

DECEMBER 22 / JANUARY 23

WELCOME TO IKSURFMAG

Welcome to Issue 96 of IKSURFMAG, the World's Number One Kitesurfing Magazine! Do you ring in the New Year by dreaming of the future or recounting the past? In this mega-issue, we've done both! Editor Crystal Veness puts the spotlight on women in kiteboarding, highlighting Jalou Langereee, Michaela Pilkenton, and Monica Ballus. Get to know the new world of Big Air kiting,

explore Brainchild Production with Rou Chater and Ralf Grösel, and dig deep into top new products in our Tech Focus. Go behind the scenes with Noè Font, visit the South Coast with Cabrinha, session Indo with Oswald Smith, and follow Adriano Bono's short line adventure. With Techniques, Tests, and more inside, you won't want to miss IKSURFMAG Issue 96!

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- WELCOME TO THE NEW WORLD -

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EDITORIAL



WELCOME TO THE
NEW WORLD



IN AND OUT OF FRAME



THE GAME CHANGER



INDO



SHORT LINES AROUND
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TECHNIQUE



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THE SOUTH COAST



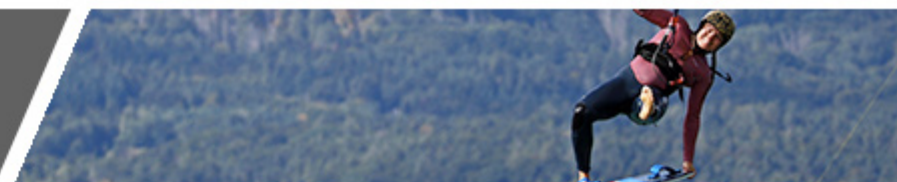
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BRAINCHILD
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TRIED & TESTED



THE INTERVIEW:
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TECH FOCUS



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ON THE FLY



MOVIE NIGHT



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PHOTO MIRIAM JOANNA

ISSUE 96 GET WITH THE PROGRAM.

It takes a lot to get me truly fired up about something. You can cut me off in traffic, spill a drink on me at a bar, or even forget my name after we've met a million times. It's all good; I'll roll my eyes and shrug it off. Maybe I'm a bit of a pushover - definitely overly conflict-avoidant. It's a reflex for me to rationalise that things are okay rather than taking the more difficult action of acknowledging they're not. But the examples above are all just mild inconveniences. I can keep letting them slide. Real injustice is something that I can't stand by. And this one's real. **There is no room for sexism in kiteboarding.**

Discrimination of any kind, for that matter, is not okay. Whether it is ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age,

disability, religion, or anything else, it needs to stop. Even small and seemingly insignificant personal choices like the kite you ride or the harness you wear cause division. Why is there so much criticism in our community? I would say live and let live, but the point of this editorial is that we should be speaking up and standing up for each other! Maybe, just maybe, you can discriminate against assholes. But maybe that can be a medical condition, too? I guess that's a bit of a catch-22.

I'm well aware that there are people in the world fighting for the most basic of human rights at this very moment. Millions of people are having their rights and freedoms stomped on by oppressive regimes and religious extremism. So, the issue of gender inequality

in kiteboarding may seem minor in comparison. However, it is an issue. And it's one that we in our small community of kites are capable of fixing.

I applaud the ladies who submitted entry videos into King of the Air to push the Red Bull organisation to create a well-overdue Queen of the Air event. The original King of the Air events held in the early 2000s ALWAYS had a Queen of the Air competition alongside the men's event. They went on the water on the same day, sharing the same stellar conditions. Hats off to Susi Mai, the last official Queen of the Air crowned in Maui at Ho'okipa Beach Park in 2005, an excellent event that saw a young Ruben Lenten unseat Robby Naish on his home turf - a sign of a generational change. Unfortunately, some things haven't changed.

In a time when women are riding harder than ever in the most extreme conditions, we think it's time for Red Bull to put the ladies on centre stage!

Some event series, like the Big Air Kite League, are doing their part to push the women's division and showcase a growing number of powerful women at their events. What started as a grassroots event series is doing much more for women in kiteboarding than far more established events. Not only that, they have taken it a step further by offering equal prize money, putting their money where their mouth is.

The GKA has also made some positive changes in recent years, offering equal pay for those that stand on the podium and up to equal pay for those below podium positions if they have the same number of male vs female competitors. This encourages more participation while answering the most common argument against equal pay: how long and difficult the road to the podium is. Young women today have made their way to the top and arrived at a competition scene where equal pay is a possibility, thanks to the hard work of the women before them who were always fighting for it. But where is the generation of young women below them? What is preventing young women from pursuing a career in professional kiteboarding?

It was an exciting milestone when Su Kay became the first female kite designer in the industry with the team at Airush. But, it was also a sharp reminder that women are underrepresented in industry roles. Women usually end up in marketing and customer service roles and rarely make it into leadership, engineering, or design roles. I don't want to take away from the talented women in these roles because they're doing an excellent job. I know this because we work with so many of them and have featured several of these amazing industry women in our Insight series.





But my point is, what about the other industry roles? Women do not lack intelligence, leadership skills, or work ethic. You can't use the classic physical disadvantage argument when it comes to these industry roles. Is there sexism in the recruitment process too? Do some brands really only value their female team for their marketing value?

Many brands are doing an excellent job in showcasing the women on their teams; we've noticed, and we appreciate them for supporting women in kiteboarding. Some companies and individuals are strong advocates for gender equality, this magazine

being a case in point. IKSURFMAG has a long history of supporting women in kiteboarding in a positive manner. But there is always room for improvement.

Did you notice that the photos accompanying this editorial do not highlight the talented women in our sport? It's because aligning yourself with a statement like this can be harmful to your sponsor relationships or reputation in the industry. I'm afraid to put a target on anyone's back by affiliating them with this statement against sexism. Except for my own, of course, and the wonderful team that we have at IKSURFMAG that is standing around me,

willing to support and encourage this statement. Instead, enjoy these beautiful photos of faceless women captured by one of the most talented female photographers I know, Miriam Joanna. She has always been an outspoken advocate for women in kiting and a badass woman without limits. She will paddle out into double overhead waves with her camera in a water housing just to get that epic shot - and quite often, it's of a female athlete that's also sending it in monster waves. I admire her not just for her talent but her fearlessness when it comes to standing up for herself and going the extra mile to represent women in our sport.

How can we still, in this day and age, have made so little progress in women's rights and gender equality in kitesurfing? Especially with so many more women now partaking in the sport. There was a time when we were a small majority. In the early days, if you had breasts and could do a back roll, you'd get a pro rider contract in a second. These days though, there are tens of thousands of female kitesurfers. We make up a huge and ever-growing part of the community, and our professional success is based on talent and merit. Check out some of the ladies out there pushing the limits and putting on an incredible show. Riders like Mikaili Sol, Angely Bouillot and Capucine Delannoy could take it to some of the guys on any given day. We're not a sideshow. We're the main event, baby. Get with the program.

We need to do more to correct the sexism that exists in some corners of our industry. We as individuals, and we as a collective. The actions of everyone in the industry are out there and visible for all to see. We know who is doing a good job supporting women in kiting, and we know who is failing. So, feel free to call out the bad behaviour whenever you see it. Whatever gender you are or identify with, you know when something's not right. Don't be afraid to say something. It's not a battle that can be won with only one side fighting. We all need to be together to demand change.

Crystal Veness

Editor



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Ozone's Jamie Overbeek grabs youngest podium spot at thrilling Red Bull King of the Air debut in Cape Town.

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RIDER JEREMY BURLANDO
PHOTO PAUL GANSE _ RED BULL CONTENT POOL

WORDS CRYSTAL VENESS

We're watching a new kiteboarding reality unfold, and it's getting wilder by the minute! After some major upsets at the recent King of the Air, Editor Crystal Veness takes a look at what's changed and what's coming next. In this feature article, she interviews athletes young and old(er) to get their perspectives on the new world of professional kiteboarding.

WELCOME TO THE NEW WORLD



**"WE HAVE WATCHED EVERY EVENT THIS YEAR.
AND WE'RE STILL IN SHOCK. THE OLD GUARD IS OUT.
THE NEW GUARD IS HERE."**

Did you feel that? It was like a shift into an alternate reality - a subtle change that threw everything just slightly off-kilter. One night, you go to sleep, the King is a kiwi, and everything is normal. Then, after a super southeaster blew down Cape Town's Kite Beach on November 26th, 2022, it changed. The King is a teenager,

and the children are running the show. What strange new world is this?!

If you've been paying attention, it wouldn't have come as a surprise that the young talent was a force to be reckoned with at the 2022 Red Bull King of the Air. If you've watched any big air event in the 2022 calendar year, you could see that the writing was already on the cards. Well, we have watched every event this year. And we're still in shock. The old guard is out. The new guard is here. Welcome to the new world. Some sporting competitions are divided into age categories to help level the playing field;

Juniors, Open, and Master's divisions aren't uncommon in professional sports. But, separating the Juniors from the Open was designed to protect the kids from getting their little hineys handed to them. In this new reality? It's the grownups that need protecting!

How did it change so quickly? Well, who better to ask than the riders that were part of that change? We caught up with several athletes, young and old(er), to get some inside perspective. Starting with young King Lorenzo Casati, who, when interviewed before KOTA, told us that his goal was to "for sure win KOTA and be the World Champion in big air". Well, we all know how that turned out!

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"IT'S THE BEST FEELING TO COMPETE AGAINST THE PEOPLE THAT INSPIRED ME IN KITING, AND IT'S A TRUE HONOUR."

With a surprise shift to the Cabrinha team and now riding a mysterious new kite, Lorenzo sees the development continuing, saying, "In big air, there has been a crazy progression, especially in the last years with tricks that were considered impossible. I think doubles loops and s-loops will be the future. Every trick now done with one loop will be done with two." On what it was like defeating so many big air legends in KOTA, he says, "It's the best feeling to compete against the people that inspired me in kiting, and it's a true honour."

Who inspired Lorenzo and his generation of riders? Aaron Hadlow was a name mentioned by every single young rider we interviewed for this article. Aaron is, without a doubt, the biggest name in kiteboarding history. How can we talk about the changing of the guard without asking the leader of that old guard his perspective? Aaron says, "If I'm honest, in previous years, I felt like we were standing still and even had taken a step backwards. I personally, for a while, felt like I had been transported back in time. But, now we seem to be really pushing through that and advancing again. The sport has some new progression and fresh faces, and it's really great to see the rise of new stars in the sport. It is no surprise to me as I was competing at the highest level at 14 years old, but somehow, I still can't help but admire the tricks these young guys pull both in big air and freestyle."



RIDER LORENZO CASATI
PHOTO PAUL GANSE
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"WHILE THE YOUNG GUYS HAVE SOME SPICY NEW TRICKS COOKING UP, THE CHALLENGE OFTEN LIES IN DELIVERING THEM CONSISTENTLY"

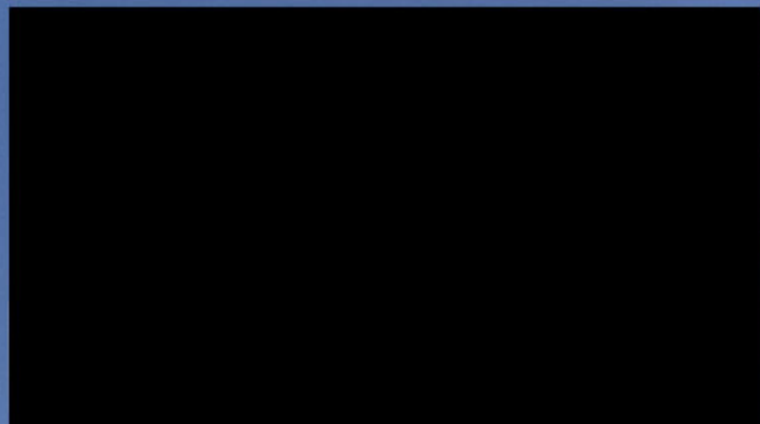
It's true that, while the young guys have some spicy new tricks cooking up, the challenge often lies in delivering them consistently in the pressure cooker that is a competition heat. Paul Serin, F-ONE international rider and 6x French freestyle champion, has since retired from competition. He is still riding for F-ONE, often features in product shoots, and has joined the freestyle tour as a judge. On the challenges the young riders face in the freestyle division, Paul says, "We, as judges, cannot give more points just because they are kids. We compare equally between everyone, and a Frontside 317 from Adeuri Corniel, or Maxime Chabloz will always have more power and height than the same trick from a 12 or 14-year-old kid. That's how it is; the muscles need to grow, but as soon as you have the technique, it's just a matter of years. It's hard for those kids because they need to learn and gain some experience in a competition heat but travelling the world at 14 requires a budget that not everyone has."

While the young freestylers are working on gaining experience and muscle mass, Paul highlights one of the current greats, "I have to give a special mention to Gianmaria Coccoluto, who kept training hard in freestyle when everyone else was doing big air or other disciplines. Gianmaria stayed motivated and strong all those years with not many events and finally won a title this year. He's a good example that hard work always pays off. I'm sure he inspired a lot of kids around the globe with his title and will make freestyle great again."

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NAISH



“WHAT WE’VE SEEN IN THE PAST TWO YEARS IS THAT BIG AIR KITEBOARDING TOOK A MASSIVE TURN AND BECAME THE NEW TREND.”

On how the industry has evolved, Paul says, "It is amazing. Every year we think we've reached the highest level possible, and then someone comes up with a new crazy trick. You can't stop progression; it's in every athlete's blood and in every sport." He continues with his thoughts on the trend towards big air, adding, "What we've seen in

the past two years is that big air kiteboarding took a massive turn and became the new trend. Brands started to push more and more in this direction because it's more visual for the audience. Freestyle kiteboarding reached a point where it's hard for the public to understand the difficulty of the tricks, where big air is much more visual and easier for people to see the commitment and the difficulty."

As Paul said, brands are pushing in the direction of big air, and F-ONE is one of them, releasing a new big air kite this year,

the TRIGGER. Their team has undergone some changes this year, including superstar Liam Whaley leaving the team. Young Josh Gillitt is on his way up to fill that gap. He's been kiting for nine years and has watched the shift in the sport from his home in the big air mecca of Cape Town. He grew up admiring riders like Aaron Hadlow, Ruben Lenten, and Jesse Richman, and says, "When I started kitesurfing, they were the ones on top and winning everything, but they were also bringing all these crazy new moves to the sport." He says, "It's super cool to be riding with the guys I looked up to when I started kitesurfing!"

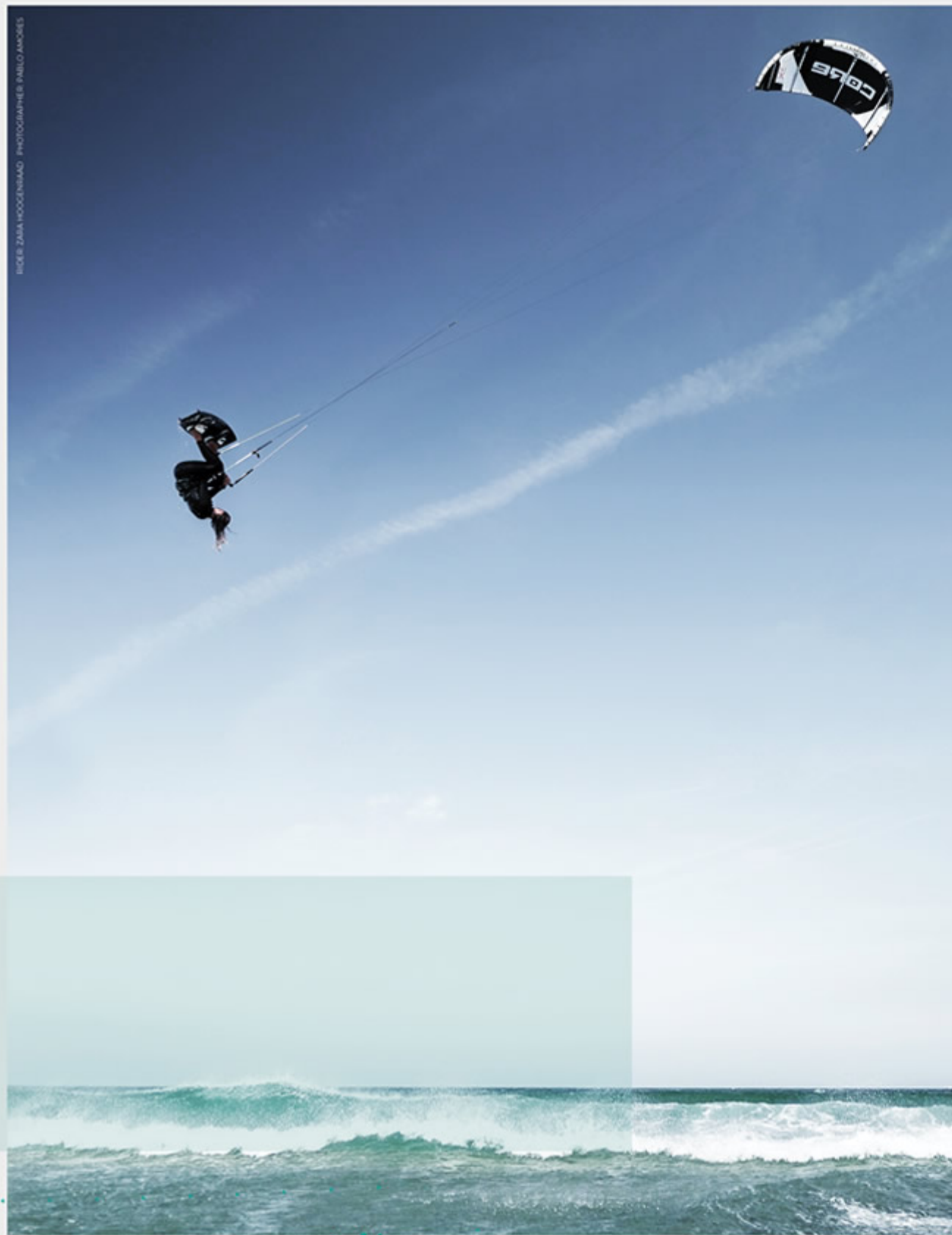
"THE NICE THING ABOUT BIG AIR IS THAT WE NEVER KNOW WHAT WILL COME NEXT. IT'S JUST INTUITION AND CRAZINESS."

The Slingshot team is looking young and fresh too. With riders like Kimo Verkerk and Jeremy Burlando headlining the team, their new generation is looking very promising, indeed. Jeremy, at a young age, is already developing his R&D capabilities, having had input into the new CODE kite. He says, "The gear is definitely a big factor in kitesurf progression. Our generation is pushing hard, too, because we want a big future for this sport. With the evolution of the gear, we'll have higher jumps, double loops, and who knows? Triple? The nice thing about big air is that we never know what will come next. It's just intuition and craziness."

On riding with the legends and sharing the water during the King of the Air and other recent events, he says, "It's a dream becoming a reality for me. I feel super blessed in the water when I ride with all the legends, and it motivates me so much!" But, he and many other young riders like him are coming into their own. He adds, "I learned a lot at the beginning from them, and now I feel like I want to push my own style and innovate more!" Josh Gillitt is on the same page, adding when asked if he still has more to learn from the legends, he explains, "If I was asked that question before this last KOTA, I would definitely say yes, but now I think I have a lot more to learn from the young guns! Jokes aside, they still have so much competition experience, and I can definitely learn from them more on how to approach competitions."

RIDER KIMO VERKERK
PHOTO ANDRE MAGARAO





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**“ IT'S VERY COOL TO SEE HOW MUCH DEDICATION
THERE IS TO TRY TO PROGRESS THE SPORT ”**

Sam Light, former pro kite legend and current Team Manager over at Slingshot, has helped select and grow these young riders. He says, "It's very cool to see how much dedication there is to try to progress the sport. This next generation coming through is taking big air to another level. Literally, in 6 months, the tricks have changed completely." He also knows that the gear development has assisted the rapid progress in the sport, adding, "New materials progressing the performance of equipment is enabling these riders to go even higher."

Big air kiting has developed blazingly fast in recent years, and this new guard of riders' absolute focus and determination is insane. Aaron agrees, saying, "Up and coming talent have gained experience and pushed each other technically; finally, there is a group of riders fully dedicated to the discipline, which in my eyes was never really the case in the past. This also coincides with previous big air riders coming closer to the end of their competition careers. The younger talent has gained experience over the last years by having a few more competitions available to them, and now we finally see that all come to fruition."

You have to wonder, of course, what someone who has been a pro rider for 20 years is thinking about their career, particularly after this year's insane growth. Sam says, "The big names won't disappear because of the following and influence they have built up over time... To stay on top of your game, you must spend your entire time on location training."



RIDER JEREMY BURLANDO
PHOTO PAUL GANSE_RED BULL CONTENT POOL

“PROGRESSION DRIVES ME, AND EVEN THOUGH I HAVE TO WORK HARDER FOR IT, THAT STILL DRIVES ME.”

I chased the competition circuit for many years but was ready for new challenges and more time at home. I really enjoy sharing the knowledge and experience I have gained with other riders to help them, so Team Manager was a natural path for me to take. I also love creating content, and it brings arguably more value to my sponsors, so I spend a lot of time making all aspects of videos, from riding in them to filming and editing."

Aaron also takes the pay-it-forward approach while acknowledging what the young riders give back to him, saying, "I have always been competitive and loved a challenge. I always try to embrace and help young talent, even if I still share a final with them here or there. This is giving me more motivation to push my own riding. Sure there is a limit to that at some point, but for now, I am loving kiting as much as ever because of it. Progression drives me, and even though I have to work harder for it, that still drives me." He's not solely focused on keeping the young guns at bay, though, and tells us what he's up to now, "In terms of other aspects,

the years in the sport and the experience I have gained opened up many doors. Testing and development are interesting to me as I'm a technical person. Working and riding for Duotone with my experience for sure helps in other areas, too, whether that means organising some media, helping our younger team riders or gathering product information; usually, I have a few things on the go. I am in Cape Town and plan to stay for a few months, where we will be developing kites and shooting new projects. There are a few things in the pipeline, so I'm really looking forward to next year and seeing what 2023 holds."

Paul Serin is also keeping busy in his post-competitive life, saying, "I'm now doing R&D testing for F-ONE and judging some GKA events on the side.

**"WE SEE THE SPORT CONTINUING TO EVOLVE
WITH EVERY GOOD DAY WE SPEND ON
THE WATER."**

On top of that, I just started school again, so a lot is on my plate. Testing kites, wings, and foils takes a lot of time, and it's crazy to see the motivation of Raphael, the boss, to make the best gear on the market. We spend all year in the water, and I have to say, winter is not the easiest in the south of France. But as I keep reminding myself, a day spent on the water is always a good day." We couldn't agree more, and we see the sport continuing to evolve with every good day we spend on the water.


As the sun dipped over the Atlantic Ocean in Cape Town a few weeks ago, and we watched bleakly as our old favourites kites trudded up the beach to watch the rest of the event play out without them, we've accepted that we can't live in the past forever.

You'll notice that this year, for our IKSURFMAG Readers Awards, some familiar names are missing from the Best Kiter lists. We want to nominate the legends because we respect their contribution to the sport, but with a limit to the number of names on the list, we had to make the shift and give the youth a chance. We have had to accept our new underaged overlords. They may not be old enough to vote, go to the bar, or open a bottle of champagne on the podium (you'll get it right next time, Jamie!), but they're here to stay. And it's time we accept it. After all, they're not going anywhere anytime soon!

RIDER AARON HADLOW
PHOTO CRAIG KOLESKY_RED BULL CONTENT POOL



IN AND OUT OF FRAME



Noè Font needs no introduction! If you've watched a great Duotone Kiteboarding movie lately, there's a high chance you'll find Noè's name in the credits. Noè has achieved so much and been to so many places in such a short space of time. Pinning him down for this feature was not easy, but it was well worth it! Get to know this Spanish kiteboarder in this exclusive IKSURFMAG article.



DUOTONE

“KITING IS A PHYSICALLY DEMANDING SPORT FOR YOUR BODY BUT ALSO REQUIRES STAYING IN TUNE WITH YOUR GEAR AND CONDITIONS.”

Kiting was my first love, as you'd say. It led me to pick up a camera. I wanted to have kite edits like the pros. Over the years, I got more and more into camera work. Today, combining these two skills has taken me on adventures I couldn't have imagined when I was a kid, just trying to spend as much time on the water as possible. Whether in front of or behind the camera, I'm doing things I'm passionate about. As 2022 comes to a close, it's the perfect time to look back at where this year has taken me.

It may help to start with some context. What young riders don't often realise as they're working their way to the top of the podium is that being a professional rider can't last forever, especially with freestyle; it takes a real toll on your body. Kiting is a physically demanding sport for your body but also requires staying in tune with your gear and conditions. Eventually, there will be a day when progression gets stale, or your body gives up, and you need to move on.

I have gone on breaks from kiting for two to three months sometimes, and it's so tough to get back into shape afterwards. Yeah, you can pick up the kite after a few weeks off and have a good session, but to be at that level of pushing forward and doing new tricks, you have to be in your best form. Sometimes, it's impossible to maintain with all the video work I've been doing. But, on the other hand, there is a life post tricks and handle passes for me, and that keeps me motivated every day.





Many people paved the way for me in combining filmmaking with kiteboarding professionally; guys like James Boulding and Tom Court did it before me. They were the first ones to do what I'm doing right now, which makes it easier to have something to aim towards. My sponsors, Duotone and Ion, have been with me from day one. Whether working on big video projects or pushing the kite park discipline, I've had support from them to follow my vision. They are happy with what I do, and I couldn't be more thankful for their backing.

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FIRST ONES TO DO
WHAT I'M DOING
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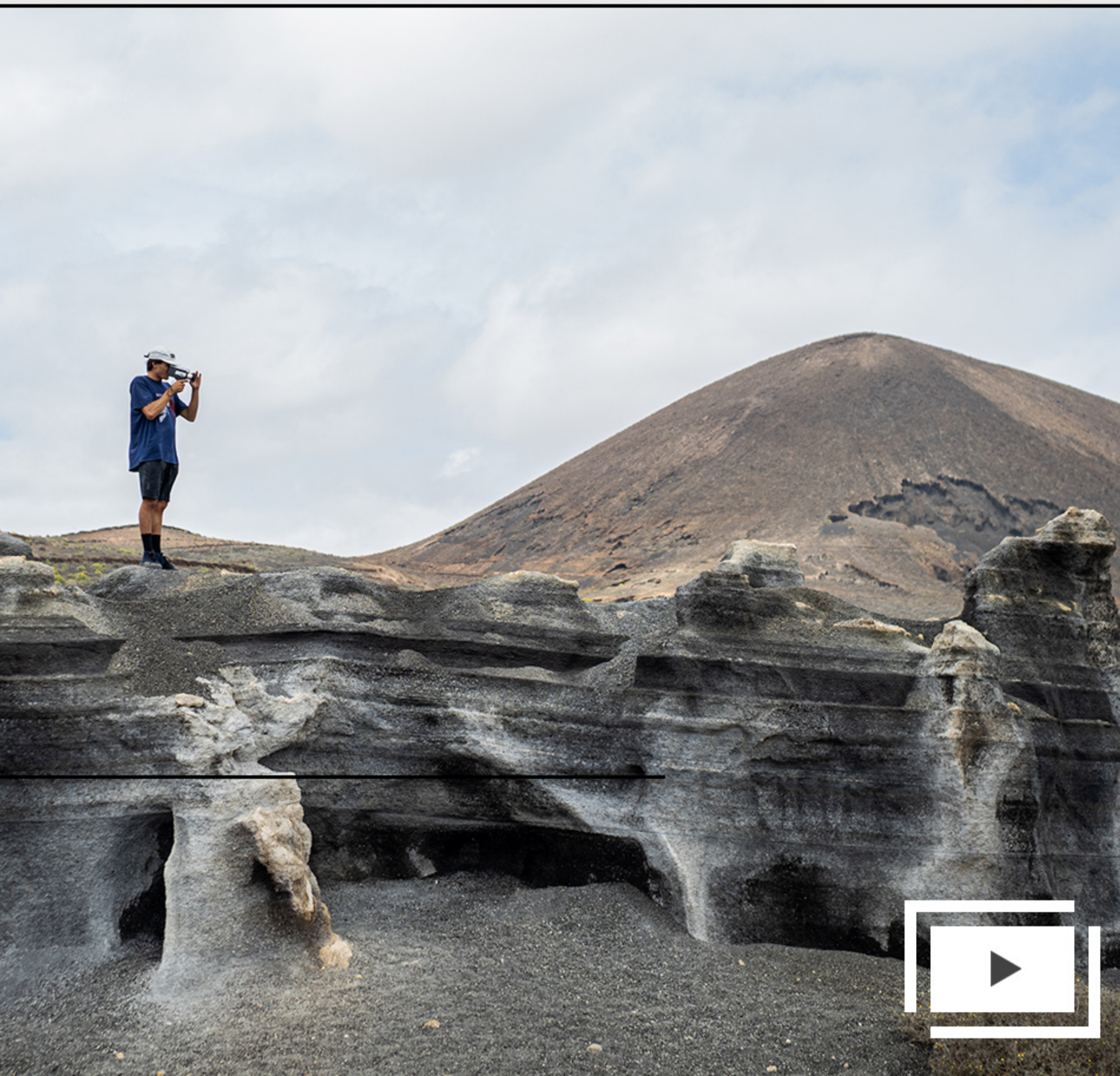
“I DO STUFF NOT MANY PEOPLE DO OR CAN DO, MAKING IT UNIQUE, BUT MOST OF THE TIME, IT COMES FROM INSPIRATION THROUGH OTHER THINGS.”

Earlier this year, I worked on a video part for ION's video series "Write Your Own Chapter", where I talk about the community aspect of Kite Park riding and what makes it so unique. I'm passionate about riding park because it combines many of my interests, including video making and the big

challenge of building features and being creative in different ways. This video will be dropping in the new year, so keep an eye out for it!

I'm often asked if I'm a creative person. And, I'd say that's not something you say of yourself; it's up to other people's judgement and perception of your work to decide if it was creative. I do stuff not many people do or can do, making it unique, but most of the time, it comes from inspiration through other things. So if that's being creative, then I am.

There are always high expectations for me when I picture how a trip or a video shoot can turn out because I have so much anticipation and an idea of how everything should be. In the end, however, it's all up to the weather and conditions. Sometimes, you exceed those expectations; in others, it's a complete failure. It all depends on what you take from it; sometimes, like in our movie "Always Sunny in Rio", a total fail turns into a great plot for a movie. In the end, I believe that it's best to make the most out of what you have, and no matter your expectations, if you can shift focus and work with what's in front of you, people will still enjoy your project.



“ THE LANDSCAPES WITH THOSE HUGE FJORDS DOWN INTO THE SEA, RUGGED COASTLINE, INCREDIBLE LIGHT, AND EVER-CHANGING WEATHER MAKE IT UNIQUE. ”

Norway was the most epic place I have been to this year. It was always in the back of my mind to visit the Lofoten Islands, and when Reno called me about making a trip there for a video shoot, I was into it right away. The landscapes with those huge fjords down into the sea, rugged coastline, incredible light, and ever-changing weather make it unique. It was also one of the most challenging shoots I have ever been on, battling cold weather and snow storms but so worth it. You should watch "The Norway Project" if you haven't yet. It's a 30 minute documentary about the trip.

Working with Toby Bromwich is always fun; we get along very well and have known each other for many years. We both know what we want to achieve on these trips and can work simultaneously to ensure we get the best photos and videos we can. It makes a difference when you have a good crew of people to work with, and everyone knows their task. We went to Ireland a few months before Norway to film "The Ireland Project", and even though the concept of the films is very similar, these two trips were very different. In Ireland, we were chasing a forecast on a last-minute call, so the trip was only three days long, and we scored. Norway was a bit more planned. We were there an entire week, and you can't just go there without a plan; it's a very remote place, and some logistics need to be taken care of.



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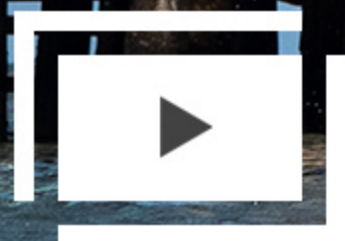
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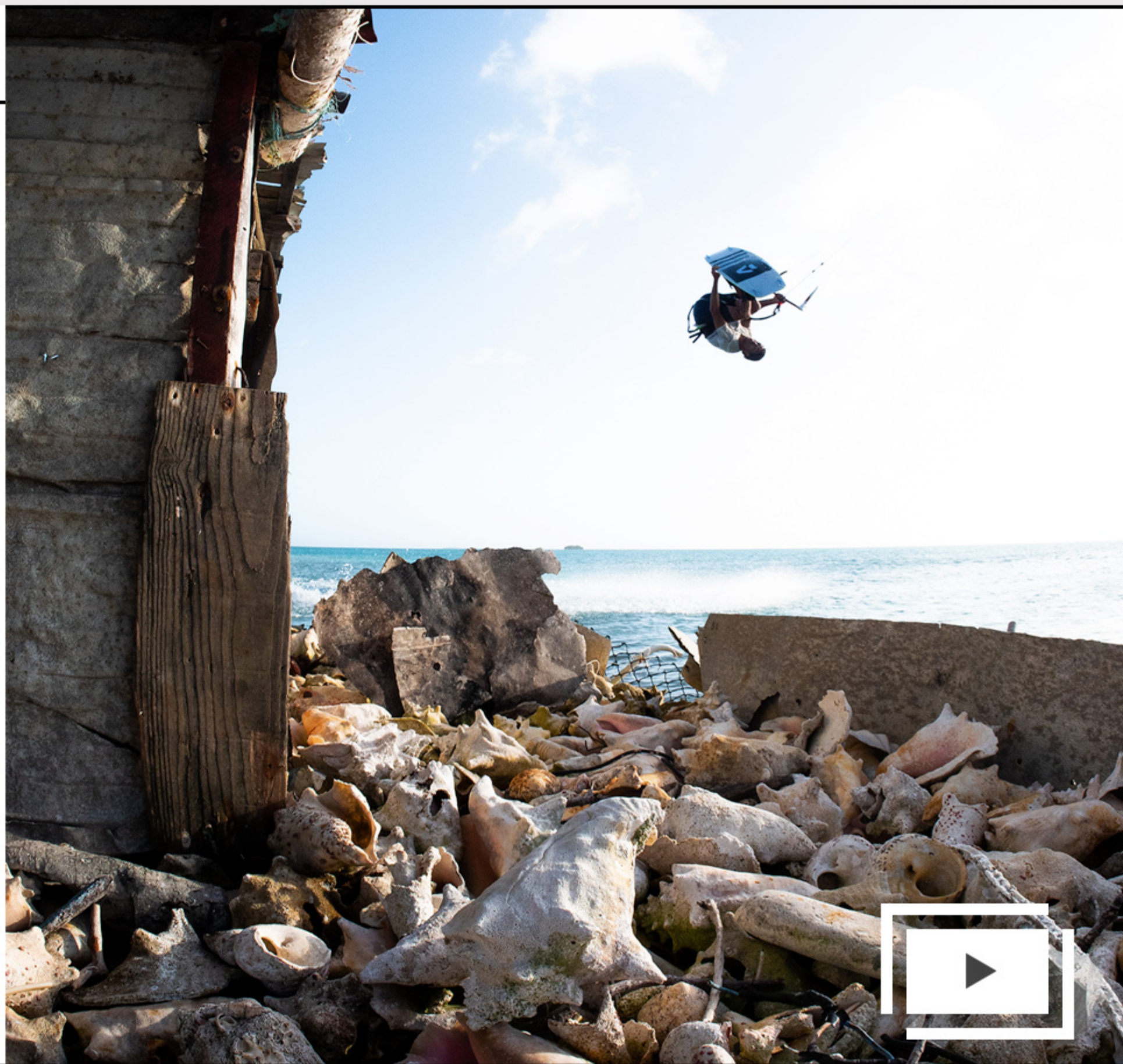
© NICOLE LAIBEN RIDER: JAMES JENKINS



“SESSIONS LIKE THIS, HYPING EACH OTHER UP WITH YOUR FRIENDS, ARE THE BEST”

Photoshoots are never easy, especially as a rider on the water all day, either doing tricks for video or shooting photos until dusk. Sardinia and the "Sardini-YEAH" project was a perfect example of that; windy every day riding different spots and conditions. I was struggling to stay away from complete body soreness, something that had never happened to me before, but after that shoot, it put into perspective how doing a little yoga might help my legs and arms stay away from cramping mid-shoot.

The GKA Freestyle World Tour has been a prime source of inspiration this year. These competitions bring the most talented riders together to see who comes out on top but also to share some time on the water with your community. This year, the most memorable moment I had in front of the camera was a couple of weeks ago during a meeting in Brazil with Tom Bridge, where we just went out filming with few expectations. While watching the GKA comp, we were joking about how BS720s must be so easy since everyone is doing them. Tom and I had done them before, but never quite consistently, so we went out to try and do one. After a few missed pops, I stuck a clean one in front of the camera. I rode next to Olek, who was filming to celebrate, but I quickly turned around to watch Tom stomp one right after me. He rode next to us, and we high-fived, celebrating a little victory. We were so hyped to have done it back to back with each other; it was the best vibes. Sessions like this, hyping each other up with your friends, are the best; even if the conditions aren't the best, you can have a blast.





That same day, I was behind the camera and got to capture a moment that was probably the best one I captured all year. I don't think it counts since everyone else saw it live, on the live stream or on social media afterwards, but Coco's (Gianmaria Coccoluto) heat against Manoel Soares in the GKA World Tour final was out of this world. He destroyed everyone with the highest score ever in competition, landing FBM5 and BS319. It was the best freestyle riding anyone had ever seen.

**"IT WAS THE BEST
FREESTYLE RIDING
ANYONE HAD
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


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“YOU NEED THE COMPLETE PACKAGE BECAUSE WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT IS YOUR LEVEL OF RIDING, NO MATTER WHAT ANYONE ELSE SAYS.”

If I had to pick which one meant more to me, a moment that I experienced versus one that I witnessed, Gianmaria's heat would be more meaningful in many different ways. In Brazil, he showed how well he could ride with ideal conditions for the event and how much he has progressed over the past few years when

everyone is focusing on spinning the board around. He set the bar a few steps higher; everyone has a new level to aim for. There has yet to be something like this happening since Bebe first came into the scene.

I haven't prioritised competing outside the Kite Park League lately. Still, I'd like to think that my riding level can justify a sponsorship alone, and my abilities to create good movies are the cherry on top. However, you need the complete package because what's most important is your level of riding, no matter

what anyone else says. If you want respect from your peers and the industry's core, you can't just be some media monster or an influencer with no clue how to ride. You might fool some sponsors into supporting you but being a poser won't take you very far. There is no doubt in today's day, your value to a sponsor is measured not only in athletic performance but also in your ability to generate good media or have a considerable following.

These days, it's all about balancing my riding and filming. It's what I've always done and maybe not the most helpful with meeting deadlines (like this article),



“SOMETIMES THERE ARE THINGS YOU CAN'T SAY NO TO AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU CAN'T LET GO OF.”

but in a way, that's how I operate, I guess. I'm trying to say "No" more often and have more time to curate projects instead of taking on too many tasks, but sometimes there are things you can't say no to and opportunities you can't let go of. I think I'll be sailing the same boat for a few more years. I don't know. Ten years? I don't know. No pressure.

For now, I'll keep doing what I'm doing. I'm currently in Taiba, Brazil, wrapping up the fall season of kiteboarding and shooting two projects I'm featured in for Duotone and a Knot Future video. At the same time, I'm editing Coco's world champion clip and a "Storming" episode with James Carew. Next is Cape Town for a couple of months, and then KPL Argentina. Stay tuned.

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THE GAME CHANGER

A professional career spanning 20 years is something few kiteboarders can claim. One of the only female kites to achieve this milestone, Jalou Langeree, 3x World Champion and one of the most popular female kites in history, shares her story. In this article, Jalou opens up about her life, career, fears, her new documentary, and some huge news.

Read all about it in this IKSURFMAG exclusive!

WORDS JALOU LANGEREE EDITED BY CRYSTAL VENESS



PHOTO VINCENT SCHAAAP

IKSURFMAG.COM



" HIS CERTAINTY HELPED GIVE ME THE CONFIDENCE TO COMMIT TO MY CAREER AS A PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE. "

Twenty years is a long time. A lifetime, even. I've been kitesurfing since I was 12 years old. Now, at 32, kiting is my whole world. I've built everything around this sport. So, when I started to doubt myself and second-guess my choices, it was scary. Fear has been a part of my career for decades. How wild - to already be talking in decades at my age!



When I finished high school, I dedicated everything to my professional career. I planned to focus on kiting full-time and travelling the world. That was especially scary because most of my friends pursued studies and stable lifestyles. Meanwhile, I spent my days at the beach doing photoshoots and stuff for my sponsors. Even at that stage, I sometimes woke up in the middle of the night wondering if I was making the right choice. Should I have been studying instead? I was always the kid that was following my own path, but I still

felt insecure. Everybody I knew was going in a different direction.

I often compared myself to my brother, Kevin. He knew his direction from the beginning. He was sure that he would pursue kiting, and he did, with all the energy in the world. His certainty helped give me the confidence to commit to my career as a professional athlete. So, I did. I was at the top of the field in wave riding and won three world championships.

People would always ask me, "What will you do when you stop kiteboarding?" I can't tell you how many times I've heard that question. It hit me like a bullet.



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I never knew the answer. I was just trying to stay focused on kiting, have a good time, and see what happens. But they kept asking, and my doubts and insecurities kept growing.

After 20 years in the sport, I asked myself, for the thousandth time, am I really happy? What am I doing? Am I following my heart? Or am I living up to the expectations people have based on how they see me from the outside? You might see me as "the ripper" or that tough-as-nails woman on the water. Who I have been or how I've portrayed myself has influenced me to be who I became, and I'm happy for everything I've achieved. I had to be disciplined and hard on myself to get those results. But I'm a way different person than what you see.

In recent years, it's been so lovely to discover who I am and accept that person. During COVID, we had a whole year break. I no longer had to live out of my suitcase and be on the road the whole time. I didn't have to be tough or ride hard and put on my public Lou persona. At long last, I could get to know my true self. I could finally break my walls down, embrace my feminine energy, and unleash my inner marshmallow. I felt immense relief that I finally had the time and space to find out who I was at that stage in my life.

Late last year, I went to Fuerteventura to do a photoshoot with the team from North, and I broke on the inside. I felt like I was wearing that mask again. I'm not this Lou anymore. I can't do what they expect me to do here - ride in front of the camera and create content. It was so not me. This truth hit me hard.

"I FELT IMMENSE RELIEF THAT I FINALLY HAD THE TIME AND SPACE TO FIND OUT WHO I WAS AT THAT STAGE IN MY LIFE."



PHOTO JALOU IN 2004



PHOTO RICARDO PINTO



" AFTER 20 YEARS, I AM RETIRING FROM PROFESSIONAL KITESURFING. AND IT'S THE BEST DECISION I'VE MADE SO FAR. "



I knew I needed to make a change. Immediately. I had been considering quitting for a while, but I was too scared. I kept thinking back to what people would always say. What are you going to do? What is your Plan B? I was super scared about everything; it was overwhelming. Everything I knew, all the people I met, all the places I was going; it was the same little circuit, but it was my whole life. I didn't have the answer yet, but I chose to let go and trust the process.

So, after 20 years, I am retiring from professional kitesurfing. And it's the best decision I've made so far.

I wasn't planning to quit during the photoshoot. It probably wasn't the best timing, considering I had a contract that was running for some time still. But, my sponsors were very loyal to me. A few weeks later, when I brought them the idea of making a documentary, they were behind me. They allowed me to spend the past year fully focused on RECONNECT and sharing my story.

RECONNECT spans my 20-year career and follows how I grew up in a male-dominated industry and lost my identity through that. At times, I didn't know what I was doing there; I was only holding on to the plan I had created for myself. There was a wall that I was hiding behind, and that wall was my safety zone. We didn't make the film sexier than it is. It's very raw. Very real. And it's very straightforward.

My main goal with this documentary is to inspire others and shed more light on mental health problems. It's something we should all talk more openly about. I hope it will create a lot of conversation opportunities after people see it. I'm not afraid to share what I went through because I know it is helping people. So many people can relate their own experiences to what they see in my story. That's what makes it powerful.

PHOTO SAMUEL CARDENAS

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PHOTO SAMUEL CARDENAS

" THIS PAST YEAR, I'VE BEEN ABLE TO PULL ALL THE LAYERS OFF AND GET TO THE CORE OF MYSELF. "

Through RECONNECT and the premieres and people I've connected with so far, I've seen it touch people's hearts. I can see the emotion and tears in the people watching, and many have come to me to share their stories. That's what I wanted to create. Even if you don't have that visceral reaction, I'm happy to put it out there. Because I believe

it's something that needs to be heard. I hope that people will feel freer to share their inner struggles. This growing openness is already happening all around us. But it should be more and more and more.

Since I've retired, the feeling of relief has been incredible. I've put my energy into something super meaningful, which has reignited that little fire within me. This past year, I've been able to pull all the layers off and get to the core of myself. I've gotten back to kiting and having fun in everything



PHOTO RICARDO PINTO

I'm doing. I still love kiting. Now that it's not my career, it feels like back in the days when I first started. You know that feeling when you're so excited just to go kiting and have a great time and not worry about everything else? That's how I feel now.

Of course, I don't always go kiting. Sometimes I don't want to. I've found that cooking helps me chill, and I walk quite a bit - long beach walks and forest walks make me very happy. I meditate on a daily basis and have been practising yoga and breathwork. I love all that stuff. Overall, I've been taking way better care of myself.

People who have known me for a long time can see that I'm much more chilled and rested, and comfortable in myself. I feel more grounded and happy with where I am on any given day. I don't have that FOMO when watching competitions or seeing people sending it in Cape Town. Last winter, I didn't feel the tiniest bit of desire to be there. None. I was just at home. It was dark. I was happy. I would wake up, go for a long walk on the beach, cycle, have great conversations with people around me, and just be me.

Everybody deserves to pull those onion layers off and return to or rediscover who they truly are. We're all living in this world where we're constantly influenced by outside things; what mom and dad expect from us, what our best friend or other people project on us, what we should do or be, how much money we should make, all of that. It's hard to be yourself and trust your own process and feelings. To know what is important to you and stick with it. To say: I'm doing it this way. I don't need a house that big. I don't need that fast car. I want to be happy. I have enough.

I have to remind myself of this all the time. I keep this mantra in my head: I am not sitting in the backseat. I am at the wheel. I am sailing this ship. I get to decide where I go and what I do.

I check with myself almost every day. How am I feeling? Am I good? Is this the right direction? Sometimes, I'm good. Other times, I've gotten a little lost, and I'm back in an old pattern. But, I recognise it quickly, and I can correct my route. I can keep moving forward.

"EVERYBODY DESERVES TO PULL THOSE ONION LAYERS OFF AND RETURN TO OR REDISCOVER WHO THEY TRULY ARE."



PHOTO VINCENT SCHAAP

PHOTO RICARDO PINTO



" I'M FINDING OUT WHAT ELSE I'M GOOD AT OR WHAT I CAN BE GOOD AT THAT BRINGS MY PAST EXPERIENCE TO THE TABLE. "

I don't know exactly where I'm going yet. I have some ideas, and I'm working on some projects. I am learning new things, and I'm finding out what else I'm good at or what I can be good at that brings my past experience to the table.

My life and career are a big part of me and who I am today. But my arrows are pointing in new directions now. It's a new start! And I can't wait to discover what's next...

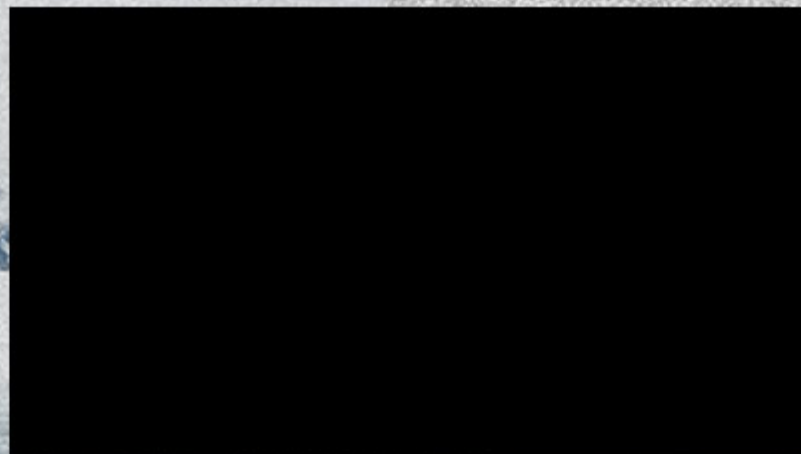


PHOTO RICARDO PINTO

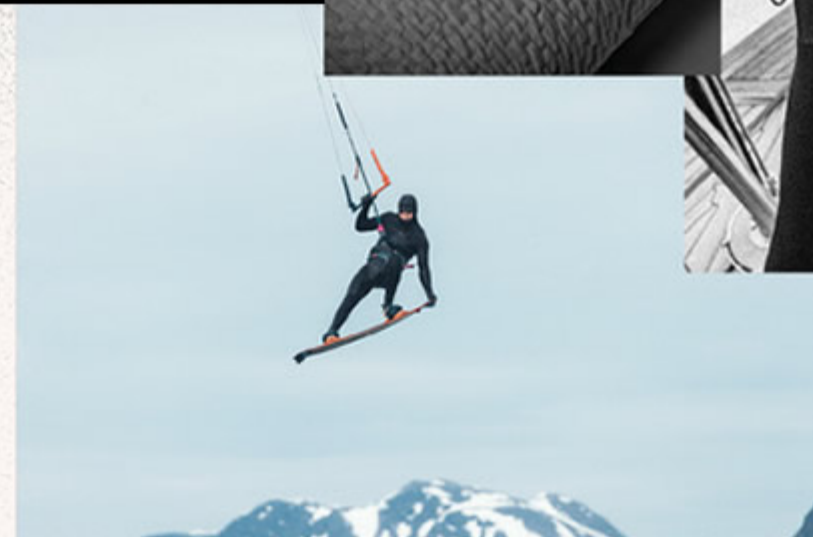


PHOTO RICARDO PINTO

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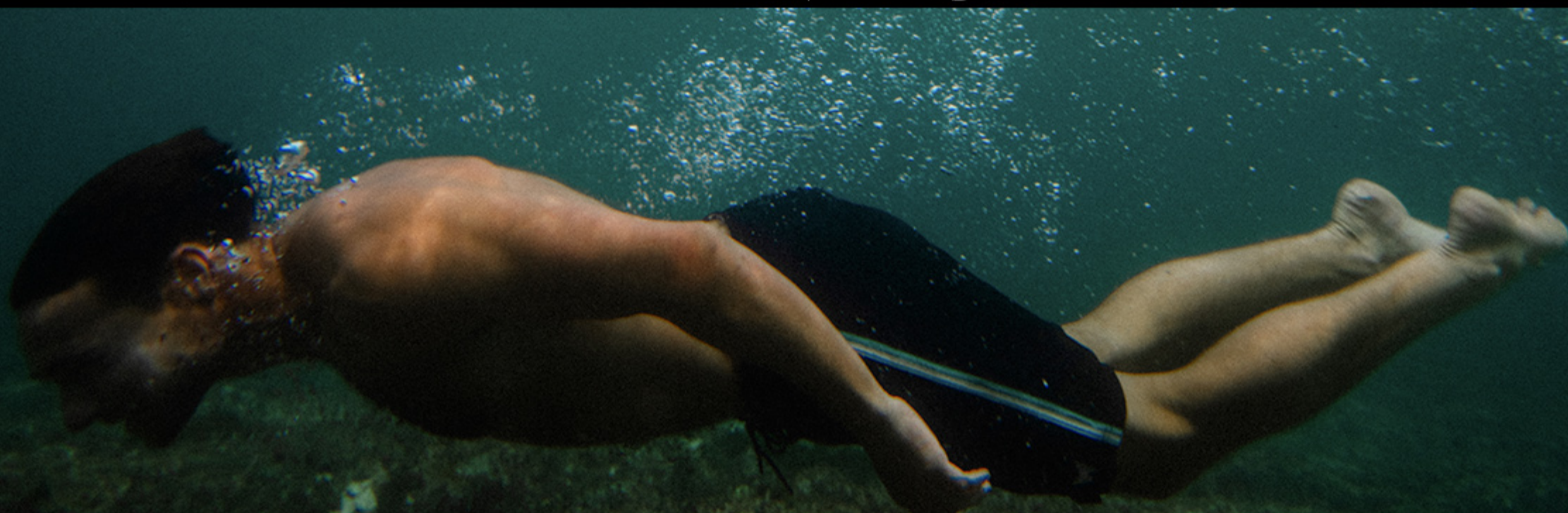
 **MANERA**

WORDS OSWALD SMITH PHOTOS WESLEY LEWIS

What do you do when the waves are off, and the pressure to produce is on? In this short feature, Oswald Smith takes us behind the scenes of Tidak Apa-Apa, an escape to Indo with Charlie Wise.



INDO



Let's be honest. Life is better in board shorts. But things don't always go as planned, and Pachamama has a witty tendency for playing the joker of spades at crucial moments. Indo is a kiteboarding gem, but to score it all time is seldom a luxury, experienced by the lucky few. Nonetheless, she graced us with her presence.

Every year Charlie and I go to Indonesia to kite Lakey Peak. Airush gave us the go-ahead and a chance to create some magic on that side this year. We've always been lucky to score. But like Murphy's law would express: Things don't always go as planned.

Lakey Peak is situated in Sumbawa, the Indian Ocean and is known for its kaleidoscopic waves and strong complimentary winds. The water is warm-tempered with a translucent texture adding to her tropical flavour. Lakey's has got a dry landscape but is rich in culture and abundant in happy faces. A warm welcome that can be felt through her ambience.

Our group was small and tight, a little brotherhood, I'd say. Wesley Lewis was our water videographer/ photographer and visionary. He is the one that could see a scene unfold before it even started, gather the crew, tidy up an idea, helps fix the blades and most importantly, drive beyond measure. Oscar was our Videographer. Oscar and I go way back from childhood, so working with him on a project like this was an absolute treat. He is familiar with kiting and has a special eye when it comes to filming. And last but not least, Charlie and I.

" THE WATER IS WARM-TEMPERED WITH A TRANSLUCENT TEXTURE ADDING TO HER TROPICAL FLAVOUR. "





Indo is not like Cape Town from a reliability point of view. If you go in summer, you will get wind and waves. Indo, however, is a bit of an erratic rollercoaster. You can get lucky and score the waves of your life, or you can get the short side of the straw and score ankle snappers. Unfortunately for us, we got the short side this year. We expected to brave 2m+ barrels. Instead, it was more like 1ft shin slappers. I might sound like a spoiled brat now, but it's true. We got skunked!

"I MIGHT SOUND LIKE A SPOILED BRAT NOW, BUT IT'S TRUE. WE GOT SKUNKED!"

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" WE WOULD KITE FROM DUSK TILL
DAWN, NOT MISSING A WAVE NOR
AN OPPORTUNITY. "



Going to Indonesia with a film crew put a lot of pressure on the team to perform. Sponsors are on your case, waiting in suspense for the bounty you are about to get, and there is really nothing you can do if the waves don't show. These were the foreboding questions that haunted us throughout the trip. Will we score?

Luckily, she gave us a little glimpse, a tease if you must. During the 10-day trip, we probably only got one semi-good day of waves. So when it was on, it was on! We would kite from dusk till dawn, not missing a wave nor an opportunity. It only takes one session to make it all worth it.

On the days of no waves, our determination prevailed, pushing us to the not-so-tempting places. I would go for freestyle between the sharp reef to fill our trip with more shots. As easy as it sounds, riding in coral banks is pretty scary! A few times, I wiped out and scratched the surface. Not ideal and definitely not Taiba lagoon but an experience non the less.

RIDER OSWALD SMITH



If you were to ask me, "Is Lakey's worth it?". I would say yes again and again. Just don't go with great expectations. To time this place with wind and waves is a roll of the dice, and everyone knows the dice are loaded. But hey, you never had the waves in the first place- All you can do is gain.

" "IS LAKEY'S WORTH IT?". I WOULD SAY YES AGAIN AND AGAIN. "

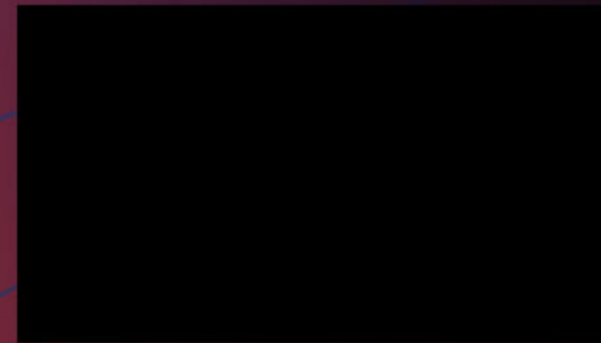
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WORDS ADRIANO BONO

With one of the best collections of short-line loop photos out there, Adriano Bono has a unique mission. Find out what drives him to get his kite so low in so many places in this short story!

SHORT LINES AROUND THE WORLD

PHOTO SAMUEL CARDENAS

" I FELT THE BIGGEST STROKE AND HAD THE MOST INTENSE KITE EXPERIENCE! "



When I began kiteboarding at the end of summer of 2016, I had yet to learn what riding with short lines meant. But, once low loop pictures and videos started appearing, I was immediately intrigued.

As soon as my kiteboarding level and knowledge developed, I was confident I was ready! I started by reaching out to Steven Akkersdijk, Camdyn Kellett and Eric Pyd; I followed their short-line journey for a while and eventually sorted myself out a set of 15-metre lines.

Once we were out of lockdown and were allowed to go kiteboarding in Belgium, I attached my short lines, gathered my courage and headed out for my first session! It was May 2020 - and I remember it like it was yesterday. Looping the lowest ever, while maybe just 5m high, I felt the biggest stoke and had the most intense kite experience!

I was on a Liquid Force NV 9m, and suddenly, looping a kite felt way more natural than ever. Of course, this included some inconvenient short-line moments, like that classic crash where the kite falls in the water completely upwind. But, I was determined, and after surviving this less-than-ideal situation and fixing my tangled lines, I would get back out in the water - over and over again. I always had the biggest smile ever across my face! After that, short lines became a permanent feature on my bars.

When high winds were on the forecast, it was all about WOOs and records. But for me, that didn't matter anymore. More sessions passed, and I kept crashing, but my control improved, and my loops got more height and power with a lower kite angle. I became more confident pulling the kite lower and lower and going out on shorter lines in stronger and stronger wind.





BELGIUM ON 10M LINES
PHOTO MAXIME HUGO

One year after the short line adventure began, I went out for a session in 40 knots with 10-metre lines and a lot of heart. Again, I gathered all my courage and pulled out my first loops, where I felt the kite going under me. With so much tension and excitement, I'm going into every loop below myself without knowing the actual outcome. There are no words to describe the intensity of that feeling. Still, today, it feels so good. Like pushing it to the extreme, doing what a kite is not made for, but experiencing it as the best thing ever.

" I GATHERED
ALL MY
COURAGE
AND PULLED
OUT MY FIRST
LOOPS "

Matchu Lopes
W#2

James Carew
W#1



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" I'M HAVING A LOT OF FUN ALONG THE WAY - AND THAT'S THE GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT I CAN HAVE. "



I never had goals; I was and am always happy with what I have and can do. I just love to keep pushing and pushing myself. It looks radical and, for some, too dangerous and stupid. But, like most extreme riders, I do it all step by step and, as my confidence grows, from low wind to more wind.

Through this short-line addiction, eventually, one thing led to another, and I found my goal: To do my thing, getting lower than low loops in as many places as I could around the world. What inspired this goal? A part of it is to create a memory for when I'm older. Another factor is showing that short lines

work, not only in the big air meccas of the world but in many different conditions. It's not only for big air; I use them for every other discipline, like foiling, freeride and freestyle. I simply love the way the kite feels on short lines.

I found myself on the short lines in France, Holland, Tenerife and eventually Cape Town in January 2022. During that trip, I managed some of my most extreme loops ever, and, in the end, I got a call from Ozone to join the shoot of the new Edge V11. Last July, I got sponsored by Ozone, and I can't thank them enough for the support they give me!

A couple of months after the short-line saga began, I found love in and for Tarifa, my home base and a perfect place to keep my training on point all year long. Brazil, I had to tick off the box, so I went, and yes, of course, I also pulled out the 10-metre lines. My list of low-looped countries is at 7 now, but that will only grow. Portugal could be the next one to add to the list soon... let's see! I'm just doing what I love and what feels like the best fit. Most importantly, I'm having a lot of fun along the way - and that's the greatest achievement I can have.

What's next? Who knows? If I feel like jumping as high as possible or floating as long as possible in the air, I will do it. I go with my flow.

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TECHNIQUE

WORDS & PHOTOS CHRISTIAN & KARINE



Having just finished a month of clinics, we can't help but be motivated by some of the fun and eye-catching moves we've seen this last Movember. So many to choose from, but we've whittled it down to these two. To get things rolling, there aren't many ways to start a session that can hold a candle to the Beach Jump. We appreciate wind direction is everything when launching yourself onto the blue stuff, but if you can find the right set up, you'll not be disappointed. Then, hot on its heels for maximum smile-inducing brilliance, it's time for a redux of the ever popular Pop to Blind with an Ole. Low level showboating never felt this good, and it's such a pleasing addition to your box of tricks that'll lead on to so much more. Enjoy and cheerio, C&K.

New 2023 clinic calendar up on:
<http://www.ckperformanceclinics.co.uk>

1 / BEACH JUMP START



CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE

2 / POP TO BLIND WITH OLE



CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE

BEACH JUMP START ▶

KITE – Cabrinha FX2 11m

BOARD – Cabrinha XO 136

This is always such a firm favourite when the planets align, and the spot just begs for it. Launching yourself with gusto off terra firma and onto the water's surface without wetting your ankles is both a sight to behold and a feeling to cherish. The mechanics are similar to jumping, so if you're already proudly displaying the underside of your board to all and sundry then this one should be on your to do list.

Before we continue to the nuts and bolts, a few details that should be adhered to. Firstly, this is a move for offshore or cross offshore spots. If you're devilishly brave, foolish or extremely accomplished, it's vaguely possible with cross shore, but we wouldn't advise this. However, under no circumstances should the idea bulb spark with any inkling of onshore on the menu. Secondly, as we so often mention, deep water is what makes kiting both fun and safe, a sport of aerial gymnastics with a splashing consequence. Few spots have the luxury of deep water right next to dry sand, and as with everything, nothing is certain. If it's not deep enough to fail spectacularly, it's not deep enough, period!

In this feature, we're using a section of beach from which the wind is blowing offshore, with a tiny bias so that going left takes you out further. As such, Karine will be jumping up and landing left foot forward, which guarantees that she'll end up in the drink. By the very nature of jumping with a kite, she will also fly considerably downwind when she gets airborne.



SET UP PIC A

You've found yourself the perfect spot. Couple of things to note. Firstly, try and get yourself as near to the water as possible, just in case. Secondly, if possible, look for dry sand. It's not a must, but your board may stick to wet sand, and it's preferable that you don't part company. It's also advisable to find a flat patch; if you're on a decline, it will be trickier to resist the power. Place your board across the wind, biased so that the tail points ever so slightly upwind, and the nose a fraction down. With your kite at 12 o'clock, climb aboard and wiggle your feet into your straps. Your sweet spot should be trimmed out, as you'll need some tension to get you up and off the beach from a standing start.



READY POSITION PIC B

This would usually refer to a certain stance whilst preparing to receive a serve, make a tackle, kick a ball or lift a weight. Normally in these pages we focus on the approach to a move, however, seeing as we're starting from a standstill, it seems prudent to bring things back down to the foundations. Your ready position should start with you putting your board down as above. Once in the straps, drift the kite back slowly, in this case to just past 1 o'clock. If you pull a little on the bar, you will feel some pull as the kite drops a little deeper into the window. Now, wiggle your board so that you can comfortably lean gently against this pull with your weight on your heels. Now your board is in the perfect position for the jump,

as it means that you will be able to resist against the pull once you send the kite. Karine has her kite around 1 o'clock, she's holding some tension on the lines to feel the pull and has dropped her weight slightly to counterbalance it. Her weight is balanced equally between both feet so that she can use as much of the board as possible to get some oomph. She's ready!

THE SEND PIC C

Your plan is to send the kite to 12 o'clock. There's a pretty high chance that the first few times you will move your kite too gingerly and not a lot will happen. You're not moving. You're static on a beach, and as such there is no apparent wind in the kite; it's your job to produce it. The faster the kite moves, the more power it will generate, so don't be shy, give it some welly! That said, you must make sure that you turn the bar on the sweet-spot. It's way too easy to yank the bar in with your front hand as you steer the kite, which will only choke and stall it, resulting in all the pull coming from in front of you, rather than above. Karine is push-pulling the bar on the sweet spot, watching as it rises, whilst keeping her weight back, resisting and adding tension in the lines.

DROP, RESIST & LEVEL PIC D

If you send the kite correctly, it will turn and motor up and across. Whilst it moves it will start to pull harder, and as such,



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you need to resist more, rocking back onto your heels and dropping your weight in an attempt to get your edge into the sand. Here you can see that Karine has committed her weight against the kite and as such is building up some energy. You can also see that she has levelled her bar. You don't want your kite flying across to the other side of the window, as this will make the eventual landing more difficult. You're looking for lift up and off the beach, so 12 is the magic number.

COIL & BREATHE PIC E

As mentioned above, you want the kite to go up towards 12 around the edge of the window. This will give you maximum lift. To guarantee this, you need to let the kite breathe as it powers, so feather the bar out to follow your sweet spot as the kite rises. You also need to resist the upward pull of the kite by squatting down whilst keeping weight on your heels. This has the added bonus of coiling your springs ready for take-off. Karine has let the bar out,



allowing the kite to climb towards 12, she's squatting with her weight on her heels to resist and her bar is still very much levelled.

KICK OFF PIC F

Once the kite reaches 12 o'clock, it's time to launch. Even if you follow the sweet spot and let your kite breathe, you'll know when it's time as you'll feel everything lifting. That said, if it adds confidence you can watch your kite and use the visual clue of it reaching 12. Your launch sequence is standard kite practice,



legs first and then you can pull on the bar. Here Karine is extending her legs, trying to jump off her heels, not her toes, so that she's resisting until the very last moment. As she extends, she then pulls the bar in for a little help from her kite. Note that the bar is still level.

IN FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT PIC G

From here on in, you should be in familiar territory. As per a jump or transition, get yourself into a comfortable and balanced position. How long you have will depend on the effort and effectiveness of both your resistance and kite send. Should you get

some height, bring your knees up, keep your bar on the sweet spot and your kite above you. Here Karine lifts her knees as she rises and keeps the kite above her on a level bar.

LANDING GEAR DOWN PIC H

Yet again, as per jump or transition, patience is a virtue. Wait until you're descending, then drop your legs, dive the kite to pull you downwind and twist your hips to point your board downwind for a soft tail first landing. Karine is perfectly set for a smooth landing, she's given the kite a decent dive from above, her bar is on the sweet spot and she's pointing downwind.



Now, back to the beach for another one! :)

TOP TIPS

Deep water and offshore wind!

Positioning your board so that you can resist is key. Don't rush into the jump, but spend some time leaning against the kite and moving it slowly to find the position in which you feel most comfortable to resist.

You do need to give the kite more of a send than you'll think is wise, however, there is no harm in starting gently and building up.



To be able to stop the kite at 12, you need the kite to start low enough to generate sufficient lift by then. This will depend on kite size and wind strength.

Deep water and offshore wind...

Now have a look at the sequence and videos for a step by step and real time playthrough.

COMMON PROBLEMS

If you find that you're not getting enough height on your jump. Chances are that you've either trimmed too much, don't have enough power or are being too gentle with the send. That said, if you're moving the

kite well but you're not going up, you might be trying to jump off your toes rather than with your heels against the edge. Make sure you drop your weight back.

If you're getting pulled across your board and landing unceremoniously face first in the water, you're most definitely choking your kite. The power comes from the kite moving, not from you yanking the bar in. Let the kite breathe enough so that it goes up to 12.

If you're landing nose heavy on your front foot, it's a sign that the kite is moving past 12 on the send. Make sure to steer the kite up, but then level before springing into action.

KEYSTONES

1. Ready position
2. Decent send from low enough
3. Let the kite breathe
4. Level, stamp, pull
5. Dive and downwind



POP TO BLIND WITH OLE ▶

KITE – Cabrinha Switchblade 8m

BOARD – Cabrinha XO 136

The Pop to Blind with an Ole has been such a popular move, celebrated on our clinics for nigh on 15 years. Last month, we had some new takers from a much younger generation, and so the Ole lives on. It's a really satisfying move that feels just oh so amazingly good. It's simple yet sublime and opens the door to a plethora of new tricks as it teaches you to land blind over the board. Low level showing off has never felt this good. If you already have blind in your armoury it would be rude not to give this a go, and if you don't, check out Riding Blind in IKSURFMAG Issue 77. All you need is some pop, patience and persistence.

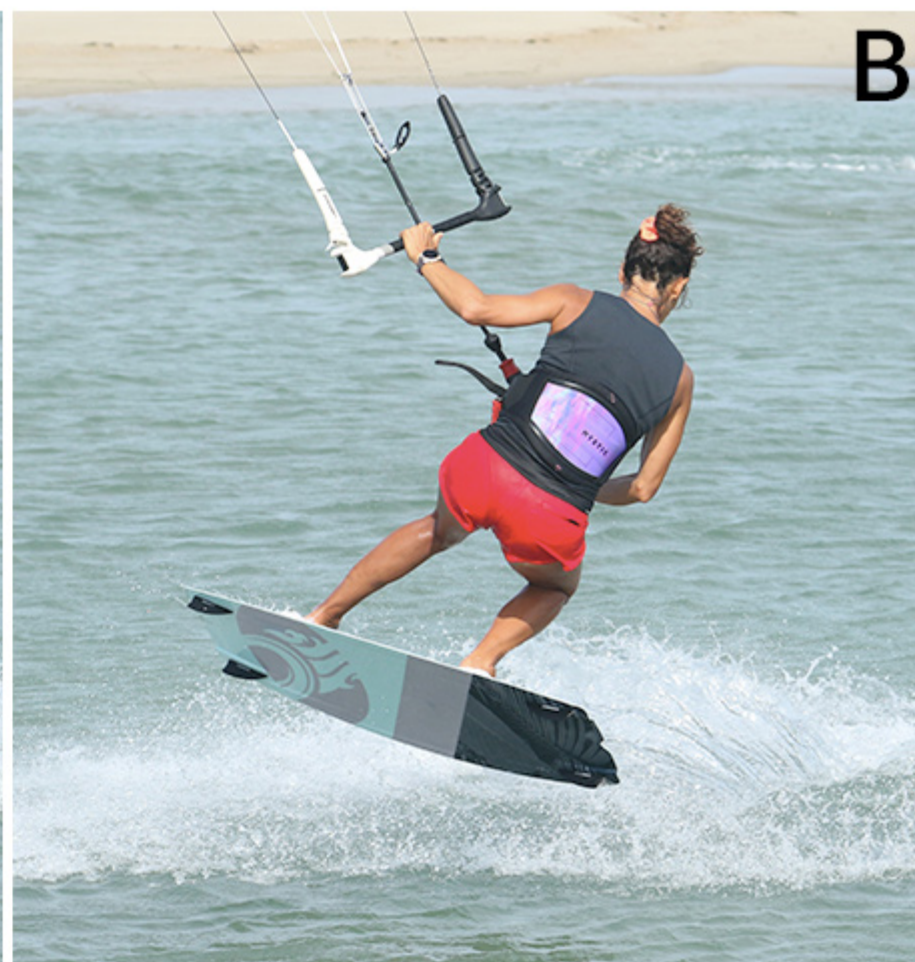
So, what is an Ole? It's the movement necessary to push the bar across from a blind position so that you are suddenly and magically riding toeside. It's the hooked in version of a surface pass. However, as simple as pushing the bar sounds, there's a fair bit going on in the background to get rid of all line tension, which then allows you to complete this with your nose intact. Without further ado, let's have a look at what's involved...

POP PIC A

Being a pop trick means that you won't be sending the kite to get off the water. In this instance, it's probably a very good thing as you're not looking for height. You just want enough to get around to blind. However, in preparation for your Ole, you will want your kite relatively high, and definitely no lower than



11 or 1 o'clock. On your approach, make sure that your hands are centred on the bar. If you already have a blind, the main difference in your pop will be your approach. You need to rotate far enough around so that you land pointing ever so slightly off the wind. By this, we mean a bit further than across the wind. This will be considerably more achievable if you don't come in edging hard, so approach on a very gentle edge across the wind. From here, you'll be able to carve and stamp to get off the water without having to turn up hard into the wind. As with everything pop, be sure to stamp before pulling on the bar, otherwise you'll be pulled across your board. Here you can see that as Karine pops she has her kite quite high and is already anticipating her blind by turning her head



back towards the tail of her board, whilst her bar remains on the sweet spot.

THE 180 PIC B

Assuming that you're already the owner of a well-honed blind, we won't hark on too much. However, as you lift your back foot up towards your bum and turn your shoulders, hips and board in unison, you must push your bar away. You don't want the kite pulling you downwind. Pushing the bar away will also prevent you from steering the kite down as you turn. Make sure that you separate your up and your around. This way, you'll be able to bring the board with you. If you go straight for your 180, you'll leave the board behind and find it hard to rotate enough.



Karine has lifted her back foot up in towards her bottom and you can see how everything is rotating together, whilst she keeps her bar out.

TOUCH DOWN PIC C

This is what you're aiming for, landing upright over the board, but blind. When aiming for an Ole, it's too tempting to try and rotate everything as far as possible. Imagine if Karine had just landed but she was facing the camera. Alas, this won't work. Blind means that your head, shoulders, hips and knees are pointing back towards where you came from. In this position, you'll be balanced and in control. Most importantly, your weight is biased towards the



new tail, which keeps the nose up and enables you to control the board – more on this in a second. In the photo, Karine has landed over the board, and she's passed cross wind. She's standing tall, her weight is on the tail, kite high and her bar is out so the power is off. She's perfectly poised to Ole.

TENSION DUMP PIC D

Now, before getting overly excited and pushing your depower main line across your face with the tension of a guitar string, you need to dump all tension. The first and most obvious port of call is to push your bar up as far as possible, quite literally depowering your kite completely. The second is to turn your board downwind. With your weight already on your new



back foot, you can drop your weight onto your heels and the board will carve off its rocker towards the kite, releasing even more tension. You can clearly see how Karine's weight is on her back foot, so she's on the turny tail. Her back leg is flexed, dropping her weight onto her heels, whilst she pushes the bar out as far as physically possible. All tension has been well and truly dumped.

OLE PIC E

It's the moment you've been waiting for. With no tension in the lines, you can now Ole, and believe us, it helps if you say it out loud too: "Ole!" Turn your head and shoulders so that you're looking forward and bring the bar across upwind and in front of your face.



Push your hand upwind as you bring the bar through. Looking at Karine, she's turned her head, pushed the bar upwind and across and her board is carving downwind, so there's no threat of any tension returning just yet.

END GAME PIC F

This is where you should be ending up, toeside in the same direction. The board is heading the same way, the kite is in the same position, only you and the bar

have moved from facing back to facing forward, just like that! You now have two choices, either carve back onto your toes or carry on toeside.

OR PIC G

As this may not be your preferred toeside, you can keep weight on your heels and slide the board back to heelside. You'll find this quite natural at first and will probably end up heelside without even thinking about it.



TOP TIPS

You have time. The sequence is important, it's two moves. Firstly, landing blind and then Ole-ing out.

Flat water is most definitely your friend. Much like blind, you'll be using momentum, and chop eats momentum for breakfast. With flat water, you'll have more glide from blind and therefore more time to Ole.



If you think about only one thing, it's getting yourself far enough around so you're not landing on an edge. Remember, don't start from too much of an edge and keep your head and shoulders upright on landing.

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

COMMON PROBLEMS

Landing on an edge. If you're used to blind, this is your default, so it'll take some concentration to override your muscle memory. Approaching with no edge and keeping your body upright will help.

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

If you're landing over the board but catch your heelside edge and fall downwind of the board. This means that you haven't depowered the kite enough post pop. Make sure you push the bar out, and if that's not helping, try trimming a bit. Being overpowered will not make life easy.

KEYSTONES

1. Relaxed edge approach
2. Pop then rotate
3. Land over the board and upright
4. Bar out and carve down wind
5. Ole, and say it like you mean it!



The Cabrinha Demo Tour has been on the move, making its way along the South Coast of the UK. With a star-studded lineup featuring Keahi De Aboitiz and Hannah Whiteley, this tour was a can't-be-missed experience! Check out this collection of snapshots and short stories from the road...

SNAPSHOTS FROM THE SOUTH COAST

PHOTOS JAMES BOULDING



RIDER KEAHI DE ABOITIZ



**"ALL THINGS CONSIDERED. IT'S A GREAT SPOT —
AFTER ALL, IT'S HOME. AND IT'S OUR PLAYGROUND."**

POOLE

Richard Salmon: The South Coast of England around Poole is a water sports hub for a good reason. The second largest natural harbour in the world provides sheltered flat conditions for learning and freestyle. At the same time, the open coastal waters face every conceivable direction to scoop up the sketchy summer winds. It's not perfection; its waves are lumpy and wind-blown, and the breeze is often gusty and unpredictable, but all things considered, it's a great spot – after all, it's home, and it's our playground.

Keahi De Aboitiz: Earlier this year, I got a taste of what Poole has to offer on one of my first proper sessions back on a surfboard since I had tweaked my knee a couple of months earlier. Although it probably doesn't look like much to those from more wave-rich areas, I know the conditions we found in Poole would be considered a pretty good day for waves in this area which is blocked from more solid swell due to the coastline. All in all, it was a really fun session with the local frothers, especially after spending a couple of weeks in Holland and France with very limited waves.

BRANKSOME DENE

Richard Salmon: Tucked away between Poole and Bournemouth is Branksome Dene Chine, a popular location for those who thrive on the prevailing south-westerlies, and it was here that the Cabrinha lunar module touched down for its demo tour on 7th September. Having experienced an uncharacteristically windless end to the summer,

“THE STANDOUT FEATURE OF HIS RIDING IS THAT HE MAKES IT ALL LOOK SO EASY”

we had been crossing our fingers tightly and were delighted when the wind gods decided to kick up a lively breeze. For two days, we were treated to one of the most surreal experiences imaginable – sharing our humble local spot with a world champion and all-around kite, wing and surf legend.

Keahi has a reputation as one of the most unassuming, engaging and down-to-earth individuals you are likely to meet. Behind the glitz of international adulation, he retains a delightful boyish enthusiasm for all things water-based, along with a genuine readiness to share his passion and experience. Happy to chat but equally keen to get on the water, he somehow turned our tiny waist-high shore break into a suitable arena to display that relaxed and fluid style which is his trademark. Of course, the standout feature of his riding is that he makes it all look so easy; whether winging or throwing strapless aerals, he maintains the demeanour of the Buddha, every movement laced with casual perfection and simplicity.

With kit wedged sardine-like into the Cabrinha van, there was something for everyone on the gear front. My son, Jack, took the opportunity to experiment with an FX2 and soon discovered a boosting experience second to none while I switched between Motos and Drifters for a little light wave riding on both the lively Spade 5'7 and the more forgiving X-breed. The opportunity to try out a variety of the latest kit while keeping an eye on Keahi's trickery was simply dream-like, and the support and enthusiasm of the whole Cabrinha crew made it all the more enjoyable.

RIDER RICHARD SALMON





An evening event at Coast Water Sports & Coffee Shop presented the opportunity for all the local enthusiasts to gather for a showing of Keahi's production of Tunnel Vision and made for a memorable conclusion to the event. However, my son had enjoyed the experience so much that he spent the next week following the Cabrinha van westwards – Oh, the freedom of youth! I would have been there too, but work keeps getting in the way....

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WEEK FOLLOWING
THE CABRINHA VAN
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RIDER KEAHI DE ABOITIZ



PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEVIN MAZUR FROM THE SOUTH COAST

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“THE KITESURFING COMMUNITY IS JUST THE BEST WHEN WE ALL GET TOGETHER”

James Boulding: We were met with two fantastic days of waves, wind and rain in Branksome Dene, and Keahi was quick to get stuck in! During a break in the showers, I jumped into the water with the housing to capture some fish eye shots. The water temperature was still surprisingly warm for September, and Keahi spent his sessions in

just a neoprene top, which was what he wore for the majority of the trip; it certainly got some funny looks from the locals at each location!

HAYLING ISLAND

Hannah Whiteley: It was so nice joining the Cabrinha demo in Hayling Island. I have a lot of nice memories from Hayling over the years. When I started competing on the British tour (BKSA) in 2007, there was always an event on Hayling Island. It was a guaranteed good time! Everyone always made it over for this

event, the wind was questionable most of the time, but the vibes were always on point! The kitesurfing community is just the best when we all get together, sharing a bit of love and stoke for the sport. You just can't beat it. It was really nice to go back to Hayling for the Cabrinha demo. At this point, I was fresh on the team, and it was such a pleasure to get to know all the crew properly. It really made me feel like I had made the right decision in joining the Cabrinha team, with such a dedicated and fun bunch of employees and team riders.

“WITH MODERN-DAY FOIL TECHNOLOGY, IT'S POSSIBLE TO GET OUT AND EXPLORE IN UNDER 10 KNOTS”

The first demo day in Hayling greeted us with some decent wind. I enjoyed a session with teammate Keahi De Aboitiz and James Boulding snapping the shots. It reminded me of the good old days... many years ago, when I was just starting kitesurfing professionally, I did a few shoots with James, as we grew up in the same town! But it's been years since we have shot anything together.

During the next couple of days in Hayling, the wind was a lot lighter, but it allowed me to check out what's possible with the 15m Contra kite. There was almost no wind at all, and I did not think there was enough for a foil session. But nevertheless, I decided to give it a try with the 15m Contra. That's what a demo day is all about, right?! I was pleasantly surprised that I could happily cruise around on the foil in the sunshine. The new Contra impressively makes every day a windy day!

James Boulding: Hayling Island served up a weekend of wonderful conditions with old and new friends to share them with. As often happens during the summer months, on a hot, sunny day on the south coast, the morning starts with no wind and clear skies and a gentle sea breeze kicks in into the afternoon. In days gone by, it wouldn't be enough to enjoy a session, but with modern-day foil technology, it's possible to get out and explore in under 10 knots. Keahi set out and all but disappeared with some huge tacks off upwind towards the Isle of Wight.

RIDERS HANNAH WHITELEY AND KEAHI DE ABOITIZ





With a very long telephoto lens and clear visibility, you can punch right in on the distance. In this session, Keahi enjoyed the light breeze and got a taste of the British coastline and the unmistakable 'All Saints' Church' during his first trip to the UK.

BIGBURY

Keahi De Aboitiz: With a few hour drive to the next stop on the tour, we rallied early for a 7 am morning session in Bigbury with a stiff offshore and new long-period hurricane swell filling in. Straight offshore winds are never that easy, but it was a great way to sample the long period lines filling into the bay and wake up before the drive.

**“KEAHI ENJOYED
THE LIGHT BREEZE
AND GOT A TASTE
OF THE BRITISH
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"I WAS THINKING THAT THIS HAD TO BE ONE OF THE MOST DISTINCTIVE VENUES FOR WIND AND WAVES ON THE PLANET."

Big props to James Boulding, who huddled through the rain squalls and nailed a couple of shots before we missioned on to the next spot on our journey.

BANTHAM

Kent Marinkovic: We caught Bantham just about right. To me, it was a quintessentially 'British Day' marked by a light, misty rain, but with waves lining up nicely across the bay and Keahi in his element. I took a walk across a sandy spit to a killer little spot called Burgh Island. It's quite a departure from home where the most historic location in the state of Florida is a 7 Eleven in Jacksonville! I walked up to the Pilchard Inn established in 1336, and as James would say, "they served me up a proper pint". Looking across the bay with its backdrop of green rolling hills and sharp craggy coast, I was thinking that this had to be one of the most distinctive venues for wind and waves on the planet.

DAYMER BAY

James Boulding: On the final stop of the four-month European demo tour, we arrived in Daymer Bay to see some local kitesurfers enjoying the water. Daymer is a stunning big river estuary spanning between Rock and Padstow. We were treated to a day of wind and sunshine, and the water glowed with a fluorescent tinge. On each side of the bay, stunning green farmland rises up out of the golden sand beaches. On its day, Daymer is a world-class wing and kite spot; the guys were lucky to experience a taste of this. It was the perfect end, and all the crew enjoyed toasting the trip's success over some sunset 'Drifter' beers.



“ JAMES WAS SMART ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT IF AN IMPROMPTU BEER SLAM COMPETITION POPPED UP, I'D BE A RINGER FOR THE WIN. ”

When the UK is working, it's a stunning mix of unbeatable riding conditions combined with quintessential British scenery and hospitality.

AT THE END OF THE ROAD

Kent Marinkovic, Cabrinha CEO: I couldn't add much to a demo with rockstars like

Hannah and Keahi on board, but James was smart enough to know that if an impromptu beer slam competition popped up, I'd be a ringer for the win. We were so stoked with the epic collaboration that we did with Bluntrock Brewery to brew Drifter Lagers in the UK. Bluntrock did a remarkable job respecting the recipe to recreate a real Drifter Lager. Everyone I met enjoyed the Drifters and was happy to learn about the "Drifter Project" that the brews support. Proceeds from our lagers go toward providing unique

wind and wave experiences to individuals that face physical challenges. No one receives a salary, and the funds donated go strictly toward airfare, food, accommodations, and instruction for participants to experience the same energy and power from these sports we have all enjoyed for many years. Kicking back at the Airstream at the end of the day, it was cool to see how a cold beer after a session plays the same no matter where in the world you are. It brings people together, sharing great stories of their last ride and dreams of future travel.

“THE THING THAT STOOD OUT THE MOST WAS THE INFINITE NUMBER OF UNIQUE AND UNEXPLORED RIDING VENUES.”

During my short time travelling with the team touring around the Southern UK, the thing that stood out the most was the infinite number of unique and unexplored riding venues. Between Hayling Island and Daymer Bay, we probably passed hundreds of jewels, each likely hiding a unique wave, most of which have probably never been seen, let alone ridden. I really had no idea how prolific the surf culture was in the UK, but after experiencing just a small portion of the vast coastline, it's easy to see why. Unlike places in the US, where most riders would protect a local break with their lives, our team had just the opposite experience in the UK. They had more invitations than time. Me, I'm looking forward to getting back to the UK to experience a bit of the North. The opportunities seem endless.



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14

WINTER 2022



PARATAISI - PERI ROBERTS

MOONA IN MEXICO | THE INTERVIEW - BRIAN FINCH
WING CONVERT - PAWEŁ TARNOWSKI | TESTS, TECHNIQUE, AND MUCH MORE INSIDE!

THE NEW HOME FOR WINGS, FOILING, SUP AND SURF...

WORDS JEN TYLER PHOTO KIMMY GUSTAFSON

INSIGHT

MICHAELA PILKENTON

The newest Naish Kiteboarding Team member is already making a splash, and it's not just on the water. Micha tells us all about her kiting life, passion for supporting the LGBTQ+ community, and fills us in on her epic plans for 2023. In this exclusive interview with Jen Tyler, we've got it all!



We love hearing the origin stories of kites who have made a powerful impact both on and off the water. So, tell us about your family and where you grew up!

I grew up in a town called Sherwood, just outside Portland, Oregon. It is the definition of suburbia. It is a town that prides itself in Friday night football games and music in the park - so I didn't exactly fit in super well. My parents lived a typical "American" lifestyle and did a great job supporting my brother and me in helping us become good people. My brother is ten years older than I am, and we have always been close. He currently lives on the east coast with his wife and two kids. I now live with my fiancée, Kimmy and our son, Link, who is 11 years old.

How did you first get into kiteboarding?

I was a big ski mountaineer in college, and between my junior and senior years in college, I wanted to take a guiding course in Alaska. Unfortunately, it was costly, and I ran a kids camp at the University of Oregon that summer instead. I decided I wanted to learn something new, and one of my instructors and mentors told me to learn how to kiteboard. He sent me to a small lake on the southern Oregon coast (Floras Lake), where I rocked up without knowing what I was getting myself into. I didn't even have a lesson scheduled! I managed to go from a beach lesson to up and riding a board in one day. Yes, I was that zero-to-hero that everyone hates. From there, kiteboarding started to take over my life.



"I MANAGED TO GO FROM A BEACH LESSON TO UP AND RIDING A BOARD IN ONE DAY."

PHOTO KIMMY GUSTAFSON

IKSURFMAG.COM

" I WOULD SPEND ALL SUMMER WAITING FOR WINTER AND DECIDED TO PICK UP A SUMMER SPORT. "

How did you go from ice skating and big mountain skiing in Oregon to kiteboarding on Maui? There must be a good story behind it!

I chuckled at this question, haha! When I was younger (think 3 - 4 years old), my mom was obsessed with watching figure skating on TV. That led to a big interest in the sport, and I finally put on a pair of skates when I was five years old. I learned much about athletics and competition growing up as a figure skater. I have had Olympic dreams since the day I stepped on the ice. I started snowboarding in middle school, taking a school bus on weekends. It was at the height of Shaun White's career, and I wanted to be like him. Going into high school,

I had to narrow down my sports, and it looked like the Olympics weren't in the cards for me. I chose to pursue soccer and continued snowboarding as it was one of the few places I felt pure freedom. Eventually, I decided to try skiing and fell in love instantly. I realised it could take me further into the mountains, and I started with a high ability level due to my years as a figure skater.

In college, I finally took my first mountaineering course, where I continued to fall in love with the mountains. That led to several years of peak bagging and skiing anything steep and deep. I even skied with athletes like Michelle Parker and Christina Lusti at the Arc'teryx ski mountaineering academy. I would spend

all summer waiting for winter and decided to pick up a summer sport. I learned how to kiteboard so that I could snow kite.

After college, my mountaineering partners scattered around the US, and winter became an expensive and lonely solo pursuit for me. I entertained the idea of professional mountain guiding but quickly realised it wasn't a lifestyle I was willing to have. Life took a turn when I went on a kiteboarding trip in December 2018 to La Ventana, Mexico. I landed in the Purple Hospital for an emergency appendectomy just before I was meant to go on a big ski trip. It kind of put me in a place of needing to figure out my life financially and mentally.



" WE DECIDED TO TRY OUT ONE OF THE FEW LOCATIONS IN THE US WITH YEAR-ROUND WIND, MAUI, HAWAII. "

I got my IKO certification in March of 2019, so I could start an official career as a kite instructor, and from there, chasing the wind around the world just kind of happened organically. I missed my second winter in 2019 because I moved to Melbourne, Australia, to work as an IKO instructor. My partner and I got pretty tired of moving for wind every six months, so we decided to try out one of the few locations in the US with year-round wind, Maui, Hawaii. Here I am four years later, based in Maui for the last two years, and about to head to Cape Town and miss out on my fifth winter in a row.

Congrats on joining the Naish team earlier this year! How did that come about, and what's your go-to setup?

Thanks! I am super stoked to be with a brand that feels like a family and has been a leader in the industry for decades. Leading up to my first international competition in October of 2021, I trained at Naish Beach a lot and started getting absorbed into the Naish family. Ewan Jaspan even helped me before I left with competition advice and strategy. In November 2021, we had a fun local comp here on Maui run by the Beach Culture World Tour, where I came in 2nd place based on beach presence and stoke. That day started a conversation about officially joining the Naish ohana (family), and the process was finalised with a signed contract in January 2022. January ended up being a big month, as I also joined Ride Engine, helping to grow their team of badass female big air riders. I have been thrilled with all of the gear at Naish, and my go-to setup is a Naish Pivot paired with a 55cm Torque 2 bar with 22m lines and a 136cm Naish Drive.

If you had to choose between waves, freestyle, park, and big air in order of preference, what would you choose?

I would, of course, choose big air first. It has always enamoured me. It would be followed closely by park. I spent the summer of 2019 in Hood River, thinking I would pursue park riding. Then freestyle (I secretly love a good light wind boots session) and waves. I've always said if I pursue waves, I want to ride big waves like Jaws!

You submitted an entry for the King of the Air! This year, there were sadly no female riders chosen. What are your thoughts on a Queen of the Air event?

Yes, I did! I was a part of a group of women who decided to push Red Bull this year by submitting entries in hopes they would create a Queen of the Air next year. I think it's about time we have a Queen of the Air event. The big air women have progressed massively in the last year, and we deserve to have our competition. I also think it's highly anticipated by much of the kiteboarding community. I know one thing for sure, the women are ready to prove we belong.

Do you think there is room for improvement in gender equality in the sport of kiting? How so?

At the moment, women are under-represented across all aspects of kiteboarding. A while back, I opened a foiling magazine and noticed there was only one woman in the entire issue, and it was in an ad. We need more representation. We need more female edits and more women's competitions to show the next generation of girls that they can be professional kiteboarders and build successful careers around it, just like the men have been able to do.

" I'VE ALWAYS SAID IF I PURSUE WAVES, I WANT TO RIDE BIG WAVES LIKE JAWS! "



PHOTO KIMMY GUSTAFSON



" I TAKE A LOT OF PRIDE IN BRINGING AWARENESS TO THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY IN KITEBOARDING. "

In the past few months, I have seen more and more men in the kiteboarding industry speak up about this equality issue and start to hold themselves and their brands responsible for addressing it. I think men often don't even notice women aren't represented because it doesn't directly affect them. I can see the shift starting to happen, but there is still a lot of work to do.

As women, we must keep fighting for our seats at the table. We need to make big asks of our sponsors and keep working harder than the boys to prove that we deserve things like all female edits and full-page features. With the continued demand we are seeing for women to be represented better, we will see brands grow their female teams, and we can

brands grow their female teams, and we can hopefully move closer to things like equal pay.

Congratulations on your recent engagement with Kimmy; what wonderful news! How did you two meet?

Thank you! We have been together for about four and a half years now. The story of how we met is pretty funny. We have a large age gap (I won't say how much to protect her ego), and she was in college with my brother when we first met. Years later, when I went to the same college, she still lived in town, and my brother asked her to keep an eye on me. So I would go to her house to escape my roommates for weekly pizza nights and weekend hangouts. The summer after I graduated from college, I kind of

The summer after I graduated from college, I kind of crash-landed at her house, and one night I confessed my love for her. Needless to say, it went well, haha!

What is it like to be one of the first out and proud kiteboarders?

I am really f***ing proud of myself. It's been challenging to be out while pursuing a professional career in a space that hasn't had any representation, so I take a lot of pride in bringing awareness to the LGBTQ+ community in kiteboarding. I often receive messages from others in the kiteboarding world who also identify as LGBTQ+, and I know moments like that matter. It's hard in some spaces to be the only gay kiteboarder, and I certainly feel othered in the professional scene sometimes, but I value representation more than fitting in.

One challenge of being visibly out that I don't think many people realise is that there are many countries where being gay is dangerous or outlawed, so it does give me pause when looking at travelling for things like competitions and training. Choosing personal safety over opportunities to grow and progress as a rider is hard.

Could you tell us about some obstacles you faced when you came out?

Honestly, my coming out was relatively uneventful. I didn't come out until my sophomore year of college, and by the time I came out, I was in a safe space. Most people I told weren't surprised. I am also lucky to have a loving and supportive family. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community that often passes for straight because of the outdoorsy spaces I exist in, coming out is not a one-time event. When I started kiteboarding, I chose not to come out to that community for over a year. That was a much more challenging space for me to come out to due to the lack of representation in kiteboarding. I knew I wanted to pursue a professional career and worried I would miss out on opportunities if companies knew I was gay. I finally realised I had to be the one to pave the way, and I wanted to start on the right foot. If I were to become a pro rider, I would do it as the most authentic me possible and prove to others and myself that it is possible to become a pro kiter as a member of a community that doesn't fit the status quo.

How would you advise someone struggling on a similar journey?

Ultimately, it's hard to give advice, as everyone's situation is different. What I can say is that for me,

" I FINALLY REALISED I HAD TO BE THE ONE TO PAVE THE WAY, AND I WANTED TO START ON THE RIGHT FOOT. "

MAUI KITE AND WING FEST
PHOTO FRANKIE BEES



" YOU WILL FIND YOUR PEOPLE, YOU WILL FIND YOUR COMMUNITY, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, YOU WILL FIND LOVE. "

PHOTO KIMMY GUSTAFSON
INSET NANCY MINOUI PHOTOGRAPHY

I had to wait until I was ready. I think living authentically matters, especially when we are inundated with pictures of people's lives that are seemingly "perfect" on social media. I think most of us live perfectly imperfect lives, which is important to represent. Protecting yourself from potentially dangerous or harmful situations is essential. Luckily, the world is slowly becoming more accepting, and that has opened opportunities where before it was only closed doors. What I can say is no matter how scary it may feel, and no matter how much you think you may be shamed, punished, and not rewarded for who you are, you will find your people, you will find your community, and most importantly, you will find love.

What exciting plans do you have for 2023?

As of right now, I am in the process of figuring out 2023, but I know it will be a big year for me as a Naish Team Rider. In 2023, I plan to attend a few international competitions, and I have high hopes for putting together an all-female edit. As part of my push for more women-centred content, maybe, just maybe, in all those trips and kiteloops, a wedding can happen!

Awesome, Thanks, Michaela! It's been great catching up!

See you soon, Jen!



FORTALEZA

MANCORA

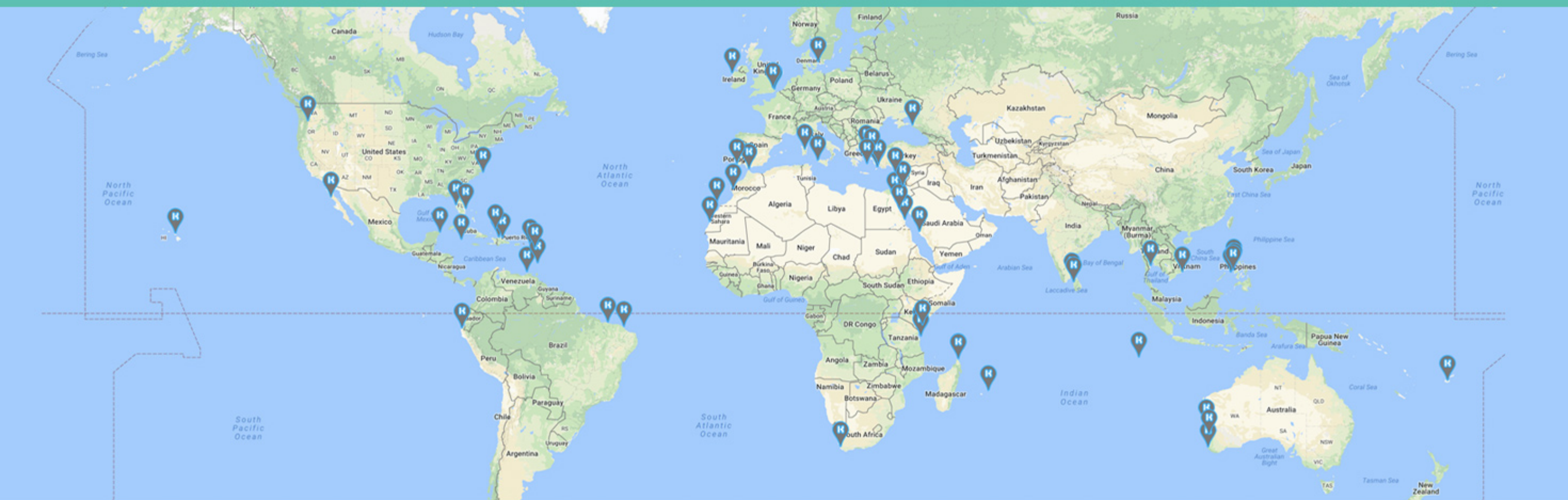
CABARETE

LANCELIN

DAKHLA

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MAUI

Intriguing Beings

WORDS ROU CHATER PHOTOS GORAN KUZMANOVSKI

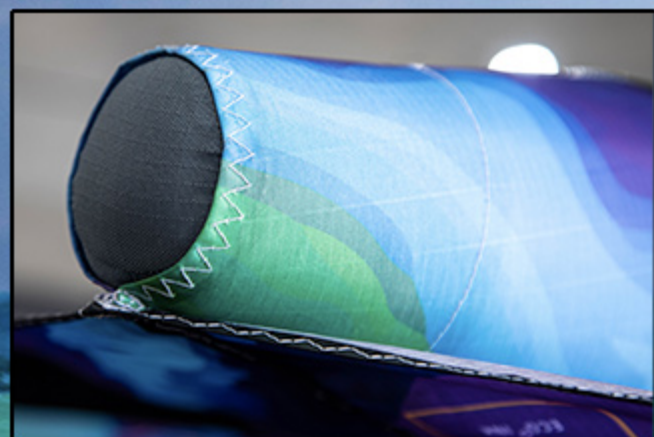


INTRIGUING BEINGS / BRAINCHILD PRODUCTION

If you haven't gotten hooked on podcasts yet, you might be missing out on some of the most interesting industry news out there! In this article, Publisher Rou Chater recaps some of the highlights from his latest Intriguing Beings podcast featuring Ralf Grösel and exploring the future of sustainable production.



"RALF FELT THERE HAD TO BE A BETTER WAY TO PRODUCE THE EQUIPMENT WE LOVE SO MUCH, SO HE CAME UP WITH BRAINCHILD PRODUCTION."



Traditionally the water sports industry has never been very eco-friendly. Using resins, foams, and exotic materials that can't be recycled and producing most goods in Asia when the main markets are Europe and the US... The carbon footprint alone is enough to make your eyes water. At least, we use the wind to put a smile on our faces, and we can, once we have it, use our equipment again and again and again. But, what if

we could change the way our industry produces equipment?

It's a conundrum that has been on Ralf Grösel's mind for some time. If you haven't heard the name before, he is the designer for some of the most iconic kites in the sport. The Dice, Rebel, Vegas and Evo are all his creations, and he's been a designer at Duotone and Icaro Paragliders for many years. More than that, he's also set up

production facilities in Asia and worked at the coalface when it comes to making the gear we love. Ralf felt there had to be a better way to produce the equipment we love so much, so he came up with Brainchild Production. A new, truly sustainable production facility in North Macedonia, in the heart of Europe. It wasn't an idea Ralf stumbled upon overnight, it's the culmination of his life's work and patents he filed years ago, finally getting to a stage where they can come alive in his facility.

Starting at the top, the roof of the Brainchild Laboratory is covered in solar panels. Energy production is one of the highest costs in any factory, so using the sun to power all the machines and lights makes perfect sense. However, this is just the tip of the iceberg. Ralf dives so deep down the rabbit hole that it was almost hard to keep up as he took me on a tour of the factory.

All the material he uses is white. You read that correctly. The material comes from France and is recycled where possible - and white. Dying fabrics not only costs time and money, it uses a lot of water, a precious resource we all need. Using coloured fabrics creates waste, as brands don't want odd colours at the end of a run. So by using white fabric, he saves up to 6 times as much water as traditional dyed fabrics.

Of course, we don't want white kites, so he's spent the last 6 months developing an eco-printing solution that really is incredible. The detail is unbelievable. It's photo-quality printing on a massive scale that is going to completely transform the way our sport looks. The future is very bright indeed. Naturally, all the inks are eco, and the footprint of this technique is minuscule in comparison to screen printing, which is how graphics are traditionally put on our kites.

Alongside these new techniques, there is perhaps the jewel in the crown, dubbed the Proweld. Imagine a leading edge that has no stitching... All the segments of the leading edge on his kites and wings are welded, using a technique that Ralf has patented and developed himself. It creates a stiffer leading edge with better structural integrity while also saving weight and reducing the stress on the bladder inside.



" DYING FABRICS NOT ONLY COSTS TIME AND MONEY, IT USES A LOT OF WATER, A PRECIOUS RESOURCE WE ALL NEED. "



" IT'S TRULY GROUNDBREAKING STUFF THAT GOES INTO THE SMALLEST OF DETAILS. "



He's kept a very tidy leading edge closing seam, so repairs can still be made, but the weight saving is a huge benefit too.

Where panels are stitched, Ralf is using recycled yarn from Germany. His goal is to keep the distance of travel for all the components as small as possible. Locally he is using moulds machined only a few miles away to inject with recycled plastic to create all the plastic parts of the equipment; think valves and tube clips, and you'll start to realise how much plastic is on a kite.

Taking things further again, he's looked at every individual part to reduce it to what is absolutely necessary, shaving millimetres off where he can to save on weight but also save on raw materials and wastage. It's truly groundbreaking stuff that goes into the smallest of details.

It goes without saying that Ralf is looking after the staff too. They have a huge kitchen and dining area that could easily be a high-end restaurant with a garden overlooking the mountains. Inside the

factory, there are stunning images of local Macedonian scenes to create a sense of pride amongst the team. All the products are proudly stamped with the country's name.

Going another step further, he has even set up a local sewing school for anyone wanting to learn to sew. Ralf recognises he needs the best of the best to create the ultimate products and wants to train people up. The course is free, and you don't have to work for Ralf at the end of it. He says it's one of the ways he is giving back to the local community.

" THE IDEA IS TO MAKE A PRODUCT THAT IS SO SUPERIOR AND SO ECO-FRIENDLY THAT WE, THE KITERS AND WINGERS, ACTIVELY DEMAND OUR BRANDS USE THESE NEW TECHNIQUES "



As far as technology is concerned, a lot of what Ralf does inside the factory is cutting-edge. He's building his own machines to create the products he wants, going as far as 3D printing components to create them. There is a whole section at the back of the factory dedicated to this purpose.

Having all of these amazing processes and being super sustainable isn't going to cut it if the product isn't good. I was fortunate enough to see some finished wings, and they are just in another class compared to what we have today. It's like Ralf is playing on a different planet while everyone else is still at the ballpark.

It's going to be a while before we see any Brainchild products come to the mass market - a year or so is a good estimate. And Brainchild isn't a new kite or wing brand hitting the market, either. Ralf is trying to make a brand and business out of the production process so that brands can partner with him to create their kites; think CORE or F-ONE manufactured by Brainchild. The idea is to make a product that is so superior and so eco-friendly that we, the kites and wingers, actively demand our brands use these new techniques, making the world a better place for everyone.

I was blown away by my visit to North Macedonia. What Ralf and his team are doing is not only groundbreaking and, at last, truly sustainable, it's pretty mind-blowing too. Hopefully, this is the start of a movement towards a better way forwards and, indeed, a better product!

Want to know more? Click [HERE](#) to tune in to the Intriguing Beings podcast!

TRIED & TESTED

WORDS & PHOTOS THE IKSURFMAG TEST TEAM

PHOTO THIS PAGE RIDER ANDREA ZUST PHOTO PEER SCHNYDER

With strange wind conditions in our test locations in both the Northern and Southern hemispheres, our testers were on the hunt for that ever-elusive ideal session. Well, perfect sessions are never a given, so what better way to really put gear to the test than in the marginal conditions that most of us are stuck with?! We've got some of the most exciting kites released this year on test in this issue! There are fresh updates to old favourites like the North Orbit and Ozone Enduro and all-new models, including the Duotone Neo D/LAB and the completely updated shape on the latest FLYSURFER Stoke. We've got two of the latest Ozone twin tips on test and, for the foil frothers out there, a review on the just-released Armstrong WKT board. Neoprene is an essential part of your kit, and we're testing two sides of the spectrum with the budget-friendly Ho Stevie wetsuit and the premium MANERA Seafarer. It's all right here in Tried & Tested!

KITES

North Orbit 2023

Duotone Neo D/LAB

Ozone Enduro V4

FLYSURFER Stoke

BOARDS

Armstrong WKT

Ozone Code V3

Ozone Torque V3

WETSUITS

Ho Stevie 4/3

Manera Seafarer 4/3



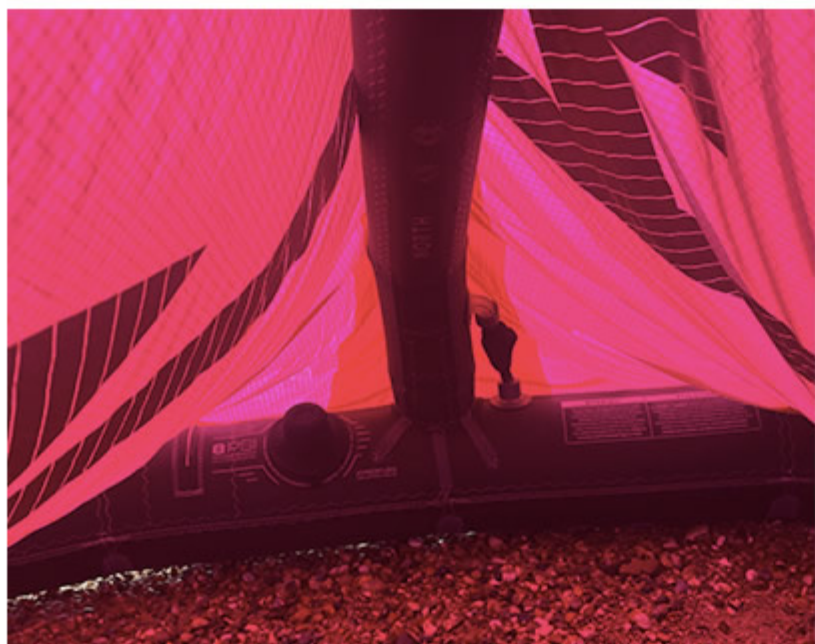
BRAND NORTH MODEL ORBIT SIZE 9M YEAR 2023

"THE ORBIT NOT ONLY GOES BIG, BUT IT'S EXTREMELY RELIABLE, ESPECIALLY WHEN LOOPING."



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

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



AT A GLANCE

Returning with a new update for 2023, The North Orbit continues to be a dominant player in the Big Air field. With podium finishes at the King of The Air, this kite of kings (Marc Jacobs in 2021 and Jesse Richman in 2020) has been proven since the beginning. It fires from all cylinders and sends you to the MOON! 2023 sees North make minor adjustments to an already well-established kite, and we've been able to get our hands on the 9m.

The North Orbit is a 5-strut design with a high aspect swept wingtip and efficient 2-stage arc design. It provides unmatched top-end control, and the qualities of this kite are even more prominent when it's in an overpowered state. With such a large wind range, this kite allows you to get out for a session on light-wind days. North has incorporated new, lighter bladders, and this bad boy can fly on those very light days.

All editions of the Orbit have been good; however, the first Orbit released in 2020 had a tendency to front stall. This issue was quickly resolved with the 2021 model. In 2022, it got even better,

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)



BRAND DUOTONE

MODEL NEO D/LAB

SIZE 10M

YEAR 2023



"FOR THE RIDERS WHO WANT THE ULTIMATE IN PERFORMANCE FOR WAVE RIDING AND FOILING, THE NEO D/LAB WILL HELP YOU TAKE YOUR RIDING TO THE NEXT LEVEL"



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

TO VISIT THEIR WEBSITE,
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AT A GLANCE

The all-new Duotone Neo D/LAB has finally arrived! Kites who love the Neo are going to be interested to see this new iteration of the kite featuring the new Aluula material. The kite has also been redesigned around this new material to ensure it achieves the ultimate flying characteristics. It's still a three-strut wave kite designed to offer the ultimate in performance, but it takes the DNA from the original and SLS constructions and adds steroids.

Aluula has a few benefits; primarily, it is lighter but also stiffer. While this makes it tricky to work with, brands that have invested the time into getting the construction right can reap weight savings of up to 30%, which equates to a 1kg saving on some sizes. That's a huge amount, especially when a lighter kite will fly in less wind and deliver more power.

The new Neo D/LAB uses this Aluula material on the leading edge and centre strut. It replaces the Dacron on the original construction and the Penta TX on the SLS version. The canopy uses the Trinity TX material seen across all kites in the Duotone range.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)

BRAND OZONE

MODEL ENDURO V4

SIZE 9M

YEAR 2023



"AN EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH-PERFORMING PACKAGE WITH MORE LIFT, DRIFT AND FREESTYLE PERFORMANCE ON TAP!"



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

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



AT A GLANCE

A mainstay of the Ozone Kites lineup, the 4th version of the Enduro has undergone a big redesign using Ozone's latest design technology. Still coming into that 3 strut performance all round category, the Enduro V4 has been designed for intermediate to advanced riders who demand a kite to keep up with all conditions and all disciplines thrown at it.

The Variable Bridle Geometry (VBG) allows you to alter the feel and performance of the kite quite dramatically to suit your activity of the day, and there are three separate rear line options to suit your preferred bar feel.

New for the V4, Ozone has used Continuous Curve Leading Edge construction, which means each segment is curved to form a perfect arc as opposed to the historic straight and angled sections. From this, the Transverse Sail Shaping allows there to be a continuous curve throughout the canopy from the leading edge to the trailing edge, again resulting in a smooth ultra-aerodynamic profile. These two new design features have greatly reduced the drag of the kite and created a tighter canopy, leading to a more performance-orientated kite.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)

BRAND FLYSURFER

MODEL STOKE

SIZE 9M

YEAR 2022



"THE
PERFORMANCE
FOR BOTH
FREERIDE AND
WAVE IS
INCREDIBLY
ACCESSIBLE"



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

TO VISIT THEIR WEBSITE,
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AT A GLANCE

It's been a little while since we have had an upgrade of this popular 3 strut kite from FLYSURFER, and once again, it is a marked improvement on its predecessor. Designed as an all-rounder, the Stoke takes decades of design knowledge from FLYSURFER's successful foil kite range and puts it into the 2 kite LEI offering. The Stoke is billed as a wave and freeride kite for the beginner to professional kitesurfer, an all-rounder for those who demand a kite which offers only the most connected feeling.

New for this third version of the Stoke, FLYSURFER has introduced the Triple Ripstop Special Coated Longevity Textile (SLC-TEX), which offers a mammoth 60% less porosity and 30% higher tear strength. These qualities, along with the weight remaining the same as a 2x2 yarn fabric, ensure your kite should last well in heavy wipeouts for years to come.

FLYSURFER has focused on creating their lightest and most streamlined kite with the Stoke. Using both a Force Frame and Profile Support, they have managed to knock an incredible 17% of the kite's weight off when compared with the previous model.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)

BRAND ARMSTRONG

MODEL WKT

SIZE 109CM (3'7 X 16.5", 8.2L)

YEAR 2023



"IF YOU ARE A
CONFIDENT
FOILER WHO IS
READY TO MAKE
THE JUMP TO A
COMPACT,
DO-IT-ALL BOARD,
TRY THIS
BOARD!"



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

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



AT A GLANCE

Armstrong is a brand that needs no introduction. If you're into foiling, you already know the name and their signature black and white striped hydrofoil range. They are at the forefront of foil design and engineering, with an extensive range of hydrofoils to fit any and every application.

Their board range, on the other hand, is relatively small, clocking in at only three different models after the recent release of the Armstrong WKT. WKT stands for Wake, Kite, and Tow, and this multi-function model is the smallest board in their range.

Our test model, the WKT109, has a volume of 8.2L, and this nimble little creature was designed for the advanced wakefoilers, kitefoilers, and towfoilers out there. Fear not! The WKT comes in two larger sizes (122cm for intermediate riders and a user-friendly 137cm for the rookies).

The low-volume board WKT features ultra tough C beam construction, using high tech moulded carbon. Their top-of-the-range finishes extend to their signature carbon pattern,

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)



BRAND OZONE

MODEL CODE V3

SIZE 138 X 41CM

YEAR 2022



"IT IS IN
PERFORMANCE
FREERIDE WHERE
THE CODE V3
REALLY COMES
INTO ITS OWN "



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

As the trend of big air and that super smooth riding has firmly established itself as the current 'in' style, boards which were once relegated to the more senior cruiser amongst us have now become the go-to. The Code is one of those and is now back for its third version of the popular high-performance freeride board.

The Ozone Code V3 houses an A-grade Paulownia wood core for ultimate flex characteristics, light weight and incredible strength. Then, a layer of Bio-Based (35% plant origin) Epoxy Resin is followed by precise lamination using high-quality Biaxial Fiberglass and UD Carbon layers to provide the ultimate balance of flex, response and strength. Narrow tips with new tri-spine channelling detail, medium flex, medium rocker, and 316 stainless steel inserts complete the rest of the board.

The Code V3 comes complete with fins and a handle, and the V2 straps on offer from Ozone are second to none in comfort and adjustability straight out of the box.

Sizes: 129 x 38 cm, 132 x 39 cm,
135 x 40 cm, 138 x 41 cm, 141 x 42 cm,
144 x 43 cm

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)

BRAND OZONE

MODEL TORQUE V3

SIZE 138 X 42 CM

YEAR 2023



"EXCEPTIONAL
HIGH-END
FREESTYLE
PERFORMANCE
AND BRILLIANT
ALL-AROUND
FREERIDE
PERFORMANCE
FOR A RANGE OF
CONDITIONS."



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CLICK [HERE](#)



AT A GLANCE

Ozone's freestyle orientated twin tip, the Torque, has had a serious facelift for this 3rd version. Billed as a high-performance freestyle and freeride board, its square outline and aggressive bottom channelling cry out to be ridden by the aspiring freestyler.

New in this third version, Ozone utilises a Hybrid Biax Fiberglass and UD Carbon Beam layup, which has resulted in increased flex in the tips and response from the centre of the board. There is an A-grade Paulownia wood core for reduced weight with ultimate strength and flex, Polymer Resin rails for protection and A-grade 316 stainless inserts.

The board has a medium rocker with medium flex and a quad concave hull for control and pop. The new graphics are in Ozone's classic simple style, and the board comes equipped with fins. The V2 straps we had on test were fantastically grippy straight out of the box and are remarkably adjustable.

Sizes: 134 x 40cm, 136 x 41cm, 138 x 42cm, 140 x 43cm, 142 x 44cm

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BRAND HO STEVIE!

MODEL MEN'S SURFING WETSUIT

SIZE 4/3MM

YEAR 2022



"THE HO STEVIE!
OFFERS UP
EVERYTHING A
KITER NEEDS
FROM A WETSUIT
AT A PRICE THAT
CAN'T BE BEAT."



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AT A GLANCE

Ho Stevie! might not be a name you're familiar with, as us kitesurfers typically gravitate towards the major kitesurfing accessory brands, and, if not, a major surf brand. However, in a world where everything is getting increasingly more expensive, we wanted to take a minute to focus on value for money.

When we saw the price point of the Ho Stevie! wetsuit, we were pretty sure that there was no chance a suit priced at \$200 USD could match the competitors within the kitesurfing industry. But, we had to know for sure!! So, we ordered a suit and, while excitedly awaiting its delivery, dug a bit more into the story behind the brand.

Ho Stevie! is a California based company owned by a surfer whose goal is to keep access to water sports accessible to all. Steve, originally from Wisconsin, moved to San Diego in 2009 to follow his love for surfing, and ended up spending some time in Kauai for several months surfing in boardshorts. Starting a brand isn't easy, especially up against industry giants, but Steve had a vision and he made it work by cutting out the middleman and foregoing athlete sponsorships.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)

BRAND MANERA

MODEL SEAFARER STEAMER FRONTZIP

SIZE 4/3MM

YEAR 2022



"IT'S A SUIT THAT FITS PERFECTLY, RIDES COMFORTABLY, AND HAS ALL THE FEATURES THAT A KITER COULD POSSIBLY WANT."



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

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



AT A GLANCE

A quality wetsuit that fits like a glove is a must in any quiver, especially if you want to spend a lot of time on the water in less-than-tropical conditions. MANERA's reputation of not compromising when it comes to their design ethos or the quality of their range (not to mention video productions!) had me itching to get my hands on one to see if they truly match the expectation.

I had the chance to test the new MANERA Seafarer Steamer Front Zip in the 4/3mm thickness, an ideal fit for Cape Town sessions in the punishing Atlantic Ocean. The test model arrived in the pewter colourway, which is an eye-catching greyish blue.

Other features like the quality one-way zipper allow you to easily secure your zip with one hand, even with frozen fingers. The sealing prints inside the wrists and ankles keep the wetsuit in place. MANERA uses GBS (glued and blind stitched) seams, as well as a unique fusion cut technique for the wrist holes and ankle holes, which have a thin and snug fit appearance. Overall, it's a suit packed with quality features that looks great!

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RIDER ELSIEN ZIJLSTRA
PHOTO ANTONIO HERRERA TRUJILLO

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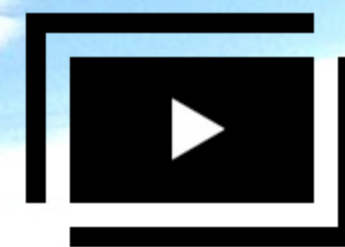


BECOME A SUPPORTER

MONICA BALLÚS

WORDS CRYSTAL VENESS PHOTOS MONICA BALLÚS

The Arctic Circle is a destination that, for most, is a distant thought. After all, who would want to go kiting in -30°C ?! Well, we found someone who did: Monica (Nika) Ballús. In this interview, we find out all about Nika's incredible experience in Lapland...



"I WANTED A CHALLENGE THAT WOULD BE PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND COMPATIBLE WITH MY WAY OF LIFE"



Nika, what sparked the idea of this incredible snowkiting expedition?

I was still in my hospital bed when I knew I needed a goal - something to look forward to so I could feel alive again. I wanted a challenge that would be physical, mental, and compatible with my way of life: exploring, blending into the environment, and moving with the force of nature. Being born in sunny Barcelona and Brazilian by heart, planning an expedition in the cold seemed challenging enough! But this is why I love kitesurfing. It is my tool to explore, to feel free.

Tell us more about the injury that put you in the hospital... What happened?

In September 2019, I was ready to embark on what I believed would be the greatest challenge of my life so far: I wanted to become the first person to traverse the open seas from Mallorca to Barcelona on a kite - alone. The day before departure, I rode my motorbike home when an animal crossed in front of me. I managed to avoid it but crashed into a wall instead.

I had over 15 broken bones and a total reconstruction of my left foot (they used my thigh to rebuild my foot). I spent almost a year in the hospital and rehab centre, living in a wheelchair while learning how to walk again. I named my new left heel Whakatau, after a Maori warrior, hoping it would become my new adventure partner. I have no sensitivity in Whakatau, which means my proprioception is not as good, and I can injure myself without noticing. Still today, Whakatau is "oversized", and I cannot wear "normal" shoes; I have to cut all my shoes, and you can generally find me wearing two different shoes.



"FEELING THE WIND ON MY FACE AGAIN AND FLYING OVER THE WATER WAS THE BEST FEELING EVER!"



How did this affect your ability to kite?

For a long time, I could not walk, so kiting was just a distant goal but the one that would get me up every day. I learned to sit ski on the snow and wanted to try with the kite when the pandemic hit. Later, about one year after the accident, I felt ready to try kiting again, so I drove 5 hours from Switzerland to the South of France on a day with a great forecast and gave it a shot. I wore a neoprene shoe on my left foot with an extra insole for protection, and it worked. That's what I still do today. Feeling the wind on my face again and flying over the water was the best feeling ever!

What made you choose Lapland?

Lapland has always appealed to me for the purity and

strength I could sense from pictures. But, through all the beautiful images on Instagram or in photo books, I could see another reality behind these landscapes, one of harsh and rapidly changing weather. It is a snow "desert" shaped by its brutal storms and extreme temperatures - with small rounded hills, leafless tree forests, frozen lakes and rivers separated by steep canyons. That is the real Lapland, and one must experience it fully to truly know the place.

How did you prepare for this massive challenge?

I approach every challenge by first asking two key questions: What can I do? And who can help me?

I knew all the "sweat equity" was on my side. But I also knew that when I started thinking about the expedition,

I could still barely walk. I had never slept in a tent in the snow or experienced freezing temperatures for an extended period. I knew the secret would lay in building the right support team around me.

I reached out to fellow adventurers like Alex Satori, Finnish locals with kitesurfing experience (Mika Bjorkmann and Lappis Kite School), doctors with expertise in cold expeditions (Louis Marxer from GRIMM in Switzerland) and even local police and rescue officers. I was lucky to find amazing people along the way that let me pick their brains, help double check my list of equipment and even lend me some equipment for the expedition. With very little time to test the equipment in real conditions, I relied mainly on their intel and my experience in handling risky situations.

The route you chose had never been explored in full - how did you feel getting ready to go into the unknown?

I planned to leave from Kilpisjärvi, a small fishermen's village in northern Finland, and head East into the Kasivarren wilderness area. I would follow a cross-country ski route for the first day. After that, I expected things to get real as I went deeper into the wilderness towards the desert border with Norway, from where I had almost no information and the maps were not very precise.

The navigation in the Norwegian part was very tricky, as I passed countless reindeer fences, rivers, forests and canyons, and even a telephone line I managed to kite under! But my main concern was finding unkiteable forests with soft, deep snow and the Reisa Canyon because I needed to learn how to walk uphill with a 70 kg sled. That, indeed, was exhausting!

Considering the difficult terrain and arctic weather, why did you decide to do this journey alone?

Come on... who would be crazy enough to embark on this kind of adventure with me, especially right out of the hospital, not knowing how Whakatau would react?! More seriously, after over a year in the hospital where I needed help for everything, I felt the need to prove to myself that I could be independent, connect with the new version of myself, assess my new limitations and really just feel how far I could go. I wanted to be in a place where I would own my successes and my mistakes and have no choice but to get myself out of whatever troubles I'd get myself into.

" I WANTED TO BE IN A PLACE WHERE I WOULD OWN MY SUCCESSES AND MY MISTAKES "





"I KNEW ALL THE WORK HAD BEEN DONE BEFORE. IT WAS TIME TO GO OUT AND ENJOY MYSELF."

Which kites did you choose, and why?

When choosing the kites, my criteria were simple: safe, light, robust and performant. So, I packed a full quiver of GIN Shaman's for the trip: 4, 6, 9, and 12m with 3 bars, though I should have brought 4 bars. The Shaman 3 is a single skin kite specially designed by GIN Kiteboarding for mountain kiting. Single skins generate a lot of power in relation to their area. Therefore, you can fly a smaller and hence more agile kite than usual. Single skins are also lighter, and you can get them in the air with virtually no wind.

What happened when you first set out on this expedition?

I started in Kilpisjärvi, a small fishing village close to the Three Nations' Border Point. Here, locals are incredibly welcoming. A huge storm was expected on the day I had planned to leave, and they didn't let me go. They welcomed me into their homes, saying, "nobody stays outside during a storm".

When I eventually got going, it was like being on the starting line of a race: I knew all the work had been done before. It was time to go out and enjoy myself. I had no idea how Whakatau would react to long hours of walking and such extreme temperatures, so I tried not to obsess about sticking to my plan of completing the full traverse. Ultimately, it was hard not to put pressure on succeeding, mainly for the people who had trusted and supported me; I did not want to let them down!

How long was the journey? How did you occupy your thoughts during all of this time alone?

The journey was ten days, fully unsupported. During this kind of expedition, you are in problem-solving mode all the time, so there is not that much time to think about many things other than moving forward,

" I WILL NOT LIE; THERE WERE TIMES WHEN I WISHED I HAD AN ADVENTURE PARTNER, SOMEONE TO BOUNCE IDEAS BACK "



trying to optimise the route based on the forecast, and staying warm and hydrated. It's literally MOVE. WARM UP. EAT. SLEEP. REPEAT and anything that gets in the way of any of these four things becomes an urgent and important issue to solve and requires all the focus.

Did you encounter any other adventurers along the way? Did you ever wish for a companion?

I met some skiers and fishermen at the beginning and, at the very end, in the more frequented parts of Finland and Norway but saw no one for most of the traverse. I enjoyed having time to reconnect with myself, and I felt the need to do this expedition alone.

I will not lie; there were times when I wished I had an adventure partner, someone to bounce ideas back, double check if we were on the right track, someone I could rely on to have each other's back and help each other to pull the heavy sleds uphill or get each other out of the snow holes. But this perfect partner is hard to find. Maybe for the next one?

At any point, did you think you might not be able to accomplish your goal? Did you have a backup plan in place to get assistance if you couldn't?

On day 6, my fuel canister leaked, and I lost almost all my fuel. Without fuel, I cannot eat, drink or heat myself.

I had only 2-3 days of fuel remaining, and I had to plan a new exit route and hope for some wind as it was no longer possible for me to walk out. That was pretty scary.

I had a support team that helped me with the weather forecast, communication and safety. Only one person in the team knew about the fuel leak and was monitoring my advancement towards the new exit point. I didn't know at the time, but he had already reached out to local forest guards in case I needed a rescue. I felt my support team was even more eager than me to have me complete that first solo traverse! I knew I was in good hands and was lucky I could focus 100% on giving it all to try to make it out safely.

What else went wrong during the journey?!

So many things! The funny thing is that everything that crossed my mind that could have gone wrong eventually did. On day 2, I got locked inside a small hut due to a snowstorm blocking the door from the outside. On day 3, I made a mistake reading the compass and ended up way south compared to where I had planned on crossing the Norwegian border. The next day, I decided to cross where I was, but the snow was deep. At some point, I was buried waist-deep with skis on, attached to my sled, and in the middle of the frozen river I was crossing. My biggest fear was getting wet, and I hoped there was still enough snow/ice below at that point! It seemed like every day brought another "unexpected" challenge to solve!


If you could look back and choose one moment that will forever stay in your mind, what is it?

After the fuel leak, I decided to continue north, knowing I was getting deeper into the wilderness, but it was the more "kiteable" option to find an exit point. I was about 100 km away from the exit point and needed some Southern wind. The night had been freezing, the snow was hard, and I started walking in an area that looked like a snowkiting dream spot. But there was no wind.

I walked for 5 hours, pulling the sled, despite the wounds already forming under Whakatau. I knew I needed to get out of there. I was fixated on an ice block on the horizon and thought, "Okay, when I get there, I will stop and eat something". The ice block seemed further and further away until I finally reached it.

"I WAS BURIED WAIST-DEEP WITH SKIS ON, ATTACHED TO MY SLED, AND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FROZEN RIVER I WAS CROSSING."





" WALKING UP THAT PASS WOULD HAVE BEEN A NIGHTMARE, BUT THE WIND HELD, AND I KITED OVER IT. WHAT A RELIEF! "

I stopped and felt a light breeze from the south. I could not believe it. I set up my 12m Shaman, launched, and..... FREEDOM!

Downloop after downloop, I was now moving at 25 km/h instead of the previous 2 km/h walking pace. I desperately needed to go over Juvri Pass to make it to the other side, where I could eventually find snowmobilers that might give me some fuel. Walking up that pass would have been a nightmare, but the wind held, and I kited over it. What a relief! That night, I camped close to a snowmobile track that I

eventually found after 10 hours of fighting against the elements.

What was the greatest success?

Completing the traverse and making it out in Maze (Norway) by my own means was probably the greatest success. It had been a wild and tough ride, and Whakatau was wounded but held on pretty well after all.

Did the experience surrounding your injury offer a source of motivation for this incredible expedition?

I was not only doing it for me but for all those whose

lives are turned upside down in a matter of seconds. For those who are lying on hospital beds, struggling to see the light at the end of the tunnel, I wanted to give them hope. The hardest part is accepting that the previous version of ourselves will not come back. When people tell you "you will come back stronger", that's bullshit. You probably won't be stronger, but you will be more resilient. If life-changing accidents teach us anything, it is that there is no substitute for hard work. There will be ups and downs, but 1% a day will go a long way. There is still so much to look forward to, and you can feel alive again.

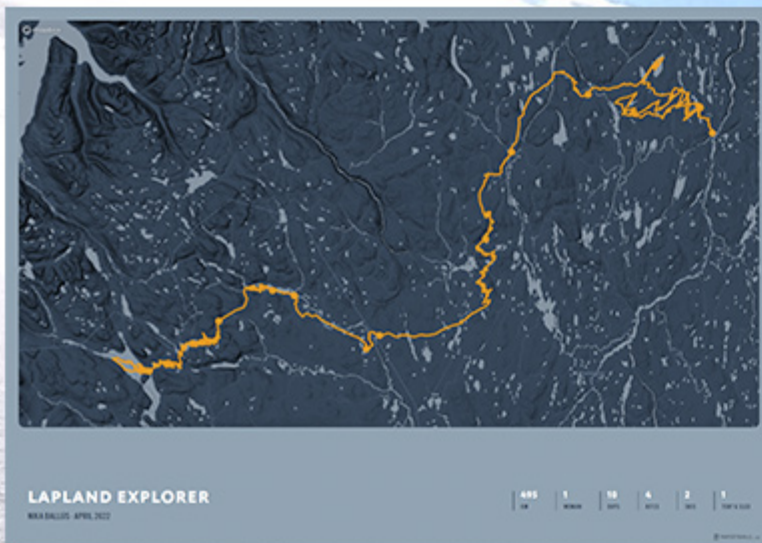
" KITESURFING IS A TOOL THAT ALLOWS ME TO MOVE AND EXPLORE THE BEAUTIFUL BUT FRAGILE PLANET WE LIVE ON. "

This isn't your first epic adventure, and we know it won't be your last... Any ideas for your next big challenge?

As I said before, this is the way I like to travel. I like to explore and connect with different places, so it will surely not be the last! Kitesurfing, for me, is more than just a sport. Just like my legs, bike or skis, kitesurfing is a tool that allows me to move and explore the beautiful but fragile planet we live on.

This past summer, my sister wanted to experience my way of exploring, and we went to cross Iceland by bike, unsupported. It was a wild experience to share with my sister, although I am not sure she appreciated it as much as I did!!

I have something very special cooking for 2023, something that was already in the back of my mind as I prepared for Lapland. Stay tuned on my Instagram account @nikaadventures. This time, I might find a partner to share the adventure with! Applications are open!



TECH FOCUS

MANERA ALT WETSUIT

Q&A with Julien Salles (Brand Manager)

New materials make up most of the headlines in the kite industry these days, but it's not all about the kites! MANERA has taken accessory innovation up a notch, and their latest release is one to get excited about. We chat with Brand Manager Julien Salles to find out all about it!



The new MANERA ALT uses 100% natural YULEX rubber. What is this material, and how is it made?

The main ingredient of YULEX foam is natural rubber sourced from hevea trees in Southeast Asia. There is no need to cut down trees to harvest the rubber, and the hevea forests are 100% FSC-certified. Farmers cut open the tree, and the natural rubber "bleeds" from it. Then comes the complicated process, which includes pre-treatment, filtration, dilution, washing, and concentration, which ends up in an emulsion. This emulsion is shipped to our neoprene factory in Cambodia, SHEICO, where it is implemented into our wetsuits.

What inspired MANERA to add the ALT, short for alternative, to the lineup?

We want to inspire people to buy a more sustainable product and inspire other brands to implement YULEX. The price of YULEX wetsuits is 20% higher than our most premium suits, so we're looking at a niche market. But, if more people buy YULEX wetsuits and more brands use YULEX rubber, it becomes more affordable. We're here to do our part and push this great new technology together with brands like Patagonia that have been pioneering it.

What makes this a greener option compared to traditional neoprene?

"Traditional" neoprene can be based on two different raw materials: Petrol or Limestone. Both are finite resources that require a lot of power to extract and transform. Natural rubber, like YULEX, is renewable and requires little energy to transform.



" WE'RE HERE TO DO OUR PART AND PUSH THIS GREAT NEW TECHNOLOGY "

PHOTOS TIM DAVIS



HIGH PERFORMANCE
NATURAL RUBBER

"THE GOAL WASN'T TO OFFER A SUSTAINABLE FOAM WITHOUT PUSHING THE WHOLE WETSUIT TO BE AS SUSTAINABLE AS POSSIBLE."

To be more specific*, let's look at the scoreboard for the production of 1kg of synthetic versus 1kg of natural rubber.

- Synthetic Rubber: ~3,000 kg CO2e emitted
- Natural Rubber: 0 kg CO2e emitted

*Sources:

1. Yulex
2. Science magazine (Published 31 August 2018, Science 361, 851 (2018) DOI: 10.1126/science.aar6859)
3. The rubber manufacturers association

Mother Nature makes the best polymers!

Compared to neoprene, are there performance or longevity advantages or disadvantages in YULEX rubber?

At MANERA, we only offer sustainable technology if it's better and equal to the standard technology. We believe being more sustainable is useless if you don't offer a performant and durable product that will actually replace the standard option.

A few years ago, the first YULEX foam didn't offer enough stretch and durability for us to implement it in MANERA wetsuits. But this has changed, and the

performance of this foam is now quite impressive! To compare with our actual range, the ALT is as warm as an X10D and as flexible as a MAGMA, which makes it an extremely good wetsuit

There are, of course, other materials that are used on both the inner and outer layers of the suit. What materials have been selected for the ALT?

The goal wasn't to offer a sustainable foam without pushing the whole wetsuit to be as sustainable as possible. We have used all our current technologies featured in our other models, like aqua glue, dope-dyed yarn, and sustainable packaging, which you can learn more about on MANERA.com.



We also implemented innovative recycled inside and outside fabrics:

- Inside jersey is made of 100% recycled nylon (sourced from production wastes)
- Outside jersey is made of 83% recycled nylon (sourced from production wastes)
- Inside fleece is made of 45% recycled polyester (sourced from recycled bottles)

Tell us a bit more about the SD2 tape. Why did you choose this method to close the seams, and how effective is it in keeping cold water out?

There are a few different stitching technologies available on the market. Flatlock is what you find on an entry-level wetsuit.

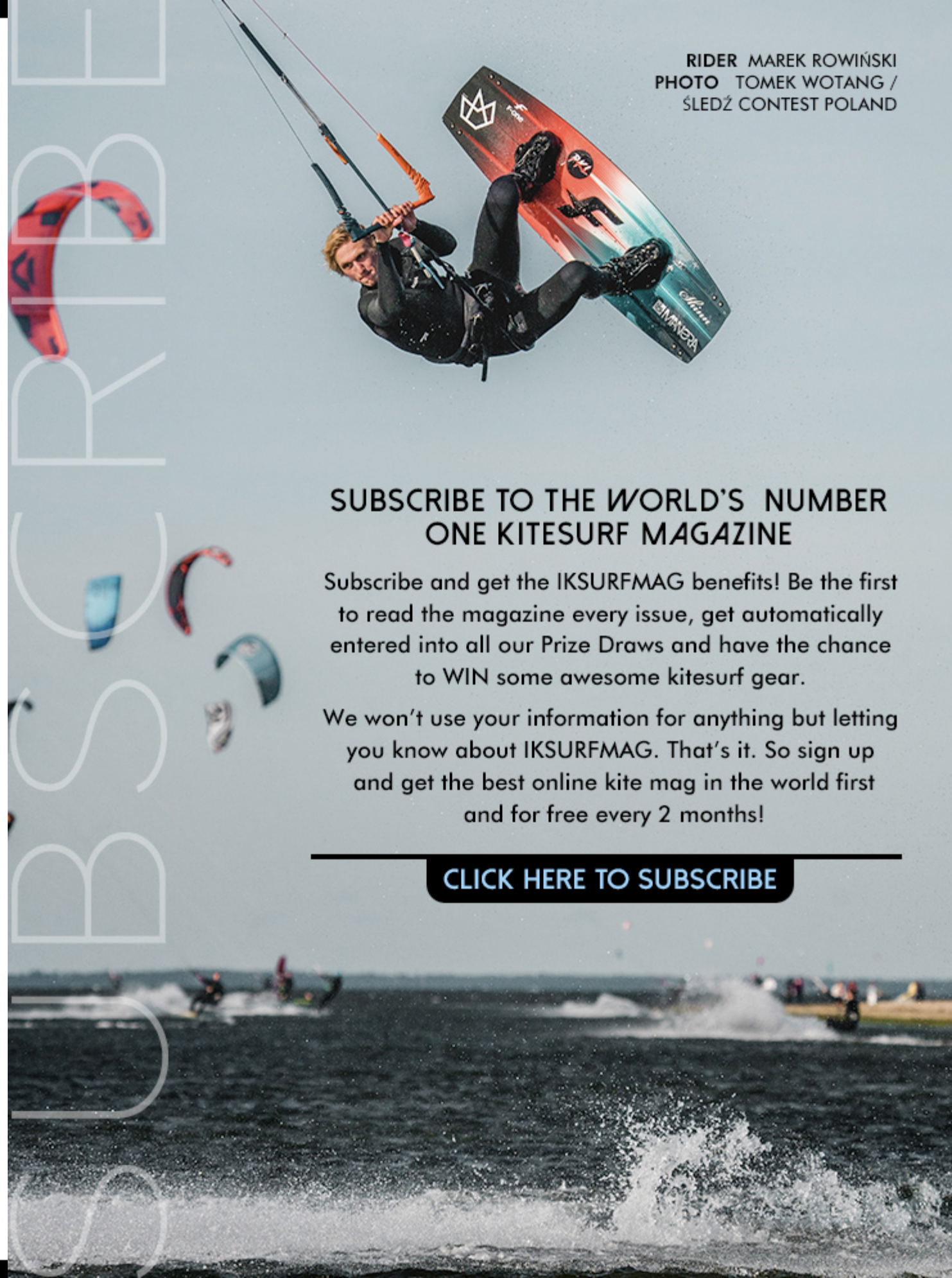
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"THEY SOON REALISED THAT THE ALT WAS DOING AN AWESOME JOB KEEPING THEM WARM."

It is not waterproof and creates rashes, so we don't use it on any of our wetsuits. GBS (glued and BlindStitched) is a specific type of stitching where the needle doesn't go through the whole layer of neoprene to ensure that the seam is waterproof. After a few seasons, this type of stitching might come a bit loose, and some water might leak inside. Liquid seams consist of sealing the seam with a

rubber-type liquid. We refuse to use it as it usually hardens after a few seasons and finally cracks open, leaving an unrepairable seam.

SD2 tape is basically a GBS seam with a tape glued on the inside. The tape is made with the same materials as our wetsuits and guarantees the seam is durable and won't tear, even after a few seasons.

For us, it's the only way to offer a durable, stretchy, and completely waterproof seam.

The ALT, like all MANERA wetsuits, is designed in 3D. How does this technique make a better-fitting wetsuit?

MANERA has used the 3D DESIGNED WETSUIT principle since its inception. Lay one of our wetsuits flat on the ground and compare it to any other competitor. The MANERA one will be pre-shaped and will look like human arms and legs are already inside.

We have specific software that allows us to design our wetsuits on a 3D model. Doing everything in 3D allows us to choose our mannequin body morphology and position and then adapt it to our sports and customers' body type. Once the wetsuit panels are designed on this mannequin, our software smartly flattens the panels, taking into consideration the neoprene thickness and elasticity to match the 3D design as much as possible.

We are improving and working on our fit every year. However, we feel like we are already quite far ahead compared to other brands that work everything out in 2D or those that just send cutlines to the factory and expect it to work out the fit for them.

Your team riders tested this suit in the icy cold waters of Svalbard. How did it hold up to the cold?

The guys were usually equipped with 6.4 Hooded Magmas and were pretty reluctant to gear up with the 5.4.3 ALT for the shoot! But they soon realised that the ALT was doing an awesome job keeping them warm. By the end of the trip, they didn't mind wearing one or the other; they just wore the one that was the driest!!



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WORDS CRYSTAL VENESS

TECH FOCUS

ELEVEIGHT COMMANDER AG PRO

Q&A with Franz Schitzhofer (Board Designer)

It takes immense talent and dedication to win a World Championship, but equipment you can rely on plays an important role. In this Q&A, we find out what went into Arthur Guillebert's Eleveight Commander AG Pro Model, the board ridden by the World Champion himself!



RIDER ARTHUR GUILLEBERT
PHOTO ROBIN CHRISTOL



"A SERIAL PRODUCT SHOULD SATISFY A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THE TARGET GROUP AND MAKE CUSTOMERS HAPPY!"



Hey Franz! First things first, tell us about your background in watersports.

I started windsurfing back in 1980, and in 1983 I went on to shape boards under the label DYNAMIT. I've shaped more than 3,000 windsurf boards since then and continued to be an enthusiastic windsurfer until the year 2000. In 2001, my son Michael was competing in the PKRA and told me that "windsurfing is only for old people!" so I took note, not wanting to seem old, and my whole family started kitesurfing. Due to natural progression, I swiftly turned to shaping kiteboards instead!

How did you become a board designer, and what inspires your designs?

After shaping a lot of kiteboards for family and friends, in 2008, I had the opportunity to work at Atomic (a famous Austrian ski brand). I learnt a lot about product management and industrialisation. There's a massive difference between shaping boards in a garage and managing a project from zero to a manufactured board with a serial number! At Atomic and later at Elan (another well-known ski and snowboard manufacturer), I was able to help realise shapes for brands like JN, Best, F-One, Core, Blade, Brunotti, Wainman, Flexifoil and, of course, Eleveight.

As I'm still an enthusiastic kiteboarder, my designs are inspired by performance, with the main focus on easy use and a lot of fun on the water! I prefer simple, efficient and clean lines. A serial product should

satisfy a significant portion of the target group and make customers happy! Simple lines work perfectly, especially for freeriding products.

The Commander AG Pro is the board of choice and pro model of World Champion Arthur Guillebert. With a Commander V4 already in the lineup, how does the new Commander AG Pro fit in?

Haha.... The AG Pro Model is precisely the opposite of simple. It's a freestyle board - focused on extremes. A competition board has another focus than, for example, a freeride board. It's used in stronger winds by experienced freestyle riders with well-powered kites. And obviously, it's the performance that counts!

What characteristics does a board need to make it a high-performance freestyle machine?

First, it needs to have an easy, accessible and massive POP! And second: POP!! Next is upwind ability, as the rider needs to come back fast in the competition box when performing many massive tricks and landing downwind. But another detail of similar importance is the need for easy landings without losing speed. The rider needs the best chance to land a trick without crashing, even when the landing is not perfect. In competition, it's obvious: when you crash or even buttcheck, you lose massive points, and maybe you'll be kicked out of the comp! I travelled for seven years around the globe with my son and watched countless PKRA events. I guess I know what's important... ;)


What are the key differences between the Commander and the Commander AG Pro? Are the differences mainly in the construction or also in shape?

The main difference is the construction and setup for the rocker and flex, the main criteria that take a board from good to a real magic stick. The setup is done over small tweaks on the outline, the Paulownia wood core's thickness profile, and the factory's press parameters! The setup is the most sophisticated detail in the R&D process, and this needs experience and patience. And it requires a lot of testing on the water!

Construction-wise, the AG Pro Model has more and different spread tow Carbon layers and reinforcements. It also has a different wood core profile and new composite Phenol rails. These key elements mean the setup is much stiffer than the Commander, and it has been adapted to the power and demands of Arthur. In short, it's much more dynamic.



" THE RIDER NEEDS THE BEST CHANCE TO LAND A TRICK WITHOUT CRASHING, EVEN WHEN THE LANDING IS NOT PERFECT. "



RIDER ARTHUR GUILLEBERT
PHOTO JIM STRINGFELLOW

"IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT FOR ARTHUR TO HAVE EXPLOSIVE POP AND BE MORE RESISTANT TO BIGGER LANDINGS"

Arthur is one of the guys who doesn't leave his brain on the beach and knows when it's senseless to try risky landings. In other words, it's very seldom that Arthur damages something!

While we're sure the competition results speak for themselves, what does Arthur have to say about his board?

We've known each other for a while, and Arthur is aware I have a complete understanding of the needs of a pro athlete. He was very excited to create his pro model, which every rider dreams about. As we developed the board, it was very important for Arthur to have explosive pop and be more resistant to bigger landings, perfect for big freestyle tricks. As soon as Arthur received the first prototype, he could instantly feel the difference in construction, and it made a big difference to his riding. He got to choose the graphics, too, and I know he feels great to showcase his name on an official pro product.

What do you think of the final result? Have you or your son had a chance to throw some freestyle moves on it?

I spent two weeks in September with my son in Greece. To be honest, the AG Pro Model is NOT a difficult board! Every rider with some basic experience can ride it and will be surprised about its upwind ability and how easily accessible it is! But the AG Pro Model has two personalities: it will start to get serious when the wind picks up and when the kite gets overpowered...

Did Arthur play a big part in the R&D process of his pro model? How was it working together?

Yes, Arthur had very concrete ideas about the performance and design, and he gave detailed feedback on prototypes and suggested improvements - that's a significant difference from the normal process and a testament to his professionalism!

Arthur rides with a lot of power and, we imagine, puts a lot of pressure on his gear! What reinforcements does this board have to keep it in one piece?

As mentioned above, there is additional Carbon plus the new Phenolic rails, but there are no 'special' reinforcements as such for Arthur. He is a rider with a lot of power, but he also has a lot of control.

WORDS CRYSTAL VENESS

TECH FOCUS

FLYSURFER HYBRID

Q&A with Christoph Hesina
(Head of Marketing)

Leaders in soft kite innovation, FLYSURFER have just released one of their most exciting products yet! The all-new HYBRID is quite possibly the easiest learning tool ever, opening up new pathways for riders big or small to enter the sport. Christoph Hesina tells us all about it in this Q&A.



PHOTO MIRIAM JOANNA



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It looks like a blend of a SOUL and a PEAK, half single skin and half double skin. So, what exactly is the HYBRID?

It's what I like to call a compact kite. Imagine the smallest kite you can travel with; add the fact that you do not need a pump to inflate it, and it flies in the funkiest wind. On top, it is almost unbreakable and extremely reliable. That is the HYBRID for me, a kite in a class of its own.

What was the concept behind the design?

We started almost two and half years ago with a closed-cell, double skin foil kite intended to perform on a surfboard and a hydrofoil. We had several promising working prototypes, but ultimately the product needed more depower. We had to find a solution and started adding single skin parts to the canopy. While testing, we realised the potential to build the best tool for schools.

A few months later, we held the best of two worlds in our hands. The perfect freeride product for retail and a school product that will help people to progress intuitively.

Can you go into some detail about the design? What is a single skin, and what is a double skin? Why do these things work so well together for this concept?

The HYBRID is a low aspect ratio foil kite, with 50% of its area covered by only a single layer of canopy cloth. Like the PEAK, the first two cells of the wing tip remain closed cell. Finding the best ratio between single and double skin took a while. The single skin irritates the airflow, slows the kite down when needed and pushes it further back into the window - one of the reasons the HYBRIDs drift is unreal.

"IT IS ALMOST UNBREAKABLE AND EXTREMELY RELIABLE. THAT IS THE HYBRID FOR ME, A KITE IN A CLASS OF ITS OWN."



"WE EXCEEDED OUR EXPECTATIONS AND QUICKLY REALISED IT IS BY FAR THE BEST CONCEPT FOR KIDS."



With the HYBRID concept, we achieve an amazing balance between power and depower for the number of cells and the low aspect ratio we use. It's very light, super stable, turns quick and is almost indestructible.

What outcomes was the designer hoping to achieve in the final product?

Designer Benni Bölli aimed to build the future of freeride foil kites, a multipurpose tool, a travel companion, and a playful kite with intuitive handling. We exceeded our expectations and quickly realised it is by far the best concept for kids.

What materials are used to achieve the right blend of lightness and durability?

We use our TX-Light and DLX+ fabrics, which are exclusively designed for our needs and used in our bestselling PEAK and SOUL products. We know for a fact that those materials will prevail in the roughest weather conditions and with long-term use.

At the recent AWSI in Hood River, we saw pro wing foiler Nathan van Vuuren pick up a HYBRID, his first time ever flying a kite. He got out on the water for his first kite foil session in less than 30 minutes! What makes this kite easier than a traditional inflatable kite for learning?

Nate and I had a blast in Hood River. He was so impressive to watch! It is a foil kite, and they have the upper hand in a few areas compared to inflatable kites. What I can tell you is that the HYBRID is so easy to control on the edge of the wind window, giving you the confidence to learn how to fly a kite. On top of that, it lifts you less than other kites and depowers immediately, whenever you need it.



**"IT'S FASCINATING HOW EFFORTLESS
AND FUN KITING CAN BE."**

Even if you get overconfident and send it through the power zone, it only generates moderate power spikes and does not rip you apart. If you drop the HYBRID, you can easily relaunch it in the lightest breeze.

Learning with inflatable kites, you normally choose smaller kites to learn the sport. For this purpose, inflatables are simply inferior. They are a lot to handle; you will struggle to relaunch them, they will drop out of the sky when you grab the board (front or back stall), and you can potentially hurt yourself or get scared when you misjudge the amount of power needed while practising water starts. In my opinion, there is no better solution or concept to learn kiteboarding safely and intuitively than the HYBRID.

The first product videos showcase the entry-level and family-friendly qualities that this kite offers.

What makes this product so safe and simple for children or first-time kite flyers?

You do not have to spend as much attention and can focus on the steering. It will not scare you because it sits super stable in the air and does not give you the feeling of getting lifted. You can regulate the steering and holding forces (bar feel), so even a child can handle it. If you drop the kite, it will drift a bit back into the soft zone without pulling you much. You do not lose ground or drift leeward because the wing's projected area is reduced by 50% until you get tension on your steering lines. I am sure more people will stick to the sport after experiencing their first lesson with the HYBRID kite.

As a water-relaunchable foil kite, the HYBRID has applications across all wind sports. So, where does

it shine the most? Land, snow, flatwater, waves?

The options are endless, but for me, it excels in combination with a hydrofoil in smaller waves. It's fascinating how effortless and fun kiting can be. I picked the shittiest conditions in the weirdest spots I could find, and I had a blast. It motivates me to explore the unknown.

Foil kite bridles can make LEI kites nervous. What's the story with the HYBRID bridle?

With the HYBRID, there is no difference compared to any other bridle, besides the two cross main lines. Those are attached above the mixer (pulley system) and lead to the opposite side of the wings leading edge. They are mandatory to ensure the kite flags out after using the quick-release system.

How can a more experienced user tune it to change the performance?

Our new technical feature is called Performance Tuner, a knot ladder on the C-pulley line. You can affect the profile camber of the HYBRID by moving up or down the ladder. You can increase responsiveness and bar forces by shortening the line, or, if you wish for more depower and lighter bar forces, lengthen the line. I personally prefer the short setting when the wind is light and the standard setting when the wind is getting strong for the size I'm riding.

Is there anything you WOULDN'T recommend using it for?

Big air, that is for sure! You can try a few basic jumps, but it is not built for sending it in a storm. We have plenty of other products for doing it. I ride the STOKE, SOUL or SONIC, depending on wind speed and water conditions, when I practice my freestyle tricks.

WORDS CRYSTAL VENESS

TECH FOCUS

ARMSTRONG WKT

Q&A with Armie Armstrong

Armstrong maintains a reputation as one of the leading hydrofoil designers in the industry. With so much attention around what's happening underneath the board, it's easy to forget about the board itself! The recent release of the new Armstrong WKT has brought the attention back to the board. We chatted to Armie Armstrong to find out all about it!



RIDER ARMIE ARMSTRONG

IKSURFMAG.COM



"WEIGHT IS ALWAYS ESSENTIAL TO KEEP TO A MINIMUM BECAUSE REDUCED MASS AND SWING WEIGHT LEADS TO FASTER RESPONSE."

Armie, give us a quick introduction to the WKT! What does WKT stand for, and who is this board for?

WKT...Wake, Kite, Tow is what it stands for, and it encompasses the versatility of this new design. The board is ideal for all foil sports that do not require volume. In terms of rider ability, these boards are very forgiving but also very performant, making them ideal for first-timers and experts. The WKT compliments our range and offers the low volume option to all those riders that don't need or want a higher volume board.

A multi-function board should satisfy the rider who wants to do a bit of everything, which seems like an exciting prospect! The WKT is ultra-thin, light, and stiff. How do these characteristics translate to a solid kitefoil board?

Weight is always essential to keep to a minimum because reduced mass and swing weight leads to faster response. Keeping it as thin as possible means that your foot is very close to the mast top. The closer your back foot is to the top of the mast, the more direct your inputs are, translating to better handling. Combined, these two factors help make the WKT very direct, manoeuvrable and fun to ride.

Let's talk construction! At first glance, the carbon component is clear. What else is inside this board?

We pioneered our own high-pressure precision moulded carbon construction similar to our new Performance Masts. Dual carbon stringers connect the stance area for extreme solidity, a perforated high-density foam core to keep the weight down and then our own A weave carbon cloth to top it off.

"THEY ARE AMAZING FOR FREESTYLE AND AIRS AS THE ROCKER HELPS THEM TOUCHDOWN SMOOTHLY."



A few features of the board take design and quality to the next level, such as the solid carbon mast tracks and titanium threaded strap inserts. How do these elements stand out within the foil board industry?

We like everything to be as good as we can make it, so it's once again a no-compromise design. Our carbon tracks were developed to resolve the issue of the plastic ones breaking and being too short. We knew what we wanted, and so we developed the longer carbon tracks.

As with all Armstrong products, titanium is widely used as it is simply the best when combined with carbon fibre. There's no fizzing in the salt water, and the strength-to-weight ratio makes it the best choice.

With the added power and torque created with a kite, towing in, or being dragged behind a boat, the board needs to be resilient to all the loads that get put through it. This is unlike surf, SUP or wing foiling, which have a relatively low torque factor and load in comparison.

Which sizes does the WKT board come in? What type of rider should choose which size?

There are three sizes: 109, 122 and 137cm. They are all easy enough to ride, but as ever, the bigger sizes are better suited to larger riders or riders with less skill level. The rocker and outline of the 137 make it really forgiving for inexperienced riders. The smaller sizes are for lightweights and experienced riders regardless of weight; they are

amazing for freestyle and airs as the rocker helps them touchdown smoothly.

Many of our readers are experienced kite foilers but have little experience with wake or tow foiling. Could a rider use the same hydrofoil setup with this board for kite, wake, and tow? What would the ideal all-around setup be?

Yes, for sure, the same setup is a massive positive and easily possible. Take the WKT size of your choice, M85 or PM935 mast, TC60 fuse, HS232 tail, and the front wing of your choice. For kiting in general, we recommend the HA925 and below, but all our smaller front wings below a 1000cm² work well for kiting. We regularly ride the HA925 towing into smaller waves, riding the wake of a boat and, of course, kiting!

TECH FOCUS

PROLIMIT FOOTWEAR

Q&A with Alex Cretier

Winter is upon us in the northern hemisphere, and the new name of the game is keeping warm enough to stay out on the water longer! In this Tech Focus Q&A, we catch up with Alex Cretier, Director of Prolimit and Kubus Sports NL, to find out all about their footwear.



Alex, Prolimit has an extensive selection of neoprene for the feet with six key models and even more choices within, from different thicknesses to split or round toe options. Why is it so critical to have the right boot when you're kitesurfing?

Prolimit is not just making neoprene footwear for kiting. We do this for a wide range of watersports, each with specific needs. Yes, we have a wide range as the demands and conditions are different all over the world. The right boot for kiting is the boot that best suits the conditions, whether that's a minimalist neoprene sock with sole reinforcement ranging up to a thick 6.5mm Polar boot. The Armoured boots are for areas with clamshells and the icy conditions in the Northern part of the world to the cold waters of the Atlantic Ocean in Cape Town.

There is a lot of technology that goes into neoprene footwear that we don't often talk about. So, what is OCL, and why is it important?

Prolimit is the only neoprene footwear producer using its own exclusive Lasts for its boots and shoes. OCL stands for Orthopaedic Controlled Lasts. To understand what it does, you have to know the production process. A neoprene sock is made, fitted on the Alloy Lasts, and then the rubber is applied and cured in an oven. This curing process determines the shape of the boot. Most of the Lasts out there are not made specifically for our kite and wind sports, where a dynamic stance and barefoot feeling are required. OCL ensures that at the arch, sole and also your Achilles tendon, the neoprene fits perfectly, and there is no air in your boot. As soon as you enter the water, the air disappears and sucks the water inside.

A row of black neoprene boots and shoes hanging from a tree trunk with wooden clothespins. The boots are of various styles, including full-length boots and shorter shoes, all hanging vertically from a horizontal line of clothespins attached to the tree. The background is a blurred forest scene with snow on the ground.

"WE HAVE A WIDE RANGE AS THE DEMANDS AND CONDITIONS ARE DIFFERENT ALL OVER THE WORLD."



" OUR OCL ARE UNIQUE TO PROLIMIT AND A HUGE INVESTMENT IN SOMETHING YOU DON'T EXPERIENCE UNTIL YOU USE THE PRODUCT. "

If you look at an OCL boot, you will see that the sole is concave, the arch is lower, and the back of the boot is narrower at the Achilles. OCL connects, so there is no suction and a much warmer, better-fitting boot.

This is a feature that Prolimit has that its competitors do not - how much of a difference does this make for the user?

That's right. Our OCL are unique to Prolimit and a huge investment in something you don't experience until you use the product. The manufacturing process requires hundreds of Lasts, all made of aluminium (to withstand the curing process in the oven). You can imagine we are really talking about attention to detail here.

What is a DCL sole? What benefit does this offer the user?

DCL means Direct Contact Sole. When we make a boot, for example, a 6mm version, we use a thick neoprene for the top of the boot but a thinner neoprene for the sole itself, which, including the rubber layers, is not thicker than the top of the boot. This way, we create more direct contact with the board and provide that barefoot feeling. The Direct Contact Sole makes you feel connected to the board and not on a spongy layering of neoprene, rubber and linings.

Your HydroGen, Mercury, and Predator models are the top-of-the-range and warmest products in your selection. What materials are they using,

and what features do they each offer?

There is a big difference between these three lines. On the Mercury split toe, we use Airflex 500+ together with TR. Thermal Rebound (TR) is the unique layering easiest to compare with a thermal blanket also in use in our Mercury, OxyGen and Vapor wetsuits. In this boot, we also use the unique X-Grip sole (a flocked rubber in a flex pattern) in combination with Zodiac Lining.

Our HydroGen model is a round-toe boot also using the Zodiac lining and X-Grip. Lastly, the Predator is a wide range with Armoured Soles (extra protection for sharp objects) to an easy step in boot. All are using one of our highest stretch neoprenes.

"WE AT PROLIMIT CONSIDER FOCUSED PRODUCT ENGINEERING AND PRODUCT-DRIVEN MARKETING AS THAT'S WHAT MAKES US STAND OUT."

How do you secure the seams so they are both watertight and comfortable?

Most important on boots is that they fit perfectly and do not suck in water due to non fitting areas around your foot. All Boots are GBS, which means watertight seams which are triple glued and stitched, offering a watertight and durable seam. Some of the boots even use the FTM (Fluid Taping Method) seal as an additional reinforcement.

Prolimit has a strong sustainability policy, a topic that often comes up when talking about neoprene. What sustainability considerations are in place in the footwear line?

That is correct. Being the only brand with an FSC certification on our PF-2 wetsuit, we also care about this side of the range. On boots, we also use Limestone neoprene, water-based glues, recyclable packaging, and recycled carbon black and dope-dyed fabrics. We are continuously searching for even more environmentally friendly production methods.

Thanks, Alex, for taking the time to share more on the Prolimit Footwear line!

We are glad your magazine is giving extra attention to boots, an underestimated part of your equipment. We can imagine that our customers think a boot is just a boot, but there is more to it. The OCL Lasts are an important part of our developing process, and we at Prolimit consider focused product engineering and product-driven marketing as that's what makes us stand out. We've got you covered!

TECH FOCUS

ION 3D FIT TECHNOLOGY

Q&A with Julian Lange (Product Designer
& Product Manager) and David Mariot
(Marketing Manager)

Perfect fit in a harness can make all the difference to your session. ION wants you to have as much time on the water as possible, and this goal is achieved through incorporating ergonomics in their design process. Learn more about ION's latest harness technology in this Tech Focus Q&A!



"WE ALL STRIVE FOR AS MUCH WATER TIME AS POSSIBLE; THIS IS OUR END GOAL."



PHOTO CRAIG KOLESKY

Julian and David, thank you for joining us! We're excited to find out more about ION's 3D Fit Technology. But first, Julian, tell us more about your role at ION and how you ended up there!

Julian: I started working for Boards & More around five years ago. I witnessed the switch from North Kiteboarding to Duotone, which was very interesting! For the first 18 months with the company, I worked as a graphic designer and industrial designer. Then, I switched over to ION to do harnesses full-time. I've now focused on harness development and product management for three years.

At ION, your approach to harness design is driven by medical science. Please share more about your this approach and the problem you've been trying to solve.

Julian: Over the last couple of years, we've seen a trend towards hardshell harnesses in kitesurfing, with a lot of glass fibre and carbon used to make the harness stiffer and distribute the forces you receive from kiting more homogeneously over the back. But, with the hardshell comes the issue that if they don't fit perfectly, they can hurt you. That's why we wanted to dive more into the whole ergonomics of the human body.

David: Exactly. A hardshell harness needs to fit perfectly to avoid injury. If your harness is poorly fit, you can't spend as much time on the water before it starts hurting. We all strive for as much water time as possible; this is our end goal. Of course, it begins with having enough wind, but having the right tools also plays a role, and this is how we at ION can contribute to maximising your water time.

Julian: A few years ago, we teamed up with spinal surgeon, Dr Thomas Fisher from Munich, who happens to be a kitesurfer and winger, and he gave us some great insights on the topic of ergonomics. The overall scheme that ION is following now and for future seasons is the Concept of Ergonomics. Different products fall into this area. We started with harnesses in 2022 and continued into 2023, but we will also implement this concept into our other ION product lines in future.

Does the softshell harness offer any advantage over a hardshell?

Julian: Softshells feel very comfortable to many people when they are trying them on in the shop. But, in strong and gusty conditions, you lose that feeling of comfort because they deform so much. That's why the hardshell is, performance-wise, a lot better compared to the soft harness. We've put a lot of effort into our hardshell lines and developing our 3D Fit Technology.

So, what is 3D Fit Technology, and how has ION incorporated this in their harness development?

David: Normally, people find their harness size by measuring their waist circumference. But this doesn't consider your back length or the curvature of your spine. For example, I'm 175cm tall, and Julian is 190cm. We are more or less the same waist size, but he has a much longer back. How can it be that we are both the same harness size? If we are wearing the same harness, one of us is not getting a perfect fit. This is why we not only take into account the waist circumference as the first dimension but also the back length as the second dimension, offering tall versions of our harnesses. The third dimension is depth.



**" IF WE ARE WEARING THE SAME HARNESS,
ONE OF US IS NOT GETTING A PERFECT FIT. "**

" OUR GOAL IS TO EVENTUALLY PUSH THE WHOLE CONCEPT INTO ALL OUR HARNESSSES. "



Depending on if you have a more straight or curved spine, we can achieve a more perfect fit with two easily interchangeable options of the Ergo Pad.

Julian: In the centre of the Ergo Pad is a recess which resembles the spine protruding from the body. You don't want to have pressure on the spine because it is very vulnerable, and if you are jumping or riding in strong conditions, this can be harmful. We developed this recess to transfer the forces to the muscles next to the spine. On the Ergo Pad, there are four elevated points that we call trigger points which, in collaboration with Dr Thomas Fisher, are carefully placed to help massage the muscles and generate more blood flow, thus extending the session because your body is feeling better.

How does a consumer verify what their perfect fit is?

David: The first and easiest option is our online sizing guide on every product detail page on our website. It guides you from beginning to end. Just follow the instructions, which will ask you to measure your waist circumference and back length, and of course, tell you how to measure the back length correctly. Put your stats in, and you get the results. But what if you are unsure about the measurement? We have other assets that will help, like online instructional videos where James Carew demonstrates how to measure your fit. Our website lets people in continental Europe and North America order a free measurement kit. This kit includes a leaflet explaining all the steps, the sizing guide, specific measuring tapes, and some

and some stickers. Last but not least, you may get a size recommendation from your measurement and consultation, but we suggest that you always try on the harness. The harness has to feel right on your body at the end of the day!

Which harnesses incorporate the 3D Fit Technology?

Julian: In 2022, when we started this project, we only integrated it into the hardshell harnesses, like the Riot Curv, Sol Curv, and the Team Series harnesses. For 2023, we have integrated the Ergo Pad into our hybrid shell harnesses like the Apex for men and Nova for women. Our goal is to eventually push the whole concept into all our harnesses.

What kind of testing process do your harnesses go through?

Julian: We're based in Munich and don't get as much time on the water as others who live close to the ocean. We are heavily dependent on our team riders and testing teams. That includes pro riders, schools, and opinion leaders. At the beginning of the development process, we create a lot of prototypes and get them out to our riders. We have a testing programme where we consistently ask them to give us feedback on the product, and that's how we find out what works and what doesn't.

David: It's surprising how it differentiates within the kite team. You could, for example, assume that the team riders, on average, have a stronger core than the typical kiter. Therefore, they might not need the cushioned Ergo Pad. But many of our pro team opt for the cushioned pad anyway. Matchu, for example, takes the thicker pad and the tall version of the Riot Curv. Aaron Hadlow also prefers the thicker pad. Whereas, people like James Carew, who is well built with a straight back, prefers the thin one.

Maybe it's age-related! Matchu and Aaron have a few years on James Carew... I know I'm enjoying the extra cushion nowadays! Any last words on the Concept of Ergonomics?

David: The whole ergonomic approach and prioritising health is in synergy with the whole company. Last year, Boards & More acquired a bike components company called SQLab.



" THE WHOLE ERGONOMIC APPROACH AND PRIORITISING HEALTH IS IN SYNERGY WITH THE WHOLE COMPANY. "

RIDER MATCHU LOPES
PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH



"WE ARE CONVINCED THAT, IN EVERY SPORT, HEALTH SHOULD BE PRIORITY NUMBER ONE."

They offer high-quality ergonomic saddles and handlebar grips for bikes. They're known for excellence and improving the bike experience for their consumers, and that's something we do for our kite consumers. We started with this ergonomic approach before we linked up, but now our product developers and marketing departments are working closely together and sharing knowledge back and forth. We are convinced that, in every sport, health should be priority number one.

LIGHTROOM

PAUL SERIN THROWING FREESTYLE MOVES IN PARADISE, AS SEEN FROM THE WATER!
PHOTO ANDRE MAGARAO



Lightroom

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

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LIGHTROOM



Lightroom

JOHANN CIVEL USES HIS OZONE HYPERLINK TO EXPLORE SNOWY PEAKS IN THE ALPS...
PHOTO WARECK ARNAUD

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LIGHTROOM

ZANDVOORT DELIVERED SOME NORTH SEA SWELL FOR SUSANNE SCHWARZTRAUBER!
PHOTO MURK FEITSMA

Lightroom

LIGHTROOM

MATT MAXWELL CATCHES SOME WAVES ON SOUTH AFRICA'S EXOTIC ATLANTIC COAST
PHOTO NICK SPILSBURY

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LIGHTROOM

ELSIEN ZIJLSTRA GETTING SOME AIR IN THE BIG AIR MECCA OF BALNEARIO
PHOTO ANTONIO HERRERA TRUJILLO



Lightroom

LIGHTROOM

LORENZO AND LEONARDO CASATI GETTING TO KNOW THEIR ALL-NEW CABRINHA KIT!
PHOTO PAUL GANSE



Lightroom

LIGHTROOM



THE CRAZYFLY TEAM PREPARES TO EMBARK ON AN EPIC DOMINICAN REPUBLIC ADVENTURE!
PHOTO LACI KOBULSKY

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LIGHTROOM

THE UNMISTAKABLE CABARETE KITE BEACH IN THE BACKGROUND OF THIS SHOT FEATURING MATTHIAS LARSEN
PHOTO MANGO HOUSE CABARETE



Lightroom

LIGHTROOM

PHILIPP MOHR MAKES A SPLASH WITH SOME STRAPLESS
FREESTYLE MOVES ON THE ELEVEIGHT ESCAPE+ V3
PHOTO HELEN FISCHER

Lightroom

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LIGHTROOM

CAMDYN KELLETT EXPLORING SOUTH AFRICAN LAGOONS ON HIS CABRINHA FX2!
PHOTO ANDREW KELLETT



Lightroom

On The Fly

KITESURF // BRINGING IT HOME IN BRAZIL

PHOTOS SVETLANA ROMANTSOVA / QATAR AIRWAYS GKA KITESURF WORLD TOUR

The final stop of the GKA Kitesurf World Tour saw two World Champions crowned in Brazil just a few weeks ago in a fiery competition that showcased a lot of local Brazilian talent. It was a tough road to the podium for the riders that came in leading the series, but the high level of riding made for a very exciting event!



It was a special event for Capucine Delannoy, who took her first-ever Kitesurf World Championship in the wave division after a dominant season that culminated in her taking out her closest rival, Frances Kelly, to earn the title. It's been a major year for Capucine, who also claimed a Big Air World Championship with the GKA earlier this year.

On the men's side, James Carew started this year as the defending champion, but he was put to the test by rivals Pedro Matos and Gabriel Benetton. Still, he's been riding strong all year and sealed the deal by winning both the event and securing his World Championship, his second in a row, in one of the toughest events of the year!



On The Fly

GEAR GUIDE //

QUOBBA FINS

While raw talent goes a long way, most of the way, in fact, there is a point in kitesurfing where having the best gear makes all the difference. When it comes to wave riding, that might mean a faster-turning kite with plenty of drift or a board designed for the specific wave conditions you're riding in. Even something as simple as your fins can make a world of difference in your ride, and after seeing some of the top riders in the wave tour riding Quobba Fins, we had to get the low down...

The surf industry, as a whole, designs its fins around the idea that the tip of the fin creates the most trailing turbulent drag. However, after extensive Computer Fluid Dynamics analysis on a thruster fin setup, it was apparent that most of the drag actually comes from the base of the fin, closest to the board. Using this new data, Quobba Fins have invented a fin shape that is designed to reduce this drag, using patented technology to substantially minimise the trailing turbulent drag found around standard surfboard fins. This is the key difference between Quobba Fins and other traditional designs.

With this unique design, kites and professional riders who use their products, like 2x World Champion James Carew, have noticed higher speed, more stability, especially when riding at speed, and smoother sailing in choppy waters.

GEAR GUIDE //

QUOBBA FINS



You may have spotted Quobba fins on kitesurf boards in the past, and they were known for their signature orange and lime green colourways. But, these bright colours are being phased out in favour of their newest models, Carbon Glass and Dark Glass. We asked what inspired the change, and the team at Quobba fins explained their approach:

"We live in a world where the signature of a surfer and the colours of a fin set up seems to be more important than the fin itself. We thought to give a simpler look supporting the following philosophy: Quobba Fins' passion is Surfboard fins, not artwork or signature names! We do surfboard fins, not artwork!"

Quobba Fins offers both single tab/Futures style and dual tab/FCS style in their Dark Glass and Carbon Glass series. The Dark Glass model is the most similar to the original Quobba Fins but with a simplified colourway.

The composition of a Carbon Glass fin includes 3% carbon fibre with a slightly stiffer flex pattern, which results in a much stronger fin! The Carbon Glass construction is their best-seller in the kitesurfing community, which puts a lot more stress on their fins than the average surfer.

Click [HERE](#) to find out more about Quobba Fins' exclusive technology, and stay tuned for an exciting new product release coming from their team soon!



WORDS DANIELA MOROZ, ADAPTED FOR IKSURFMAG
PHOTOS ROBERT HAJDUK

On The Fly

RACE REPORT //

DANIELA MOROZ ON HER 6TH WORLD TITLE

I arrived in Europe at the beginning of September to start my preparation for the World Championships, giving me six weeks to train before the first day of racing. I made the decision to skip the European Championships to focus on preparing myself for the Worlds, and began working with my full-time coach Chris Rashley and friend and technical advisor Nate Housberg for two phases of training.

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In Phase 1, I spent three weeks in Hyeres, France, testing the brand-new kites I had just received and strengthening in the gym to gain muscle mass. These things were vital in gaining back the speed I had been missing over the summer. In Phase 2, I trained at the venue of the World Championships, Poetto Beach, on the Italian island of Sardinia, just outside the city of Cagliari.

After two weeks at the regatta venue training in several different wind directions and sea states, I could not wait to get racing - I had never felt more ready to deliver my finest performance at a regatta. I was proud of the progress I had made in the weeks leading up to the Worlds, not only on the water but off. I met with a sport psychologist weekly to help me build a strong and confident mindset. I have been practising mindfulness, meditation, and visualisation. I had been working out and felt super fit. I felt so confident and ready in a way I had never felt before. And on October 11th, it was finally time to begin!

We started with 3 days of the opening qualifying series in which competitors are mixed in 2 separate fleets based on world rankings. I was the only competitor, male or female, to win every race of this qualifying series, but my closest competition, Lauriane Nolot from France, was only a point behind.

On day 4, the top 25 sailors went into the gold fleet, completing 4 races. It was a beautiful mistral day with 20-25 knots, eventually picking up with gusts to 30 knots, extremely gusty and shifty wind, and completely flat water. It was a day I had repeatedly experienced during training, and I knew exactly what I had to do. After a disqualification due to being over early (UFD) in the first race, I won the next 3 races,



On The Fly

RACE REPORT //

DANIELA MOROZ ON HER 6TH WORLD TITLE

even finishing with a healthy lead of about 800m in the last race.

This scoreline kept me in first but still only a couple of points ahead of Lauriane, who was consistently finishing second. The next day brought more offshore wind, which was extremely light and patchy. I started the day a bit slow but progressed throughout the 4 races. Having entered the final race, I was 1 point ahead of Lauriane. I needed to stay ahead to maintain my first-place advantage heading into the last day of the regatta. I managed to do just that, and only needed to win one race in the final series in order to win the world title!

The final day brought the onshore wind back with some big chop. I was nervous but excited. It was time for the last final push. It was Katie Dabson (GBR), Ellie Aldridge (GBR), Lauriane Nolot (FRA), and me in the women's final. As I was waiting for our start, the wind picked up just a couple of knots, and the other girls went in to change from 15m to 11m kites. I opted to stay on my 15m, knowing I could match their speed upwind and be faster downwind. Lauriane took the lead right away, with me just windward. As we were approaching the top mark, Lauriane crashed, and I was able to take the lead. From there, I knew I just had to sail clean, and I could win this race. On my 15m kite, I quickly extended my lead on the downwind, and by the end of the second lap, I was 300m ahead in first place.

When I rounded the last mark and crossed the finish line, there was an overwhelming sensation of pride and joy, unlike anything I had ever felt. I immediately found Chris on his coach boat, and as I sat down, I said, "I think we got the job done."

[Click here to read the full blog!](#)

On The Fly

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS // OZONE KITES

Ozone Kites has begun a pioneering collaboration with the outdoor clothing brand Patagonia to produce more sustainable canopy and dacron materials for kites and wings in a bid to raise the green credentials of the industry as a whole.



The tie-up between Ozone and the brand renowned for its concern for the environment started a number of years ago. But it was unveiled only recently when the two companies shared an "Ozone X Patagonia" stand at the AWSI expo in Oregon's Hood River, USA.

Several years of effort and testing have produced some promising advances, with a kite using primarily recycled materials given a first airing at the US expo. The canopy and dacron look and perform like virgin materials.

But the project has yet to achieve its ultimate goal of developing materials made of recycled content that can meet Ozone's demanding standards for high performance and longevity.

Once that goal is reached—and Ozone and Patagonia are confident it can be—the plan is not only to offer kite and wing products to Ozone customers but share the technology with the entire industry. It is a move very much in keeping with Patagonia's prioritisation of the environment over profit.

Ozone, concerned about the environmental impact of its products and production processes at its dedicated factory in Vietnam, approached Patagonia several years ago. Ozone hoped to tap into Patagonia's market-leading experience after it set out several years ago to use only materials that were "recycled, recyclable or regenerative".

In keeping with Ozone's tagline, "Inspired by the Elements, Driven by Nature", the kite brand asked Patagonia to help it find ways to become more sustainable, whether through better packaging, reducing waste or cutting the toxicity of its production processes in Vietnam.



PHOTOS ALVARO RODRIGUEZ

On The Fly

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS // OZONE KITES

Yet, ultimately the discussion between the companies moved on to the techniques and raw materials used to produce the canopy, dacron and other components. They are almost entirely made from petrochemicals, and Ozone wanted to find a way to reduce their environmental impact.

That led Ozone to ask some of the world's leading kite material producers to consider a collaboration to develop a new product. The aim was to make a canopy and dacron of mostly recycled plastics with the same qualities of strength and longevity that customers and brands have grown to expect.

Ozone's collaboration with Patagonia has been examining all the components of kites and wings from

a sustainability viewpoint to find improvements. Not only have the materials gone under the microscope, but also coatings and the ink used for branding and logos, trying to find less toxic alternatives.

For several years the companies' collaboration has been working on water-based coatings, non-toxic inks and ways to find 100% recycled raw materials for the canopy and dacron.

Despite all the efforts, though, the reality is that many of the alternatives are unable to withstand the rigours of salt water and UV light almost always encountered when kitesurfing and winging.

The result is that the tie-up is currently putting back a percentage of virgin material into the canopy and dacron in order to attain the long-term durability and

dacron in order to attain the long-term durability and strength required by the industry.

Patagonia's Jason Slezak, long a leading light in kitesurfing and an environmentalist, was candid about the setbacks. The materials made of wholly-recycled content tested well when new, but with usage in a UV and saltwater environment, degraded more than was acceptable.

But Patagonia still relishes the opportunity to join Ozone in the ground-breaking project.

"It's been a really great opportunity to partner with a brand like Ozone and have this relationship," said Slezak. "It's not really a true partnership. We are just trying to help each other with the strengths that they have: in building incredibly good kites and wings, and wanting to make their product and their factory a lot more sustainable. And then, using our knowledge and our relationship with the vendors to give them a little bit of a helping hand in the years that we have put into this in our clothing and our outerwear."

FOIL FOCUS // PARATAISI

Fiji is world-renowned for its outstanding waves and consistent wind. Australian foil, kite, and wing extraordinaire Peri Roberts heads there in search of the perfect wind sports destination. Unfortunately, this time around, she wasn't so lucky. However, what she did find may be more valuable.

RIDER PERI ROBERTS
PHOTOS MARIE CHARMASSON



"Slowing down allows us to find beauty in simple moments. "Parataisi" translates to "Paradise" in local Fijian language. I was soul searching and found it here; in The Ocean, in The People. Parataisi is the way Fiji captures your heart. Take a breath, Paradise awaits."

Watch the film [here](#), and don't forget to check out Tonic Mag for the story behind the trip!





On The Fly

EXPLORE // DUTCH ISLAND DOWNWINDER

WORDS FELIX MAK, ADAPTED FOR IKSURFMAG

The Dutch Wadden Islands, one of the most beautiful natural places in Europe, is home to many great kitesurf spots. There is an easy mnemonic to remember the order of the Wadden Islands. TV-TAS stands for Texel, Vlieland, Terschelling, Ameland and Schiermonnikoog. The KiteActive team, experienced in Wadden kite trips, had the idea to conquer the TV-TAS on a kiteboard. Here's how it all went down...

The original plan was to start at the head of Texel, but we received reports of a huge delay on the Texel ferry. So, we decided to start the downwinder in Den Helder, and DEN' TV-TAS was born! After a restless night with a storm that raged over the Netherlands, we arrived at the Afsluitdijk to Den Helder, where 33 eager men were waiting in their wetsuits, and adrenaline was screaming through the air. We call this the well-known kitesurf jitters.

After a briefing from our team and safety planning, we kicked off with Felix in front and Thomas in charge of the broom wagon in the back. You can compare the function of our team to that of a group of sheepdogs. Our goal is to keep the group together, set the pace, and ensure no accidents happen. Unfortunately, it soon became apparent that,



On The Fly

EXPLORE // DUTCH ISLAND DOWNWINDER

even with our online briefing and many warnings about the difficulty level, not everyone was ready for the challenge. The first two dropped out at Den Helder, followed by one on Texel, and were unable to complete the journey. With the lost time, the pressure was increased, and we had to continue with the group that was left.

Arriving at the Razende bol, we gave a quick wave to the seals and continued on to Texel. Huge waves came in here, but luckily everyone played it safe. We were able to pick up speed after this and passed the sluffer, a beautiful lagoon on Texel. We were at Cocksdorp in half an hour and saw the Vliehors in the distance. Fryslân's nautical team lay between the islands. Walter van Berkum and Joris de Wit, two seasoned skippers from the brown fleet and good friends, were there to ensure safety between passages on a rib. This is, perhaps, even a bigger adventure than on the kite. As a kitesurfer, you are flexible in almost all conditions, but you can't say this of a rib with waves towering from all sides. These men risked their lives to guarantee the group's safety, which deserves a standing ovation, in my opinion!

By that point, we had lost a lot of time and also water. The water was receding, and the Vliehors (also called the Sahara of Fryslân, a huge sandbank at the head of Vlieland) was largely dry. Suddenly, we had to sail not downwind but a solid upwind to get around the sandbar. Arriving at Vlieland, gigantic rollers came in from the North Sea; you had to think twice about which way you were going. Several people made the mistake of going too far downwind, which cost them dearly, requiring even more sailing upwind.

CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE



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

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

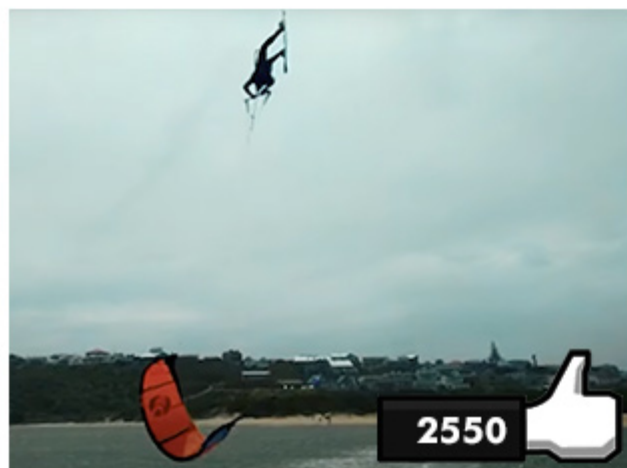
Put the popcorn on, it's Movie Night!

MOVIE NIGHT

#1

MEGALOOP – EXTREME VERSION

Taking the top spot on our Movie Night list this issue is Camdyn Kellet! Camdyn and the crew loaded up and headed to South Africa's best flatwater spot to catch a massive storm forecast with gusts of 50+ knots!



2550



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#2

JUST CASUAL KITESURFING IN SOUTH AFRICA. WHAT A BEAUTY!

We've never included Reels on our Movie Night list, but Lasse Walker sending it over a whale is just too good that it would be rude not to share this clip - especially with over 2K likes!



2041

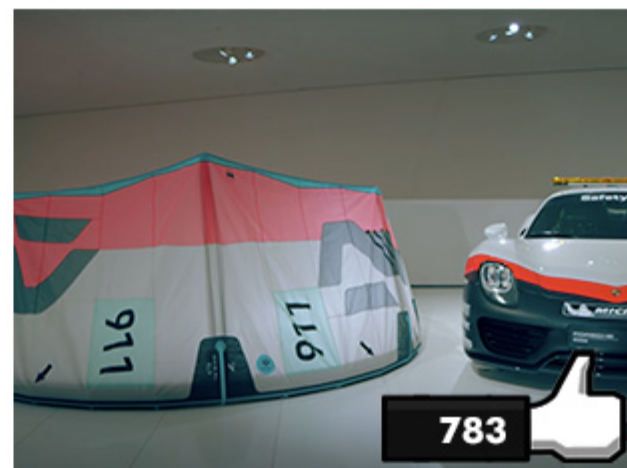


[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#3

DUOTONE REBEL SLS PORSCHE EDITION

Right, someone grab the popcorn; this one is sure to spark a discussion! Duotone's Rebel SLS Porsche Edition was recently released, and Florian Panther, Creative Director at Duotone, tells us all about it at #3...



783

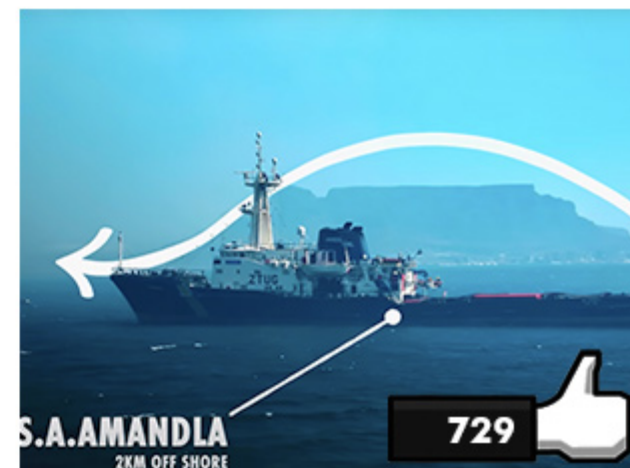


[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#4

WE JUMPED OVER A MASSIVE SHIP

In the #4 spot, three of the world's best big air kitesurfers were challenged by Red Bull to jump over a giant boat. Sounds crazy, right? Well, watch this video to find out just how crazy it is!



729



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RIDER POSITO MARTINEZ
PHOTO LACI KOBULSKY

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