

APRIL/MAY 22

## WELCOME TO IKSURFMAG

Welcome to Issue 92 of IKSURFMAG, the World's Number One Kitesurfing Magazine!

Just a few months into 2022, and the wheels have already fallen off! It's a good thing we still have kitesurfing to bring us together and keep the stoke alive! In this issue, we take a look at your impact on the industry, travel the globe with Riding to Explore, session in

Sri Lanka with Therese Taabbel, and discover South Africa with Johanna-Catharina Edin. Hear what Tom Bridge and Karlie Thoma have been up to and see what's new in the snowkite scene. Find out about the latest tech from Duotone, Ozone, Eleveight, and Airush, learn new techniques with Christian & Karine, and more! IKSURFMAG Issue 92 is here!

## ENJOY THE LATEST ISSUE



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KARLIE THOMA / TECHNIQUE, TECH & MORE INSIDE!**



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PUSH YOUR BOUNDARIES



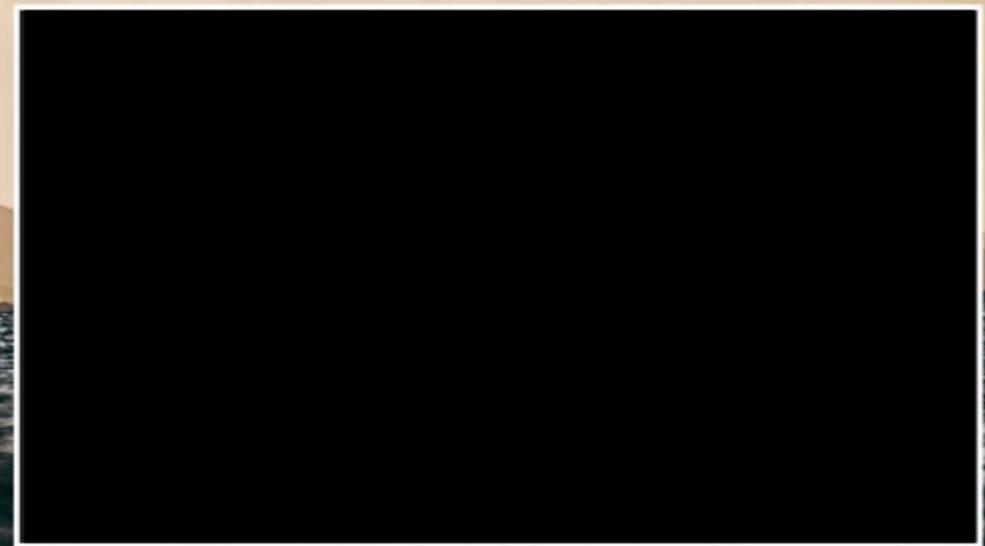
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PUSH YOUR BOUNDARIES  
PUSH YOUR BOUNDARIES

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Alby Rondina © Lucas Stiller

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COMPETITION



EDITORIAL



TAKE YOUR PICK



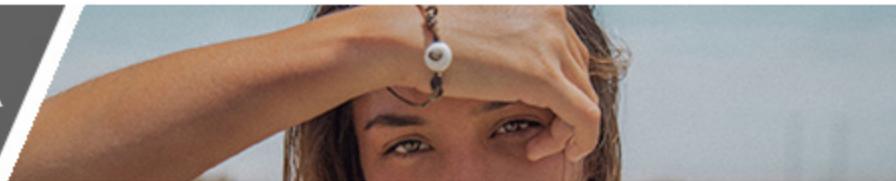
RIDING TO EXPLORE:  
AN ALPINE EXPEDITION



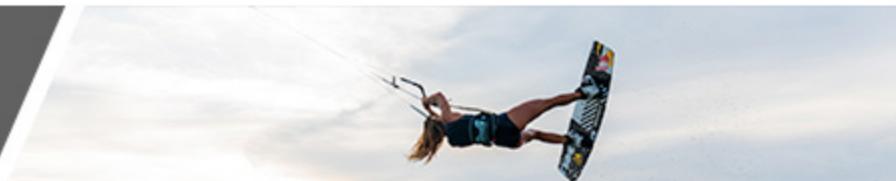
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INSIGHT: KARLIE THOMA



WINDS OF CHANGE



TECHNIQUE



ON THE FLY



NEW PERSPECTIVES



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LIGHTROOM



THE INTERVIEW:  
TOM BRIDGE



MASTERS OF SNOW



MOVIE NIGHT



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PUBLISHER >

Rou Chater  
[rou@iksrfmag.com](mailto:rou@iksrfmag.com)

EDITOR >

Crystal Veness  
[crystal.veness@iksrfmag.com](mailto:crystal.veness@iksrfmag.com)

TECHNIQUE EDITORS >

Christian Harris & Karine Nativel  
[christian@iksrfmag.com](mailto:christian@iksrfmag.com)  
[karine@iksrfmag.com](mailto:karine@iksrfmag.com)

WEB EDITOR >

Jen Tyler  
[jen.tyler@iksrfmag.com](mailto:jen.tyler@iksrfmag.com)

DESIGN >

Karen Gardner Creative  
[hello@karengardnercreative.co.uk](mailto:hello@karengardnercreative.co.uk)

ADVERTISING SALES >

Anastasia Pankina  
[anastasia@iksrfmag.com](mailto:anastasia@iksrfmag.com)

IT DIRECTOR >

Alex Chater  
[alex@nextelement.co.uk](mailto:alex@nextelement.co.uk)

CONTRIBUTORS >

Armelle Courtois, Martin Thomas,  
Guillaume Broust, Therese Taabbel,  
Tom Seager, Johanna-Catharina Edin,  
Samuel Tome, Andy Troy,  
Wareck Arnaud, Tom Bridge,  
Karlie Thoma, Samuel Cardenas,  
Ralf Grosel, Craig Kolesky, Rob  
Whittall, Clinton Filen, Robert Bratz

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magazine although the staff may have  
been subject to beatings in order to get the  
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just that, views, & should be taken with a  
pinch of salt. Kitesurfing is a dangerous  
sport & none of the activities depicted  
within this magazine should be  
participated in without full instruction in  
person by a qualified instructor.

YOURI ZOON ISLAND HOPPING IN THE MALDIVES  
PHOTO NAATI KAKUNI / SLOWTAPE





# WIN

## ...A MANERA HALO HARNESS! SUBSCRIBE TO WIN, CLICK [HERE](#) IT'S FREE

Looking to upgrade your harness game?

We've teamed up with the crew at MANERA to give away a new Halo harness. This is your chance to win one of the most innovative new products of the year!

MANERA has taken a fresh approach with the design of the Halo, combining the supportive qualities of a hard shell harness with the comfort of a soft shell. The MANERA Halo is made up of two key parts;

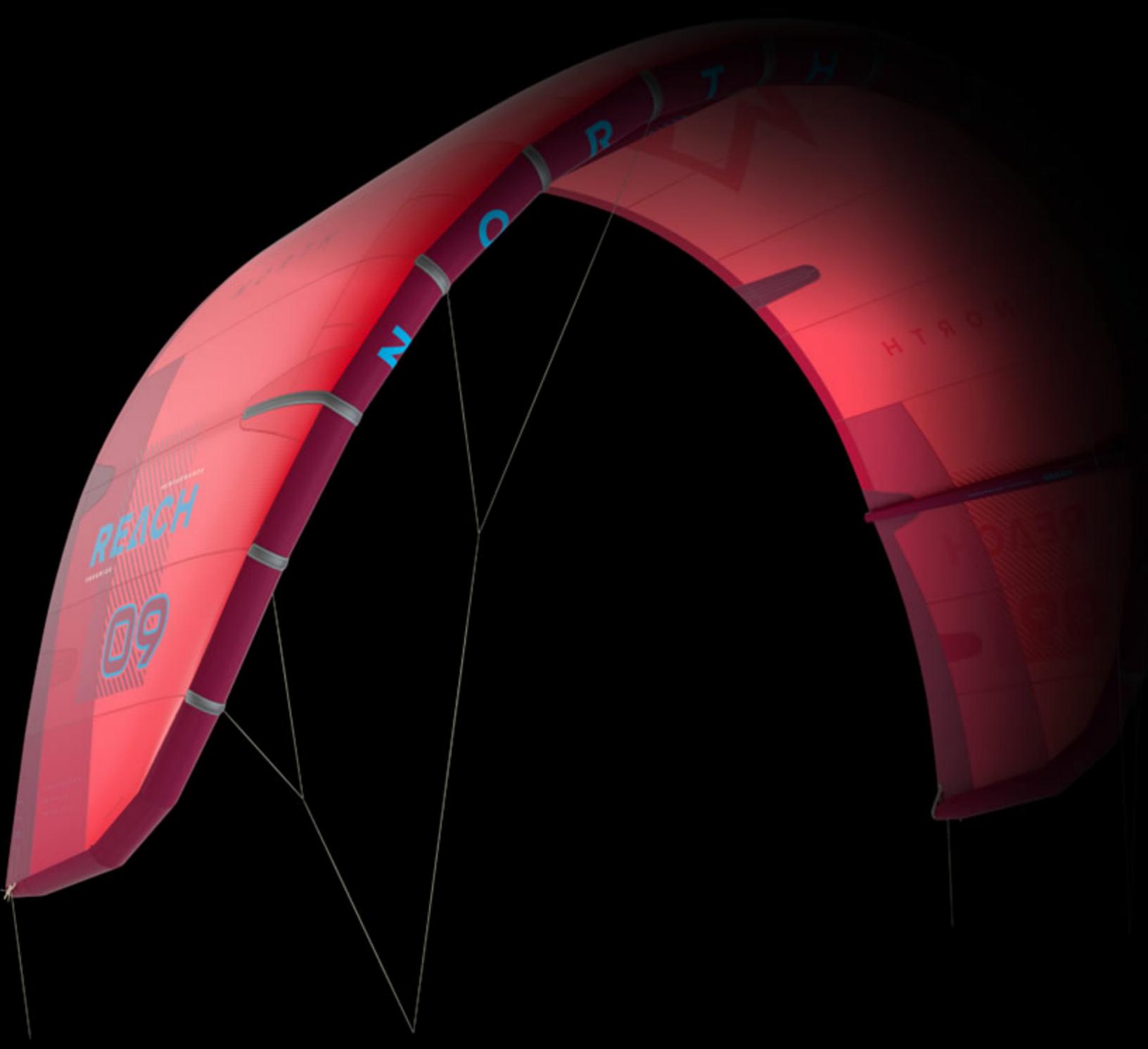
The Adaptive skin is a flexible material that hugs the body, offering comfort and freedom of movement. The Hardshell is a rigid arc that does not touch the body or the Adaptive skin, but encircles the harness to prevent bending and compressing under the pressure of the kite. This "Adaptive Shell" makes a winning combo, and it could be yours!

Ready to rock the most advanced harness technology on the beach?

HOW CAN I WIN THE PRIZE?

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

By subscribing to IKSURFMAG you'll be entered into all future prize draws and be first to read the magazine. We will never spam you and only email about new issues or important IKSURFMAG news.



 NORTH

## YOUR DESERT ISLAND KITE JUST GOT LIGHTER

Lively and playful performance in all conditions. For 2022, we've made your go-to kite even easier to fly.

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**"My eyes have never felt so loved"**

**- Sukie R**



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## ISSUE 92 NO TO WAR

In journalism, being impartial is a virtue. Publicly choosing a side is unprofessional. After all, who will be there to share the facts if the news is full of nothing but opinions? That said, we are a publication centred around a hobby. We share beautiful photos of talented kitesurfers exploring incredible destinations. You read IKSURFMAG because you love to kitesurf, and positive, engaging content is what uplifts you as you flip through these pages.

We openly put our hands up and acknowledge that we are not political analysts, scientists, or economists. More often than not, we share our opinion. We've done our fair share of complaining about how Brexit has complicated the UK kitesurfing industry, and

looked at the pandemic's impact on kiteboarding. We think it's important to share stories on how our kite spots are changing along with the climate or inform our readers by doing our best to explain economies of scale in kiteboarding production.

With Russia's ongoing war on Ukraine, and the lives of so many Ukrainians at risk every single day, it's hard to remain silent. I could write a 10,000 word opinion piece about how wrong I think this war is. I don't think there is ever a 'right' or 'just' war and surely as a species we should be learning the lessons of the past. War is bad, period. However, that's not why you're here. This is, at the beginning and end of the day, a kitesurfing magazine.

While bringing kitesurfing into this topic may trivialise

it, I'll bring it back to kitesurfing. We are a global community. Kiting transcends borders, race, age and gender. We are brought together by this incredible sport that we all love. Our community has many Ukrainian and Russian kitesurfers in it, and each of them are part of this treasured group. They always will be.

So, when Ukraine has secured their independence, and the recovery has begun, choose love. Do not turn your backs on your fellow kitesurfers, wherever they come from. The only way forward is to come together, not to remain divided. We will share the water again soon.

*Crystal Veness*

Editor

# EDGE<sup>V11</sup>

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This time manufactured with new materials, the Edge V11 will take you to higher altitudes and quicker than before. It drives fast through turns making it easy to send it big and maximise satisfaction from your free ride sessions.



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RIDER JANEK GRZEGORZEWSKI, BEST MALE KITESURFER 2021  
PHOTO THOMAS BURBLIES

# TAKE YOUR PICK

WORDS CRYSTAL VENESS

Your choices matter in kiteboarding. Whether it's who you voted for in our Readers Awards, what gear you spend your money on, or how you engage with rider and brand content online; your decisions fuel the industry. Read more, and hear from your Readers Awards winners in this article!

**“ EVERY KITER HAS A DIFFERENT  
DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. AND NONE ARE  
INHERENTLY WRONG. NO MATTER WHAT OTHER  
KITERS TRY TO TELL YOU! ”**

We make choices every day, sometimes without even realising it. Our lives are filled with decisions, so many that it would be impossible to count how many we make in a single day.

Some choices have very little impact on our lives, like how you take your eggs at breakfast. It's a simple decision and one that is largely preference-based. Others, like which route to drive to work, are made by considering our own experience, knowledge, and information. You could call that a logic-based decision. Whether you should try to make it through that yellow light or not, with so little time to analyse, could be considered an intuitive decision. Then, of course, there are choices that are made based on our self-identity or personal values. An example would be what clothes you wear, or if you're going to answer that call from your mum even though you're in the middle of something important.

What about when it comes to kiteboarding? Let's look at kite gear, as an example. Some kitesurfers buy gear because they admire the team riders from a specific brand, others because their local shop owner gave them a great deal, and others on something as simple and superficial as the colour or graphics. Every kiter has a different decision-making process, and none are inherently wrong, no matter what other kitesurfers try to tell you!

There's nothing wrong with making choices where performance isn't the most significant consideration.



**AIRUSH**  
KITEBOARDING

# LIGHT YEARS AHEAD

We introduce the new Ultra Team, featuring Ho'okipa.

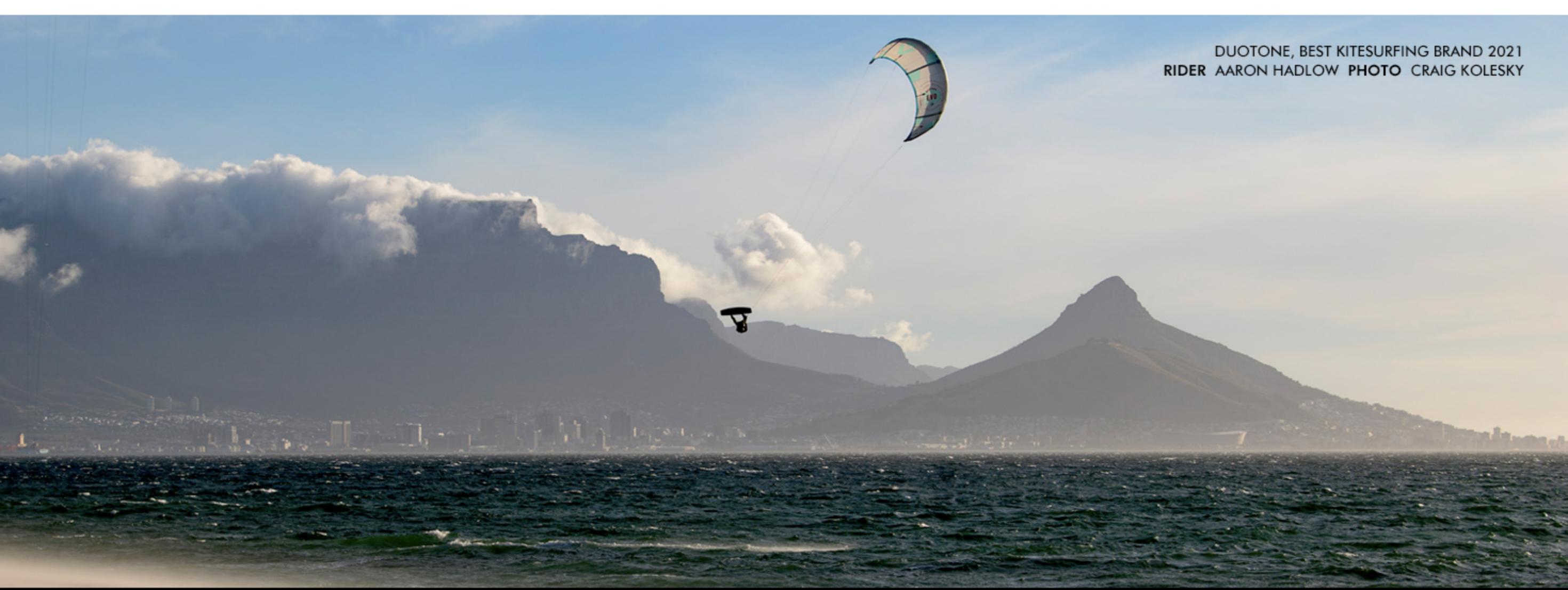
Developed in partnership with Challenge Sailcloth, this unique Ultra PE leading edge and strut composite material is 25% lighter and 10x stronger than traditional fabrics. This allows for 50% higher pressure, creating increased stiffness combined with a thinner leading edge. The result is supercharged responsiveness coupled with sublime handling, and of course the long-term performance you expect from Airush.

The new Ultra Team, light years ahead.



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**“ WE PICK OUR PREFERRED BRANDS. AND OUR TEAMS,  
AND WE DEFEND THEM FERVENTLY. ”**

After all, most kite gear out there is a good choice. Other than, perhaps, a pure C kite for a beginner kiter, most kites will work for any beginner to intermediate level rider. Even if a beginner chooses a pure C, or a kite in their favourite colour, that may be an expression of their self-identity, and is a fair choice. As much as buying the kite that feels the best on the water is important, buying

the kite that makes us feel the best on the water - which sounds the same but isn't - is a reasonable decision.

Tribalism has reared its head in the kitesurfing community. We pick our preferred brands, and our teams, and we defend them fervently. While this can add a bit of sport to the game, and some ribbing amongst friends, we should also consider the negative impact of judging and criticising the choices of others. We are all entitled to our own opinions and choices in kiteboarding, and we don't all have to agree. Once again, almost all

kiteboarding gear is good kiteboarding gear. There are very few bad choices. And, most importantly, if it's your money, you can do what you want with it!

There are some other theories on choice which also apply to kiteboarding. An interesting one that has been both proven and disproven, depending on which scientific study you read, theorises that having less choice makes the act of making a decision easier. Choice overload, or being "spoiled for choice", makes it difficult to make a choice to begin with, and once we do, the chance of regretting said choice is not small. With so many options available, it's easy to blame ourselves for making a "wrong" choice.



**“ THAT'S JUST LOOKING AT ONE BRAND. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE INTRODUCE 20 BRANDS WITH 9 KITES EACH INTO THE MIX? ”**

Back when the only kite in the F-ONE lineup was the Bandit, it was simple. You bought a Bandit. Now, there are nine different kites on the F-ONE website. So, do you take the Bandit or Bandit S? Well, maybe you should forget the Bandit completely and take the Breeze because your spot doesn't get much wind, or the WTF because you want to be a freestyle champ. In this case, F-ONE's decision to expand their lineup served to address kilters with more specific needs. But, for the majority of their customers, the Bandit probably still does the trick. Which makes you wonder, is the choice an illusion?

That's just looking at one brand. What happens when we introduce 20 brands with 9 kites each into the mix? Now, you have 180 kites to choose from. Let's just pretend that boards and bars and wetsuits and harnesses don't exist for the moment, because that would be too clear an example of choice overload! Where do you even start?

If you could, you would get in touch with your local kite shops and demo as much gear as possible. However, many kilters, especially those in places with a single lake, puddle, or pond, in their vicinity, don't have a single accessible kite shop. Others may have only one or two shops that stock specific brands and models, limiting their choice. Let's assume you're shopping online, and every brand is available to you.

What information do you use to help you make a decision? It might be online reviews, marketing directly from the brands, or polling their local Facebook groups.

# AN EXTRA DOSE OF ADRENALINE



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The Pivot is the perfect all-around kite for performance freeride and big air. This kite is famous for its incredible jumping ability, wave riding action, responsiveness, and tight, pivoting turns. Its versatility allows you to feel comfortable on your twin tip, surfboard, or foilboard in all weather conditions. Whether you're casually cruising or boosting for adrenaline — the Pivot is the right choice.

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# NAISH

**“ THE PUDDING, IN THIS CASE, IS KITING PERFORMANCE THAT WE CAN SEE WITH OUR OWN EYEBALLS. ”**

Impartiality is a fantasy in kiteboarding, and because we all have personal preferences, looking at reviews or reading on forums and in groups can lead to reading biased information. You might be getting advice from someone who themselves have very limited access to kites or knowledge of the entire market. The information is, quite simply, skewed towards brands that have a more global reach.

That doesn't make the information wrong, of course, because there is a reason that bigger kite brands have been able to obtain that reach. Sure, money can buy exposure, but even money can't protect a brand from a bad reputation from a dissatisfied public. Having a reputation for making products that perform well and are reliable and safe has a positive impact on brand growth.

When your team riders are standing on every podium or posting photos and videos of incredible achievements on social media, the community can see evidence to support what brands may promise, like greater heights, more hangtime, faster loops, and insane drift. Marketing budgets and carefully crafted words surely help, but the proof is, inevitably, in the pudding. The pudding, in this case, is kiting performance that we can see with our own eyeballs.

What has brought this analysis of choice about? Our annual Readers Awards wrapped up in February, and it's the opportunity every year for you, our readers, to speak up! With the tapping of your keyboard keys or the click of your mouse, you have made your mechanical voices heard!





**“ I THINK ONE OF THE MOST WONDERFUL THINGS ABOUT KITESURFING IS OUR COMMUNITY...”**

Hannah Whiteley, your winner for Best Female Rider for the 2nd year in a row, says, "I think one of the most wonderful things about kitesurfing is our community... I have been creating content, competing, and writing magazine articles for many years. But to this day, I am still surprised when what I do reaches our community. Maybe it's inspired you to start kitesurfing or perhaps

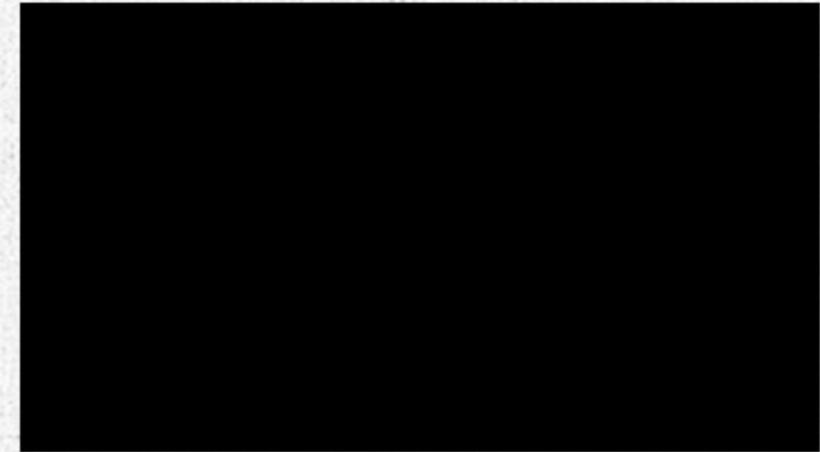
motivated you to keep trying that trick that seems near impossible, or just brought a smile to your face. This feels like the biggest reward in itself. We are all so much stronger than we believe; sometimes we just need a bit of inspiration to ignite it. Thank you so very much for taking a moment to vote for me as your Best Female Kitesurfer of 2021, and for the second year running. You are all part of this award, so I really just want to say thank YOU, the readers. IKSURFMAG, thank you for hosting the awards and continuing to get the community spirit going. Thank you,

Duotone Kiteboarding & Chiemsee, for being my main supporting sponsors."

Janek Grzegorzewski has been making waves in the world of Big Air with his smooth, effortless style and was your clear winner for Best Male Kitesurfer. "I'm insanely happy with the voting. I would not have expected such a high lead in front of other very good riders. It's an honour to be chosen as the Best Male Kitesurfer of 2021, voted by the kitesurfing community, which, in my opinion, is the most valuable vote. I am happy and proud that my kitesurfing style is what the majority loves to see. Thank you all for your support!"



RIDER: KADEN SPONHAUER | PHOTOGRAPHER: ERIC DURAN



**A NEW GENERATION OF LIGHTWEIGHT HARNESSES**  
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CONTOUR SEAT V1

**“ BEHIND EACH OF THOSE BRANDS IS A TEAM OF PEOPLE WHO WORK HARD TO MAKE PRODUCTS THAT YOU LOVE. ”**

Of course, there are many kilters out there who aren't in the competition scene or chasing world championships but work diligently to create content that they think will be entertaining and valuable to the kiting community. Your choice for Best Vlogger, Ben Beholz, started vlogging six years ago, and for 2021, you chose him as your favourite! "That means the world to me. I don't think any other rider out there would be as happy as I am right now to win this prize. What makes me so happy is not the fact that I won the prize; what makes me happy is the fact that you guys enjoy and appreciate my work so much that you go to IKSURFMAG and hit the vote button for Ben Beholz. Honestly, I'm over the moon! Thank you, thank you for being part of my journey, thank you for voting for me, and thank you for watching my videos!"

We have to give an honourable mention to your choice for Best Video; Third Time's a Charm. This film, by Edwin Heighton of The Stoke Farm, is one of many incredible videos he produced in 2021 and features the talented young brothers Jamie and Sean Overbeek. We look forward to seeing what he creates in 2022!

These are individual impressions from people that you chose as your favourites, but you also spoke up about your favourite brands, and behind each of those brands is a team of people who work hard to make products that you love. The founders, designers, marketers, distributors, and everyone behind the scenes that play a part in getting their products to market, appreciate the recognition for their efforts.





**“YOUR CHOICE AND YOUR VOTES ALL  
IMPACT WHAT BRANDS AND RIDERS  
CREATE FOR YOU.”**

You chose Duotone as the Best Kitesurfing Brand, CORE as Best Kite Manufacturer, F-ONE as Best Board Manufacturer, and Mystic for Best Kitesurfing Accessories Brand.

Your choices are important, and we want you to know that. Not just to us from a media perspective, who are legitimately curious about which brands have made the most impact on you each year, but to the riders and brands you have taken the time to vote for. If they didn't think you liked their stuff, they'd probably stop putting it out there.

Whether it's in our Readers Awards, how you spend your money, or how you engage with content online, your choice and your votes all impact what brands and riders create for you. So, speak up, let your votes be heard, and be vocal about what you want, like, and don't like. Let's see how we, as individuals, can continue to shape the industry.



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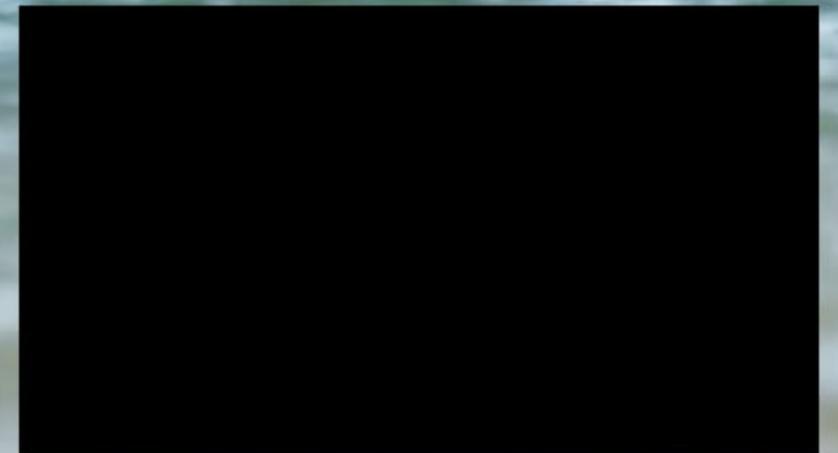
#BOOSTYOURSELF

## FLOW

PROGRESSION, FREERIDE  
TWIN TIP  
132X40.5 / 137X42 / 142X43 / 148X44



#GOWITHTHEFLOW

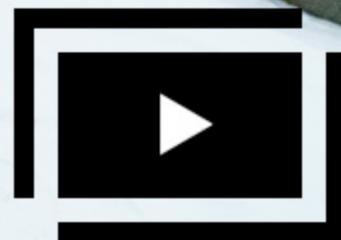




WORDS ARMELLE COURTOIS PHOTO GUILLAUME BROUST

# RIDING TO EXPLORE: AN ALPINE EXPEDITION

The climate is changing, glaciers are melting, and new lakes are continuously emerging. On an expedition that spanned the Alps, the Andes, and the Himalayas, Armelle Courtois and Martin Thomas are on a mission to highlight the effects of climate change. Read about their experiences kitesurfing in these incredible alpine environments, right here in IKSURFMAG!





**“TWO WEEKS LATER, WE WENT TO THE PYRENEES AND HAD OUR FIRST SESSION IN AN ALPINE LAKE, WITH SNOW ALL AROUND US.”**

It was only recently that I found a love for the mountains, thanks to my brother, a mountain guide in the eastern Alps of France. He lives next to the Lac de Passy, a lake with a view of the south face of Mont-Blanc. I was visiting him on a windy day when he said, "It's kiting weather!". I always keep my kite gear in my car, so I replied, "Yes, why not try?!".

Kiting in a small, gusty lake surrounded by trees and rocks was not the most pleasant experience. But, riding in front of this majestic mountain was an incredible feeling. When I told my partner about it, he was thrilled, "We have to try this in the lakes in the mountains!" So, two weeks later, we went to the Pyrenees and had our first session in an alpine lake, with snow all around us. At this moment, we set our sights even higher, ready for an even greater challenge!

It was 2019 when Riding to Explore was created. I, Armelle Courtois, am a kitesurfer competing for speed records. My partner, Martin Thomas, is an avid kitesurfer and an Olympian, competing in Canoe Slalom. We set a goal to push the limits of kitesurfing and achieve an altitude world record. The plan was to journey to the Alps, the Andes, and the Himalayas, kiting in each location. But, almost as soon as our adventure began, our mission took a different focus.

The highest lakes come from meltwater from the glaciers, which has accelerated in recent years. We found lakes that did not exist just a few years ago.



PHOTO GUILLAUME BROUST

**“IT WAS OUR FIRST HIGH MOUNTAIN EXPEDITION, AND WE WERE MORE EXCITED THAN PREPARED.”**

The rapid change in the high mountain ecosystems was painful to see. Once we became aware of it, we knew we had to push ourselves to see and share what was happening in the mountain ranges around the world.

We needed an experienced team to document the journey, particularly a director with an understanding of outdoor filming.

In addition, they needed to be physically tough, with mobile equipment and the ability to handle an aquatic environment and cold climate. So we called Guillaume Broust, a specialist in climbing films. We also had the help of Christophe Tong Viet, who created our first short film, and Alex Lopez, who is working on the final feature film.

In the summer of 2020, our team set off on the first leg of our expedition in the Alps. It was our first high mountain expedition, and we were more excited than prepared. We only thought of kiting in the mountains

and couldn't comprehend how challenging it would be. Each person had to carry 25 kg through rugged terrain; it was a long journey. We had to adapt, learning as we went along.

The alpine environment was, unsurprisingly, hostile for kiting. The launch areas were dangerously gusty, surrounded by high mountain faces, large trees, and sharp rocks. They posed a constant threat in the event of an error. To avoid hypothermia in the glacial lake waters, which were between 1° and 6°C, we had 5mm wetsuits complete with gloves, booties, a hood and a waterproof windbreaker jacket - an essential detail of a successful anti-cold combo!

PHOTO GUILLAUME BROUST



Most importantly, we had to plan a camp where we could manage the delicate moments after the session, when we had to quickly remove our wet clothes, completely exposed to the elements.

From Savoie to the Hautes-Alpes, there were five alpine lakes that we would attempt to ride. We had begun the trek to our first lake only a few days after lockdown had ended, and these lakes hadn't seen human feet in a very long time. The weather was bitterly cold, and we expected to arrive at a frozen lake. But, in the middle of the snow-covered surface, the lake was thawed, and the wind was blowing. It was an incredible start!

“ IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SNOW-COVERED SURFACE, THE LAKE WAS THAWED, AND THE WIND WAS BLOWING. ”

ALPHA

THE ULTIMATE HARDSHELL HARNESS

PROLIMIT

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WITH OUR NEW ALPHA BAR WITH ELECTROPLATED TITANIUM FINISH

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No matter what support you like  
**WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED.**

PROLIMIT

## “ WE SPENT TWO DAYS WAITING FOR WIND IN THE MOUNTAINS IN A STUNNING ENVIRONMENT ”

In the Northern Alps, our second attempt was thwarted by a frozen-over lake and worse weather on the way, so we headed to the Southern Alps for lucky number three. We arrived at a lake without snow and sunny skies. The wind, however, was nowhere to be seen. We bivouacked - stayed in a temporary tent camp - for two days and only managed to get one glorious hour of wind for the twin tip and hydrofoil.

Next, we continued to the Maurienne valley, finding our fourth, semi-frozen lake at an altitude of 2550m. We spent the afternoon floating in between icicles and icebergs, with not a whisper of wind, interrupted by short bursts blowing up to 20 knots, for just enough time to get up and ride! It was too cold and early in the season to find water any higher, so we returned home for a break.

In July, we hiked up to a lake at 2900m, just above the Grand Méan Glacier. We spent two days waiting for wind in the mountains in a stunning environment, with sun, rain, and hail. It is a sad fact that this lake is not listed on any map at the moment, as it has just formed. Launching a kite on the steep, rocky bank took some serious teamwork, but the final session was the perfect end to our time in the Alps.

Kiting in the high mountains requires precision and preparation. To be honest, we barely made it. Still, we knew we were doing something important and were determined to achieve our goal. Our expedition in the Alps allowed us to perfect our equipment, and now, we were ready to spread our wings and fly onwards to the Andes and the Himalayas.

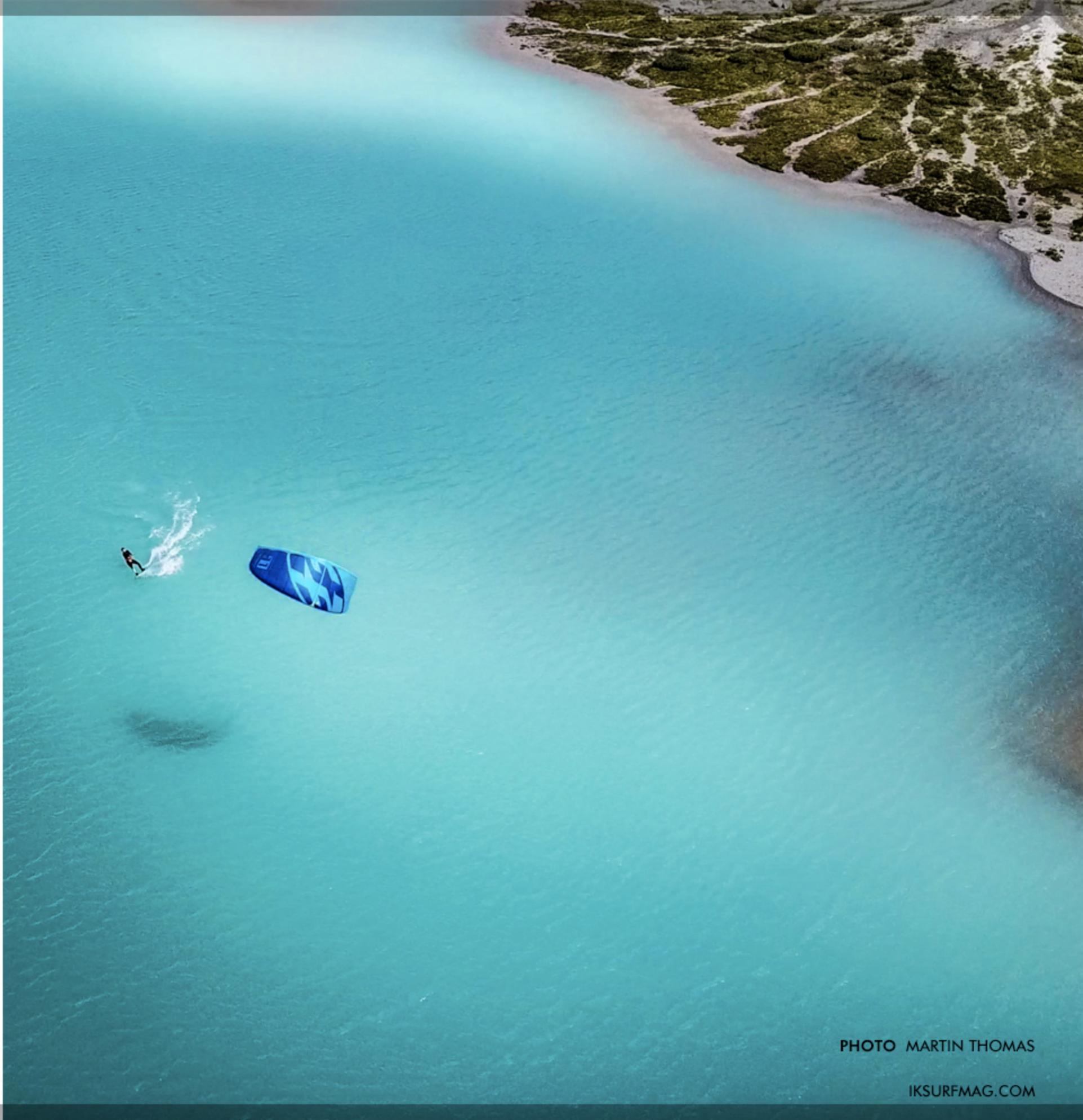


PHOTO MARTIN THOMAS



PHOTO MARTIN THOMAS

**“ WE WANTED TO KITE AT THE FOOT OF THIS GLACIER, AND DOM MANAGED ALL THE LOGISTICS FOR OUR TRIP. ”**

We didn't know when we began, but the 3-month expedition we planned would take more than 2 1/2 years. Thanks to global travel restrictions, it was a year before we could reach Peru, but we were more prepared this time. We researched the effects of hypoxia, which is very hard to

manage, especially while kiting. We also knew the high altitude would exert different pressure on the kites. On our way to higher peaks, we packed drysuits, essential not because of the cold water but the cold after the session and while we waited. We could conserve more energy by remaining in our drysuits the entire time.

After reading his article on crossing the Andes with Stéphane Vallin, we reached out to Dominique Riva-Roveida. He knew the Quelccaya glacier, the largest tropical glacier

on the planet. We wanted to kite at the foot of this glacier, and Dom managed all the logistics for our trip. In August 2021, we would finally meet!

Our French team - myself, Martin, and Alex Lopez - flew to Cusco to meet with Dom and the Peruvian crew before beginning the expedition. On the last evening before our trek, the cook and muleteers welcomed us into their home, in a small village at 4000m. They prepared a festive meal for their family and us, wearing traditional clothes. It was an honour and a truly magical way to begin this leg of our journey.



PHOTO MARTIN THOMAS

August is the month of the wind in Peru, though the predictability of the wind was in question. It was there, but sometimes asthmatic, always irregular, and turbulent in valleys dominated by summits up to 6000m. The sun would warm the day before the afternoon wind swept it away, resulting in a temperature drop from 15° to -10°C.

Every morning, at dawn, our caravan of ten horses, a guide, three muleteers, and the cook packed up camp and set off in search of a new lake, reachable in a half-day of steady walking. Despite the increased effort required by the altitude, the moderate rhythm allowed us to arrive in good enough shape to have energy left for a kite session.

“OUR CARAVAN OF TEN HORSES, A GUIDE, THREE MULETEERS, AND THE COOK PACKED UP CAMP”

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**“THE SUIT, HARNESS, AND HOOD MADE BREATHING AT THESE ALTITUDES EVEN MORE DIFFICULT; EACH GUST WAS A TEST, AND EACH TACK A VICTORY.”**

Every afternoon, with the kites ready, we waited impatiently for the breeze, looking up at the sky, watching for snow. As soon as the kite was in the air, the suit, harness, and hood made breathing at these altitudes even more difficult; each gust was a test, and each tack a victory.

At 5025m, we would face an intense challenge to achieve the world altitude record. It was a whole afternoon of battle, aborted launches, unsuccessful starts due to lack of power, a torn kite canopy, and confusion from hypoxia before we finally achieved it. It was an intense emotion kiting in front of the highest Andean glaciers, but we weren't finished yet.

Crossing the mountain pass at 5500m, we found another lake, sitting at 4900m. The weather was nice, there was wind, and we all felt relaxed after accomplishing our primary task. At the end of the 10-day expedition, we had ridden five out of six lakes attempted and achieved our kiting altitude record. In this amazing place with turquoise water, a glacier in the background, and pink flamingos, we soaked up the euphoria of the moment.

Peru is beautiful beyond belief, and the glaciers in the Cordillera are magnificent. Yet, more powerful than the physical achievement was the experience with our team. Muleteers are very kind, welcoming, friendly and happy people. They were dedicated and passionate about the cause of Riding to Explore. Together, we shared a unique human adventure.

**“ THE COUNTRY WAS STILL CLOSED TO TOURISM, SO WE WERE ALMOST THE ONLY WESTERNERS IMMERSSED IN THE LOCAL POPULATION. ”**

ARMELLE KITING LAKE SINGRINACocha AT 4350M  
PHOTO ALEX LOPEZ

We had achieved so much already, but the mission was far from complete. We had been planning the Himalayan leg for a year. Everything looked to be going well, but as soon as we got back from Peru, everything fell apart one month before leaving for the Himalayas. The pandemic halted tourism, visas were no longer available, and Sherpas were impossible to find - many were made unemployed by the agencies due to the lack of tourism. In short, it was a complete panic getting everything re-arranged in one month.

Unable to travel to Nepal due to travel bans, we found a way to the Himalayas via Ladakh, India. Fortunately, our film director Guillaume was already there. He had help from Dadul, a Ladakhi who set up his trekking agency there but also has a base in France. He put a great team at our disposal and managed to organise everything in two weeks. We got our business visas approved just four days before taking off!

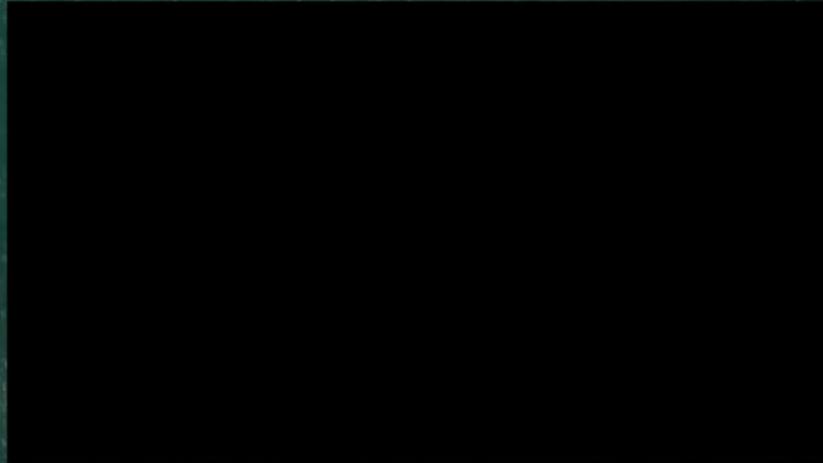
On October 16th, we arrived in the Himalayas. The country was still closed to tourism, so we were almost the only Westerners immersed in the local population. The Ladakh region is quite similar to Tibet; a great spirituality emerges from the monasteries perched on seemingly every mountainside. It is also a very militarised region because of its border with China. This duality between Buddhism, pacifism and militarisation was omnipresent and very contradictory.





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**“ WE IMMEDIATELY UNDERSTOOD THAT WE HAD A MASSIVE CHALLENGE AHEAD OF US. THE HIMALAYAS ARE SOMETHING ELSE! ”**

In the highest and most beautiful mountain range in the world, we were in awe of the scenery around us. The walls are incredibly steep, with sharp ridges and vertical lines; it was striking. We immediately understood that we had a massive challenge ahead of us. The Himalayas are something else!

Each day, the team progressed in the middle

of this rugged terrain, headed towards a lake located at 5400m. The locals told us it never snows until November, yet on October 15th, we were caught in a snowstorm with temperatures down to  $-30^{\circ}$ . It was the fifth day, and we were at the advanced camp of the Nimaling Plateau, the lake only one day away. However, the whole team was blocked in at 5000m by the snowstorm. In 24 hours, temperatures plummeted, the ground and rivers froze almost instantly, the little vegetation burned, and snow obscured our tracks, with the wind blowing up to 100km/h.

It was over before it began. The lake had frozen and was no longer accessible, despite our attempts. Resigned, we descended the mountain. We needed to find the strength and motivation to go up another valley towards another pass, another lake that was less high, bigger, and salty, which would hopefully prevent it from freezing before our arrival. Regardless of the setback, we were more determined than ever to achieve our goal of kiting in the Himalayas.

On our way to our new destination, I saw a slight movement on the cliff and immediately called out to the others, "There's a wolf, stop!" Look closer, we realised it was a snow leopard with two cubs - unthinkable!



**“OUR HEARTS HAD NEVER BEAT SO FAST. PERHAPS IT WAS A SIGN OF LUCK - THAT THE WINDS WERE FINALLY CHANGING.”**

There was a river between us; maybe she had come to have a drink. She saw that we were looking at her. She watched us calmly, even sitting and laying down while keeping a curious eye trained on us. After 15 minutes, the leopard family continued their slow journey through the rocks. Our hearts had never beat so fast. Perhaps it was a sign of luck - that the winds were finally changing. To us, it was a gift from nature.

When we arrived at 4900m, we were relieved to find a well-defrosted lake and sunny skies, despite the  $-15^{\circ}\text{C}$  ambient temperature! Unfortunately, the wind had disappeared in an area where it is usually omnipresent. We awaited its return for ten days. After six days of waiting, we arrived on the shores of Kyagar Tso, where the nomadic tribes that would typically occupy the area had left because of winter - all but one family. We explained why we were there, and they invited us to stay and set up camp next to them.

They welcomed us into their tent to warm up and drink tea with them. We didn't share meals; it would have been too risky for our small European stomachs to embark on kitchen tests. Despite the cold, the weather was lovely, and we enjoyed our days with the tribe outdoors. Their daughter Tanzin, a very independent three-year-old, spent all her time with us. She had unlimited, incredible energy, and we were sad to leave her.

After four days with the tribe, completing our ten days without wind, a wrinkled front finally formed at the bottom of the lake in the late afternoon.

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**“ AS KITESURFERS WHO FIND SO MUCH JOY IN OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, WE SEE WHAT WE HAVE TO LOSE EVERY SESSION, ON EVERY TRIP TO THE WATER. ”**

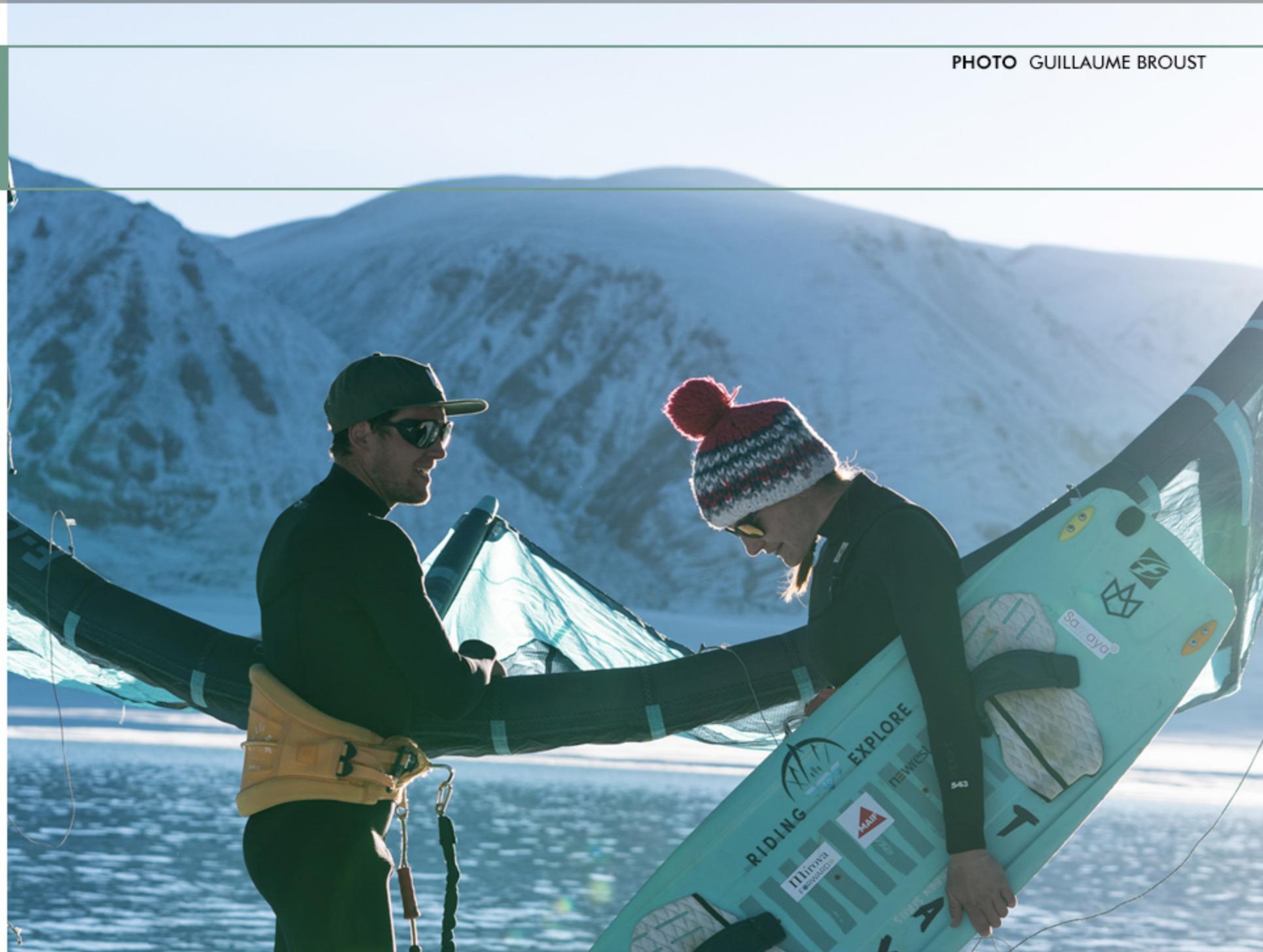
PHOTO GUILLAUME BROUST

As it strengthened, the snow began to lift and swirl. There, surrounded by the world's highest peaks, in the enchanting Himalayan mountain range, we kitesurfed! For those 90 minutes on the water, all our past disillusionments flew away.

As our expedition drew to a close, we met inhabitants of the village of Gya. They had lost their houses when a section of the glacier fell into the lake, causing a devastating flood. Their testimony was a grim conclusion to our mission of discovery. Here, global warming is no longer a threat but a reality. Despite the seriousness of the subject, the last memory of this expedition will remain the smiles of the children, glowing on their faces while discovering the joys of flying a kite.

Everyone was moved by what we encountered in these mountain ranges. The rapid decline of the glaciers is immediately apparent in the Andes, and the floods in the Himalayas are directly linked to glaciers melting. In Europe, we often speak of climate change as a "threat" because we are not directly affected by it. Not yet. But in the places we visited, the people we met are already losing their homes; the springs are drying up, and the villages have to move because there is no more water. It is already happening.

We often believe that our small actions have no impact, but that's not true. We are the consumers;



therefore, the industrialists follow what we validate by what we choose to consume. The first step is becoming aware of these issues and making conscious choices to combat them in our everyday lives. Let us all do what we can and not judge each other. Solidarity is the answer.

As kitesurfers who find so much joy in our natural environment, we see what we have to lose every session, on every trip to the water. Wonder, knowledge, and respect for nature is the best environmental protection. We must act now, later is too late.

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RALF GROSEL

# TECH FOCUS

## DUOTONE EVO & EVO SLS 2022

The Evo has been the ultimate all-round kite in the Duotone lineup for 15 years. With the recent addition of the Evo SLS, you might be wondering what the key differences are! We spoke to designer Ralf Grosel, who filled us in on what sets the 2022 Evo SLS apart, and which kite might be right for you! Find out more in this IKSURFMAG exclusive!



**The Evo has been a part of the Duotone line-up since 2007/2008. Ralf, how long have you been working on the Evo?**

The Evo was the first tube kite I designed for Duotone Kiteboarding (previously known as North Kiteboarding), and development first began at the beginning of 2006.

**What were the original design goals in the early versions of this kite?**

The design goals were quite clear: create the ultimate all-around kite. In this regard, the Evo has never changed within its position in the line-up. In the early stages, we placed a lot of focus on a self water relaunch to satisfy the schools and ensure that students do not face any obstacle during the learning process. We wanted to ensure that kiting would be extremely accessible for a wide range of users.

**While the Evo has had 15 versions, the Evo SLS is a newer product in the line-up, in only its 2nd version. So, what's new in the Evo SLS 2022?**

The Evo SLS has been entirely developed around the new Penta TX material, which is quite different compared to standard Dacron. This also means that the resulting flight characteristics are quite different, especially when we introduced the first version of the Evo SLS.

We made a very sporty kite, which was very reactive and snappy, which, naturally, required quite a high level of riding skills to extract the best out of that concept. Based on the market feedback, we have worked quite hard on achieving high performance in the easiest possible way for the end-user. The new design goal was to make the kite more accessible and more intuitive to fly and steer while sharpening the connection between the kite and the rider.



**" WE WANTED TO ENSURE THAT KITING WOULD BE EXTREMELY ACCESSIBLE FOR A WIDE RANGE OF USERS. "**



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**" THESE ANGLES ARE SUPER IMPORTANT FOR STRUCTURAL STIFFNESS. "**

**What are the key performance improvements in the 2022 version over the Evo SLS 2021 version? Can you go into some detail about these developments?**

To make the performance of the Evo SLS 2022 more accessible, we had to make the connection and interaction between the rider and kites. I did this by changing some variables, especially the arc. I have flattened the radius, which gives you a different sheet-in-and-go feeling. It increases the steering forces slightly and the sheeting forces by just the right amount to feel more connected with the kite.

Of course, when you change one parameter, you always have to adjust some other variables. For example, the tip geometry has to be changed, and

and these angles are super important for structural stiffness. The way the kite handles in the turn and through the turn has been adjusted, the tip strut tension settings, and some of the other key features that you typically play with when changing the flight characteristics of a kite.

**Does the SLS version simply use more premium materials than the original Evo, or are there changes in the actual design and shape? Why is there a need for a different approach to the Evo and Evo SLS?**

Well, let's put it this way: The Evo original is a completely new design. And, yes, it uses the more classic materials, but in the best possible way. It's very

important to understand that all materials have their pros and cons.

The Penta TX creates very sporty, snappy kites. On the other hand, the standard Dacron has more softness and smoothness, which is great for the weekend warrior or the rider who wants to have a very accessible kite. This is related to the torsion stiffness of the material. It's pretty much similar to the spring settings on your car; if you go for a sports car, then you have harder spring settings, and you'll feel more connected to the road. If you want to have a cruiser, these springs are generally softer, which increases comfort. With the kite materials, you immediately feel the difference when working on Penta TX and then going back to normal Dacron.



**“ WHEN YOU PUT ENERGY IN THE KITE BY LOADING IT FOR A JUMP, IT GIVES MORE ENERGY BACK. ”**

With the key learnings from the last years of development, I was able to reconsider some of the flight characteristics of the Evo original and extract the best out of it. I have added different bridle geometries to the Evo original to ensure that this kind of softness and twist in the kite is controlled so that the kite is extremely smooth and accessible. The Evo original stands for being the all-around kite in the industry. This product has to come with a certain easiness and an intuitive, common-sense way of flying.

When using different kinds of materials, if you change one parameter, you have to adjust all the others. But, this is simply the result of using different materials. They really do require a completely different set of parameters to find that sweet spot for the material itself.

**The Penta TX material has had a lot of positive attention! So, what makes the Penta TX material so unique?**

That's quite simple to answer - it adds performance, sheer flying performance, jumping height, turning performance, and light wind ability because of the reduced weight.

Penta TX is not your typical Dacron material; it is manufactured differently and applies a different kind of coating. It has a way higher structural stiffness, especially in a diagonal direction. It's like a spring that uses a different spring load. When you put energy in the kite by loading it for a jump, it gives more energy back. Now, that makes the kite more snappy and more aggressive, but also more challenging to ride, in some aspects. As I've mentioned before, I would recommend the Evo SLS and the Dice SLS to skilled riders with at least a few years of experience.





**" YOU CAN SEE BY THE PERFORMANCE OF TEAM RIDERS LIKE EDGAR ULRICH, REGARDLESS OF IF HE'S ON SNOW OR WATER; IT'S INSANE! "**

**Tell us a bit more about the Flex Struts. How do they work, and how do they improve kite performance?**

I had initially developed the Flex Strut for the Juice original, and for one important reason: to make a big kite more responsive. The Flex Strut helps to deform the tip area. So, for example, if you fly the kite, you start to deform the tip on the right side. The kite also starts to deform on the left side, which is even more important for turning speed. So, the kite pitches forward on the left side, and the Flex Strut is developed in a way that it has a very high pitch moment. It starts to rotate over the leading edge, which makes the kite accelerate. You feel this

acceleration when the kite comes around and starts to hook - or pull you. This is the power you feel in the kite.

The Flex Strut was extremely helpful and essential to make a big kite feel smaller and way more fun. It's a very important design feature; however, this feature does not work for all different types of kite concepts. We are constantly changing the functionality and the flex of the Flex Strut according to the kite requirement. The Dice SLS, for example, does not require any Flex Strut at all. If it had that Flex Strut, it would be too nimble and too snappy in the turning behaviour, which is not a good feature for a very C-shaped kite. On the other side, for the bigger kites,

especially in the bigger sizes, it makes sense to apply this logic to the kite and make the handling characteristics as smooth, predictable, and fast as possible to give you the best handling performance.

**Performance-wise, where does the Evo SLS 2022 excel the most?**

The Evo SLS is still an all-around kite, which is one of its key features. The kite jumps super well. You can see by the performance of team riders like Edgar Ulrich, regardless of if he's on snow or water; it's insane! The kite is super intuitive in the loop, and it catches great, which is one of the most important features in a looping kite.

It also works fantastically on the foil, especially on the race foil, if you really want to shoot over the lake in light wind conditions. If you are not looking particularly for unhooked performance, then the Evo SLS is THE all-around kite that suits pretty much 90% of all riding styles.

**Is this kite targeted to more advanced riders? Would you suggest a beginner kiter choose a different model?**

Yes, definitely. The Evo SLS is targeting a more advanced rider, and as mentioned before, you should have three years of good kite experience on your shoulders to extract the best performance out of this concept. Otherwise, I recommend the Evo original, especially the new model. It is an absolute game-changer within our portfolio because it has never before made kitesurfing so easy. The accessibility and overall performance have never been better and easier than with this super intuitive and straightforward kite.

**You've just wrapped up another test trip in South Africa! Are you allowed to share any details on the products you were testing? Any exciting developments you share with us?**

South Africa has been fantastic, as it is every single year. And yes, for the entire kite industry, it's the only way to escape horrible European winter and progress with the development phases we need to go through. We are trying to push the boundaries every single year.

The past few years have already been very exciting with introducing the Penta TX from Challenger Sail Cloth and the Aluula material from Aluula Composites.



**“ IT IS AN ABSOLUTE GAME-CHANGER WITHIN OUR PORTFOLIO BECAUSE IT HAS NEVER BEFORE MADE KITESURFING SO EASY. ”**

A man with blonde hair, wearing a black wetsuit, is standing on a beach. He is focused on adjusting the control bar of a kite. The kite is partially visible in the foreground, showing yellow, purple, and teal sections. The background features a blue ocean with white waves and a clear sky. A black text box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**" IT'S THE BEGINNING OF A COMPLETELY NEW ERA OF KITE DEVELOPMENT. WE'RE IN VERY EXCITING AND VERY CHALLENGING TIMES "**

Both of these companies are pushing the limits further. We are, I think, quite a big part of this development process, and it's such a fun game for me at this stage in my career to work with these two fantastic brands and skilled manufacturers with a great vision and absolute will to push the industry further. I will try to combine these materials with new flight properties and production technologies to ensure that we are always ahead of the game in kite design.

While I cannot tell you every detail of our kite development, I can tell you that we are making small, step-by-step progress in everything, in every single aspect of development. When it comes to new materials like Penta TX and Aluula, this is not the end; it's the beginning of a completely new era of kite development. We're in very exciting and very challenging times, but we can expect more good things to come!

#### **Any last words on the new Evo SLS?**

If we're talking about the Evo SLS, we have to talk about the Evo original as well! I think riders should consider trying both models, as they vary quite a lot in the way the kite talks to you and interacts with you. I would say give them both a try and see which one fits you best!

# TECH FOCUS

## ELEVEIGHT MASTER RANGE

The Eleveight Master, a high-performance twin tip designed with freeride and freestyle in mind, has been refined for 2022. With both a standard and premium construction in the range, which Master will help you master your session? Eleveight Co-Founder, Robert Bratz, lays out the differences in this Tech Focus piece!



The Master range was developed as a radical high-performance freeride to freestyle twin tip. The technical concept of the Master is a light performance board with a medium flex and a super light wood core, with carbon incorporated to refine flex patterns. The Master and Master C+ share the same DNA when it comes to shape, with key differences in construction.

The Master V5, in the standard construction, uses an aerospace-grade Spread Tow Carbon stringer that runs from tip to tip, giving the board a very dynamic rebound flex. Our innovative PRS rails improve grip and upwind travel and redirect spray away from the rider. This board continues to exceed the expectations of more aggressive riders dedicated to boosting mega loops and stomping technical freestyle tricks.

The Master C+ V4 is entirely coated in a lighter and more superior Spread Tow Carbon with a unique woven structure, which significantly impacts flex and pop, offering the highest impact resistance and performance. The board is lighter and, in some aspects, more dynamic, making it a great tool for those who want to push the limits of hangtime and big air. With unmatched materials and masterful craftsmanship, riders will be able to pop harder and boost higher than ever before.

Both models have been fine-tuned with new 90° channel layout steps for increased grip and a 3D dome deck and bevelled rails, allowing the tips to be thinner while increasing stability. The Master C+ also introduces the new Firefin System, a compact and durable fin system. With the Firefin click



## MASTER

system, you can easily change your fins without any tools to tune your board according to the conditions.

The Master V5 is available in 136, 139, and 142. We have also developed the little sister of the Master

## MASTER C+

for the smaller and lighter riders; the Master S V2 is available in a 132. The Master C+ V4 comes in a 136 and 139.

WORDS CRYSTAL VENESS  
PHOTOS SAMUEL CARDENAS

# TECH FOCUS

## OZONE EDGE V11

Q&A with Robert Whittall

The Edge is THE free ride and big air kite from Ozone, and it just got an update!

We chatted to designer Rob Whittall about how the Edge V11 achieves its impressive performance.





**" IT WAS A FAST KITE FOR BOOSTING AND WAS AIMED PRIMARILY AT EXPERIENCED RIDERS THAT WANTED TO SEND IT AND GO BIG! "**



**The Edge, the longest-running kite in the Ozone lineup, is now available in a V11! Why has the Edge received the most versions of all kites in the Ozone range?**

The simple answer is that it has been around a long time! It was not the first inflatable kite we made; that was the Instinct Sport. The Instinct Edge was our second kite to hit the market, and back in the day, it was a great success for us. At that point, it had 5 lines, and the 5th line was what we called an Active 5th line as it was connected to the trimmer, so it did more than just support the leading edge as most 5th lines do.

**What year did the first Edge come out? What segment of the kitesurfing market was it designed for?**

The first Edge debuted back in 2007. Back in the day, it was a fast kite for boosting and was aimed primarily at experienced riders that wanted to send it and go big! It was always our top-end kite from the start, hence the name.

**Has the intended function of this kite changed over the past ten versions?**

The goal of every iteration of the Edge has been to deliver speed and airtime. It's very successful as a race

kite and has won countless championships in the race scene, and is the kite for the Youth Olympic Games. But, in addition to race performance, it has always had a tone of boost because speed can be turned into altitude.

**What are the key flight characteristics of the new Edge V11?**

She is powerful, solid and handles really well for a high aspect ratio kite. The amazing thing is that it is fun to ride for anyone with intermediate experience or above. If you are looking to get some airtime, the Edge V11 will help you go bigger and stay up longer.

“ THE EDGE HAS AMAZING CHARACTERISTICS ACROSS A WIDE OPERATING RANGE ”



It's easy to jump as it has so much float and generally gets you higher than you would normally go. Due to the power it delivers, it is also a good kite on light wind days because it gets you going when you would be struggling on anything else. You can loop it too, but that is quite engaging as it has a lot of pull, so you need some skills to commit to that.

**For those familiar with the V10, what were the main improvements over the previous version?**

It's all down to details now. We are refining the design rather than trying to reinvent the wheel. Sail tension and leading edge pre-load is where we are focused. We have made many prototypes trying to improve the parameters of the design, but where you gain in some aspects, you lose in others. It is widely agreed that the Edge has amazing characteristics across a wide operating range, so now we work on improving that further.

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**“ IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE WHAT THE GUYS CAN DO IN TERMS OF ALTITUDE! I AM AMAZED AT HOW HIGH THEY ARE GETTING THESE DAYS ”**

Recent versions of the Edge have been oriented toward advanced free riders and those that like to go big. If Ruben Lenten and Jamie Overbeek riding this kite are anything to go by, this must also be true of the V11?

100%, the Edge will always stay true to its name and the performance that it is renowned for. We would like it to continue to be known for speed and airtime, and we are confident that the V11 will continue the legacy.

**What is it about the shape or design of this kite that also makes it a power performer in racing and in the snow?**

It's a combination of airfoil, planform and leading edge thickness. Lift and forward drive from the airfoil, high aspect ratio planform to maximise the performance potential, and a thick leading edge to make it all stable and powerful... Add a little Ozone special sauce to that, and you have the Edge!

**What are YOU most excited about in the new Edge V11?**

It will be interesting to see what the guys can do in terms of altitude! I am amazed at how high they are getting these days; it's incredible to think that 40m on the right day might be possible! Imagine 40m high! That would be ultimately very impressive, and I think it will happen sooner or later.

WORDS CRYSTAL VENESS  
PHOTOS SAMUEL TOME

# TECH FOCUS

## THE AIRUSH APPROACH

### Q&A with Clinton Filen

What does the development cycle of a new kite product look like? Clinton Filen, Airush Brand Director, takes us behind the scenes, giving us some insight on just how many people and how much time it takes to bring a new product to market.

Find out more in this Q&A!



**"By Innovators, For Innovators". Tell us a bit about the creative geniuses behind the scenes at Airush!**

We are a group of designers and riders coming from different disciplines, with different backgrounds, each of these adding something unique to the mix. We are based in Cape Town, which also serves more as a hub, connecting point and primary test centre for the global team. Innovation is not only about creating the latest technology; it is also the broad desire to take a step forward in riding performance, hence our ethos.

**It is clear that Airush wholly embodies its brand values; Do your distributors, shops, clients, and customers all share this appreciation for innovation?**

We do our best to connect with the beginning of the chain and connect with people who are riding and experiencing the products. There are so many positive moments when you see how stoked people are on the gear. If you are authentically passionate about creating good products, the good dealers feel this and many of them will share their feedback and input, as they are the link to the customer and many of them are on the water themselves.

**Where do the designers and testers find inspiration to add new technology and production methods to Airush products?**

There is inspiration everywhere. You just need to be open to what the future looks like and start to create that today. Of course, we also draw constantly on feedback from riders, dealers and customers.

**Is it essential for Airush team riders and testers to be creative and development focused?**

Certain athletes are 100% focused on riding, although they will normally use this as a creative outlet.

In this case, their feedback may be purely focused on



**" YOU JUST NEED TO BE OPEN TO WHAT THE FUTURE LOOKS LIKE AND START TO CREATE THAT TODAY. "**

what they need the product to do in order to help push their level, and this is a good development focus. Connecting this, are key riders who are also product testers who are more analytical in identifying weaknesses or key areas to focus on.

**Do testers and team riders provide product feedback or suggestions to the designers? How does this collaboration work?**

The primary product testers will connect with the broader team and the designer. For example, Alex Pastor is very focused on Freestyle development and will work closely with each designer across the board,

bar and kite range. The same goes for Victor Hays on the Freeride products; we will generally have a key tester in each category. That being said, our design team always encourage product feedback from all of our riders; after all, they are typically trying new things and pushing the limitations of the products.

**Using the Session as an example, the current version was released in July 2020. When it comes time to develop the next version, how does the team identify areas of improvement?**

The team will share their long-term feedback on the performance of the kites over extended use.

**" WE LOOK AT KEY ASPECTS OF A PRODUCT THAT WE WANT TO MAINTAIN AND THEN KEY AREAS WE THINK WE CAN IMPROVE "**



We will also receive feedback from customers during demo events, tests and even groups of friends and customers who might reach out to us.

Wherever possible, we will be working on longer-term ideas in materials, constructions and shapes and translate these into new products.

**Whether it's new materials, new stitching patterns, new profiles, or new bridle layouts, how does the idea for a change get implemented and tested?**

We are generally chasing key outcomes in each product, and there is a brief that consolidates all of the input. If you simplify it, we look at key aspects of a product that we want to maintain and then key areas we think we can improve, and we chase those.

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RIDER ARTHUR GUILLEBERT  
PHOTO STUDIO 4X4



**" A NEW BOARD MIGHT TAKE A YEAR, WHILE A NEW KITE MATERIAL COULD TAKE UP TO FIVE YEARS. "**

**Is it often that, after making a concept into reality, it fails? How do you bounce back from an idea that doesn't work?**

Real innovation is difficult, so you need to be conditioned to accept failure as part of learning, and this is a part of the culture we try to build in the company. If you are surrounded by people who are constantly trying new things and dealing with that reality, that is critical to innovation.

**How long is the process from the first concept to testing to production to release?**

That depends on many things, including the complexity of the project, the performance requirements, manufacturing process and the type of product. A new board might take a year, while a new kite material could take up to five years.

As we have a philosophy of no planned obsolescence (we replace products once we have a clear improvement), it means many products will be in an ongoing development cycle and only be replaced once we have made a clear step forward.

**What is the most exciting innovation coming up - that you're allowed to talk about?!**

Come Spring, we will launch a new material that we have been working on. We have heard some industry chatter and have had a few questions on it already, but we will tell you this, it's going to be big!

It is hard to highlight one thing, but right now, we have been enjoying an incredible season, with the standout products being the new Switch and Lithium. We put a huge amount of energy into the Freeride category for the season, and it is great to see the response.



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# INSIGHT

## KARLIE THOMA

---

WORDS JEN TYLER

How does giving a discount to a couple of AirBNB guests in exchange for kiteboarding lessons lead to becoming a professional kiteboarder?! Find out in this Insight feature, where Jen Tyler catches up with newly signed North rider Karlie Thoma. This Maui-based daredevil has some tales to tell! Get to know Gnarlie Karlie in this exclusive interview right here on IKSURFMAG.



A woman in a black bikini is surfing on a blue and white wave. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds. The water is a vibrant turquoise color. The surfer is in a crouched position, riding the face of the wave.

“ EVERYTHING I’VE DONE UP UNTIL THIS POINT  
HAD BEEN OUT OF PURE PASSION AND LOVE  
FOR JUST DOING CRAZY AND GNARLY S#!T! ”

**Karlie, it's great to meet you and congratulations on your recent move to North Kiteboarding! Can you share with us the story of how you joined their team?**

Thanks so much! I got with North through Jesse Richman; he put me in touch with Alex Vliege, and we spoke about what I was doing on the water and where I wanted to take it. After that, everything just lined up! Never in my wildest dreams did I think I could be a professional athlete. Everything I've done up until this point had been out of pure passion and love for just doing crazy and gnarly s#!t!

I definitely would do it anyway, but it's cool having North and Mystic backing me up. I'm out there on social media; I say what I want and do what I want, and they fully support that.

**What was it like growing up in Maui?  
Were you born there?**

Maui is pretty rad! I would say I was a tomboy. I loved doing whatever the boys were doing. I got into sports like soccer, hockey, basketball, kitesurfing, pretty much everything! I felt like a little bit of an outcast when I was younger, just because I was a young girl doing all these different sports, and I didn't have many friends to do them with. But yeah, it kind of shaped me into the person I am today.

**What's your earliest childhood memory?**

Hmm... probably at the skatepark when I was about eight years old, dropping into the halfpipe!



PHOTO FRANKIE BEES

**Who inspired you to first get into kiteboarding, and who do you still look up to today?**

I started kiteboarding because my dad rented out a room to two Swiss kitesurfers visiting Maui for the summer. One day, I went down to the beach with them, and I was like, "I want to learn that!" So we went to the Naish shop and got me a 3m kite and a super big harness. They taught me to kitesurf and got a discounted rate on the room. That's how it all began!

“ THEY TAUGHT ME TO KITESURF AND GOT A DISCOUNTED RATE ON THE ROOM. ”



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"HE MOTIVATES ME TO TRY NEW THINGS OUT ON THE WATER, AND HIS STYLE IS JUST SO RELAXED AND CONTROLLED."

Someone I look up to would probably have to be my friend, John Mackay. He's just a super awesome, super chilled guy. He motivates me to try new things out on the water, and his style is just so relaxed and controlled.

**With nicknames like Gnarlie and Scarlie, you must have some insane tales to tell! Have you ever been in a situation where you thought, "Am I going to make it out of this one"?**

I am feeling that right now! Of course, I want to push

my limits in every sport that I do, but with all these injuries and surgeries, I'm a bit hesitant now of the consequences.

**Do these injuries impact your riding today or make you more mindful while kiteboarding?**

I get in a gnarly headspace when I'm injured, and it takes me a long time to get out of it. I am struggling with the thought of knowing where exactly I want to take all these different sports. I'm trying to find that line still - I really am, but it's kind of like a double-edged sword, for sure.

**Tell us about your front roll – fish pull – megaloop!**

So before I tried that trick, I was doing megaloops, and 360 grabs, kind of like that old school style. So, one day, I thought to myself, I want to send it and try it. I figured the fish pull would loop the kite a lot quicker, so I just sent it with that thought in mind! I've had some gnarly, gnarly crashes with that one; you can see one on my Instagram probably falling from over 30 feet. The kite did not catch me, but I'm trying to throw in some rotations in the mix.



PHOTO TIM KELLNER

It's terrifying, though, because there's no such thing as "safe to send it" in big air - you have got to huck and hope for the best!

Living relatively close to Jesse Richman, do you and Jesse session together often? Have you known each other since you were kids?

So, Jesse and I used to ride Naish previously, sort of like Maui-sponsored. I grew up seeing him, but we were on entirely different sides of the beach in Kanaha. Jesse was down at the Pro Pool, and I was up at Old Man's Beach.

"THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS "SAFE TO SEND IT" IN BIG AIR"



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Occasionally, I would go down to Pro Pool and check out the scene, but all my friends were at Old Man's, so I mainly just stayed up there. Over the years, Jesse and I have done many product shoots, and we just finished up a product shoot with North back in December. He's a cool guy.

**Can you talk us through your North quiver? Favourite piece of equipment?**

My go-to is a 7m Reach with 22 or 24m lines and the Astra 129, but I'm dabbling with the 132 now. I think it's super great for looping and probably my favourite piece of equipment.

**Just skimming through your IG page, you consistently push past gender stigmas; it's inspirational, and we love that about you! Your open-minded and fearless approach to life makes you a strong role model for young women. What led you to become such a fierce advocate?**

I don't know where it comes from - I just grew up loving to push boundaries. I remember as a kid seeing a boy doing something, and my immediate response would be, I can do that! So I would consistently do that until I did it. That's just how my life has been.

I feel like I'm very focused and driven, especially in sports, because it's evident that someone's been working on something, just by how they are on the water. So I want to continue to dedicate my life to that, with or without sponsors.

" I REMEMBER AS A KID SEEING A BOY DOING SOMETHING. AND MY IMMEDIATE RESPONSE WOULD BE, I CAN DO THAT! "



PHOTO XANDER NOE



PHOTO FRANKIE BEES

Women can do anything the guys are doing, and I just want to hold this vital energy for women and speak my mind. Just be yourself and who you are, and the right people and the right things will follow.

**Do you participate in Maui Kite Fest every year?**

Yes, I do - I've done all their competitions! It's an incredible little event on Maui.

“ THE RIGHT PEOPLE AND THE RIGHT THINGS WILL FOLLOW. ”

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"I WANT TO FOCUS ON BEING ON THE WATER AND GETTING MY MIND AND BODY HEALTHY AND PREPARED FOR ANYTHING."

There are few competitions here in the USA, so it's cool to have one organised by all the people in Maui and to see our little community coming together.

**Are you and your mum still running 'Ohana in Paradise'?**

When I got this sponsorship, I decided to put my licence inactive and really give it my best shot. It's a dream come true that I didn't know I had! I want to focus on being on the water and getting my mind and body healthy and prepared for anything. So I'm putting real estate on the side for now.

**Karlie, it's been awesome! Thanks again for the interview. Any upcoming exciting plans you'd like to share with us?**

Not yet! I'm kind of figuring out in my head where I want to take all these different sports and where my body will let me take them. So that's something I still got to think through quite a bit, but I will let you know when I know. Thank you so much for getting in touch with me, Jen!





After 10 years as a professional athlete, Therese Taabbel is riding the winds of change. With new gear and new goals, she heads off to Sri Lanka to start a new chapter. Naturally, a trip to the tropics isn't complete without an unexpected twist! Join Therese in paradise in this IKSURFMAG exclusive feature!

WORDS THERESE TAABEL PHOTOS TOM SEAGER

# WINDS OF CHANGE



**“THE IDEAL DESTINATION NEEDED TO HAVE NICE SCENERY FOR THE VIDEO WHILE OFFERING GOOD TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.”**

I have never been more excited about change. Change is nerve-wracking and out of your comfort zone, but outside your comfort zone is where the magic happens. This year marks the start of a new chapter. What better way to begin than a radical change?

Partnering with CORE has been wildly exciting! Of course, the first step was to film my team introduction video, which meant going somewhere where I could also focus on learning new freestyle tricks for the upcoming competition season. That left me with limited options. The ideal destination needed to have nice scenery for the video while offering good training opportunities. Sri Lanka seemed like the perfect place.

My sights were set on Kalpitiya, a small town in the north of Sri Lanka, just three hours from Colombo. It's not easy to find consistent freestyle conditions in January and February, but I had been to this spot before, in 2019, and experienced great conditions with steady wind but a slightly too small lagoon. This year, I had heard rumours that a new, larger lagoon had appeared, a perfect shape with deep, flat water. I knew I had to go back and check it out for myself.

On a recent trip to Brazil, I had teamed up on a shoot with a talented young gun, Tom Seager. He is a strong kitesurfer, passionate photographer, and creative videographer. He is the perfect guy behind the lens for a video shoot, as his young motivation sets the tone for everything he does. So I called Tom, and we booked our tickets to Sri Lanka.



PHOTO MARTIN THOMAS

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**“ I KNEW I NEEDED SOME EXTRA SUPPORT  
TO BUILD BACK MY CONFIDENCE ”**

After my recent ACL injury, getting back on the water has been a slow, steady process. I knew I needed some extra support to build back my confidence and push myself to reach that next level. Zac Andrews, one of the world's best kitesurf coaches, has his base in Sri Lanka. I coached with Zac back in 2019, and with his help, I learned many new tricks. With Tom and Zac on my team, I knew this trip would be the perfect combination of shooting and training. Sri Lanka has several different routes from Europe, and if you book in time, it is quite affordable. From Colombo airport, it's a 3-hour transfer to Kalpitiya. From December until March, the wind blows northwest almost every day in the winter season, averaging between 12 and 20 knots. The conditions were dreamy, and most days were perfect for my 11m CORE Impact.

The new lagoon is big, leaving plenty of space for freeride, winging, foiling, and freestyle. You can stay right next to the lagoon and walk from breakfast straight to the beach when the wind kicks in during the late morning, and it continues to build throughout the day. It's the perfect set-up for a kite trip!



“ZAC GAVE ME SOME EXCELLENT INSIGHTS, MY NEW KITES HAD MORE SLACK, AND THE CONDITIONS WERE PERFECT.”

One morning, I went out early with Zac to work on my S-mobe. Since injuring my knee on this specific trick, it has taken me some time to build back my confidence with it.

Zac gave me some excellent insights, my new kites had more slack, and the conditions were perfect. With a motivated mindset in the ultimate setting for pure fun on the water, everything came together. I am now performing the S-mobe with 100% confidence.

We'd focused more on training in the first

part of the trip, so I could get used to my new kites and build up my level so that we could capture some solid tricks in the video. The sky had also been grey, so it wasn't ideal shooting conditions. We had gotten a few tricks on video but were saving most of the filming for the last week of the trip when the skies would clear. Everything was running smoothly up until that last week.



**“ IN THE DAYS BEFORE, THE WOUND HAD LOOKED TOTALLY FINE AND HARMLESS. ”**

We had just taken an hour and a half boat ride out to this perfect tiny island called Vella to film some beautiful drone shots. We had 200 metres of flat, blue water to ourselves. The wind had already kicked in when we got there, so I pumped my 13m Impact, and Tom put up the drone. After half an hour on the water, out of nowhere, I felt so sick that I had to take a break.

My first thought was, "I did push myself a lot over the past days; maybe my body is telling me to take a rest". After some time, I wasn't feeling any better, so we took the boat back. I was disappointed that we couldn't get all the drone shots that we had planned, but there was no way I could have gone back on the water. I had never felt this sick before, and it was a miracle that I didn't faint on the bumpy boat ride home. I went straight to bed and was fast asleep before the sun had set.

The next morning, I woke up to discover that my entire lower leg was completely red. I had gotten a small wound on my shin two weeks before in Cape Town, while attempting board offs. My wound was no longer small, and it was clear that I had a serious infection. I went straight to the hospital, where I spent the next two days with an IV in my arm delivering me much-needed antibiotics. I was shocked by how quickly the infection spread. In the days before, the wound had looked totally fine and harmless. I guess it's a good reminder to keep an eye on your cuts when you are in the tropics!



“AFTER TWO DAYS, I WAS READY TO BREAK OUT.”

It wasn't the Sri Lankan experience I had in mind, but they took good care of me in the hospital. It was a private hospital, but the room had no windows and the thin mattress made it feel more like a prison! However, the staff were kind and competent, and I felt safe. But, after two days, I was ready to break out. The antibiotics had started to do their job, and the infection and swelling had subsided. My ankle had swollen up to the size of a ball, but the redness around the wound was gone, so the doctor sent me home.



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**“ WE SUPPORT EACH OTHER BY BRINGING OUR INDIVIDUAL STRENGTHS TOGETHER. ”**

When I got out of the hospital, I had a few days left, but I was not allowed to go to the water. I was too tired and weak after being sick to find the energy to go out and explore. Instead, I focused on catching up on work, recharging and resting before flying back home. The next few days were the perfect chance to decompress and think about all the changes that have come my way.

After building the first 10 years of my career with Cabrinha, making the switch to CORE was a huge decision. I had felt it was time for a change and new challenges. Being a competitive freestyler, one of the most important factors is to have a specific freestyle kite, and CORE has one of the best c-kites on the market. If I wanted to take my freestyle to the next level and realise my personal goals, I needed to have the best kite. I knew that I wanted to ride the Impact kite, so I approached CORE. We had a few meetings, and like a first date, there was

great chemistry with the team. It felt right. With CORE, we support each other by bringing our individual strengths together. I can't wait to see what the future holds!

Even after only a couple of weeks riding the Impact, I can already feel a huge difference in my riding. I'm sure my jump height will increase 50% when I get the XR7, haha! This has been the best decision in my career. Everything is produced with quality in mind, from the packaging to the pump. It is done the German way, with pure quality and performance. It's like driving the fastest car in Formula One. That edge can make all the difference.

**“ I KNEW I HADN'T ACCOMPLISHED EVERYTHING I'D HOPED TO ON THIS TRIP, BUT I FELT READY TO PUSH FORWARD. ”**

As I was packing up to go home, I knew I hadn't accomplished everything I'd hoped to on this trip, but I felt ready to push forward. Sri Lanka has this beautiful and peaceful energy with humble and friendly locals. If you are searching for introspection, there are yoga and meditation classes. You can wake up in the morning with a peaceful sunrise and spend time looking inwards. But if it's a kite community you're looking for, this is the place. It's a popular kite destination with an amazing vibe for socialising and meeting new people. Whatever you are searching for, you can find it here. I'm definitely coming back again next year!

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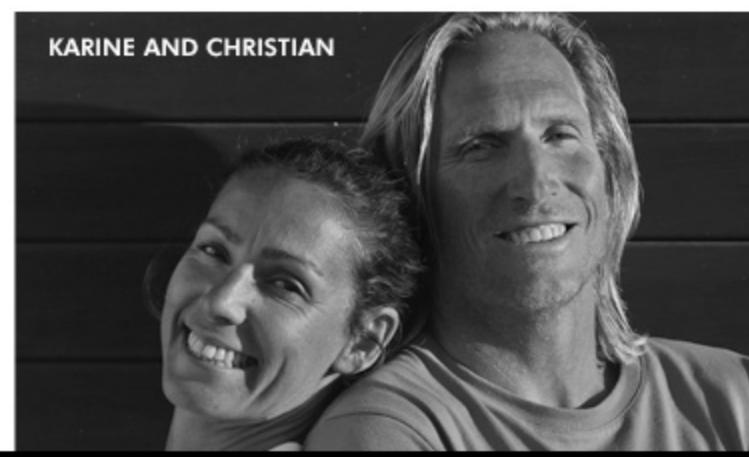
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# TECHNIQUE

WORDS & PHOTOS CHRISTIAN & KARINE



KARINE AND CHRISTIAN

Couple of crackers for this issue! First off, we continue with your meteoric rise through all things twin tip toe side. Making the most of your new found friend, we'll take you through the joys of popping from toeside back to your old best friend, heelside. Then, in preparation for the icy winds forecast in parts of Europe for this week, or if you just fancy steezing straight off the beach, it's onto the twin tip beach start - a sure-fire way of impressing your peers, and a joyous method to delay the inevitable first dip.

Have fun. C&K.

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## 1 / HOOKED POP FROM TOESIDE TO HEELSIDE 2 / TWIN TIP BEACH START



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## HOOKED POP FROM TOESIDE ► TO HEELSIDE

**KITE** – Cabrinha Switchblade 8m

**BOARD** – X-CAL 138

To continue our quest of all things toeside, it's time to throw the pop from toeside into the mix. Now that you're getting more comfortable, having dialled in your toeside and added the pop to toeside, it's surely time to have a tasty way to get back to heelside. Not only that, once you master this, you'll have popping from toeside on tap, which will open the door to an unfathomable number of moves, tricks and challenges. What's more, here you'll be learning how to get off the water without using your kite from your toes, but then the getting back to heelside part is already pre-programmed in your very being. So, let's not beat about the bush and get straight to it.

**READY POSITION - YOUR TOESIDE PIC A.**

Hopefully, you've read the previous few articles and watched the "how to fix your toeside video". If so, you know what we're looking for. A quick recap of your stance never hurts. Bar trimmed in enough that you can set up and gain speed using two hands. The chest and hips face forwards, shoulders up, your weight committed upwind, and hips forwards so you can now apply pressure against your edge with both feet. This comes from your ankles. The more you flex your ankles, the lower and more forward you can drive your knees. With your knees driving you, edge against the pull from your kite and put tension on the lines. The more you push, the further upwind you can drive the board. Karine's hands are centred on the bar,

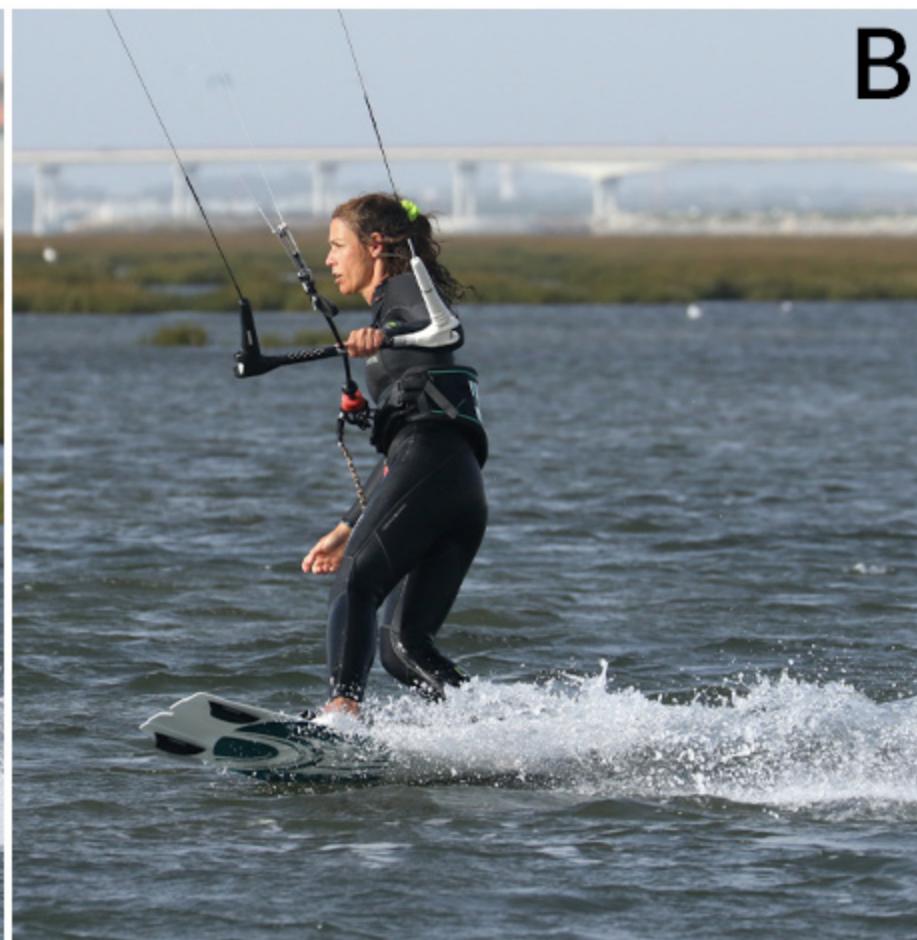


A

she's looking forwards, her chest and hips are open, facing the nose of the board, her knees and feet twist forwards, as she flexes her ankles and drives against the toeside edge of the board with the balls of her feet. For the pop, your kite wants to be parked somewhere just above the mythical 11 or 1 o'clock.

**RELAX PIC B**

No different to a cheeky pop on your heels, you'll find it unfeasibly difficult to pop from a strong upwind edge. The position we just revisited is all about resistance and tension - miraculous when your aim is to head upwind. However, it means that every sinew in your body is driving against your edge. With all that pressure locked in, you'd need herculean strength to stamp against it. Don't get us wrong, for your set up,



B

it's picture-perfect, but you can't pop from here.

Best way to lose tension? Relax. :) That's exactly what the plan is; relax your edge. This way, you can stay in position, keep your speed, but release some of that tension. If you look at Karine, she's standing up more, effectively extending herself over the board. She's released her front hand, enabling her to sheet the bar out a fraction so she doesn't need to edge as hard. She's gone into cruise mode, still on an edge but not firing upwind, relaxed and balanced. In essence, you're edging without driving; you can even relax your kite face! Depending on how much you relax your edge, your board will change course to more across the wind or slightly off the wind. It doesn't need to be much, just enough to take the pressure off.



### CARVE AND COMPRESS PIC C

The reason you relax is so that you're ready to give it your all. You're going to carve into your takeoff, and as with all things carving, it's about compressing and extending. You've just done the first extend, and now it's time to compress. At first, your carve doesn't need to be anything near radical; it's just about putting tension back on the lines and building resistance with the board so that you have something to stamp against. To carve back onto your edge, you want to use as much of the board as possible, this means keeping weight on both feet. You need to drive the board back onto its edge. Just like a fine toeside, it all starts with your ankles, flexing them so that you can get your knees across and turn the board.



If you look at Karine, she's released her front hand from the bar, dropped her weight, pushed her knees across the board, dropped her shoulders forwards, and, as such, the board turns up on all its edge. The final thought here is to sheet the bar out so you can turn away from the kite. If you pull in on the bar, the kite will pull you, and you won't be able to carve. Think of this stage as a progressive carve rather than an aggressive change of direction. In simple terms, you're merely carving back onto your edge.

### YOU DECIDE PIC D

A pop happens because you say so! Heel or toe, you can't wait for it to happen – you make it happen. Popping is all about dynamism, the sudden stamp, extension and explosion. Your aim is to kick against

the board from your strong toeside position. The beauty is that with weight on both feet, you're free to stomp with all your might with both legs. Whereas if all your weight is directed solely over your back foot as you carve up, you'll need ridiculous strength to pop. Yes, once again, it's about technique, not brute force. Timing is crucial. As soon as you are carving, the tension is replaced, and you can pop. Wait too long and you'll either be overpowered or stop. To launch yourself, you'll use both legs. You will automatically detonate the front leg a fraction of a second before the back leg (because there will be a bit less weight on it). As your front leg extends, it throws your weight back onto your back foot and the tail of the board, which will enable you to stamp off your back leg with virtually no weight on it.

In the pic, you can see that Karine's front leg is extending. This suddenly pushes her weight back so that she can...

#### STAMP & EXTEND PIC E

We've said it before, but this is the popping equivalent of a heartbeat. As you kick off with your front leg and your weight shifts back, you have a split second when it's easy to stamp before you feel all the tension from the lines and board. You're trying to stamp against your back foot rather than your toes. To be explosive, you need a hefty launch pad, and a couple of pinkies definitely won't cut the mustard. The great thing is that with your weight back and this heartbeat one-two kick-off, the nose of the board will rise steeply, which will give you confidence for the next bit even if you only get it a few centimetres off the water. Here Karine has stamped hard, extending her back leg, corking the board off the water. As she extends and rises, she gives the bar a little tweak in for good measure. This can give you a little lift, but more importantly, it will pull you up over the board.

#### TO HEEL PIC F

Once you're up off the water, it's all about keeping your balance so that you can get back to heelside. This means staying over the board so that you can land on the board. Although you're aiming to get back to heelside, you don't want to land on your edge, but flat. Having pulled the bar in slightly on takeoff, the kite will pull you towards it. The caveat here is that if the kite has moved up to 12 o'clock, it won't. Steady yourself on the bar and think of lifting your rear leg up. You'll find that as it rises, you'll start turning.





Bring your free hand forward to give you a sense of direction. Realistically your body is screaming to get the board back around to its preferred orientation, your harness is desperately trying to untwist you. In fact, it's almost as if gravity itself wants you to land heelside. As long as you're balanced and over the board, it will be "almost" automatic. Have a look at Karine, and you can see she's got her eyes on the prize, looking where she wants to go. Her head and shoulders are forwards over the board. As she lifts her back leg, the kite is pulling on her harness hook and untwisting her. Karine is also bringing her free hand forwards. A heelside landing is most definitely in the post.

#### STOMP IT PIC G

And as if by magic! The final part of the jigsaw - landing. Once your rear foot starts to move forwards, you can drop what was your front leg. This is about to become the tail, and as long as it lands first, your board will touch down softly, even if you haven't made it all the way around. Karine is over her board and ready for landing.

#### TOP TIPS

It's worth pondering here that this is a pop, and therefore it will all happen very quickly. The first thing you should do is practice on land with no kite or



board. A simple 180 from toeside to heelside. Keep your shoulders facing forwards before springing up and turning. With your chest open, only your lower body has to work to change stance.

Once on the water, practice relaxing your edge and then carving back up; a mini zig zag. This way, you'll get an idea of the necessary change of direction and a feel for the resistance returning as you carve back onto your edge. At the end of the day, this move is carve and go!

Find some flat water, and start with your kite a tad higher. This may mean that you land with little speed,



but it will give you the confidence to go for it.

Just like popping to toeside, you only need to get the board off the water. Relax your toeside edge and then move back onto it, stamping immediately. Once you've got the movement, you can then relax more and carve longer.

Have a look at the sequence to see it step by step, and then check out the video for a full how-to.

### COMMON PROBLEMS

You can't get off the water. Not relaxing your edge. It's tempting to try and pop whilst riding toeside, but without relaxing your edge first, you'll find that there is just too much pressure going through your back leg, and as a result, nothing will happen.

If you get left behind and land heavily on an edge,

it's because you're not over the board. The most common reason for this is that you're leaning your shoulders back towards the tail of the board before stamping. As the front leg extends, only your hips should move back. Keep your shoulders forward by breaking at the waist.

It's working, but no matter how much effort you put in, you're only just getting off the water. This is almost the reverse of the last problem. If you only concentrate on staying forwards and over the board, it can be very difficult to stamp aggressively and fully extend your back leg as your weight isn't above your back foot. Make sure you drop your hips as the front leg kicks and fully extend your back leg. Don't rush to bring your back leg up.

### KEYSTONES

1. Stand up to relax edge
2. Drop hand and carve with ankles and knees
3. Stamp with both legs, heartbeat pop
4. Pull bar to stay over board
5. Bring rear foot up and through, push front leg down



## TWIN TIP BEACH START ▶

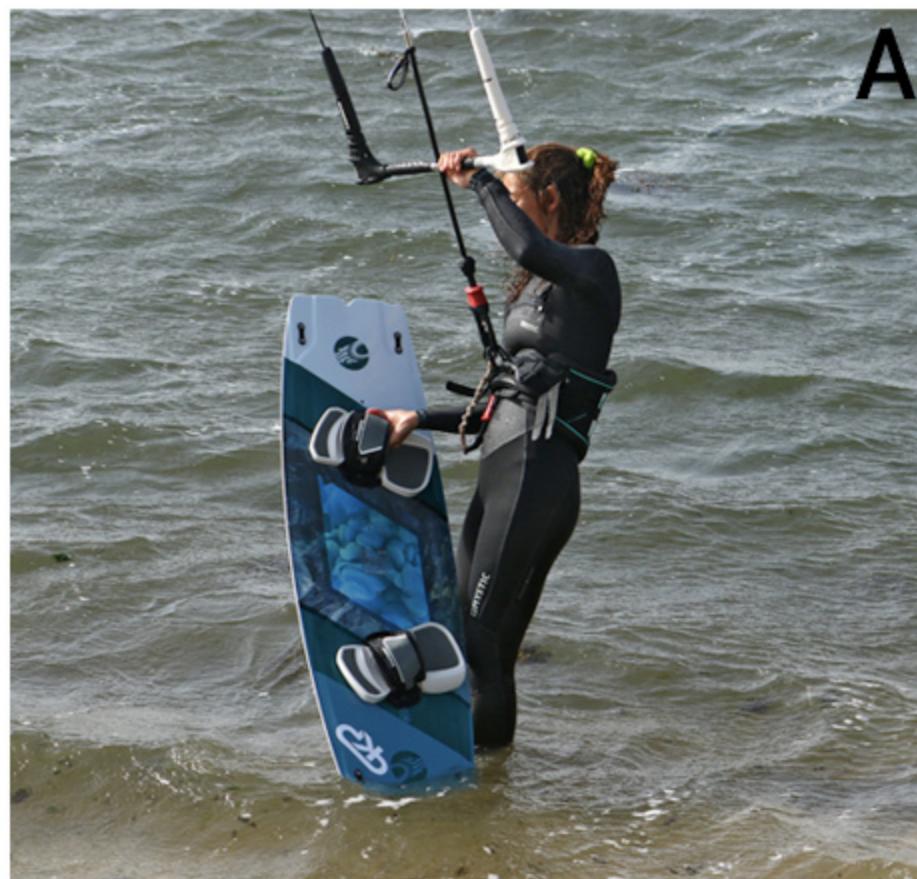
KITE – Cabrinha Switchblade 8m

BOARD – X-CAL 138

Come on, admit it, it's something we all want to do. Casually stroll up to the water's edge, drop the board, hop on and sail off into the great blue yonder with hardly a hair out of place and a completely dry derriere. So here it is, the beach start. As with all great moves, it's not just stylish but brilliantly practical. It's one thing cooling yourself down post pumping in hot climes and bikinis n' boardshorts. But keeping dry and warm on your first run can be a great warm-up and total blessing for those of us in cooler parts of the world.

Couple of things to take into consideration before giving this a go. You need room to safely dive your kite, to get on the board and be pulled towards the kite, and just in case, enough room to crash your kite. This brings up the question of wind direction. If it's blowing dead onshore, you'll need to walk a good distance out if it's shallow enough. Should it get deep too quickly, leave it for another day or another spot. Diving your kite into a sharp palm tree or scooting up dry shingle on your nose is overrated! Water depth and, therefore, the seabed, are also important. The beach start works best in anything under knee-deep. The deeper, the harder. This may well tempt you into very shallow water, but if the bottom is hard or rocky, there will be unpleasant consequences should it all go Pete Tong. Common sense should prevail.

Right, Mum and Dad chat over, let's see how the



beach start works. In the photos, the wind is blowing cross with the tiniest bit of on. The bottom is soft sand, and shelves off quickly.

## WALKING IN PIC A

Best way to walk in is likely the way you normally would, front hand holding the board, whilst your rear hand controls the kite and flies it away from the beach at around 1 or 11 o'clock. The easiest way to hold the board is by the front foot strap. This will make it easier to place the board where you want it. Once you're in a few centimetres of water, you can drag the board in front of you as you crab out. Karine has her rear hand centred on the bar. Her sweet spot is relatively far out, as she will need power, lift and support from the kite. She's holding her board by the front foot strap, and she's walking out to calf-deep water. You can happily



wait in this position if you need to let someone pass or some white-water wash through.

## BOARD DROP PIC B

Whilst positioning your board, it's always good to keep the kite forwards. This way, if anything happens or a gust hits, you can let go of the bar, and the kite will drop around the edge of the window with no risk of getting lofted in shallow water. You want to drop your board angled upwind close to your front foot. If you twist your upper body to look upwind, you can then drop the board. Holding your board by the front strap means that the tail is in the water, and therefore the board won't flip as you release it unless it's very windy. The other advantage of holding the board this way is that you can just drop it, you don't need to bend low or squat down.



C

As such, you're far less likely to accidentally pull on the bar. You can see how Karine has twisted her body upwind, her kite is still around 1 o'clock, and she's let go of the foot strap so that the board drops down close to her front leg, pointing as if she was riding upwind.

#### FRONT FOOT FIRST PIC C

Your aim now is to get your front foot in the strap. You may find this simpler with some support from the kite. If you pull gently on the bar, the kite will support you. You can do this with either one or both hands on the bar.

Gently moving the kite to 12 will also support you. Watch your front foot into the strap. It won't go all the way in without some pressure, especially if you have neoprene on your feet, but try to get your heel over the pad. In the photo, you can see that Karine has slowly moved the kite up to 12 and pulled the bar in for some support. She's looking at her strap and watching her front foot in. As you do this, the front of the board may sink. At this point, it's not a problem. If it does, gently lift your toes and bring your knee up so that your board is close to the surface.

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## KITE BACK PIC D

With your front foot in, you're ready to rock. It's fair to say that the wind affects this next bit considerably. Standing on one leg with a bit of help from your kite is relatively simple in constant wind. However, if the wind is gusty, you will find that the odd little hop to keep balance is needed. It shouldn't look like you're changing out of your wetsuit in the shallows, but you'll unlikely have the poise of Nureyev. With both hands narrow on the bar, you want to move the kite slowly back to either 1 or 11 o'clock, whichever is away from the direction you intend to go. Keep the bar pulled slightly in to stop the kite bouncing about. And keep your toes up to keep your board in place.

D



The reason to move your kite back is so that you can use it for lift to help you get on the board without sinking it. If you start at 12 o'clock you can only dive the kite down into the window, which is likely to end in tears. Looking at Karine, she's pulled the bar in a touch as she moves the kite back to 11 o'clock. Her hands are narrow on the bar. She's watching the kite, and even though the nose of her board is submerged, she keeps her toes and forefoot up so that it can't go anywhere.

## GREEN LIGHT PIC E

With the kite in position, it's best not to hang around. Your aim is to positively steer the kite forwards so that it moves from, in this case, 11 to 1 o'clock. As it turns,

it will go up, giving you lift, which you can use to hold you and prevent the board from sinking as you step onto it. In the photo, Karine is steering her kite forward with a very positive action. She wants to get it moving. She's watching her kite so that she can see once it's turned and starts moving forwards. In anticipation of what's to come, she lifts her front foot, holding the nose and toeside edge above the water.

## UP AND ON PIC F

Once the kite turns and starts to move, it will lift on your harness. If you watch your kite, you'll know when it starts to move across the window. As it does, you can level the bar, as you don't want it to dive down.

E



You can control the lift by sheeting in or out and use it to support you by sitting in your harness so that you can lift your back foot into the strap without pushing the nose down underwater. Karine has swapped her gaze from kite to board and is watching her back foot into the strap. She's pulled in on the bar to take the weight off her front foot, and she's levelled the bar to stop the kite diving. With the bar level, the kite will still move, but it won't turn down.

#### EDGE AND GO PIC G

Once your back foot is in, it's full steam ahead.



Drop your weight onto your heels and twist to look upwind. This will push your hips back and set you into your riding position. As you do this, you can dive the kite. You'll be in a good position to take the power as it comes on. You can see that Karine has dived the kite, dropped her weight upwind and back, directing the board where she wants to go. Bingo.

#### TOP TIPS

Although it's not always possible, finding some shallow flat water will make life easier. If you're fighting a shore break and moving water, learning will be tricky.

If you ride with your straps tight, try loosening them a little for your first attempts, as it will make slotting your feet in easier. However, if they're too loose, you won't be able to hold the nose up, so don't go mad.

Be gentle when you turn the kite to get the hang of things. This will probably result in little or no lift. However, as the kite moves, you can sit into the water and then dive again to start. Once you've built your confidence, you can steer the kite more quickly to get the up and over 12 o'clock lift.

Have a look at the sequence and check out the full video to get yourself prepared...



### COMMON PROBLEMS

Having a hard time keeping your balance. Use the kite. It's there to support you. And make sure the board is not too far away from you when you drop it. If you're stretching and reaching, you won't be balanced.

Not getting any lift to step the back foot up. Two solutions. Make sure you take the kite back before starting. Only if your kite starts at 11 or 1 will you generate lift. If you start at 12, you'll only get forward or downwind power. If the kite is behind you but still no lift, you'll need to be more aggressive with your steering forwards. Remember, it can be aggressive, but only momentarily before you level the bar to straighten up the kite's flying line.

Always sinking the nose and getting pulled over the handlebars. Sure sign that your kite isn't starting behind you. Take it back first.

### KEYSTONES

1. Front strap and kit forwards
2. Front foot first
3. Kite slowly back to 11 or 1 o'clock with bar slightly in
4. Positive steering forwards to generate lift
5. Watch back foot in, drop weight and dive kite





FORTALEZA



MANCORA



CABARETE



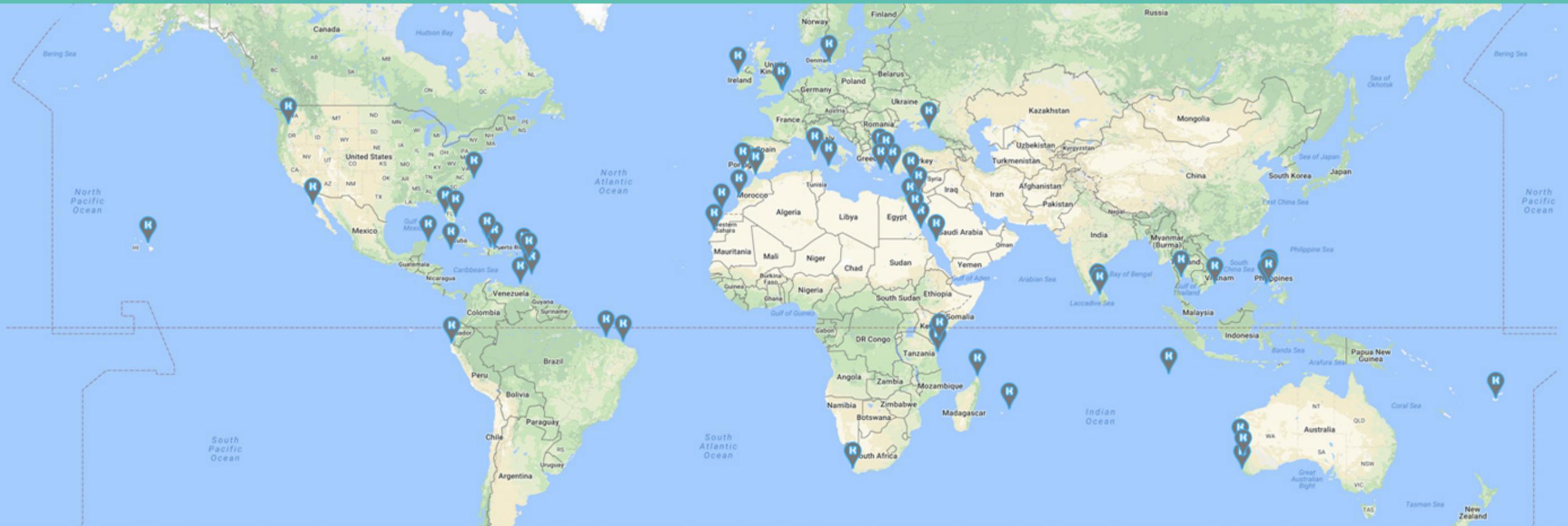
LANCELIN



DAKHLA

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CAPE HATTERAS



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UNION ISLAND



CAPE TOWN

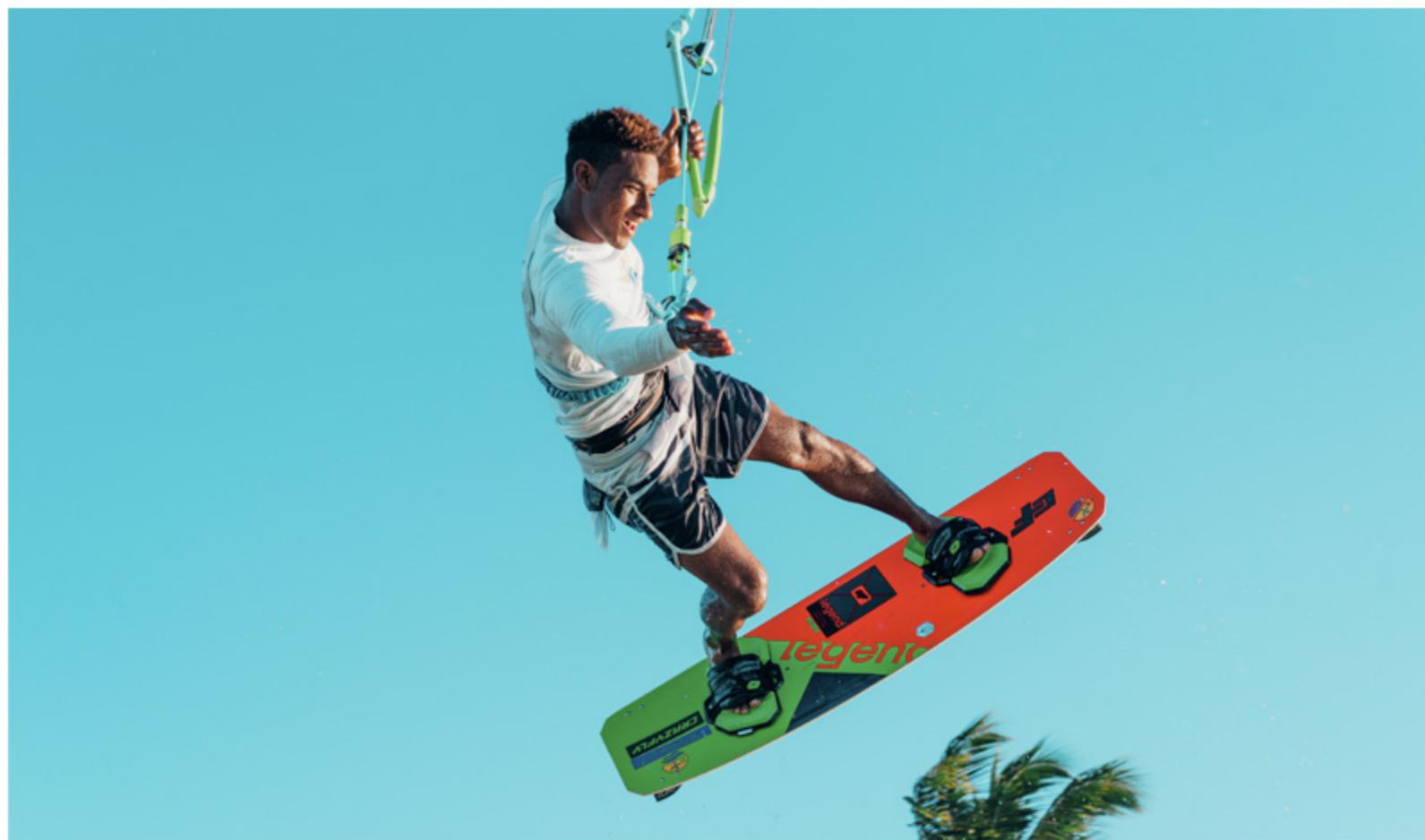
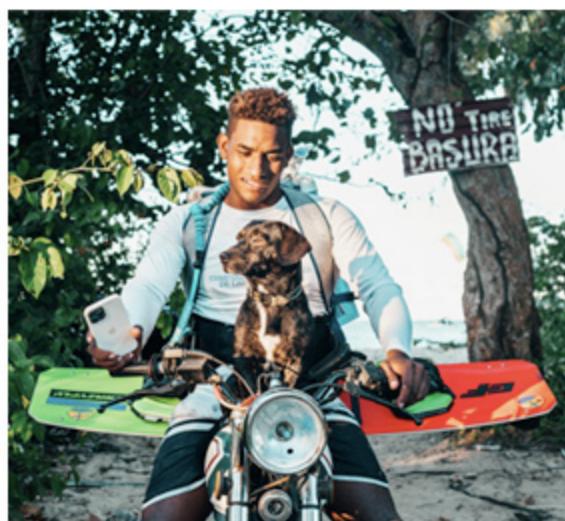


MAUI

# On The Fly

## INTRODUCING // LORENZO CALCANO

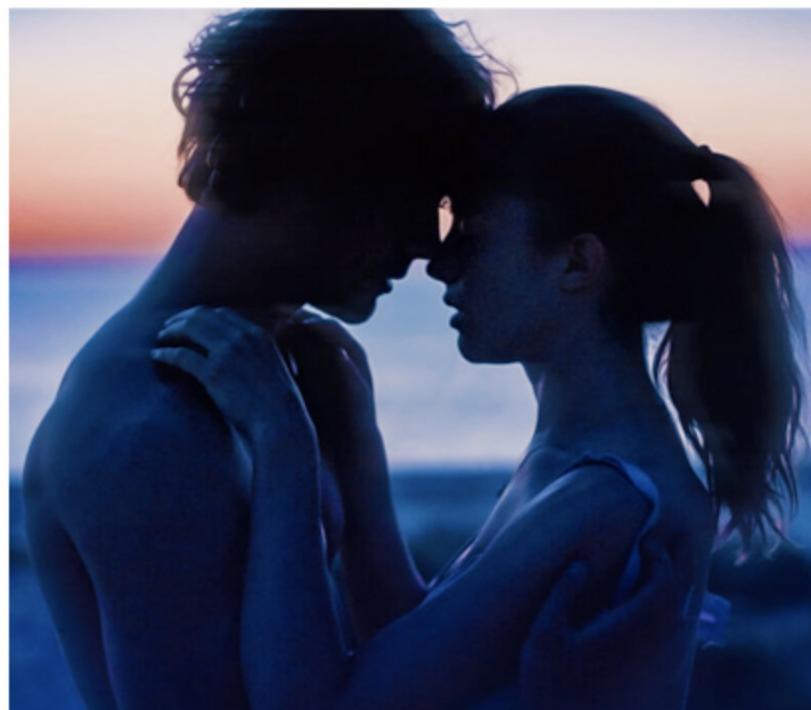
If you've been kiting in the Dominican Republic, you've undoubtedly seen this talented rider soaring through the sky! As a recent addition to the CrazyFly team, Lorenzo Calcano is ready to take it to the next level!



"I've been on the beach from a very young age because my family lived by the beach. When I was nine years old, my cousins and friend motivated me to start kitesurfing. Every day that I kited, I had more affection for it and more desire to learn. Now, I have 14 years of experience in the sport.

In the Dominican Republic, Las Terrenas is one of my favourite places to kite because there is a beautiful climate and dreamy beaches. I love Cabarete because the wind is stronger and the waves are great. And Las Salinas, at the south of the island, is an awesome spot with strong wind all year long.

I'm so happy to be part of the CrazyFly team, alongside Lillo Fourré and Posito Martinez! They have high-quality products, and I am using the Sculp kite and the Legend board for freestyle. I love to combine the Hyper kite with the Raptor Extreme board for big air. My goal for 2022 is to get a good result in each competition that comes up. I'm excited to represent my sponsors and the Dominican Republic!"



## On The Fly

# BEHIND THE SCENES // INTO THE WIND

Kitesurfing has made it onto the small screen, with Polish film *Pod Wiatr* getting an English dub and releasing internationally as *Into The Wind*. If you've been too busy kitesurfing to binge-watch all the newest releases on Netflix, you may have missed this one! We had to find out what went down behind the scenes of the latest major kitesurfing production, so we reached out to director Kristoffer Rus to find out more!



**When you first saw the script for *Pod Wiatr*, were you excited to help bring the story alive?**

Just the notion of being at the Hel Peninsula in the summer, shooting a feature film with extensive kitesurfing scenes, brought a warm smile to my face. I was born and raised in a seaside town in Sweden, so salty water and wind are something that makes me feel at home.

**Did you anticipate realistically capturing the kitesurfing components of the film would be a challenge?**

I was prepared for a challenge, but not the huge challenge that the water scenes turned out to be. Every day, reading wind stats with the production crew and planning water, boat, and aerial shots with the actors and stunt coordinator were great fun but very hard. Mother nature has a tendency to make you feel humble, especially when you have many shots to do and the wind disappears or the other way around, a storm comes and we need to rescue all the kites in the water and secure our crew. But overall, I believe that the conditions were very kind to us. Thank you, Mother Nature! We actually made rituals every night for us to have great weather conditions to shoot. I guess it worked!

## BEHIND THE SCENES // INTO THE WIND



PHOTOS ©NETFLIX



**How long was the filming period for the film? How many of those days were spent filming kitesurfing?**

We shot for 34 days over a period of 2 months, and I believe that around 30% of that time, we spent in or on the water shooting kite sequences. However, that doesn't mean that 30% of the movie is kiting scenes. It takes much more time to shoot action scenes on the water than dialogue scenes in a hotel. Nevertheless, the kitesurfing scenes really seem to resonate with people from all over the world.

**Poland has so many talented kitesurfers and some stunning beaches! What was it like working with local kitesurfers, like stunt double Marek Rowinski?**

Without local kitesurfers like Marek Rowiński or Maciej Szulikowski, this movie would not look as spectacular as it does. We were surrounded by experienced ocean people that were deeply involved in the preparations and the actual shooting. At ABC Surf in the village of Kuznica, Hel Peninsula, the actors learned to kitesurf long before we started the production of the film. Already in March 2021, the actors were brave enough to enter the water in spite of close to zero temperatures and icy winds. So, in many of the shots on the water, you can actually see our actors surfing in the movie. But of course, the most spectacular freestyle tricks are made by Marek Rowiński - a passionate, highly skilled kitesurfer with heaps of positive energy!

**Are you a kitesurfer? Did spending so much time at the kite spots inspire you to give it a try?**

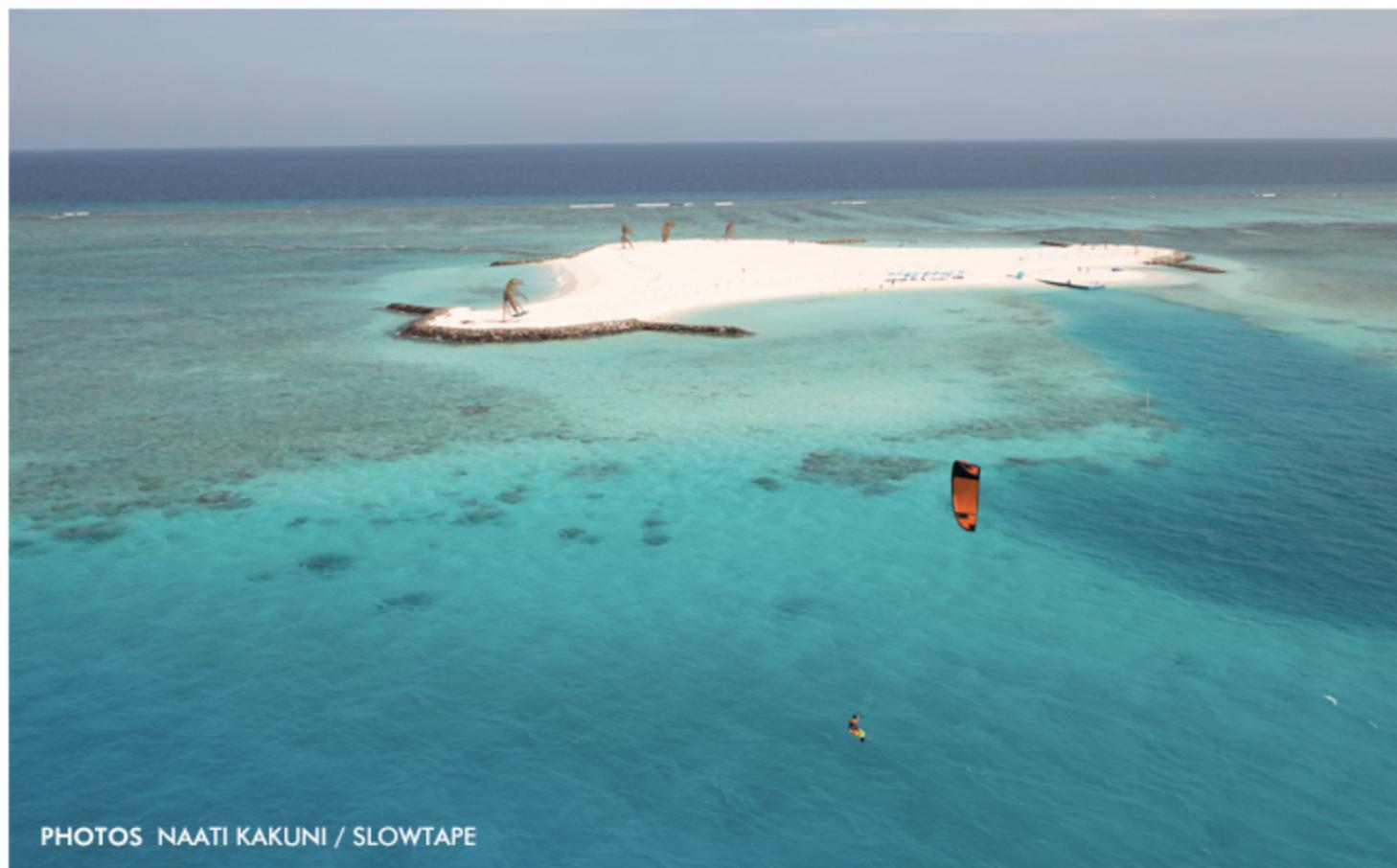
I've been fascinated by surfing for a long time, often forcing my family to go to Fuerteventura for holidays to catch some waves. But as we prepared for INTO THE WIND, crew members also wanted to learn and understand how it works. So, together with the crew and actors, I found myself spending quite a lot of time in the water learning to kitesurf. Now, I have an IKO level 3 certificate and can independently enjoy kitesurfing! I'm hooked, really hooked, and just waiting for the season to start at Hel Peninsula!

*On The Fly*

# MALDIVES // YOURI ZOON



Riding in the Maldives is always something special to me. The first time I came was in 2016, for the Raalhugudi Kite Fest. Every year since then, I have been coming back and seeing the sport grow each year. This year, I was there to help out with the first-ever kiteboarding competition in the Maldives.

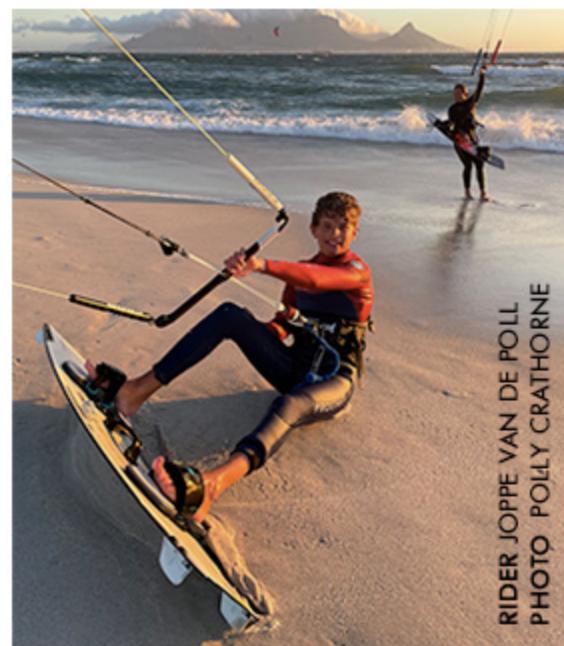
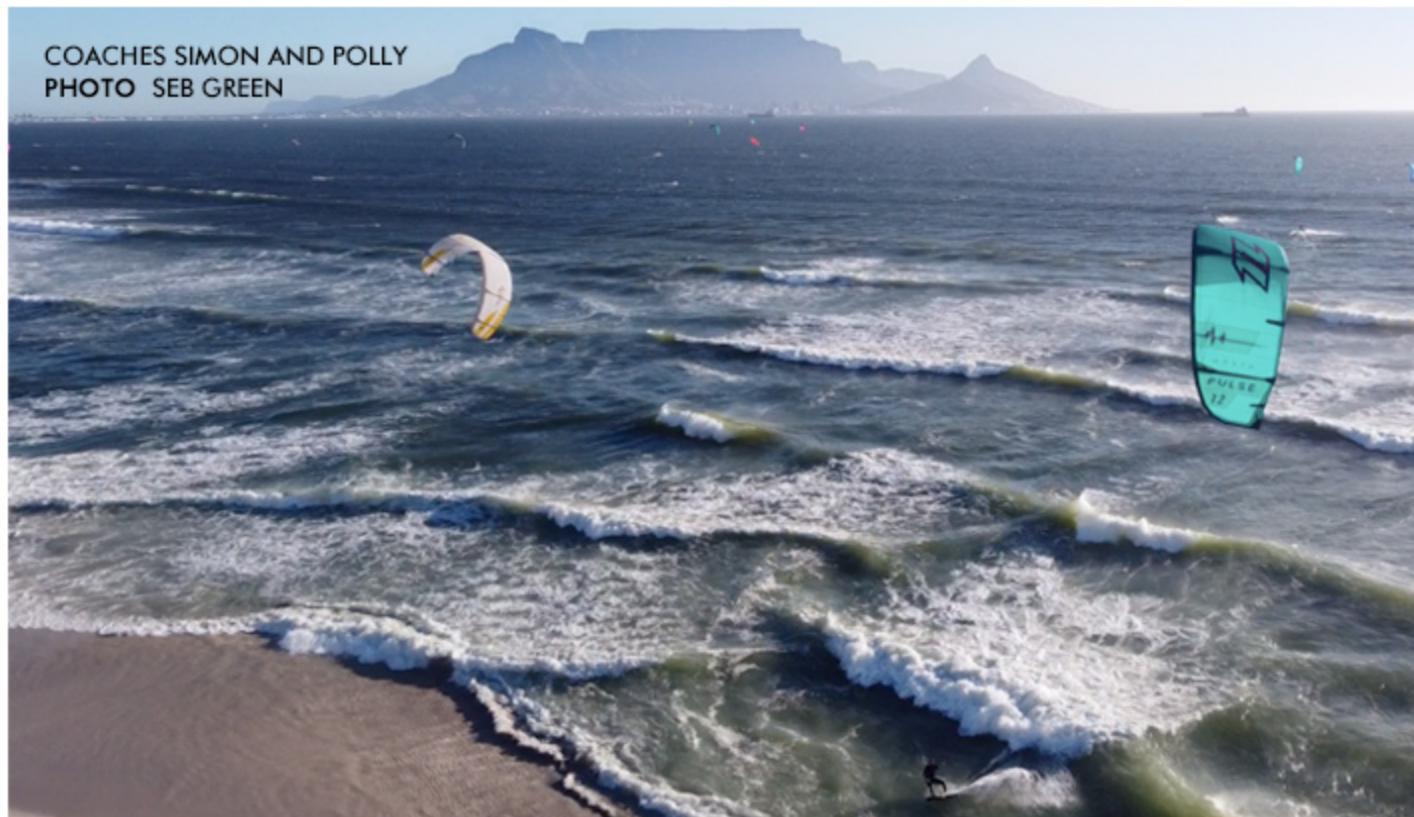


PHOTOS NAATI KAKUNI / SLOWTAPE



I was lucky to squeeze in some sessions myself! The Maldives has light wind days, but with the right gear, like this 15m Machine Light Wind from Slingshot, I rode every single day. Cruizing around the island in crystal clear water is just pure bliss!

COACHES SIMON AND POLLY  
PHOTO SEB GREEN



RIDER JOPPE VAN DE POLL  
PHOTO POLLY CRATHORNE

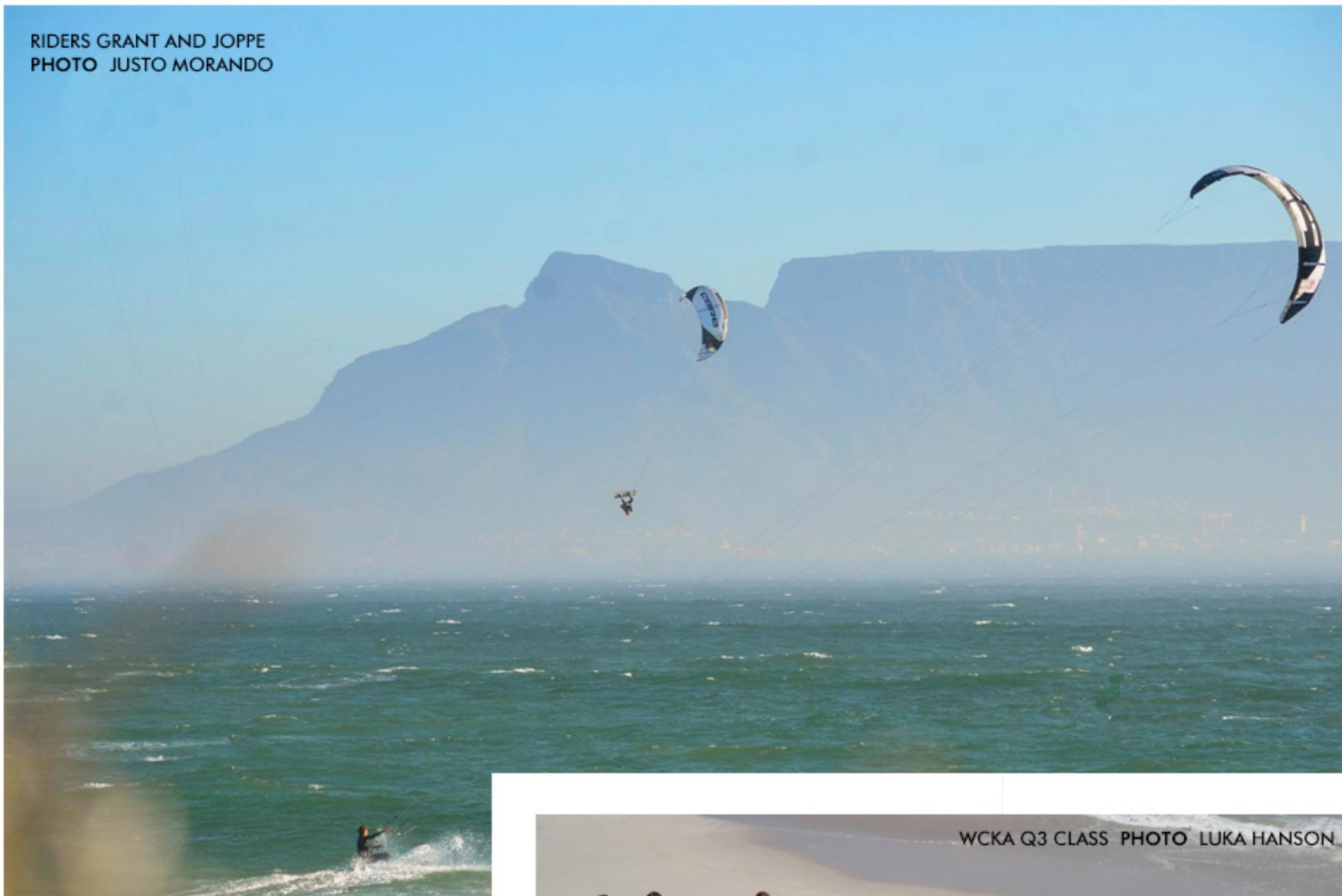
## On The Fly

# WORLD CLASS ACADEMY // POLLY CRATHORNE

Waiting to pass through customs amidst the rest of my fellow sleepy passengers from the UK overnight flight, I reflected on the last time I was at Cape Town International Airport. At the end of our quarter in South Africa in March 2020, the news was breaking of the magnitude of the pandemic. Two years ago, I was handing our World Class Kiteboarding Academy (WCKA) students personal protective equipment in the form of dust masks sourced from the hardware store. I naïvely waved them onto planes destined for their family homes in Mexico, America, the UK, Mauritius, Germany, Holland, Canada, Belgium, Egypt and Portugal. I did not know that this group of twenty students, who had spent between one and four years travelling, studying and kiting together, would not be able to meet again for their final term at high school or their graduation ceremony.

Fast-forward two years. I felt jubilant to be back on South African soil for the first time again with this year's WCKA cohort. I have been Head Coach, Literature and Social Studies teacher at the travelling High School for kiteboarding students for four years and taught in multiple destinations. South Africa remains a favourite destination for our students and staff for the culture, the landscapes, the people, and, of course, the conditions. We began our time in Langebaan, the stomping ground of our WCKA alumni Luca Ceruti, before transitioning to WCKA alumni Camdyn Kellet's backyard, Cape Town. Each morning we were spoilt for choice for workout locations in the Table View neighbourhood. Pull-ups in the park's jungle gym, swimming in the surf break at Blouberg or running to Big Bay and back with iconic views of Table Mountain and the city dominating the horizon. Then we would head back to Rosie's on Coral Road for the school day, with a full roster of all the core subjects. Faithful friend of World Class, Rosie, hosts the school in her cosy kitesurfing backpackers' accommodation. I was reminded of the unwanted guests we brought with us two years ago. Head lice! It turns out talented kitesurfing kids can also suffer from the same insect infestations prolific at my non-kitesurfing, non-travelling school growing up.

RIDERS GRANT AND JOPPE  
PHOTO JUSTO MORANDO



WCKA Q3 CLASS PHOTO LUKA HANSON

*On The Fly*

# WORLD CLASS ACADEMY //

## POLLY CRATHORNE

School projects this quarter included a home composting project in science, a rap on racial injustice in South Africa in history class, investing on the virtual stock exchange in economics, kite edits in media productions class and 'build your own experiment' in chemistry class.

After six hours of lessons at Rosie's, shouts of "kite meeting" would echo around 'campus' and we gathered our gear and got down to Blouberg beach. We kited our socks off in all sorts of conditions this year. Then, at sunset, with sand blowing into our smiling faces, we folded up our 7m kites and discussed whether the dorsal fin we saw in the water belonged to a sunfish or something more sinister.

One big air day, we held our school competition at Blouberg. Students competed in heats for honour (and a tiny replica King of the Air trophy from a souvenir stall in Greenmarket Square). Grant Mayo took the win, impressing the judges - alumni Luca Ceruti and Camdyn Kellet - with his smooth boogie loops, while Lukas Hanson's backroll kite loops and Joppe van de Poll's kite loop late backroll on the final buzzer sent spectators wild and had them tied for runner up.

There is a sense in Blouberg that you have your finger on the pulse of the kite industry. Whether that's being in the presence of Big Air royalty as they sailed into the new territory of "double loops", or kite brand dealer meetings taking place in the neighbourhood; or having magazine editors, like IKSURF's Crystal, just across the road. This season, there was a buzz as the easing of covid restrictions allowed businesses to open, tourists like us to filter in, and competitions to run again. We were thrilled to be part of it.

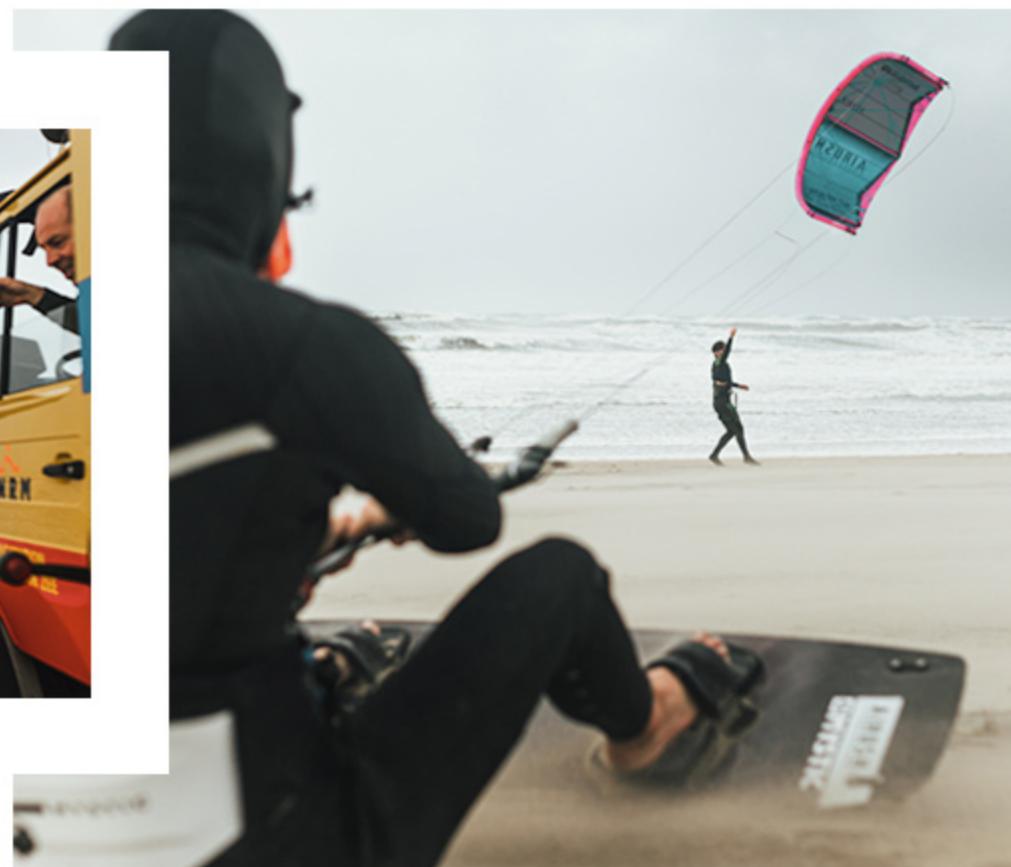
On The Fly

# STORM SESSION //

## GIJS WASSENAAR

The forecast was insane, like never before, and it was about to hit Holland! Looking at the predicted wind, I decided to get myself a 5m the day before the storm arrived.

PHOTOS DANNY HOUWAART



On the morning of the storm, we could see the wind getting stronger by the minute, so we prepared our 7m kites. As a group of experienced kiteboarders, we kept an eye out for each other, but the wind started gusting 55-60 knots after about an hour. A few minutes later, we decided to pack up our 7m's and pump our 5m kites. I had to attach the lines to it indoors because it wasn't possible on the beach - with snow goggles on, we were still getting sandblasted!

When I launched the kite, it behaved pretty well in 60-70 knots of wind! The main problem was the current in the water; even when I was just cruising, I drifted downwind. The police and coast guard came because someone had called, suspecting there was a kiter in trouble. Luckily, there wasn't, and I could reassure them of that. They said if I went out again, I'd be on my own, so that was the moment I decided to call it a day! It was intense, extreme, but all under control with trusted people around to keep it safe.

PHOTOS LUKAS STILLER  
RIDER VALENTIN RODRIGUEZ



*On The Fly*

## GKA // SALINAS DEL REY, COLOMBIA

All eyes were on the action at the GKA Freestyle World Cup, which just had its first stop of the season in Colombia. For the first time, the GKA Kite World Tour arrived at the windy paradise of Salinas del Rey. On Colombia's Caribbean coast, kitesurfers from all over the world came to experience one of the country's best kite spots.



With ten different countries represented in the rider's selection, Salinas del Rey saw some of the world's best kitesurfers enjoying their spot and competing for the season's first podium. The excitement and energy were apparent amongst the 22 men and six women competing in the event. Included in the crew were several talented Colombians, including 2019 GKA Freestyle World Champion Valentin Rodriguez.

One of the rising stars of kiting, Juan Rodriguez, was stoked to have a GKA event in his home country and even more stoked to make it on the podium in 3rd place, behind Brazil's Manoel Soares in 1st and Carlos Mario in 2nd. Mikaili Sol started her season off strong on the women's side, claiming her 1st place spot, with Bruna Kajiya from Brazil in 2nd and Rita Arnaus from Spain in 3rd.

Spectators on the spot and following along online were treated to an action-packed event in a beautiful kite spot that promises to be one of the hottest new destinations in South America.

Salinas del Rey, located just outside the small fishing village of Santa Veronica, has an incredible point break that barrels down the coast. On the inside, flat water is available, thanks to the protection from the point. With warm water, windy conditions, and the option to kite in either waves or flat water, it's clear why this spot has made such a strong impression in the kiting community!

On The Fly

# GKA // SALINAS DEL REY, COLOMBIA

RIDER CARLOS MARIO  
PHOTO LUKAS STILLER



The wind in northern Colombia blows side onshore and is consistent from December until April. With warm water and no chance of rain, you can leave your wetsuits at home.

While Colombia might seem a world away for many visitors travelling from Europe or North America, where most of our readers are, there are plenty of convenient available and two airports near the spot in Barranquilla and the major hub of Cartagena.

There's nothing like riding in a still up-and-coming spot with uncrowded water and peaceful beaches. With the perfect conditions broadcasted to the kite world during the GKA event, that is sure to change soon! Perhaps a visit to Salinas del Rey, Colombia, is in order... Sooner rather than later!



GKA Freestyle World Cup



*On The Fly*

## ZANZIBAR // SQUATTER REUBEN TAYLOR

I'm a Maasai from Arusha. It's hard to understand, but my family has never sent me towards any target or focused on developing talents. I've decided to step out on my own to find things that inspire me. I have found my passion for kitesurfing.

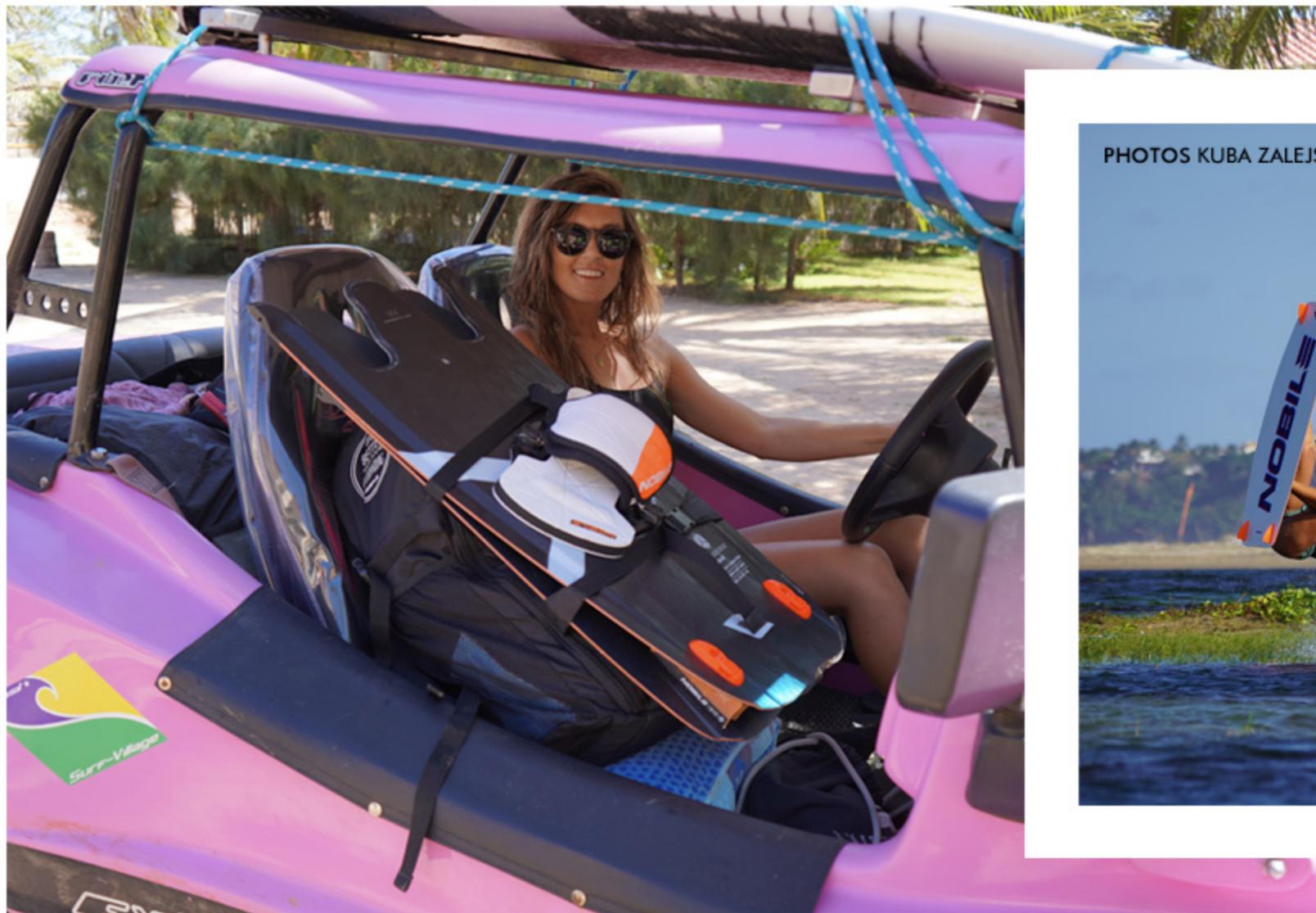
PHOTOS IVAYLO MINKOV



Paje is one of the best kite spots in the world. The shallow flat water and stable wind in the lagoon are perfect for teaching and riding freestyle. It is protected by a reef and at high tide, is an ideal playground for wave riding.

I'm an IKO kitesurfing instructor. I enjoy teaching because I can see the pure happiness in my students when they can finally perform any task given. I love to see how the students are learning and progressing in each step, in every new thing they do, and in each challenge they overcome. The emotion that is felt in each new kiter is amazing. Regardless of condition, age, origin, or profession, all people can do it.

When I ride my kite, I have an amazing feeling of freedom inside me. It's me, wind and the ocean together.



## On The Fly

# CATCHING UP // KATARZYNA LANGE

As a kiteboard girl, my life is all about travelling. The end of the year always means going to Brazil, a paradise on earth, where it's always windy, and the lagoons are perfect for freestyle.

With my close friends, I spent two months in a little fishing village with the sweet water lagoon of Guajiru. The secret is staying in the small Pousada Surf Village, with its surfy vibe, an owner with a long kiteboarding history, and a quiet lagoon just a short drive from the village.

On this trip, my focus was to make unique video material showing a high level of riding at one of the best kite spots and featuring my favourite boards. We found picturesque scenery with a strip of palm trees at a small lagoon for a wakestyle session on the Game Changer 142cm. Not disturbed by any human, the spot turned out to be perfect. Next, I switched to the Nobile NHP SPLIT board; It's the best board for kite travelling and new technology freaks! For fun, I always do big air and old school. It keeps my mind fresh while still improving my overall skills. The best thing is, when performing new manoeuvres, there's no need to train for weeks on end; you just give it a try!

I always appreciate my time spent in Brazil cause it's packed with kiteboarding in every way! It's been a tradition for 14 years and will continue!

Wishing you all windy days!

Kate

*On The Fly*

## SOUTH AFRICA // LEE HARVEY

I've been coming to Cape Town since 1999, and this is my 16th trip. It was great to get away after a hard year of Covid in the UK, unable to go any further than 10 miles from the house. We stayed in Big Bay (near the busy Blouberg kite beach), but always keep an eye on conditions to score down south.



These photos are from my favourite kite spot in South Africa; Scarborough. On this day, there was no wind when we got there, so I surfed until I felt the southeast coming. I pumped up my 7m Neo SLS when it switched on to catch some waves! The water was freezing cold but crystal clear with light offshore wind and heavy waves in front of the rocks. There was no one else out; it was a dream session.

Known as one of the windiest and most challenging kite spots in the world, Cape Town has an allure that is irresistible. So, when Johanna-Catharina Edin was in need of a break from the pressures of the competition scene, South Africa's sandy shores were calling! Did she find the answers she was looking for on her trip? Find out in this exclusive IKSURFMAG article!

# NEW PERSPECTIVES



**“ NOW I AM ALWAYS EXTRA CONSCIOUS OF MY GEAR AND LINES, CHECKING THEM TWICE EVERY TIME.”**

My first foray into kitesurfing in Cape Town was when I was 19 years old. I used to work in a surf shop back home in Sweden with some of my friends, and, over winter, we all went to South Africa together to explore a new kite spot!

Cape Town is well known for its strong wind

and tough conditions, and I remember my friends warning me that it's one of the most challenging places in the world to kitesurf. I've always liked a challenge, though, so I went on the trip without fear.

Of course, my first time out at Scarborough, I had a kitemare. I fell on a wave and dropped the kite in the water, ending up on the rocks downwind. If you've been to the spot, you know exactly where I'm talking about! My lines were a tangled mess, and I got caught up in them, leaving burn marks

around my leg. I didn't realise until afterwards how badly it could have gone. But, I learned a lot from that moment, and now I am always extra conscious of my gear and lines, checking them twice every time. It's better to be safe than sorry!

It's a challenge; the conditions are very different from what I am used to at home in Sweden. Still, most sessions were incredible. My best memory of kiting in Cape Town was when I saw a massive whale while kiting. A few of them seemed to be coming downwind with us. It was an unforgettable experience!

Over time I've gained more and more confidence in the challenging wave conditions in Cape Town. With good tips from friends and kitesurfers with more experience, I have progressed and pushed my level even further, feeling much more comfortable out in these extreme conditions and more able to handle tough waves in other spots.

I had just finished a wave competition in Morocco in November of 2021, placing 3rd at that event and 3rd overall on the GKA Kitesurf World Tour. But, something had been building up throughout the year - a sense of frustration. I felt stuck in many ways; my riding wasn't improving, and I felt like I didn't learn anything new from competing. After finishing on the podium, it was time to step away from competition, and I knew Cape Town was the right place for it.

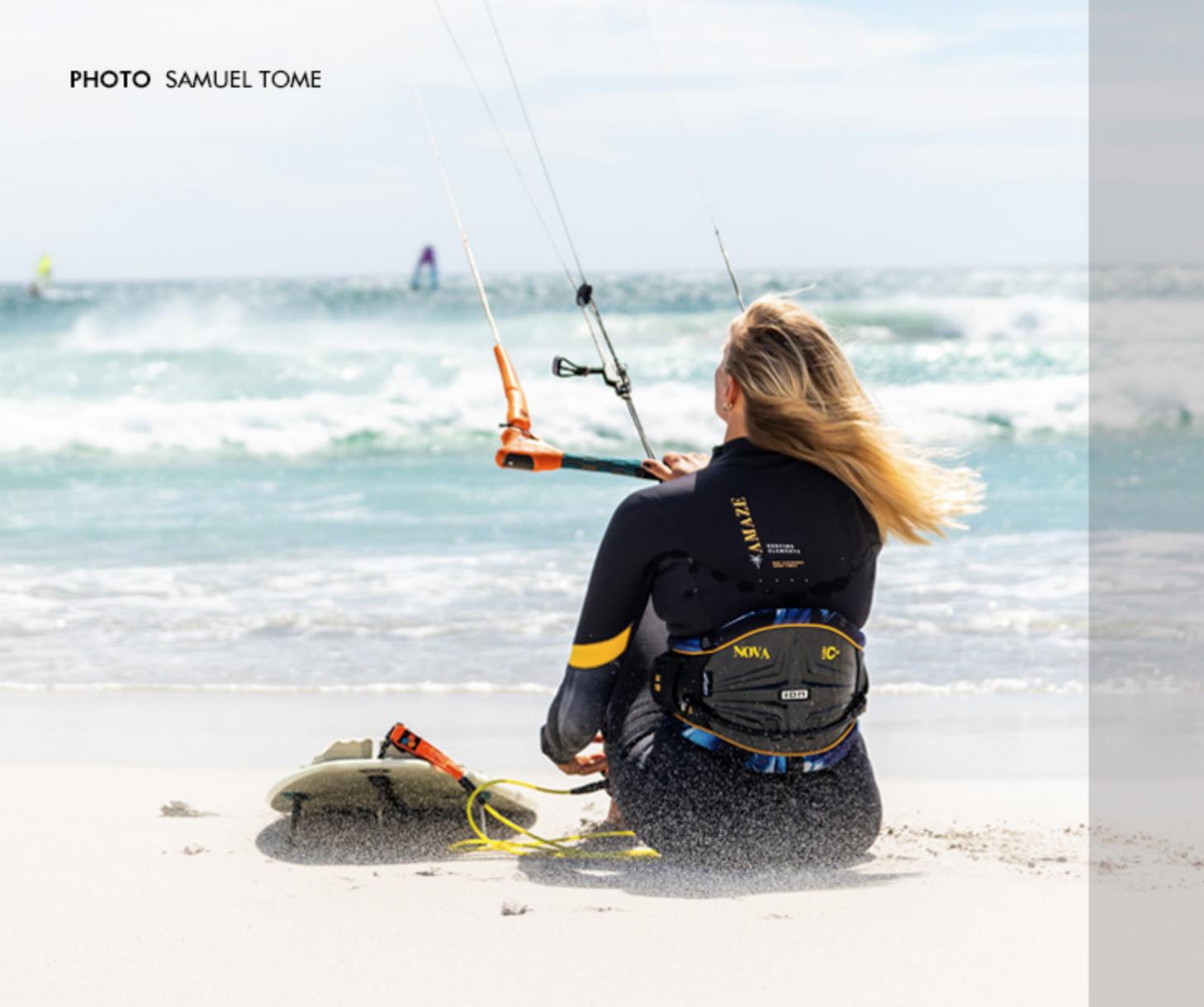
There are many good kite spots worldwide, but many places tend to be plain or boring if there is no wind. Cape Town has so much besides kiting to offer. There are amazing surf spots, great golf courses, delicious food, gorgeous nature, and vibrant city life. I've recently started mountain biking, and Cape Town has some of the world's best MTB tracks. With so much to offer on the water and off, I've been coming back year after year, and I'm still not bored!

These days, I usually combine my stay with shooting for sponsors and training for upcoming competitions. This year, I headed to Cape Town to do some shooting with FLYSURFER and ION.

Many talented photographers are based in Cape Town or visit during the season. Samuel Tomé is a local photographer who took some great shots of me during a session at his local spot, somewhere in the wild Western Cape. He knows this tricky spot inside out and always manages to capture the best shots.



**" MANY PLACES TEND TO BE PLAIN OR BORING  
IF THERE IS NO WIND. CAPE TOWN HAS SO  
MUCH BESIDES KITING TO OFFER. "**



This year, FLYSURFER had Andy Troy on the team for their product shoot, and I hired him to take some photos for some of my other upcoming projects and the wave clinics I put on while in Cape Town. Jens Hogenkamp also managed to snap a few cool shots during our FLYSURFER shoot, capturing some behind the scenes perspectives. They turned out super well, but I never got a chance to meet him! It's been a lot of fun mixing it up and working with different photographers this season.

“ THEY TURNED OUT SUPER WELL, BUT I NEVER GOT A CHANCE TO MEET HIM! ”

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“ WE SPENT A LOT OF TIME DRIVING AROUND TO DIFFERENT SPOTS, SOMETIMES RIDING IN REALLY ROUGH CONDITIONS. ”

Shooting and riding for yourself can be very different. If you shoot from the water, there is a lot to think about to get the shot. You have to line up in front of the photographer, which can be very hard as you want to hit the section where the wave is breaking, right in front of the camera! Of course, getting a sharp shot without water on the lens is another challenge that I leave in the hands of the professionals!

Nailing the timing between the best light and best riding conditions is always tricky, especially if you're looking for a backdrop other than the classic Table Mountain at sunset. We had a tight shooting schedule, so we were shooting from early morning until late evening. We spent a lot of time driving around to different spots, sometimes riding in really rough conditions. On a shoot, you've got to take what you can get if the wind is there.

You can get so caught up in the shoot or the competition that you forget to actually enjoy the session. The outcome becomes the sole focus, and progression goes out the window. On this trip, however, with a different mindset, I found that I was kiting even more than usual and getting so much more enjoyment out of each session. Not only that, but my skills were improving too, even though I wasn't focused on training!

Over the years, input from talented kitesurfers like Jalou Langereer, Matchu Lopes, and Luke McGillevie has really helped me to improve. I've watched many videos and often ride with a GoPro in my lines so that I can review the footage with other kitesurfers, which has helped me so much.

PHOTO SAMUEL TOME



**“ NEVER BE AFRAID TO SEEK OUT INPUT OR GET SOME COACHING IF YOU FEEL STUCK OR WANT TO IMPROVE YOUR SKILLS! ”**

Because I've learned so much with the help of others, I have discovered a real passion for coaching. So, when I decided to extend my stay until the end of February, it seemed like a perfect time to host a clinic. The response was overwhelming, and I

hosted two weekend-long wave clinics for women. My passion is to help other female riders; I think there is a special connection and understanding between women on the water!

We all want to enjoy that feeling of flow and confidence out on the water. Often, you just need to get the right tips to take your kiting that step further. Never be afraid to seek out input or get some coaching if you feel stuck or want to improve your skills!

I believe Cape Town is a perfect place for women to progress their level, finding more comfort and confidence in the waves.

After these clinics, I felt recharged and like I could see the sport from a new perspective. I feel like I'm finding more flow by sharing my knowledge and experience with others. It feels like a win when I see women progress, achieve and come up with a smile after the session. I still want to achieve so many things within the kiteboarding industry, and now I feel I have the freedom to go and do those things.

PHOTO ANDY TROY



**" THERE IS A UNIQUE RHYTHM AND FLOW  
IN THIS SPOT, AND I'M ALREADY  
PLANNING MY NEXT CAPE TOWN SEASON! "**

Cape Town is an essential place for the industry and my growth as an individual and a kiter. Every season has been similar yet different in so many ways. There is a unique rhythm and flow in this spot, and I'm already planning my next Cape Town season!

In the meantime, I'm enjoying my new home base in the UK and planning my next kite clinic with Jalou Langeree in Fuerteventura. See you on the water soon!

RIDER MAREK ROWINSKI  
PHOTO ROBERT HAJDUK

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WORDS & PHOTOS THE IKSURFMAG TEST TEAM  
PHOTO THIS PAGE  
RIDER CABRINHA TEAM PHOTO LUKAS STILLER

It's that time of year, once again, when exciting new releases are dropping left, right, and center. We've managed to get our hands on some of the newest kit available from Cabrinha's 02 Collection, along with the latest Duotone kites to receive the SLS upgrade!

On the accessories side, we've got the latest premium harnesses from Ride Engine and Ion on test. Read on to find out what our testers thought of the all-new 2022 equipment!

#### KITES

Cabrinha Switchblade  
Cabrinha Contra  
Duotone Dice SLS  
Duotone Evo SLS

#### HARNESSES

Ion Riot Curv  
Ride Engine Elite V7

# TRIED & TESTED

BRAND CABRINHA

MODEL SWITCHBLADE

SIZE 9M

YEAR 2022



"IMPROVES ON THE ALREADY CRAZY HANGTIME AND HUGE BOOSTS THAT PREVIOUS VERSIONS OFFERED."



#### AT A GLANCE

Back in 2006, the first Cabrinha Switchblade was launched. Fast forward to today, when, after 16 years of progression, research and development, the 02 Switchblade has been released. This kite has helped riders achieve world records, world championships and push the limit of the sport. For instance, in 2017, Nick Jacobsen jumped 210M off the Burj al-Arab in Dubai on a Switchblade. If that doesn't tell you that the kite is trusted by the upper echelons of the sport, nothing will...

For the 2022 Switchblade, Cabrinha has made two major changes to the kite: the first is introducing new ceramic pulleys made from Zirconia, a tough material that is also used in teeth restoration! Back to kiting, though, the new pulleys are a much more impact and wear-resistant product.

Secondly, the bridle has been completely restructured. The new configuration gives more balance overall to the kite and offers quicker turning and lighter bar pressure. Cabrinha has implemented this change to open the kite up to even more riders. But this comes at no loss to the performance; the kite really comes into its own when it's niking.

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

BRAND CABRINHA

MODEL CONTRA 1 STRUT

SIZE 9M

YEAR 2022



" A KITE WITH A HIGH LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE IN HYDRO-FOILING, TWIN-TIPPING, AND WAVE RIDING "



#### AT A GLANCE

The Cabrinha Contra 1 Strut is the second iteration of this kite. In a unique approach, Cabrinha has split the Contra range into two, with smaller sizes (up to 11m) available as the Contra 1 Strut, and the larger sizes (13m+) in a 3 Strut version, designed to keep the structure of the larger kites more intact.

Back in 2020, the Contra was only available from 13m to 19m. Now, with a 1 Strut version, the range of this popular light wind performer has greatly increased, even available in a tiny 3m! During this short amount of time, the Cabrinha Contra has gained a strong reputation from many in the kiting community as one of the best light wind kites out there. In this review, we are focusing on the Contra 1 Strut, newly updated for 2022.

Compared to other kites in their range, the Contra 1 Strut has only one rear line attachment. This lets riders know that they are using the optimal attachment point and are getting the full experience out of the kite. One of the most common questions that I get asked at the IKSURFMAG Test Centre at Loop Watersports is, "What attachment point should I use?".

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BRAND DUOTONE

MODEL DICE SLS

SIZE 12M

YEAR 2022



"FOR THE CONFIDENT RIDER WHO WANTS TO TAKE THEIR BIG AIR AND FREESTYLE TO THE NEXT LEVEL, THIS KITE IS A WINNER!"



#### AT A GLANCE

With a large range of kites to choose from in the Duotone range, you can certainly be assured that there's a kite for exactly what you're looking for. The Dice has been a staple kite for many years, packed with performance and aimed at the more experienced rider who enjoys freestyle and aggressive loops while still having the ability to perform exceptionally well in the waves. Duotone kite designer Ralf Grosel is consistently changing the way we look at kiting. With input from Aaron Hadlow and Lasse Walker, there are even more new features implemented in the latest version; the 2022 Duotone Dice SLS sure does deliver!

Like many of the kites in the Duotone range, the Dice comes in two different constructions - the standard material and the more advanced SLS (Strong, Light, Superior) version. Think of the SLS like a kite on steroids; everything is just that little bit better. However, for obvious reasons, the SLS model kites have an increased price compared to the standard version. Duotone's SLS kites consist of the newest, most innovative and top-quality materials on the market. The leading edge is replaced with Penta TX,

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BRAND DUOTONE

MODEL EVO SLS

SIZE 9M

YEAR 2022



" A DO-IT-ALL KITE THAT OFFERS AN EXCITING AND RESPONSIVE RIDE IN EVERY DISCIPLINE! "



#### AT A GLANCE

Duotone has a fantastic and comprehensive quiver of kites available to their users; there truly is something for everyone in all disciplines of kiteboarding. The Evo is marketed as the most all-around kite in the range and comes in both the standard and SLS (Strong, Light, Superior) construction. The SLS materials give this kite a much sharper, premium feel compared to the standard Evo. The Evo SLS provides an exciting feel when on the water, whether you've gone for a freeride blast, freestyle session, or even a wave or foil session. The top-end overall performance gives it great efficiency in all aspects of kiteboarding.

The Evo SLS has a 3 strut design, with the two wider struts being 'Flex Struts', offering more flexibility and giving this kite a handling experience like no other. SLS kites are relatively new in the Duotone range, but have become a fast favourite. For those who don't know about Duotone's SLS (Strong, Light, Superior) range, these products use the newest, most innovative and top-quality materials on the market. In the new Evo SLS, the leading edge is replaced with Penta TX,



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BRAND ION    MODEL RIOT CURV    SIZE M TALL    YEAR 2022



“ THE NEW 3D FIT TECHNOLOGY HAS REDEFINED PERFECT FIT, RESULTING IN ULTIMATE COMFORT. ”



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

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#### AT A GLANCE

Ion is one of the most well-loved accessory brands in the kitesurfing industry, and for good reason. Their focus on engineering harnesses that are safe and ergonomic results in some high-quality products. Today, we're testing the 2022 Ion Riot Curv for men. The Riot Curv is one of the most advanced harnesses in the Ion lineup, designed with comfort, support, and performance in mind.

At first glance, it looks quite similar to the previous model of the Ion Riot Curv, but picking it up and taking a closer look reveals some massive differences. The familiar shape of the Plus Spine has added another dimension, incorporating Ion's new 3D Fit Technology, used across the entire 2022 Curv harness range.

Ion believes that a hard shell harness is only better than a soft shell if it fits just right, and I'm inclined to agree with that assessment. Your harness can make or break your session, and one that doesn't fit right will do you no favours. After all, you're not going to make it to the top of Everest in shoes that don't fit. Not that kiting is as challenging as climbing Everest by any means,

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BRAND RIDE ENGINE

MODEL CARBON ELITE

SIZE M

YEAR V7 / 2022



" ANOTHER STEP FORWARD IN ONE OF THE INDUSTRY'S BEST HARD SHELL HARNESSSES! "



#### AT A GLANCE

As the original innovator of the carbon hard shell harness, Ride Engine has secured its spot in the industry as the hard shell king. The Elite is their flagship model and the most premium harness in the range and has received some exciting upgrades in its V7 / 2022 release.

What seems to be the ultimate kite industry innovation goal over the past couple of years - lighter weight, innovative materials, stronger than ever - has been wholly embraced by the team over at Ride Engine. The Elite V7 weighs in at around 25% lighter than the model before.

At first glance, it has the classic Ride Engine DNA. It offers the same features and benefits as previous versions but has been fine-tuned in a few small ways to make a lighter, better harness.

Like the very first versions of the Ride Engine Armor harness, built by founder Coleman Buckley, the shell of the harness has been ergonomically contoured to complement the shape of the human body. Unlike the original made-to-order versions, which were custom-built for each user,



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LOUKA PITOT SCORED COTTON CANDY SKY DURING  
THIS STUNNING FOIL SESSION IN THE MALDIVES!  
PHOTO MOHAMED AHSAN



*Lightroom*

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

IKSURFMAG.COM

LIGHTROOM

KEAHI'S FIRST ATTEMPT AT SHOOTING STILLS WHILE ON A SESSION  
WITH MOONA WHYTE! THE RESULTS? SEE FOR YOURSELF!  
PHOTO KEAHI DE ABOITIZ

*Lightroom*

LIGHTROOM

JEREMY BURLANDO KNOWS EXACTLY WHERE THE CAMERA IS!  
PHOTO SOULART

*Lightroom*

IKSURFMAG.COM

LIGHTROOM



JULES CHOLLET SNUCK OUT FOR AN EARLY MORNING SOLO SESSION,  
EARNING HIMSELF A PICTURE PERFECT BARREL!  
PHOTO @MATTIYF

*Lightroom*

LIGHTROOM

TIMON UIJL MAKING SOME SPRAY IN THE WARM WATER OF BRAZIL!  
PHOTO ISRAEL GIL

*Lightroom*

LIGHTROOM

JEROME JOSSERAND HAVING A SMOKING SESSION IN THE FRESH SNOW AT COL DU LAUTARET  
PHOTO VANESSA ESCANDE

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LIGHTROOM

STIG HOEFNAGEL NAVIGATING THROUGH THE MANGROVES, AS SEEN FROM ABOVE  
PHOTO MICHAL JAGNIATKOWSKI

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*Lightroom*

LIGHTROOM

THE ELEVEIGHT TEAM RIDING ON WHAT LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER PLANET,  
BUT HAPPENS TO BE GRUISSAN, FRANCE!  
PHOTO - ELEVEIGHT

*Lightroom*

LIGHTROOM

ALBY RONDINA OOZING STYLE, AS USUAL DURING THE CABRINHA 02 COLLECTION SHOOT  
PHOTO LUKAS STILLER

*Lightroom*

THE INTERVIEW

# TOM BRIDGE

WORDS CRYSTAL VENESS PHOTOS ANA CATARINA

The Bridge family has a stack of World Championships on their shelf, and the youngest of the lot, Tom Bridge, has put together an impressive kiting resume by the age of 21! Hear all about how he got started, his World Championship hopes, thoughts on Red Bull King of the Air, and more in this exclusive IKSURFMAG interview!



" I NEVER IMAGINED IT TURNING INTO A "CAREER"; IT WAS ONLY ABOUT GOING OUT AND HAVING FUN AND BEING THE BEST KITER I COULD BE. "



**Tom, thanks for joining us! The last time we interviewed you was 10 years ago when you were 10. What's going on in your life?**

Yeah, no worries, it's been a minute. So I'm currently back at home; I was on a trip to Cape Verde a couple of weeks ago, where I, unfortunately, broke my ankle on one of the last days. It's nothing bad, though, and I should be back on the water by mid-April.

**How old were you when you first got into kiteboarding, and what was your impression of the sport when you got started? Did you know early on**

**that you would be making a career out of kiting?**

I was about six when mum first put a little power kite in my hands. I remember flying the power kite for nearly a year before I went on the water, so as soon as I had a board under my feet, I didn't have to focus on the kite. The kite control was already there from the year I did on land, so it made the progression of getting to a decent level a lot faster. I never imagined it turning into a "career"; it was only about going out and having fun and being the best kiter I could be. I still have the same objective now. Even if the money

wasn't there, I'd be doing the same stuff I'm doing now.

**Do you still spend a lot of time on the water with your family or hanging out around Edge Watersports, or are you doing your own thing?**

Yeah, it has become a lot rarer to have the whole family at home now, but it's always good to get on the water together when we all are. There's just been a new development on the Exmouth seafront, so it's a whole new shop. Also, my brother Olly has his cafe (Hangtime Time) in the same place, which is going well for the lad.

“ I WAS JUST TRYING TO BE THE BEST RIDER I COULD BE AND DOING WHAT I ENJOYED DOING ”



**You could land blind before most kids could even ride a bicycle! What drove you to push so hard as a young athlete?**

I don't think I was ever thinking about "training" or "pushing". I was just trying to be the best rider I could be and doing what I enjoyed doing and never putting myself into a category of riding style, you know? If it got too windy to unhook, I'd be chucking loops and anything else, or if I got bored of that, I'd ride in the waves. I think it's stupid when people only do one thing. At the moment, that being big air and seeing people doing loops on 12s... it's not it.

**Your first competition was in 2009 when you were only 8 years old, and you claimed the Junior World Championship 3 times in a row, in 2013, 2014, and 2015. Are you still pursuing a World Championship in Freestyle, or has your focus shifted recently?**

Christ, you know a lot more about me than I do! When I was younger doing the junior contests, it was such a good stepping stone to get to the men's tour. Back then, the men's tour was so good, and I think it was a much more viable career option than what it is now. Maybe I'll do one event and see what happens, but at the moment, with the tour being as it is, I'm not going to commit to all of them.

**You've got a trick named after you, the Bridge Flip. Have you claimed any other new tricks or NBDs recently?**

I've done quite a few "NBD" tricks in the last year. I don't feel like putting a name on anything or claiming anything. I'd rather put it out there and have people claim it.

**Let's talk about your signature riding style! Did you draw inspiration from other sports or other riders, or how did this unique style come about?**

Not really; I don't watch a lot of watersports online, only surfing. I think I was just getting bored of doing conventional "freestyle". I want to go out and have fun and do something I haven't done before. I wouldn't even say it's that unique, maybe that everyone is a bit boring, I guess. All I'm doing is taking off differently and passing with both hands. If you've got power when you land, why not do another trick?

**"Light work" was such an epic film and an incredible display of your talent. Linking multiple tricks together down the line is not something that we often see in pro kiting. How difficult is this?**

It's not too bad with the kite I'm on at the moment. The North Pulse is the best for it because it just doesn't stall, and it's got heaps of power, so I can land one trick and go straight into the next without worrying about the kite. I think a massive part of it is trick selection, and linking the right tricks together is critical.

**Red Bull is known for putting together some insane video productions with their athletes, like Speedriding Through an Alpine Resort and some of the wake projects with Dominik Guhrs. Do you have any goals or plans to do a project of this scale?**

Yeah, they do some crazy stuff, and I have got a load of ideas. I've got a big video that just came out on March 29th, probably my biggest yet. I'd been working on it since I went to Brazil last year, so I'm really excited to show everyone.

**" I THINK A MASSIVE PART OF IT IS TRICK SELECTION, AND LINKING THE RIGHT TRICKS TOGETHER IS CRITICAL. "**



" ALL I WANTED TO DO GOING INTO THE EVENT WAS GET A FEW PEOPLE TALKING AND HOPEFULLY MAKE A HEAT, SO I WAS HAPPY. "



**You put on an impressive performance in the 2021 Red Bull King of the Air! Was it a challenge combining your freestyle moves with extreme big air tricks?**

King of the Air was fun! All I wanted to do going into the event was get a few people talking and hopefully make a heat, so I was happy. I didn't think too hard about what tricks I was trying to do, and I just wanted to do what I usually do on a regular session when I'm doing loops. So even when it's super windy, I would still be trying to unhook and do passes - it's just what I'm into.

**Riding against fellow Red Bull athlete Airton Cozzolino must have been a wild experience. What do you think about the evolution of strapless riding and strapless big air?**

I think he's one of the best guys in the contest. The day before the event, everyone was on the water, and he was going crazy. I didn't understand how he was doing it. My brother, Guy, and I would be sitting on the beach watching him do his thing; it was mind-blowing!

**Back in the day, you listed Marc Jacobs as one of the riders you admire most. Are you two pretty close, especially now you're both riding on the North team? What was it like having him take you out of the event in Round 3, and go on to win it all?**

I've known Marc for ages. I was always on the tour when mum was doing the PKRA racing events, and my brothers and I would always be on the event site running around in the riders lounge, annoying everyone. Marc was always around and helped me with whatever I needed, so I've always been close with him, and it was cool to see him go on and win the King of the Air. I guess there's no better person to go out to!

"WHENEVER THERE IS A SNIFF OF SWELL AT HOME, I'M ALWAYS EITHER SURFING OR KITING ON A SURFBOARD."

**When it comes to KOTA, there has been some controversy about equipment choices and some shifting trends, notably the lack of riders continuing to use boots. You were one of the minority in boots; can you tell us a bit about why they remain your personal preference?**

I just don't feel comfortable in straps, and also, for me, the thought of doing board offs doesn't excite me. To stick to boots wasn't really a thought for me.

**Do you hope to return for the next edition of KOTA? Do you think we'll see any other equipment innovations like a competitor riding on a hydrofoil in the next event?**

Yeah, for sure, I want to keep doing it. But, in terms of foils, in King of the Air, personally, I don't really think it's ever going to be a thing. I think jumping with a foil looks silly. Foil kites, on the other hand, I think have massive potential.

**Back in Issue 33, you said you do some wave riding and strapless freestyle for fun. Do you still spend some time on the wave board? What about foiling and winging?**

Yeah, I love to ride a wave board! I love to surf, so I find it really fun and whenever there is a sniff of swell at home, I'm always either surfing or kiting on a surfboard. And yes, when I was in Cape Verde a couple

of weeks ago, I had my first winging session. It's fun. I was on a boat of a board and a massive foil, but just riding some waves was pretty fun. I doubt it's something I'm going to go hard for, but, yeah, I can do it.

**By the time this issue goes live, you'll have celebrated your 21st birthday.. So happy birthday!! Any big plans for 2022?**

I've got a trip to Cape Hatteras with some of the Knot Future guys at the start of May, which I'm very excited about. Then, I want to go to Tarifa and Greece; I'd love to do that in the summer, but it's all very relaxed. I am just going to get this ankle going again and see where we are!

A few months ago, the Serre Chevalier Vallée saw some epic snowkite action during the latest World Snowkite Masters. What is snowkiting freestyle and what does an event in this category look like? Find out what went down - and up - in the French Alps in this exclusive article!

# MASTERS OF SNOW





**“ WITH SO MUCH ACTION ON THE WATER, I WOULDN'T BLAME YOU FOR NOT NOTICING THE STUNNING SNOW-CAPPED PEAK IN THE BACKGROUND. ”**

The 2022 Lords of Tram just wrapped up in Le Barcarès in southeastern France! If you tuned into the livestream, you probably saw the mind-blowingly rapid progression that big air kiteboarding is going through, with Double Loops, S Loops, and Double Boogie Loops landed in the competition. In the end, Andrea Principi stole the show in an insanely close battle with Giel Vlugt. Pippa van Iersel claimed a triumphant win in the ladies division, and at centre stage in the Division 2 category was local rider, Theophile van Beek.

With so much action on the water, I wouldn't blame you for not noticing the stunning snow-capped peak in the background. Canigó mountain just had a gentle dusting of snow thanks to the cold snap that most of continental Europe are experiencing.

Snow on our minds, we turned our attention to one of the best snowkite destinations in Europe, the freshly powdered winter wonderland of France's Serre Chevalier Vallée. Just a few months ago, during the 19th edition of the World Snowkite Masters, this popular winter spot lit up with activity as competitors came from near and far to participate in this unique event. There's no one better to tell us where it all began than Wareck Arnaud, a talented snowkiter, photographer, and frequent contributor to this magazine!

"The Snowkite Masters started from the idea of having a great party while bringing together the best riders in the world, including legends of Snowkiting like Guillaume Chastagnol. This event was created by the Ozone Kites dream team, Matt Taggart, Rob Whittall,



**“RIDERS DID US THE HONOUR OF COMING FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, AND THE WORLD SNOWKITE MASTERS WAS BORN.”**

Dominik Zimmermann, and my buddy Régis Labaune at the legendary Col du Lautaret pass in the Hautes-Alpes. The spot is sublime, and we never get tired of it! When we opened the event to the snowkiting public, riders did us the honour of coming from all over the world, and the World Snowkite Masters was born.”

Frequent competitor, Marek Zach, tells us a bit about how a major snowkite event works, explaining, “The 2021 competition showed that snowkiting embraces all the areas of kite sports, from wakestyle in strong winds up to big air, freeride and riding up mountains. Freestyle in the mountains is completely different to that on the water. Firstly, you're riding a few thousand meters above sea level, which leaves its mark on your body, and you ultimately know who has been training and who hasn't. Secondly, you have to remember that the spot is not flat,

and it might happen that after a trick, you're not landing but are flying further and higher. In that situation, the judges expect to see more variety from the riders; you have to give it your best!”

Of course, we can't talk about the event without speaking to Didier Botta, a stand-out performer in the event, winning in both ski and snowboard freestyle. He breaks down the format, saying, “The competition format was centred on freestyle with three categories: men in snowboard, men in ski and women in snowboard. Each day, all competitors measured themselves in 12-minute heats and had the opportunity to perform 12 tricks, with the 6 best tricks being scored.

**“ IT WAS REALLY INTENSE TO RIDE AT 200% POWER DURING THE RUN. THE DEEP SNOW MADE IT TIRING BUT ALSO SUPER FUN. ”**

The final results were calculated by adding the scores from each round. On the last day, we had a freeride event. We had a spot called "Pyramide" to play on. For me, this is what snowkiting is all about: playing with the hills and natural obstacles and mixing jumps, flying, and nice turns in the powder. It was really intense to ride at 200% power during the run. The deep snow made it tiring but also super fun. My best trick was a handle pass over the cornice riding down the slope as if I was snowboarding."

Botta has dedicated a lot of energy to his snowkite performance, which showed in his results, "SKM is the perfect moment to meet friends, ride together and push the limits of freestyle snowkiting. When the competition is on, it's time to send the best tricks. It was my goal to compete in both the ski and snowboard and be in good enough shape to win both. In the previous two events, I learned that it is complicated to be on top in both, but this time, I succeeded. I am proud of this achievement and happy with the feedback and congratulations I have had since. One thing that made me really happy was being congratulated by Chasta (Guillaume Chastagnol), who has inspired me since the beginning."

For Laurent Guyot, also known as Lolo BSD, having the SKM at his home spot is one of the most exciting times of the year. Guyot says, "I've lived in the Serre Chevalier Valley for five years; it's cool to compete at home!



RIDER DIDIER BOTTA



**“ PROGRESSION CAN HAPPEN QUICKLY IN THE SNOW, ESPECIALLY WITH THE POSITIVE INFLUENCE OF OTHER PASSIONATE RIDERS. ”**

The Lautaret Pass is actually the best freestyle snowkite spot over here. Joss and Kirstie (who run the Lautaret Lodge & Spa) are a big part of the snowkite community here at Lautaret Pass, and we always go to their brasserie to share good food and drinks before or after the session."

Like many SKM competitors, Guyot goes back year after year, "Most snowkite events these days are focused on racing, and most snowkiters are freeriding, so I think it's cool to see snowkite freestyle in a competition! I'm 50% there to have fun riding and partying with riders and friends, and 50% focused on the competition. Riding and partying is the SKM concept, and it works pretty well!"

First-time attendee and competitor Charlotte de Foucault tells us about the conditions during the event, "The night before, a lot of snow had fallen. The feeling of riding in a metre of powder was really incredible. I used to kite on water, but I was just discovering snowkiting, and I quickly got into the game. Finally, I ended up on the podium, and so I'm happy! It was a nice experience with friendly, good vibes!"

Progression can happen quickly in the snow, especially with the positive influence of other passionate riders. Winner of the Women's Freestyle, Marie Dubois, weighs in, "As my first contest in the snow, I was happy to land an S Bend, Double Front, and Front to Blind. Snowkiting in a group helps a lot; watching other riders improve makes others want to push their limits to be better.

RIDER MARIE DUBOIS



## “SNOWKITING IS THE BEST WINTER ALTERNATIVE IF YOU LOVE KITING AND SNOW”

This spot is magic for snowkiting in the Serre Chevalier Vallée; it's working almost every day! We're also lucky to have the Lautaret Lodge on the spot. They keep us warm during our breaks around nice meals and drinks! It was a perfect week, both on and off the snow."

Botta adds, "As the level improves on the water, it also does on the snow. There is an evolution in the unhooked tricks but also big air. What I focus on and love the most is big air, using the kite to jump high and doing rotations and kiteloops in an amazing winter atmosphere. There are endless possibilities in snowkiting! Snowkiting is the best winter alternative if you love kiting and snow; it's definitely worth a try if you haven't yet." Snowkiting really is for everyone. It's not only

a way to go kiting when you're not near the water; it's a subcategory of the sport that exists completely independently. On the subject of safety and accessibility, Marek Zach says, "The equipment is evolving like everything else in the world, and it's doing that quickly. Some elements stay the same, but the advancements in gear have made the sport super safe and accessible to everyone. You can see 5-year-olds using kites in open fields behind the house somewhere, totally carefree, and seniors using it to ride up mountains as alternatives to ski lifts."



**“ WE ARE CELEBRATING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SKM. TO RIDE WITH THE LEGENDS OF SNOWKITING, DISCOVER THE SPORT OF SNOWKITE ”**

Of course, like with kiting on water, some of the best moments occur even when not attached to a kite, and Wareck Arnaud has spent more time behind the scenes and behind the lens in recent events, as you can see by this incredible gallery of snowkite photos from SKM. Arnaud says, "During SKM, I don't really have time to ride anymore, but I love to organise the event and do my best to accommodate those who give us the honour of coming to participate and making this event possible. Riders come from Norway, Russia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Spain, Italy, Germany... without these riders, there would be no event. Thank you to them, our partners, spectators, and our technical team!"

"In 2023, we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the SKM. To ride with the legends of snowkiting, discover the sport of snowkite, and explore the spot, I hope that we will have the honour of welcoming you, yes, you who have read this article until the end, as well as the whole IKSURFMAG team, to join us for our 20th-anniversary event!"

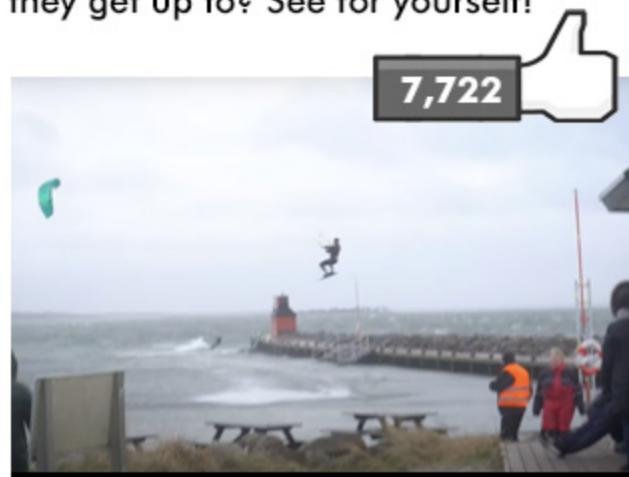
The IKSURFMAG website is crammed with the latest news and best videos from the kitesurfing industry. With so much to see, where do you even start?!

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

**Put the popcorn on, it's Movie Night!**

## #1 STORM MALIK 45-50 KNOTS

We're not surprised this one claimed the top spot in this issue! Storm Malik promised to bring high winds and wet weather, which are conditions Nick Jacobsen and Mikkel Hansen enjoy most! So, what did they get up to? See for yourself!



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

## #2 NINE ON NINE'S - JASON VAN DER SPUY (SHORTLINE KITELOOPS)

Coming in hot at #2 on our Movie Night list is Edwin Haighton and Jason van der Spuy who teamed up to create this insane edit. A nine-metre kite on nine-metre lines. Need we say more?



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

## #3 BROWN WATER AND GAPS WITH YOUNG FELLA MAX

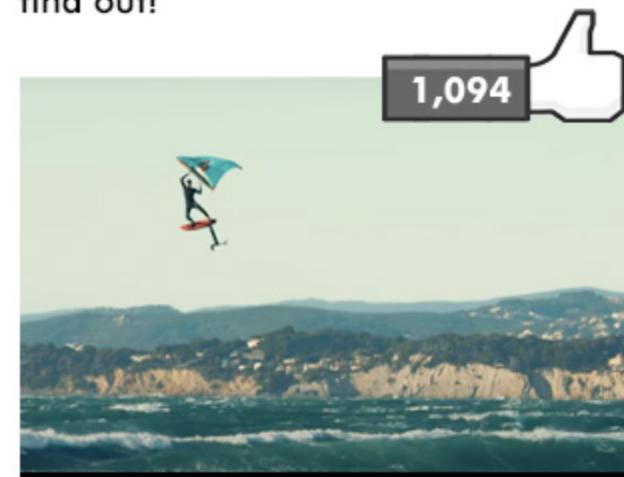
Mikkel Hansen claims yet another spot on our Movie Night list, this time pairing up with the young gun, Max Dahl. These North team riders jump some land gaps and cruise around in Denmark – what a vibe!



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

## #4 TITOUAN GALEA - STRIKE V.2 - 10M JUMP

Titouan Galea leaves us amazed once again! With the wind blowing well above 35 knots, Titouan grabbed his STRIKE V2 and put a WOO tracker on his board. What happened after that? You'll have to watch this to find out!



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

# MOVIE NIGHT

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