

KSURF!

ISSUE **113**

WINTER 25

WELCOME TO IKSURFMAG

Rou opens the issue with a heartfelt editorial on how the magazine has evolved alongside the sport and why community support will help keep independent kite media alive.

We honour the life and energy of Graham Howes, chase snowy peaks with Johann Civel, and follow Hannah Whiteley as she finds out if

Hood River lives up to the hype. We go behind the scenes with Duotone's Philipp Becker, rewind two decades with Aaron Hadlow, and dive into Andy Troy's world through the lens of his most iconic shots. Plus, fresh gear tests, technique, and the latest movie picks to fuel your stoke. Dive in!



ENJOY THE LATEST ISSUE



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THE WORLD'S NUMBER ONE KITESURF MAGAZINE

INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

KSURF!

113
WINTER 25



IN LOVING MEMORY OF GRAHAM HOWES
1987-2025

Strong
Light
Superior

S/L/S

DUOTONE



REBEL SLS C07



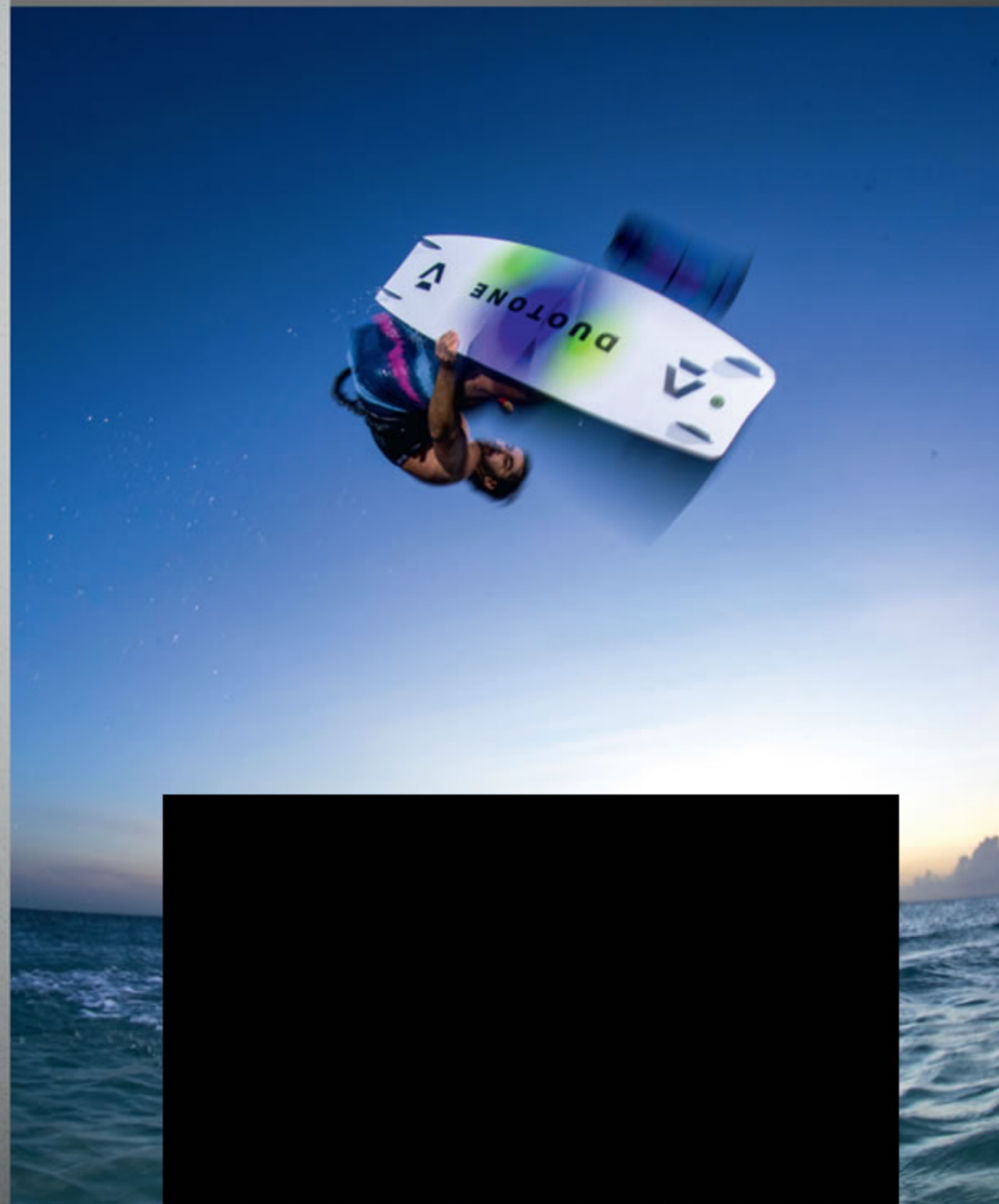
REBEL SLS C05



REBEL SLS C08

Rebel SLS

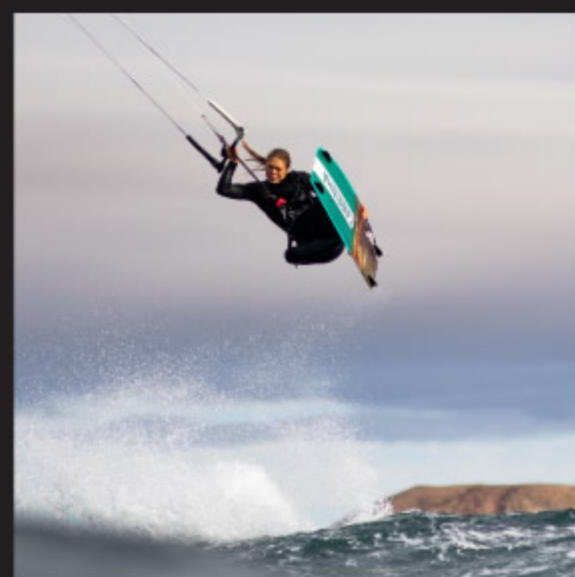
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2025

SWITCH



BLADE

CABRINHA

es / gc / 25

Photo Fabian Moser

Rider Shahar Tsabary



ONLY HIGHER IS HIGH ENOUGH

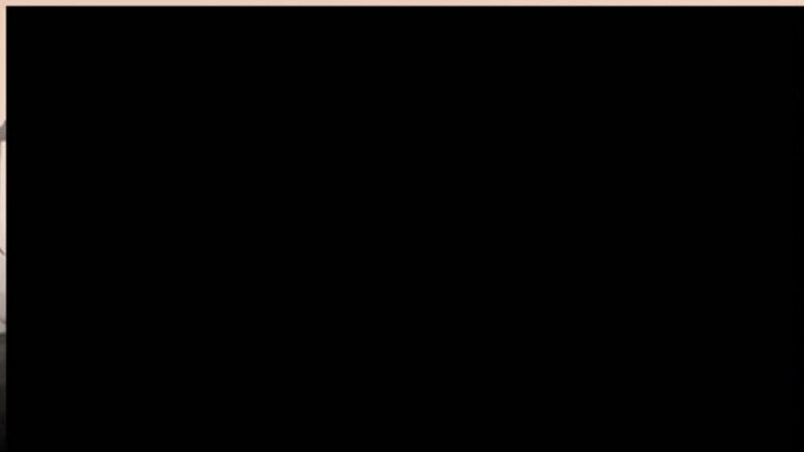
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JINNE BOER, OZONE TEAM RIDER, NETHERLANDS



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EDITORIAL



COMPETITION



IN MEMORY OF
GRAHAM HOWES



CHASING SUMMITS



HOOD RIVER: WAS IT
WORTH THE HYPE?



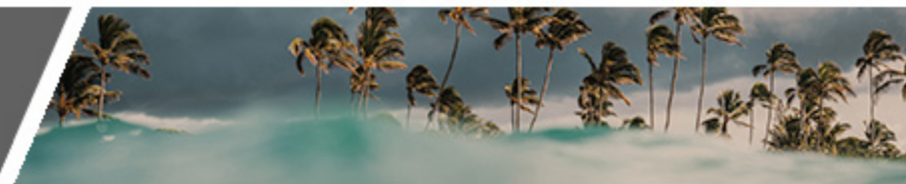
INSIDE DUOTONE 2026



AARON HADLOW



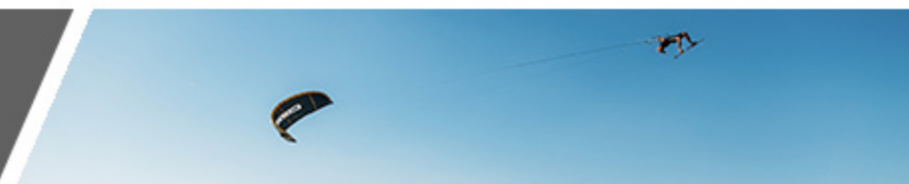
THROUGH ANDY
TROY'S LENS



TECH FOCUS
EVEIGHT



STORM READY



WOO WORLDS 2025



TECHNIQUE



TRIED & TESTED



LIGHTROOM



MOVIE NIGHT



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No trees were harmed while we made this magazine although the staff may have been subject to beatings in order to get the job done. The views in this magazine are just that, views, & should be taken with a pinch of salt. Kitesurfing is a dangerous sport & none of the activities depicted within this magazine should be participated in without full instruction in person by a qualified instructor.

RIDER GIEL VLUGT
PHOTO ZARA BAGAROV



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US



EDITORIAL

“Keeping the Stoke Alive”

It’s hard to believe that IKSURFMAG has been running for almost 20 years. What started as a simple idea, to share the stoke of kitesurfing with riders around the world through a digital magazine, has grown into something far bigger than I ever imagined.

Back in the early days, we’d publish the magazine every two months, and that alone was a huge task.

These days, the media landscape has changed, and so have we. In addition to publishing the magazine you’re reading now, we post news and stories daily on our website and social channels, create video content for YouTube, send out a weekly newsletter, and produce a weekly podcast.

Every issue, every story, every video, interview, and review we create comes from a small team of riders

who genuinely love this sport. We do it because we want to help you get more out of every session, to inspire you to explore new spots, and to celebrate the global kite community that keeps us so passionate about the sport we love.

But the world of media has shifted, and our advertising model needs to evolve too. The recent industry downturn caused by the overstock issue has been the toughest I’ve seen in my 25 years in the watersports industry, tougher even than the 2008 financial crash, Brexit, or Covid.

To protect ourselves from pressures we can’t control, we’re turning to our community, to you, for support so we can take charge of our own future.

That’s why we’ve launched something new, a way for readers like you to directly support what we do. For just **£1.50 a month**, you can help keep IKSURFMAG free and independent for everyone.

With your help, we can keep publishing across all our channels without compromise, and continue bringing you the very best of the sport we all love.

If you’ve ever found a story that inspired you, a review that helped you choose your next kite, or a technique video that made you ride better, please consider becoming a supporter today. It costs less than a coffee, but it means the world to us.

IKSURFMAG has always been **by riders, for riders**, and now we’re asking the riders to help shape its future.

Thanks for reading, thanks for riding, and thanks for being part of the journey.

See you on the water,

Rou Chater

Publishing Editor



WIN

...XENON ELIXIR TWIN TIP & A T-SHIRT! SUBSCRIBE TO WIN, CLICK [HERE](#) IT'S FREE

This issue, we have teamed up with Xenon to offer you the chance to win one of their new big air and freeride boards, the Elixir! This premium board is made in Europe with a lightweight wood core, full carbon lay-up with UD Carbon Dual Backbones for stiffness. It even has an integrated NFC chip, so you won't ever lose it! And just to ensure you look the part on the beach, there is a t-shirt for you too!

MAKE SURE TO SUBSCRIBE TO IKSURFMAG FOR A CHANCE TO WIN!

TO WIN THE PRIZE:

Simply subscribe to IKSURFMAG for free, and we'll enter you into the prize draw. We will pick a winner from our subscriber list. If you are already a subscriber, you will automatically be entered into all future prize draws!

Subscribing to IKSURFMAG gives you a chance to win our exclusive prize and gives you early and free access to our magazine. Rest assured, we respect your privacy and will **ONLY** email you about new issues and important IKSURFMAG news!

IN MEMORY OF GRAHAM HOWES

1987-2025

The kite community has lost one of its brightest lights. Graham was more than a rider; he was a force of nature whose energy, laughter, and fearless spirit brought people together from every corner of the world. His legacy runs deep through Dirty Habits, the crew he built, and the countless lives he inspired. Here, we share a few words from those who knew and loved him, remembering the man who made every session, every party, and every moment unforgettable.



There are some people whose energy fills every room, every lineup, and every memory. Graham Howes was one of them. Larger than life, fearless on the water, and endlessly generous off it, he built a community that stretched far beyond Cape Town. Through Dirty Habits, he turned a lifestyle into a movement that captured the fun, chaos, and heart of kiteboarding.

Graham's passing has left a massive hole in our sport and in so many lives. No trip to Blouberg ever felt complete without seeing him smiling, sending it, or throwing one of his legendary parties. His spirit was contagious, and his impact will never fade.

In this tribute, we have gathered a handful of voices from the hundreds of beautiful messages shared around the world. Friends, riders, and fans are remembering Graham and the mark he left on us all.



“ HIS SPIRIT WAS CONTAGIOUS, AND HIS IMPACT WILL NEVER FADE. ”

“GRAHAM HAD A PRESENCE LARGER THAN LIFE ITSELF, ALWAYS THE LIGHT IN THE GROUP, ALWAYS THE ONE LIFTING US HIGHER”



Graham and somehow that always made me feel a bit better. Luckily, this time we both came out unscathed. We cracked a beer, went diving for crayfish, and ended the day lying under the stars, reciting ridiculous poems, howling at the moon and filling every in-between moment with laughter.

It's days like this and memories like these that I'll always hold closest to my heart. Graham had a presence larger than life itself, always the light in the group, always the one lifting us higher. He lived harder than most, and in doing so showed us all how to be more alive. He had this rare gift of making people feel seen, heard, and part of something bigger. Whether through a joke, a deep conversation, or simply the energy he brought into a room, Graham touched more lives than he could ever have imagined. I'm proud of the man he became and even prouder of the legacy he's left within all of us.

It breaks me to know I'll never share another wave, another road trip, another session side by side with you. But your spirit will carry on in every single one of us who were lucky enough to know you.

So here's to you, G-man. The adventurer, the A-grade human, starchild, the soul who lived more in his years than most do in a lifetime. Forever missed. Forever celebrated.

Forever G-man.

OSWALD SMITH

I'm at a complete loss for words, but I want to try because G-man, you deserve that and so much more.

I'd known Graham since I was a teenager, and together we went on some unforgettable adventures. From full-on festive times in Zanzibar, surf strike missions up the West Coast, to hiding from the blazing sun in Angola.

We'd done it all. And what special times they were.

This photo takes me back to a road trip up the coast, chasing an untouched (and very secret) wave. I remember how scared we both were that day. It was a powerful, intimidating beast of a wave, but we braved it together. I used to joke with myself that if one of us ever needed rescuing, it would be

JETT BRADSHAW

My brother, my mentor! Two square pegs in a round hole, Graham saw something in me I wouldn't have even gambled on. He picked me up from nowhere, backed me when no one else would, and put me on the map. My G, you've left an unreal void in my life, so many unanswered questions... the biggest one — why did you never give up on me, through thick and thin, you were there? Later my G

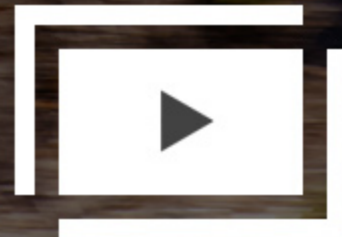
RYAN PEACOCK

Graham was a true mentor to me, somebody I could completely relate to. An unbelievably driven individual looking to make a difference in our industry, which has the odds stacked against us. Together, we fumbled our way through interviews with some of the world's top athletes to create a documentary aimed at raising awareness of mental health in action sports. Graham gave me a sense of purpose during a dark time in my life, and I will forever be proud of what we created and the message we shared.

Rest easy, Graham ❤️



“ HE PICKED ME UP FROM NOWHERE,
BACKED ME WHEN NO ONE ELSE WOULD,
AND PUT ME ON THE MAP. ”



“THE SINGLE MOST IMPACTFUL THING HE SAID TO ME ON A DRIVE UP TO NAMIBIA IN SEARCH OF THE UNKNOWN... ‘THE DREAM IS FREE, THE HUSTLE IS SOLD SEPARATELY’ ”



KYLE CABANO

What a special human Graham was, and how blessed we all were to have such a legendary leader of our water sports community.

I had the privilege of sharing many of my life's greatest adventures with Graham, on photoshoots with North, Mystic & Dirty Habits. Graham inspired me to follow my passion; he has that effect on people. The single most

impactful thing he said to me on a drive up to Namibia in search of the unknown.... 'the dream is free, the hustle is sold separately' and that will live rent-free in my mind.

His untimely departure has left a hole in the hearts of so many of us, but his memories will go on within each of us. Rest easy G.

GRAHAM IN PATAGONIA — A TRIP LIKE NO OTHER - BY ALEX VLIEGE

I've shared many trips, shoots, and late nights with Graham over the years. I've known him for about 18 years, the number of years they say it takes to become "grown up"... something Graham would never be.

There are countless stories that come to mind, some of which definitely couldn't be printed in a magazine.



“ HE WAS CLIMBING OVER CARS WITH HIS KITE, DOING STUPID FUNNY STUFF TO GET EVERYONE LAUGHING, AND PUSHING TO GET THE SHOTS EVEN IN JUNK CONDITIONS. ”

But when I thought about what really showed who he was, one adventure stood out: Patagonia. Graham always wanted to do things differently and go the extra mile, and this trip perfectly showed what he was made of.

Almost two years ago, I was asked to organise a trip for the North team to Patagonia. The plan was simple: bring the crew, have no script, and make the most out of each day while documenting it.

It was just before the 2023/24 Cape Town season, and I honestly didn't think Graham would say yes, he's always flat out at that time of year. But when I called him, he said, "This might be my only chance to go to Patagonia. Hell yes, I'm coming." And thank God he did.

We had a wild stopover in Buenos Aires for a few days, ending with a proper all-nighter, before landing in Bariloche. We'd been told it was the start of summer and to bring 3/2 wetsuits and maybe a jacket for the evenings. Instead, we arrived to freezing winds, glacial meltwater and snow. The first day was bitterly cold, gusty and rainy, and everyone was exhausted. As team manager, it wasn't exactly the easiest day to keep spirits high.

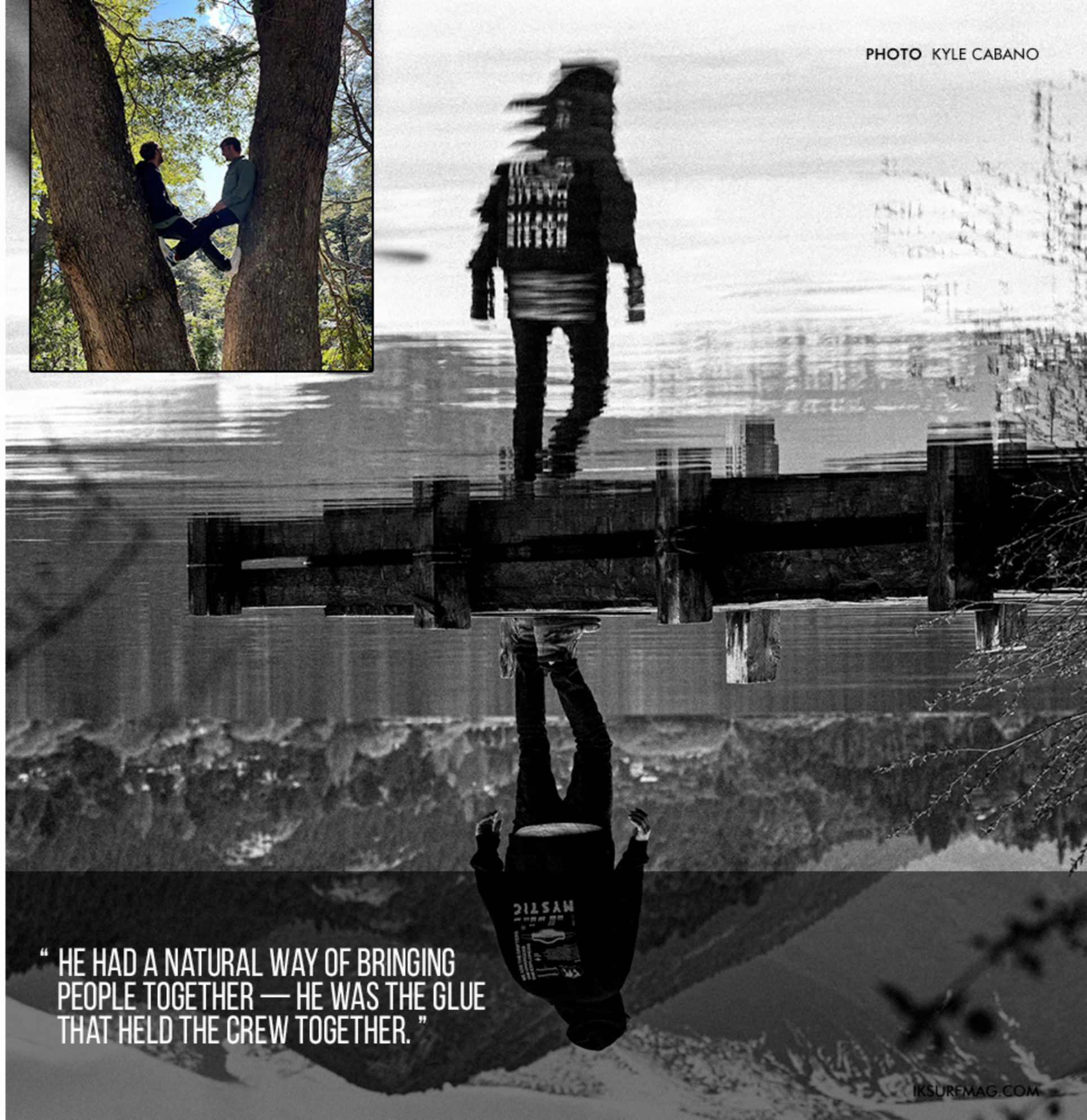
And then there was Graham. It was his first time ever kiting in booties (which we'd quickly bought from a local shop), but he didn't hesitate for a second. While the rest of the crew were recovering, he was already out on the water, making the absolute most of it. He was climbing over cars with his kite, doing stupid funny stuff to get everyone laughing, and pushing to get the shots even in junk conditions. He had this way of pulling the whole team along with his energy.

This was also the first time we combined three kites with three foilers on one trip. That could easily have created two separate groups, but Graham was one of the key people who made sure everyone felt included. He had a natural way of bringing people together — he was the glue that held the crew together.

A few days later, the owner of one of the main ski resorts heard that big names like Graham and Nick Jacobsen were in Patagonia. He arranged to open the entire ski station just for us. They gave us snow scooters, took us up into the mountains, and told us we could ride wherever we wanted. The sun came out, the sky was blue, they organised a braai on top of the mountain for us, and Graham turned to me and said, “Pinch me, bru, this is a dream.”

He’d hardly snowboarded before, but within minutes, he was carving down the slopes with that effortless style he had on the water. We built a little kicker, rode first tracks in untouched snow, and made jokes about “Africans in the snow” as Graham, Jet, and Kyle found their feet. It was surreal. It felt like towing in on a wave, but on a mountain.

On the last night of the trip, we gathered around a campfire to celebrate what had turned into an unforgettable adventure. Everyone was stoked, proud, and exhausted in the best way. Then Graham did something I’d never seen from him before. He picked up a stick and declared it the “talking stick,” leading a small ceremony in which everyone took turns saying words of appreciation about each other and the trip. It was a beautiful moment of connection, the perfect ending to a wild journey.



“ HE HAD A NATURAL WAY OF BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER — HE WAS THE GLUE THAT HELD THE CREW TOGETHER. ”

“ HE HAD THAT RARE MIX OF VISION AND DRIVE, PAIRED WITH A HUMILITY THAT MADE HIM BOTH APPROACHABLE AND INSPIRING. ”



This trip was nothing like what we'd expected — full-on winter instead of summer vibes — but in the end, it became one of the best adventures of our lives. The edit Kyle Cabano made, *Going Nowhere*, went on to become one of the most-watched clips on North's YouTube channel. No script. No plan. Just pure energy, curiosity, and the magic that happens when you put Graham in the mix.

MAX BLOM

Graham was always entrepreneurial and endlessly creative. He had that rare mix of vision and drive, paired with a humility that made him both approachable and inspiring. Yet, beneath his confident exterior, Graham sometimes wrestled with self-doubt. It was this balance, ambition tempered by vulnerability, that made him so deeply human.

I still remember our conversations about Dirty Habits and Mystic, how the two brands could come together. It was such a natural partnership. Our ideas and visions aligned effortlessly, mainly because of who Graham was. He was always willing to adapt, always looking to connect people and communities. Above all, he simply wanted to create cool things — projects that meant something, brought people together, and made life a little more exciting.



In meetings, Graham never focused on the obstacles; he saw only opportunities. His optimism was infectious. He had a way of turning challenges into sparks of creativity, and that energy lifted everyone around him.

One of the greatest lessons I learned from Graham was the importance of celebrating, not just big wins, but every meaningful moment along the way. It's something I've carried into my own work: giving people the recognition they deserve, honoring their craft, and, in true Dirty Habits spirit, throwing a good party. Because that's what Graham believed in, that life is short and worth celebrating every step of the way.

"Chase your vision, chase the world, time is ticking," he used to say.

Sadly, Graham's life ended far too soon. But he lived with a passion and authenticity that most can only dream of. His spirit — fearless, creative — will always be remembered. It lives on in our hearts, in our work, and in every community he helped build.

Graham didn't just create brands. He created moments, memories, and movements that continue to inspire us all.

" HE LIVED WITH A PASSION AND AUTHENTICITY THAT MOST CAN ONLY DREAM OF. HIS SPIRIT — FEARLESS, CREATIVE — WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED. "



CHASING SUMMITS

Not many riders know the art of snowkiting in the mountains like Johann Civel. For more than two decades, he and the Ride Up crew have chased wind and snow across peaks from the Lautaret Pass to Alaska and beyond. We caught up with Johann to hear how it all began, what drives his passion for kiting up and skiing down, and the lessons he's learned in the high mountains.



WORDS JOHANN CIVEL QUESTIONS JEN TYLER
PHOTOS WARECK ARNAUD





“ HEADING STRAIGHT UP THE MOUNTAINS WITH THE KITE AND THEN SKIING BACK DOWN. IT FELT LIKE A WHOLE NEW WORLD HAD OPENED UP TO ME.”

Johann, you and the Ride Up crew always send us such impressive snowkite photos. We thought it was time to learn more about what you do! How did you first get into snowkiting, and what inspired you to use a kite for climbing mountains?

Hi Jen! I started snowkiting and kitesurfing back in 2000. My mother came back from Quebec with my very first two-line kite, and that's where it all began. Growing up surrounded by big mountains and already in love with snowboarding and skiing, it felt natural to take the kite into the mountains. That mix of wind, snow, and terrain instantly hooked me and set the path for everything that came after.

Where did you meet the Wareck Arnaud and Hugues Beaume?

I met Wareck and Hugues around 2004 during the SKM, but we had already been crossing paths at the same spot on the Lautaret Pass. We spent a lot of time riding there together, sharing sessions and pushing each other on the mountain.

Do you remember your very first ascent and descent? When was it, and what was it like?

It was around 2003 when I started riding directly from the Lautaret Pass. That was really the beginning of the dream, heading straight up the mountains with the kite and then skiing back down. It felt like a whole new world had opened up to me.

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UNTWIST

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ELEVEIGHT



Rider: Chris Bobryk / Picture: Alexandre Ahmarant

ELEVEIGHT.WORLD

“ A BIG SLUSHY AVALANCHE BROKE OFF THE SLOPE ABOVE, JUMPED OVER THE CLIFF, AND LANDED JUST FIVE METRES FROM HUGUES AND ME.”

Do you usually plan these trips as a team, or do you chase conditions more spontaneously?

The weather forecast is often the most challenging aspect of the job. When you know that just 5 knots is enough to get a big flight or a slow ride up the mountain, you start to feel like any day could work. Giving a chance is the best way to find out for sure. Most of the time, the team is just two people, sometimes three.

Have you ever been on an expedition where everything went wrong and you were genuinely worried about the outcome?

About ten years ago, we started doing traverses in the mountains. I mean riding up one side, skiing down the other, and carrying on like that for as long as the wind would power us. Some days, we would cover around 60 kilometres with 6,000 metres of elevation gain without ever retracing our tracks.

One day, at the end of a long traverse, we had to walk at the bottom of a steep valley to get back to civilisation. It was warm. We came across a dead ibex that wolves had eaten during the winter, and a few minutes later, we saw live ibex. They were startled by us and began moving above us in the same direction.

A few minutes after that, a big slushy avalanche broke off the slope above, jumped over the cliff, and landed just five metres from Hugues and me. That day, I felt more than ever that the mountain was not my place at that time. The outcome was my worst experience in the mountains, topped off with a ten-kilometre walk back.





“ YOU CAN LAND YOUR KITE, AND PACK IT UP WHENEVER YOU WANT WITH NO EFFORT ”

Which Ozone kites do you use for these missions, and what makes them suited for mountain ascents?

I use the Subzero a lot for this kind of expedition. This kite performs perfectly in the mountains with a fast loop, good backstall control, and no cravats thanks to its compact shape. As soon as the wind picks up, I switch

to the single-skin Explore. There is no better way to stay safe in strong and gusty winds.

All the models are well-suited because they all have the magic fifth line. You can land your kite, and pack it up whenever you want with no effort, in very little time, no matter how intense the wind is. This system is the best I have ever used, and it is what makes Ozone the best snowkite on the market.

The Hyperlink is incredibly high-performing. I really love it for flying in wide open areas, on slopes over 30 degrees, or when I want to

optimise in really light wind. It just performs too well for wild and steep expeditions. When you gain performance, you lose some safety and ease of use.

How has Ozone supported you over the years on these expeditions?

Ozone is like a family. They have supported me for 20 years, and none of this would have been possible without them. Their support has allowed me to travel the world, meet incredible people, and discover new snowkite areas. Thanks to them, I have been able to spend a big part of every winter chasing the wind and reaching new summits.



How do you decide on the right kite size and ski setup for each ride?

First, it depends on whether I plan to fly or go on an expedition. For flying, I use the bigger kites. If I am riding up the mountain, I often use the 9. If the weather forecast predicts strong wind, I will take the seven-metre kite or pack an extra four-metre kite in my bag.

Aside from kites and skis, what specific gear is essential for safety and performance?

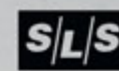
For safety, we always carry essential snow equipment: a transceiver, shovel, probe, and an airbag is a huge plus. When we go on glaciers, we also bring a rope and carabiners in case of a crevasse fall.

“FOR SAFETY, WE ALWAYS CARRY ESSENTIAL SNOW EQUIPMENT”



Jaime SLS

Freeride / Freestyle



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Check out the whole Freeride Range 2026



Select SLS, Select Concept Blue, Soleil SLS, Soleil Concept Blue



Take your riding to the next level



“ WE SPEND BETWEEN FIVE AND NINE HOURS OUTSIDE, SO KEEPING THE WEIGHT DOWN IS CRUCIAL. LIGHT SKIS, LIGHT BOOTS, AND ONLY CARRYING WHAT YOU TRULY NEED ”

For performance, we use freeride or touring skis with skins, along with a kite made from light material to optimise in light wind. A reliable safety system is essential, such as Ozone’s internal re-ride system, which is perfect for these conditions.

How much does weight and packability influence your gear choices?

During our daily expeditions, we spend between five and nine hours outside, so keeping the weight down is crucial. Light skis, light boots, and only carrying what you truly need in your bag is the key. These days, we avoid carrying two kites in the bag whenever possible.

What goes into picking the perfect day to kite up a mountain?

Fresh powder, steady wind, and plenty of free time, the perfect combination!

How do you read the wind and snow conditions to decide if it is safe?

That is the hard part of the job. These days, there are too many wind models, and they often do not say the same thing for the same day, so we can never be sure what we will get. It is really hard to plan anything precisely. First, you have to go, and second, you have to be opportunistic with whatever the wind and snow give you.

“ JUST BECAUSE IT INDICATES A RISK LEVEL OF ONE OUT OF FIVE DOES NOT MEAN IT IS SAFE. THE REAL DANGER COMES FROM THE MOUNTAINS, NOT FROM THE KITE.”

What makes a good spot for kite ascents, and what are the red flags that tell you not to go?

All mountains can be a good spot one day; you just have to be there at the right time. The red flag to watch is the BRA, or the Avalanche Risk Bulletin; however, just because it indicates a risk level of one out of five does not mean it is safe. The real danger comes from the mountains, not from the kite.

Where have you found the most memorable places for kiting up and skiing down? Is there one mountain or region that stands out as your all-time favourite?

Home! We have the perfect maps, roads everywhere in the mountains, and our own knowledge of the terrain. Argentina, Alaska, and Turkey have also been incredible places to explore.

What do you do in the summer months when there is no snow? Do you switch back to kitesurfing?

I have been kitesurfing for 25 years, but I am no longer kiting. These days, I am winging it, though my primary focus is on surfing. Surfing and snowkiting will always be my passions. In these two sports, regardless of age or physical strength, experience continues to allow for improvement. That is what I love about them.





“ START WITH A SCHOOL OR A SNOWKITE GUIDE LIKE ME TO HELP TRANSFER YOUR WATER SKILLS ONTO THE SNOW. ”

What advice would you give to someone who wants to try snowkiting in the mountains for the first time?

- Start on skis. The more time you spend practising on them, the faster you will improve at snowkiting.
- Start with a school or a snowkite guide like me to help transfer your water skills onto the snow.
- Take a guide if you are heading into the mountains and it is not your usual playground.

What is the most important lesson you've learned from years of chasing wind and snow in the high mountains?

Be opportunistic and seize the chance. You have to go to know!

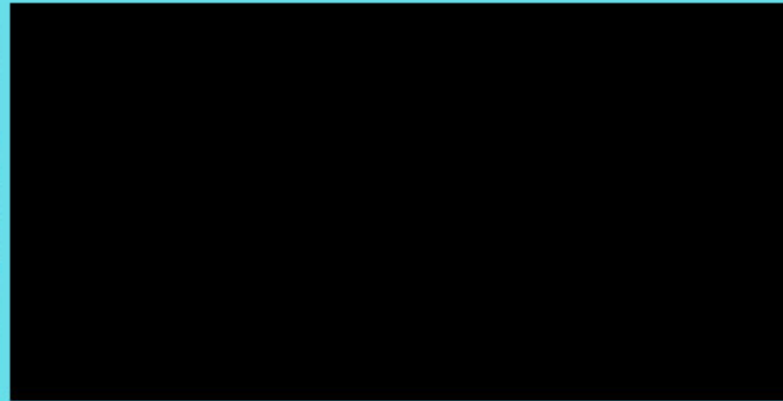
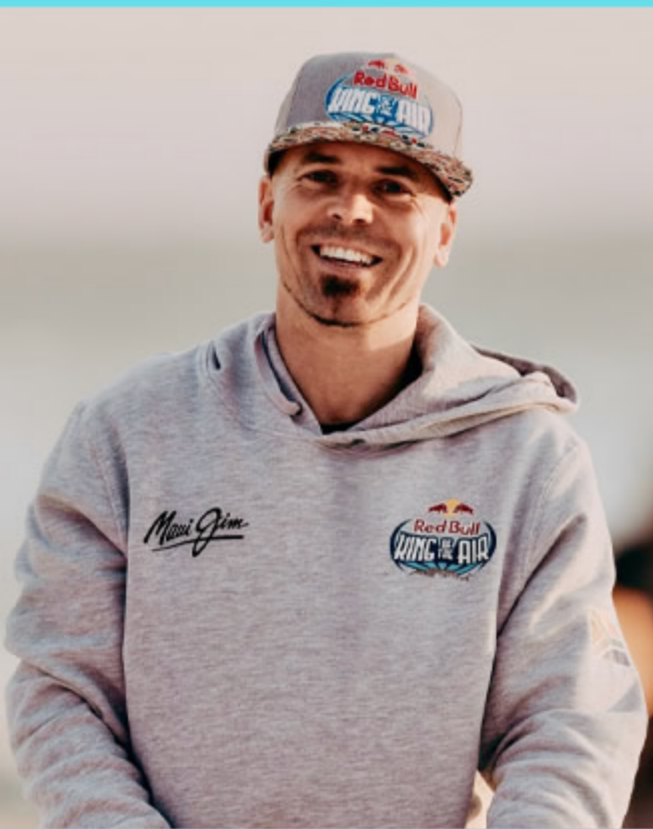


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WORDS HANNAH WHITELEY PHOTOS ANDRE MAGARAO

HOOD RIVER: WAS IT WORTH THE HYPE?

Hood River has long been whispered about as the ultimate US playground for wind sports, and so Hannah Whiteley finally packed her bags to find out if the hype was real. Two weeks, countless sessions, and a few blueberry scones later, she can confirm that Hood River more than lives up to its legend!

“ I ONLY HAD ONE NON-WINDY DAY. JUST ONE. EVERY OTHER DAY DELIVERED STEADY, RIDEABLE CONDITIONS. ”

The first time I drove into Hood River, I could not take my eyes off the Columbia River Gorge. Colourful kites danced against the backdrop of steep green cliffs, and Mount Hood hovered in the distance like a postcard come to life. Before I had even unpacked my gear, I had the feeling this place was something special.

GETTING THERE

To get to Hood River from Europe, there are a few different routes you can take. I chose to fly to LAX and then connect to Portland. I decided to break up the journey and stay a couple of days in LA, which was fun and helped me adjust to the time zone. Portland is just a two-hour flight from LA, so that part was easy. I recommend hiring a car in Portland, as it is about a 1.5-hour drive to Hood River. I was kindly picked up by my friend James, a local of Hood River.

I visited Hood River to have a great time, explore a new place, and capture some new content. I had heard so much about Hood River, the American mecca of wind sports tucked away in Oregon, and finally got the chance to see it for myself. Could it really live up to the stories? After two weeks here, I can say without hesitation that it is worth the hype.

WIND AND WEATHER

Out of 14 days, I only had one non-windy day. Just one. Every other day delivered steady, rideable conditions. That consistency makes Hood River pretty special; there is a great variety of spots to ride, each with its own character and landscape.





“ PLACE I COULD HAPPILY SPEND A MONTH OR TWO IN THE SUMMER, BUT THE SHEER AMOUNT OF TIME I SPENT ON THE WATER KITING LEFT ME EXHAUSTED. ”

I recommend staying in Hood River for at least 10 days. There are plenty of activities to do beyond wind sports, and a longer stay gives you time to explore and enjoy the area without feeling rushed. Hood River is a place I could happily spend a month or two in the summer, but the sheer amount of time I spent on the water kiting left me exhausted.

After a couple of weeks, I felt it was time to return home and give my body some rest!

The best time to visit Hood River for wind is during the summer months, from June to September. This is when the thermal winds are at their peak. Mornings are often calm, ideal for foiling sessions. By midday, the wind starts to build, reaching its strongest and most consistent levels in the afternoon. Wind forecasts are often unpredictable; most of the time during our stay, it seemed like there would be little to no wind, yet we still managed to score epic sessions.

It is prominently known for its strong winds, but during our stay, we were blessed with perfect 12 and 9-metre weather.

Hood River has a similar climate to Cape Town. The days can be pretty hot, but the evenings are cooler, so you will definitely need warm-weather clothes as well as something longer for the evenings. I mostly rode in a shorty wetsuit or a 3/2 long wetsuit. There was a heatwave during my stay, making it particularly hot, but you can always cool off in the nearby river.

RIDING SCENE

I could not believe how many riders were out winging,



kite foiling, or cruising downwind. Add the iconic slider park for wakestyle tricks, and you have one of the rare spots in the world where almost every discipline shares the same playground.

The downwind foil scene is huge in Hood River; rumour has it that it is the best downwind spot in the world. Everyone is generally friendly, so it is likely you will find a lift back upwind or can jump on a shuttle.

FAVOURITE SPOTS

My favourite kite spots came down to the Sand Spit, also known as the Event Site, which is my absolute favourite. It has butter flat water, hardly anyone out, and is perfect for twintip sessions. I would go in for just a quick ride and end up kiting for hours.

“RUMOUR HAS IT THAT IT IS THE BEST DOWNWIND SPOT IN THE WORLD.”

WOO

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BAPTISTE
▲ 18.6m

LEADERBOARD
Misty Cliffs, ZA

1		BAPTISTE	29.3m
2		CYRIL	27.2m
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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“ I AM HAPPY THAT THIS ASPECT OF MY WORK STILL BRINGS ME SO MUCH JOY ”

I also really enjoyed Lyle. It is a little busier, but worth it, with flat water and dramatic scenery. Do not miss out on the rope swing under the bridge either; it is great fun to launch yourself off after your kite session. It was also so special to share a few sessions with friends from around the world.

CAPTURING THE ACTION

I enjoyed shooting with Andre Magarao; after several years, it was definitely time to reconnect and capture some magic. Interestingly, I actually enjoy my sessions a little bit more when I feel I have added a productive element to them. Creating content is a huge part of my job as a professional kitesurfer, and I am happy that this aspect of my work still brings me so much joy, allowing me to be in my creative flow. Do not get me wrong, sometimes it gets frustrating doing the same trick over and over because everything needs to line up perfectly to make the magic shots. Teamwork is dream work; in the end, it is always worth it.

NO WIND DAYS

Hood River is not only about the wind. On the rare no wind day, there is so much on offer; I found myself spoiled for choice. Epic hikes with sweeping views over the gorge. Mountain biking trails that cut through pine forests and ridgelines. White water rafting for when I still wanted an adrenaline fix without a kite in my hands.

FOODIE FAVOURITES

And let us not forget the food. Hood River and White Salmon are packed with cosy cafés, craft breweries, and bakeries that make the perfect post-session fuel.

“HOOD RIVER IS MORE THAN JUST A WIND SPORTS DESTINATION; IT IS A FULL-ON EXPERIENCE.”

I can guarantee you will be happy if you try the White Salmon Baking Co. or Nativ Café. They have the best blueberry scones I have ever tasted. In Hood River, Pine Street Bakery is amazing. I am quite the bakery specialist. There is also a really great pizzeria in Hood River called Solstice, which I have become quite obsessed with. If you are looking for a beautiful scenic spot, I recommend Riverside in Hood River.

NIGHTLIFE AND STAYS

I would love to give you some great nightlife recommendations, but the jet lag was really hitting me hard by the evening. I was dreaming of my bed. There are definitely fun gigs playing and bars to hang out at, but I will have to explore that scene next time.

Accommodation is on the expensive side; there is limited availability online due to American rental law, so I recommend booking in advance. I stayed in White Salmon, which was super nice. I would definitely stay there again. The internet connection in both Hood River and White Salmon is good and works well for remote working.

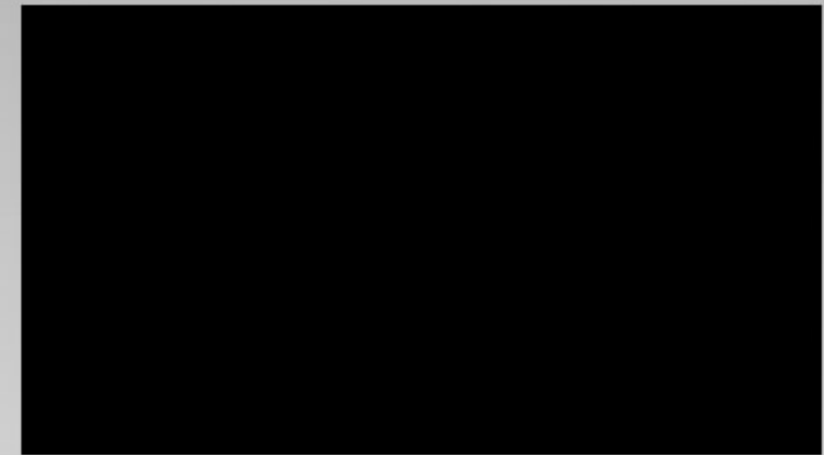
Hood River is more than just a wind sports destination; it is a full-on experience. Between the reliable wind, the variety of riding options, the good vibes, and the endless adventures on land, it is the kind of place that hooks you instantly.

I came wondering if it would live up to its reputation, and I left already planning my return. If you have ever thought about making the trip, do not hesitate. Hood River delivers.





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INTERVIEW ROU CHATER PHOTOS TOBY BROMWICH

Behind the Duotone brand is Philipp Becker, the brand's Marketing and Communications Manager, who's been part of the ride for 15 years. As the new gear hits stores, we caught up with him to chat about Young Blood, D/LAB, and how Duotone keeps pushing the sport forward.

INSIDE DUOTONE 2026

INNOVATIONS, INSIGHTS AND MARKETING IN THE MODERN AGE WITH PHILIPP BECKER



RIDER MATCHU LOPES



" YOU CANNOT SELL A PERFORMANCE KITE WITH ONLY A SIX-SECOND SCROLL-BY; YOU NEED STORYTELLING THAT GOES DEEPER, TOO. "

If you have followed kiteboarding for any length of time, you have felt the ripples from Duotone's marketing engine. At the centre of that machine is Philipp Becker, International Communications and Marketing Manager, who has been with Boards and More through the North to Duotone era for roughly 15 years. He has seen social media platforms rise and fragment, watched team riders grow from groms to world champions, and helped guide some of the sport's most ambitious product launches from first sketch to shop floor.

We caught up with Philipp as Duotone's latest gear hits stores to talk about everything from the Young Blood program to DLAB materials and why "not changing for change's sake" is a real product strategy.

FROM ONE FACEBOOK PAGE TO A THOUSAND TOUCHPOINTS

"When I launched the first Facebook channel, it was just Facebook," Philipp says. Those days are gone. Modern brand storytelling now spans product pages, short videos, films, pro centres, the academy app, sustainability projects, and youth development. "Everything is faster. Attention spans are short, but we still need to communicate real information, not just TikTok snippets."

The team has grown with the times, bringing together a larger in-house crew and a close circle of longtime collaborators, including photographer Toby Bromwich and filmmaker Carlos Guzman. The goal is consistency across all platforms. You cannot sell a performance kite with only a six-second scroll-by; you need storytelling that goes deeper, too.

RIDER EDGAR ULRICH

RIDER MATCHU LOPES

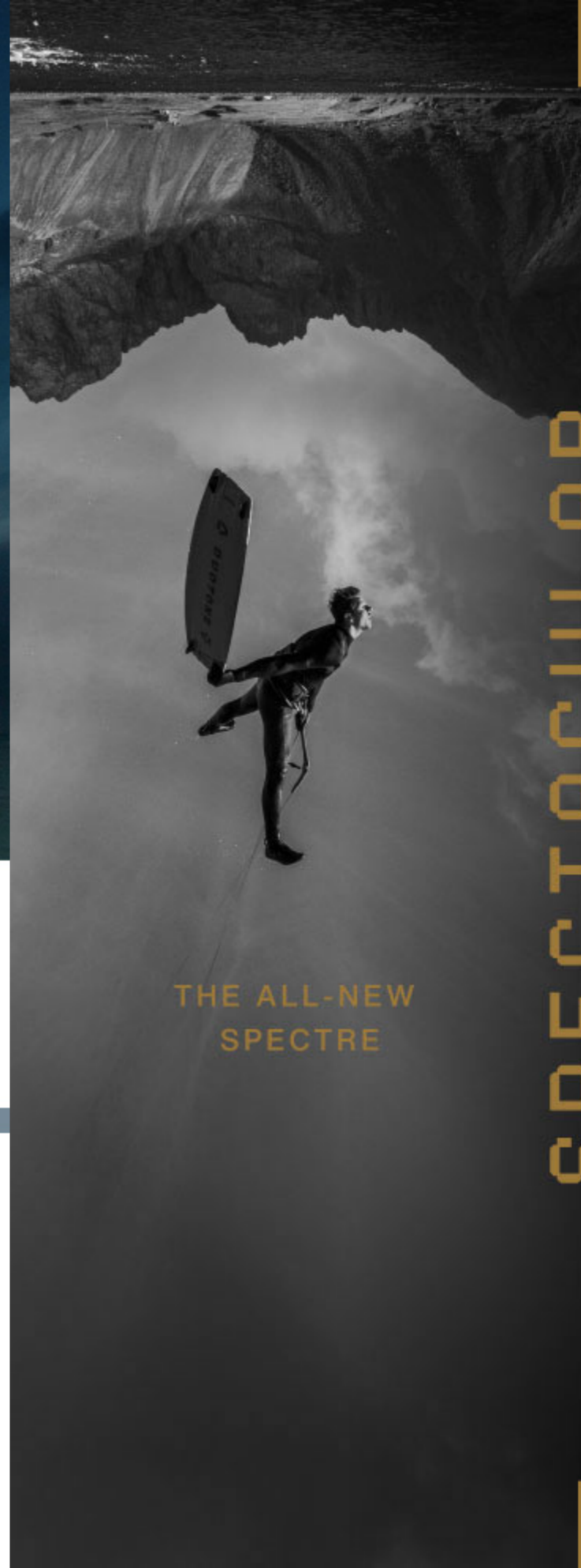


BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION: YOUNG BLOOD REIMAGINED

Duotone's Young Blood initiative has existed for two decades, but has evolved from a fun week on the water into a structured pathway. Camps are now international and national, filled with sessions on mindset, athlete professionalism, editing, content creation, and how to be valuable to sponsors.

"It's talent scouting, yes, but it's also education," Philipp explains. Porsche supports the program with guest mentors, including sports psychologists who typically work with racing drivers and non-water sports creators who teach social media skills.

" IT'S TALENT SCOUTING, YES, BUT IT'S ALSO EDUCATION "



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“ IF SKY SOLBACH NEEDS TWO MORE WEEKS TO IMPROVE A KITE BY 20%, WE WILL DELAY THE SHOOT. ”

Riders like Andrea Principi and Lorenzo Casati came through Young Blood before becoming world champions, and alums often return to mentor.

One standout moment came during the Youth Worlds in Tarifa when Philipp hosted a short Q&A with athletes Mathea, Mikaili, and Liam. Two and a half hours later, not one kid had looked at their phone. “They were hanging on every word,” he says.

THE HARDEST PART OF THE JOB: CONTENT, CONTENT, CONTENT

Lining up photo and video production each year is “probably the hardest challenge,” Philipp admits. Kites and boards must be finalised, riders and creatives booked, weather windows targeted, and logistics sorted. Then you just hope for the right wind and waves. “If Sky Solbach needs two more weeks to improve a kite by 20%, we will delay the shoot. We change flights. That’s the priority.”

Duotone relies on proven spots that balance reliability and variety. Venezuela has been a recent favourite for its turquoise water and steady wind, while

Fuerteventura offers easy logistics and consistent conditions. Wave shoots still chase dream setups in places like Mauritius, but the focus is always on delivering clean, realistic product content.

Gear often arrives as finished pre-production, hand-carried from Munich to avoid customs issues. It is not glamorous, just a lot of lists, long days, and late nights.

TEAM BUILDING IN THE BIG AIR ERA

Big air dominates attention and sales right now, but Duotone avoids simply buying champions. The focus is on discovering talent early through Young Blood and national programs and supporting riders as they grow.

Philipp points out that waves and foiling remain key parts of Duotone's DNA. "We are pushing those categories too. The Neo comes in Original, SLS, and DLAB for a reason," he says. Trends move in cycles. Strapless freestyle had its moment, foil had its rise, and big air is leading today. Duotone's lineup balances all of them.

WHY THREE CONSTRUCTIONS

Duotone's approach to Original, SLS, and DLAB balances performance needs and accessibility. Original offers proven performance at the best price. SLS gives a lighter, stiffer feel and more durability. DLAB, made with advanced materials like Aluula, pushes top-end performance. "We started DLAB to show what's possible," Philipp says. "We never expected demand to explode like it did."

Concept Blue offers an eco-friendly option where performance stays the same while the environmental footprint is reduced through undyed canopy fabric, recycled plastics, and bio-based bladders. "Around 30% of buyers choose Concept Blue when it's available," he says.

INSIDE THE MATERIALS PIPELINE

Duotone's lab in Munich constantly tests new fabrics and runs long-term durability studies. Aluula supply can be a challenge, and the material itself has evolved. The brand works closely with suppliers, as it once did with Teijin, to fine-tune materials for both performance and production. "There are even more exotic materials out there," Philipp says, "but we don't want kites to become unaffordable."

RIDER MATCHU LOPES

"TRENDS MOVE IN CYCLES. STRAPLESS FREESTYLE HAD ITS MOMENT, FOIL HAD ITS RISE, AND BIG AIR IS LEADING TODAY."





Beyond fabric, the main developments now come from leading-edge design, pressure, and structural refinement. Radical shape changes are rare these days. Most progress comes from precision.

WHAT'S NEW RIGHT NOW

This year's highlights include the Rebel DLAB and Juice DLAB. The Rebel DLAB focuses on accessible top-end big-air performance with a five-strut frame and smooth hangtime, while the Juice DLAB delivers true light-wind fun with fast, agile handling and plenty of pop even in single-digit winds.

Neo development continues under Sky Solbach, refining the kite's signature drift and reactive steering across all constructions.

" RADICAL SHAPE CHANGES ARE RARE THESE DAYS. MOST PROGRESS COMES FROM PRECISION. "

HARLEM PEAK & ASCENT



Reach new heights with the ultimate Big Air combo: the ultralight 5-strut Harlem PEAK and the all-new twintip board, the Harlem ASCENT.

Designed by Ralf Groesel and Aaron Hadlow. Trusted by Big Air World Champion Lorenzo Casati.

harlemkitesurfing.com

Rider: Baptiste Bourdoulous
Photo: Aris Giannoukos





"IF A NEW VERSION IS NOT TRULY BETTER, DUOTONE WILL NOT CHANGE IT. THAT IS NOT HESITATION BUT RESPECT FOR RIDERS WHO KNOW WHAT THEY LIKE."



Evo versus Rebel remains a common question. The Evo, a three-strut kite, feels faster and more playful, especially in smaller sizes for looping. The Rebel, with five struts, is stiffer and steadier in gusts, built for big jumps and long hangtime. Many team riders use both depending on the conditions.

On the twin-tip side, Philipp suggests most riders chasing an upgrade should look at the Jaime or Jaime SLS instead of the whole Team Series Big Air board. "Grip is similar, comfort and fun are higher, and your knees will thank you," he says.

DON'T GUESS. GO TEST

Duotone puts a big focus on demos. Distribution teams run beach events across Europe and beyond, offering multiple constructions and sizes to test. The Try It Now program through local shops makes it easy to borrow gear. "Try it for five minutes or an hour. If you don't like it, don't buy it," Philipp says. "But most people feel the difference."

THE CONSTANT THREAD: MAKE IT BETTER OR LEAVE IT ALONE

Philipp's key philosophy is simple. If a new version is not truly better, Duotone will not change it. That is not hesitation but respect for riders who know what they like. When the Rebels' pulleys were removed, some riders needed time to adjust, but the payoff in handling made sense for modern big air.

That mindset, innovate when it counts, support the next generation, and keep standards high, explains why Duotone continues to lead. As the 2026 gear lands, there is plenty of substance behind every clip you scroll past.

RIDER MATCHU LOPES

TWO AND A HALF DECADES AT THE TOP

WORDS ROU CHATER

Few names in kiteboarding command the same respect as Aaron Hadlow. A five-time World Champion, two-time King of the Air winner, and one of the sport's defining figures, Aaron has been part of kiteboarding's story since the very beginning. Over the years, Rou Chater and he have crossed paths at beaches, competitions, and photoshoots all over the world, and his passion for the sport has never faded. In this feature, we rewind to where it all began: from those early Cornish days to the world stage, tracing the evolution of a rider who helped shape modern kiteboarding.

“IT’S ALWAYS GREAT TO SEE THAT “I CAN’T BELIEVE IT!” REACTION, WITH WIDE EYES AND A MASSIVE SMILE ON THEIR FACE.”

CORNWALL BEGINNINGS

“It must have been around 1998,” Aaron recalls, thinking back to when he first saw a kite. “It was through my dad, really. He was deep into windsurfing at the time. We lived in Cornwall, and our local beach was Gwithian, a place anyone in the UK wind or surf scene probably knows.”

Aaron’s dad was part of that pioneering group of windsurfers who couldn’t resist the pull of this strange new sport. “He’d come home with a Ram Air kite full of sand, having been dragged up the beach,” Aaron laughs. “Eventually, I started flying his kites in light winds. When the Wipika Classic came out, the first inflatable, it suddenly felt safe. I must have been about ten years old.”

Those early sessions were as raw as they come. Gwithian isn’t exactly the easiest spot to learn, with cold Atlantic winds and rolling surf. But that wild Cornish environment

shaped him. “The conditions were always changing: the wind, the tides, the water state. You had to adapt constantly, and that adaptability became one of my biggest strengths in competition.”

FROM THE ESTUARY TO THE WORLD

Aaron’s first competition came soon after. “It was in Weymouth. Back then, the BKSA didn’t even have a junior division; they literally made one up for me on the day!”

That improvised start kicked off a whirlwind few years. “I worked my way up through the ranks: junior, amateur, then pro. By the time I was twelve or thirteen,

I was already competing internationally. It all happened fast, a blur, really, but my clearest memories start around 2004 when I won my first world title."

He never did clinch a UK Championship, something he still finds amusing. "By the time I got to that level, my mindset was already international. I was chasing world titles. But the British scene was amazing; riders like Sam Light and Lewis Crathern came through that same pathway."

THE FLEXIFOIL YEARS

Before the global spotlight, there were small beginnings, borrowed kites, snapped lines, and local sponsors. "My first proper deal was with Flexifoil," Aaron says. "Before that, I'd get small discounts from Wipika through West Country Watersports. Pete Stevens helped us out loads."

"Jason Furness from Flexifoil scouted me, got me on the team, and we started developing kites together. He later helped me land Red Bull and clothing sponsors, and he became like an older brother. We still talk today."

From there, things snowballed. Ten or more events a year on the PKRA tour, constant travel, and relentless competition. "It was intense, but I loved it. I didn't just want to win once, I wanted to prove I was the best every season."

That drive carried him through one of kiteboarding's most competitive eras. The PKRA tour back then was a grind, long travel days, constantly changing conditions, and no safety net. "It was the best education possible," he says. "You learned to read people, to manage pressure, and to find consistency when everything around you was chaos."



"IT WAS INTENSE, BUT I LOVED IT. I DIDN'T JUST WANT TO WIN ONCE, I WANTED TO PROVE I WAS THE BEST EVERY SEASON."



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“IT WASN'T ABOUT HUGE TRICKS; IT WAS ABOUT STYLE AND CREATIVITY. IT GAVE ME SPACE TO GROW AGAIN.”

PHOTO ARIS GIANNOUKOS

THE ART OF REINVENTION

After dominating freestyle, Aaron's focus shifted toward creative projects. "Andy Gordon and I met in Australia and started filming without any expectations. Six months later, he sent me an edit that blew my mind. That's when we really started pushing production, using helicopters, cranes, and multiple cameras. This was before drones, and the results still hold up today."

Then came park riding and the Triple S events; a chance to reset and rediscover the sport. "It wasn't about huge tricks; it was about style and creativity. It gave me space to grow again."

And when Big Air came back into focus, Aaron was right there. "Ruben and I were already looping in Cape Town before King of the Air returned. Big Air gave me a way to keep pushing without the same level of freestyle impact. I won King of the Air twice and had a few podium finishes that extended my career and kept the fire alive."

A LONGTERM COLLABORATION

Throughout that evolution, one constant thread has been Ralf Grösel, one of the sport's most respected kite designers and a long-time collaborator. "I met Ralf during my North Kiteboarding years," Aaron says. "From the first time we worked together, there was a real connection. He's an engineer, I'm a rider, but we both obsess over how things feel in the air. That mix of precision and intuition has always clicked."

Their partnership helped produce some of the most iconic kites of the modern era, designs that balanced performance and predictability, setting new benchmarks. "Working with Ralf taught me so much about design," Aaron explains. "I'd give him feedback on a feeling

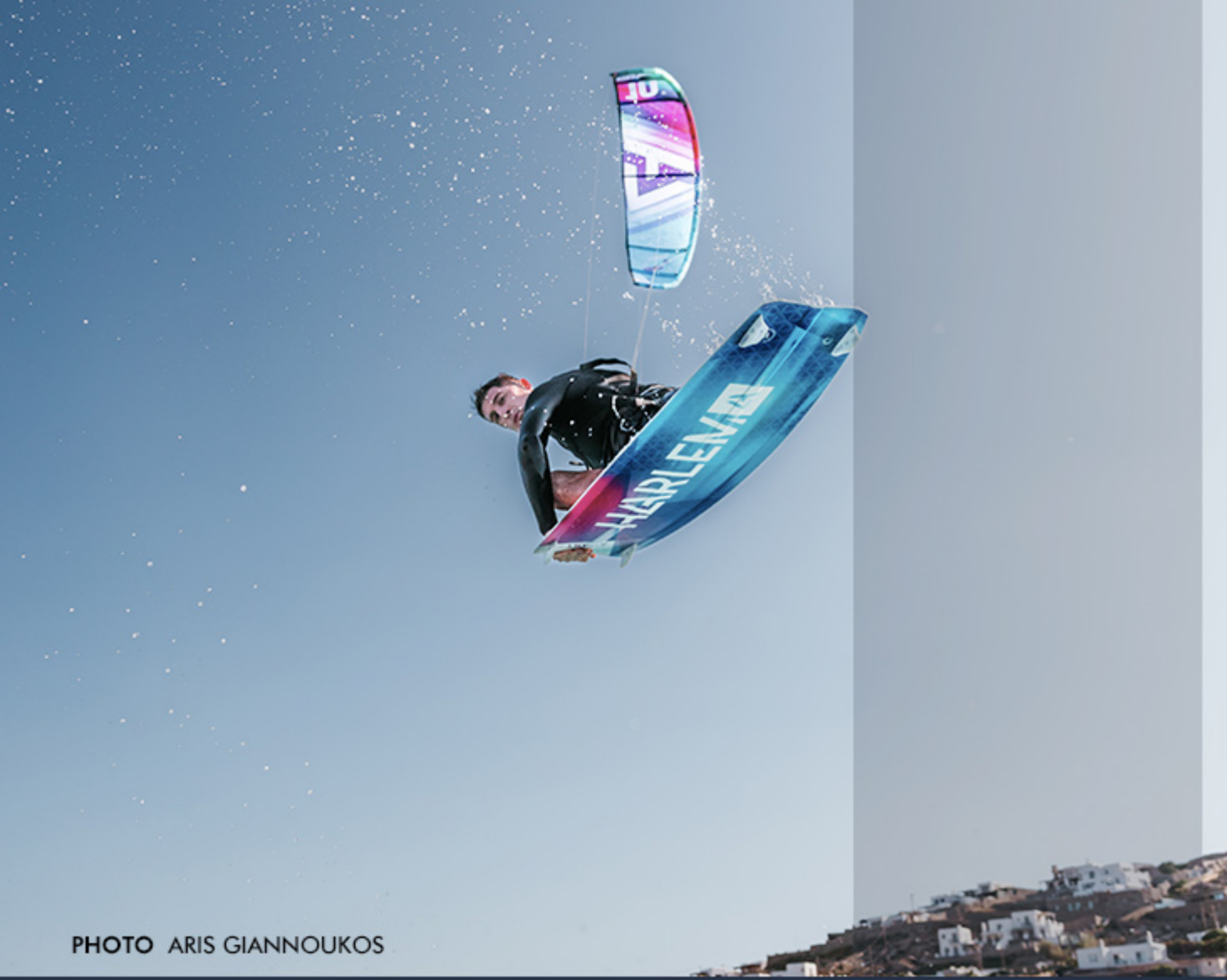


PHOTO ARIS GIANNOUKOS

or behaviour, and he'd translate that into measurable design changes. It was a proper back-and-forth, the kind of relationship every rider dreams of having with a designer."

That shared understanding has carried through into Aaron's current role with Harlem Kitesurfing, where Ralf now leads the design program. "When Ralf joined Harlem, it felt natural to reconnect. The brand's got this independent energy, small enough to be agile, but big enough to push boundaries. I loved that. It reminded me of the early days, when innovation came from passion rather than process."

"THE BRAND'S GOT THIS INDEPENDENT ENERGY, SMALL ENOUGH TO BE AGILE, BUT BIG ENOUGH TO PUSH BOUNDARIES."

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PHOTO CRAIG KOLESKY

“THE GEAR’S LIGHTER, SAFER, MORE REFINED, BUT WHETHER YOU’RE LOOPING OVER TABLE MOUNTAIN OR CRUISING AT YOUR LOCAL BEACH, THAT FEELING NEVER CHANGES.”

Aaron’s role at Harlem isn’t just about lending his name to a kite. He’s actively involved in testing, development, and shaping the brand’s performance direction. “We’re not just tweaking things for the sake of it. Every session, every prototype, is about refining how the kite feels; the feedback

through the lines, the lift, the recovery, all of it. It’s that same obsession with the details that’s driven me since I was a kid.”

He speaks with genuine enthusiasm about the collaboration. “Ralf’s designs have always had soul; they’re engineered, but they also have that magic you can’t quite quantify. To be part of that process again, helping to create kites that push the sport forward, feels amazing. It’s a full circle, really, from learning on my dad’s gear in Cornwall to helping shape what the next generation will ride.”

STILL SENDING IT

Now, more than 25 years since those first sessions at Gwithian, Aaron remains one of kiteboarding’s most respected voices. “The sport’s evolved massively, but the essence is still the same,” he says. “Everyone’s chasing that feeling of freedom. The gear’s lighter, safer, more refined, but whether you’re looping over Table Mountain or cruising at your local beach, that feeling never changes.”

And he’s not done yet. “It’s been an incredible ride, full of learning and fun. I’m still as passionate as ever,” he grins. “Who knows, maybe I’ll still be out there in another 25 years.”



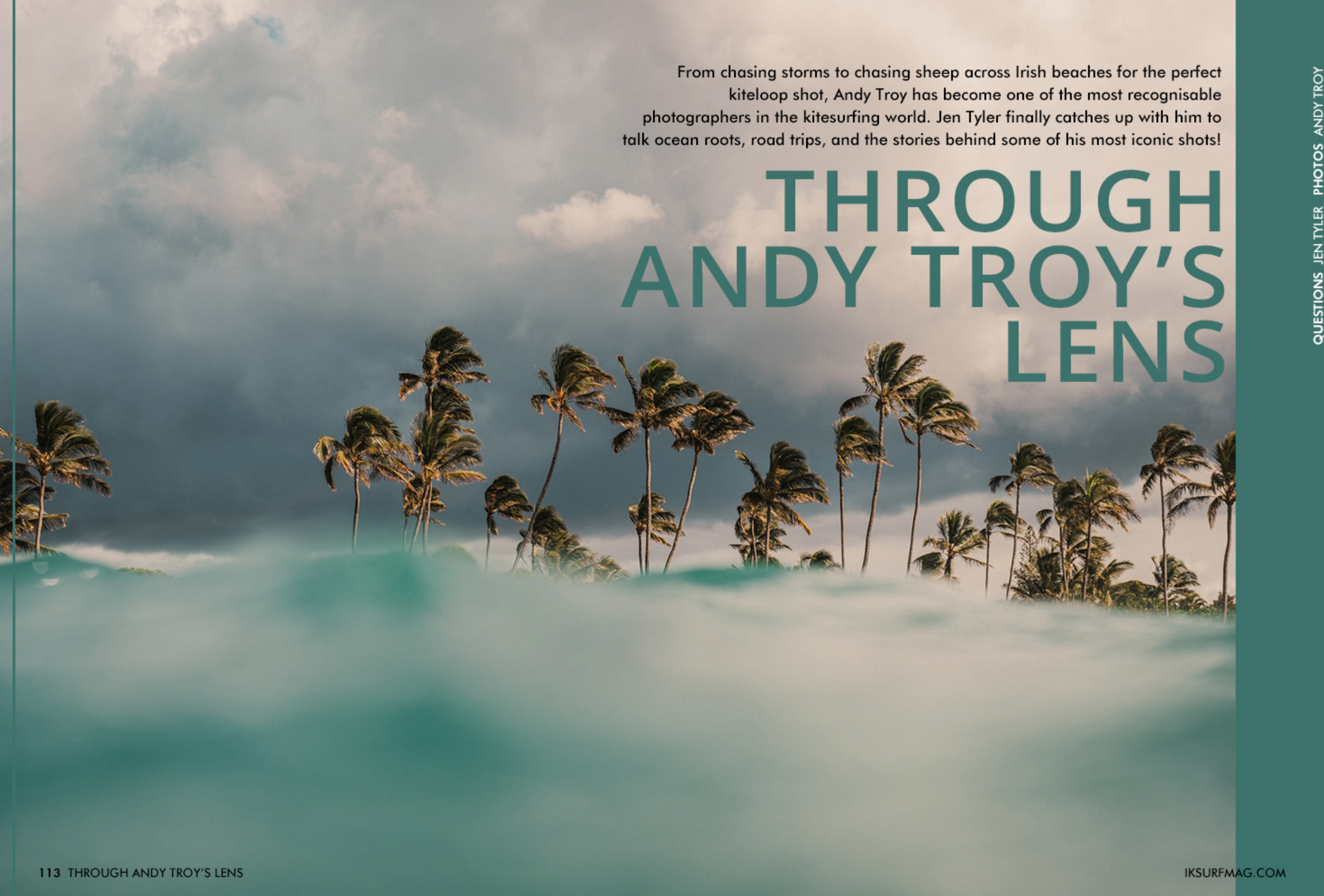
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 - 3D TOP RAIL CHANNELS
 - INTEGRATED NFC SCAN TECH



A tropical beach scene with palm trees and a cloudy sky. The palm trees are silhouetted against a bright, cloudy sky. The foreground is a blurred, light blue-green color, suggesting the ocean or a shallow reef flat. The overall mood is serene and tropical.

From chasing storms to chasing sheep across Irish beaches for the perfect kitemloop shot, Andy Troy has become one of the most recognisable photographers in the kitesurfing world. Jen Tyler finally catches up with him to talk ocean roots, road trips, and the stories behind some of his most iconic shots!

THROUGH ANDY TROY'S LENS



" I WAS IMMEDIATELY HOOKED. I STARTED
FILMING KITESURFERS ON MY LOCAL BEACH
WITH MY FATHER'S VIDEO CAMERA "

Hi Andy, we've been wanting to interview you for a while, and I'm glad we finally have the chance! Let's start at the beginning: growing up in Zeeland with the sea on your doorstep, did you become a photographer because of the ocean, or were you a surfer who just happened to pick up a camera?

Hi Jen, great to be here! I've always been connected to the sea since I was a baby. My parents would take me along on their sailboat, so being on the water felt natural from the start. During my secondary school years, around age 12 or 13, I started flying small power kites, and later that year, I bought a kite buggy. This was around 2000, before kitesurfing had really become a thing. A year later, in 2001, I saw a classmate, Reinier Korstanje (now a KOTA judge), kitesurfing for the first time with a 2-line kite. Later that same year, I went to the beach with another classmate who had just bought a Wipika Classic 8.5m and a directional board to try kitesurfing for the first time. I was immediately hooked. I started filming kitesurfers on my local beach with my father's video camera and even created a small kitesurfing website as a hobby.

In the following years, I mostly filmed my kitesurfing friends just for fun and uploaded the videos to my site. In 2005, I met Youri Zoon, who lived nearby, and we started making some videos together that got really good reactions. That was the moment I realised I wanted to do more with video and, later on, photography.

At the time, I was mainly focused on filming, occasionally taking photos with a simple camera. During my studies, I interned at a marketing company that also owned one of the bigger Dutch kitesurfing websites. They gave me a professional camcorder to shoot kitesurfing videos and content for their business.



“ I STARTED THINKING SERIOUSLY ABOUT WORKING FULL-TIME IN THE KITESURFING INDUSTRY. ”

After that, I wasn't quite sure which direction to take, so I decided to start freelancing, mainly building websites while also doing video and photography. My father lent me the money to buy my first DSLR, the Canon 7D, which was excellent

for both video and photography. That gave me the chance to learn how to really use a proper camera.

In the years that followed, I mostly shot kitesurfing for fun with friends and occasionally with pro riders like Youri Zoon. I also contributed a couple of articles each year to the Dutch magazine Access, mainly to earn extra money to cover costs. At the time, most of my work was in corporate video and photography, and I did a lot of

filming for a big travel agency, shooting hotels and destinations.

The turning point came during COVID in 2021, just after I returned from working abroad on a big TV show. Kevin Langeree called to ask if I was available in the next two weeks to shoot his new Reedin gear on a road trip to Spain. Ydwer had just had his accident, and there was no other photographer available. That road trip turned out to be such an incredible experience that I started thinking seriously about working full-time in the kitesurfing industry.



“ THAT WAS THE
MOMENT I KNEW I
COULD MAKE A
LIVING DOING THIS ”

That idea grew even stronger when I met Ruben and Aaron again in Denmark and did an FPV drone shoot with them. At the end of 2021, I decided to take a big risk: I went to Cape Town with all my camera gear and drones. With a bit of luck, I met the people behind BAKL at an after-party and got to know most of the big air riders. That was the moment I knew I could make a living doing this.

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FPV drones really helped me break into the scene and pushed me to further develop my photography skills. That same year, I also travelled with Hannah Whiteley, which gave me a huge boost in exposure and helped me get my name out there in the kitesurfing community.

You shoot commercial campaigns, travel stories, and raw action on the water. How do you switch mindsets between creating something polished for clients and capturing action shots?

The past few years have been mainly focused on commercial and product shoots, which are entirely different from just following riders. There's a lot of planning involved with the brands, making sure the shoot matches their style and vision. These projects are usually scheduled months in advance, so even if the conditions aren't great, the riders and I still have to make it work.

Commercial shoots often mean working closely with the brand's team, their R&D department, and the rider, sometimes in harsh or less-than-ideal conditions, to get the perfect shot. It can be challenging, but seeing those images in shops, magazines, and online is incredibly rewarding. Most people never realise who's behind those shots, which makes it even more satisfying.

When I'm shooting with riders while travelling, there's a lot more freedom to chase the best conditions. These sessions also give me space to experiment with new angles, techniques, or gear. Over the past few years, I've done a lot of these freeride-style shoots with Stig Hoefnagel, which resulted in six cover shots in just over a year.



“ IT CAN BE CHALLENGING, BUT SEEING THOSE IMAGES IN SHOPS, MAGAZINES, AND ONLINE IS INCREDIBLY REWARDING. ”

“ THE LIGHT CAN CHANGE, AND THE CONDITIONS MIGHT NOT BE WHAT YOU EXPECT, BUT I LIKE TO HAVE A VISION BEFORE I START. ”



These shoots feel more spontaneous and go with the flow, while commercial shoots require careful daily planning and coordination. I think the experience I gained from over a decade of corporate shoots, TV shows, and festivals has helped me switch mindsets and adapt to both styles of work.

In kitesurfing photography, timing is everything. Do you see yourself more as a hunter waiting for the perfect shot, or as a storyteller who shapes whatever moment unfolds?

There is always some uncertainty when shooting kitesurfing. The light can change, and the conditions might not be what you expect, but I like to have a vision before I start. On most shoots, I try to shape things toward the image I want to capture. Of course, there is always an element of luck involved, like the cover shot of Stig doing a kitemove with the sheep in the foreground. I had imagined that shot when I was in Achill Island in Ireland, but everything had to line up perfectly. Right after that jump, the sheep wandered off, so we never got a second chance. I enjoy that and the high-risk, high-reward approach to shooting because it makes those moments even more special when they come together.

Where is the most off-the-beaten-path place you've travelled to that left you creatively inspired?

For kitesurfing, I really enjoyed Oman, Madagascar, and Los Roques in Venezuela. These are remote places with almost no one around, surrounded by raw nature, where you really have to explore to discover the best spots to shoot.

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Every photographer has a “magic shot” burned into their memory. What’s the one image you’ve taken that still gives you goosebumps, and what’s the story behind it?


Maybe not the most technical shot, but definitely the one I remember most from last season in Cape Town. It was with Jett on a nuking day at Macassar, with winds hitting 50 to 60 knots, making it almost impossible to even walk on the beach, with things flying around. I had just finished another shoot when I spotted Jett throwing some insane short line late backs. I asked him to do a kite loop at a specific spot, and he nailed it perfectly on the first try. At the time, it was his highest short line loop ever on 10-meter lines, reaching over 19 meters on Surfr.

Who is your absolutely favourite rider to team up with for a shoot?

There are so many great riders to work with. Kevin Langeree and Stig Hoefnagel are always easy and quick to shoot with, while Lorenzo is incredibly technical. Cohan van Dijk and Jett Bradshaw constantly push each other during the North shoots, and Jason and Luca bring their short line loops to the mix. The girls, like Francesca, Zara, and Nathalie, are so motivated and bring amazing energy to every session. And this year, shooting with Robby Naish in Maui for the Naish shoot was a real highlight. It is hard to pick just one favourite.

Can you tell us about your recent trip to Egypt? How was Kite Fest 2025 from behind the lens? Were there any funny photography mishaps along the way, and who were some of the other photographers you teamed up with during the event?

I’ve been helping out with Kitefest as part of the media team since the very first year. It is entirely different from most kite safaris because it is not just about kiting;

A photograph of a kitesurfer performing a kite loop. The kitesurfer is high in the air, with their kite visible below. The kite is white with a black and blue design, featuring the letters 'SZ' and the name 'HILSON'. The background shows a dramatic coastline with mountains and waves. The sky is blue with some clouds. A quote is overlaid on the image.

“ I ASKED HIM TO DO A KITELOOP AT A SPECIFIC SPOT, AND HE NAILED IT PERFECTLY ON THE FIRST TRY. ”



“ IT CAN BE TOUGH WATCHING OTHERS RIDE AMAZING CONDITIONS WHILE I AM BEHIND THE CAMERA. ”

it has a more festival vibe. This year, we were incredibly fortunate with the conditions; wind every single day. I worked alongside Nikola Bagarov on video and editing, and Eslam Piko on photography, while I focused mainly on special shots, such as slow-motion video and flash photography. There might even be a few funny slow-motion crashes coming out soon.

Action sports photography can look glamorous from the outside, but what’s

one behind-the-scenes reality that people rarely see?

The places I travel are what many people dream of, but they often forget that I spend 8 to 9 months of the year on the road. I am standing on stormy beaches in the rain, in fifty-degree deserts, carrying bags full of heavy equipment while the gear is getting sandblasted on the beaches of Cape Town. And of course, as a kitesurfer myself, it can be tough watching others ride amazing conditions while I am behind the camera. To capture those unique shots, we often have to reach places that are hard to get to or hard to ride, even if the photos make it look effortless.

Looking ahead, if you could design your dream project with no limits, destination, riders, or style, what would it look like?

I am already working with Stig on some exciting projects, and we have some great ideas that will resonate more with the general public. I have always found that remote and raw locations work best, exploring places few people have ever been. We want to focus on tricks and actions that are easy for non-kiters to appreciate, with a small crew to keep things simple and efficient. Hopefully, you will see the results next year.

Great, thanks, Andy!

Thank you, Jen!

RIDER GIANMARIA COCCOLUTO
PHOTO KILIAN BLOT



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QUESTIONS JEN TYLER
WORDS ROBERT BRATZ

TECH FOCUS

POWER IN YOUR HANDS

ELEVEIGHT CS AUTO BAR V2 AND THE CS VARY BAR

In this Tech Focus: Power in Your Hands, we speak with Robert Bratz about the evolution of Eleveight's CS AUTO Bar V2 and CS Vary Bar Plus, exploring how these refined systems deliver smoother handling, cleaner lines, and the confidence to push your limits. Find out more here!

RIDER MIKA HACKENBERG PHOTO HELEN FISCHER





" THE VARY BAR PLUS NEEDED TO BE A BOMBPROOF ALL-ROUNDER THAT WORKS FOR RIDERS WHO WANT ADJUSTABILITY AND RELIABILITY WITHOUT OVERCOMPLICATION. "

Hi Robert, thanks for joining us today! What were the main goals when redesigning the CS AUTO Bar V2 and the CS Vary Bar Plus?

Hi Jen, thank you! Our primary goal was to implement the new Quick Matic III, offering the best quick-release system that is easy to use and very safe. We also worked on a few refinements by taking what we already had and making it feel even more precise, intuitive, and clean. With our flagship Auto Bar V2, we included fine-tuning the mechanics by improving the auto-swivel system, reducing friction, and providing riders with a smoother, more direct connection to the kite.

For the Vary Bar Plus, we also added a round-shaped, dual-cavity TPU tube to house both the depower and safety lines, keeping them separated within a unified system. The aim was to minimise friction on the lines to reduce wear and tear and increase durability, while maintaining the bar's incredible versatility. The Vary Bar Plus needed to be a bombproof all-rounder that works for riders who want adjustability and reliability without overcomplication.

Both bars share the same DNA, but we wanted to give riders two distinct experiences: one built for maximum performance, and one designed for universal compatibility and ease of use.

How is this year's V2 AUTO Bar different from the first version?

The V2 maintains the same concept but elevates everything to a higher level. Implementing the Quick-Matic III release is the biggest upgrade as the improved inner body takes releasing and assembling to the highest safety standard and allows for smoother, lighter trigger action. The new ceramic bearing in the auto-untwist system also ensures it will spin with almost no resistance, even after heavy use in salt or sand. That means cleaner lines and consistent handling, no matter how hard you loop.



" THE AUTO BAR IS DESIGNED FOR RIDERS SEEKING THE CLEANEST PERFORMANCE POSSIBLE, WHETHER LOOPING, UNHOOKING, OR SENDING BIG AIRS. "

The grip has also been reshaped, featuring dual-density EVA and an oval profile that fits naturally in your hand. You feel more connected, more comfortable, and less fatigued. It might seem subtle, but it makes a huge difference. V2 features numerous new technologies that collectively result in a noticeable difference on the water.

Why did you introduce two separate bar models rather than one all-rounder?

Because, honestly, no single bar can do everything perfectly for everyone. The Auto Bar is designed for riders seeking the cleanest performance possible, whether looping, unhooking, or sending big airs. It's a precision tool with minimal friction and automatic untwisting.

The Vary Bar Plus, on the other hand, is built for adjustability and broad compatibility. Its variable width makes it ideal for different kite sizes or travel setups. We could have tried to combine both concepts, but it would've meant compromise, and we prefer to keep each with a specialism.

Can you explain how the auto-untwist ceramic ball-bearing system works in real riding conditions?

Every time you spin or loop, the lines twist. Normally, you'd have to untwist them manually, but with the Auto Bar V2, the system does it for you. Once looped, simply spin the bar so the backlines are untwisted, and the front lines will follow.

The bearing material is key as ceramic doesn't corrode, and it stays smooth even when full of salt and sand. You don't really notice it working, which is the best compliment, and it just keeps your setup perfectly clean while you focus on the ride.

What sort of testing goes into making sure the ball-bearing swivel and the cleat systems stay reliable after heavy use?

Let's just say we're a bit obsessive about testing! We test the components under every condition we can find and expose them to saltwater, freshwater, sand, cold, and UV. The swivel is loaded, twisted, and untwisted thousands of times, and our team riders put the prototypes to the test in real conditions. For the cleat system, we conduct abrasion and tension tests to ensure everything operates smoothly and remains jam-free over time, even after hundreds of sessions.

The dual-cavity tube is a big talking point. What problem does it solve for riders and how?

This one's simple but clever. The dual-cavity tube separates the depower and safety lines inside the centre system. On most bars, they share a single path and rub against each other, which creates friction and uneven wear. By separating them, both lines run smoothly and will last longer. It also keeps everything tidy and less prone to tangles, delivering a simple but really effective upgrade.

What improvements were made to the Quick-Matic safety release systems (V3 on AUTO and V2 on Vary)?

The Quick-Matic system has undergone continuous refinement over several generations. On the Auto Bar V2, the Quick-Matic III release has a redesigned internal layout for lower friction and faster reset. You can feel that it is smoother and more intuitive.

The Vary Bar Plus utilises the same QR II, a proven and reliable system. Still, we took it a step further by redesigning the swivel function and incorporating a ceramic ball bearing. The result is a cleaner, more predictable system that operates effortlessly, even under heavy use or in challenging conditions.



“ THE SWIVEL IS LOADED, TWISTED, AND UNTWISTED THOUSANDS OF TIMES, AND OUR TEAM RIDERS PUT THE PROTOTYPES TO THE TEST IN REAL CONDITIONS. ”



" EVERYTHING JUST FEELS CLEANER, MORE FLUID, AND MORE CONNECTED. "

Which riders or riding styles will feel the biggest benefit from the AUTO Bar's auto-swivel feature?

If you're looping, spinning, or riding waves, you'll love it, particularly in big-air, freestyle, and for wave riders. The auto-swivel keeps the front lines perfectly untwisted, so the kite always responds the same, no matter how many rotations you've done. Once you've used it, you don't want to go back, as for these disciplines, everything just feels cleaner, more fluid, and more connected.

How does the new low-resistance click-in release improve rider confidence in emergencies?

All our Eleveight bars feature an easy-release system that meets all relevant standards. In 2017, we were the first company to introduce the click-in reassembly mechanism, which has since become the universal standard. This should provide a high level of confidence. However, development never stops, and for the new Quick Matic III, we wanted to do it even better. The new system is very smooth. Even under full load, the release is consistent and easy to trigger, which gives you confidence that it'll work instantly if you ever need it.

Resetting it is also more intuitive with a simple and clean 'click-in' that takes seconds, even in the water. That simplicity means riders are also more likely to check or practise it regularly, which keeps their reactions sharp.

In your opinion, why is bar development just as important as kite development for performance, progression, and safety?

The bar is your control system, and where you feel the kite and how you interact with it is a bit like a steering wheel. You can have the best kite in the world,

but if the bar feels heavy, sticky, or imprecise, you'll never unlock its full performance.

Quite often, we also forget to talk about the lines in our bar systems. They serve as connection points and play a crucial role in performance; for us, this topic is critical. Each year, we test various lines and configurations to ensure that the impulse from the bar is effectively translated into the kite. Eleveight bars are made with Sk99 lines from a leading supplier to offer unmatched durability, which is key to optimal performance.

A well-designed bar improves responsiveness, comfort, and control. It also gives you the confidence to push harder, knowing everything will be safe and behave exactly as expected. That's why we invest just as much time into bar development as we do into kite design.

How does improving the bar system influence a rider's ability to push limits in loops, unhooked tricks, or big-air?

Precision and trust are the key words here. When your lines stay clean, your release works perfectly, and your steering feels instant, you can focus completely on the move.

Less friction and a smoother feel mean you can loop faster, time your moves better, and recover more naturally. It's the kind of improvement that gives you confidence to send it a little harder each session.

Looking ahead, what future innovations in bar design do you think will most change how riders interact with their kites?

We see a lot of developments that might be great on paper, but in reality, they are too complex.



" THE GOAL ISN'T TO ADD FEATURES FOR THE SAKE OF IT; IT'S TO KEEP REFINING THE FEELING OF TOTAL CONNECTION BETWEEN THE RIDER AND THE KITE. "

The depower system and the related clam cleat have been on the market for a long time and are very reliable. However, we can likely expect some updates in this area that will make the functionality easier.

Material and weight will always play a role. Lines are very solid these days with little stretch, but the line industry is also working on new concepts to decrease stretch even further. Lines have the most impact on performance, so that is our number one topic.

We're moving toward even smoother, more responsive and lighter systems, with less friction and maintenance.

Materials are improving rapidly, with advancements in coatings, bearings, and overall quality.

I also think modularity will grow with bars that can easily adapt to different riding styles or kite setups without adding complexity. The goal isn't to add features for the sake of it; it's to keep refining the feeling of total connection between the rider and the kite. That's where real innovation happens.

Great, thank you so much, Robert!

Thanks, Jen!

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STORM READY

GIEL VLUGT ON THE XR PRO 2

WORDS ROU CHATER AND GIEL VLUGT

Tarifa's Balneario was once off-limits; now it's the go-to big air arena. On any windy afternoon, you'll find Giel Vlugt parked in his van, watching flags whip and waiting for the call. We caught up with him as the new XR PRO 2 hits the water to talk progression, pressure, and why this kite raises the bar while keeping that unmistakable CORE feel!



PHOTO THOMAS BURBLIES
LOCATION BALNEATIO, TARIFA KITE PACE PRO



Tarifa's Balneario used to be a hard no. Now it is a launchpad for the world's most committed big air riders, and on any windy afternoon, you will find CORE's Giel Vlugt parked up in his van, watching flags snap straight and waiting for the green light. We caught up with him just as the new XR PRO 2 lands in shops to talk progression, pressure, and why this latest XR keeps that signature "CORE feel" while raising the ceiling for height and control.

Giel did not grow up by the sea. He discovered kiting at 18 while training as an outdoor sports instructor, then spent seven seasons teaching in Tarifa. Those summers were a grind: eight hours a day on the beach, two weeks straight if the Levante allowed it. He loved it, but saved every euro to buy himself a year off to train. He converted a van, slept at the spot, and put in six to eight hours on the water whenever the wind blew.

The breakthrough came in Cape Town. He went for a Back loop board off "just for the photo" and landed it after a handful of tries. That was the moment he decided to go all in. A few years later, he was the first to land a double loop, and overnight, his name was everywhere.

THE HEAD GAME

Ask Giel for learning advice, and it is simple: do not give up. Some riders learn in minutes; others need hours. Accept your timeline, control what you can, and keep turning up. That mindset also carried him through his toughest setback, a stubborn ankle injury. He built a recovery team around him and did exactly what the specialists asked. No shortcuts, no ego.

"SOME RIDERS LEARN IN MINUTES; OTHERS NEED HOURS. ACCEPT YOUR TIMELINE, CONTROL WHAT YOU CAN, AND KEEP TURNING UP."



“IT WAS NEVER DESIGNED TO BE THE EASIEST LOOPER. IT WAS DESIGNED TO JUMP HUGE AND FLOAT FOREVER.”



CHASING THE JUDGING

Competition formats shift. Cold Hawaii 2025 rewarded massive height and power. Doubles scored fewer than in previous seasons. Giel adapted. If the judges want big singles at 25 to 30 meters with technical board-offs, that is what he will bring. The goal is simple: read

read the scoring, ride to it, then push the level inside that window.

WHY THE XR HAS A FOLLOWING

For years, the XR has been the go-to tool for breaking personal bests. The recipe is well-known. Fly fast, edge hard, sheet in,

go up. Crucially, when you sheet out the XR, it dumps power quickly, which lets you hold a bigger kite and still build speed for takeoff. That is why you see riders on nines and tens when others are on eights. It is also why the XR has constantly looped with consequence. It was never designed to be the easiest looper. It was designed to jump huge and float forever.



“THAT STABILITY GIVES RIDERS THE CONFIDENCE TO SEND HARD WITHOUT SECOND-GUESSING THE GEAR.”

WHAT IS NEW IN THE XR PRO 2

The brief from CORE's lead designer, Frank, was clear: keep the XR DNA and raise the ceiling. According to Giel, they did more than that.

- More height: the XR PRO 2 lifts higher again.
- More hang time: longer, cleaner flight windows.
- Faster turning: especially noticeable on 10-meter sizes, where Giel is now training and landing new tricks he previously reserved for smaller kites.
- Smoother loops: refinement in materials and geometry rounds out the loop without losing that XR punch.

“It feels like a new kite, but it still feels like a CORE. You know where it is at all times. Bar feedback is lighter than older XRs, yet the connection is still there, even when you are upside down after a kicker,” says Giel.

MATERIALS AND STIFFNESS WHERE IT COUNTS

The XR PRO 2 uses an Aluula airframe, and while the early buzz around exotic frames was about weight, Giel says the real magic shows up when it is howling. In 40 to 50 knots, the kite stays locked in shape. No jellyfishing, no collapsing wing tips. That stability gives riders the confidence to send hard without second-guessing the gear. “In Cold Hawaii on a nine, I never worried about my equipment. All my focus was on the trick,” he says.

WIND RANGE THAT REWARDS COMMITMENT

Low end is better than before, says Giel Vlugt, and the High-end remains the XR's superpower thanks to that sheet-out depower that lets you hold more kite than the next rider. If you are chasing WOO numbers in gusty storms, this is the trait you care about.

THE BAR SYSTEM THAT PLAYS WELL WITH OTHERS

CORE's Sensor offerings keep single front-line safety while giving riders the option to run a high or low split. There is an extra visible centre line in the core of the system. It looks unusual the first time you lay it out, but on the water, you do not notice it. The upside is compatibility and transparency. If something ever wears, you see it and swap it before it matters.

TUNING OPTIONS YOU WILL ACTUALLY USE

The XR PRO 2 carries meaningful on-kite tuning:

- Wingtip settings: Easy, Super Easy, and Medium for the steering feel you prefer.
- Backline knots: adjust bar pressure from low to high. Giel loops on the low setting for a free, responsive feel.
- CIT bridle points: choose Tight Loop, Normal, or Wide Loop to change how the kite pivots and drives through a loop. On larger sizes, he prefers the Tight Loop setting for crisper turning.

XR OR PACE, PRO OR STANDARD

CORE has kept the line-up clean and distinct.

- XR family: built for height, hang time, and storm control, with loops that carry real pull. Choose the XR8 if you want best-in-class boosting and board-off progression at a more accessible price. Choose the XR PRO 2 if you want the same DNA with a stiffer frame, more height, cleaner loops and the most control when it is nuclear.
- Pace family: built for looping feel and progression across all sizes. If your priority is smooth loops, tighter pivots and playful handling, Pace is the faster path to confidence. You will still jump high, but it is the loop experience you are buying.

“ THE UPSIDE IS COMPATIBILITY AND TRANSPARENCY. IF SOMETHING EVER WEARS, YOU SEE IT AND SWAP IT BEFORE IT MATTERS. ”



“THE XR HAS HAD A CLEAR JOB FOR MORE THAN A DECADE. JUMP HIGHER THAN EVERYONE ELSE AND MAKE IT FEEL CONTROLLED.”

Who should step up to the PRO frame? If your home spot rarely tops 30 knots and you do not loop much, XR8 is a smart buy. If you ride storms, chase records, or want the most composed loop and bar feel under serious load, the XR PRO 2 earns its premium. The difference is not only for pros. Intermediate riders who push in strong wind will feel it.

ON THE WATER WITH THE XR PRO 2

The most telling feedback is how Giel rides it. He is training new tricks on a 10, holding

bigger kites deeper into storms, and stacking 27-meter jumps without thinking about canopy flutter or tip fold. He puts the improvement in simple terms: more confidence to push, and more usable performance in the sizes and conditions that score.

Big air has never moved faster. Formats evolve, tricks cycle, and conditions seem wilder every season. Through that churn, the XR has had a clear job for more than a decade.

Jump higher than everyone else and make it feel controlled. The XR PRO 2 keeps that promise and adds speed and smoothness, opening the door to bigger single loops and more technical board-offs at real height.

If you have the chance, test one back-to-back with your current storm kite. Set the bar pressure where you like it, try the Tight Loop bridle setting on larger sizes, and find a proper gust. The numbers on your WOO will tell part of the story. The rest you will feel in your hands and your gut when you sheet in.



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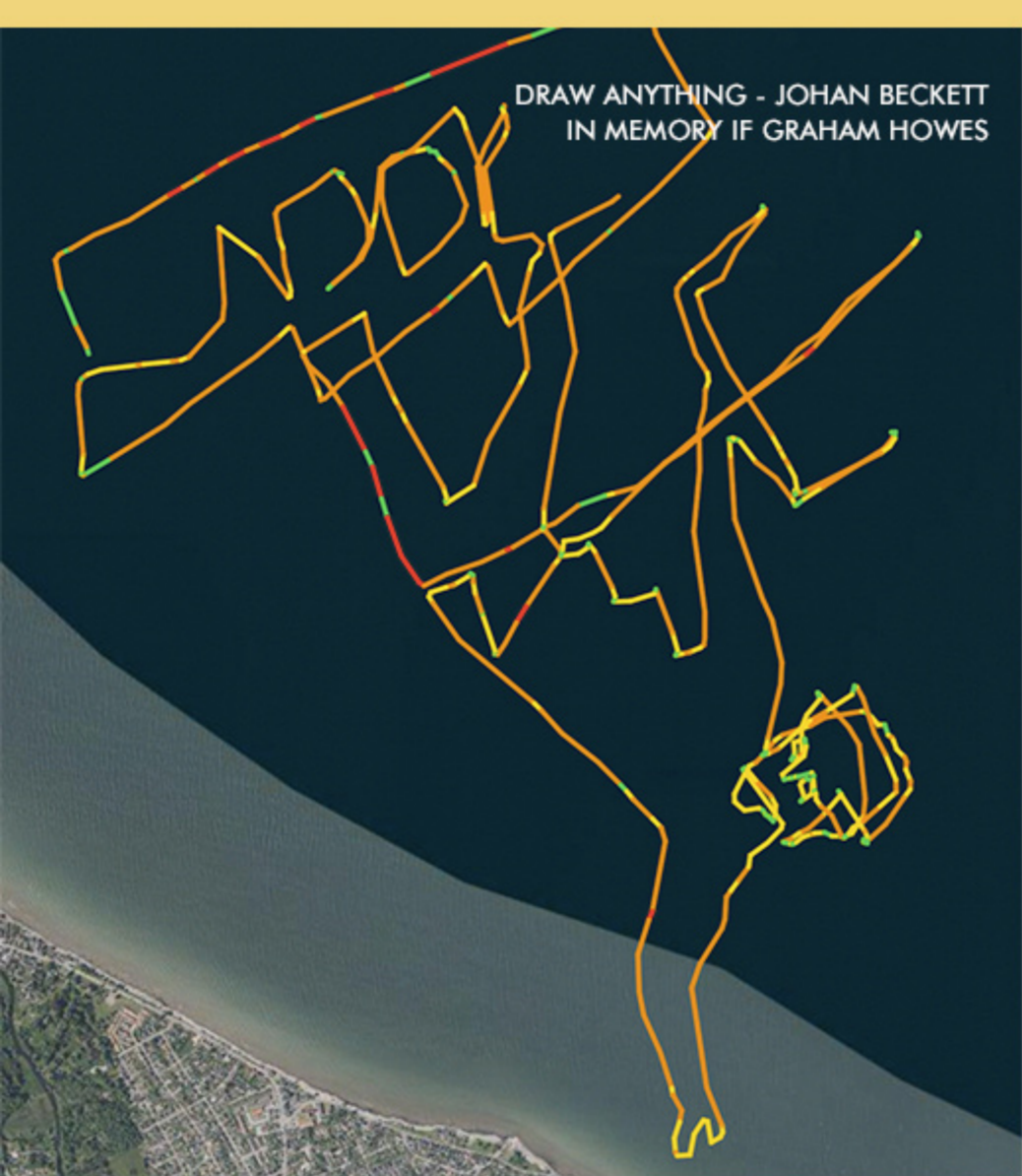
WORDS ROU CHATER AND ARLIN LADUE

WOO WORLDS 2025

WOO's fifth annual kite and wing throwdown brought riders together worldwide from September 13 to October 12, turning everyday sessions into a month-long battle for glory! With over one hundred thousand dollars in prizes and leaderboards changing with every storm, WOO Worlds once again proved the power of a small blue sensor to unite a global community of riders.



JAMIE OVERBEEK - NATIONS CUP



“ WITH OVER ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS IN PRIZES, THE REAL PRIZE WAS BRAGGING RIGHTS AS RANKINGS FLIPPED WITH EACH STORM. ”

Thirty days, one global session. WOO's fifth annual kite and wing throwdown ran from September 13 to October 12, drawing riders into the rhythm of chasing forecasts, sending it, and battling for leaderboard glory. With over one hundred thousand

dollars in prizes, the real prize was bragging rights as rankings flipped with each storm. A decade after WOO's small blue sensor first answered the question every kiter asked, how high did I go? it has evolved into a tool that turns everyday sessions into a worldwide competition. In a recent KitePod chat, IKSURFMAG's Rou Chater caught up with WOO's Arlin Ladue to talk about the brand's journey, the rise of WOO Worlds, and the future of riding together as a global community.

FROM HACKATHON TABLE TO KITEBOARD

Arlin Ladue first met the early WOO team at a tech event in Boston. Among the pale-faced start-ups glued to pitch decks, one group looked like they had been outdoors. On their table sat a board that Ladue initially mistook for a wakeboard; it was a kiteboard. Their mission was simple: at their local Pleasure Bay spot, every southerly evening turned into a boost-off, yet no one could tell who jumped the highest. They built a sensor that could capture airtime with accuracy, paired it with GPS from phones and watches and

“ THEY CREATED A MONTH-LONG RIDE ANYWHERE FORMAT THAT REWARDED BOTH PARTICIPATION AND PERFORMANCE. ”

brought a Strava-style sense of progression to a sport that had never had it. Coming from a ski and snowboard background, Arlin immediately saw the potential in using gaming mechanics to get people off screens and playing outside.

WHY WOO WORLDS EXISTS

By 2021, after years of trying to integrate the device into live events that focused on tricks over height, WOO flipped the script. Instead of piggybacking on single-venue competitions, they created a month-long ride anywhere format that rewarded both participation and performance. The idea was simple: give everyone a clock, launch challenges, add real stakes and let the wind dictate the theatre. Cash, kites and serious prizes put skin in the game. Teams formed from shops and clubs, local heroes emerged, and an individual sport began to feel like a season with teammates and storylines.

The format expanded fast. The highest single jump stayed as the headline, but the cumulative jump height added endurance and grit. Distance: One Hour, mixed pace with efficiency, often on foils, and team challenges are asked for the best five jumps or collective totals, bringing tactics into play. Timing was crucial, too. Holding the event in September and October gave it a natural rhythm: northern autumn storms, southern spring breezes, then a reset before the following season.

FAIR PLAY AND HUMAN REFEREES

With real prizes on the line, results had to be beyond question. WOO blends data science with human refereeing. The sensor records the board's story,

HIGHEST JUMP MENS - LEVI SMIT





“PLAYFUL YET PROFOUND, IT SHOWS WHAT IS POSSIBLE WHEN IMAGINATION MEETS WIND AND WATER”

GPS from the phone or watch provides speed and distance, local weather data adds context, and a rider's history sets a baseline. When something looks off, the team picks up the phone to hear first-hand what happened. Over the years, they have coded out loopholes, two sensors on one board, suspicious tracks that look more like car rides than kite sessions, always aiming to keep the highest jump with the highest jumper and the fastest hour with a rider on water, not wheels.

DRAW ANYTHING: ART ON WATER

One of the most creative formats is Draw Anything, which began as a simple heart-shaped GPS challenge and has since evolved into large-scale ocean art. Most riders use foils for precise upwind angles, often pre-programming their route on a smartwatch and even using islands and coastlines as part of the design. This year, Danish rider Johan, now with the Jacobsen crew, delivered a moving tribute to Graham Howes: a hand-drawn silhouette across the sea, filmed by drone. Playful yet profound, it shows what is possible when imagination meets wind and water, and of course, a beautiful way to remember Graham.

CHASING THE RECORD

The WOO jump world record still stands at 36.7 metres, set in New Zealand in 2024 by Hugo Wigglesworth. Arlin calls the record a cocktail of talent, weather, the right spot, timing and nerve. Hugo returned home this year older, stronger and armed with both the kite that set the record and a new foil kite, already posting mid-thirties jumps.



HIGHEST JUMP - SENIORS: CLARK ROBERTSON
PHOTO HUGO WIGGLESWORTH, JON ADAMS, CLARK ROBERTSON, SIMON GARDINER

“ WITH OVER ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS IN PRIZES, THE REAL PRIZE WAS BRAGGING RIGHTS AS RANKINGS FLIPPED WITH EACH STORM. ”

But predicting a record is a fool's game; this season's biggest jump so far came from a completely different rider, kite and spot, proving that in a global month, surprises always surface.

WING JOINS THE GAME

Many early wingers were kites first, so WOO's app features, spots, gear logs,

session feeds, and leaderboards translate naturally. The jump game is there for wings too, but GPS-driven metrics like speed, total distance, and Distance One Hour fit the discipline exceptionally well. In the Nations Cup leaderboard, kite and wing scores now combine so that a windy day counts, whichever craft you ride.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

For newcomers, it all starts with the free WOO app. Create an account, browse the spot map, follow riders and watch the live session feed. Record your own rides with a phone in a dry bag or a compatible smartwatch, then add

the WOO sensor to measure airtime and join the jump game. Think of it as a journal of your wind life, your progress, your crew and your milestones all in one place.

THE TWO-DAY TEAM MARATHON

New for 2025 was the two-day Team Total Distance challenge. It is simple to explain but tough to execute: forty-eight hours, top five scores per team, go as far as you can. Wingers and kites went shoulder to shoulder, some using race foils or speed boards to maintain pace, while others lit up their kites and helmets to ride at night, with shoreline tents serving as their base camps. Seasickness proved real for some, but daylight warriors still logged impressive mileage.

**“WOO’S REAL INNOVATION IS NOT THE SENSOR;
IT IS THE INVITATION TO TAKE PART.”**

This format rewarded planning, teamwork and endurance rather than a single gust of glory.

NATIONS CUP: PRIDE ON THE LINE

Mid-month, the Nations Cup leaderboard read like a roll call of the windiest coastlines: Netherlands, Germany, New Zealand, South Africa, United Kingdom, Australia, Estonia as a dark horse, United States, France and Denmark. Each country’s tally came from ten performances, top three overall kite jumpers, top female, junior and senior jumpers, plus men’s and women’s wing jump and Distance One Hour scores. Beating a national teammate in any category pushed your flag higher, with prizes from Flysurfer, North and Waydoo adding to the rivalry.

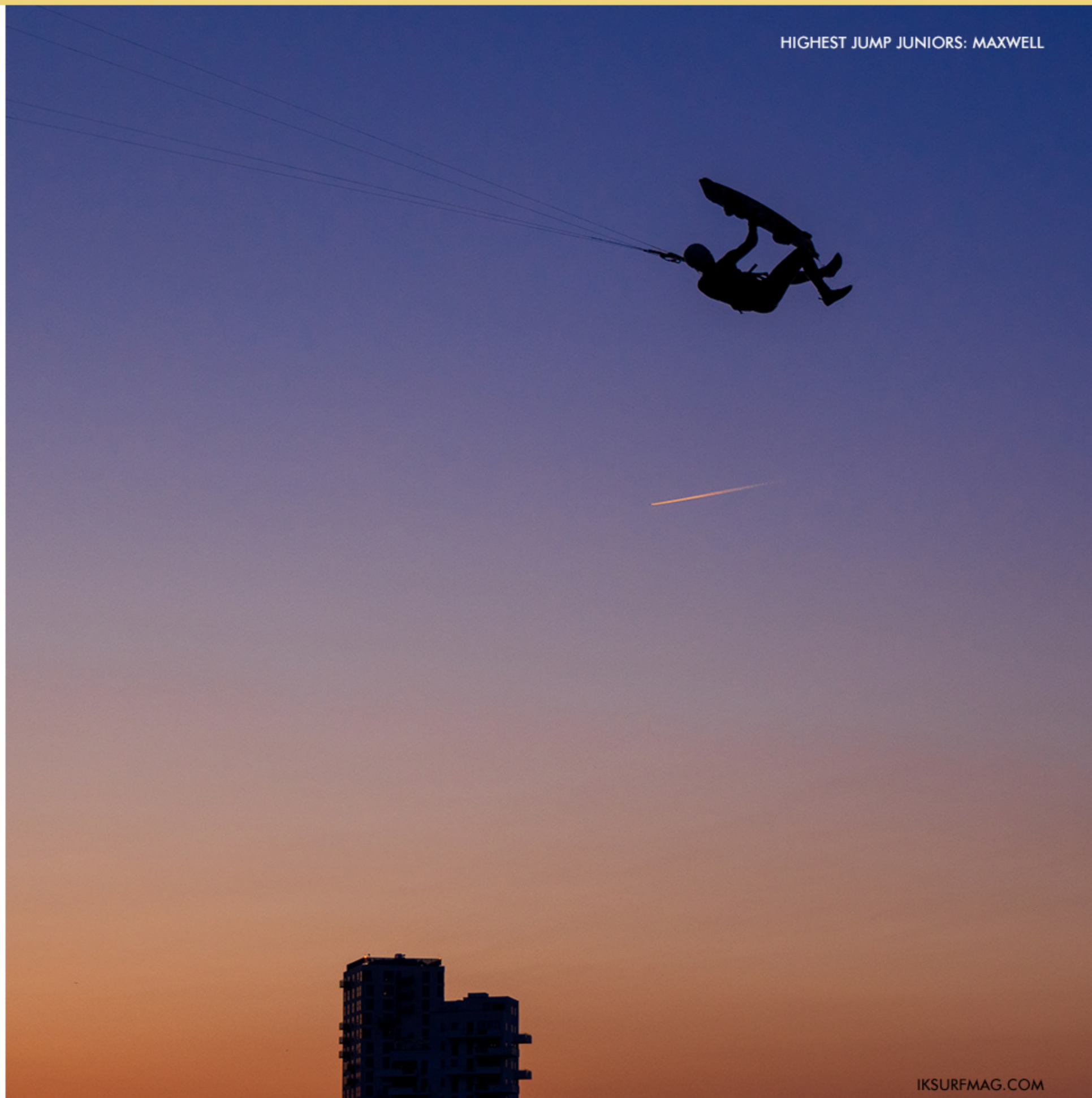
WHY IT MATTERS

WOO’s real innovation is not the sensor; it is the invitation to take part. Whether you are logging your first foil kilometres, drawing a GPS heart for your kids or storm hunting for a world record, WOO turns windy days into stories you can share. For the WOO team, it is also a sprint: filters tuned, calls made, leaderboards updated and late-night laptop dashes whenever something extraordinary happens. That is the cost of building a world you actually want to play in.

THE 2025 SEASON IN ACTION

WOO Worlds 2025 kept the format simple but full of energy. Draw Anything wrapped on 5 October with wildly creative tracks, Team Total Height lit up 27 to 28 September with a global send fest, and Team Total Distance closed the show on 11 to 12 October,

HIGHEST JUMP JUNIORS: MAXWELL





“LIT UP WITH LED GEAR AND GLOWING KITES, JUMPED THROUGH THE NIGHT, NAPPED BRIEFLY, THEN WENT ALL DAY SATURDAY”

rewarding endurance and planning. Max Height ran all month, building a rolling highlight reel of personal bests.

Dutch rider Levi Smit was one of the headline stories. Watching a storm forecast for his home spot of Texel, he left work early, rigged his 8.1 metre North Orbit Pro 2025 and launched straight into 43 to 50 knot winds. Mid-session, he felt one jump that was insane jump; it turned out to be

36.4 metres, a personal best that now leads WOO Worlds 2025 and ranks as the second-highest jump in the world.

In the team arena, the Guardians of the Galaxsea conquered WOO's first-ever 48-hour Team Total Height challenge. Meeting in Kegnaes, Denmark, they hit the water at 00:01 on Saturday, lit up with LED gear and glowing kites, jumped through the night, napped briefly, then went all day Saturday and sealed victory with a final Sunday push.

The fight for second was intense. Team Eleveight Kites surged ahead on Saturday,

but the WOO Tang Clan, with riders in Brazil, Mauritius, Western Australia, and Fehmarn, clawed back on Sunday. A huge last-hour push from Aya Kiteboarder in Brazil clinched second for WOO Tang, edging out Eleveight by the narrowest margin.

PODIUM REWARDS:

Guardians of the Galaxsea – €2,000 shop credit from ION International

WOO Tang Clan – €1,000 shop credit plus ION Suspect Duffel Bags

Team Eleveight – ION Suspect Duffel Bags and a WOO HQ prize pack

Two more challenges wrapped up the month: Team Max Height, top five riders' single highest jump of the month, and Team Total Distance, 48-hour accumulated distance held on 11 to 12 October.

THE SPIRIT OF THE GAME

WOO Worlds is equal parts competition and community. Juniors celebrated first-ever personal bests, seniors proved they still had it, brands rallied shop teams, beach crews swapped tactics, and national chats buzzed as local spots lit up. The app gave the whole event a heartbeat: a windy spike at one beach could flip a leaderboard by sunset, a clever tide call could add a metre, and a last light flatwater grind could sneak in precious kilometres before cut-off.

For newcomers, fundamentals mattered: update the firmware, check the mount, warm up before chasing Max Height, hold a steady line for Distance One Hour, minimise tacks and keep transitions tight. Save early, upload fast and let the data lock in your effort.



“PLAYFUL YET PROFOUND, IT SHOWS WHAT IS AND WATER”

Structured yet never stiff, WOO Worlds celebrates the highest jump of your life and the chaos of chasing it. It shines on the solo rider who finds wind in a squall, the team captain coordinating five spots at once, and the nation climbing together. Safety always came first: riders checked their gear, stayed within their limits, and looked out for each other, but from there it was all about riding hard, having fun, and letting the numbers tell the tale.

For personal bests, team glory or national pride, WOO Worlds 2025 was the month to send it.

THE WINNERS

1. Nations Cup

1st The Netherlands 272.7

2nd New Zealand 262.1

3rd South Africa: 258.4

2. Highest Jump

MENS

1st Levi Smit 36.4m

(8.1m North Orbit - Paal 17, Texel on Sept 15th)

2nd Jamie Overbeek 36.1m

(7m Duotone Rebel - Norre Vorupor Mole on Oct 5th)

3rd Josh Gillit 35.9m (8m F-ONE Trigger Brainchild - Norre Vorupor Mole on Oct 5th)

WOMENS

1st Su Kay 25.2m

(8m Lacuna Alpha v4 - Dolphin Beach on Sept 24th)

2nd Kimberly Pauw 20.1m

(8m Eleveight RS Pro V2 - Kijkduin on Oct 4th)

3rd Mignon Rijnja 19m

(6m North Orbit 2024 - Wijk aan Zee on Sept 15th)

“THE GLOBAL FLEET CLOCKED AN INSANE 48 DAYS OF AIRTIME AND COVERED 288,000 KM, THAT’S SEVEN LAPS AROUND THE PLANET!”

JUNIORS

- 1st Maxwell North 30.8m
- 2nd Ingmar Woerdeman 29.9m
- 3rd Martin Rahnel 23.3m

SENIORS

- 1st Clark Robertson 28.1m
- 2nd Peter Balmel 25.8m
- 3rd Pavel Ermilov 24.5m

3. Distance 1 Hour

MEN

- 1st Toby Wigglesworth 58.2 KM
- 2nd Sam Dickinson 57.8 KM
- 3rd Jannis Maus 56.0 KM

WOMEN

- 1st Ella Geiger 49.4 KM
- 2nd Justina Kitchen 47.4 KM
- 3rd Mariska Wildenberg 41.4 KM

4. Max Team Height

- 1st Kitemana 158.3M
- 2nd CTAIR 147.3M
- 3rd FlyingKiwis 139.1M

5. Team Total Height

- 1st Guardians of the Galaxsea 48.6 KM
- 2nd Wootang Clan 29.5 KM
- 3rd Elevieght 29.2 KM

KITEMANA



6. Team Total Distance

- 1st Guardians of the Galaxsea 3357.5 KM
- 2nd Woonited 2763.7 KM
- 3rd Elevieght 2322.5 KM

FUN WOO WORLDS STATS

Here’s what went down at this year’s WOO Worlds, and the numbers are wild!

Germany topped the charts with 971 riders, making it the most represented country in the competition.

Together, the global fleet clocked an insane 48 days of airtime and covered 288,000 km, that’s seven laps around the planet!

In total, riders smashed 1,310 personal records, and Timo Martin went full send, setting an unofficial world record for the longest distance kited in a single day, a mind-blowing 556 km!

CLICK **HERE** TO SUPPORT US

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



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TECHNIQUE

WORDS & PHOTOS CHRISTIAN & KARINE

This issue is most definitely toeside-tastic. We continue with our resurrected surfboard skills. This time is the toeside waterstart. It's an absolute classic that will enable you to ride around all day whilst avoiding the need to carve or change your feet in the face of adversity. So long as you can switch to toe side on a twin tip, this little gem will be easier to learn than your own name!

Then, onto a tasty little add-on to your now well-honed jump transition. You're going to add a toeside landing! Not only is this a great progression, but it's also a fabulous solution if you're struggling to land them, taking off with your favoured foot forward. You can now take off and land, leading with the same foot. Talk about Hercules' broom.

Enjoy:)
C&K

2025 Clinic Calendar up on:
<http://www.ckperformanceclinics.co.uk>



1 / HOW TO TOESIDE WATER START A STRAPLESS SURFBOARD



CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE

2 / HOW TO JUMP TRANSITION TO TOESIDE



CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE

HOW TO TOESIDE WATER START A STRAPLESS SURFBOARD ▶

The toeside waterstart is a great weapon to have in your surfboard armoury. If you're up and riding and can carve around to toeside but haven't yet mastered the art of the foot change, this one is definitely for you. If you already have a toeside but can't yet carve, this is also for you. Whether you're riding strapless or enjoying the intimacy of straps, this is a wonderful get out of jail card that can really save your bacon, or at the very least reduce time spent in the drink. If your feet are still in contact with the board and you're in the water, you will choose which way you can go.

In essence, the toeside waterstart is the simple marriage of your waterstart to your well-honed toeside. Even though you haven't yet done this, your body and mind already know the moves. All we've got to do is connect them!

Before we start, we should note that Karine rides a regular surfboard, so she favours her left foot forward. This means that her board will be pointing to her left, but she'll start and twizzle around so that she's riding toeside, left foot forward to the right.

If you're also regular, you'll do the same. If you're Goofy and prefer your right foot leading, you'll do the opposite, a mirror image of what's to follow.

PART 1 – PREP & SET UP

FEET ON PIC A

Although you'll be getting up back to front, preparing for this water start is much the same as your regular



waterstart. Karine is 'putting her board on' as if she were going to kite to her left. She holds the tail with her rear (right) hand while controlling the kite with her front (left) hand. With her kite around 12:15, she sits back, lifts her legs and plants her feet onto the board, across the wind. You need to make sure that you get your back foot far enough onto the board so that you will be able to apply pressure to the ball of the foot when needed.

KITE BACK PIC B

Next up is getting your kite into position. You need to move it back a tad, in this case between 11 and 11:30, so you can dive it across the window, through 12,

rather than straight down at the water. Put pressure on your heels to create some resistance and move your kite back gently, as you don't want it to pull or lift you. Bend your knees so that your bum is close to your board. Karine watches her kite as she moves it slowly back in the opposite direction from which she'll start.

PRIMED PIC C

Once your kite is in position, level the bar off to stop it moving any further and feather the bar out to the sweet spot so it doesn't drag you. How far back you position it will depend on how much power you have. If you're powered move it to 11:30, if you're a bit low on juice aim for 11. Now you're ready!



PART 2 – WATERSTART

DIVE PIC D

You're aiming to dive your kite to about 1:30 and no lower than 2, or 10:30 and no lower than 10 for you Goofies. You want your kite to turn and pass high in the window on its way across. This way your kite will generate lift to get you up, before it dives lower and gives you some forward drive. You need to start with a solid input to turn the kite so it doesn't drift up to 12. Keep your bar on the sweet spot and watch your kite as you steer it to ensure it doesn't stall, especially if you're not powered. You can see that Karine has been positive in her steering. Her bar is on the sweet



spot, and she's watching her kite, ensuring it turns and doesn't drop into the window.

WRONG LEG PIC E

Now that your kite is moving, turn to look in the direction you want to go. This is where the difference starts. Even though you're looking forward, you have a tail with three or maybe four fins where your board's nose should be! This is helpful, as those bad boys won't take too kindly to being ridden backwards. Unfortunately, they won't do all the work without your guidance. As you look, move your head and shoulders towards the tail of the board and your front knee. This will move your weight over that foot.



In the photo, Karine has turned her head and shifted her weight towards her front knee. The result is that the tail sinks ever so slightly.

ROLL UP PIC F

As the kite starts to power and you resist against the board through your heels, you'll feel yourself being lifted, just as you would in a regular waterstart. Keep your weight on your heels and roll over your front knee, allowing the knee to work. Looking at the picture, you can see that as Karine rolls up over her front leg, the tail sinks further. As the board is pulled towards the kite, the fins will bite.



G

STAND PIC G

As the fins bite, effectively stopping the tail from moving, the board will start to pivot, and the nose will swing off downwind. Keep weight on your heels so that the downwind rail of the board doesn't catch, and slowly stand up, keeping yourself upwind of the board. Once up, you can level your bar to stop the kite from flying down any further. Karine keeps her heels weighted and the downwind edge of the board up so that the nose can slide around. Her weight is still over her front (right) foot, which keeps the tail dug in and fins biting. She has levelled her bar to stop the kite diving.



H

SWITCH PIC H

With your weight over your back foot and the board pointing downwind, you need to get your board the rest of the way around to toeside. The action is one that you've hopefully practised hundreds of times. Keeping your hips back, twist them to face forward in the direction of travel. As you do this, you can push your front foot and the nose of the board through and around. You can see that Karine still has her weight back, and the tail of her board is under. She turns her hips forward and pushes her back leg and nose toward the toeside.



I

TOESIDE PIC I

To finish the job, you need to move your weight onto the balls of your feet to lean the board over and transition onto your toeside rail. Stand up and push your hips across the board and upwind, leaning into your harness. As you do this, move your weight forward to centre it over both feet, bringing the nose down. To get entirely comfortable and into your default toeside position, you should wiggle your feet into their usual positions. Here Karine is standing up. She puts her hips upwind and moves her weight forward to get onto her rail. You can also see



that her front foot is a bit too downwind, so she will wiggle it over the centre line a touch more to make things more comfortable and efficient. Once she is, she can turn the board a bit further up and make some ground upwind.

TOP TIPS

Make it easy on yourself. Your first attempts will be significantly bolstered if you keep it simple. You can try this on your trusty twin tip first, and then on your favoured toe side. This way, you'll be keeping the odds in your favour.

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

COMMON PROBLEMS

The unintuitive part of this move lies in the fact that you must roll up onto the board while resisting.

It's easy to overdo the getting up and flying over the handlebars. This is why having a good kite movement from one side to the other is so important, rather than an aggressive dive down to the water.

KEYSTONES

- 1 Feet on as usual
- 2 Kite back to either 1 or 11.
- 3 Dive kite across the window
- 4 Move the weight over the fins and roll up
- 5 Stand and push your nose through before centring your weight.

**" MAKE IT EASY ON YOURSELF.
YOUR FIRST ATTEMPTS WILL BE
SIGNIFICANTLY BOLSTERED IF YOU
KEEP IT SIMPLE. "**



HOW TO JUMP TRANSITION TO TOESIDE ▶

Cabrinha Switchblade 8m **Cabrinha XO 136**

Variations and add-ons lie at the very heart of kite moves. Combining moves you have stuffed firmly in your box of tricks is a brilliant way to keep moving forward and stoke your mojo. Landing a jump transition to toeside is a perfect example of this kiting chop shop and a cracking progression from last issue's jump transition.

The principles are very much the same. You're looking to tame your momentum, get off the water early, and make the most of your big chill before a hearty dive, landing off the wind to keep moving, carving back onto your edge, and claiming it. However, you'll be landing toeside this time, albeit with your nose pointing off the wind.

Having gone through the jump transition in detail last issue, we'll recap the first half before adding on the timing, movement and essentials for the modified landing. We should also add that you'll be better off landing on your strong toeside. The bonus here is that if you've been struggling to land off the wind on your weaker heelside, you'll now have the chance to land with your favourite foot forward!

Let's dive into it, starting with a short but sweet recap.

APPROACH PIC A

With your kite around 11 o'clock or 1 o'clock, approach on a good edge to tense your lines. Position your hips parallel to the board's centre line so you get



plenty of edge in the water. Have a look to ensure you've got space to change direction and dive your kite. Ease your bar out to slow down a touch. You can see that Karine has a centred stance with her bum low. Her kite is at 11 o'clock, bar eased slightly to slow down, and she's already checked to ensure the coast is clear. She's ready.

SEND PIC B

To get yourself off the water, you need to be positive



with your bar action and hold your edge. The secret lies in not sending the kite for as long, so it doesn't go too far back. You'll generate enough oomph if you have enough power in the kite and tension in your lines, and you'll give the bar a decent input. Karine is powerful here, so she's been quite aggressive with the bar to generate lift. This means she must be aware of not sending the kite too far. She keeps looking where she's going and resists with her edge. As the kite lifts, she will feather the bar out a touch to stay on her edge.



C

KICK OFF PIC C

Your take-off is crucial and really is a make-or-break moment. You must be ready to stamp, anticipating the moment to kick off and level the bar. If you wait until the kite snaps you off the water, you will end up with the kite too far behind you (unless you're going high). When you feel your kite is above your level, kick hard against your edge, extend yourself up, and pull the bar in for some extras. That's your order of play! You can clearly see that Karine has kicked off hard with her back leg, extending up. Her bar is level, and she's pulled on it. As such, she's on her way up, and equally importantly, her kite has



D

stopped moving back and is parked around 12.

THE BIG CHILL PIC D

How long you have in the air will depend on the height you get. The higher you go, the more patient you have to be. The crux here is that while you're going up, or just hanging around, you keep looking forward, keep the bar level and resist the temptation to turn your head and look back from whence you came. Lift your knees so that you're balanced and sitting in your chair of air, and aim to ease your bar out a fraction to the sweet spot if you have time. You'll still be moving slowly forward. The picture shows that Karine's bar is level and she's still looking forward.



E

You'll still be moving slowly forward. The picture shows that Karine's bar is level and she's still looking forward.

DROP, TURN & DIVE PIC E

As soon as you feel you're on the way down, it's time to turn your head and look downwind towards where you'll land. Dive the kite hard to accelerate you downwind for a smooth landing. Once again, resist the temptation to turn your head and look back the other way. Here Karine has started her descent, and she's focused downwind on where she'll land. You can see that she's given it the beans on her bar and is diving the kite hard so that it pulls her downwind rather than sneaks around the edge of the window.



Perfect. Up to this point, it should all sound very familiar. Now it's time for the embellishment, adding the toeside landing!

LIFT THROUGH PIC F

As soon as you dive, it's time to bring what your front foot was through. To do this, focus on where you are going to land. Look down and drop what your front shoulder will be. This is quite a natural movement during a jump transition, but make sure you don't bust the bar as you do this; you need to keep the push-pull on. As your shoulder drops, you can twist your hips, turning them from facing forward to facing downwind in the new direction. With your trunk twisting, lift your knee and bring your foot and board through. This will be more intuitive with pull from the



kite as the kite will lead, and you can follow. Karine is still giving her bar the beans; she's looking down at where she'll land and has dropped her shoulder. Her hips are twisting, so she can lift her back knee up and over, bringing the board to toeside.

TAIL FIRST PIC G

As your kite pulls, keep your bar on the sweet spot or thereabouts, as this will give you the momentum you need to continue moving. You aim to land pointing slightly downwind, but it'll be hard to land over the board due to dropping your shoulder to twist yourself around. Drop your rear leg so that the tail touches first. This will help direct the board into the wind. Here, Karine is still diving her kite as she touches down tail-first. Her board will pivot off the tail and



stay pointing downwind as she does.

TENSION & TOESIDE PIC H

Your final task post-reception is to get tension on your lines. As soon as you land, steer your kite up. This way, you won't dump it, and as it climbs, it will continue to pull and keep you moving. Be wary of holding onto the bar for support, as this will stall your kite and you'll sink to an untimely stop! With the kite pulling you, you can then centre your hips to put your weight on both feet and force yourself into your well-rehearsed toeside position. Once you are, you can lean into your harness and point your board more upwind, biting in with your toeside edge. You can see that Karine has her board flat, she's steering her kite up and has centred her weight.



Any second now, she'll carve back up onto her toeside edge. Job done!

TOP TIPS

Small but perfectly formed. There's no need to go massive at first. Concentrate on the mechanics; even if you stop on landing, you can work up from there.

As already alluded to, make sure you're jumping and transitioning to land on your favoured toeside. This will give you less to think about and allow you to adjust and adapt to your landing.

Look at the sequence and the video to see how it all adds to one smooth transition.

COMMON PROBLEMS

Suppose you're landing on an edge and sinking. You'll only be able to turn the board that far if your kite drifts across to the other side of the window. Your kite can only do that if you a, don't level the bar and/or b, turn your head too soon and look back upwind. Keep looking forward and only dive hard and late.

KEYSTONES

- 1 Edge and send kite from 1 or 11 to just past 12
- 2 Level, Stamp, Pull, then Big Chill - Look Forward
- 3 Turn to look Downwind, Dive Hard
- 4 Drop shoulder, twist trunk and lift back leg through
- 5 Land tail first before lifting the kite and centring the weight to point upwind





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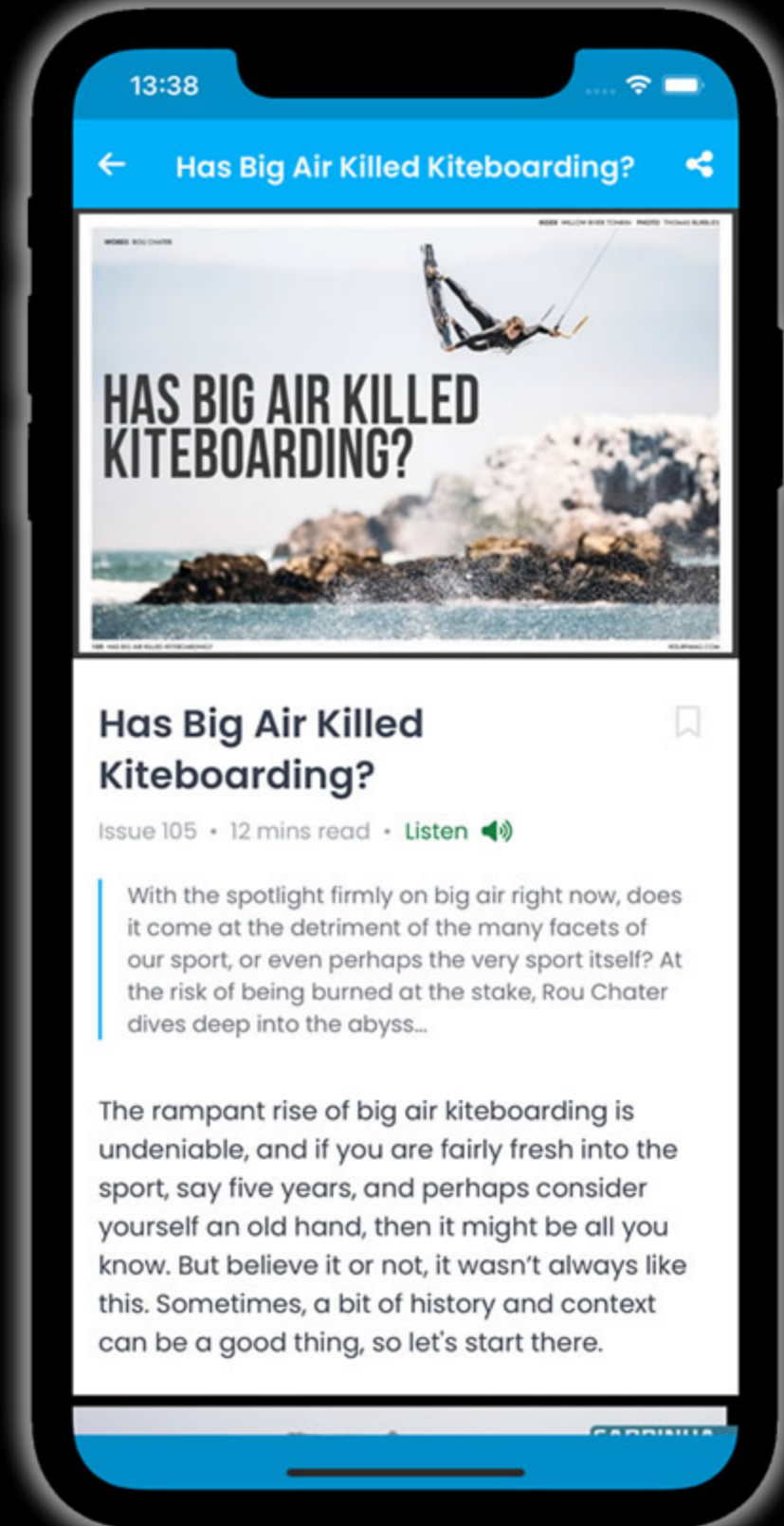
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TRIED & TESTED

For Issue 113 of IKSURFMAG, the team put the latest ION Amaze CORE 4/3 Front Zip womens wetsuit and the men's Seek CORE 4/3 Front Zip, Ozone's latest Edge VT and Ozone Edge VT Ultra X, The Line Smith SK99 premium lines and Duotone's Blur DLAB to the test during the UK spring sessions. Curious to know how they performed out on the water - Read on!

CORE
AMAZE



WORDS & PHOTOS
THE IKSURFMAG TEST TEAM

IKSURFMAG.COM

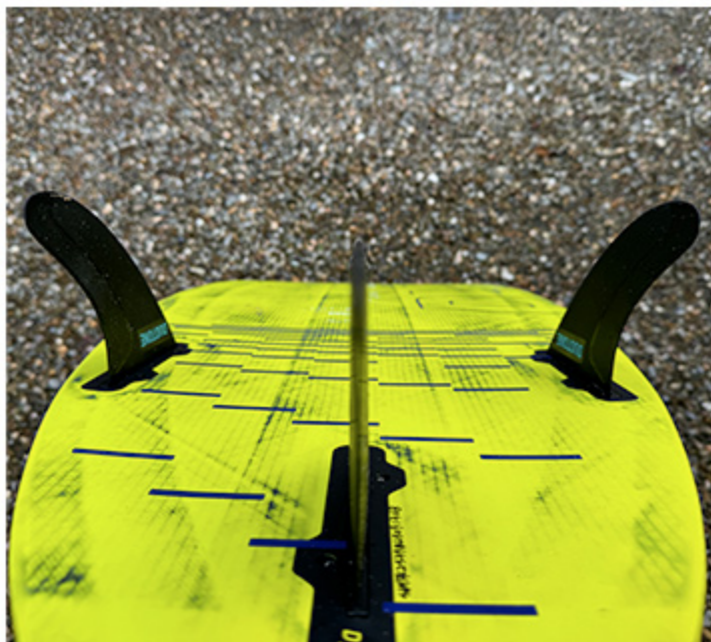
BRAND DUOTONE

MODEL BLUR D/LAB

YEAR 2025



" GRIP, HIGH-SPEED STABILITY AND EASY HANDLING MEANS YOU GET A BOARD THAT WILL WORK FOR MANY RIDERS. "



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

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

AT A GLANCE

The Duotone Blur D/LAB 2025 stands out in the surfboard lineup as a high-end yet surprisingly user-friendly option for medium to big waves. With a design focus on speed, control and performance, it's aimed at riders who want to carve hard turns and be able to push the limits in challenging surf. Key features include a refined rocker profile to handle steep sections, a round tail for excellent grip in the turns, and a thruster fin set up.

The D/LAB construction features a carbon stringer, Innegra fibre layup and the Reflex Memory Foam Shock Absorber 3.0 for comfort, reduced vibration, and to eliminate any heel dents as the memory foam will always conform back to its original state.

From the get-go, it's clear this board is intended to perform when conditions step up. What surprised us in our test, though, was how comfortable it remains across various conditions.

IN THE WATER

When you throw the Blur into bottom turns, the grip is genuinely impressive.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)



BRAND ION

MODEL AMAZE CORE 4/3 FRONT ZIP WOMENS WETSUIT

SIZE XS

YEAR 2025



" ONE OF THE
EASIEST AND
MOST
COMFORTABLE
WETSUITS I HAVE
EVER WORN "



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

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



AT A GLANCE

When I first unboxed ION's Amaze CORE 4/3 Front Zip, the very first thing I noticed was how incredibly soft it felt. It did not have that stiff, rubbery feel you sometimes get with thicker wetsuits. The colour immediately stood out too. The purple and lime green combo is bright, bold, and definitely a standout on the beach. What I really love about the Amaze CORE is that while it looks fun, it is built with some serious technical details.

It is made with neoprene-free natural rubber sourced from oyster shell powder, soybean oil, and eco carbon black. I appreciate that ION is focusing on sustainable materials, showing that high-performance wetsuits can be eco-conscious without compromising quality. Inside, the suit features Hot Stuff 3.0 made from recycled fibres for warmth and stretch. The lining on the arms and lower legs is Silk Stuff 2.0, which is soft and smooth against the skin, making the suit super comfortable to get into. The seams are glued, blind-stitched and reinforced at stress points, while the knees are flexibly taped to boost durability without sacrificing flexibility.

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BRAND ION

MODEL SEEK CORE 4/3 FRONT ZIP

SIZE 98 M/T

YEAR 2025



" WARM, SOFT, FLEXIBLE, AND PACKED WITH SMART DESIGN DETAILS THAT MAKE EVERY SESSION EASIER. "



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

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



AT A GLANCE

The ION Seek Core 4/3 Front Zip is a reliable, flexible wetsuit that delivers warmth, comfort, and performance at a really fair price. Unboxing the wetsuit, I was surprised at how soft it was. Built entirely neoprene-free, it uses natural rubber sourced from oyster shell powder, soybean oil, and eco-carbon black, making it a genuinely sustainable choice without compromising on feel or durability.

Inside, you'll find Hot_Stuff 3.0, a recycled-fibre lining that provides impressive insulation through the torso, and Silk_Stuff 2.0 across the chest, arms, and legs for that soft, stretchy comfort that ION does so well. The minimal seam design keeps it flexible, while seam-free shoulders give you extra range of motion; something I really noticed on the water. Being more freestyle-oriented, this was something I noticed immediately and really appreciated.

The front-zip entry is smooth and practical, featuring a soft cord lock that's easy to adjust with one hand, even when your fingers are cold, which we're used to in the UK! Reinforced stress points at the knees and crotch add to its long-term durability, making this a suit built to last.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)



BRAND OZONE

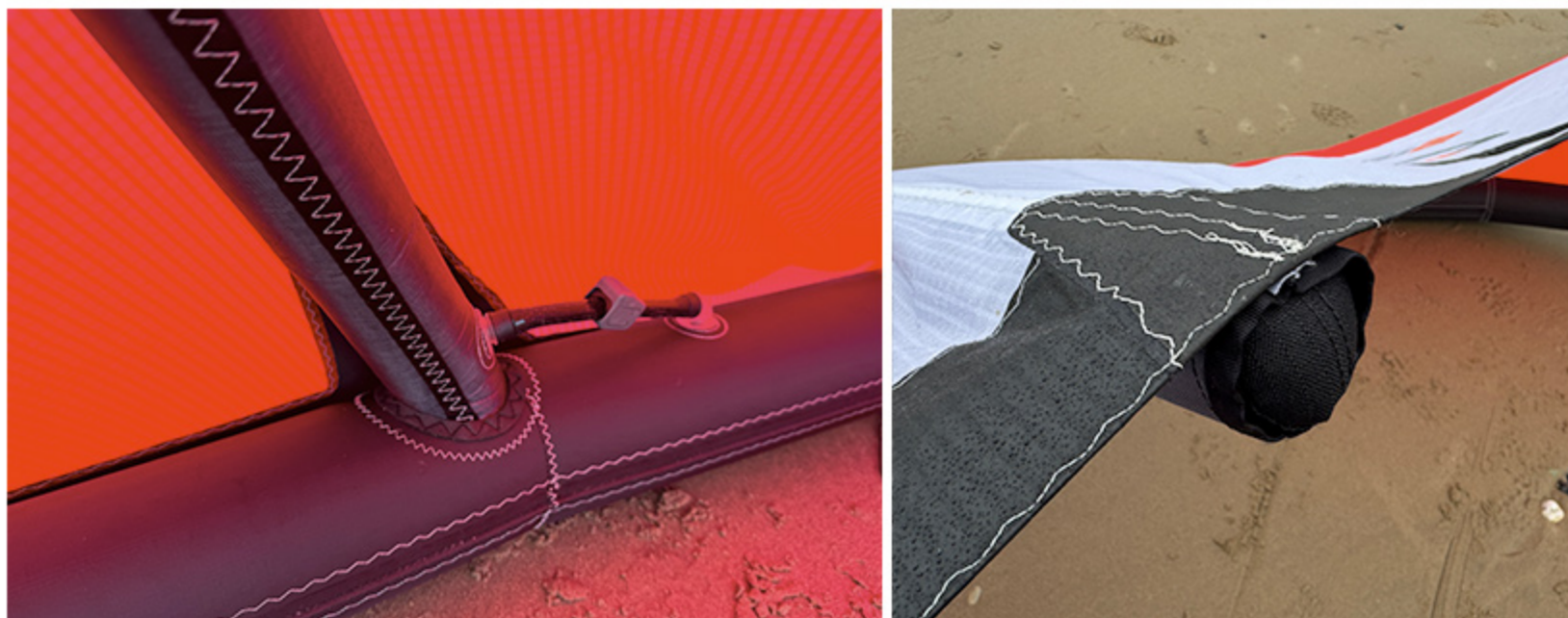
MODEL EDGE VT

SIZE 12M

YEAR 2025



" FOR RIDERS WHO CRAVE SPEED, LIFT, AND CONTROL COUPLED WITH EASE OF USE AND A FORGIVING NATURE. "



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

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

AT A GLANCE

The Ozone Edge has long been one of the defining kites in Ozone's range, a benchmark for speed, hangtime, and upwind drive. Now in its 13th iteration (the "VT" stands for Version Thirteen), the Edge continues to evolve while keeping its core DNA intact.

The new lineup spans 6 to 13m in one-metre steps, plus 15m and 18m options for light-wind sessions. The 12m is new for this release, along with the 15 and 18m sizes; this narrows the gap from the 13m to the 17m and 19m last year. The new 12m is a welcome addition, hitting the sweet spot freeride size many riders love.

Ozone has re-engineered the construction by size: smaller kites (6–9m) use full Teijin triple-ripstop Dacron for strength and durability, mid-sizes (10–13m) feature a hybrid 125g Dacron/ Teijin triple-ripstop Dacron mix, and the big sizes (15–18m) use 125g Dacron to reduce weight and improve the flying characteristics.

Updates for the new kite include increased canopy tension, especially at the trailing edge, to reduce flutter and

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)

BRAND OZONE

MODEL EDGE VT ULTRA X

SIZE 7M

YEAR 2025



" IF THE EDGE VT IS THE SUPERCAR OF FREERIDE KITES, THE ULTRA X IS THE CARBON-BODIED TRACK EDITION "



AT A GLANCE

The Edge has always been the benchmark for freeride and big-air performance within the Ozone range, and now the Edge VT Ultra X pushes that benchmark even higher. It takes the refined platform of the Edge VT, complete with its new platform, refined arc, and 16-point bridle, and builds it around a complete Aluula airframe, with a new super-light canopy material too.

That means an Aluula leading edge, five Aluula struts, and a new double-ripstop canopy material from Teijin that reduces the canopy weight by 17%. This adds up to a weight reduction of around half a kilo compared to the standard VT. The real magic, however, isn't in the weight savings; it's in the stiffness. Aluula delivers an incredibly rigid frame that resists distortion in even the strongest gusts, transforming the kite's feel in high-wind and big-air conditions.

Like the VT, you'll find increased canopy tension, especially along the trailing edge, for a flutter-free ride and ultra-precise steering. The 16-point bridle, inspired by the Vortex, allows Ozone to use a narrower leading edge without sacrificing stability.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)



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

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



" FOR ANYONE WHO'S EVER SNAPPED A LINE MID-SESSION, THE ABILITY TO GET BACK ON THE WATER FAST IS INVALUABLE. "



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

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



AT A GLANCE

The Line Smith has been quietly carving out a name for themselves in the kite world, focusing on one of the most overlooked yet crucial components of any setup — your lines. Their SK99+ Premium Lines are made from ultra-high-performance Dyneema SK99+, a fibre known for its outstanding strength-to-weight ratio, low stretch, low shrinkage, and durability.

What really stands out, though, is The Line System — a clever, modular approach that allows riders to replace and maintain their lines without sending their bar away for servicing. Whether you've snapped a line mid-season or your old set is looking tired after years of use, The Line System makes it possible to order exactly what you need and fit it yourself at home. They cover all the major brands and bars, and if you can't find your setup on the website, speak to Gilion — he has vast experience in fixing kite lines and will be sure to help.

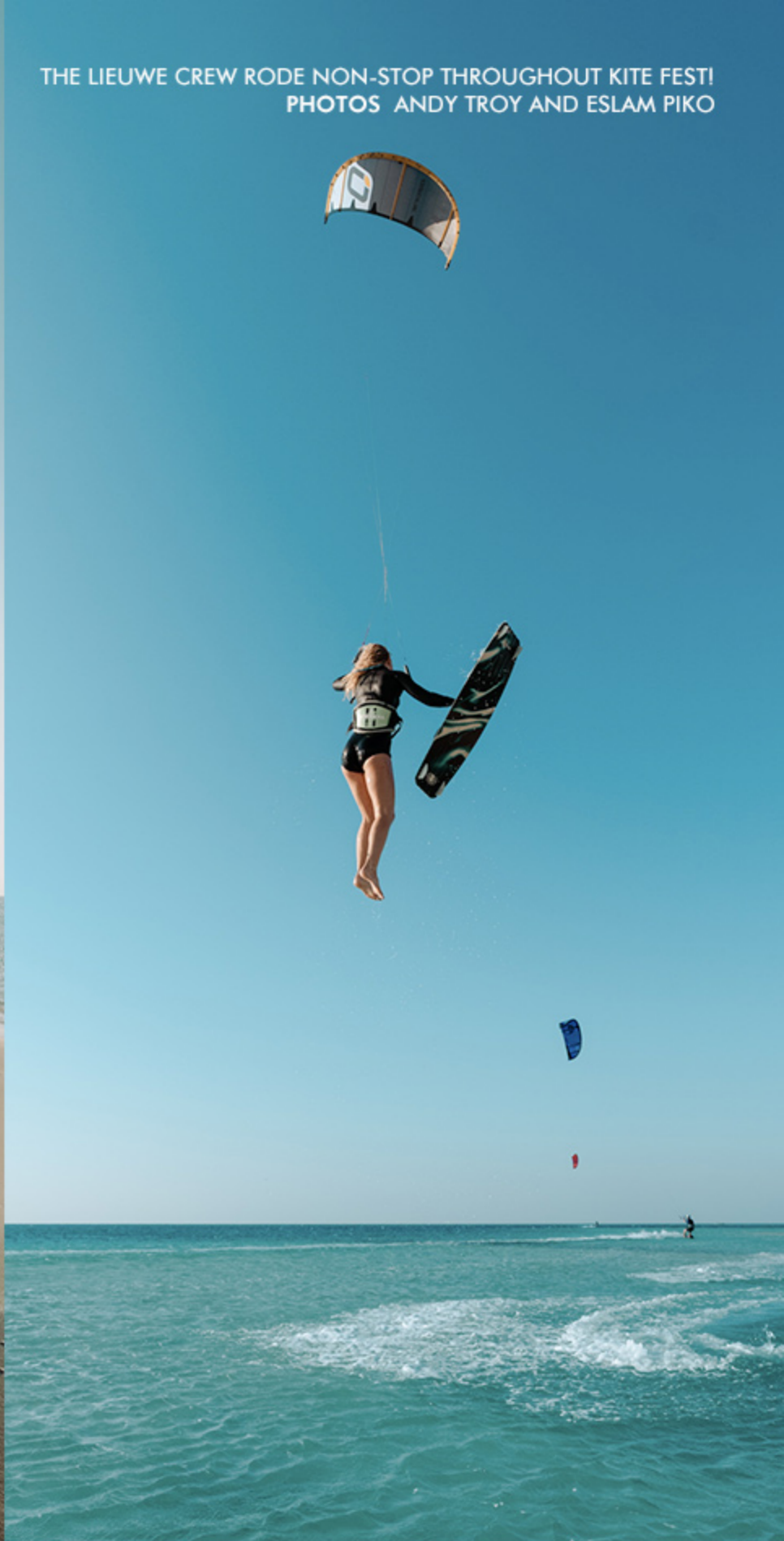
The headline here, though, is that for around 90% of brands, you can order directly from the website to get back on the water as soon as possible,

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)



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

Lightroom



THE LIEUWE CREW RODE NON-STOP THROUGHOUT KITE FEST!
PHOTOS ANDY TROY AND ESLAM PIKO

ANDREA CHASING WOO RECORDS AND PUSHING LIMITS IN GREECE. REBEL DLAB, WAY FINS AND FULL FOCUS!
RIDER ANDREA PRINCIPI PHOTO ARIS GIANNOUKOS



Lightroom



Lightroom

JAN BURGDÖRFER ENJOYING A SESSION IN PORTUGAL ON THE NEW ELEVEIGHT RS PRO.
RIDER JAN BURGDÖRFER PHOTO ALEXANDRE AHMARANI

IKSURFMAG.COM



Lightroom

THE SPACEX KITESURFING CREW STORM CHASING
IN COLD HAWAII
RIDER STIJN MUL PHOTO THOMAS ROOS

IKSURFMAG.COM

A man with long, wavy hair, wearing a black wetsuit and a black harness, stands on a sandy beach. He is holding a rope that extends across the water. In the background, there is a large, dark mountain. To the left, a yellow and black kayak is partially submerged in the water. The sky is clear and blue.

Lightroom

JEREMY BURLANDO ALL GEARED UP ON RIDE ENGINE'S
ELITE CARBON TYPE 1 HYPERLOCK HARNESS BURLANDO LTD
RIDER JEREMY BURLANDO PHOTO LORYS GHIONE

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

7 SPORTS IN 1 DAY AT JAWS

From tow-in surfing to wing foiling, kiteboarding and more, Kai Lenny takes on Jaws in Maui with an insane lineup of seven sports in one day and claims #1 on our Movie Night list!

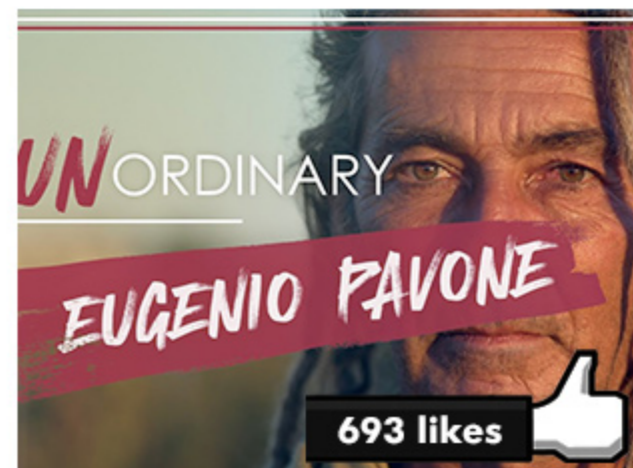


[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#2

EUGENIO PAVONE | [UN]ORDINARY

At 56 years old, Eugenio Pavone is living proof that passion has no age limit. Filmed in Lo Stagnone, Sicily, this inspiring short by Laci Kobulsky captures his free spirit, joyful riding, and endless love for freestyle kitesurfing.



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#3

HOW TO FIX CROSSED OR INVERTED LINES (KITESURF TUTORIAL)

Crossed or inverted lines can ruin your session fast, but Alex Buss has you covered. In this tutorial, he breaks down the simple steps to quickly untangle your setup so that you can get back on the water with ease.



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#4

KITEFOIL BAR TUNING EXPLAINED - [2025 ULTIMATE KF SETUP]

Alexander Lewis-Hughes dives into his kitefoil bar setup, answering the most common questions about how and why it works. From key setup tips to rider-specific adjustments, he breaks it all down in his latest video!



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

RIDER JEREMY BURLANDO
PHOTO LORYS GHIONE

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