

AUG/SEPT 18

WELCOME TO IKSURFMAG

Welcome to Issue 70 of the World's Number One Kitesurfing Magazine! Duowhat? New Cabrinha? North gone? North back? With so much going on at kitesurfing's top table we put the definitive word down on what's happening with the biggest brands in the industry. Brandon Scheid travels to La Ventana to

discover the easy life and Julie Leleu is the subject of our Ten Questions feature. Annelous Lammerts investigates the rise of the Hood Jam, one of the biggest events in kiteboarding right now and there's more — the magazine is packed, as always, with the best photos, stories and videos!

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KITEBOARDINGS CORPORATE TAKEOVER

· TRAVEL: LA VENTANA · FOR THE RIDERS BY THE RIDERS · JULIEN LELEU/CARLA HERERA · TESTS, TECHNIQUE AND MUCH MORE INSIDE

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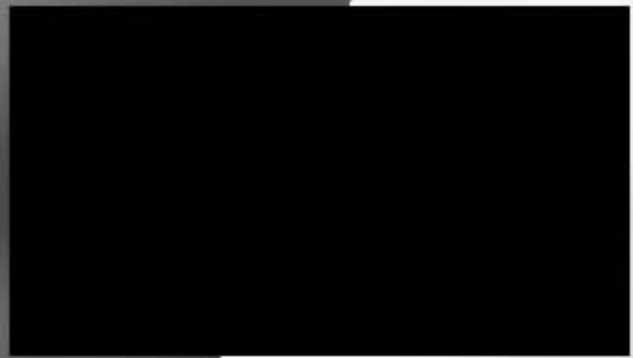
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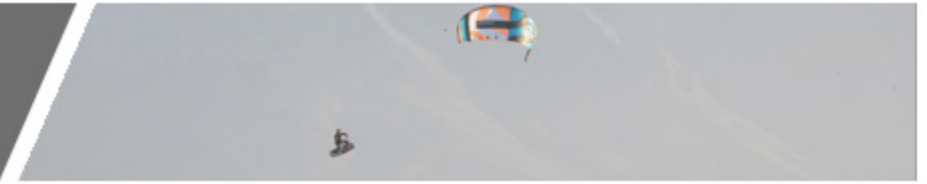
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CONTENTS

PUBLISHING EDITOR >

Rou Chater
rou@iksurfmag.com

FEATURES EDITOR >

Lindsay McClure
lindsay@iksurfmag.com

TECHNIQUE EDITORS >

Christian Harris & Karine Nativel
christian@iksurfmag.com
karine@iksurfmag.com

WEB EDITOR >

Jen Tyler
jen.tyler@iksurfmag.com

DESIGN >

Raise Creative
www.raisecreative.com

ADVERTISING SALES >

Mary Booth
mary@iksurfmag.com

IT DIRECTOR >

Alex Chater
alex@nextelement.co.uk

CONTRIBUTORS >

Brandon Scheid, James Boulding,
Toby Bromwich, Annelous Lammerts,
Vincent Bergeron, Julien Leleu,
Svetlana Romantsova and
Carla Herera.

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WILLOW RIVER TONKIN PUTTING THE NEW CORE NEXUS THROUGH IT'S PACES!
PHOTO CORE KITEBOARDING



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This issue we have teamed up with CrazyFly to bring you this fantastic board that is sure to take your riding to the next level!

The Raptor Ltd from CrazyFly is one of their most popular boards; it's a high-end freeride and freestyle machine crafted from carbon with a killer look to make it easy to spot on the water. Brand new CompFlex 4T5 Carbon on the bottom of the board makes the new LTD Neon even more comfortable and smoother, especially in choppy water. The Nano Glide Skin on the bottom of the board helps the board track and go upwind better thanks to its micro channels.

Handcrafted in the CrazyFly factory in Europe, the finish on this board is incredible. CrazyFly products also now come with a massive three-year warranty, so you know this board will be with you for some time and that the brand stands behind their products. The Raptor LTD Neon works best with Hexa LTD Neon Bindings for unmatched comfort and board feel. A set will be included in the prize, and you can choose a size to suit you from 132x41 / 136x41 / 140x42cm

A huge thanks to CrazyFly for such a fantastic prize, good luck in the competition!

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PHOTO ANDRE MAGARAO



ISSUE 70

Seventy issues of IKSURFMAG! Twelve years ago, if you'd asked me about Issue 70, I'd have laughed you off the beach. What started out as a small project between two brothers has turned into the largest kitesurfing website in the world, the most widely read kitesurfing magazine on the planet and the most downloaded kite related app on both the App stores.

We've got an incredible team behind the scenes that help us achieve our goals, and without them, none of this would have been possible. I'll indulge myself by taking a moment to thank Alex, Mary, Karen, Lindsay, Jack, Jen, Robin, Sukie, Ben and of course Christian and Karine who all help to put the magazine, website and App together.

We wouldn't be anywhere without you though, the readers of this magazine who keep on checking out the content we publish. If it weren't for you, we really wouldn't be here, so my thanks goes out to you reading this right now. Keep on spreading the word, enjoying the magazine, and most of all loving the sport.

It's funny; after 18 years of kiteboarding you'd think I'd be getting jaded by it all, yet right now I'm the biggest frother there is. As soon as those leaves start moving, I'm checking the weather stations and headed to the beach. For me kitesurfing is a sport that keeps reinventing itself, from twin tips to surfboards, race boards to foilboards and everything in between it seems like there is nothing that can't make you happy when there is a kite involved.

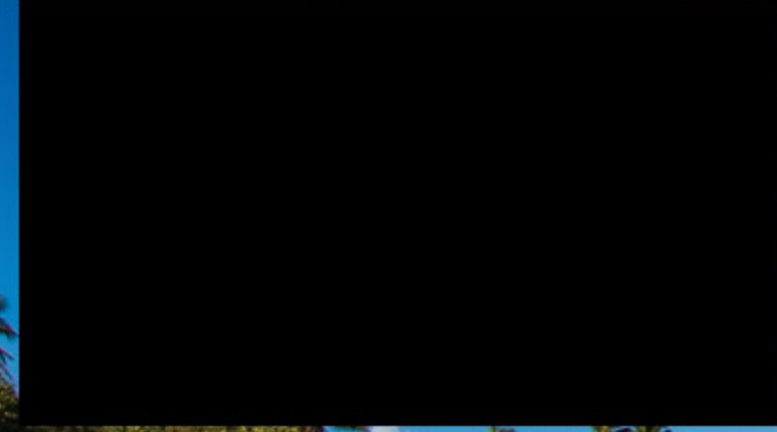
The addictive nature keeps me coming back for more, and I am sure you all know that feeling. Enjoy the latest issue and let's keep on rolling towards the next big milestone!

Thank you

Rou Chater

Publishing Editor

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RIDER ALBY RONDINA
PHOTO JAMES BOULDING

Rou Chater looks at the bizarre series of events that have led to some major moves at the top of the kiteboarding industry. Duotone launches and old North is no more, a couple of ex Cabrinha staff set up new North, what's been happening at Cabrinha? If you want to know what is going on, then you need to read this...



A STORM IN A TEACUP

WORDS ROU CHATER

Unless you've been living under a rock lately, you can't have failed to notice some significant changes at the top of the kiteboarding assemblage. Boards and More, the company responsible for North Kiteboarding for the last 18 years, has dropped the license for the name in favour of launching a new brand; Duotone. This became official on the 23rd of July, although kiteboarding's most guarded secret made the rounds in May on Kiteforum.

“ ALLOWING THE INDIVIDUAL BRANDS CHANCE TO GET BACK TO THEIR ROOTS AND FOCUS ON THEIR KEY BRANDS”

Long before all of this, however, in 2014, longstanding figurehead Mr Neil Pryde retired and sold up his business Pryde Group, of which the kiteboarding brand Cabrinha has been a part of since the very early days of our sport. This sale, and the changes within the company as a result, was the initial catalyst that led to the re-shuffling of some of the group's operations in Hong Kong over the past year, and moving HQ back to the office in Maui where it had all began. Hong Kong was the location for the head office of Pryde Group with large numbers of staff, and many of the company's brands operating from there.

These actions left some people wondering what was going to happen to Cabrinha. Conversely, this move was more a well-timed way of 'trimming the fat' - so to speak - from the Pryde Group portfolio and allowing the individual brands chance to get back to their roots and focus on their key markets - all to positive effect.





RIDER ANNELOUS LAMMERTS
PHOTO JAMES BOULDING

“ HAVING THE WHOLE TEAM BASED ON MAUI MAKES ONE OF THE BIGGEST BRANDS IN THE INDUSTRY A VERY NIMBLE PLAYER. ”

For years Cabrinha has been operating between kitesurfing's mecca of Maui, and one of the most overpopulated, yet business orientated places on the planet that is Hong Kong. Moving forwards the majority of the Cabrinha team would now be based in the expanding Maui office. Whilst the rumour mill went into overdrive about what was going on behind the scenes, the reality was far removed from the content of the kite forums. Cabrinha has continued to expand its creative and technical hub on Maui, at

the birthplace of our sport, whilst still keeping its logistical arm close to its manufacturing facilities.

The investment into the Maui operation has been a strategic plan that was initiated by Pete himself a number of years ago. As with any large company this has been a steady but deliberate process. Contrary to popular internet folklore, this had nothing to do with the current industry changes occurring. Having the whole team based on Maui makes one of the biggest brands in the industry a very nimble player with a relaxed, yet focused and passionate management style permeating from above. The brand has

always placed innovation right at the top and with management, product engineers, marketing and R&D teams now in one place it means very exciting times ahead.

Meanwhile, over in Germany, Boards and More decided to no longer produce products under the North Kiteboarding name, effectively leaving North Kiteboarding in danger of disappearing into obscurity. Though, North Technology Group, who own the name and licensed it to Boards and More, wasn't about to let this happen, and in order for North Kiteboarding to live on it needed some staff to run the operation. Conveniently there was a group of people out of a job in Hong Kong thanks to the recent shifts in Pryde Group.

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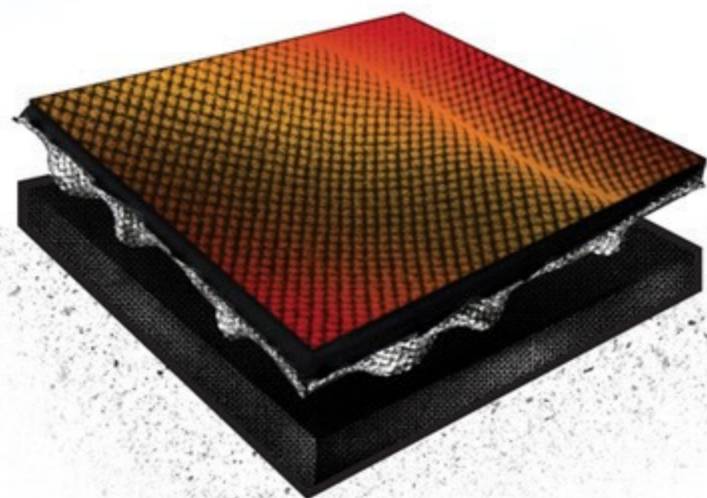
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RIDER NOÉ FONT
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH

“ THE POSITION OF BEING THE BIGGEST PRODUCER OF KITES AND BOARDS HAS BEEN AN OFTEN-MYTHICAL GOAL. ”

It's the sort of stuff that could set your mind spinning, and should you as a kiter really care about this boardroom brinksmanship? Arguably not, but you are undoubtedly going to be hit by a marketing storm over the next few months and maybe even years. We're risking a lot by writing this article, putting noses out of joint is one thing, losing ad revenue for a small business like ours is even more critical.

Even so, because we think you should care where your kites are coming from, who is making them, and dispelling some of the Chinese Whispers that are circulating, we are pressing ahead. Therefore, read on for the definitive and final word on what's going on at kiteboarding's top table.

First of all, the position of being the biggest producer of kites and boards has been an often-mythical goal for some brands. Selling more gear means you have more money to reinvest in technology and innovation so you can then sell more equipment. This never-ending cycle will continue as long as you can maintain customer interest in your products and keep on coming up with new ideas along the way.

Traditionally the biggest producers of kites and boards have been Cabrinha and Boards and More (North Kiteboarding under their stewardship). Selling between 25,000 and 35,000 kites a year each depending on product years and who was on top. In the past few years Boards and More have been dominating the market, with Cabrinha right up there with them.





“ PRIMARILY THE GUYS AND GIRLS WORKING FOR THESE BRANDS ARE KITERS JUST LIKE YOU AND I. ”

Lower down the table the positions shift with the wind, brands like Naish, F-One, Core Kiteboarding, Slingshot, Liquid Force, Airush, Ozone, Flysurfer and the rest all jostle for position. When I say jostle, they probably don't care too much individually who is ahead, but you get the picture. Depending on marketing, product and buyer confidence kite sales go up and down. Obviously everyone wants them to keep going up so they can continue innovating

and ultimately sell more gear.

One aspect of this was the sales figures which the GKA accumulated. In 2017 the Global Kitesports Association recorded sales figures from the members of around 100,000 kites. Not every brand is a member, so if you account for that then the best estimate of total kite sales for 2017 was approximately 140,000 to 150,000. That is a relatively small number; kiting is a niche sport.

Most kite brands in the sport are rider owned and run. F-One, for instance, was founded

by Raphael Salles back in 1998 and still remains under his care to this very day. Core Kiteboarding in Germany is under the stewardship of Bernie Hiss and has been since he started it. Other companies, such as Cabrinha and Boards and More (Duotone), however, are owned by larger companies and ultimately shareholders, though they maintain a key figurehead leading the brands themselves.

Is that a bad thing for you as a rider? Not at all. Primarily the guys and girls working for these brands are kites just like you and I. They are devoted to the sport and care about it it's progression, just the same as those of us who've been in the industry for many years. Pete Cabrinha is an intensely passionate waterman from Maui, and he still runs the show at

PETE AND THE TEAM ON MAUI
PHOTO JAMES BOULDING



Cabrinha. Till Eberle, the CEO of Boards and More, arguably fits the bill of being more like the average kitesurfer than most. He takes two kite holidays a year, gets out on the water at weekends when he can, and the rest of the time he is stuck in the office miles from the sea doing his job.

All that being said, shareholders will always want a return on their investment, and it is the need for that return that has sparked this latest round of changes. Accordingly, for the brands that are beholden to a higher power, they require that relationship to work, and they need to ensure they remain profitable. The smaller brands, of course, need to stay profitable too, but ultimately they are only answerable to themselves.

**“THE REST OF
THE TIME HE IS
STUCK IN THE
OFFICE MILES
FROM THE SEA
DOING HIS JOB.”**

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With that brief overview delivered, let's look in a little more detail at what's been going on. If you read the forums, you'll be seeing things like this: "Duotone, what kind of a name is that?", "New North is the new Cabrinha", "What are Cabrinha going to do now everyone has left?". Of course the Internet is a rumour mill best taken with a pinch of salt, but once someone starts asking the question, things quickly spiral out of control. Ultimately, I guess we want to know if it is the end of kiteboarding as we know it?

Let's start with Cabrinha, as it's arguably the simplest one to talk about. I've been speaking to James Boulding (Marketing Manager) and Pete Cabrinha in Maui, and rest assured the future is looking bright.

Cabrinha have just come off the back of an amazing spell of sales for the business and have been enjoying

"THE INTERNET IS A RUMOUR MILL BEST TAKEN WITH A PINCH OF SALT...THINGS QUICKLY SPIRAL OUT OF CONTROL"

some of the best years in the history of the company. The 2019 product is literally about to drop as I type this and the team are looking forward to another incredible year with an exciting product line.

As Pete put it, "We have a great team here in Maui, and we are all fully behind the Cabrinha brand and our commitment to kiteboarding. We have one of the best teams in the business, they can be nimble and effective at what they do."

Cabrinha were a fantastic brand before all of this, so now we can only expect evermore superior things from them. If you are ever fortunate enough to meet anyone from Cabrinha you'll notice how dedicated they are to the sport, people like Dave Hastilow

RIDER COLLEEN CARROLL
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH



RIDER MATCHU LOPES
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH



(Division Manager) simply loves kiteboarding and wants to make it better for everyone. There is a real mix in the team too; guys and girls from all over the world coming together to make great products. I like that vibe.

“Think globally, act locally” was how Pete put it, and that rings true. They still have their international distribution in place, which is one of the company’s biggest assets. With Maui controlling the destiny of the brand one hundred percent the future is looking

“ CABRINHA ARE STILL VERY MUCH AT THE COALFACE AND DEDICATED TO MAKING EQUIPMENT THAT IS BOTH INNOVATIVE AND FUNCTIONAL . ”

positive. Distribution is such a key aspect to any kiteboarding brand and has long been one of the strengths Cabrinha has enjoyed - and no doubt is a huge contributor to their success. Customer satisfaction plays such a big role and having these teams on the ground all around the globe ensures excellent aftercare and efficient customer service.

Cabrinha are still very much at the coalface and dedicated to making equipment that is both innovative and functional. Pete is dedicated to putting the customer experience first and foremost. He wants the brand to reflect that with products that make your sessions more enjoyable.

One point I would mention is that I had to persuade Pete and James at Cabrinha to engage with this piece. Their strategy in all of this was to keep their heads down and carry on doing what they do best, making great equipment and letting that speak for itself. I felt it was important, given the rumours being spread, to tell their side of the story: Cabrinha is



RIDER CRAIG CUNNINGHAM
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH

doing very well and embarking on a new, even more focused journey, that places you - the rider, very much at the forefront.

This brings us nicely onto Duotone, or Duowhat as seems to be the favourite comment of the Internet melee at present. I was told about Duotone in January of this year, and I admit I was incredulous as to why a leading brand would decide to drop the most recognized, and maybe even respected moniker in the business. As time passed and they explained the situation it has become much clearer, and makes a lot of sense.

I chatted with Till Eberle at length in Tarifa at the Duotone launch, and he put it very succinctly. "When you rent a house you can't do anything to it, you just rent it. When you buy the house you can redecorate, tear it down and build a new one, do whatever you want. We were always renting North,

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“ AFTER 15 MINUTES IN TARIFA, I’D FORGOTTEN NORTH AND DUOTONE SEEMED LIKE SECOND NATURE. ”

now we own Duotone the possibilities in the future are no longer limited by the owner of the name saying yes or no.”

What is ABSOLUTELY CRUCIAL in all of this is that Boards and More licensed the name North Kiteboarding. It was never anyone from North Technology Group (who just owned the name) creating the products, it was always the team from Boards and More.

Therefore, all the intellectual property, designs, product names and even the N logo are owned by Boards and More. The entire product range you know and love will continue under Duotone.

The Neo, Dice, Vegas, Rebel and all the kites will remain, the Click Bar, Iron Heart, Trust Bar are the same, just “now by Duotone”. The same goes for the boards too, the Whip is still the Whip, it just has the Duotone logo on it. Yes, yes, I know, perhaps you hate the name, but honestly, after fifteen minutes in Tarifa, I’d forgotten North and Duotone

seemed second nature. Although, ask an Italian to say it if you want a laugh, “Duooo Tony”...

A long session testing the new Dice and the separation between North and Duotone got even further. The kite was incredible, I was grinning from ear-to-ear and kiteboarding was as it always was: #mindbendinglyawesome. As I came off the water, I remarked to Till, “The name may have changed, but the equipment is all just so much fun!”

For 18 years Till and his team have been developing market-leading kiteboarding products, and that continues, nothing has changed, they have kept Ken Winner, Sky Solbach and Ralf Grosel as designers,

every single staff member has stayed with the brand and perhaps, even more telling, all the pro riders have renewed their contracts too.

Duotone really feels like a family affair at the moment, from the ground up there seems to be a buzz around the new brand. They are working with the media, wanting to get the message out there, I honestly think by this time next year we might be saying North Who?

And that succinctly brings me on to my final topic, the

“DUOTONE REALLY FEELS LIKE A FAMILY AFFAIR AT THE MOMENT, FROM THE GROUND UP THERE SEEMS TO BE A BUZZ AROUND THE NEW BRAND”

“new” North Kiteboarding recently released a press release two days before the official Duotone launch saying “North Kiteboarding is coming home” with a slogan on the website stating “There is only one true North.”.

At this point I heard people getting excited, saying they can't wait for the new North products and that they can now get the new Rebel from North. However, that clearly isn't the case, and as we look set to go into a marketing frenzy over this one let's set the record straight.

Yes North Technology Group, owned by Oakley Capital, a private equity firm, is going to be launching a new range of equipment under the North Kiteboarding moniker which it has always held. A new Rebel? Not a chance - Boards and More own the intellectual property on all the products they made whilst under the North license. While there is some talent under the hood in the guise of Mike Raper and Pat Goodman (ex Cabrinha kite designer), they and

RIDER MATCHU LOPES
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH



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SLASH PURE WAVE/STRAPLESS
SIZES 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12



TORCH PRO PERFORMANCE/FREESTYLE
SIZES 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14



DASH FREESTYLE/FREERIDE
SIZES 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14



BOXER FREERIDE/FOILING
SIZES 3.5, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16



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“ LAUNCHING IN AUGUST 2019 LEAVES THEM WITH JUST TWELVE MONTHS TO DEVELOP AN ENTIRELY NEW RANGE OF GEAR ”

the rest of the team have a huge mountain to climb.

Launching in August 2019 leaves them with just twelve months to develop an entirely new range of gear. I say new, as Boards and More and Cabrinha will rightfully protect their intellectual property. They can't make a

kite like the Switchblade or the Neo, and they can't copy the Click Bar or the Overdrive Bar. You won't be seeing your favourite twin tip from 'old North' (Boards and More and now Duotone) or Cabrinha with a North logo on it either.

I've been hearing rumours that the plan for the new North will be to undercut on prices and go direct to market. This might work in the short term although does anyone remember Best? They attacked the market with 3-for-1 deals and sold loads of units,

but then they sought out a traditional distribution model recognising the importance of actually turning a profit and providing customer service as opposed to candidly grabbing market share. Of course they ended up owing the riders, magazines, and just about everyone they had dealings with, huge sums of money and have arguably disappeared as a brand.

In a sport like this good distribution is key, while the company members at Cabrinha and Duotone may be relatively small in terms of numbers, when you cast the net to the wider international level the team numbers grow significantly. The distributors in each

LETS ALL JUST GO KITESURFING...
PHOTO JAMES BOULDING



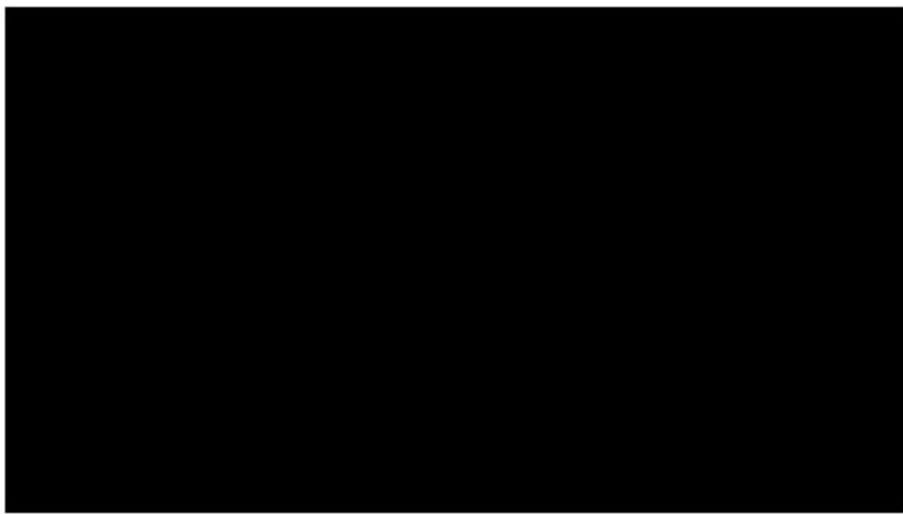
country have a team of people running demos and helping customers. A network of shops backs that up delivering products to the end consumer and national and local riders are all putting effort in too. The global make up of a kite brand is huge, and distribution is critical.

Kiteboarding isn't an enormous sport, the numbers prove that, yet it is one that is ardent and flourishing. In this industry it's all about the relationships

“THE GLOBAL MAKE UP OF A KITE BRAND IS HUGE, AND DISTRIBUTION IS CRITICAL.”

and reputation that you have. Cabrinha and Duotone have established those key factors over the last twenty years, not just with the media, but with distribution networks, schools, shops and most importantly customers. All that's been received from the “new North” thus far is a barrage of piquant press releases from a PR company, about product potentially becoming available in the Autumn next year, and nothing more concrete regarding the brand, company or specific product range itself.

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WORDS BRANDON SCHEID PHOTOS VINCENT BERGERON

West coast surfers and kiteboarders are always looking for warm, windy places to spend their winters. When stories of long point breaks, windy bays, and warm welcoming people, trickled north out of Baja, many adventurous souls load up their 4x4's, full of food, water, boards, and beers and drive south in search of the next epic destination.

LA VENTANA, THE EASY LIFE AWAITS



“ THE DAYS ARE WARM AND THE NIGHTS ARE COOL. THE FOOD IS DELICIOUS AND THE BEER IS CHEAP. YOU’LL DISCOVER A TRUE KITEBOARDING OASIS AT THE TIP OF BAJA! ”

The Baja road trip initially started out as a surfer’s pilgrimage and was soon adopted by the windsurfing community as well. New surf breaks were continuously being discovered up and down the 1000-mile peninsula and assessed for wind sports potential too. San Carlos, Baja’s premiere wave-sailing spot, was one of the first to be put on the map as a world-class destination during the 90’s.

When kiteboarding gained popularity in the 2000’s, riders began to look for locations with ideal wind conditions to practice the sport. Word soon got around that a small, sleepy fishing village called La Ventana, (The Window) on the southern tip of Baja, on the Gulf of California, had incredible wind conditions. The village was originally settled in the 1940’s by Salome Leon, a local pearl diver from the nearby town of La Paz. With winds blowing almost daily from November until April, it’s an ideal spot in the northern hemisphere for kiteboarders to spend their winters. It is often referred to as “Hood River South” since many local Pacific Northwest kiteboarders spend their winter months enjoying the comforts of temperate Baja living. The days are warm and the nights are cool. The food is delicious and the beer is cheap. You’ll discover a true kiteboarding oasis at the tip of Baja!

I have made the trip down to La Ventana a few different times and have always had great success. When Gary Siskar, Liquid Force Kiteboarding Brand Manager, asked me to scout a new location for our LFK winter photo shoot, and without hesitation,





“WORKING ON A PHOTO/VIDEO SHOOT IS NOT AS GLAMOROUS AS ONE WOULD IMAGINE.”

I knew just the place! I assembled a dream team, including designer Julien Fillion, ripper Sensi Graves, legendary rider/designer Jason Slezak, and photo ninja, Vincent Bergeron. Our task was to gather marketing collateral for our 2019 line of boards, accessories, and a few of our new kites, the NV V9 and P1. Our meeting point was at the Los Cabos airport, where we began our journey into the desert.

Working on a photo/video shoot is not as glamorous as one would imagine. Yes, we get to kiteboard a lot, however, the sessions are long and often we are kiting in spots that are better for the photo composition rather than the riding conditions.



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“FROM THE BEAUTIFUL TURQUOISE WATERS AND CACTUS-FILLED DESERT TO THE HOT SPRINGS, AND SALTY SLIDER-FILLED WATERS OF CHOCO LAKE, ONE CAN FIND A DIFFERENT SESSION ALMOST EVERY DAY.”

We usually have to repeat the same trick over and over until we hear Vince say, “got it!” then it’s on to the next one, for another ten to twenty minutes. The days are long, and we spend the evenings sorting out and editing footage of the thousands of shots we took during the day.

Thanks to the wonderful geography and climate of the area, the island of Cerralvo and the mainland make a Venturi-like canal

that funnels through the thermally enhanced wind, and we get good conditions almost daily. There are many large and safe beaches to launch from, and the wind blows side shore from around 11 am until 7 pm almost every day. If you’re willing to do a little driving (about 15 minutes) you can catch the wind a little earlier at the top of the bay.

Between the top of the bay and the bottom, there is a plethora of backdrops and different spots to ride. From the beautiful turquoise waters and cactus-filled desert to the hot springs, and salty slider-filled waters of Choco

Lake, one can find a different session almost every day. Combine all that with a short two and a half hour drive to the Pacific side for proper wave riding, and you have an abundance of riding options within a two-week trip.

When you are off the water, the vibe around La Ventana is really eclectic and diverse. The contrast in the variety of people adds a really interesting dynamic to the town. From wealthy CEO’s vacationing to gypsy campers living off shoestring budgets, retired windsurfers, Mexican gauchos, and kites of all ages and skill levels, you’ll see it all. In addition, the crime rate is very low and the town feels safer than most I’ve ever been to.

A woman in a blue tank top and patterned bikini is captured mid-air while kiteboarding. She is holding the control bar of her kite, which is suspended by a line. Her board is yellow and white. The background shows a vast, sandy dune under a clear blue sky, with a strip of green coastal vegetation and the ocean's edge visible at the bottom of the frame.

“ THERE ARE PLENTY OF SURF AND KITE SPOTS UP AND DOWN THE PENINSULA, AND DRIVING THROUGH, IS REALLY THE BEST WAY TO SEE THEM ALL. ”

Most nights, there is something special going on at one of the many food stands, beach bars, or campgrounds. This makes for a fun round of weekly outings where you can chat about the day's sessions and enjoy some amazing Asada tacos.

The town as a whole has embraced kiteboarding and windsurfing tourism as their main source of income and has adapted their simple fishing village to cater to modern times. They now have an ATM, a gas station, coffee shops, bike trails, faster Internet, countless amazing restaurants, and lots of different accommodation options. While some may say that this takes away from the true Baja experience of camping in the middle of the desert, I believe some of the added comforts have made the town a much easier place for the average kiteboarder to enjoy their holiday.

HOW TO GET THERE

The most recommended way to get to La Ventana is by 4x4, to experience Baja in all its glory. There are plenty of surf and kite spots up and down the peninsula, and driving through, is really the best way to see them all.

Many world-class spots lay at the end of a long, adventurous dirt road, and although that sounds exciting, Baja is really something you need to be prepared for. If you're planning on going 'off the grid', you will need water, food, and power, not to mention some good maps and a hearty taste for the unknown. Even though most small towns in Baja are relatively safe, caution is recommended on the roads down south.



style on land."



"performance on water."



STAY SALTY

**“ GO WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS PREVIOUSLY DONE THE DRIVE BEFORE;
THE EXPERIENCE DEFINITELY COMES IN HANDY. ”**

The best way to tackle this route is to go with someone who has previously done the drive before; the experience definitely comes in handy. The 101 South is definitely worth experiencing.

You can fly into Cabo San Lucas airport (SJD), which is about two and a half hours away from La Ventana, or La Paz airport (LAP), which is about an hour away. Cabo is often easier and cheaper to fly into but requires a slightly longer drive.

VISA AND FORMALITIES

Most countries' residents are allowed to enter Mexico without a visa for up to 180 days, making travel easy, cheap, and pain-free. Just make sure you have a passport and you should be good to go!

ELECTRICITY

Rental homes and businesses in La Ventana work on the US power plugs and voltages, so if you are coming from abroad, just make sure you have the appropriate adapter.

MONEY

The currency of Mexico is, the Peso and as of this moment, it is pegged at 18.55/1 with the USD. Usually, for the kiteboarding tourist coming to Mexico, this means that the cost of living is cheap. I suggest exchanging money at the airport, as the cash machines are not always working in the La Ventana. In the past, you would have to drive for about an hour to get to La Paz to get money and gas. Some restaurants, lodging, and the two grocery stores will take credit cards, but most of them will require cash, so just carry cash with you to be on the safe side.





“IT IS VERY UNLIKELY THAT YOU WILL COME ACROSS ANY LANGUAGE BARRIERS, BUT SOME GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF SPANISH MAY ALWAYS COME IN HANDY.”

LANGUAGE

While Spanish is the national language of Mexico, most people are fluent in English. It is very unlikely that you will come across any language barriers, but some general knowledge of Spanish may always come in handy.

CAR RENTAL

It is fairly easy to rent a car at Cabo airport and the rental prices are often advertised at

a very cheap rate, but of course, there is a high mandatory insurance fee, which is not mentioned! The prices add up, and rental cars end up being rather expensive, so there isn't really a way around it.

Some of the lodging in La Ventana offers airport pickups, which help keep costs low if you are traveling on a budget. Once you are in La Ventana, you don't really need a car, but it definitely helps if you want to explore the town and its surrounding areas.

INTERNET AND CELL

As one would expect in the middle of the

desert, the Internet and cell coverage are not ideal! That being said, we were able to find great Wi-Fi at several of the bars and businesses in town, and our accommodation had its own, private, Internet connection. In addition, our cell devices once enabled for International use, worked well all throughout the area. However, the service and the Internet often dropped, especially when downloading heavy file transfers, high-quality streaming, or other taxing use. I would say, you could still “work” from La Ventana, but I wouldn't set high expectations on the speed and quality of the connection. If you're on vacation, it shouldn't be a high priority anyway!

Three sizes available

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136 x 42 cm

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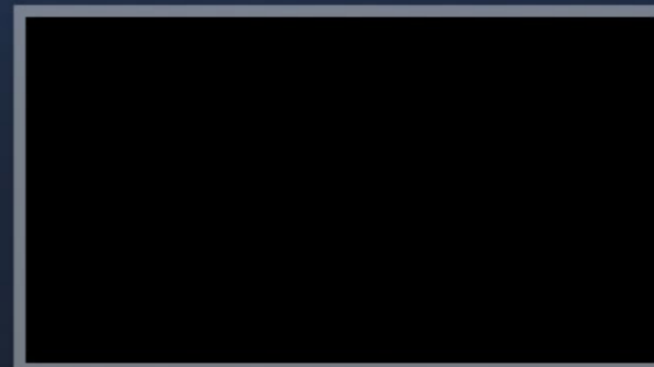
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"THE CLIMATE IS PERFECT FOR CAMPING AND IT IS THE MAIN PREFERENCE FOR MOST PEOPLE."

WHEN TO GO

The wind season runs from November until April, and January is the busiest month of the winter months.

WHERE TO STAY

Baja Joes: The original windsurf hotel and bar in La Ventana, has great drinks, rooms, and launching area.

Camp Ground: This place is great for people looking for a more affordable way to stay long term. The climate is perfect for camping and it is the main preference for most people. There are several campgrounds in town that offer a wide range of amenities.

“ HE HAS GIVEN BACK MORE TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY THAN ANYONE ELSE IN TOWN AND HAS A WEALTH OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE AREA. ”

Gypsy-Drive Down: Bring a tent and pitch it in one of the many canyons throughout town. There are no services, but if you are prepared, it can be cheap and amazing.

Air B&B: Renting a house is really the best way to enjoy the town. A quick search online will yield an abundance of options scattered throughout the town. If you see listings for El Sargento, don't be confused; it is just the name for the north end of the town. There have been buildings booming all over town, mostly fueled by kiteboarders looking for a retirement, or winter vacation home, and there are plenty of beautiful places to choose from.

Palapas Ventana: This is one of the best places to stay in the entire town. They have delicious food, great rooms, and good times with the owner, Tim.

He has given back more to the local community than anyone else in town and has a wealth of information about the area. If you're not staying there, make sure you pass by the bar for a Baja Fog and a chat with Tim.

WHERE TO EAT

While there are countless, great restaurants up and down the bay, for me there is only one winner, and it doesn't even have a name! You can locate it by walking to the west side of the road between Baja Joes and Playa Central around 7 pm; it will be filled with gringos looking for the best tacos in town! Make sure you order 1 kilo of Adobada (pork taco) and enjoy one of the best meals of your life!





“ ON LIGHT-WIND DAYS, THE DEEP WATER AND STEADY WIND MAKE IT AN IDEAL HYDROFOIL SPOT. YOU’LL WANT TO HAVE ALL YOUR TOYS WITH YOU! ”

CONDITIONS AND WHAT TO BRING

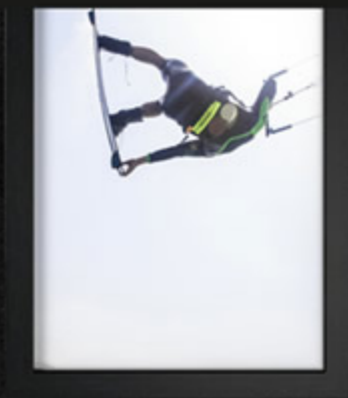
You can expect the wind to blow daily from about 11 am until 7 pm. The wind can either be thermally generated and be on the lighter side or fueled by an El Norte weather system and howling winds. Most kiteboarders bring their 7m, 9m, 12m, and a hydrofoil.

On windy days, there may be breaking waves up and down the bay, so a surfboard is ideal. On light-wind days, the deep water and steady wind make it an ideal hydrofoil spot. You’ll want to have all your toys with you! Surfboards, mountain bikes, motocross, kites, foils, twintips, and even spearfishing gear can be used daily.

It is important that you bring a wetsuit; after all, it is winter. Most people ride in a shorty during the warmest hours of the day and a full 3/2 in the evenings.

Since the town is essentially a desert, expect the temperatures to drop a little in the evening so just make sure you pack a little bit of everything.

There is a reason La Ventana is such a popular spot, the wind, climate and chilled out vibe make it a compelling place to spend some time. If you get the chance, make the trip, you definitely won’t regret it!



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WORDS ANNELOUS LAMMERTS
RIDER EWAN JASPAN
PHOTOS TOBY BROMWICH

FOR THE RIDERS, BY THE RIDERS

We take an in depth look at how one of kiteboardings most respected events came to life. The Patagonia Hood Jam 2018 went down in history as one of the best ever with amazing wind and incredible riding, but it takes a lot of hard work and effort to get there!





“THE PARK STAYS IN THE WATER ALL SUMMER AND IS OPEN FOR EVERYONE TO HAVE FUN ON AND IMPROVE THEIR RIDING.”

From the 22nd of July till the 28th of July all the best park riders in the world came together to compete in the Patagonia Hood Jam, the second stop of the Kite Park League, in Hood River, Oregon. The Gorge might be known for strong and gusty wind, but during the Patagonia Hood Jam, the riders got better conditions than anyone could have hoped for! Steady wind for the bigger kites every single day, the perfect

conditions for the riders to push their limits in competition.

Quite a few of the Kite Park League competitors went straight from the Triple S, the first stop of the Kite Park League, to Hood River since it is easier than flying back to Europe in between. They were the first ‘park rats’ to arrive at the Slider Project. The Slider Project is the first, and still the only, public kite park in the world. Those ‘park rats’, including myself, had to put the features out and put the park together. After that, the park stays in the water all summer and is open for everyone to have fun on and

improve their riding. Something that is still unique, it created a lot of talented riders and is a big influence on the level in the Hood Jam these days.

Two locals and competitors on the Hood Jam for the past years, Blaine Baker and Lindsay McClure, organised the first Junior Hood Jam the week before the main event. This was the perfect possibility for young shredders under the age of 18 to compete together and the prize for first place was a spot with all the pro’s in the Hood Jam. KPL Judge Alexander Lewis-Hughes and pro riders Alex Maes and Ewan Jaspan not only judged the competition but also gave the kids tips on how to approach the rails and what they are looking for when they are judging the tricks.



VISITING THE SPONSORS
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH

All the young riders improved a lot before and during the event, and it was great to see the progression. The kids were all stepping up their game and pushing each other to land new tricks. For the competitors of the Hood Jam, it was great to see that the next generation landing new moves and getting closer to the level of competing with them.

In the Junior Jam finals, Mark Cafero (USA) showed that he was ready to compete with the best riders in the world by landing a backside 720 and crowmobe of the kickers and really clean and technical rail hits. Jack Rider, a young Canadian ripper, ended up second and Xander Raith also from the USA came in third.

"THE KIDS WERE ALL STEPPING UP THEIR GAME AND PUSHING EACH OTHER TO LAND NEW TRICKS."

RAZOR

7TH GENERATION



“ THE EVENT WOULDN'T HAPPEN IF IT WEREN'T FOR A GROUP OF PASSIONATE KITEBOARDERS PUTTING IN A LOT OF TIME AND ENERGY OVER THE YEARS. ”

Since the first two actually won a video wildcard to compete in the Hood Jam, the open place went to Xander, and he could now join the other two to compete in the Patagonia Hood Jam.

After the Junior event, the Patagonia Hood Jam kicked off. This event has always been organised by the riders, unlike other events such as the Triple S. The Triple S is organised by Real Watersports, which means they arrange prize money, judges, media, crew to move the park and so much more. But for the Hood Jam, it's different, it's organised for the riders, by the riders. The Hood Jam has been growing a lot and turned in a very short amount of time into an event with prize money for the athletes, the best media crew and professional judges. The event wouldn't happen if it weren't for a group of passionate kiteboarders putting in a lot of time and energy over the years.

Before the Hood Jam came to life, there was another park competition, the Ro Sham Throw Down. The first one was organised in 2010 by Joby Cook and Forrest Rae. Two years before that they were the ones who started the Slider Project and thanks to them this grew into what it is. After some years Rich Sabo and Brandon Scheid took over the Slider Project management. There was no Ro Sham Throw Down at the time, and one evening while having some beers with Colleen Carroll and Craig Cunningham they decided they had to bring back a park event in Hood River.

RIDER JULIA CASTRO
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH



RIDER ALEX MAES
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH



RIDER SENSI GRAVES
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH



They put out a two-second video to announce the contest, and the first Hood Jam became a reality!

Everyone rode as much as they could all week, and they would get pizza and watch all the clips at Colleens brother's house. Steven Borja filmed every single hit, and they would watch all the tricks and judge each other from that. The two girls competing, Colleen Carroll and Lindsay McClure, had to compete with the guys since there was no separate category yet.

"THEY WOULD WATCH ALL THE TRICKS AND JUDGE EACH OTHER FROM THAT."



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" OVERALL I'M REALLY STOKED TO SEE PEOPLE FLYING FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD TO COME TO THE HOOD JAM. "

After the first year, there were a lot of people that wanted to come and be part of the event. They realised that they needed to turn this into something bigger. Colleen took the responsibility to organise the competition and started to put in a lot of time and energy to turn it into a proper competition. In 2016, the second edition of the Hood Jam was a huge success with pretty much all of the best park riders showing up. Also, the rise of the Kite Park League (KPL) in 2016 and the Hood Jam being part of that made more competitors interested in competing and spending more and more time at the Slider Project. In 2017 and 2018 the event has been growing mainly thanks to the work that Colleen keeps putting into organising this event. "I didn't set out to make an event that would be a world tour qualifying event", Colleen said, "It really started as an idea to bring an event back to the Slider Project. After that first year I really saw the potential in it, and from there it has been growing organically. While on the one hand, it's a world-class event, on the other it's still pretty grassroots in nature and a small scale event. Overall I'm really stoked to see people flying from all over the world to come to the Hood Jam."

Rich and Brandon help her where they can and also still play a big part in making the Hood Jam happen. Brandon always had the role of making sure the park is set up right during the event. He always gets a group of riders to help him during the event and make sure everything is moved and in place and ready for each heat. All the riders know that if you compete in the Hood Jam, you need to help out with moving obstacles or in other ways.



" TRY NOT TO GO TO BIG TO QUICK BECAUSE EVENT ORGANISATION ALWAYS ENDS UP BEING MORE TIME AND MORE WORK THAN YOU EXPECT. "

Rich is still Slider Project manager and takes care of all the paperwork and pretty much anything else that needs to be done. Hosting the awards ceremony, selling Slider Project t-shirts to raise money, setting up the rider's area at the event and what not. Sensi Graves was in charge of the media distribution this year and makes sure we kept all our awesome sponsors happy and stoked for the next years.

Colleen also gave some advice for people that are thinking about organising an event or competition at their home spot. "Try to keep it as simple as possible in every regard, to try not to overcomplicate things. Try not to go to big to quick because event organisation always ends up being more time and more work than you expect. If you can start something that is a bit smaller, your chance of not getting discouraged or overwhelmed is greater, and you're going to have more fun doing it. You learn a lot every time you organise an event, so if you start small, you can learn a lot of lessons when there is not as much on the line.

Once you have your system figured out you can take and more responsibilities, with bigger sponsorship and have more people travelling from further to attend your event."

What is really amazing to see is that not only the local shredders and international riders are the ones helping and contributing to making this event into what it is. We have the best media team in the business with Toby Bromwich and Vincent Bergeron, and we are lucky that they have supported our event the past 3 years. Since 2016 they are helping to grow this event even though the budget is small. This also counts for head judge Alexander Lewis-Hughes who also comes to support this competition every year to push park riding in the right direction.



PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH

Of course, we cannot forget James Ropner, better known as "Homie", for the amazing "Homie Live-stream" to the KPL-Facebook page during the event and making sure that people at home wouldn't miss a single trick.

The sandbar that creates the flat water for the Slider Project in the Columbia River has been changing a lot of the past years and this year was definitely harder than other years. The Hood River didn't have a lot of water flowing down since there wasn't a lot of snowfall this winter. Instead of having a deep channel behind the sandbar, the whole sandbar got divided over the spot, and it was pretty much shallow everywhere.

"THE HOOD RIVER DIDN'T HAVE A LOT OF WATER FLOWING DOWN SINCE THERE WASN'T A LOT OF SNOWFALL THIS WINTER."

RIDER: CARL FERREIRA - PHOTO: SAMUEL TOME



RRD

robertoriccidesigns

RELIGION
 I G I N M K 9
 RE-LI-GION
 /rɪˈlɪdʒ(ə)n/
 [COUNT NOUN]
 The relationship, variously identifiable in the rules of life, feelings and manifestations of homage, veneration and adoration, which binds man to what he considers sacred or divine.

SIZES: 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10.5 - 12



“ IT IS GREAT TO SEE THAT LITERALLY EVERYONE IN THE COMPETITION IS HELPING SOME WAY OR ANOTHER ”

This meant there was way more moving the park this year compared to other years and also during the Patagonia Hood Jam all the riders had to be on it. Since the regular spot got too shallow, we had to move the park further out to make sure there was going to be enough water for the event. During the Hood Jam, there was still quite a bit of moving around, but Brandon Scheid and Rich Sabo were on it and always rallied enough riders to help move the park fast and not lose any time between the heats. It is great to see that literally everyone in the competition is helping some way or another to make this event happen the way it does.

There were 6 features part of the Patagonia Hood Jam this year. We had the Duotone rooftop and the Pole on the left, the Cabrinha funbox to corrugated tube and Duotone rooftop on the right and both the small Session kicker and big Slingshot kicker set up to both sides. In the end, all the riders got scored from 0-10 on all 6 features, and the top 3 riders of the first heat advanced to the final. The next 3 riders from the would compete in the 9 person dingle heat with each other for the last 3 spots in the final. Head judge Alexander was very clear about what he wanted to see in the competition; “tricks that you would put in a video part”.

Since the conditions were so good the level in both men and women was insanely high, and there were quite a few competition NBD's (Never Been Done's). In the men's division, it was Brandon Scheid landing the first backmobe 720 in competition,

RIDER SAM LIGHT
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH



THE CREW!
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH



and Noé font landed a ridiculous Backside 360 Melan Frontside 360. The Women provided three comp NBDs in the space of a heat. Colleen Carroll and Karolina Winkowska both landing Tootsie Rolls, Sensi Graves landing an Underflip and Katie Potter stomping a Tantrum to blind.

During the first Hood Jam, there was pretty much no budget, and the prizes were very creative. The golden "Hammer Award" is one of those that stayed and turned into a classic Hood Jam award.

" THERE WAS PRETTY MUCH NO BUDGET, AND THE PRIZES WERE VERY CREATIVE. "

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BRADLEE RUTLEDGE

RIDER CRAIG CUNNINGHAM
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH



" THIS YEAR THE AWARD WENT TO THE TWO RIDERS THROWING DOWN THE BIGGEST TRICK OFF THE KICKER. "

This year the award went to the two riders throwing down the biggest trick off the kicker. In the women final it was Colleen getting the highest score with here insane Tootsie Roll scoring a 7.77. For the men, it was Christophe Tack that landed a super clean Pete Rose 5 scoring 8 points.

The top 3 for both men and women was pretty much impossible to say from watching the heats and during the awards ceremony at Kickstand it was announced that the top 3 men were separated by only 0.11 points. Local hero Brandon Scheid was the one that came out on top, followed by Ewan Jaspan with only 0.03 behind him, and Sam Light came in third. In the women, Katie Potter showed she had been improving a lot and thanks to consistently good hits on every feature she secured her first KPL podium. In second place it was Julia Castro who scored the highest score of the whole event, but it wasn't enough to beat Karolina Winkowska who absolutely killed it on every feature.

The third and last tour stop of the Kite Park League will be at the Kite Mansion in Icapui, Brazil. Make sure to watch the complete recap video on the Kite Park League Facebook!

The Patagonia Hood Jam wouldn't be possible with all the support from the amazing sponsors! A big thanks to Patagonia, Wind Voyager, Dakine, Full Sail, Hydro Flask, Sunski, Makulo, Duotone, Ion, Stoked Roasters, Raw Elements, Kickstand, Big Winds.



FORTALEZA



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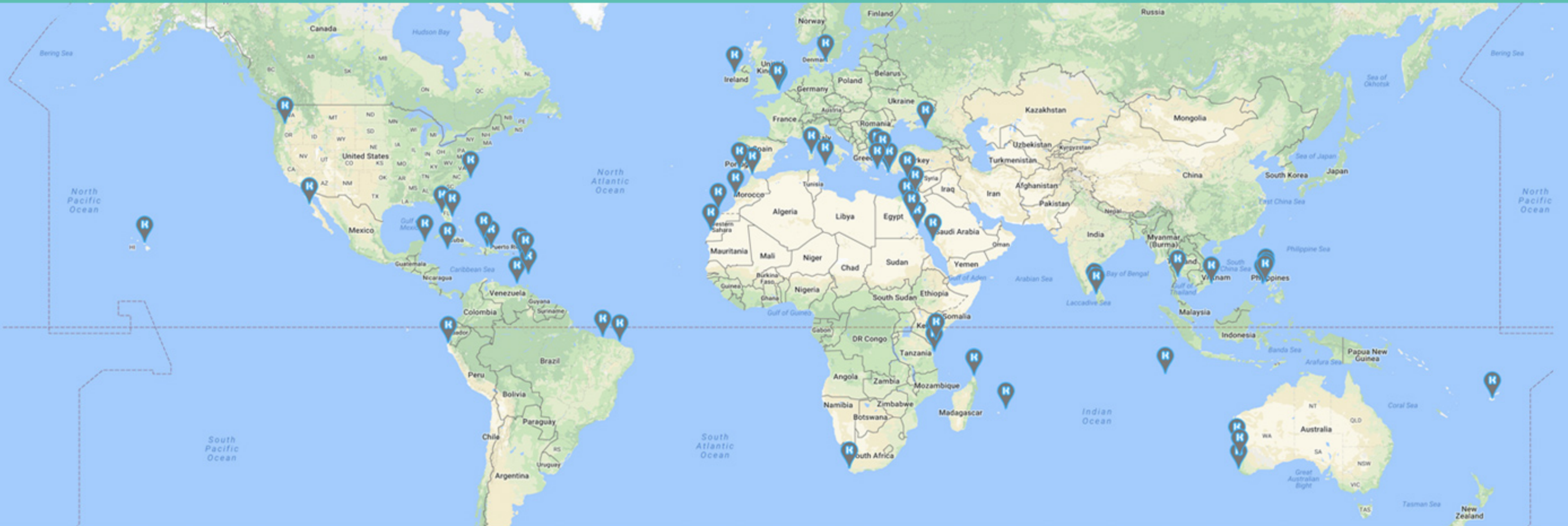
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THE TRANSITION

**THE ONLY CONSTANT THING
IN LIFE IS CHANGE. THE
TIMES, THE CONDITIONS,
EVERYTHING IS IN MOTION.
ONLY THE DESTINATION
STAYS THE SAME; LIKE OUR
AMBITION TO BUILD THE
MOST INNOVATIVE**

DUOTONE TRUE KITEBOARDING

MEET
THE
PEOPLE
WHO
MAKE
IT ALL
COME
TRUE



JAIME HERRAIZ

NIKLAS VALENTIEN



TILL EBERLE



DUOTONE TRUE KITEBOARDING



HERITAGE & **INNOVATION**

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TECHNIQUE



WORDS & PHOTOS CHRISTIAN & KARINE

In a slight departure from our usual moves of the month type technique, this issue we're going to have a broader look into the realm of down winding. It's a topic that we often get asked about and cover during our clinics, and seeing as how the season in Brazil, the land of endless down-windies, is kicking off it's probably the high time to prepare yourselves for the various techniques to both surviving and more importantly enjoying the journey ahead.

Everything we mention here is relevant whether you're riding a twin tip or a surfboard, or even a plank of wood – even though all the photos and videos are of a strapless nature. Also, worth noting is that although this article is about getting downwind, we won't be discussing carving around and riding waves downwind, or jumping, that's for another time.

CKPerformance clinic space due to cancellation:
 Red Sea Boat Safari 1st - 8th September 2018

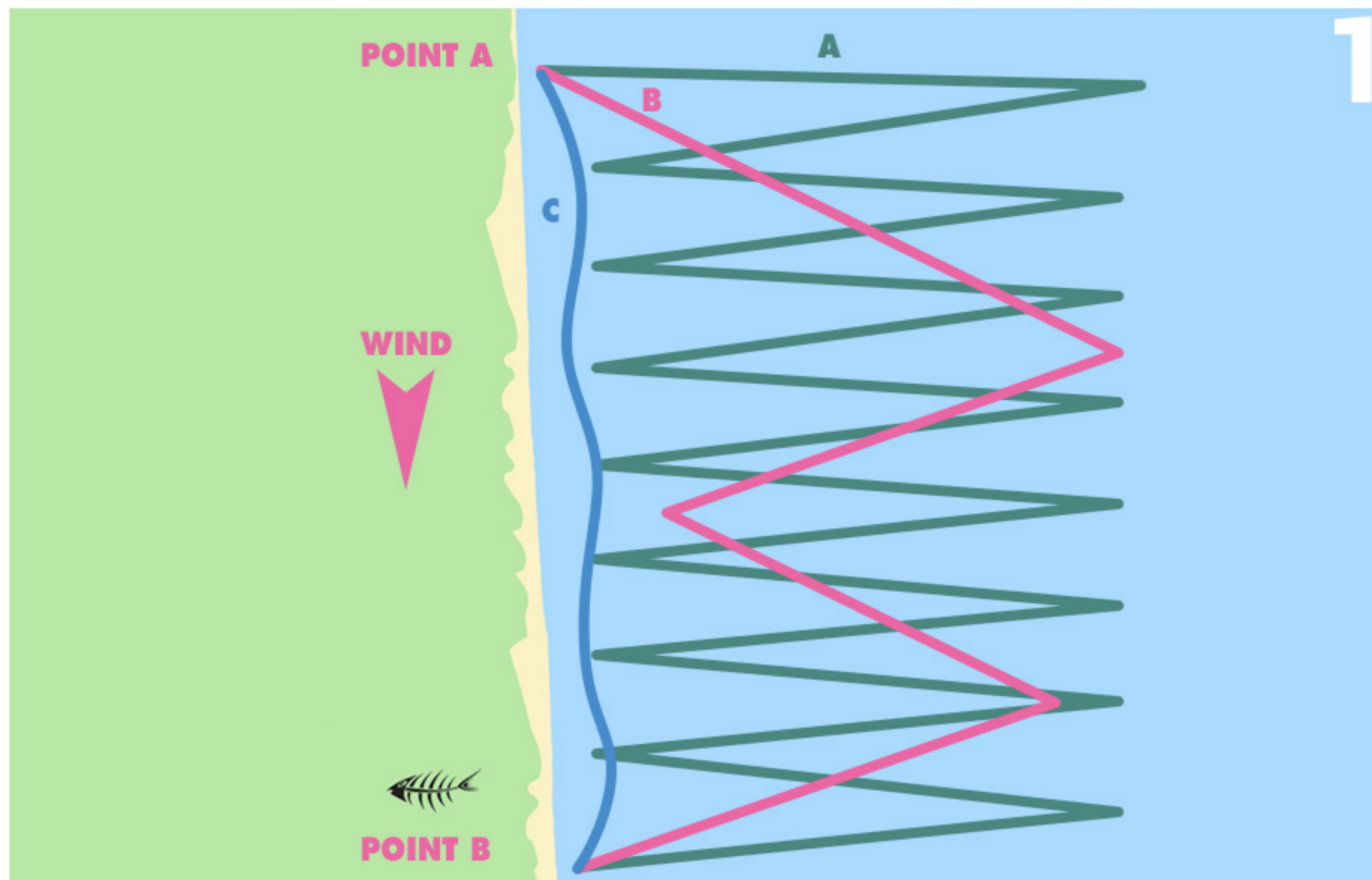


There is no better place to start than the beginning, so what do we kilters mean by riding downwind?

Simplest way to think of it is to imagine that you want to go from point A to point B. For theory's sake, if you look at **Pic 1** you can see that the kite school, Point A, is on a beach with the wind blowing cross-shore. The idea is to launch at the kite school and then ride down the coast to the restaurant at Point B. Due to the cross-shore wind direction, lunch is downwind of your starting point. We can probably all agree that riding upwind on an edge isn't going to get us to our tasty grilled snapper. This means that any angle more off the wind than riding perpendicular across the wind will eventually get us to lunch, from a couple of degrees zig zagging (a) down the coast to 45 degrees off the wind on a broad reach (b), to riding straight down wind parallel to the beach (c) and everything in-between. It's all a question of angles from 91° to 180° .

Please note that this is a simple theoretical diagram and that the wind could be from many directions, and each one will determine how you can make your way downwind. If the wind is onshore, for example, you'd happily make your way to the restaurant without having to point off the wind at all!

Down-winding is just a loose term for riding "off" the wind or "with" the wind to some extent. The real question lies in how we can ride down wind effectively and efficiently. The funny thing is when we all learn to kite, the holy grail is to ride upwind, so why is it that once we master the be all and end all, doing what came so naturally, going down-wind, is suddenly so



challenging? Surely it should be as simple as rolling downhill on a bike? The answer lies in a multi-faceted, multi-tasking smorgasbord of variables, possibilities and one could say opportunities such as wind strength, kite size, board size and volume, speed, apparent wind and dare we say – rider ability.

As we're all well aware the simple fact of the matter is that as soon as we turn off our edge and further downwind we lose tension in our lines and everything comes to a grinding halt. However, before we look at why that happens and the myriad of ways that we can

stop it happening, let's just spare a moment's thought for how we turn the board off the edge and more downwind.

Pointing Off the Wind – How To

We'll keep this brief and bare in mind that regardless of kiting craft it's pretty much the same idea. For this we will assume that we have enough power in our kite to be happily riding without the need to work our kite, otherwise known in our formative times as Park & Ride Heaven.



In a way if you were to undo all the good work that sets you up on a strong edge, then you'll be most the way to flattening the board off. And once the board is flat, with no edge and power in the kite you will officially be riding, however gently or temporarily, off the wind towards the kite. This is the real edge and release of kiting and it has sweet football association to do with popping and the world to do with bearing off the wind! That's right, all you have to do is release your edge and bingo, off the wind you go....

In **Pic 2** Christian is riding upwind on an edge. He's not hammering hard upwind but he's happily making ground. On a twin tip he would be

resisting, looking upwind, whilst on a surfboard his feet are upwind of the centre line of the board sinking the upwind rail, looking upwind and he's edging with his bodyweight upwind of the board. You can see that his hips and bum are out over the water and his front shoulder is twisted and slightly lowered. Yet again it's the same on a twin tip. Assuming that he's flying the kite correctly, the result is an edge.

Now let's look at **Pic 3** in which Christian has "released" his edge and is now travelling off the wind. The most obvious difference is that he is now standing with his weight over the board, and as such there is absolutely no edge, zilch, nada.

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To get from the previous photo to this one and successfully release your edge you need to soften your knees. Not to sit, but to stop resisting, so that you're no longer trying to drive your weight against the edge or rail of the board. As you soften and flex your knees allow your weight to swing over the board, so that your hips and shoulders follow. Lift the kite slightly, so you can use it to lift you up onto your feet. As your weight moves inboard you can weight your back foot, the whole foot, not just the heel and stand onto it slightly, although you still need to keep some weight on the front foot. By literally standing more upright your board will not have carved but it will have flattened and from this point onwards it's a subtle matter of using your feet to steer the board further off the wind should the desire or need arise.

You can see Christian using the kite to lift him over the board in **Sequence 1**.





One important note to remember. If you lift the kite to help you inboard, you'll need to dive it again as you turn off the wind otherwise you'll end up underneath it with no power...

You can see this all in real time in **Video 1**...

Before moving on it's important to understand that many kites find it simple to go down wind toe side. In fact, when people first try a down winder it's often so much easier for them to relax their toeside edge than it is their heelside edge. The principal is much the same, if you stop edging and stand more over the board, the kite will happily pull you off the wind once you've released your toeside edge.

Sequence 2 shows the workings of standing up on your toeside edge. Yet again you can see Christian lifting the kite to help pull him up and inboard, which flattens it off. The really important part of toe side is to keep enough weight on your front foot, as it's tempting to lean too far back and thus put the brakes on.

Video 2 shows this in real time.

As such down-winding will at first be considerably easier with your favoured foot forward, regardless if you're heelside or toeside, and the main reason being that you'll feel comfortable with a bit of weight forwards, whereas on your "weaker" side you'll lean back more. Now that we've had a quick refresher on how to turn downwind let's ponder what often happens next.

YOU SLOW DOWN!!! WHY?

Quick answer, you have lost tension in your lines. This is not always the case and we'll look at that in a mo. However back to saggy lines. Once your board turns towards the kite, you're moving towards it and as such tension is lost. Normally when you're riding the quick fix is to get back on an edge. That won't cut the mustard here though as your stomach is grumbling and lunch is waiting downwind. This is where a whole host of options present themselves, and which one you choose will depend on the variables at play!

At its most simple, riding downwind or off the wind is balancing the angle you ride off the wind against the power that you have at your disposal. So, if you're maxed and hanging on for dear life it should come as no surprise that you can fly off down wind. We've all experienced this, completely out of control waiting for the inevitable cartwheel. Think about those speed loonies in the ditch in Lüderitz, Namibia. They're able to point off at about 140[∞] and are now riding at nearly 58 knots, which isn't far off our Motorway speed limit in the UK! They're able to do this because they're hanging onto a lot of cloth in a lot of wind. Fair dinkum, we know that with way too much power we can get to lunch pretty sharpish.

However, the majority of us won't willingly be planning to downwind with that much power and speed, especially riding strapless, and that's why we need other methods to help us point further downwind, so that we're not slaloming 100km to get 5 km down the beach - we've all been there:)

It is good to know though that if the wind picks up we can just follow the kite as if we're wakeboarding. With the power that many of us ride with we'll soon be grinding to a halt in need of some oomph, lest we resort to carving back up onto our edge. Realistically this article is about how to keep tension in your lines while making the best possible progress downwind and how to mix it up a bit so that your body doesn't wave the little white flag when you're still miles from home. We're going to look at a few methods to help us get down before lunch gets cold.

THE ANGLE GAME – HOW TO KEEP TENSION IN YOUR LINES

As we've said it's all about angles. You can try this for yourself when you're powered up. You can most likely ride a few degrees off the wind quite happily, but if you point the board any further off the wind you lose power. This angle game should always be your first port of call. It shows you how far downwind you can go, if at all, with the kite you've got in the given wind strength and the size of your board. If you can't go enough off the wind with the power you've got it's time to add something to the mix.

NO 1. WORKING THE KITE

Theoretically this is the simplest solution. This is what makes kiting so unique. In a boat or on a windsurfer where the mast is fixed to the hull, you have to turn the craft to pick up speed and garner extra power. Whereas we can move the kite independently of where we're going, and generate power, it's truly unbelievable. For sure because we want to go off the wind we will turn the board down wind, heelside or



toeside, but we can then work the kite – something we should all be pretty comfortable with.

Have a look at **Sequence 3** to see how the kite should be moving. Here Christian is riding toe side. If he was riding heelside the kite would be doing exactly the same.

Christian is diving the kite quite aggressively to get it going down and then he's taking it all the way back up, almost past 12 o'clock. This way he gets maximum movement, using as much of the window

as possible, which equals maximum pull. He's watching the kite, so he knows where it is and this will help him to follow it – down wind. Seeing as the kite will be pulling you downwind it's important to have your weight a bit further back, whilst not sinking the tail of the board and thus creating drag. Simplest way to do this is to get your hips and derriere back, but don't lean your shoulders and head back. This way you'll be stable but the board will be trimmed nicely from nose to tail and can plane happily.



Video 3 shows Christian working the kite whilst riding heelside.

For this method to work you need to ponder how not to stall the kite and how best to work it. You're still moving towards the kite so even though it's pulling you will be losing power. The temptation is to pull the bar, but with little tension you'll stall the kite and drop it, so make sure you keep it on the sweet spot. Secondly to make sure the kite turns aggressively without stalling, use both hands – push & pull, fulcruming around the sweet spot. You'll need some patience, as with less tension the kite may be slower to turn than you expect, so have faith in your input.

And finally, you must resist two very natural urges. When you dive the kite, you will feel a surge of power. Don't let the bar out when you feel it, use the power. Then if you're losing tension it's oh so tempting to turn back on an edge. If you really, really need extra tension, better to lean back and slow the board than turn upwind. The caveat here is if you're about to drop

the kite, then it's better to head up and save yourself.

Video 4 showcases is the toe side version of this technique.

TOP TIP

At first don't take the kite too low. If you keep the kite above the 10 and 2 o'clock marks you give yourself room to manoeuvre if it doesn't work.

When you steer the kite back up, make sure it can breathe as this is when you're most likely to stall it. If it's not coming up, push the bar out a touch.

PROS & CONS OF WORKING THE KITE

On the plus side this method is least likely to get you in trouble, you can see what the kite is doing and you have time to react if you feel all power go.

Against working, well it's the most physical method as you'll be working your arms like there's no tomorrow. And the power will constantly be on and off, as you dive and lift, and as such you'll have to alter your body weight forwards and backwards, which is also tiring.



VIDEO 3



VIDEO 4

Final thought here. If you've got plenty of wind you'll have no problem going well off the wind here, without too much drama, so it's a keeper. However, forget ye not that if the wind is light, you'll get the least angle off the wind and as such you will be zig zagging your way down wind slowly. As such to avoid the sore leg burn of lactic acid, it's worth turning frequently and sharing the burden between both legs.

NO 2. DOWNLOOPING THE KITE

This next method to get a bit more oomph on your way down wind is an extension of the underturn, so having that in the bag before trying this will help... Downlooping the kite is a very effective way of getting well off the wind whilst maintaining speed. By downlooping, we mean that you will be looping the kite with your front hand, so that it rotates down and forwards in front of you in the forward half of the window. As far as the board and body are concerned it's much of a likeness. However, you will be able to point further off the wind so you may need to open your shoulders more so that you're looking towards the kite and it can be more comfortable if you point your front foot a tad more towards the nose. Pointing your back foot forwards is also an option but not a must.

Looking at **Pic 4** Christian is riding right foot forward and heelside, he has the kite high and has turned the board off the wind. Keeping the kite high is a must here as you need room to downloop the kite and the higher the kite is, the less pull it generates,



so you can play with this depending on power. You'll also be much more balanced on the board with the kite pulling from a bit higher, once it gets too low you may lean back too much and fall off the back of the board. For a downloop Christian will be using his front hand, so he moves it slightly forwards on the bar and his back hand is also slightly out, not centred. This way he can use both hands and achieve maximum leverage.

Now onto **Pic 5** with the board already pointing off the wind there won't be any surprises as long as you are positive with your bar movement. Much like working the kite, the secret

to a good loop is using both hands in a push and pull movement. The way in which you push and pull is vital. Your aim is to get the bar parallel with the centre line, so that the knuckles of your back hand are pushing against it. You can see that Christian's bar end is bending as it touches the centre line. As with any form of moving the kite you must concentrate on not steering the bar, using it like a giant steering wheel. It may feel that you're doing a lot but it won't have the desire defect of shortening one line whilst extending the other. This positive movement will get the kite turning down, and the downloop started.

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Finally, **Pic 6** this is from the same sequence and you can see how far Christian has already travelled, yet he still has the bar push-pulled to the max. Due to the nature of moving towards the kite, you won't have as much tension, it can all happen slower than you expect, so it's important to keep commitment on the bar. It's also better to turn the kite too much, rather than too little. As long as the kite is high you can keep it going straight into another downloop.

Have a look at **Sequence 4** Here Christian is heelside left foot forwards.

TOP TIPS

If you bang out a few downloops in a row, as your lines twist more and more after each rotation your bar will become unmanageable as the tension of lines increases, so be sure to untwist your bar regularly. Personally, we never do more than two in a row without untwisting.



As you become more confident you can actually steer the kite around the downloop, choosing how big or small the loop is depending on how much power you need, and therefore choosing in which direction it pulls you.

Finally have a look at the two video clips. **Video 5** is heelside downwind with downloop. As with working the kite you can happily downloop toeside. **Video 6** shows up close the bar movement for downlooping and the body position for successfully cracking it out whilst riding toe side off the wind.

PROS AND CONS

The pros of Downlooping:

Takes you further off the wind in less wind than working the kite.

You're going towards the kite as it loops, so although it'll generate pull, it will be easy to control.

You can sheet the bar out a bit if there is too much pull whilst keeping the kite turning giving you more control.

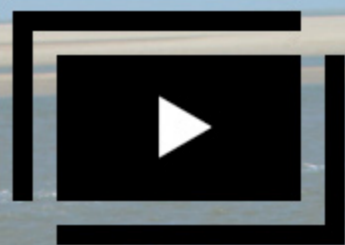
Less physical/tiring than working the kite.

The cons of Downlooping:

As with the underturn if you drop the kite whilst downlooping with some speed, you are very likely to roll and invert the kite. As such there is the potential for getting your lines crossed and at the very worst of gift wrapping your kite. At first this may not be a method you want to try miles out to sea.

If you are slightly under-powered there is a limit as to how off the wind you can point the board.

You will have to untwist your lines as you go.



VIDEO 5



VIDEO 6

Final thought – This is a great weapon if the wind is cross onshore, as you can use the downloops to pull you back towards the beach. Beware though, your back leg will be on fire...

NO 3. KITE-LOOPING THE KITE

Next on the list is the trusty kite loop. Fear not, there will be no suggestion of getting air and pulling the trigger to get you downwind, although it would work. A kite loop is the opposite of a downloop. As we just witnessed, in a downloop the kite moves forwards, the same way as you are going. A kitemove moves the kite back, into the half of the wind window behind you. This means that the kite is pulling slightly against the direction you are travelling, which means that it has the potential to produce more power and pull you yet further off the wind – perfect.

This method is slightly more advanced in the fact that

you do need a strong and balanced stance on the board and have the ability to adjust/steer the board, depending on how much power is produced. Even if your board is flat and pointing off the wind, a kitemove can surprise you with a tad more power and a slight change of direction as it pulls you back...

Let's have a quick look at **Pic 7** in which Christian is riding left foot forwards. First off, knowing that he can turn even further off the wind and have more pull from the kite Christian almost carves his board off the wind so that he can get off the wind more quickly. This means getting his weight centred over the board and once again raising the kite. Having the kite high has the same advantages as before, more room to move it, and potentially less power if this is your first time. Here Christian is riding downwind right to left, so his back hand is his right hand. This is the hand that will pull, so he's moved it down the bar.



Onto **Pic 8** to loop the kite Christian now pulls with his aforementioned back hand and pushes with his front hand, fulcruming the bar on the sweet spot. The same technique applies here, the idea being to get the top bar end and your knuckles up close and personal with the centre line, guaranteeing that the kite will turn and loop as planned. Judging by Christian's kite face he's given it plenty of beans. Notice how he is definitely standing lower, centre of gravity dropped, having flexed his legs more. This is in anticipation of having more pull and

therefore being more dynamic to hold the power. A final note for this example. Christian is powered up, he's not flogging in light wind. In anticipation of a hefty pull from the kite he actually turn the board further off the wind. The windier it is the further he'll turn. You could actually turn back towards the kite so that you're now going downwind in the other direction!!! This means that if you get the full-on turbo boost you'll move towards the kite, accelerating whilst also keeping control.



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Then, in **Pic 9** having received the whip from the kite Christian keeps steering the bar and keeps the power on. That is to say he keeps the kite sheeted in on the sweet spot. Yes, we're banging on about this, and although you can briefly sheet out a bit to stop yourself becoming over-powered, you must not leave the bar out. If you do the kite will stop turning and you'll possibly dunk it in the wet stuff. And don't forget that your lines will be twisting so you'll need some untwisting to follow.

Sequence 5 clearly shows the kite going up and round, relatively high in the window. Even so

Christian gets a decent pull and speed and is travelling considerably more than he did in the previous two methods.

Your final thought here is to maintain tension on the lines. This may sound somewhat silly seeing as that's why we looped the kite, but as we will have accelerated there is a chance that as the kite climbs we'll be moving faster than it is. The danger here is that we overtake the kite, or perhaps undertake it describes it better. Either way if the kite gets stuck at 12 o'clock while we motor on beneath it, all tension will be lost and the kite will flutter down like a leaf in

autumn. To conquer this, you'll either need to loop the kite again or dive it down with the front hand, and turn back towards your original downwind path.

TOP TIPS KITE LOOPING

Prepare for more power by carving the board fully downwind or a few degrees through the wind so you're almost pointing at the kite as it loops.

Once it loops regain tension by turning back to your forward downwind path and fly the kite.

Video 7. Gives you the real-world view of a heelside downwind incorporating the kitemloop.

PROS & CONS OF KITE LOOPING DOWNWIND

Pros:

- Guaranteed more power.
- Can point even further downwind.

Cons:

- Easy to run under your kite and drop it upwind of you.
- Need to untwist your lines.
- In stronger wind, more likely to get pulled off the board as the turbo kicks in.
- On some tacks when you'd rather broad reach off the wind, for example in cross on conditions, it may pull you too far back the other way.

THE KILLER COMBO – BOTH LOOPS

If you really want to turn the Pirellis to Jellies and get downwind at a good angle as fast as you can when it's not too windy this is just the ticket. By mixing downloops and kite loops you'll have no trouble keeping the tension in your lines, you'll have no need to untwist your lines and you can alter your course downwind depending on which loop you pull,

kiteloop to go back a bit the other way, downloop to continue forwards. All in all, this is the ultimate method with a cherry on top.

The crux of combining them is to always make sure that you have both tension in your lines and the kite high enough before pulling the kite into either loop. At times you may need to turn the board slightly against the rising kite as it comes out of a loop.

You can see it's no different to what you'd imagine in both **Sequence 6**, starting with a kiteloop, followed by a tight downloop and then another kiteloop. If that's a bit confusing, **Video 8** will shine some light!

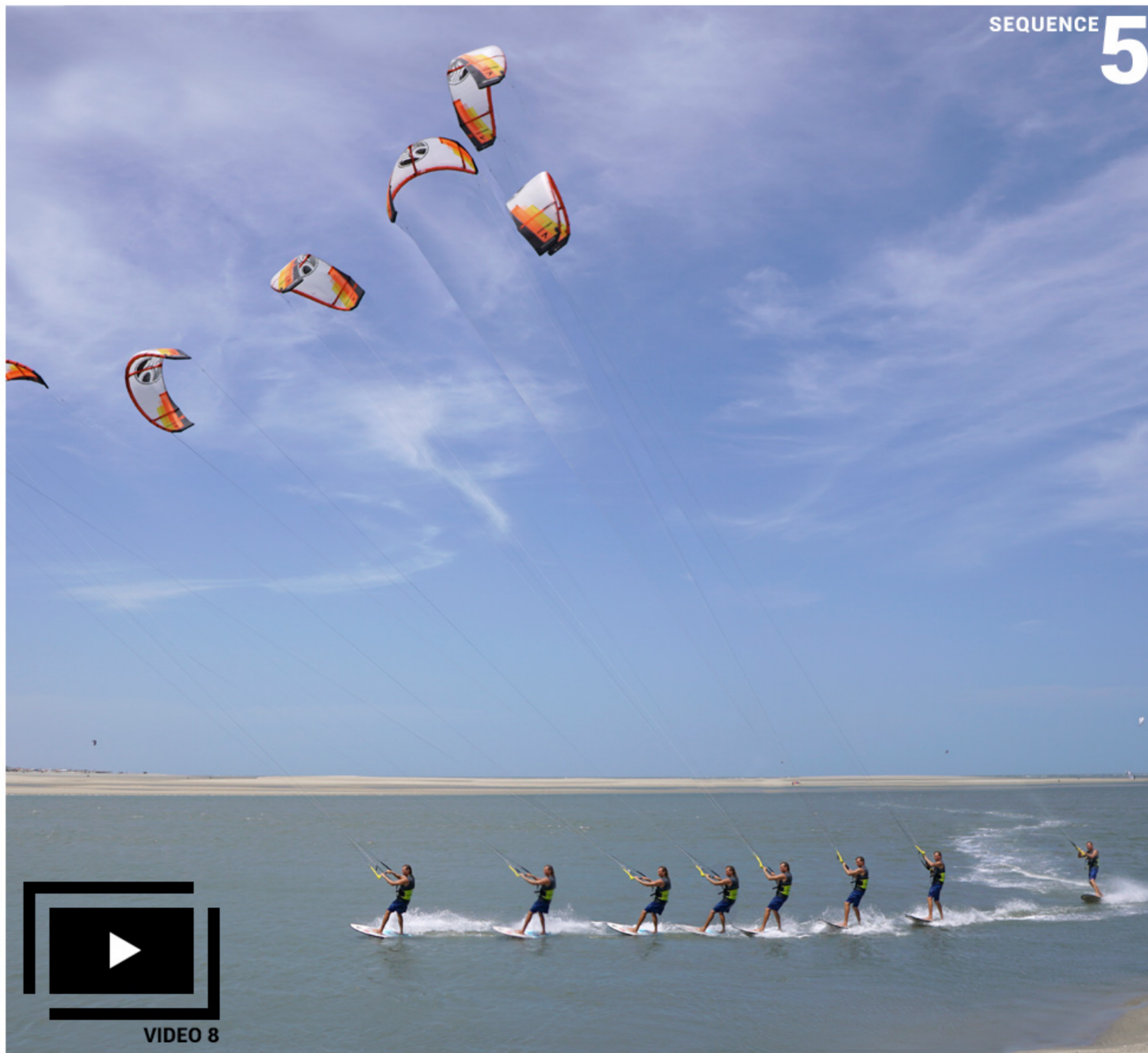
The great thing with this combo is that there is no rule as to when you pull one or the other loop, it just needs to match where you want to go and how much power or speed you need. There is no need to do one after the other, a few of one followed by one or a few of the other. Give it a go and see how you get on:)

TOP TIPS FOR COMBO LOOPS

Make sure that you have the kite back up high before pulling for the next loop.

You need tension to pull the next loop, so you may have to alter the angle of your board, more downwind, slightly back for the kite loop and slightly less downwind for the downloop.

Start doing this with your favoured foot forwards. Experiment and you'll find the balance.



Pros

No untwisting

Natural military rhythm with kite, left right

Can steer where you want to go, more kiteloops take you back a bit more, downloops forwards a bit.

Cons

Fast and furious....

Final thought on the Combo. As this method can take you pretty much dead downwind in a drunken kind of way, and due to the fact the you can create oodles of pull, power and speed, it's worth pondering that this may be a task best taken with one foot forward to start with. For example, if you prefer riding left foot forward you can literally just ride that foot forward as long as possible. With the kite looping both ways you're really riding a mixture of toeside and heelside whilst the kite loops each side of you.

FINAL WORDS

What can sometimes make kiting seem difficult is the constant need to adapt to the ever-changing environment within which we practice. The wind is rarely constant, buffeting us with gusts and tricking us with lulls. The sea is alive, altering state and surprising us with random chop and waves. Traffic and obstacles need avoiding. It's never a level playing field. Hopefully with the new skills that you can learn from this you will have a myriad of solutions to deal with whatever Mother Nature throws your way the next time you're heading down wind.



What a tricky couple of months it has been for wind, it's played havoc with our testing schedule and we've done what we could. The result is a mixed bag of gear and lets all keep our fingers crossed that the wind returns soon so we can all get back to the serious business of kitesurfing!

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PHOTO HÅKON MAELAND

BRAND OZONE MODEL CHRONO V3 SIZE 13M YEAR 2018



"THE CHRONO V3 IS AN ALL-OUT FUN FOIL TO FLY"



AT A GLANCE

The Chrono entered the kite world way back in 2014 when foil kites were still something of a novelty. Move on 4 years, and the Chrono is now one of many foil kites available on the market but holds its stead as one of the most dependable all-around performance foils.

Now in Version 3, the designers have taken some of the winning formula from their R1 V2 race foil and added it into the Chrono's ease of use to create a high performing foil, which can still be used by a regular kiteboarder or snowkiter in regular conditions.

New for V3 is an overhaul of the shape and internal design of the canopy. A compact wing, squarer tips and new internal diagonal ribs all come together to create a more reactive and responsive kite.

The bridle and canopy material are made with Ozone's known high quality, and each item is checked in their own factory so you can be sure your kit will arrive in perfect condition.

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BRAND DUOTONE

MODEL DICE

SIZE 9M

YEAR 2018



“ LOTS OF PULL
OFF THE WATER
AND A DECENT
AMOUNT OF
HANGTIME TOO ”



AT A GLANCE

Just in case you haven't heard the news, all your favourite North Kiteboarding products are now being produced by Duotone. Same riders, same designers, same team and the same great products, just with a new look and a new name on the fabric.

The Dice has been around for years now and has an army of fans who I am sure won't be upset by the name change as they care more about the kites handling than the name written on the side! The kite has been their all-around model for some time and is pitched at being the perfect choice for the freestyler who likes to dabble in the waves too.

Duotone could have chosen the easy path and kept this hugely popular kite unchanged for this new brand launch. However, they have instead chosen to enhance the kite's performance further. The structural rigidity has been improved across all sizes, but the smaller more high wind kites have had particular attention paid to them. The goal being to make them boosting machines for the rider looking for those Woo scores!

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WEBSITE, CLICK HERE



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BRAND CORE MODEL IMPACT 2 SIZE 9M YEAR 2019

“ AN ABSOLUTE WEAPON, A FULL C KITE, WITH ALL THE MODERN TRIMMINGS. ”



AT A GLANCE

Core Kiteboarding produces some seriously good kite gear, with models like the XR5, GTS5 and more. They like to cater for everyone, so there is always going to be something to suit your needs in their range.

This issue we are taking a look at their freestyle and wakestyle weapon the Impact 2. In its second generation, this 5-line full C shape kite has undergone some work, it's had its aspect ratios adapted to give it a faster more explosive feel and to widen its wind range. This 5-strut weapon is out to deliver huge amounts of slack and pop.

The Impact 2 comes with all of Core's top end construction and design features. We see the Exotex Dacron, Coretex Triple Ripstop, Speed Valve 2 to name a few.

The Impact 2 comes in a variety of sizes and is compatible with any of Core's bars however we would recommend going for the Sensor 2S Pro with the Wake adaption kit.

Sizes: 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15m

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BRAND SLINGSHOT

MODEL SST

SIZE 8M

YEAR 2019



“THE SST IS PRODIGIOUS. IT EXCELS IN A MAGNITUDE OF STYLES.”



AT A GLANCE

The SST is one of Slingshot's key models for the 2019 season. Originally the Wave SST, Slingshot have found this kite to be so adaptive that they have rebranded this model to suit a variety of styles. Now coming to us as the wave, foil, freeride crossover.

A 3-strut compact C shape kite with features such as the Slingshot IRS bridle, Ripstop Surf Grid, Split Strut tech and much more, the SST boasts high-end design and construction. Aimed at the rider who wants to do it all, with a definite nod towards wave riding the SST is pitched at being a fantastic all round set up. Perfect for boosting, foiling and carving up the faces it's a one kite quiver that will appeal to a lot of riders.

The Slingshot SST is compatible with either the Compstick w/Guardian or Compstick w/Sentinel offering a choice of above or below the bar depower options, available in a variety of mouthwateringly tasty new colourways the SST comes in the following sizes:

Sizes: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12m

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BRAND AIRUSH MODEL ULTRA V2 SIZE 10M YEAR 2019



" A 3-KITE FOILING
QUIVER WEIGHS
ONLY 6.07KGS! "

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WEBSITE, CLCK HERE



AT A GLANCE

Airush have been at the forefront of the kite industry for many years now producing some brilliant market leading designs and technologies. This issue we are going to be taking a look at the new Ultra V2.

The 2019 Airush Ultra V2 is a single strut, lightweight SLE that is targeting not only the light wind foiling market, but has the cross-over ability of freeride and wave riding too. Single strut kites have certainly become more popular since kite foiling has boomed. These kites fly in less wind, have tons of depower and provide very little horizontal pull when looping.

The Ultra V2 comes with some of Airush's key features which enable the kite to be light yet also stable, responsive and durable, such as the Load Frame V4, Webtech and V3.2 bridle system. The Ultra V2 comes with a 250gm bag and a three kite foiling quiver weighs only 6.07kgs! 23kg travel allowance = no problem

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" THE 720 IS
SUPER
LIGHTWEIGHT
AND RESPONSIVE
UNDERFOOT "



BRAND CORE **MODEL** 720
SIZE 5'1 **YEAR** 2018

AT A GLANCE

CORE have a strong surfboard range for this year, with riders like Willow River Tonkin on the team it's hardly surprising. His weapon of choice when it comes to strapless freestyle is the aptly named 720.

The board has a classic glass coat, which surrounds the closed cell PU foam core. Inside this is a vertically laid wood stringer, which controls the flex of the board. This is in turn laminated into the fibreglass coat to create a great looking board.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)

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WEBSITE, CLICK HERE



" THIS BOARD IS
FANTASTIC TO
RIDE, NO MATTER
WHAT YOUR
STYLE IS. "



BRAND SLINGSHOT **MODEL** ASYLUM
SIZE 141 X 43CM **YEAR** 2019

AT A GLANCE

Constantly innovating new technologies and designs Slingshot produce some seriously good twin tip boards, both in the kite market and wake market. The Asylum has been one of Slingshots leading weapons in the kite market for over a decade now, targeting the performance freeride – freestyle / wakestyle market. High rockered, with deep aggressive channels and rammed with tech the board features Slingshots Dura-Glide base, fusion sidewalls, carbon bedrock inserts

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" THE NEW FLEX
IN THE TIPS
REALLY ROCKETS
YOU OFF THE
WATER "



BRAND FLYSURFER **MODEL** RADICAL6
SIZE 138 X 42.5 **YEAR** 2018

AT A GLANCE

Flysurfer have never been ones to follow the crowd, and their Radical board series proves they know what they are doing. Back for round 6, the Radical6 maintains the unique tried and tested outline, while the internal construction of the board has been modified for even higher performance.

The Radical6 has been designed for riders who need a board that will enable them to do a little bit of everything. Not an all-out cruiser, nor a dedicated

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" THE CHAMELEON
OF KITEBOARDS
WITH IMPRESSIVE
PERFORMANCE "



BRAND SHINN **MODEL** RONSON PATROL
SIZE 138 X 42CM **YEAR** 2018

AT A GLANCE

The extensive board line up from Shinn ensures there is a board for every type of rider out there, and for those who like to mix things up between handle passes and board offs, the Ronson Patrol is your weapon of choice.

Designed as a crossover board, it is not simply another compromising all-rounder; instead it is a high performing hybrid which excels under the foot of a high performing rider.

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" THE TORQUE V1
PRODUCES A
PHENOMENAL
POP WITH
MINIMAL RIDER
INPUT "



BRAND OZONE MODEL TORQUE V1
SIZE 138 X 42 YEAR 2018

AT A GLANCE

Ozone's entry into the board game started earlier this year with the impressive Code V1 freeride board. We didn't think it would be long until a freestyle board joined the lineup, and only a few short months later we were introduced to the Torque V1.

Designed as an uncompromising freestyle board, it also happens to be a solid choice as an all-rounder for those who enjoy some old school trickery in straps also.

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" CARVING IS AN AREA WHERE THE TRAX ALWAYS IMPRESSES "



BRAND F-ONE MODEL TRAX HRD LITE TECH
SIZE 137 X 42 YEAR 2018

AT A GLANCE

The Trax has been in the F-One line up for some time now, and it has seen many updates over the years. For 2018 the shape remains almost identical to last years model, but the construction techniques have been changed to increase the pop and further improve the ride.

The board utilises a unique technique in the factory to create the tired and tested Helical Rail Design or HRD for short. This means you get a shaped rail, that offers

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BRAND SHINN

MODEL JACKSON + K FOIL

SIZE 130 X 45CM

YEAR 2019



"IT'S FAST,
STABLE AND
LOVES TO BE
CARVED."

TO VISIT THEIR
WEBSITE, CLICK HERE



AT A GLANCE

Shinn have been producing some incredibly top end boards for many years now, this issue we are going to be taking a look at the new Shinn Jackson foil board and Model K foil set up.

The Jackson is a dedicated foil board with sizes accommodating the entry level foiler through to the foil masters out there. The board is a super robust snowboard construction, with a swept nose, beveled rails, one-piece 3D traction pad, Sneaker LTD Straps and Trim-Tracks. The swept nose and beveled rails allow you to ride knowing you are far less likely to catch a rail or trip over the front of your board, less crashes, more riding time. The 3D traction pad provides not only grip, but added control over the rails and tail of the board. We now see the addition of a 130cm size variant.

The Model K foil is a new addition from Shinn, which comes as the perfect progressive foil. Aimed at those wanting to move on from their first foiling experiences through to those advanced freeride foilers who are not only looking for speed but a flowing, carving wing that's capable of it all.

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10 QUESTIONS

WORDS JEN TYLER

Julien Leleu

Julien Leleu is an incredibly talented rider and videographer from an unlikely background, had the stars aligned differently he might have been playing in the recent football World Cup, rather than kitesurfing his way around the world.



“My parents made it clear that I could do whatever I wanted with my life, as long as I did well in my finals.”

PHOTO @HIGHLIGHTPROD



Describe your hometown, your hobbies as a kid, and how you got into kitesurfing?

I was born in Paris and grew up between Marseille, Montpellier, and Lille. As a kid, I played football for the Paris Saint-Germain Football Club (PSG), until I was sixteen years old.

Ever since I can remember, my father would take me to the beach with him to watch him kitesurf. It was while watching him that my passion for the sport began.

I only started kitesurfing when I was twelve years old because I was still committed to football. By the time I was sixteen, I decided to leave my dreams of becoming a football player behind, and devote all my time and attention to becoming a professional kitesurfer.

I moved to the north of France with my father where there happens to be a large and crazy kitesurfing community (comparable to the 'Dirty Habits Crew in South Africa'), and we all kitesurf together as often as possible, regardless of the weather conditions! It's great because we really know how to motivate each other.

At university, I was allowed to skip classes sometimes to train, and of course, I took full advantage of that!

My parents made it clear that I could do whatever I wanted with my life, as long as I did well in my finals. So, as soon as I completed my Bachelor's Degree (with excellent grades, I might add!), I moved to Tarifa and started travelling the world.





We know you had a pretty gnarly knee injury 3 years ago. How did you spend your days when you were off the water? What sort of rehabilitation, training, and exercises helped you regain your strength and confidence on the water?

Indeed. I tore my ACL, lateral and medial meniscus ligaments, bruised my fibula, and fractured the top of my tibia, during a kite loop competition. At the time, I was just starting to get confident enough to compete in the World Cup, and I had already made it to the top ten a few times.

PHOTO
@HIGHLIGHTPROD

“I tore my ACL, lateral and medial meniscus ligaments, bruised my fibula, and fractured the top of my tibia”



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“you have to remain positive, meditate and use the bottom to bounce back up even higher than before!”

PHOTO SVETLANA ROMANTSOVA

I was really down during that time because the first surgeon that examined my injuries said that I probably wouldn't be able to compete anymore or ride at the same level. All that did was motivate me to prove the opposite! I decided to get a second opinion and met with a different surgeon. I told him that I would basically do whatever it takes to get me back on the water.

The surgeon recommended 16 months of intense rehabilitation – that's what had to be done, so that's what I did! I went to Cape Breton, a rehabilitation centre for top athletes, which was very encouraging

because I was surrounded by so many sports professionals in similar situations.

I genuinely learned that when you hit rock bottom, you have to remain positive, meditate and use the bottom to bounce back up even higher than before!

Based on what you went through in your injury, what tips would you share with other riders to try and help prevent such injuries?

Honestly, I think in my case, even with the best preparation, the injuries were unavoidable. In general, I recommend having good physical fitness,

which doesn't only mean lifting weights but also working on balance. The key is proprioception, flexibility and, to strengthen the muscles.

I would also advise training with a professional that knows the sport well, and it's physical demands until you understand your own body and learn the proper training routines that work best for you.

The funny thing with kitesurfing is that the more you injure yourself, the more you understand your body and the fewer injuries you get afterwards!

Always remember to stay hydrated and eat well!

You are a strong believer in “choose the job you love, and you’ll never have to work a day in your life”. If you could only choose one, would you rather spend your day’s kitesurfing or filming and why?

Absolutely, this is the philosophy I live by! Find what you love, put all your energy and focus into it, and eventually, you’ll make a living out of it.

I love kitesurfing and how it makes me feel, but I also enjoy using my brain and not just ripping on the water! It’s great being a professional kitesurfer, but what’s next? What happens when you are in your 30’s (especially for freestyle kite surfers) and have had so many injuries that you can’t compete anymore?

Just imagine, for years you’ve been travelling to the most beautiful places in the world for competitions and photo shoots, and suddenly you need to get back to reality and have a regular job, a routine. Without a backup plan, you would shoot yourself!

Professional kitesurfers aren’t like other athletes; we don’t make enough money to keep us comfortable forever. So, in my case, creating videos and taking photos has always been something I enjoyed. I decided to start up my own company with my good friend and business partner Soufiane Hamaini.

I also work with RRD as a rider, developing their products and working on their marketing strategy and videos. I think I have the perfect work balance between riding and filming/editing!

“ Find what you love, put all your energy and focus into it, and eventually, you’ll make a living out of it.”



PHOTO SVETLANA ROMANTSOVA





You are an incredibly talented videographer! What inspired you to start filming and editing? What was your first movie about?

I started off by creating some fun content with the crew back home, mostly just humorous, raw videos of whatever we were up to. Later on, I moved to Tarifa and started travelling with Forest Bakker. We worked together for four years on many projects, under the company name 'Light Bros'.

I also went and stayed at Oliver Umpierre's place in Uruguay a few times. He covered all my travel costs, and in return, I kited at his home spot in Punta del Este and worked for his company called 'Studio Roff'. It was an excellent opportunity for me to get experience. I was training, filming, and kiting on the days we didn't have any projects going on.

PHOTO
SVETLANA ROMANTSOVA

“I was training, filming, and kiting on the days we didn't have any projects going on.”

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“Cape Town is such a diverse and unique city, and the kitesurfing spots are idyllic for filming.”



PHOTO SVETLANA ROMANTSOVA

10

Later on, I decided it was time to start my own company. My friend Soufiane approached me and suggested we team up and create High Light Productions. I have so much respect for Soufiane and he honestly always motivates me to do my best.

You spend a lot of time in Cape Town, and clearly, it's a fantastic place to be, but why is it your favourite kitesurfing destination?

Yeah, I have spent many winters in Cape Town, you could consider it to be the second headquarters of RRD. Most of our RRD shoots and product development take place there because its rough conditions make it the perfect place to test and film new products. At the end of last year, I spend two and a half months in Cape Town, directing and filming all the RRD product videos for the 2018 equipment.

Cape Town is such a diverse and unique city, and the kitesurfing spots are idyllic for filming. There are waves, flat water freestyle spots and nuking winds for proper big air mega loop, topped off with some insane parties and amazing music, what's not to love?

This year, I invited my dad to come and visit me in Cape Town for his birthday. I owe him so much, and we haven't had a trip together ever since I became a professional kitesurfer. He usually buys me kites for my birthday, so this time, I thought it was only fair that I bought him a ticket to experience my world in its golden moments!

If you had to go on a trip without your kitesurfing equipment and camera, what essentials would you pack and where would you go?

I'd get on a sailboat with my closest friends, a few bottles of rum, music, and sail wherever the wind takes us. Or, we'd go to the best festivals, with our group of friends.



“The spots we go to are incredible and unspoiled as people are only allowed to ride them during this specific event.”



Which other rider inspires you, motivates you and is the most fun to have a session with and why?

Ruben Lenten's philosophy always inspires me. He knows how to embrace life, he enjoys his sessions, and really shares the stoke! Otherwise, I love sharing sessions with all my good mates including Carlito Ferreira, Alex Vliege, Liam Whaley, Oswald Smith and of course my Frenchies from back home, Val and Seb Garat, Antoine Fermon and the rest of the tribe.

What is your favourite RRD set up and discipline to ride in?

It honestly depends on the conditions. If it's freestyle heaven, I would take my JUICE v5 140 x 42.5 and Obsession, but if it were a stormy day, I would

probably still ride my JUICE and loop the Passion MK10 for maximum lift loops. It is such an easy kite to ride but at the same time gives you the high performance you need, if you ask for it. In all cases I'd always use my boots, I only ever ride straps and pads if it's a shoot or just for fun.

Do you have any exciting plans coming up this year that you'd like to share with us?

I'm flying out for the DDC (Dakhla Downwind Challenge). It's a 500 km downwinder along the Moroccan coast, organised by Soufiane Hamaini and Dakhla Spirit. It is going to be an amazing, memorable experience; different from any trip I've ever been on. The spots we go to are incredible and

unspoiled as people are only allowed to ride them during this specific event. Every night, we sleep under the stars, somewhere in the desert!

There are a few other projects in the pipeline, but I'm not able to speak about them just yet.

Ok, last question! Describe your perfect day from sunrise until... the following morning!

I would wake up to reggae music, just to set the vibe and get amped for the day. I'd head to the beach for a surf session in the morning, a good BBQ with friends around noon, and then I would kitesurf until sunset. After a day like that, there is no better way to end it other than a good, proper party until the next sunrise!



[FEMALE FOCUS]

CARLA HERRERA

WORDS LINDSAY MCCLURE/JEN TYLER



Meet Carla Herrera, a rider from Spain who has been shredding on the strapless freestyle scene. Carla has been competing on the GKA Strapless World Tour and is improving every session she has on the water!. Get to know more about by reading her story!

Where did you grow up, when did you learn to kite, and what got you interested in the sport?

I was born in the Dominican Republic, but later my family moved to Spain. When I was 12 years old, we moved to Conil in southern Spain, just one hour from Tarifa. Two years later, I flew a kite for the first time, and that's when I got hooked. Ever since I have always kept one eye on the forecast and don't see myself ever living away from the sea. What got me interested was the power of the kite, the adrenalin and Tarifa's challenging conditions.

On the women's side, you've been one of the pioneers in strapless freestyle. Has this always been your discipline of choice and what attracted you to it?

To begin with, I started with freestyle and achieved a pretty decent level! But two years ago I tried the surfboard and really enjoyed it. After a few sessions, I decided to move over to strapless freestyle. I guess I switched because I am a girl who likes action. Also, we don't usually get nice waves for wave riding here!

How has living in Tarifa influenced you as a rider?

Tarifa is well known for its strong winds; almost every day we get great conditions for training strapless freestyle. Many of the riders here have a super high level, so I learn from them and get motivated to improve every time I ride.

"TARIFA IS WELL KNOWN FOR ITS STRONG WINDS; ALMOST EVERY DAY WE GET GREAT CONDITIONS FOR TRAINING STRAPLESS FREESTYLE."





Well done on a successful start to the season on the GKA World Tour. The women seem to be on fire! What have you done to prepare for the season?

Honestly, I thought that this year we would have some more freestyle events on the tour and the other women would be a bit more motivated and prepared for it.

Last winter, I moved to Brazil to train properly. There, I got more consistent and learnt how to go bigger. I was really close to landing my first strapless kite loops!

PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH

"I WAS REALLY CLOSE TO LANDING MY FIRST STRAPLESS KITE LOOPS!"

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Sadly, this year most of the women's events are wave-based with only a bit of freestyle, as most women don't want to ride freestyle. At the moment, I am trying to train and improve my wave riding, although this is not the easiest in Tarifa. I really think with the right support and training I could be on top in the wave events. Wish me luck!

How do you balance competing, riding for fun, and shooting?

At the end of the day, the most important thing is being on the water. I don't mind whether it is

for competing or just for fun, but I always try to do my best.

What are your goals for 2018?

I have already reached one of my goals. This was to get proper support from a brand and be able to compete at all the GKA events. My other goal was to finish in the top three on the tour. But it looks like there won't be any more women's freestyle events, so I have to be realistic. I am happy with my performance so far, and I think I can do better at the next events. Just give me some time, and you will see!

You recently joined the Ocean Rodeo team – congrats! What prompted the change in equipment, what are you riding on these days, and do you like most about your gear?

Thank you! The gear is quite similar to what I'm used to, so it wasn't a big deal. At the moment, the kite I use most is the Roam. I feel really comfortable with it because it is a fast kite and works pretty well in both waves and freestyle. As for boards, we are working with some new concepts and prototypes, but I can't tell you any more at the moment!



PHOTO
TOBY BROMWICH

Thank you again Ocean Rodeo for all the support!

Describe your dream session.

I love strong wind, I would say something like a 35-knot side-offshore wind and a good kicker to the right so I could go as big as possible. Since it is a dream, let's add a glassy left wave and a lagoon at the end. And I would share it with my boy. There it is... the perfect session. Luckily, there are often strong winds here in Tarifa, so it gets pretty close.

Do you find yourself riding with other female riders, are you generally on the water with a bunch of guys, or a good mix? How does the crew you ride with influence your session and your riding style?

I usually ride with guys, as sadly, there are few girls in the sport. Riding with girls is fun, but if I'm honest,

"LET'S ADD A GLASSY LEFT WAVE AND A LAGOON AT THE END."

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The Slingshot Turbine is no longer just a light-wind weapon. For 2017, Slingshot is offering the Turbine in sizes ranging from 5m to 19m. In the larger sizes, the Turbine will continue to be a reliable light-wind choice and, in the smaller sizes,...

New For 2017 Slingshot Expands Turbine To Full Size Range
The Slingshot Turbine is no longer just a light-wind weapon. For 2017,...

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I don't mind kiting with guys. Especially when their level is higher than mine because then I get pushed and motivated. If they can do it, so can I. I always really enjoy the sessions after competitions. When the guys are riding for fun, and I get a lot of ideas and tips for improving.

When you aren't kiting, what are you doing?

Since the beginning of this year, I have been trying to train every day, working on my overall fitness. Besides that, I work as an instructor. Basically, I spend my days at the beach! I also love going to the mountains with my dog.

What do you enjoy most about the GKA World Tour? What changes or improvements would you like to see? What is the vibe in the women's fleet?

What I enjoy most is seeing the crew again. We all live in different places, so it is always good to see them. And of course, getting to travel the world and discover new locations to ride.

I would like to finally see the women's division becoming a full tour, not only in the wave discipline but also in strapless freestyle. Last year, I competed against the guys in Tarifa, and I qualified for the men's main event. Unfortunately, at the end of the year, those points did not count because I didn't get them in a woman's event. I don't think it's fair that one girl will be the GKA Wave and Strapless Freestyle World Champion at the end of the year when we had no freestyle events.



"I SPEND MY DAYS AT THE BEACH! I ALSO LOVE GOING TO THE MOUNTAINS WITH MY DOG."

PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH



PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH

For me, waves are not something I enjoy doing, but I know if I want to be the best, I have to do them. However, the rest of the competitors do not seem to see it this way, and they just refuse to compete in freestyle.

The atmosphere between the girls is really great, we are all friends and help each other during the competition. This wasn't something I was expecting, so it was a very pleasant surprise.

If you could change one thing about the world of kiteboarding, what would you change and why?

Auto-inflatable kites!

If I had to choose just one thing, I would like all the brands to get more involved in bringing the sport to school kids. I live in Tarifa, but we see barely any local people riding. It is because they have never tried kitesurfing or maybe can't afford to try. If we could see more initiatives that helped kids get into kiting that would be fantastic.

The IKSURFMAG website is crammed with news and videos everyday, we only show the best videos, so to make it onto the site is an achievement in itself.

These are the 4 most popular videos that have been viewed on the site as voted for by you with your thumbs up likes in the last 2 months! Check out the full list [HERE](#), and if you see a video you like on the site, give it the thumbs up, it might just help to push it onto this page!

MOVIE NIGHT

#1 PROJECT 65+

This awe-inspiring film looks at 14 different women from all over the world who are all over 65 and have a passion for kiteboarding. Every story is different and if this film doesn't inspire you then you may need to check your pulse! Be sure to check it out.



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#2 FOILING WITH ROBBY NAISH KEVLOG #210

Kevin has been such a regular in our Movie Night section he may as well take up residence! His vlogs are incredibly popular and this one is a belter, foiling with Robby Naish features the undisputed King and Kevin shredding.



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#3 MAGIC CARPET: BETTER THAN A HYDROFOIL

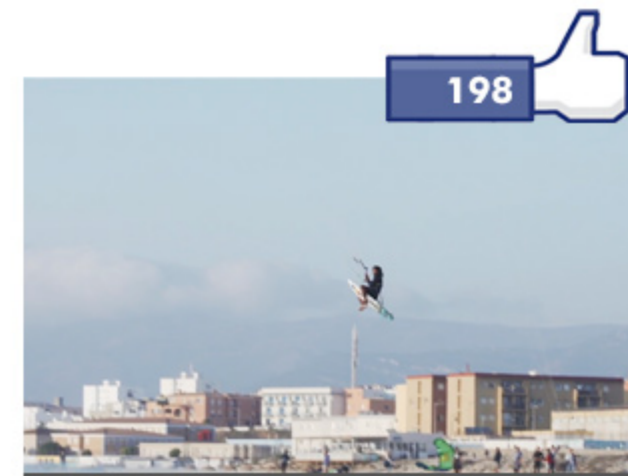
With some clever editing and inspiration from Aladdin this one had us headed to the rug shop in an effort to recreate the magic. The 360's on the foil while answering a phone call were what did it for us, immense skills!



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#4 GLUED BY THE WIND

Airton Cozzolino defies physics with his riding; he's like a freak of nature or an alien from another planet. There are only a couple of the guys in the world that can beat him, and when his A Game is on he is unstoppable. Watch him throw down on a windy day in Tarifa!



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

LIGHTROOM

CAMILLE DELANOY SENDING IT IN TARIFAI
PHOTO SAMUEL CÁRDENAS



Lightroom

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

LIGHTROOM

ABOVE AND BELOW WITH LILOO FOURRÉ
PHOTO ANDREA MAGARAO

Lightroom

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LIGHTROOM

JESSE RICHMAN GETTING BUSY ON THE WAVES IN MAUI
PHOTO FRANKIE BEES

Lightroom

LIGHTROOM

LIGHTWIND CRUISING IN MAURITIUS ON THE NEW NEXUS LW FROM CORE KITEBOARDING
PHOTO CORE KITEBOARDING



Lightroom

LIGHTROOM



Lightroom

ALEX FOX TESTING OUT THE NEW SLINGSHOT MISFIT
PHOTO SLINGSHOT KITEBOARDING

IKSURFMAG.COM

LIGHTROOM

SÖNKE PATITZ CRUISING ON LAGO DIE RESIA, SOUTH TYROL ITALY WITH THE ORTLES GLACIER
PROVIDING A STUNNING BACK DROPI
PHOTO WWW.TOM-IMAGES.COM



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LIGHTROOM

BENJAMIN ROUSSET MAKING THE MOST OF WHAT'S ON OFFER!
PHOTO HÅKON MAELAND



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LIGHTROOM



Lightroom

MAREK ROWINSKI JNR ADDING SOME STYLE TO A SIMPLE CARVE, GET GRABBING!
PHOTO ROBERT HAJDUK

LIGHTROOM

POSITO MARTINEZ FROM THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC KEEPING THAT KITE LOW!
PHOTO ANDREA MAGARAO



Lightroom

LIGHTROOM

MAXI GOMEZ GETTING STYLISH IN THE LAGOON IN TARIFA
PHOTO SAMUEL CÁRDENAS

Lightroom

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LIGHTROOM

KAROLINA WINKOWSKA IS BACK FROM INJURY AND SHREDDING AS HARD AS EVER!
PHOTO SLINGSHOT KITEBOARDING



Lightroom

LIGHTROOM



Lightroom

SIMON JOOSTEN RIDING AT THE GKA FUERTEVENTURA STRAPLESS COMPETITION
PHOTO TOM BRENDT

IKSURFMAG.COM



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BLAZEJ OZOG GETTING SOME SERIOUS HANGTIME
PHOTO ROBERT HAJDUK

LIGHTROOM



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GUSTAVO ARROJO GETTING WILD ON MAUI
PHOTO FRANKIE BEES

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AS SUNSET SESSIONS GO, THIS ONE ON THE SHINN PHOTOSHOOT
THIS YEAR WILL BE ONE TO REMEMBER!
PHOTO ROBERT HAJDUK



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