, and it was made, quite literally, just for you.

MACH1 POWER IN MAURITIUS  
PHOTO BLACKLAVA PRODUCTION / OZONE

"THEY'RE NOT JUST BUILDING  
KITES; THEY'RE BUILDING A BETTER  
WAY TO SUPPORT THE SPORT AND  
THE RIDERS WHO LIVE FOR IT."





MATERIAL INSPECTION/QUALITY CONTROL  
IS A VITAL DEPARTMENT



SQUIRREL WINGSUITS, ALSO MADE IN  
PARAPEX. AERODYNAMIC KNOWHOW  
PHOTO DAN DUPUIS



PARAGLIDING, FOREVER PHOTO OZONE





A full-page photograph serves as the background. It depicts a man in mid-air, performing a kiteboarding maneuver over a beach at night. He is holding onto a control bar connected to lines that disappear into the dark sky. Below him, two other men stand on the sand near a yellow dune buggy. The scene is dramatically lit, with a large splash of water or sand in the foreground creating a bright, textured area. The sky is dark with some clouds.

# BACK TO BRAZIL

## 20 YEARS LATER

For many riders, a trip to Brazil is an annual ritual, a pilgrimage to consistent wind, buttery lagoons, and good vibes. But for Alby Rondina and Alvaro Onieva, this year's journey was more than just another kite trip; it marked a full-circle moment. In this feature, Jen Tyler catches up with both of them in Back to Brazil: 20 Years Later!

WORDS JEN TYLER, ALBY RONDINA AND ALVARO ONEIVA  
PHOTOS ANDRE MAGARAO





" THIS TIME NOT AS COMPETITORS, BUT COLLABORATORS. WHAT STARTED AS A WORK TRIP QUICKLY TURNED INTO SOMETHING MORE. "

After first meeting on the PKRA tour two decades ago, Alby Rondina and Alvaro Oneiva reunited in the birthplace of freestyle, swapped stories from the golden days, and shared the water again; this time not as competitors, but collaborators. What started as a work trip quickly turned into something more. "I hadn't been back to Brazil since before COVID," says Alby. "When Alvaro, now the head judge of the GKA, asked me to join the panel in Cauipe, I was stoked. It was meant to be just work, with three events back-to-back, but when one got cancelled, suddenly we had time. The best crew, free days, and a road to Jeri." Alvaro says, "It was an unexpected trip. We had a week-long break between events, and it just clicked. We rode, slept, and ate açaí; it was pure bliss. It felt karmic."

Alby and Alvaro first crossed paths in 2005 at a PKRA event in Sardinia. "Alvaro was already one of the OGs," Alby says. "I don't think he remembers me back then—I was just a tiny local rookie!"

I always enjoyed riding and sharing good moments with Alby," Alvaro says. "He was humble and super stylish. I also remember his family's support; they came to every event."

Back then, the scene was completely different. There were no livestreams, Instagram stories, YouTube tutorials, or TikTok edits. "You had no clue what your competitors were training unless you saw it in a heat," says Alby. "Being at an event meant everything. It was your only chance to see who was pushing the sport."





"IT'S ALSO OPENED  
THE DOOR TO  
CREATIVITY,  
CONTENT, AND  
NEW WAYS TO  
STAY STOKED."

Social media has radically transformed the game. "Now everyone knows everything about each other," Alby says. "But it's also opened the door to creativity, content, and new ways to stay stoked." Travel has also changed. "I remember trying to reach Cauipe Lagoon with my mom by horseback," Alvaro laughs. "We never even made it!"

3D FIT TECHNOLOGY

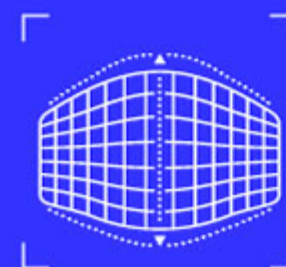
- Less pain
- More performance
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THE NEW DEFINITION  
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**"FREESTYLE WAS THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERED, NO WINGING, NO BIG AIR, JUST HOURS AND HOURS ON THE WATER."**

Returning to legendary spots like Uruau, Taiba, and Cauipe triggered major déjà vu. "These were the places where I learned so many tricks," says Alby. "They were the epicentre of kiteboarding. Freestyle was

the only thing that mattered, no winging, no big air, just hours and hours on the water."

This time, it was different. "For the first time, I wasn't training every day," Alby says. "I've always been a focused athlete, riding twice daily, stretching, and working on tricks. But this trip was about enjoyment. We mixed in surf foiling, winging, downwinders, and it made me fall in love with Brazil all over again."

And the sessions? Magic. "Riding with Alvaro again was dreamy," says Alby. "He's always been an inspiration; short boards, crazy blind-to-blind tricks, and always that huge smile. We may not be throwing as many tricks as we used to, but the style and love for the sport are stronger than ever."

"Getting back on the water with Alby brought back so many memories," Alvaro agrees. "It felt like rewinding time. The sport brought us together, and we're still riding that wave."









"A YOUNG  
CREATIVE WITH  
FRESH ENERGY.  
"THIJS WAS KEEN  
TO JUMP IN" "

They were joined by photographer and filmmaker Thijs, a young creative with fresh energy. "Thijs was keen to jump in," says Alby. "It was fun seeing the sport through his eyes. Along with Maxi, a good friend and judge from Tarifa, we loaded up a small car and road-tripped from Cumbuco to Jeri, stopping wherever the conditions looked good."



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From a creative perspective, it was a dream shoot. "Tow-in surf foiling in Ilha do Guajiru, surf foiling sunrise sessions in Jeri, pure freedom," Alvaro remembers. "Those moments before the competition day started were like meditation."

Of course, no Brazil trip is complete without linking up with Andre Magarao. "Andre is a legend," says Alby. "We go way back. He came from a skate and BMX background and brought that raw style to kite photography. I remember him deciding to use flashes in broad daylight, a game-changer. His night shots? You just know they're his." Alvaro adds, "Andre always pushes you creatively. He knows what looks good and brings the art out of every session."

While the sessions were electric, there's no denying that time has shifted things. "We're not 20 years old anymore," Alby said. "After a few days, we were both looking for massage therapists." Alvaro agrees. "There's a limit to the tricks and conditions we can handle. I'm riding more versatile gear now, freeriding is where it's at."

Still, their love for perfect conditions hasn't changed. "There's nothing like Cauipe flatwater, Taiba kickers, or the big air potential in Ilha do Guajiru," says Alby. "These spots are still world-class."

In between riding and shooting, they had time to reflect. "Alvaro's been a major part of the judging scene," says Alby. "He works hard and loves the sport. I've been busy with the Cabrinha distribution in Italy and my centre, ProKite Alby Rondina in Sicily. But when I was asked to judge, I said yes right away. It felt right to give back."



" THEY MAINTAIN THEIR SHAPE UNDER HIGH LOAD, OFFERING EXCELLENT BACK SUPPORT AND EVEN PRESSURE DISTRIBUTION. "





**"THEIR STORY PROVES THAT THE HEART OF KITEBOARDING LIES NOT JUST IN THE TRICKS OR THE TITLES, BUT IN THE PEOPLE, THE PLACES, AND THE ENDLESS PURSUIT OF STOKE"**

The evolution of the sport has brought new disciplines and gear. "We're seeing young riders throwing handle passes in light wind and loops when it's nuking," says Alvaro. "The gear is getting more adaptive. It's about blending styles now." But some things never change. "The stoke of being on the water, that buggy ride to the beach, açai in the afternoon, it still gives me energy and freedom," Alvaro says. "The connection with nature and each other is the real essence."

So what's next? "We've got some reels out on Instagram already," says Alby. "And we hope to link up again for the freestyle stops in Abu Dhabi and Brazil later this year."

"I still want to visit Alby's Pro Centre in Sicily," says Alvaro. "It looks like the perfect playground, flat water, waves, and big air potential."

We had to ask the most important questions of all: what's the secret to staying stoked after 20 years? "Mix it up," says Alby. "I'm lucky that Cabrinha makes top gear for all conditions. Freestyle, waves, foil, big air, I love it all. Stretching helps, too!"

"Never forget the essence," adds Alvaro. "The sport is the excuse. It's the connection."

Two decades in, their story proves that the heart of kiteboarding lies not just in the tricks or the titles, but in the people, the places, and the endless pursuit of stoke. Alby and Alvaro found all that back in Brazil and more.









HARLEM



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WORDS GIEL VLUGT QUESTIONS JEN TYLER  
PHOTOS & VIDEO ANTONIO HERRERA TRUJILLO

Get ready for an inside look at the mindset, motivation, and recovery journey of one of Big Air's most explosive riders. Jen Tyler sits down with Giel Vlugt to talk injuries, comebacks, world records, and what it really takes to stay at the top. From the lows of recovery to the highs of chasing new limits—this is Giel, unfiltered.

# FEAR OF MISSING OUT







**“ HE KNOWS HOW TO MAKE ME FEEL COMFORTABLE,  
BUT ALSO WHEN TO GIVE ME THAT EXTRA PUSH.  
IN MY OPINION, HE’S THE BEST IN THE BUSINESS! ”**

**Giel, we just finished watching ‘Fear of Missing Out.’ How did the idea for the film come about, and what made you want to share this part of your story?**

Together with my sponsor, Capital, we set out to create a documentary series that gives a real look into my life—not just the training and fun moments, but also the challenges and how I face them. Starting this journey while I was still deep in recovery made it clear what the focus of this first episode needed to be.

**How did you and Antonio Herrera Trujillo first connect, and what made him the right collaborator for this project?**

Antonio’s actually a good friend of mine—we met a few years ago playing basketball here in Tarifa. At the time, I was just stepping into the kitesurfing scene, and he was just getting started with his career too. That friendship makes it really easy to be myself in front of the camera. He knows how to make me feel comfortable, but also when to give me that extra push. In my opinion, he’s the best in the business!

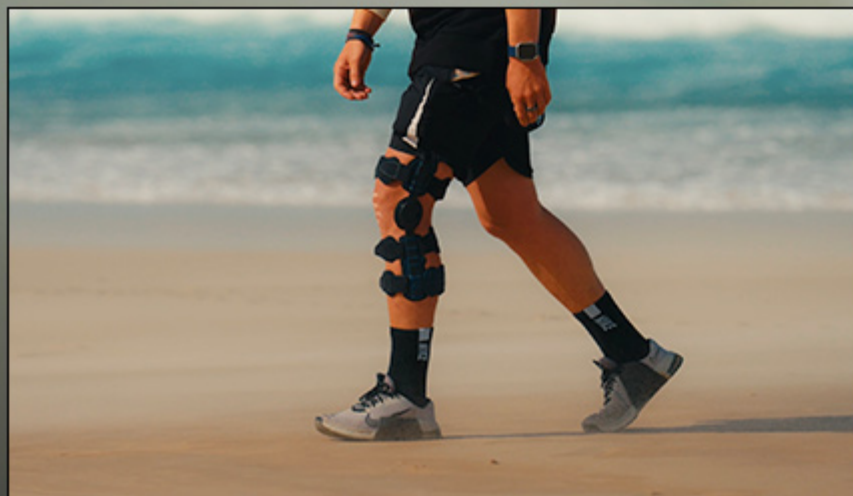
**What was it like being on the other side of the camera—raw, vulnerable, and not just riding?**

Honestly, it was terrible—haha! I’m not used to showing my “vulnerable” side, and I usually have a pretty positive outlook even during the lows, so digging into the more negative side wasn’t easy for me. Normally, I’d avoid watching everyone kite in epic conditions if I couldn’t ride, but for the video, we went to check it out to capture my reaction. That part honestly felt like I was torturing myself!

**Can you take us back to the moment of the injury—what happened, and what was your immediate reaction?**

I was charging full speed at a wave—probably around 50 kilometres an hour—trying to hit it just right.





**“EVERY TIME I GET INJURED, DEEP DOWN I KNOW IT RIGHT AWAY... BUT I ALWAYS TRY TO CONVINCE MYSELF IT'S NOTHING SERIOUS.”**



But I was a bit too late, and the lip had already collapsed. It ended up slamming straight into my knee while I was still at full speed. I felt a lot of pain instantly, but I didn't want to believe something was actually wrong. Funny thing is, every time I get injured, deep down I know it right away... but I always try to convince myself it's nothing serious.

**Did you know right away it was serious, or did it take time to realise the impact fully?**

I knew it wasn't good news, but being the positive person I am, I kept telling myself it was just a bit sore and would clear up in a

few days... little did I know what was really ahead.

**How did your background—from a family of physiotherapists—shape your understanding of what needs to happen next?**

Knowing how important it is to treat an injury properly from the start, I took it seriously right away. But just two days later, I had to travel back to Holland, which obviously didn't help the recovery. Luckily, I had a lot of support—Ruan Retief in Cape Town helped me out massively right after it happened, and I also had a few video calls with my family, which made a big difference.

**What were the biggest physical hurdles you faced during recovery?**

The first few days after the injury were tough—my knee was incredibly sore and stiff. But after about a week, I started to get a bit more mobility back. Honestly, this injury has been more challenging mentally than physically.

**Injuries can be just as tough mentally—how did you stay motivated during the darker moments?**

I always try to focus on the positives. Instead of stressing about what I can't do, I shift all my energy to what I can do. Keeping my mind busy with other things is key—if you're occupied, there's no time to feel down about the situation... haha!





“KNOWING I WAS DOING ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING I COULD GAVE ME A REAL SENSE OF PURPOSE”

Were there any specific people, routines, or habits that kept you grounded during the most challenging times?

When you're injured but fully committed to coming back stronger, it honestly becomes a full-time job. At one point, I was doing hyperbaric chamber treatments three times a week, physio four to five times a week, hitting the gym daily, eating home-cooked, unprocessed meals every day, and cycling every other day too. Knowing I was doing absolutely everything I could gave me a real sense of purpose and kept me motivated and incredibly positive throughout the process.

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YOUR LIFETIME IS IRREPLACEABLE  
YOUR LIFETIME IS IRREPLACEABLE  
YOUR LIFETIME IS IRREPLACEABLE



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**What was your first session back like, emotionally and physically?**

I was incredibly nervous before getting back on the water and told myself I'd be happy just riding up and down. But after about 50 metres, a perfect kicker popped up—and without thinking, I went for a big jump. As I took off, muscle memory kicked in, and I looped the kite into a rotation. That moment gave me such a massive boost—it was exactly what I'd been missing for the past two months. I stuck to an hour-long session, just like I'd agreed with Curro, my physiotherapist in Tarifa. My muscles were cramping for days after, but it was totally worth it!

**Has your mindset changed since the injury, either in training, competition, or life?**

No, because I genuinely believe that if you give it everything you've got, there's no reason to be unhappy with the outcome. At the end of the day, doing your absolute best is all you can control—and that in itself is something to be proud of.

**Do you still feel the same drive to push boundaries, or has your focus shifted?**

Absolutely! I can't wait to get back out there and push my limits again. That said, I also want to showcase more of what kiteboarding is about beyond just competitions. For me, kitesurfing is the perfect way to explore incredible places and connect with people around the world. My focus has shifted a bit—not because of the injury, but because I truly believe there are still so many stories in this sport that deserve to be told.



**“IF YOU GIVE IT EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT,  
THERE'S NO REASON TO BE UNHAPPY  
WITH THE OUTCOME.”**





**“ IT’S ABOUT TAKING THINGS SERIOUSLY,  
LISTENING TO YOUR BODY, AND MOVING AT  
THE PACE IT ALLOWS ”**

**Are you still chasing the world record for the highest jump?!**

Oh yes, it will be mine one day. Mark my words!

**What’s next for you—competition, content, or something new?**

I really believe this documentary series is going to be something special. We’ve got tons of ideas and some incredible locations lined up that we can’t wait to share with you all. So keep your eyes peeled—we’ll be posting updates and episodes on both my Instagram and YouTube channels!

**What message did you hope other riders would take away from this documentary?**

This episode, in particular, is all about showing the highs and lows—but more importantly, how to handle them in the most professional way possible. It’s about taking things seriously, listening to your body, and moving at the pace it allows. Don’t get caught up in what others are doing or worry about what you’re missing out on. Accept where you are, make the most of it, and go kick ass!

**Thanks, Giel - It’s been a pleasure!**

Thanks, Jen!



QUESTIONS JEN TYLER

# INSIGHT

## ISABELLE KAISER

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From the fashion and paragliding industries, Isabelle Kaiser took her time finding her place in the action sports world—but when she did, she made it her own. Now leading creative at Brainchild and launching Juniqua, the first kite and wingfoil brand for women, Isabelle is blending design, innovation, and style in a bold new way. Find out more in this exclusive Insight feature!



**Hello Isabelle, and thank you for joining us today! What was your earliest memory of flight and the paragliding world as a child in the Kaiser household?**

Hello Jen! Thank you so much for having me. I didn't take my first tandem flight until I was 24, which might be surprising given that my dad owned a paragliding brand! As a kid, I was more interested in other activities and, honestly, a bit scared. Back then, paragliding seemed like something for the older generation and not very stylish. Eventually, I did a few tandem flights and one legendary solo flight, which might be my only one!

**Did you always know you'd end up working in the action sports industry, or was it something you grew into?**

Absolutely not! My background is in marketing and communications, and I began my career in the fashion industry. However, I have always been drawn to design, particularly graphic design. It became my way of expressing ideas when words failed me (which, let's face it, happened more often than I'd like to admit). So, when my dad asked me to take over marketing and visual product design at ICARO Paragliders, it felt like the perfect opportunity to delve deeper into graphic design. I even planned to study graphic design on the side, but then something new came my way, and that plan took a completely different turn!

**What lessons did you pick up from your parents about building a business?**

Running your own business requires hard work—lots of it. However, I see it as a positive challenge. I come from a generation that views hard work as a natural part of life, and I don't consider it a negative aspect.

PHOTO ARIS GIANNOUKOS

**"RUNNING YOUR OWN BUSINESS REQUIRES HARD WORK—LOTS OF IT."**







I'm fully committed when there's a great idea on the horizon. So far, I've been fortunate to be involved in some incredible projects.

When and where did you meet Ralf Grösel?

A few weeks after I joined ICARO Paragliders, my dad introduced me to Ralf. At that time, he was designing paragliders for ICARO and overseeing production in Sri Lanka with Aero Dynamics. Ralf presented a bold rebranding concept he had co-created with a Berlin-based art director.

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**" I'M COMPLETELY HOOKED AND MUCH MORE MOTIVATED TO HIT THE WATER, EVEN IF CONDITIONS AREN'T PERFECT "**



The goal was to infuse modern flair and lifestyle vibes into the paragliding scene, and I was immediately captivated. We scraped the initial study plans and put all our effort into revamping the brand, and we succeeded! The entire paragliding industry adopted the fresh look we developed. Incidentally, our first ICARO photoshoot took place in North Macedonia, which was my first visit to the country!

**How and when did you first get into kiteboarding? Are you still as passionate about it as those early days?**

I entered the world of kiting through Ralf. Initially, I tried it but didn't feel particularly passionate about it. My ideal session consisted of sunshine, warm water, no crowds, just a light breeze, and a good-looking guy nearby to rescue me if necessary. However, things have changed, primarily due to my new project. Nowadays, I'm completely hooked and much more motivated to hit the water, even if conditions aren't perfect (although I do have my limits—not 40 knots and rain!).

**What is your job role at Brainchild, and what are your day-to-day responsibilities?**

In addition to shaping the visual brand identity of Brainchild, I took on the responsibility of managing all the "unimportant" details—those small touches that often go unnoticed, but that women typically appreciate. In any startup, you wear many hats; today, with a growing team, things are more structured. I have been part of Brainchild's digital printing journey from the beginning—a technique Ralf introduced to the kite industry, which has opened up a whole new world of creative possibilities.



My current role involves handling customer design files, guiding clients through the complex pre-print process, and providing support on custom designs, accessories, and concept development. I also focus on marketing; we've established Brainchild as a distinct label. However, our marketing strategies differ from traditional kite brand practices. We maintain a reserved approach to content, as our production insights are highly sensitive.

**Brainchild's mission is about future-forward innovation—what excites you most about the company's vision?**

Brainchild is a playground for innovation, functioning like a creative lab where ideas constantly flourish. What excites me the most is the limitless potential present. There's always something thrilling, whether it involves materials, production techniques, or collaborations across different industries.

**What are some of the challenges that you face as Head of Marketing and Head of Graphic Design?**

As Brainchild grew rapidly, I received support from another woman on the team. However, as I began to delegate tasks, I realised just how complex and layered the design aspect is, particularly when it comes to explaining things, especially given my less-than-ideal communication skills.

The brands manage their campaigns, and we are proud that they all feature the "Brainchild Label" in their storytelling.

"WHAT EXCITES ME THE MOST IS THE LIMITLESS POTENTIAL PRESENT."





"BRING YOUR UNIQUE ENERGY TO THE TABLE—THIS INDUSTRY NEEDS MORE."



**What's the future look like for Brainchild?  
What's next?**

By the end of the year, we will expand Brainchild Manufacturing by an additional 3,000 square meters. The current production site in Bitola will be transformed into a dedicated research and development centre and innovation hub. If you know Ralf, you can expect something new and innovative

to be in the works. Stay tuned!

**What would you say to women keen to get roles within the industry? Do you have any advice for them?**

Femininity can be a superpower, particularly in industries where technology and performance often dominate the conversation. My advice is to be confident and trust your intuition. Bring your unique energy to the table—this industry needs more.

**Tell us about your latest project, Juniqua, the first kite and wingfoil brand made exclusively for women!**

I'm so excited to share the story behind Juniqua – Be Unique! The idea for this brand was born three years ago when Brainchild's digital printing opened the door for me to create my custom kite. That moment completely transformed my view of the sport, and I found myself fully immersed in kiting.



**" JUNIQUA IS AN ELEGANT AND FEMININE KITESURFING BRAND DESIGNED TO PROVIDE WOMEN IN WATERSPORTS WITH CLASSY, HIGH-PERFORMANCE GEAR "**



Other women started to notice and asked if they could buy the gear. To my surprise, I realised that no single female-first kite brand was available. Thus, Juniqua – Be Unique was born!

Juniqua is an elegant and feminine kitesurfing brand designed to provide women in watersports with classy, high-performance gear that makes them feel wonderful and confident on and off the water. With Juniqua, we aim to transform state-of-the-art watersport equipment into fashion!

The equipment features a sporty-chic design, developed in collaboration with Ralf Grösel to ensure optimal kite performance. At launch, our collection will include an all-around freeride kite, a twintip board, pads and straps, and a kite bar. Additionally, Juniqua will offer accessories such as pouches, bags, and towels to prepare ladies for all their adventures.

The upcoming collection's signature design element is the iconic houndstooth pattern, inspired by Chanel. This pattern reflects timeless elegance and class.

Juniqua takes a unique approach that sets it apart from the traditional kite industry. Our strategy is B2C, primarily driven by influencer marketing, and we aim to reach beyond the conventional kitesurf community. We especially target fashion-forward women in other luxury lifestyle sports like golf and skiing to inspire them to explore kitesurfing.

**Amazing, thanks so much, Isabelle and best of luck with Juniqua!**

Thanks Jen!



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PHOTO LONGBOAT

WORDS JEN TYLER & POSITO MARTINEZ

# POSITO'S PARADISE

Dominican powerhouse Posito Martinez is back—and this time, he's not just riding, he's building. After years of competing at the highest level, Posito opened his own kite school in Cabarete, where it all began. Jen Tyler chats to him to learn about his journey from local grom to pro rider, what makes Cabarete so special, and how he's helping the next generation chase their dreams!



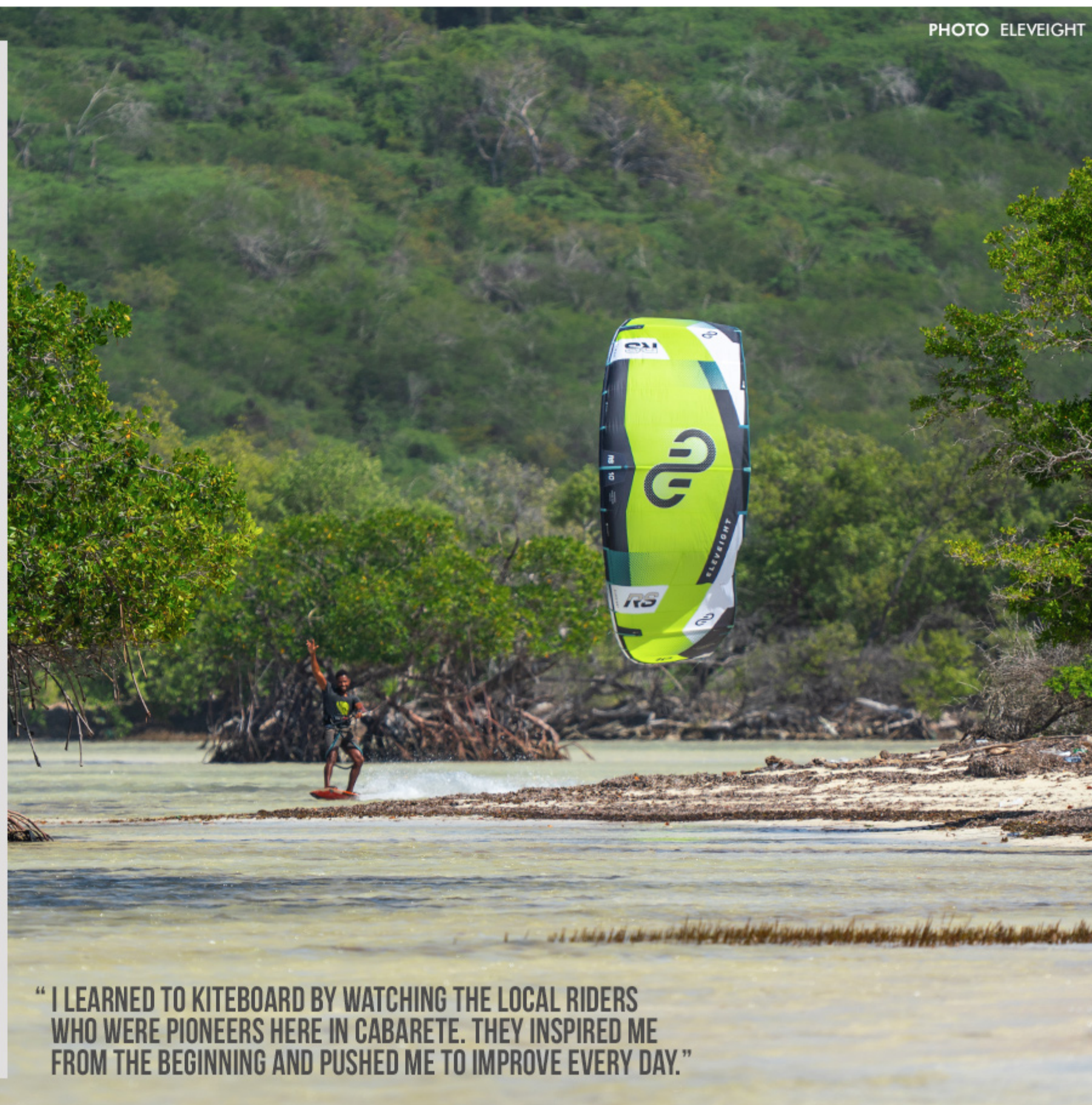
Posito, thanks for joining us and massive congratulations on opening your new school! It's been five years since we last caught up with you, and so much has changed since then; let's take it from the beginning! What was it like growing up in Cabarete? Who taught you to kiteboard?

Thank you for having me! Growing up in Cabarete was a real privilege. Being surrounded by the ocean, the wind, and a community passionate about water sports shaped me from a young age. I learned to kiteboard by watching the local riders who were pioneers here in Cabarete. They inspired me from the beginning and pushed me to improve every day.

Today, I run the Posito Martinez Kite School, which is now online. Anyone can book beginner, intermediate, or advanced lessons with me via phone or email. I also organise fun kite trips around the Dominican Republic, an incredible adventure where we ride, explore, and enjoy this paradise together. Also, on these kite trips, I can teach beginners, intermediate, or advanced lessons without any inconvenience, learning like a pro directly with me.

**Looking back at where you started compared to where you are now, how does it feel?**

It's amazing to look back. I started as a kid with a board, dreaming of flying high, and now I have my own school and represent a global brand like Eleveight. I used to dream of having what I have now, and I thank God for making it possible. Teaching others to ride and helping them improve or even become pro kiteboarders makes me feel truly fulfilled.



**"I LEARNED TO KITEBOARD BY WATCHING THE LOCAL RIDERS WHO WERE PIONEERS HERE IN CABARETE. THEY INSPIRED ME FROM THE BEGINNING AND PUSHED ME TO IMPROVE EVERY DAY."**



**“EVERY CHALLENGE TAUGHT ME  
SOMETHING AND MADE THE JOURNEY  
EVEN MORE MEANINGFUL.”**



PHOTO FRIENDLY KITE BUEN HOMBRE

**What was your biggest challenge in making your dream of a kite school happen?**

The biggest challenge was definitely the logistics, finding the right moment, building a trusted team, and managing everything while still staying focused on my riding. But every challenge taught me something and made the journey even more meaningful.

**What's the one session or competition moment you'll never forget and why?**

One moment I'll never forget is competing twice in the Red Bull King of the Air. Being part of such an iconic event, surrounded by the world's best riders, pushed me mentally and physically. The energy, the crowd, the wind, everything came together and reminded me why I love this sport so much.

**Is there a trick you're still chasing that you haven't fully landed?!**

Absolutely! I'm always chasing progression. I'm working on adding more control and power to my double loops with rotations. Timing and commitment are key. In Cabarete, we usually get up to 25 knots max, so it's hard to consistently train big tricks like doubles, but I know I've got the potential. With the amazing gear Eleveight provides me, I feel safe and confident pushing my limits.

**What makes Kite Beach so special compared to other world-famous kite spots?**

Kite Beach has an incredible vibe—it's raw, authentic, and rich in culture. We are surrounded by nature, where things feel more untouched. But the real magic is the community and the culture. Picture yourself embraced by the ocean and palm trees.



**"CABARETE IS A SMALL TREASURE IN THE WORLD. THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC ISN'T A RICH COUNTRY, BUT CONSIDERING THE PEOPLE'S HAPPINESS, WE FEEL THE RICHEST ONES."**

After an amazing kitesurf session, nothing beats fresh coconut water to refresh. I always welcome anyone who wants to visit Cabarete. I was born here and know every corner of this magical place!

**How do you keep your Big Air and Freestyle skills sharp while running a business? Do you still find the desire to compete, or has the new school taken up all of your attention?**

It's all about balance. Running the school takes time, but I prioritise training, staying in shape, and getting on the water as often as I can. I still have the passion to compete; I just choose my events more carefully now. I also continue to travel and run kite clinics

around the world. I will be in Türkiye in June and July, organising kite clinics there.

Anyone who wants to start kitesurfing or advance their level can shoot me a message on Instagram!

**How would you describe the magic of Cabarete to someone who's never been?**

Cabarete is pure energy. It's a perfect mix of natural beauty, steady wind, warm waters, and a community that lives for the ocean. You feel it as soon as you arrive: the freedom, the rhythm, the culture. Cabarete is a small treasure in the world. The Dominican Republic isn't a rich country, but considering the people's happiness, we feel the richest ones. You will feel this warm, welcoming,

and happy culture when you arrive in the country.

**What's your go-to Eleveight setup for Big Air vs. Freeride?**

I ride the Eleveight XS-Pro with the Stellar board for Big Air, which gives me insane lift and full control in strong winds. For Freeride, I go with the RS V9 and the Master C+ board; it's smooth, fun, and perfect for all-around riding.

**How have Eleveight supported you in creating your own school?**

Eleveight has been incredible. They've supported me not just as an athlete but also as an entrepreneur. From gear to guidance, they've always backed me, and it feels incredible to be part of a brand that truly believes in their riders' dreams. I'm proud to be part of the Eleveight family.



**Tell us about Cabarete!**

**What makes Cabarete a must-visit spot for kites and travellers?**

Cabarete is a kiter's paradise: consistent wind, warm water, good vibes. But more than that, it's a town full of culture, great food, music, and adventure. Whether you're here to ride hard or just relax, Cabarete delivers. You can kitesurf, surf, paddleboard, be lost in nature, learn to dance bachata, or enjoy the nightlife surrounded by palm trees, rivers and happy people.

**When is the best time to visit, and what conditions can you expect?**

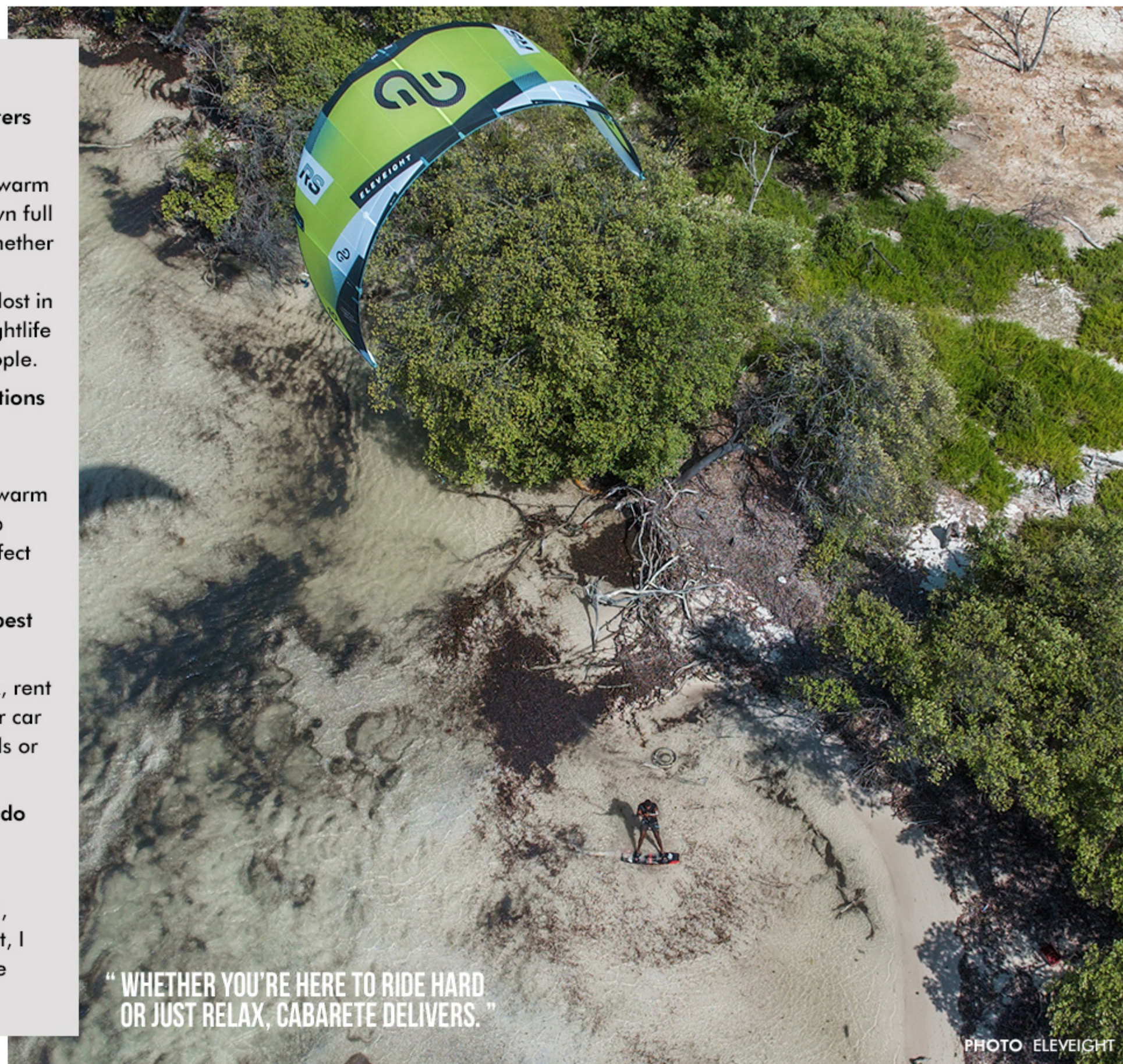
The best time is from mid-December to August. You'll get steady trade winds, sunny skies, and warm temperatures all year. The wind usually picks up around noon and stays strong until sunset - perfect for long sessions.

**How easy is it to get around, and what's the best way to explore?**

It's super easy. Everything is close; you can walk, rent a bike, or grab a moto-taxi. Renting a scooter or car is a great option if you want to explore waterfalls or nearby towns.

**Where should you eat, and what local dishes do you recommend?**

There are tons of great spots from Dominican kitchens to international restaurants. Try mangu, fresh seafood, and tostones. For drinks at sunset, I recommend Mojito's Bar Cabarete, La Casita De Papi, Tuva or La Mesa Taina at Kite Beach.



**"WHETHER YOU'RE HERE TO RIDE HARD  
OR JUST RELAX, CABARETE DELIVERS."**

PHOTO ELEVEIGHT



**"COME WITH AN OPEN MIND AND BE READY TO ENJOY BOTH THE OCEAN AND THE VIBE ON LAND."**



**What are the best things to do when the wind isn't blowing?**

There's never a boring day here. You can surf in the morning, explore waterfalls, do yoga, mountain bike, learn bachata or just chill with friends. I also offer guided trips to some impressive natural waterfalls and rivers around the island for anyone wanting to discover more about the Dominican Republic.

**How reliable is the internet, and are there good remote work spots?**

The internet here has improved dramatically and is fast and reliable for remote work. There are also great cafés and co-working spots, especially along the main street. Many digital nomads live here now.

**Where should people stay? Are there kite-friendly places nearby?**

You'll find everything from beachfront hotels to hostels and villas. One of my favourites is Wind House Cabarete—that's my own apartment for rent, specifically for the kitesurf community. Also, Mango House, where you can meet fellow kites, is just a 2-minute walk from Kite Beach. Many places offer storage, lessons, and easy beach access.

**What advice would you give to riders visiting Cabarete for the first time?**

Come with an open mind and be ready to enjoy both the ocean and the vibe on land. Respect the locals, protect nature, and share the stoke. Oh, and bring sunscreen. Be ready to fall in love with Cabarete. Many people come for a week and end up staying for years!



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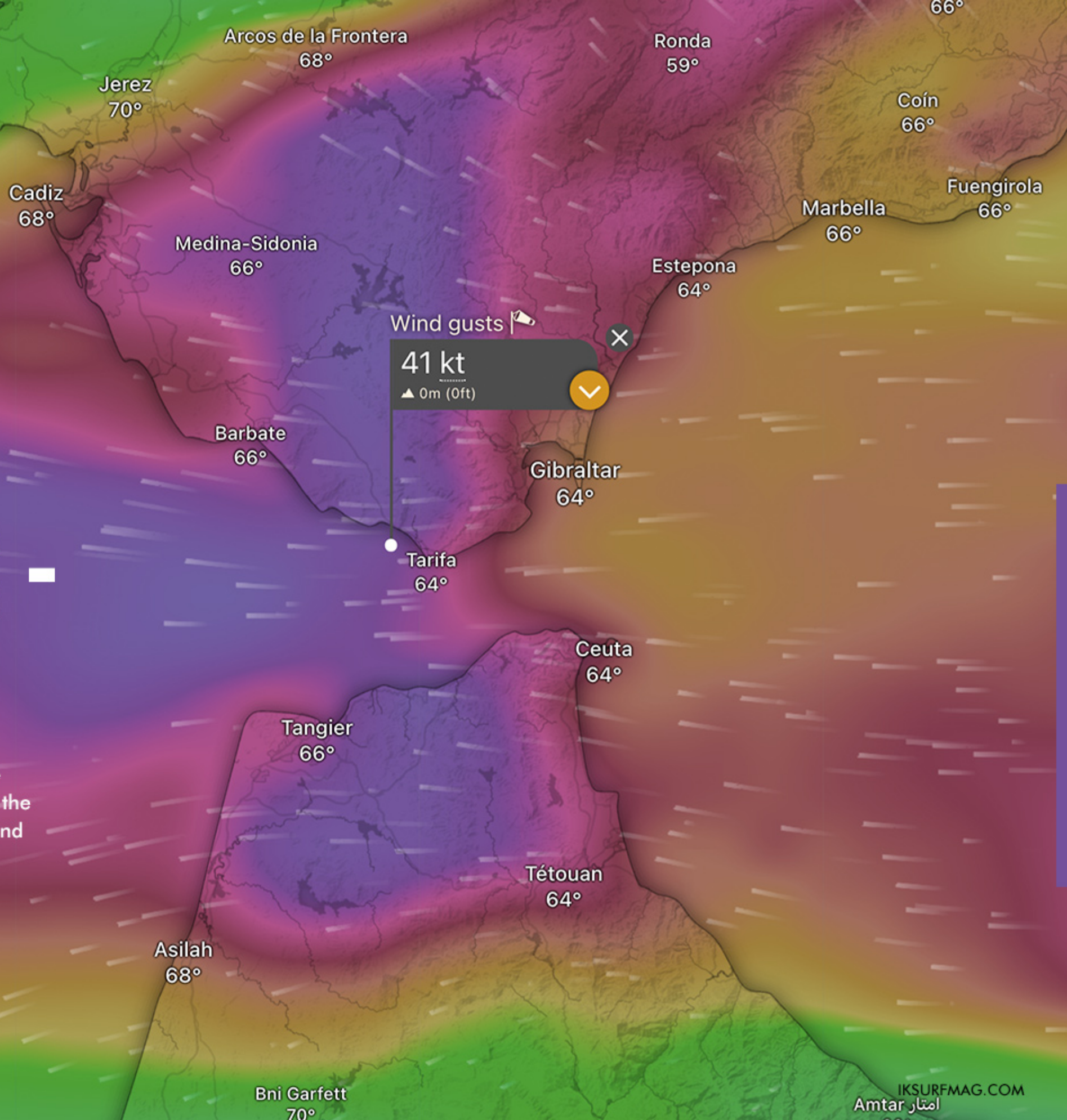
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WORDS JEN TYLER AND ARLIN LADUE

# WOO SPORTS - CODE PURPLE

No judges, no flags—just riders, their WOO, and the will to send it. On April 28th, gusts hit 44 knots, and the beach lit up with monster airs, new faces, and full-send energy. Jen Tyler caught up with WOO Sports' Arlin Ladue to find out how Code Purple came to life and why it's shaking up the big air scene!







**“TARIFA DELIVERED AN UNFORGETTABLE DAY THAT SET THE TONE FOR THE UPCOMING FULL POWER TARIFA EVENT.”**



When the stadium meter in Tarifa hits 40 knots, you know what time it is—Code Purple. No judges. No flags. Just riders, wind, and their WOO devices.

On Monday, April 28, at 8:06 AM, the anemometer read 44 knots, and the beach came alive. Riders stacked on 6m kites were still overpowered, car doors barely budged, and the stoke was off the charts. This wasn't your average send session—it was a one-day, full-send showdown.

With a €2,300 prize pool and a leaderboard lighting up in real time, Jason van der Spuy (31.2m) and Francesca Maini (20.4m) took the top spots. Juniors got in on the action too, including Ingmar Woerdeman, who hit a massive 18.3m. Between savage gusts, broken struts, and a few near-death wipeouts (we're looking at you, Francesca!), Tarifa delivered an unforgettable day that set the tone for the upcoming Full Power Tarifa event.

set the tone for the upcoming Full Power Tarifa event. But behind the chaos is a clever concept catching fire in kite communities worldwide. We caught up with Arlin Ladue from WOO Sports to hear how Code Purple came to life—and where it's headed.

**Arlin, tell us about Code Purple! Who came up with the concept of one-day, local challenges?**

Over the last ten years on WOO, we've noticed that the best riders instinctively grab a WOO and go when the wind nukes. The forecast for April was looking wild



**“THEY MIGHT’VE BEEN TRAINING FOR YEARS,  
BUT ONE GOOD GUST ON A CODE PURPLE DAY  
CAN INSTANTLY PUT THEM ON THE MAP.”**



—40+ knots—so we teamed up with WET Watersports in Tarifa and turned it into a one-day, open-format boost-off for whoever was in the area.

**Did the one-day format change how riders approached performance?**

Absolutely. It created a totally different kind of pressure. There’s no fixed heat time—riders go when they feel ready, and from any spot in the region. We saw them timing their sessions carefully throughout the day, often staying out just 30 minutes at a time to catch the right gust.

**How do you choose the locations?**

It’s all forecast-driven. We partner with local kite shops, like WET Watersports in Tarifa, to be the regional host and help spread the word. That way, when the storm hits, they’re ready to rally riders, offer demos, and showcase the local scene.

**What made Tarifa the perfect launch spot?**

Tarifa always draws top riders in the spring. When it nukes, you have a stacked lineup of talent and an insane amount of energy on the beach. You don’t need much to make it happen—just wind and stoke.

**Seeing newcomers like Riccardo Zuanetto and Ingmar Woerdeman land huge jumps was amazing. What was that like?**

That’s the beauty of this format. It gives emerging riders a stage. They might’ve been training for years, but one good gust on a Code Purple day can instantly put them on the map.

**How is the format evolving, and what’s worked best so far?**

We’re experimenting with different setups, such as event length, criteria, and team formats.



One of the most fun has been Teams, where riders push each other and share the outcome. There's a lot of potential to tailor each event to the local vibe.

**If you could drop the next Code Purple challenge anywhere in the world, where would it be?**

The current World Record (36.7m) was set by Hugo Wigglesworth near Wellington, NZ in Plimmerton. It's a spot where the wind compresses and funnels into a bay, creating unpredictable updrafts, waterspouts, and turbulence. It is not "safe," but it's helped the local "Flying Kiwis" to podium at WOO Worlds every year we've run it.. Every year, we've run it. I'd love to document a 40 kts+ session there, including prizes, safety boats, and a few of the world's best.

#### CODE PURPLE TARIFA WINNERS

##### Men:

1st Jason van der Spuy – 31.2m (7m Airush Lift Team)

2nd Beto Gomez – 30.4m (7m Duotone Evo)

3rd Valentin Hoenderop – 30.2m (6m Rebel D/Lab)

##### Women:

1st Francesca Maini – 20.4m (5.9m Orbit Pro)

2nd Alessa Sophia Mensch – 17.8m (6m Naish Pivot)

3rd Rose Hourtoulle – 8.7m (6m, completely lit!)

##### Junior Highlight:

Ingmar Woerdeman – 18.3m (Canos)

##### Thinking of hosting your own Code Purple?

You don't need judges or a full event team. Watch the forecast, rally your local crew, and fire up the WOO. With plug-and-play support from the WOO team, it's a great way to showcase talent, stir up local excitement, and create world-class content right at your home spot.

**"IT IS NOT "SAFE," BUT IT'S HELPED THE LOCAL "FLYING KIWIS" TO PODIUM AT WOO WORLDS EVERY YEAR WE'VE RUN IT.."**





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QUESTIONS JEN TYLER  
WORDS AARON HARLOW  
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# TECH FOCUS

## HARLEM KITESURFING PEAK + ASCENT

Jen Tyler chats with Aaron Hadlow about Harlem's newest releases—the PEAK kite and ASCENT twin tip. Built in collaboration with Ralf Grösel, the gear blends performance, comfort, and sustainability. Aaron shares what sets these designs apart and why they're built to help riders push their limits. Read all about it here!





Hi Aaron, We can't wait to hear about Harlem's latest releases! How did the collaboration between Ralf Grösel and you influence the development process?

We have been working together for over 10 years now, and we have a common understanding of our vision for kiteboarding products. I have always looked to gain an advantage with the best possible performing products, but I also realise that this needs to be commercial and that the consumer can also take advantage of that.

**What about the relationship makes it so successful?**

We are able to feel the kite in the same way, so it is a great validation and gives us a lot of confidence in what is being produced. We are very precise and know that this translates to the final product.

As I mentioned, we share the same ideas and believe that our approach to products and riding style is the most beneficial for all riders looking to push their limits and/or simply have an easy and comfortable ride.

**Let's start with the all-new PEAK! What were the design goals when you started the project?**

After the THRIVE, which is a 3-strut, fixed bridle, super friendly, all-round kite (which you can also extract performance), we wanted to work on a different style of kite that is more suited to jumping high and hang time. We always first and foremost put commercial properties as a priority, so comfortable bar pressure, easy handling, good de-power, etc, but mainly we focused on a kite that would be super easy to jump high with precise handling and 'sheet and go' (producing lots of power/lift when sheeting in).



" I HAVE ALWAYS LOOKED TO GAIN AN ADVANTAGE WITH THE BEST POSSIBLE PERFORMING PRODUCTS "



**"IT IS VERY INTUITIVE, GOES UPWIND WITH EASE, AND SITS VERY HIGH INTO THE WIND."**



#### **How does the kite differ from the THRIVE and FORCE?**

The FORCE has amazing speed and looping capabilities. The Thrive is a 3-strut, all-round kite made for every level of rider, every discipline, and every condition. The PEAK is a 5-strut big air kite made for jumping high and breaking records.

Regarding feeling, the THRIVE and the PEAK differ in steering and de-power stroke type. The pressures are similar, but delivered in a different way. The steering is still direct, but produces a wider arc, meaning the delivery of the power (and kite loop) is more consistent. The kite still has lots of de-power, but the limited pulley system makes you feel more connected to the back lines, especially in stronger winds. Being a 5-strut frame, the frame is stiffer and the PEAK has a higher top end, so you can hold and control more power in strong wind.

#### **How beginner-friendly is it for someone new to big air?**

I believe it works great. It is very intuitive, goes upwind with ease, and sits very high into the wind. This allows the kite to really find its position in the wind window during take-off, and with the right timing, it gives you a really vertical take-off and solid connection to the kite, in turn giving you the most control. Again, the kite has great de-power and handling abilities, so I expect this kite to work really well for many levels of riders.

#### **How does the PEAK handle super gusty or stormy conditions?**

We wanted this kite to perform at the highest level, meaning the better the rider, the more you can extract from this kite. This kite sits so far into the wind window and can give a huge amount of vertical lift.



"EUROPEAN RAW MATERIALS SUPPLIERS ARE PRIORITISED, DRASTICALLY REDUCING TRANSPORT DISTANCES AND CARBON EMISSIONS."



We designed the kite to give our team riders the most confidence possible, allowing us to push our limits even further. It has a great second lift upon landing, so the combination with the board makes for a smooth landing.

#### **What materials or parts help make it more sustainable?**

This topic is a part of the company values, really trying to find better solutions, if possible and viable. Of course, we work on optimising the packaging and logistics processes, but when it comes to kite production, there are a couple of factors. Our full kite (and wing) line-up is produced at Brainchild production, which operates on solar energy. European raw

materials suppliers are prioritised, drastically reducing transport distances and carbon emissions. Our kitebag is made of 97% recyclable and recycled materials. All kites are also digitally printed, meaning all the material that enters the factory is white, which saves a lot in waste material but also saves a lot in the colouring process, as the process to dye the material into a solid colour is very energy-consuming.

#### **Tell us about the ASCENT. You've been designing twin tips for a long time. What makes it different from other twin tips?**

I have always loved board design. I remember being fascinated by it since I first started kiteboarding. Over the years, I worked with shapers and designers

and gained a great understanding.

It was really exciting to have the chance to produce a board from scratch to suit our kites and see what is possible in design. I have a strong philosophy about how a board should work and feel, which is echoed by Ralf. The channels and concave are pretty unique, but I would just say the precision and all the parameters (rocker, flex, outline, etc.) are what set it apart.

#### **What kind of rider is it designed for?**

Our range has two boards: The LAUNCH is a more flexible and forgiving board with quick planning and a comfortable ride. We wanted to maintain speed and comfort, but achieved that in a different way due to the concave and channels.



Having a quick board is key to getting the most out of our kites, so this was important, but we were able to make a more stable platform and add more rocker so that it could be pushed harder and ridden more powered. Intermediate to advanced riders will be perfectly suited to this board.

**How does it fit in with a big air rider's quiver, and what size would you recommend?**

I am 180cm and 75kg. Both sizes work for me. I would say I am right in the middle of the two. I would take the 135 in more extreme conditions, although for most sessions, I am riding the 138. I am used to a bigger board from freestyle, so that works for me.

It really depends on your riding style, weight and height, but we would generally recommend the 135 for riders up to 70kg and the 138 for riders over 60kg.

**Why did you blend carbon and glass in the board, not just full carbon?**

We had free rein to make this board however we thought best. We tried many different constructions, including full carbon. We just wanted to make the best board possible.

In the end, we came up with a blend of glass and two carbon weaves. We were really looking to make a specific flex pattern from tip to centre. They should be super solid between your straps to reduce reverse flex for a solid land. Then, having a bit more forgiveness on the tips to help load and carve into the wind upon takeoff. Speed, height, grip, and control are key for us to suit our kites, so we implemented this in production.

**What's the benefit of the soft-flex tips on this board?**

In general, it adds comfort to the ride in harsh condition, I also feel it allows you to sink the tail of the board and really have a consistent and grippy carve,

**" SPEED, HEIGHT, GRIP, AND CONTROL ARE KEY FOR US TO SUIT OUR KITES, SO WE IMPLEMENTED THIS IN PRODUCTION. "**







**"THERE ARE SO MANY FACTORS IN GETTING A BOARD RIGHT, AND I AM REALLY HAPPY TO RELEASE AND SHARE THIS ONE."**



this gives you great confidence through take off allowing you to jump into the wind and get a really vertical and connected take off. Upon landing, it is also more controllable, sometimes stiff carbon, fast rebound tips can buck you off balance, so again, it is just about the ease of use.

**What have you done in the shape to make those harsh big air landings easier?**

One point that stands out the most is the comfort of landing on this board. We were aiming for this, but it also exceeded our expectations. The channel and concave configuration, in combination with the flex pattern, are definitely the main contributing factors. As I always say, there are so many factors in getting a board right, and I am really happy to release and share this one.

**What would you say to a rider thinking of upgrading their twin tip?**

I would say that boards are really personal. Many people have a different style and preferences. It is definitely interesting to demo and try friends' boards wherever possible. Definitely give whatever you try a good go. Really think about the things you like and dislike and why.

So far, the feedback on the Ascent has been really positive. People have felt comfortable and confident about it straight away, which is a really good sign for me.

If you have the chance to try the board, give it a go. There's not much to say; I know the board will speak for itself.

**Great, thank you, Aaron!**

Thanks Jen!





FORTALEZA

MANCORA

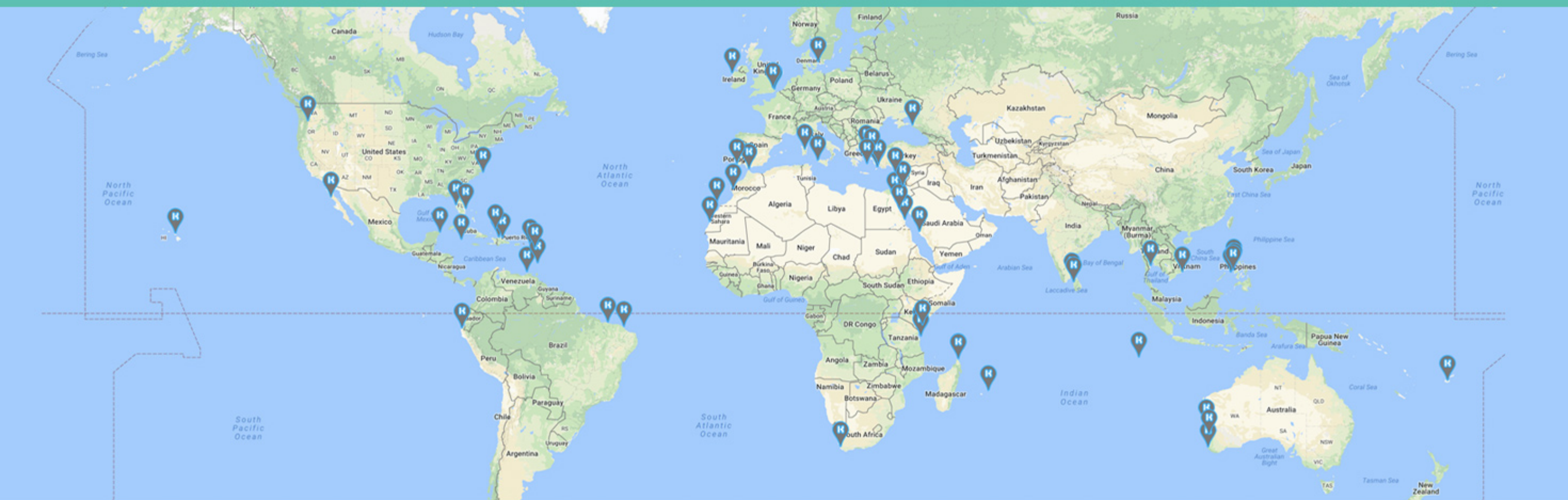
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QUESTIONS JEN TYLER  
WORDS ELEVEIGHT TEAM

# TECH FOCUS

## ELEVEIGHT XS V6 KITE AND STELLAR V2

We caught up with the Eleveight team to unpack the biggest V6 kite and Stellar V2 updates —like faster loops, improved materials, and insane grip. Here's everything you need to know about these two big air machines!







" BY STRATEGICALLY PLACING THIS STRONGER 6X6 RIPSTOP FABRIC, WE'VE REDUCED ELONGATION AND CREATED SMOOTHER POWER TRANSITIONS BETWEEN MATERIALS. "

Hi! We're stoked to hear about Eleveight's latest releases: the XS V6 kite and Stellar V2 twintip. Let's start with the XS V6. What are the main design changes in the XS V6, and how do they improve performance over the previous version?

Big air is constantly evolving, and with it, riders' demands shift year by year. This is incredibly exciting for our development team because we're constantly challenged to meet new expectations and push performance further. Now in its sixth version, the XS was born as a pure big air kite, engineered for boosting and explosive lift. Over time, it's gone through numerous incremental refinements,

but the standout evolution in V6 is its turning speed.

Modern big air is all about radical, controlled loops, and to meet that, we slightly reduced the kite's aspect ratio to achieve a tighter turn radius. This lets the kite loop faster and with slightly less power, giving riders better control, which is especially important for technical tricks like board-offs and spins. We also reshaped the leading edge arc to increase the projected area, enhancing low-end power and supporting improved turning ability.

We've introduced X6 ripstop material for version six in key areas like the trailing edge and wingtips.

Big air puts huge pressure on a kite, and by strategically placing this stronger 6x6 ripstop fabric, we've reduced elongation and created smoother power transitions between materials. It allows the kite to hold its shape better under load and recover faster, which means it's more reactive and has improved longevity.

We also added a bridle trim setting, allowing riders to customise the turning speed to suit their style and conditions. Whether you're an old-school booster looking for maximum hangtime and smooth turning or chasing ultra-fast pivots and double loops, the XS V6 can be tweaked to your style.





**"THE PIVOT SET-UP TRANSFORMS THE XS INTO A SUPER FAST-TURNING KITE, WHICH LETS YOU DO DOUBLE LOOPS LIKE NEVER BEFORE!"**

For the old-school booster, we still have the tip setting with a lot of hangtime, which is a bit more forgiving in the turn. However, the pivot set-up transforms the XS into a super fast-turning kite, which lets you do double loops like never before!

**Compared to earlier models, how does the XS V6 handle in marginal wind conditions?**

In marginal wind, a 5-strut kite will always carry a bit more weight, which you feel at the low end, but for V6, we made specific changes to counter that. By adjusting the leading edge arc and increasing the projected area, we improved the kite's low-end efficiency compared to previous versions.

**For a rider who's used to previous XS models, what's the biggest performance upgrade they'll feel straight away?**

The most noticeable difference is the turning speed and the increased reactivity of the bar. Don't get me wrong, previous versions already had solid turning speed, but they focused more on hangtime and delivering that grunty, raw power. V6 keeps that DNA but takes it further with faster loops and more agility.

Experienced riders will love the faster speeds, quicker loops, and a touch less brute force, which makes it easier to control mid-manoeuvre. The new materials also play a big part here, as reduced deformation under load improves how quickly the kite recovers, which is really noticeable in stronger winds.

**Any specific conditions where the XS V6 truly shines or surprised you with its performance?**

The name says it all: 'Extreme Series'! The XS V6 absolutely shines when you're aiming to jump high.



That doesn't necessarily mean you need insane wind, though, of course, when it's pumping, the 5-strut frame comes alive and accelerates even more.

What really surprises people is the wow factor you get when you load up and take off, as the lift is explosive and the hangtime endless. This is also a deal breaker for heavier riders who often deal with kite deformation in strong winds. These riders generate more load naturally and need a kite that holds its shape. The XS V6's solid frame delivers exactly that, and the performance difference is something they feel instantly.

**On to the Stellar V2! What were the main updates for the Stellar V2, and how does it differ from V1?**

The success of V1 took us by storm. When we first started working on it, we weren't sure how it would sit alongside our Master C+, but Franz Schitzhofer was confident the design would hit the mark for big air, and he absolutely nailed it!

For V2, we kept the same proven outline but introduced a few strategic upgrades. We refined the internal layups and adjusted the tip shape to boost performance. One major update is the new carbon reinforcements on the top deck, which reduce tip flex and improve rebound. Combined with the reshaped tips, the result is a board that feels even grippier and more aggressive underfoot.

It's not a complete reinvention as V1 and V2 share the same core philosophy, but big air riders will appreciate V2 immediately. As we like to say: you go big or you go home!

"WHAT REALLY SURPRISES PEOPLE IS THE WOW FACTOR YOU GET WHEN YOU LOAD UP AND TAKE OFF, AS THE LIFT IS EXPLOSIVE AND THE HANGTIME ENDLESS."







"IT'S AN EXTREME FREERIDE BOARD, AND THAT'S THE SETUP WE USED DURING DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING."

**How was the outline redesigned for V2, and how does it change the board's handling in choppy or gusty conditions?**

With twintips, we don't change the mould every year as there's a lot of work and investment behind each one, so we typically aim to use a mould for two to three years. That said, each mould still gives us room to evolve the design through things like rocker line adjustments, tip shaping, wood core thickness, and layup changes. For V2, we focused on layup refinements and tip tuning as they can significantly impact performance.

But back to your question... V1 and V2 are very grippy based on their channel layout and tip form, which translates into performance in gusty conditions.

Since big air sessions often happen in strong wind and chop, we made sure the Stellar could handle that. Both versions handle well in these conditions, remain predictable, and hold speed even when the water's messy.

**Is the Stellar V2 intended to be used strictly with boots, straps or either?**

These days, most of the big air community is riding with straps, especially since so many tricks are board-offs or crazy one-footers. That said, the Stellar is built tough. It features our heavy-duty plywood insert blocks, which are more than capable of handling the load, even in boots.

The Stellars outline, flex, and responsiveness are performance characteristics optimised for use with

foot straps. It's an extreme freeride board, and that's the setup we used during development and testing. So, while boots are totally possible, the board really comes into its own with straps.

**What size would you recommend for riders just starting to push Big Air tricks but still want freeride versatility?**

Board size depends greatly on rider weight, height, and personal preferences, but as a general rule, go for the 139 if you're heavier. The 136 is excellent for average-weight riders, especially around or under 80kg.

Both sizes are excellent for getting into big air. They offer solid grip, aggressive pop, and responsive feedback, yet still deliver the versatility of a high-performance freeride board. The 133 is ideal





**"IT'S BUILT FOR AMBITIOUS FREERIDERS WHO LIKE TO PUSH BIG AIR BUT ALSO WANT SOMETHING THEY CAN RIDE IN ALL CONDITIONS AND MIX THINGS UP."**

for lighter riders or those looking for a board for nuking wind days, but it's more of a specialist size best suited to experienced riders who already have extreme big air experience.

**What's the first thing riders notice when they step on the Stellar V2?**

Grip! That's the first and most immediate impression. The Stellar features a multi-concave bottom with well-placed channels that optimise water flow and generate massive hold through the rails, crucial for loading up for a big jump.

The second standout feature is the damping and optimised flex. The basalt fibre layup delivers a very dynamic response with enough stiffness for a solid pop on takeoff, yet enough flex to dampen landings. Unlike full carbon, which can sometimes feel too stiff and harsh, basalt offers a nice balance. It gives you that springy energy without punishing your knees on impact.

**What type of rider will get the most out of the Stellar V2, and who might be better suited to a different board style?**

Like the XS, the name 'Stellar' hints at its intention for riders looking to take their session to the stars. If you aim for height and precision, the Stellar is for you. It's built for ambitious freeriders who like to push big air but also want something they can ride in all conditions and mix things up.

I wouldn't recommend the Stellar as a beginner's board, as we have other models that are better suited for learning and progression. Likewise, for freestyle-focused riders, there are more specialised boards in our range. The Stellar's narrower tips don't offer the pop or landings that freestyle demands, but it's a top choice for riders chasing height, versatility, and control!



CRUISING ON THE FOILS IN THE HEBRIDES!  
PHOTO JAMES BOULDING

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# TECH FOCUS

## RIDE ENGINE SHELTER, BONFIRE & TECH CHANGING ROBES

A good changing robe can make all the difference when battling the elements and enjoying those pre- and post-session moments at the beach. Jen Tyler catches up with Ride Engine's Gary Siskar in this Tech

Focus feature to break down the key differences between the Bonfire, Tech, and Shelter changing robes. From wild coastal winds to tropical downpours and everything in between, find out which robe fits your next session!





**"THE DOWN-FILLED INSULATION AND WEATHER-RESISTANT SHELL PROTECT YOU, KEEPING YOU WARM NO MATTER WHAT THE FORECAST SAYS."**

Hi Gary, thanks for joining us! We're stoked to hear all about Ride Engine's changing robes. First up, can you walk us through the main differences between the Bonfire, Shelter, and Tech changing robes?

Absolutely. We all know that beach conditions can vary dramatically, whether it's cold or sweltering hot, when gearing up for or winding down after a session. As we developed our line of changing robes and ponchos, we saw an opportunity to offer a tiered system: lightweight, midweight, and heavyweight options, much like those found in high-performance outerwear collections. The Shelter is our lightweight, thin-shell changing poncho that is windproof and water-resistant, perfect for mild conditions. The Tech

Changing Robe is our midweight option, featuring a full-length zipper, windproof outer shell, and a cosy synthetic lambswool lining for added warmth and comfort. And for the coldest days, we offer the Bonfire, a heavyweight, quilted, down-filled poncho designed to handle blustery weather or to keep you warm around the campfire.

**Which robe is best suited for extreme wet weather, and why?**

Each robe has its purpose, but when it comes to braving extreme weather, it's those cold, wet, and windy days that truly put gear to the test—and that's precisely where the Bonfire stands out. With its oversized poncho-style fit, slipping in and out of a wetsuit is a breeze. The down-filled insulation and

weather-resistant shell protect you, keeping you warm no matter what the forecast says. And the best part? It's so cosy, you won't want to take it off—just jump in the car or kick back and enjoy that sleeping-bag-like warmth after your session.

**What kind of sessions or situations is each robe best made for, like post-surf, cold mornings, or rigging up in the wind?**

The Shelter is a solid choice; it is lightweight, easy, and protective when it's warm or has tropical showers and wind. For those chillier, ominous, misty days when you want something you'll happily keep on after your session, the Tech Changing Robe delivers comfort and coverage before and after hitting the water. And when the wind is niking or snow is on the ground,



but you're still suiting up, the Bonfire has your back, making it easy to get in and out of even the thickest wetsuits while keeping you seriously warm.

**How does the waterproofing on the Shelter robe compare to the Tech one?**

The Shelter features a laminated waterproof coating, while the Tech Changing Robe uses a micro-weave ripstop fabric for water resistance. Both provide solid protection from the elements during a quick change. However, the Shelter is your best bet for staying dry if you plan to linger in heavy, driving rain.

**Is the Shelter robe warm enough for chilly days, or is it more for mild weather?**

As a single-layer, windproof, and waterproof shell, the Shelter offers some protection against the chill, but it's designed as our lightweight, compact, and easily storable changing robe. If you're looking for something to combat the cold, the Tech Changing Robe or the Bonfire are much better suited for the job.

**The Bonfire's got that wind-resistant shell—how well does it hold up in wild coastal weather?**

We packed everything into the Bonfire. With a windproof, water-resistant outer shell and insulating down fill, it's built to handle the harshest conditions, perfect for those bitter days when you still have to wrestle into and out of your wetsuit.

**Is it okay to wear the Bonfire in the rain, and how should we look after it after a session?**

It's perfectly fine to wear the Bonfire in the rain to change in and out of your wetsuit. However, like all down-filled outerwear, once the insulation gets wet, it can clump and lose its ability to retain warmth.

**"THE TECH CHANGING ROBE USES A MICRO-WEAVE RIPSTOP FABRIC FOR WATER RESISTANCE."**







**" IF YOU'RE EXPECTING TO BE STANDING IN A DOWNPOUR, THE TECH CHANGING ROBE OR THE SHELTER PONCHO IS A BETTER CHOICE. "**

The outer shell offers light water resistance and is ideal for quick changes, but if you're expecting to be standing in a downpour, the Tech Changing Robe or the Shelter poncho is a better choice.

**What is the purpose of the zippered side-arm holes on the Tech robe, and how do they help with changing?**

The Tech Changing Robe is designed more like an oversized technical jacket, offering full-length coverage with a comfortable, insulated interior. One of its key features is the discreet zippered side access panels, which allow you to easily change in and out of a wetsuit, bikini, or swim trunks without the robe raising up. This means more privacy, less hassle, and better protection from wind and cold while changing. Its windproof shell and soft synthetic lambswool lining make it a go-to piece for pre- and post-session comfort, especially in cooler, blustery conditions.

**How effectively does the synthetic lambswool lining retain body heat after a cold-water session?**

Synthetic lambswool has long been used in outerwear, workwear, and foul-weather gear, and for good reason. It's a proven alternative to natural lambswool, offering excellent insulation while maintaining performance when wet. Unlike natural wool, it won't retain odour when damp, making it a practical and reliable choice for a changing robe. After a session, a wet wetsuit can dampen the liner.

**What makes the Tech robe your go-to when it's really blowing on the beach?**

The Tech Changing Robe is the perfect choice for most beach conditions, whether it's blowing, chilly,



or damp, it simply delivers. Inspired by the oversized robes ski racers wear while waiting for their runs, it offers full-body and arm insulation, a deep hood, and a weatherproof shell. Designed for performance and comfort, the Tech Changing Robe will become your go-to layer for changing and chilling on the beach.

**Last but not least, out of the three, which one's your personal favourite and why?**

Ah, that's a tough one! But I'd go with the Bonfire if I had to choose just one. Its super-oversized fit makes getting in and out of a wetsuit effortless, and it's incredibly comfortable to just lounge around in. It feels like walking around wrapped in a cosy down sleeping bag! Who doesn't like that?!

**Perfect, thanks so much, Gary!**

Thanks, Jen



**"IT FEELS LIKE WALKING AROUND WRAPPED IN A COSY DOWN SLEEPING BAG! WHO DOESN'T LIKE THAT?!"**



Lieuwe Boards has always been about expression—on the water, in the workshop, and through design. Their latest Instinct Collection is no exception, fusing performance engineering with bold, unapologetic aesthetics. In this feature, we dive into two standout boards from the line: the Falcon and the Shotgun—each crafted for riders chasing speed, power, and individuality.

# RAW. WILD. INSTINCTIVE.





"DESIGNED WITH COMFORT  
AND CONTROL IN MIND, IT'S  
FOR RIDERS LOOKING TO  
PUSH THEIR BIG AIR LIMITS."



The Falcon is Lieuwe's lightest Big Air performance board to date. Years of R&D went into creating a carbon board that delivers next-level speed, pop, and energy return, without some carbon constructions' harsh, rigid ride. Designed with comfort and control in mind, it's for riders looking to push their Big Air limits. The Falcon also introduces Lieuwe's newest insert system, allowing ultra-precise stance setups, and comes with the option for a custom slider track, machined for riders who want it all. Then there's the Shotgun—a board that needs no introduction. It's Lieuwe's best-selling model worldwide. Loved for its medium flex, ultra-light 3D wood core, and smooth ride in all conditions, the Shotgun delivers powerful pop, effortless control, and soft landings. It's the brand's original love—and after years of refinement, riders demanded that Lieuwe stop tweaking it. When something just works, it becomes iconic.

At the heart of the Instinct Collection is designer Dennis Klip's raw and expressive artwork. For this series, Dennis set out to create a collage-inspired visual story rooted in instinct and natural energy. "The idea behind the Instinct board was to create a raw, edgy collage featuring natural elements, animal patterns, and a punk-like vibe," he explains.



Using torn paper textures, scanned silhouettes, and gritty halftone effects, Dennis built a visual language that celebrates the primal side of riding—where you don't overthink, you just send it. Inspired partly by a film shot with team rider Jop Heemskerk in Mauritius, the lion emerged as the central symbol, representing power, focus, and the spark that drives progression. Elements like the skull and torn illustrations tie back to nature's wildness, while punk and brutalist textures add a rebellious edge.

The result? A collection that feels alive, instinctual, and unfiltered—just like the riding it was built for.



"DENNIS BUILT A VISUAL LANGUAGE THAT CELEBRATES THE PRIMAL SIDE OF RIDING—WHERE YOU DON'T OVERTHINK, YOU JUST SEND IT."





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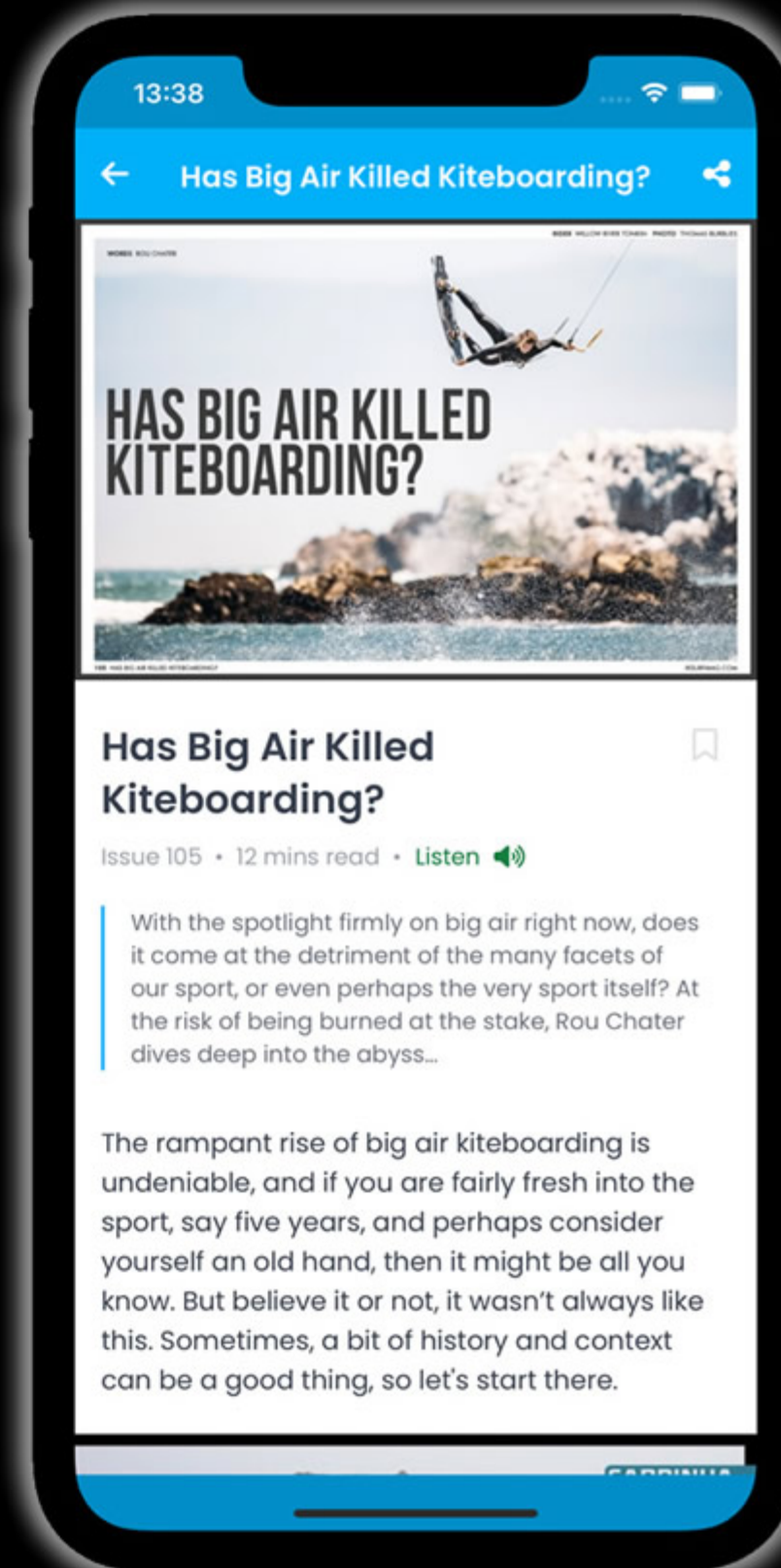
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# TECHNIQUE

WORDS & PHOTOS CHRISTIAN & KARINE

We trust this issue finds you all well. This time round, we're kicking off with a little strapless morsel. For those of you entering and enjoying the fun-filled world of strapless surfboards, there is no better way to start your session with a stylish bang than a cheeky beach start. No more dipping your derriere into the wet stuff, we just like to hop and go! Then it's onto more from the school of Back Rolls. If you've been following and doing your homework, you'll be ripe and ready to spice up your sent back rotation up. Today, it's all about kite Lego. You'll be adding a tail grab and proper English mustard.

Have fun.

C&K

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KARINE AND CHRISTIAN



## 1 / HOW TO BEACH START A STRAPLESS SURFBOARD



CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE

## 2 / HOW TO BACK ROLL TAIL GRAB



CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE



## HOW TO BEACH START A STRAPLESS SURFBOARD ▶

It's been a while since we've delved into the world of strapless, and as such, we thought it time to revisit some of the fundamental skills. Once you can ride and water start there, there's no reason you shouldn't have a go at the beach start. It looks good, strolling into the water, hopping onto your board without dunking yourself in the drink, and sailing off into the sunset. Style aside, it's also highly functional. The beach's purpose starts becoming all the more obvious in the sea. Once you've got waves, shore break, other kites and limited opportunities, nothing beats this quick-fire, sure-footed and time-efficient method of getting up and going before your board disappears again!

As with all things strapless, we highly recommend learning this in flat water if you can. Although it will become your go-to get out of jail card, practising it without ripping, repositioning or stealing your board will be considerably easier. If you can't, jumping in at the deep end never hurt anyone!

A few things to consider before springing onto your favourite block of fibreglass. First off, water depth. Deeper than knee deep, and it'll be tricky to learn, just below the knees should give you enough water so you don't go grinding your fins on the sand or knocking them off on the rocks—secondly, wind direction. Once you're on your board, you will head downwind slightly before you can head up, so if it's on shore, you'll need to head out further.



Ideally, shore will give you room for error, and you're less likely to dump your kite on some unfortunate beach user.

For the beach start, it's essential to understand how your kite flies and where your board should be pointing. As Karine is in this article, if you imagine you'll be starting right foot forward, you'll be taking your kite from around 11 o'clock, and diving it gently towards 1. This way it'll go up over 12, giving you some lift and enabling you to get out of the water before diving down and powering off. As for your board, it should be pointing slightly upwind, just to the side of you at about arm's length. A surfboard will naturally turn off downwind because of the fins in the tail.

By starting upwind, you have a modicum of time. It also wants to be on the side you're going and slightly away from you. This way the kite takes you towards it and you have room to get onto it, rather than just barrelling through it! OK with this in mind, let's see how it works...

### FIND YOUR SPOT PIC A

Walk out normally, controlling the kite with your rear hand and carrying your board under your front arm or in your front hand. Get away from obstructions, people and the beach and ensure the water is knee deep or just under. Face downwind so that the wind is blowing onto your back. If you weren't beach starting, you'd generally go deeper to water start.





B

Karine launched her kite, picked up her board, and wandered out until it was deep enough.

#### KITE POSITION PIC B

OK, once you've found your spot, your first job is to position your kite at its starting position. You do this before dropping the board, because the longer you leave it to its own devices, the more likely it'll move into an unwanted position! Hold the board midway up the nose (in flat water, you can rest the tail in the water) and use your rear hand to steer the kite back slowly. Keep a little tension on the rear lines so that the kite behaves. As Karine will be riding off to her right, she moves the kite back towards 11 o'clock. The position will vary depending on kite size and



C

wind strength, but it'll be between 11:30 and 11. The further back, the more lift you'll generate, so it's helpful with less wind or deeper water. If the kite starts at 12, it'll dive into the water, so even if you make it onto the board, you'll have a load of speed and be fighting to stop the kite from hitting the drink.

#### BOARD POSITION PIC C

With your kite in position, it's time to drop or place the board. You want the board pointing slightly upwind. As alluded to earlier, the wind will blow the nose off the wind, so you've bought yourself more time by pointing it slightly up. You can see that Karine has dropped the board so that the same part she was holding is close to her front leg. By doing this, as the



D

board slowly moves, it will drift away from Karine, giving her space to jump onto it. When you've dropped the board, replace your front hand onto the bar.

#### MOVE THE KITE PIC D

To generate power and lift, you have to move the kite. How much will depend on your power, but you will need the kite to move quickly because you are stationary and have no apparent wind. As such, be positive with your bar movement to get the kite turning. You can see that Karine has given her bar a decent pull-push, keeping it on the sweet spot to get her kite moving quickly. If the wind is light, you'll have to concentrate more on the sweet spot, as you don't want the kite stalling and flying through the window.



E



## PAUSE THE KITE PIC E

As the kite turns and starts to accelerate, you're waiting for it to reach 12 o'clock on its way forward. Once the kite reaches 12 o'clock, level your bar, effectively pausing it. If the kite pulls too much before it reaches 12, you can feather the bar out so it doesn't. Karine leans gently back to resist the kite as it moves up to 12. She feathers the bar out to resist the pull, levels the bar to slow the kite as it passes over 12 and flexes her knees ready to spring. You can see that the board has started to drift away from Karine's front leg.

F



## FRONT FOOT FIRST PIC F

With the kite lifting, it's time to jump onto your board. All you want is a helping hand; your legs do the rest. Pull the bar gently, steering the kite forward as you do so, and spring up towards the board, lifting your front knee and stepping your front foot forward, aiming to land around its usual riding position. Karine has pulled her bar in for a lift; she's jumping up off the ground, lifting her front leg and aiming to land front foot first. Her bar is now steering forward again to keep the kite moving so that she gets forward pull once on her board.

G



## NOSE PUSH PIC G

Follow with your back leg, springing off the ground and up onto the board. You want the front foot to land first, as when it hits the deck, it will push your board's nose away from the wind. However, to be balanced and prevent the nose from sinking, you'll need both feet firmly planted on the board, so get some weight on your back foot too. You can see how Karine's board is turning away from the wind. As she lands on the board, she drops her weight back and pushes through her front leg, directing any pull from the diving kite into the board to bear away and generate forward momentum.





## ACCELERATE PIC H

Now with your kite diving and your board bearing away onto a broad reach, you should accelerate, keeping yourself and your board above the water until you start planing. As you accelerate, steer the kite back up and forward, drop your weight and turn back across the wind to get line tension, an edge and ultimately speed. Karine steers her kite, weights her heels and turns her board back upwind. Job done!

# H

## TOP TIPS

If you're learning this in flat water, the board may not drift away from you. If this is the case, give yourself room by stepping away from the board before steering the kite forward.

You can alter how much weight you put through your front or back foot depending on the position of your board. The more upwind it's pointing, the more you'll need to get on the front foot. However, if your board swings across the wind or even broad, you can land with two feet or your back foot first to stop yourself from going over the handlebars.

It's OK to watch your kite as you start to turn it, making sure that it's not stalling, but as soon as it's on the way up, switch your focus to the board, so that you know where to aim for and land.

It goes without saying that to start, you'll be better giving it less on the bar than too much. Adding more positivity to steering the bar each time is preferable to getting launched over your board the first time.

Check out the sequence and watch the video for the complete run through...

## COMMON PROBLEMS

Without a shadow of doubt, the most common error is to stand too close to the board and try to hold it still by placing one foot on it before moving the kite. This will result in you hopping on one leg in the sea, trying to stop your board from moving with your toes, while looking up at your kite and steering it one way and then another without losing your balance. That's a lot to do. Do think of this as a little hop forward onto the board. It's nothing too rad, but not pedestrian!

## KEYSTONES

1. Kite back to either 1 or 11.
2. Drop board pointing slightly upwind.
3. Dive with gusto.
4. Pause the kite and hop on.
5. Look where you want your front foot to land.





## HOW TO BACK ROLL TAIL GRAB ▶

In issue 106 of IKSURFMAG, we introduced you to the hallowed sent Back Roll. Hopefully, this should mean you've had plenty of time and opportunity to practice and maybe hone this delight of a move. If you have, it's time to add some of the proverbial mustard and spice it up, and what better way than adding a grab. The first grab on the menu is the tail grab. You'll try to get hold of the heel side fin with your back hand as you rotate. Sounds simple enough!

To score this move, it's paramount that you have a slow rotation, control of your kite and enough time. We will be using the same sent, jumping with the kite, back roll as before. The slow rotation will make time move more slowly, giving you time to think about and execute the grab. Where and how the kite flies will have a massive impact on your support and confidence in the air. You don't want to send it too far back; just past 12 will do. You can then leave it there as you rotate and grab, before bringing it forward to dive and pull you out of the move. Let's look at what's involved to add a cheeky grab...

### APPROACH & SET UP PIC A

Just as per your back roll, your approach should be comfortable. Start on a decent upwind edge, your kite at 1 or 11 o'clock, with enough speed so that your board feels alive. You'll need some power, as you want to get airborne without having to force it. Position your hands on either side of your centre line, butting up against it. This will deter your kite from



moving too fast once you release your rear hand. When the coast is clear and you're feeling good, it's game on. Karine has a good edge, she's riding comfortably upwind, hands are centred, and her kite is at 11 o'clock with enough power to get her off the water easily.

### SEND AND OUT PIC B

Now you're ready, it's time to get yourself off the water. Assuming that you've got enough power, you want a gentle progressive send so that you can feel where the kite is. In short, don't wang it! It's so important not to lose your edge when back rolling, and a gentle send will help here as the kite lifts. Feat the bar out to follow the sweet spot to hold your



edge. AND keep your rear leg stiff! Don't let it soften, otherwise you'll carve upwind and rotate too quickly. Here, Karine has sent her kite, aiming to move it to just past 12, and as it pulls, she eases the bar out to hold her edge.

### LEVEL PIC C

At the end of your send and whilst you're still edging. It's imperative that you do this before take-off. If you do, the kite won't move back any further, and you already know where it is before getting airborne. The result is that there is no need to multitask as the kite is already sorted. You can rather concentrate all your efforts on the grab. You can see that Karine has levelled her bar to stop the kite; she's still edging,







her back leg is still stiff, so all her edge is in the water and she's heading upwind, not carving up.

#### TAKE OFF PIC D

It's all about rotating slowly, to give you plenty of time for the grab. This means less carve and less head. By keeping your rear leg stiff, you'll avoid carving up, but by feathering the bar out, you will naturally turn up a tad further. From here, you can fully extend, kicking yourself up and off the water, turning your torso as you do. Once you're extending, you can pull the bar in for extra lift. All your effort should be in the up rather than around. Looking at Karine, you can see that she is taking off whilst still looking over the bar and at the camera:) This guarantees that she'll rotate slowly. Her bar is pretty



level, and her kite is hanging just past 12, giving her both lift and float.

#### NO RUSH PIC E

Even though this part is all about grab preparation, we prefix it with no rush because the take off is crucial. Even though you'll want to get your knees up and start searching for the grab, extending fully into your back roll will give you more time. Your mantra is to make sure you extend before bringing everything together. Once you're up and rotating, happy with your kite position and feeling the float, you can bring your knees up, and if you're feeling balanced, you can release your back hand. Make sure you're supported by your harness; don't support yourself with your front hand. Ease the bar out a touch from



take-off towards the sweet spot so that the kite doesn't steer forward, you want it waiting just past 12, as then you won't feel any unwanted pull, but you'll still have the support. You can see that Karine is lifting her knees in front of her to bring the board nearer and has released her back hand with her bar on the sweet spot. She's focused her eyes on the prize, her heel side fin area.

#### GRAB IT PIC F

If you've taken off without carving, you should find that you can get the grab by the halfway mark, upwind. Bring your knees up as far as possible and extend your arm to grab the board. As much as an effort as it may seem, try to lift the board to you, rather than reaching down towards it.





If you reach down, you'll likely need to compensate by holding yourself up on your front hand, which could get the kite moving forward, which is not what you want. Karine has her knees and board up high so that she can easily reach the heel side edge near the fins. You can see that her bar is on the sweet spot, not pulled in, and she's focused on her target for the grab. You can hold the grab for as long as you feel comfortable, but at first, it'll likely be over in a jiffy.

#### Coming Down Pic G

As soon as you feel yourself start to descend, it's time to think about getting yourself around the rest of your rotation. The first and most obvious helper is your head. Turn it to look over your shoulder to encourage yourself around. The second is your kite. If you steer it



slowly forward from its static position, it will pull you around as it moves. You can do both of these, either whilst holding your grab or having already released it and replaced your rear hand on the bar. Here Karine releases her grab whilst steering her kite forward with her bar out on the sweet spot. She gently turns her head to look over her shoulder to see where she's going.

#### Dive Pic H

Once you can see where you are and judge where you'll land, dive your kite. As the kite comes over 12, it will lift and hold you for a soft landing. Look slightly downwind towards where you'll land and drop the board underneath you, ready for touchdown. Karine is looking where she'll land, her kite is diving, and she's twisting her hips to point the board into the wind.



#### TOUCH DOWN PIC I

You can aim for a tail-first downwind landing with your board down and legs extended. Land over the board and make sure that you're balanced before carving back onto your edge and steering the kite out of its dive into the new direction of travel. Et voila, Karine stomps the landing over her board before heading up, getting comfortable and untwisting her lines with a bar spin.

#### TOP TIPS

It's not always possible, but if the conditions allow you to avoid using a small kite, a larger, slower kite can inspire more confidence. You'll have more float without needing height, and it'll feel less twitchy when holding the bar with only your front hand.





If you concentrate on only one thing, it is to rotate slowly. You can always throw your head and dive the kite to get yourself around, or even float down gently, facing backwards. However, if you spin uncontrollably, you'll struggle to squeeze in a grab and struggle even more to land it. Time is your friend. Right, have a look at the sequence for a step-by-step walkthrough and check out the video for the real-time visuals.

#### COMMON PROBLEMS

Rotating too fast. Bet you didn't see this one coming! We've already mentioned it, but if you feel like you're coming around before you've even got your knees up,

you need to slow the rotation. Keep your back leg stiff and avoid leaning back into your takeoff. Extend up and around, and you'll have oodles more time.

If you're struggling to reach the grab, it's tempting to lean back as you raise the board. However, by doing so, you're tilting yourself away from it. Keep your head up and work those abs. Try lifting your back knee more than your front knee, as this will angle the board's tail closer to you.

#### KEYSTONES

1. Upwind, comfortable
2. Send, Out and Level

3. Up and Around
4. Head centred, knees up, grab
5. Turn head and steer kite forward to finish.





A full-page background image showing a kitesurfer in a black wetsuit riding a wave. A large blue kite with orange accents and the word 'DUOTONE' is visible on the left side of the frame.

# TRIED & TESTED

This season, the IKSURFMAG test team put some of the latest Duotone and ION gear through its paces, including the ION Amaze Amp Hot Shorty, Duotone Whip 5'3, Neo 9m, and ION's Women's Nova Kite Harness 2025. Want to know how they performed? Find out more here!

- ION - Amaze Amp Hot Shorty
- Duotone Whip 5'3
- Duotone Neo 9m
- ION - Women's Nova Kite Harness 2025

WORDS & PHOTOS  
THE IKSURFMAG TEST TEAM

IKSURFMAG.COM



BRAND ION

MODEL AMAZE AMP HOT SHORTY 2.0 LS FRONT ZIP

YEAR 2025



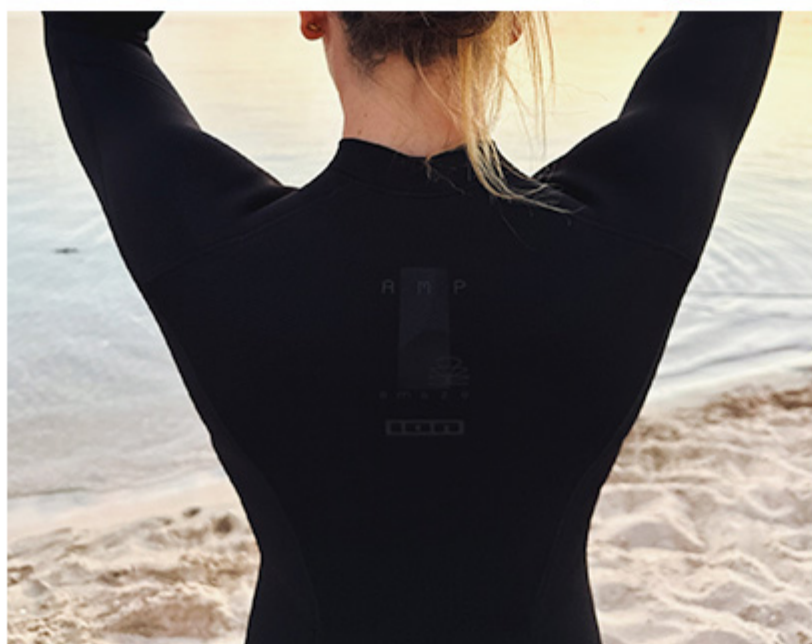
"IT GAVE ME FULL FREEDOM TO MOVE AND JUST ENJOY BEING ON THE WATER."

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

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CLICK [HERE](#)



#### AT A GLANCE

I've been riding in Soma Bay, Egypt, where it's been a solid 30°C every day. I needed something light, comfortable, and protective that wouldn't leave me roasting or covered in odd tan lines. When I heard I was testing ION's Amaze Amp Hot Shorty 2.0 LS, I knew it would be exactly what I was looking for. This long-sleeve shorty feels like it was made for this kind of riding. It's flexible in all the right places, doesn't ride up, and dries incredibly fast between sessions. The boy-leg cut stays put, and the long sleeves gave me peace of mind riding all day under the sun.

#### ON THE WATER

From the first session, I felt the difference. The suit is made from natural rubber neoprene, so it's softer and stretchier than many other suits I've tried in the past. The Hot\_Stuff 2.0 lining in the front keeps it warm enough when the wind picks up, and the Plasma\_Plush 2.0 on the back dries so quickly that I barely noticed I'd just come out of the water. I've been in and out of it all day, and it's super easy to put on and take off, even when it's not totally dry.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)





BRAND DUOTONE

MODEL WHIP

SIZE 5'3

YEAR 2025



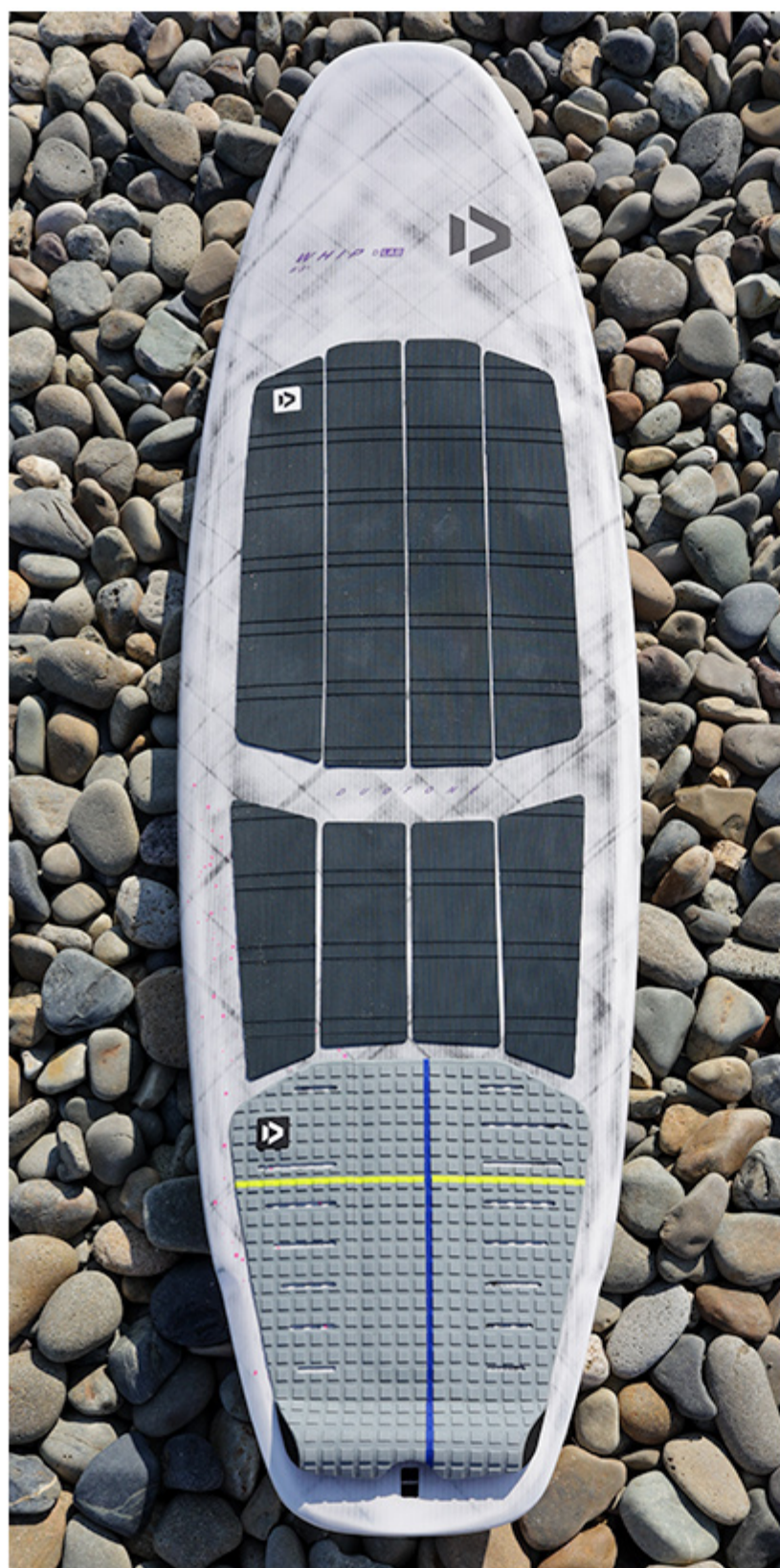
"IF YOU ARE  
LOOKING FOR  
SOMETHING THAT  
CAN PERFORM AT  
THE HIGHEST  
LEVEL, THIS IS IT"

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TO SEE MORE PHOTOS,  
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#### AT A GLANCE

Duotone has been making surfboards for what seems like forever. The range has always been pretty comprehensive, but this year it's been slimmed down, a nod perhaps to the popularity of big air and the waning popularity of strapless freestyle, which used to drive huge sales of these styles of boards. There are now four boards in various constructions to choose from.

The Whip remains, along with the Volt, which was new last year, while a new shape, named the Blur, joins the lineup alongside the Provoke freestyle-specific board. The Whip is the freestyle and small to medium wave powerhouse, it always has been, with a new shape for 2025 that is actually quite different from last year's model.

Construction-wise, you get the choice of DLab, which uses a carbon layup and the Reflex Memory Foam under your feet to reduce heel dents, or you can pick the SLS Concept Blue version, which uses Basalt fibres from volcanoes in place of carbon for a greener option. The new DLab construction shaves almost half a kilo off the board's weight;

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)

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BRAND DUOTONE

MODEL NEO SLS

SIZE 9M

YEAR 2025



"IT GAVE ME FULL FREEDOM TO MOVE AND JUST ENJOY BEING ON THE WATER."



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

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



#### AT A GLANCE

The Neo SLS is one of the most iconic kites in our industry. It's synonymous with wave riding and strapless freestyle and has dominated the market and the competition scene for over a decade. For 2025, the Neo SLS has had a significant update, with a new wing tip design and an improved trailing edge featuring new battens optimised in length according to the kite size.

It's a cutting-edge wave kite that stands out in its category, especially for ambitious riders eager to push their performance limits in both the waves and the air. This kite is designed specifically for those who wish to excel in varying wave conditions and strapless freestyle enthusiasts aiming for competition-level quality.

It's worth mentioning that it's available in three builds: the Neo, featuring Dacron construction; the Neo SLS, which utilises the Penta TX leading edge and strut build; and the top-of-the-line DLab, which uses an Aluula frame. As someone who's been riding these kites for years, I've always opted for the SLS build, it's light while being kinder on the wallet.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)



BRAND ION

MODEL WOMEN'S NOVA KITE HARNESS

YEAR 2025

"IT PERFORMS  
PERFECTLY  
WHETHER YOU'RE  
CRUISING OR  
SENDING IT."



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

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



#### AT A GLANCE

Having loved my first ION Nova harness in 2023, when I heard I was being sent the 2025 Nova to test, I couldn't wait to get my hands on it—and I have to say, it didn't disappoint. Unboxing the harness, the Scarlet Red colour immediately caught my attention. It's different from the usual tones you'd see on the beach, but it didn't look out of place either! Straight out of the box, the Nova felt solid. Every detail is considered, and the harness has that clean, high-quality finish I've come to expect from ION. Designed with a medium-soft flex, the Nova hits that perfect balance between secure fit and freedom of movement. When I put it on, it hugged my waist perfectly, thanks to the internal Flex\_Belt and easy-to-adjust PVC buckles (on both sides)

Sizes: 34/XS, 36/S, 38/M, 40/L

#### ON THE WATER

Hands down one of the most comfortable harnesses I've worn on the water! It stayed perfectly in place, didn't ride up. Whether cruising or edging hard, it offered all the support I needed while letting me move freely.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)



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

## 4 POSTURE MISTAKES KILLING YOUR JUMP HEIGHT

Landing at #1 is Get High with Mike! In this video, he reveals four simple posture fixes that could seriously boost your jump height. From better front-line tension to smoother takeoffs, these tips are gold—don't miss this one!



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#2

## RAW: PROFESSIONAL KITESURFING & I LOST MY KITE

At #2, Evan Klijn and Hugo Wigglesworth bring the chaos to Langebaan! What starts as a regular kite session quickly spirals when Evan loses his kite. It's raw, real, and the kind of madness we all live for.

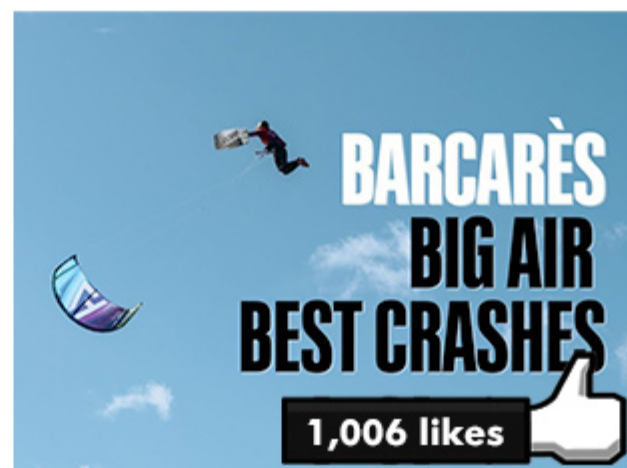


[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#3

## BIG CRASHES | LORDS OF TRAM 2025

At #3, things get brutal at Lords of Tram 2025! This crash reel is packed with wild wipeouts, gnarly landings, and the kind of big air carnage only Tramontana can deliver. Brace yourself—this one hits hard!

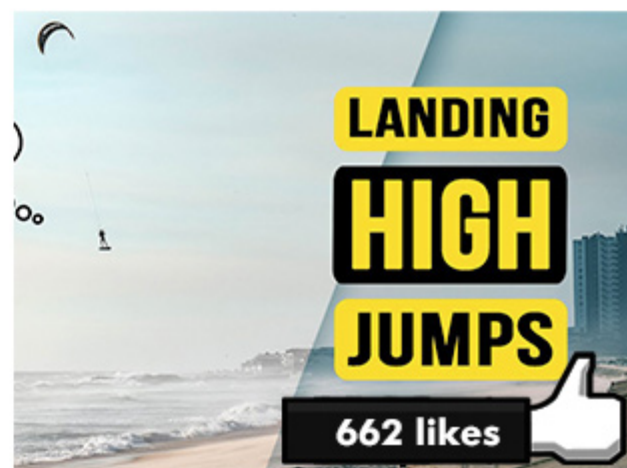


[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#4

## 3 WAYS TO LAND HIGH JUMPS // KITEBOARDING SA MASTERCLASS

At #4, Steven Akkersdijk breaks down how to land high jumps like a pro! In this South Africa masterclass, he shares three tips to help you stick the landing, absorb impact, and ride away clean. No more crash landings!



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)



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PHOTO LOUIS ARNAUD LAVASIER

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