

FEBRUARY / MARCH 23

WELCOME TO IKSURFMAG

Welcome to Issue 97 of IKSURFMAG, the World's Number One Kitesurfing Magazine! It's sure to be a windy 2023, and we know kilters around the world will be looking for any and every opportunity to get on the water! This issue, Publisher Rou Chater packs his bags and heads to the tropics for a dreamy Bahamas Kite Cruise, Gabi Steindl brings us on an off road

adventure down under, Camille Delannoy goes on a storm search in Iceland, and Brandon Scheid hunts for perfect lefts in Chile. Hear all about the first GKA event of the season at Fuwairit Kite Beach in Qatar, and get the scoop on sending it in feature interviews with Mike Mac Donald and Francesca Maini. There's plenty more waiting for you right here in IKSURFMAG Issue 97!

ENJOY THE LATEST ISSUE



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- TEN DAYS IN PARADISE -
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BIG AIR INTERVIEWS / TECHNIQUE / TECH FOCUS & MORE!
 THE WORLD'S NUMBER ONE KITESURF MAGAZINE

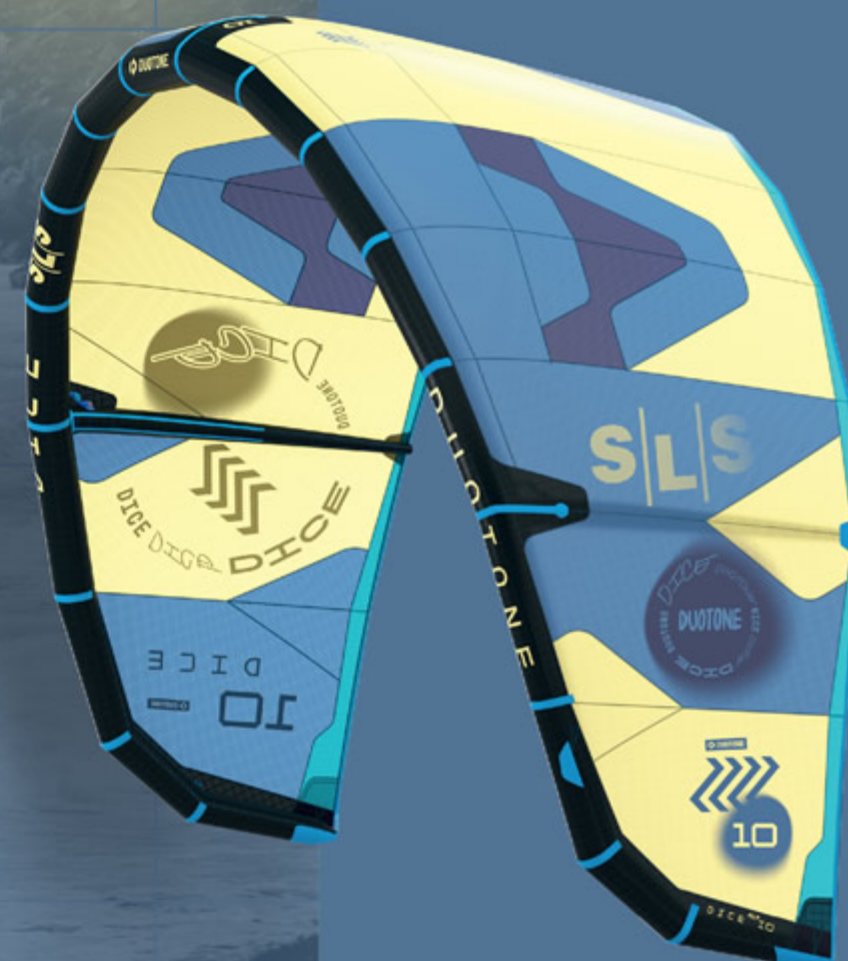
FREESTYLE / WAVE



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
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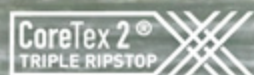


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EDITORIAL



TEN DAYS IN PARADISE



WHERE THE WATER LIES
LIKE A BOOMERANG



ICELAND:
DYSFUNCTIONAL BEAUTY



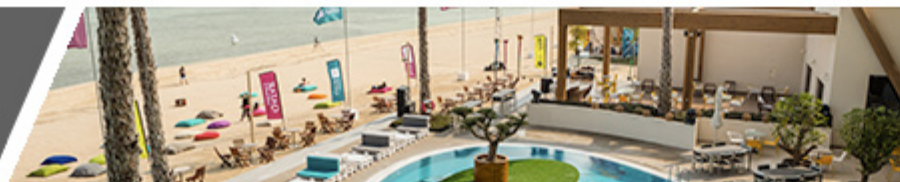
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INTRODUCING 03



ON THE SPOT:
FUWAIRIT KITE BEACH



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THE INTERVIEW:
MIKE MAC DONALD



INTO THE TIME
MACHINE



TECH FOCUS



ON THE FLY



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MOVIE NIGHT



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FRONT COVER PHOTO ROU CHATER

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just that, views, & should be taken with a
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sport & none of the activities depicted
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participated in without full instruction in
person by a qualified instructor.

ELLIE DIMITROVA AND LUKAS VOGELTANZ SHARING THE STOKE!
PHOTO NICOLA BAGAROV



RIDER RENO ROMEU
 PHOTO TOBY BROMWICH



WIN

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One of the most popular freeride boards on the planet has just received a makeover, and it could be yours! For this issue, we've linked up with Duotone to offer one of our lucky readers an incredible competition prize, the all-new 2023 Duotone Select Twin Tip in the size of your choice!

Perfect for riders looking to cruise and boost, the Select offers plenty of comfort on the water - with a turn of pace and performance that will excite you.

This year's model features a narrower, longer outline with improved handling and upwind capabilities. Space Flex technology gives you a smooth ride and excellent pop. The Select is also excellent in light winds and quick to get on plane, offering you plenty of power and performance when you need it. If you want a freeride board that will get you riding earlier, make your sessions smoother and give you bigger jumps, the Select is it!

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RIDER LASSE WALKER
PHOTO CRAIG KOLESKY

ISSUE 97 DON'T PANIC.

Strong wind and massive waves are:

- A) the perfect conditions for SENDING IT
- B) a recipe for disaster
- C) time to grab the popcorn and watch from the sidelines
- D) all of the above
- E) a sign of the apocalypse (my kite spot is a lake)

The conditions in the past week or so in Cape Town have been, as the cool kids say, nuking. Everyone's first instinct seems to be to race down to the beach and get ready to send it. That is, of course, until things get a bit too hairy for anyone but the best.

On the windiest day of 2023 so far, with wave sizes fit for a King (of the Air), I went for a session on my trusty directional, despite being very much outclassed by the conditions. But, sometimes, we make poor choices in the name of kitesurfing glory.

It's okay to admit when you're out of your depth. After all, we know ourselves and what we're capable of better than anyone else. However, to know the extent of our capabilities requires putting ourselves to the test. As water users, experiencing a scary hold under is something we all know is possible, but few of us prepare for. In the name of self-preservation, maybe we should.

This January, the team at ION organised the first-ever ION Global Athlete Summit in South Africa.

This event brought together an impressive, star-studded lineup of big air riders, wave kites, windsurfers, wakeboarders, wingfoilers, and big wave surfers. I was excited to join them for a breath hold clinic led by Hanli Prinsloo, freediving champion and ocean advocate.

While we were scattered across the lawn on yoga mats, doing breathing exercises and preparing our lungs for the challenge ahead, I was more than a little anxious and intimidated. To be next to one of the best wave kites in the world, Matchu Lopes, and big air legend Lasse Walker, who happens to freedive, I felt out of my depth - pun intended. But, inspired by the commitment of everyone around me, I closed my eyes and took a deep breath.

I battled the overwhelming urge to breathe and struggled through the involuntary convulsions in the diaphragm, your body's attempt to force you to breathe. While it feels like you're all out of air and surely about to enter the pearly gates, you're not. As Hanli explains, your carbon dioxide levels are rising, and your body is acting to conserve the air you have left. You've got time. If you can override the urge to breathe, you'll black out well before you run out of air. Obviously, if you are not underwater, you should take a breath before you actually pass out.

I didn't quite make the 4-minute breath-hold milestone that some of the athletes around me did, but managing 3 minutes was an accomplishment I never considered for myself. It is insane what the human body is capable of if we only try. Of course, those times were significantly lower in the water and even more so when in the water and under stress. My first experience of being held underwater, even in the relative safety of a hotel pool, was as short as it was stressful. I NEEDED to breathe. My lungs were screaming, and I was on the verge of panic as I pushed my way to the surface. On the other hand, Lasse, a freak of nature, managed to put most of us to shame, looking blissfully relaxed despite my greatest attempts to drown him.

Watching the experienced athletes around me handle the challenge with ease proved how being prepared and staying calm impacts the outcome. When you lose your ability to stay calm, you lose control.

On my next attempt at an underwater breath hold with Lasse pushing me down, I followed Hanli's advice. Instead of thinking about the weight on my back and how badly I wanted that next breath, I admired the pretty colour of the water, considered the texture of the pool's bottom, and wondered what I would have for lunch. I thought about everything except breathing.

PHOTO VOLKER HANSEN



And it worked. What an experience; to discover what your body can do and realise that your limit is mostly in your mind.

The reality of the open ocean, however, is not quite the same as being pushed around in a pool. The ocean, on those strong wind and big wave days, is working against you, and that's a lot harder to prepare for.

When I started my wave session in those heavy conditions, I knew I would be outside of my comfort zone. But I knew what I could do, which was keep my kite flying, and I knew the spot well enough to know where I'd be safe and where I'd be struggling. I ran through my "shit hits the fan" plan, which is, essentially: If you fall in front of the board, protect your head. If you wipe out in a wave, keep the kite flying, no matter what. Remember to hold your breath when a wave comes. And, most of all, don't panic! As Hanli says, "It's the panic that kills you."

Game plan ready, I pulled into the next wave and channelled my inner Matchu Lopes. After one incredibly satisfying wave with a couple of very snappy turns (if I do say so myself), a rogue wave liberated me of my board, and I took a few sets to the head. But I was ready. As I watched the set waves breaking towards me, I took a deep breath, and used my kite to pull me out of wall after wall of white water. Never once did I feel afraid; the calm mind prevailed.

Quick side note: Don't be afraid to call it quits before you even start. Safety should always be a priority, and things can go very wrong very quickly when kitesurfing in extreme conditions. Take your time and don't let your pride get the best of you.

It was clear fairly quickly that these conditions weren't for me. As I said, you know what you're capable of,



RIDER MATCHU LOPES PHOTO CRAIG KOLESKY

which means you know when you've hit the limit of your capability. So, with one good wave in my pocket and having just endured a proper spanking, I headed back to the beach where I, and many other slightly overwhelmed kites, parked on the sidelines to enjoy the show. Disaster avoided. Most disasters can be if you just take the time to prepare.

The ION Global Athlete Summit was an example of a brand being prepared - acting with purpose, checking in, connecting with the team, coming up with new ideas, and making a concrete plan to move forward.

Oh, and having some fun! That's what it's all about, at the end of the day. Everyone in that company is there due to a love of watersports. As they say, ION is about challenging yourself, experiencing nature, and feeling its force.

So get out there and embrace the challenge. Experience that nature. Feel its force! You're capable of more than we think. Don't panic. You've got this.

Crystal Veness
Editor

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Ozone's Jamie Overbeek landed a new WOO world record with an astonishing jump of 35.3m at his home spot of Workum in the Netherlands, adding another accolade to his growing list of honours.

Overbeek, who just turned 17 and recently claimed the youngest-ever podium place with a second at the 2022 Red Bull King of the Air in Cape Town, made the highest recorded jump in gusty, 40 knots winds.

*The photo is not related to the world record jump

Jamie Overbeek World Record Kite

R1 V4 - 9m



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WORDS ROU CHATER

Ever wanted to get lost in the wilderness and kite a new spot every day among great people whilst eating fine food and drinking cold beers? The opportunity came up for IKSURFMAG Publisher Rou Chater to join Kite Boat Cruises in the Bahamas, and now he's hooked! Read all about the experience in this exclusive article!



RIDER BRAD STRAHM PHOTO JAVIER SANCHEZ DARDER



**"IT'S ON THE BUCKET LIST OF MANY KITERS
THAT LIKE TO SPEND THEIR TIME ON THE WATER
IN PARADISE."**

Cruising the Caribbean on a boat and kiting each day isn't anything new. In fact, it's on the bucket list of many kitesurfers that like to spend their time on the water in paradise. Aritz, Lauren and the rest of the team at Kite Boat Cruises have been living this dream for the last five years. However, what they try to offer their guests is a different experience. Just like the uniqueness of humanity, there is a certain flavour they bring to the boat that you just won't get anywhere else.

I arrived in the Bahamas on the 5th of December. As usual, I hadn't really given the trip much thought. That's always the case with me; I've jumped in taxis headed to places I've never heard of in far-off lands at the ping of a new email arriving before. It drives my other half, Mary, mad! "Where are you going? What are you doing? How long will you be gone?" My answer of "I don't know" never seems to really cut the mustard, but that's just how I've rolled for the last 20 or so years while travelling the globe chasing the kiteboarding dream.

Stepping out of the airport into this tropical paradise seemed unreal after the gloomy UK winter I'd left. I jumped in a taxi, armed with the name of the marina where Windchaser1, my home for the next ten days and the latest addition to the fleet for Kite Boat Cruises, was docked. On arrival, I fumbled my way through the security gates, found the boat and set to making friends.

RIDER SHAUN BENNETT
PHOTO ROU CHATER



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**“ THEY HAVE FIVE YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
RUNNING TRIPS AROUND THE BAHAMAS AND
ARE EMBARKING ON THEIR SIXTH SEASON ”**

Aritz has been running the Kite Boat Cruises operation for five years. He met Lauren, an avid surfer, on a kiteboarding trip to Union Island, where she was adding kiteboarding to her arsenal of talents. Aritz was already a keen sailor and kite instructor, having built his own wooden boat in the Philippines (a story you simply just have to ask him, and arguably one of the maddest ones I've heard in my years on this planet). They decided they could make a good team with Aritz at the sharp end of the boat and Lauren cooking incredible food and running operations behind the scenes.

It took a few years to pull the feat off; after all, getting a boat and running trips is no easy task. I've often thought about it myself and usually start to think about something else as soon as I look at the prices of suitable boats. Fast forward to the present day, and they have five years of experience running trips around the Bahamas and are embarking on their sixth season with Madrigal and Windchaser1, accommodating three crew and up to eight guests on each boat. Hats off to them for daring to dream and making that dream a reality.

Having met the crew and the rest of the gang for the week, we slipped the mooring and headed off into the slick Bahamian night. I still didn't know where I was going, much to Mary's annoyance, as it wasn't long before the last vestiges of phone signal slipped away as easily as the ocean did beneath us.





“ WE WERE HEADED TO THE EXUMA NATIONAL PARK, ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL AREAS IN THE BAHAMAS ”

After cracking the champagne and celebrating the new boat's first voyage with "guests", Aritz explained that we were headed to the Exuma National Park, one of the most beautiful areas in the Bahamas. We'd sail through the night into the small hours but would wake up away from the

hustle and bustle of Nassau to the peace and tranquillity of the protected marine park and all its delights.

I used the word "guests" in that manner as this was a press trip; while we were treated like royalty from beginning to end and given the full Kite Boat Cruises experience, we were there to do a job at the end of the day. Namely, Aritz and Lauren wanted a ton of footage to promote their operation throughout the season, and I wanted a story

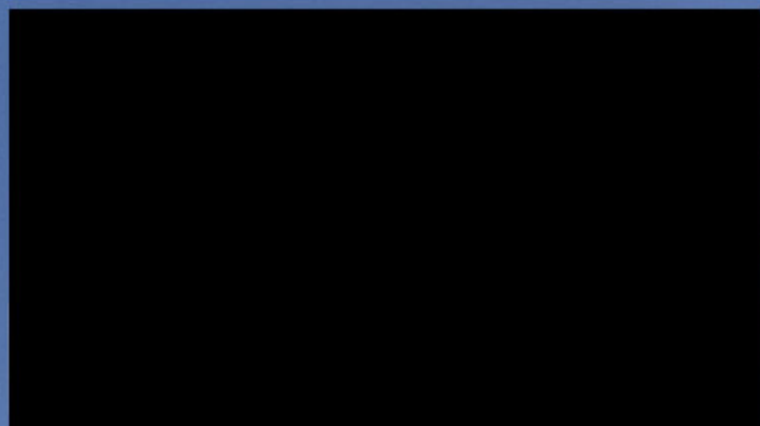
and the content for the video you will find attached to this article. And, of course, an excuse to kite in the closest thing to heaven I've seen yet.

In addition to myself, Lauren and Aritz, we had Javier, Ale, Anastasia, Andries, Sean, Brad, Tom and Olivia. It's a testament to the sheer size of Windchaser1, a huge 58-foot Fountaine Pajot catamaran, that we could all fit on board with plenty of space without ever feeling crowded. My newfound friends and shipmates all had roles to fill. Javier was the kite instructor and first mate aboard Windchaser1 for the season.

PIVOT

HIGH-PERFORMANCE FREERIDE/BIG AIR

SIZES: 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 14



NAISH

“ WE KITED AND SNORKELLED AROUND THE WRECKAGE, DISCOVERING THE INCREDIBLE CLARITY OF THE WATER HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME. ”

Ale had the same role onboard the sister boat Madrigal, and Anastasia was the chef for the season on board that boat too. Andries was a Yachtmaster and friend of Aritz, there to help out if needed.

Sean and Brad were incredibly talented riders and instructors from Florida, there to get the money shots, and Tom Bridge, the pro on this trip, needs no introduction. His friend Olivia was there getting social media content.

By the end of the evening, I knew who I was going with, what we were doing, and where we were going. Mary would have been so proud, it's a shame the phone signal was long gone. ;-)

We awoke for our first morning onboard at Norman's Cay, made famous as it was home to Pablo Escobar's private airfield used to ship cocaine to America from Colombia back in the day. The runway is currently "unused", but I still saw a few planes taking off and landing. I guess you can stop the drug lord but perhaps not the industry. We anchored right next to the wreck of one of his planes, now a popular tourist spot.

We kited and snorkelled around the wreckage, discovering the incredible clarity of the water here for the first time. It really is so clear and so blue; I fell in love instantly. The wind was light, so we took to the water for our first kite session on foils, doing laps around the boat and exploring the reefs that were scattered around us.

RIDER SHAUN BENNETT
PHOTO ROU CHATER



RIDER JAVIER SANCHEZ DARDER
PHOTO BRAD STRAHM



THE CREW
PHOTO ROU CHATER



That evening we took the dinghy to Norman's Cay and walked around the beach for a sunset beer. There is nothing on the island besides the runway, a new marina, a house, and a restaurant. All were closed, but the restaurant had kindly left some chairs out, which we put around their fire pit. A quick scavenge for wood didn't take long, and pretty soon, we were chilling by the fire with beers pinching ourselves for being so lucky as the sunset put on a magnificent display.

**“ THERE IS NOTHING ON
THE ISLAND BESIDES
THE RUNWAY, A NEW
MARINA, A HOUSE,
AND A RESTAURANT. ”**

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“THE WHOLE CREW WAS FROTHING TO GET WET AND CAPTURE THE MEMORIES ON CAMERA.”

We then headed back to the boat for what was one of many world-class meals. I mentioned earlier that Lauren and Aritz try to differentiate from the rest of the pack, and food is one of their specialities. For the entire duration of the trip, we enjoyed some

of the most incredible food I've eaten—an impressive accomplishment, as it was all stored onboard and prepared in the galley. Of course, fish and crayfish are a speciality when they can catch them too.

The next day was our first proper experience heading to a remote spot in the dinghy and kiting some of the most incredible water in the world. I can't even begin to describe it in words, but the water

was the sort of azure blue that dreams are made of. Warm, windy, flat and with brand new equipment to put through its paces from North Kiteboarding, the whole crew was frothing to get wet and capture the memories on camera.

We stayed at the point all afternoon, getting footage and the images you see in this article. Thankfully they can do the talking for just how stunning it was rather than reading my poor prose, which can never do it justice.



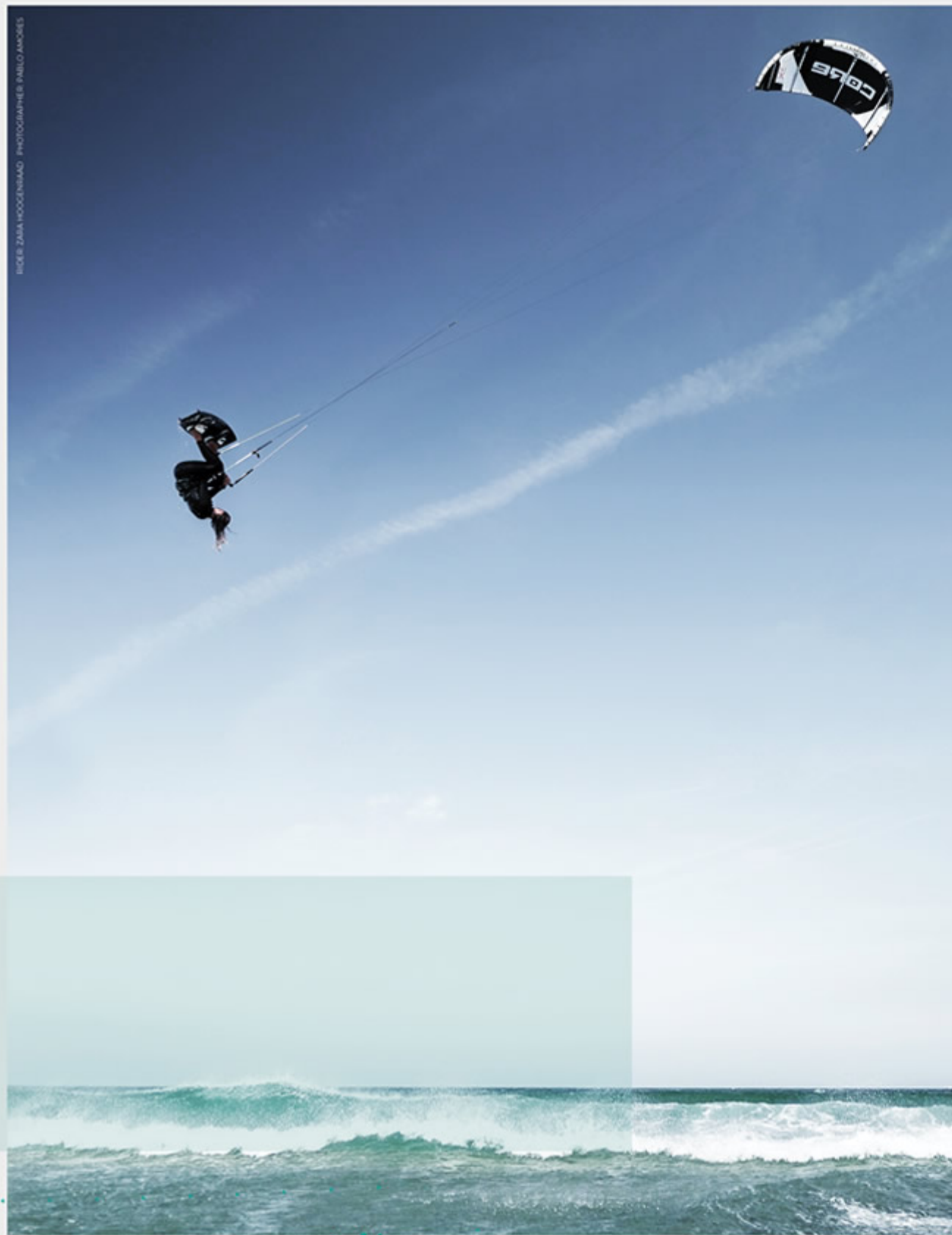
“ THIS TRIP WAS FULL OF ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME OPPORTUNITIES, AND YOU'D KICK YOURSELF IF YOU DIDN'T EMBRACE THEM AT EVERY TURN. ”

Tom Bridge was on fire, pulling his repertoire of combination tricks and getting the rest of the crew amped to get on the water. I even went back to my freestyle roots, so inspired by Tom; it's the first time I've unhooked in ten years! The conditions, the camaraderie and the crew cheering on the beach were enough for me to forget the knees and see if I could still do a raley. Much to Tom's surprise, it seems an old dog still has it - but only just.

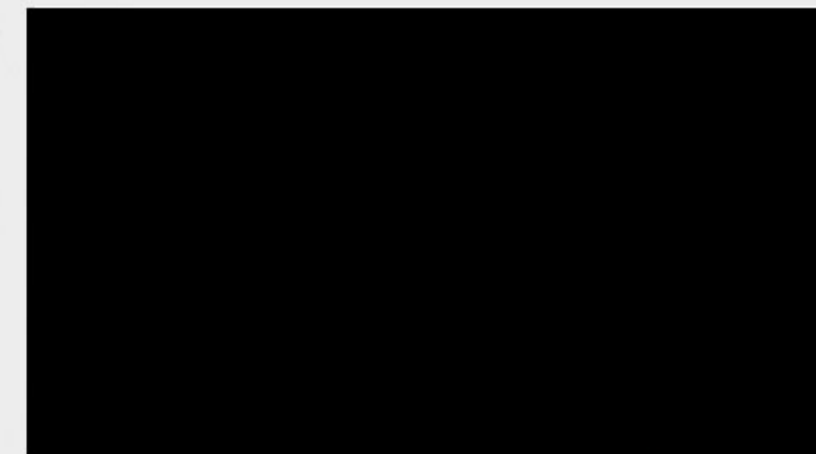
The next few days were spent getting into the routine of the boat, sailing deeper into the national park, finding remote kite spots, eating amazing food, and swimming with sharks. Yep, you read that right. The Marine Park is huge and doesn't allow any fishing. As such, sea life has flourished, from the smallest of reef fish to the larger men in grey suits and everything in between.

It felt strange to be diving into the water with the pointy teeth and snappy jaws around us, but this trip was full of once-in-a-lifetime opportunities, and you'd kick yourself if you didn't embrace them at every turn. The reef sharks were fortunately not that interested in us, but it made for some incredible photo opportunities. When the sting ray arrived, I thought I'd seen it all until a pair of enormous eagle rays cruised majestically past.

As the days flew by, we found ourselves in Staniel Cay to restock on food. This stop allowed us to step on dry land for the evening and give Lauren and



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“NEEDLESS TO SAY, WE ALL MADE THE DIVE, AND WHAT AN INCREDIBLE EXPERIENCE IT WAS.”

Anastasia a break from cooking. The Staniel Cay Yacht Club is a night I won't forget for a long time. I'll leave the details up to your imagination, but needless to say, it would have been befitting of the Shenanigator.

The next morning, as heads were a little dusty, Aritz and Javier were cooking up another once-in-a-lifetime experience - cave diving at the Thunderball Grotto. The name comes

from the James Bond movie of the same name, filmed on location with Sean Connery. Considering the state of our heads, there was some trepidation as Aritz explained we just needed to "dive down, swim for a bit and then pop up in a cave... But be sure to put your arm above your head, so you don't cut it on the roof of the cave".

It was the sort of instruction that required a leap of faith, much like the ones I take travelling to destinations unknown. It was made all the more interesting as the cave dive didn't involve any diving gear (they have

that on the boat, too, by the way), just us with snorkels and masks and a bit of blind faith in Aritz and Javier. Needless to say, we all made the dive, and what an incredible experience it was.

There are loads of routes into and out of the main cave, with other caves branching off through more tunnels. Once Aritz had the measure of our limited-by-hangover capabilities, he announced it was time to do some "super dangerous advanced shit", which for me, was the quote of the trip. With that, we were diving through tiny holes underwater and exploring deeper into the grotto. To pop up in a totally dark bat cave full of actual bats was yet another thing I will never forget.

RIDER SHAUN BENNETT
PHOTO BRAD STRAHM



The whole trip was just one incredible experience after the other, whether that was kiting on remote sandbars, sunset fire pits, swimming with sharks and rays, cave diving, foiling behind the boat, or eating incredible food; I could go on and on, but you get the idea.

If you've never had a kite boat on your radar, you will do now. I can't recommend Kite Boat Cruises and Aritz, Lauren and their incredible team enough. The whole crew strives to ensure their guests have a luxury experience while kiting, which is what separates them from their competitors. You'll kite in some of the most incredible locations on the planet and experience things you just can't get anywhere else.

Their reputation for providing an amazing experience is proven by their many repeat customers and having enough demand to expand and add their second, bigger boat this year, in partnership with Windchaser Boats.

ROU'S QUICK TIPS

- Book a cabin or ideally the whole boat with a group of friends
- Pack a book
- It's warm, so take lots of sunscreen
- Don't forget your sense of adventure
- Be ready for some incredible food
- You can fly directly to Nassau from most European cities and plenty in the US
- Pack light; the cabins are not small, but they aren't huge either
- Go with an open heart and mind, and you'll have the best experience of your life!

Click [HERE](#) to learn more about Kite Boat Cruises and [HERE](#) to take a closer look at Windchaser1.

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WHERE THE WATER LIES LIKE A BOOMERANG

WORDS GABI STEINDL PHOTO JAIMEN HUDSON



With a massive area of 2.6 million km² and some of Australia's most iconic landscapes, Western Australia is the home of the iconic road trip. Follow Gabi Steindl as she explores its scenic and rugged beauty, epic surf spots and one of the most pristine (and sharky!) coastlines in the world!

PHOTO GABI STEINDL



PHOTO JAIMEN HUDSON



**"WESTERN AUSTRALIA IS MY PLAYGROUND,
WHERE THE OPTIONS FOR GREAT WAVES AND
NEW ADVENTURES NEVER RUN OUT."**

"Are you travelling all alone?" The ranger looked at me, puzzled. "Yep," I replied with a big smile. His eyes inspected my Landcruiser. "You're carrying off-road recovery equipment, yeah?" "Ehm, nope," I played it cool, but his questions made me a little nervous. "And you're planning on sleeping alone on the beach?" "That was the plan." "Countless cars have already fallen victim to the beaches here. The sand is really soft in places and very, very deep. Hopefully, you've got an air compressor and know a thing or two about tire pressure?" "Absolutely." Whether he believed me or not will remain unknown. "Well then, good luck!" "Thanks, mate."

I first came to Western Australia in 2007 to shoot a kiteboarding road trip story with a New Zealand photographer and fell head over heels in love with the Margaret River region of the South West. I am now a permanent resident and have been married to an Australian big wave windsurfer for 12 years. Margaret River is my home, and Western Australia is my playground, where the options for great waves and new adventures never run out.

On this trip, I wanted to explore some more remote stretches of the south coast of WA. With my jam-packed Toyota Landcruiser — loaded with two wave kiteboards, a surfboard, a foil board, six kites, several bars, harnesses, wetsuits, my swag (one of the greatest inventions known to mankind!), an Engel car fridge, gas cooker, camping chair, camera gear,



PHOTO JAMES HOOPER

“THE COLOUR OF THE WATER HERE RIVALS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SPOTS IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC WITH TRANSPARENT WAVES THAT ARE OFTEN HARD TO SEE.”

and the most important kitchen utensils - I kissed my husband goodbye and hit the road. The first obstacle I had to tackle was crossing the Thomas River. My heart fully started pounding when the river water sloshed over the bonnet of my Landcruiser. On the other side, I stopped the engine,

took a deep breath and let the tires down to 15 psi. The real adventure was about to begin! The Esperance area, about 800 km from Margaret River, is an isolated paradise on the coast of the Southern Ocean and is famous for its breathtaking beauty. The Wudjari People of the Noongar cultural group (also Nyungar, the Indigenous Australians of South West Australia) are the true locals and the traditional owners of this region. Their name for Esperance is Kepa (Water) Kurl (Boomerang), meaning 'where the water lies like a boomerang'.

Fundamental to Noongar and Wudjari identity and culture is a strong connection to the land with a deep sense of responsibility to both manage and nurture their "country" (Boodja or Boodjar) and everything connected to it.

The region around the small town of Esperance, with only 12,000 inhabitants, officially has two of Australia's whitest sand beaches, so fine the sand squeaks underfoot. The colour of the water here rivals the most beautiful spots in the South Pacific with transparent waves that are often hard to see. Unfortunately, Esperance is also known for giant white sharks, and in the last three years alone,

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“ JAIMEN IS A PERSONALITY IN THE DRONE FILMING WORLD AND HAS BEEN FEATURED BY MAJOR INTERNATIONAL MEDIA OUTLETS ”

there have been three fatal shark attacks and a number of near-misses. Five days before I arrived, an 18-year-old girl was attacked and miraculously survived despite severe wounds.

I was excited to finally meet Jaimen Hudson, who grew up here. As a well-known aerial photographer and drone pilot, I had been in contact with him for quite some time about various photoshoots I had planned in the area. From the very first phone call, I felt a special connection with Jaimen.

Jaimen is 31 years old and has been a quadriplegic since he was 17 when he was involved in a serious motorbike accident in the sand dunes just out of town. Before the accident, surfing, skateboarding, and scuba diving ruled Jaimen's life. His earliest childhood memories are of the days on the water with his mother and father, who ran a scuba diving school and boating business. About eight years ago, Jaimen became interested in drone photography and videography, but due to his limited hand function, he feared that he would never be able to operate a drone himself until he bought one in 2015. Now, Jaimen is a personality in the drone filming world and has been featured by major international media outlets such as The Huffington Post, BBC, The Sunday Times, BBC Earth and many more. Besides his filming and photography business, Jaimen bought and now runs his parents' family boating business with his wife Jess, a Canadian from Vancouver Island. Their three-year-old son, "Captain," is a real trooper, and a second child is on the way.

PHOTO GABI STEINDL





PHOTO JAIMEN HUDSON

“THE QUEASY FEELING IN MY STOMACH DUE TO THE LARGE WHITE UNDERWATER INHABITANTS SUBSIDED QUICKLY”

In an extremely stylish, black VW Multivan modified for Jaimen to drive himself, he dashes along the coast every day before sunrise in search of wildlife. Dolphins and whales are usually the main subjects of his phenomenal footage. Until then, he had never shot kitesurfing and was just as excited as I was. "The wind forecast looks

good for the afternoon," I said, "let's meet at West Beach around noon." "Perfect!" Meeting him in person and finally experiencing his positive energy and charisma was amazing. During my first session, the queasy feeling in my stomach due to the large white underwater inhabitants subsided quickly; the mind-boggling scenery was helping. Dempster Head, a granite headland nearly 100m high at the western end of the pristine, snow-white West Beach, is breathtaking from the land but even more so from the water. Massive boulders shining in millions of reddish-brown

shades in the midday sun stuck out of the turquoise-blue water as if a giant would have cast them like dice. The horseshoe-shaped Twilight Bay, the unofficial landmark of Esperance with its iconic "rock with a hole," was our playground the following day. The colours of the Southern Ocean dazzled me, a kaleidoscopic spectacle of the most vivid shades of turquoise. At just under 8 knots, the wind conditions were borderline at best for my 10m. With a foil board as my light wind weapon, I hoped to make things work and to inspect the weird rock with the hole through it at Twilight Cove, which reminded me of the head of a prehistoric Pterosaur up close.



Halfway there, the wind suddenly died off to literally nothing. Looping my kite and being dragged through the water like trolling live bait was rather unsettling. Knowing a foil looks like a big, shimmering fishing lure, I couldn't help but think of a friend of mine who got bitten by a shark while foiling in New Caledonia. "Breathe, don't think of sharks, breathe, don't think of sharks..." I felt relieved when I finally could feel the sand under my feet. An elderly gentleman on a beach walk who observed my aborted foiling mission came across the squeaky sand to comment, "Three weeks ago, a 4.5 metre great white made headlines cruising around right here, with lots of families and kids on the beach."

**" I FELT RELIEVED
WHEN I FINALLY
COULD FEEL THE
SAND UNDER
MY FEET. "**

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PHOTO JAIMEN HUDSON

“THE BUBBLEGUM-HUED PINK LAKE WAS A PLACE THAT HAD TO BE SEEN TO BE BELIEVED”

A tourist filmed it with a drone. Check it out on YouTube!" I did later on. Woowow, he was big!

As ubiquitous as the white sharks in Esperance are, after a few days there, I stopped thinking about them. Whenever the swell was up, and the wind blew, I went kiting. I did long downwinders, played in transparent waves and was, without exception, always alone on the water. The breaks along Esperance's beaches usually are a fun size as the 105 offshore islands of the Recherche Archipelago (also called "Bay of Isles" by the locals) block the swell.

One day, when the wind blew fully onshore, and all the breaks were a blown-out, chaotic mess, I drove Esperance's famous Great Ocean Drive. It's a 40-kilometre circular loop that goes past stunning empty beaches, rocky headlands, coves, sheer cliffs, karri forests and two lakes that lie inland from Esperance: Pink Lake and Lake Warden.

In the early 21st century, the bubblegum-hued Pink Lake was a place that had to be seen to be believed, inspiring Dreamtime stories and considered a natural treasure by locals. The pink hue was caused by microscopic algae producing beta-carotene. Unfortunately, the unique colour faded just over ten years ago due to changes in natural water flow, reduced evaporation and salt extraction. The lake, which used to be so pink, was a sad sight in its now unspectacular grey-white tone. Glancing into the distance, I suddenly spotted a pink shimmer. I blinked several times and rubbed my eyes. What I saw looked totally fake.

PHOTO GABI STEINDL



Eventually, I realised that neighbouring Lake Warden (also a salt lake) was actually glowing pink. The ladies at the tourist office had told me that this could happen once or twice a year, but only if many different independent factors come together. Immediately, I rang up Jaimen, "Mate, Lake Warden is pink!! I want to kite it. How can I get there?" "Whaaat?! No way!! I'm coming!"

The Lake Warden area is a nature reserve with difficult access. It was already late in the afternoon, and little time was left. I drove closer to Lake Warden and fought my way through the thick bushes to the shore of the salt lake. Around the lake was a thick,

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THE TOURIST OFFICE
HAD TOLD ME
THAT THIS COULD
HAPPEN ONCE OR
TWICE A YEAR"**

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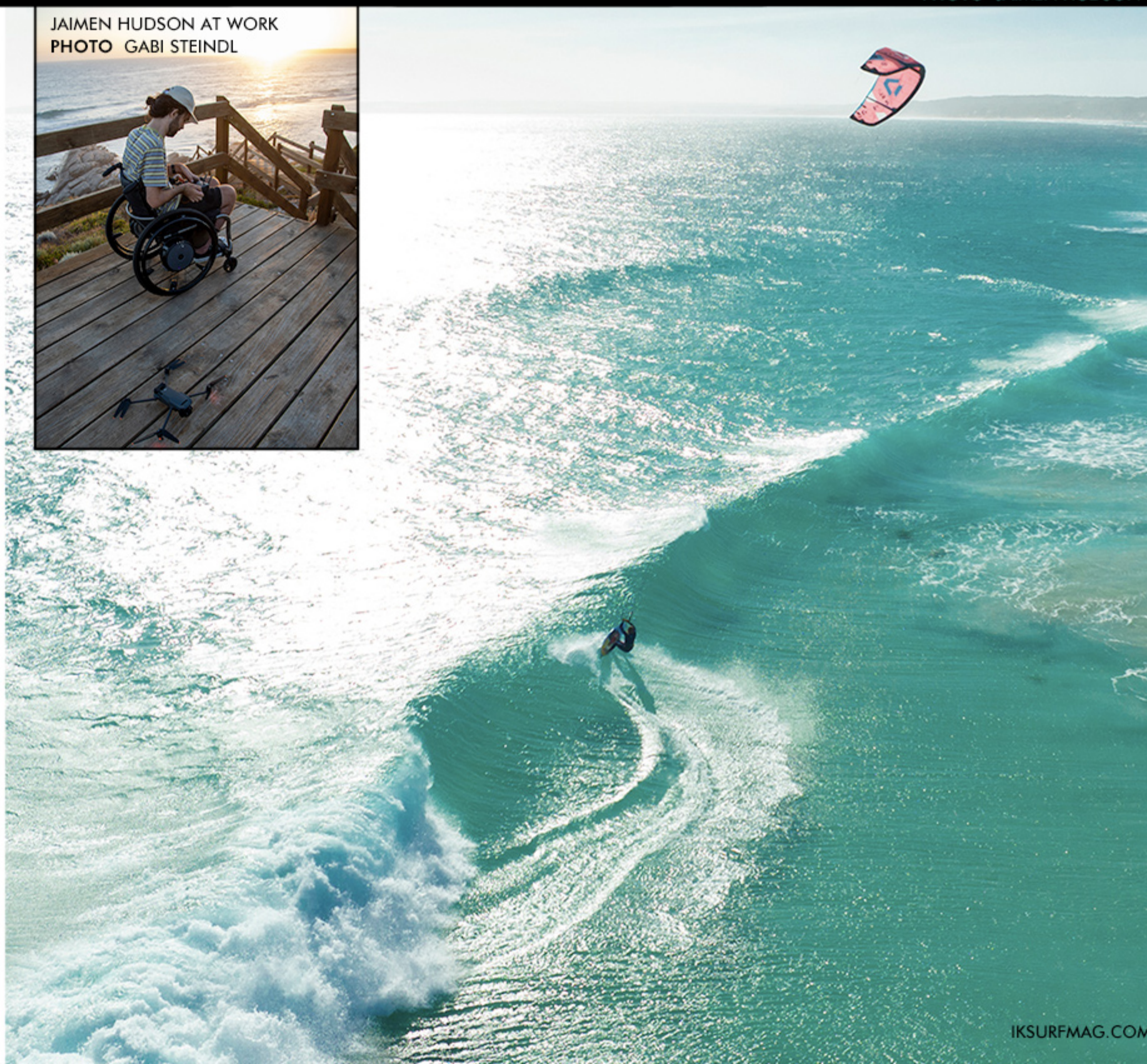
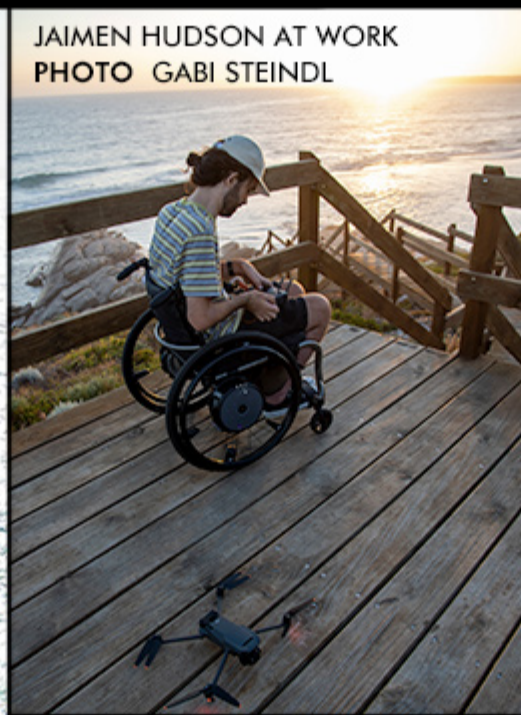
"I GOT LUCKY IN LUCKY BAY AS WELL. THE WIND WAS BLOWING, A LITTLE SWELL WAS ROLLING IN, AND I HAD IT ALL TO MYSELF."

PHOTO JAIMEN HUDSON

dry salt crust over a hundred metres wide. Before even thinking of pumping up my kite, I had to check the water depth and the ground below the surface. As if on snow, I trudged to the shore of the lake and waded cautiously in. The water was only about 10cm deep, the bottom a rock-hard, sharp crust of salt. The wind was super gusty. The sky and the clouds reflected in the pink water. As much as I wanted to glide into this surreal setting with my kite, I knew I would rip out the fin boxes of my wave board. After a moment's thought, I was on the way back to my car. Without fins, I went on a crazy ride on my wave board on this liquid pink mirror. A fair number of Lake Warden tattoos — scars from various cuts on my feet from the harsh salt crust — are my souvenirs for life, as are Jaimen's phenomenal photos.

After kiting virtually every break around Esperance, it was time to venture into more remote realms. First up was the spectacular Cape Le Grand National Park. Founded in 1966, the 32,000-hectare national park is home to Lucky Bay, which has been scientifically declared twice as having the whitest sand in Australia. Matthew Flinders — the man who named Australia — gave Lucky Bay its name in 1802 when he took shelter here after being hit by a storm while sailing a perilous route through the archipelago in the HMS Investigator. I got lucky in Lucky Bay as well. The wind was blowing, a little swell was rolling in, and I had it all to myself.

JAIMEN HUDSON AT WORK
PHOTO GABI STEINDL





**“THE EXHILARATING FEELING OF PURE FREEDOM
TOOK UP EVERY SINGLE CELL IN MY BODY, HITTING
THE FIRST STRETCH OF SNOW-WHITE BEACH”**

The absolute highlight of my road trip was, without a doubt, Cape Arid National Park. Remote takes on new meaning in this wildly beautiful, biodiverse area that spans over 280,000ha. The nearly untouched wilderness here is an important conservation area for 1100 plant species and more than 160 bird species, some of which are

threatened or endangered. Migrating whales pass by headlands in late winter and spring. Most of the park is only accessible by four-wheel drive. Everything has to be brought in: water, food, a tent or swag, and camping under the huge starry sky is the only option. After the Thomas River crossing, you can head east along the beach towards Cape Arid for 29 kilometres. The exhilarating feeling of pure freedom took up every single cell in my body, hitting the first stretch of snow-white beach, which is only safe to drive on low tide. Without any idea where I was

going to roll out my swag or what dangers and adventures were ahead of me in this completely isolated corner of the world, I set off. Where phone coverage doesn't exist and lonesome fishermen casting lines from the beach were the exception, where a small judgement error could turn into a full-blown nightmare in a matter of minutes, I felt at home.

On a narrow section of the beach with super soft sand, my car started to sink and was stuck. With the tide rising, time was running out. I dropped the tyre pressure to 12 psi and luckily got out before my Landcruiser fell victim to the Southern Ocean.



PHOTO JAIMEN HUDSON

Rocky headlands had to be traversed to get from one beach to the next. Without any tracks visible on the rocks, I needed to keep my eyes glued to the rocks a few metres ahead. Due to the orientation and the geography of the 29 km of coastline up to Cape Arid, you can find a beach with the wind from any angle, from fully offshore to fully onshore. With not a soul to be seen, and the thought of "Salisbury Island" and the great white shark nursery just off the coast (where Discovery Channel's "Lair of the Great White" was filmed) in the back of my head, it took quite a bit of convincing myself to pump up a kite and go for a session.

**" I NEEDED TO
KEEP MY EYES
GLUED TO THE
ROCKS A FEW
METRES AHEAD."**

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“GETTING UP WITH THE SUNRISE, FEELING THE FINE, SQUEAKY SAND UNDER MY TOES ON MY WAY TO A MORNING DIP”

There is no better feeling than reviewing the day at nighttime, all alone on an endlessly long, snow-white sandy beach under the Milky Way, and crawling into my swag, utterly stoked with small red sunburnt eyes. Getting up with the sunrise, feeling the fine, squeaky sand under my toes on my

way to a morning dip in the most turquoise blue water, sipping a coffee from the camping stove and waiting for the wind to get stronger to go kiting; that was pure joie de vivre.

But all dreams must come to an end. Eventually, I had to leave Cape Arid. I couldn't hit the road back home to Margaret River without spending a few more days with Jaimen and his beautiful family. In the short time I've known them, they have become very dear to my heart. Some more epic kiting

sessions with Jaimen's drone above me, a legendary boat trip out into the breathtaking seascape of the Recherche Archipelago, and a visit to Esperance's Lucky Bay Brewery marked the end of an unforgettable time.

Hugging Jaimen, Jess, and my little buddy Captain goodbye wasn't easy. I programmed a different route into Google Maps for the way home. One more highlight was still on the menu: Wave Rock, also known as Katter Kich by the Noongar people. The 15m high and 110m long natural granite rock formation shaped like a tall breaking ocean wave was created



PHOTOS GABI STEINDL

“ I SAT HIGH UP ON THE CREST OF THE ROCKY WAVE LOOKING OUT OVER THE SURROUNDING DESERT WILDERNESS, REMINISCING ON ALL THE WILD MOMENTS ”

by the erosive action of wind and water over millions of years. The red, brown, yellow and grey vertical stains on the rock, caused by rain washing chemical deposits (iron oxide and carbonates) down the surface, looked hand-painted and added to its wave-like appearance.

For the last sunset of this trip, I sat high up on the crest of the rocky wave looking out over the surrounding desert wilderness, reminiscing on all the wild moments, crazy experiences and legendary kite sessions. But most of all, my heart and thoughts were with Jaimen, who had touched me deeply with his incredibly positive attitude, the love of life he exudes, his humour, infectious energy and his incredible family. This road trip has not only made me fall in love with my adopted home, Western Australia, all over again; I made new friends for life and that is the most beautiful outcome that one could wish for.

Join Camille Delannoy and Oswald Smith as they brave hostile conditions in search of wind and waves in one of the most dramatic sceneries in the world: Iceland. Was it worth it? In this feature article, Camille takes us behind the scenes of Mystic's latest film!

ICELAND: DYSFUNCTIONAL BEAUTY

WORDS CAMILLE DELANNOY PHOTOS VINCENT SCHAAAP



“ A MASSIVE STORM CAME UP ON THE RADAR. ALL SIGNALS POINTED TOWARDS AN EPIC MISSION. ”

This trip was one of the wildest I've done. For five days straight, the wind was blowing 50+ knots, it was raining all day long, and temperatures never went higher than 10 degrees.

Since early 2022, I've wanted to do a cold water adventure with my partner-in-crime, Oswald Smith, and some of the Mystic crew. A bunch of friends, kite gear, heavy-duty camera equipment, and a mission to shoot whatever would come our way. In tune with the roots of the Mystic brand, we looked North for the ideal setting, somewhere with harsh climates and rugged landscapes. And most importantly – wind!

The idea was to head somewhere in the north Atlantic chasing a gnarly forecast, explore an unknown place and find the best possible conditions. The seed was planted. Now, all we had to do was wait for the green light. Fast forward to the beginning of May, when a massive storm came up on the radar. All signals pointed towards an epic mission. The stage was set. Iceland was on! We locked in the plane tickets, made a rough plan, and two days later, the whole crew was in Reykjavik with a 4x4, a camper, a bunch of Mystic gear (those wetsuits were absolutely essential), and plenty of fuel to explore the country.

To be in Iceland and shoot there was a dream, but we wanted to capture its raw side instead.

Everybody's seen the picture-perfect version of Iceland, but not its chaotic side. This is where the concept of 'Dysfunctional Beauty' came into play and would take centre stage for the remainder of the trip. It was time to go off the grid.





“ I WANTED TO GET A STRAPLESS FREESTYLE SESSION IN, AND, AT FIRST, THIS PLACE LOOKED PERFECT ”

We spent the first days hunting for wind and the right spots without much luck. Iceland is not made for kiteboarding. With impossible kite launches and extremely strong and gusty winds, it took blood, sweat, and tears to find any viable spots.

We tried to kite everywhere, many spots out of our comfort zone. One of the strapless sessions I did was in a river right in front of a bridge. I wanted to get a strapless freestyle session in, and, at first, this place looked perfect: 35 knots, flat water, and a stunning backdrop. I got changed, Ozzie helped me rig up, and off I went.

After a few minutes, I realised that the spot wasn't rideable and that a single mistake would throw me straight into the bridge.

The place was full of rocks with shallow water, and when the wind picked up, I started to think that riding this spot maybe wasn't the smartest idea. I got dragged on the rocks for 100 metres, trying to get back before the crew came to help me. I lost a couple of fins in the river, and it was definitely one of the scariest moments I've ever had while kiting. Still, seeing the shots after made it worth it.

That session put things into perspective for us. After only two days, we realised that we wouldn't be able to find actual kite spots, so we had to shift our focus.

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“ WE FINALLY FOUND A SPOT WITH NO ONE AROUND, A LAGOON BRIMMING WITH ICEBERGS, AND A HUGE GLACIER IN THE BACKGROUND. ”

We weren't looking for spots anymore but for raw landscapes and beauty, and then we would find a way to ride the place - or at least give it our best to make it work.

Comfort was long gone after two days. Wetsuits would never dry, the camper and cars were full of sand, and food was getting simpler by the day. We didn't see a single person going in the water, and people watching us launching our kites and getting in the sea looked at us like we were maniacs. Especially with the many signs that read, "Deadly sneaker waves. Don't get close to the water!"

The main area we wanted to ride was a glacier lagoon, and when we showed up, the spot was completely off the table. We drove around for hours, looked at every little lagoon on the map, and searched for the best possible option. After a few unsuccessful stops and 20 minutes in the middle of nowhere, we finally found a spot with no one around, a lagoon brimming with icebergs, and a huge glacier in the background. To our delight, there was a strong dose of wind! This was one of the most memorable sessions I have ever had, giving me a full range of emotions.

Oswald Smith summed it up perfectly, saying, "Imagine an all-powerful alabaster of glazed iced. Gracing you with its monumental grit. One of the most majestic spots I've ever had the pleasure to kite."

RIDER CAMILLE DELANNOY





“ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IS TO TRUST YOUR GEAR. YOU HAVE TO KNOW THAT YOU CAN RELY ON IT NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.”

Following that session, the plan was to find big waves and strong wind. After a few sessions in places that were definitely not meant to be kited, we found what we were

looking for: 35 knots, big waves, and of course, freezing water. That was our last session in Iceland, and the stoke level was high as we scored a wide variety of spots ranging anywhere from glaciers, river mouths, waterfalls, and waves on the sharp rocky southern coast of Iceland.

It was the trip of a lifetime. I remember sitting in the airport with Ozzie on the last

day and touching back with reality, still appreciating the week we spent with the head full of icy memories. Kiting in those kinds of conditions is hard mentally. You have to “take abstraction” of the cold and the rain and focus 100% on the moment. You’re not thinking of anything else but what is happening right in front of you. I think that one of the most important things is to trust your gear. You have to know that you can rely on it no matter what happens.

RIDER OSWALD SMITH





“ WE WANTED TO SHOW THAT KITING DOESN'T STOP AT THE FAMOUS DESTINATIONS THAT EVERYONE IS USED TO SEEING ”

Finding these different spots was a challenge, but that was why we went there. We could have gone to a tropical destination with warm water and steady wind every day, but that's not what we wanted. We wanted to go to new places, places where people have never kited before. The whole trip was an exploration. The goal was to push the limits on where it was possible to ride. We wanted to show that kiting doesn't stop at the famous destinations that everyone is used to seeing, but that it can be done everywhere. No matter the place and no matter the conditions, if there is water and wind, it's possible to ride.



INSIGHT

FRANCESCA MAINI

This is just the beginning for British-Italian rider Francesca Maini, who is making waves at only 20 years old! In 2018, Cesca entered her first BKSA competition and claimed a podium without knowing the names of most tricks at the event! Now, she's making headlines as the first woman to ever land a double loop in competition at the BAKL. In this exclusive INSIGHT interview, Jen and Cesca catch up about her racing, wave riding, winging and big air skills!



" WE WENT TO MAURITIUS A LOT,
AND THIS WAS WHERE I HAD MY
FIRST-EVER KITESURF LESSON. "

Hey Francesca, we're stoked to have you for this INSIGHT feature! Can you tell us a little about yourself? What was your hometown like? What was it like growing up in an Italian/British family?

I grew up in Herne Bay, a seaside town in the southeast of England. This is where I learned to kiteboard, and I have been kiteboarding ever since! Our house is a minute's walk to the sea, so when the wind direction is right, my dad, brother and I always kite there. Usually, there are no other kites there, so there was plenty of space to learn! My dad is Italian, and I have lived in England my whole life, but all my cousins and many of my family are Italian and live in Bologna; we visit them a few times a year or whenever possible. Having an Italian family always means there's delicious food around!

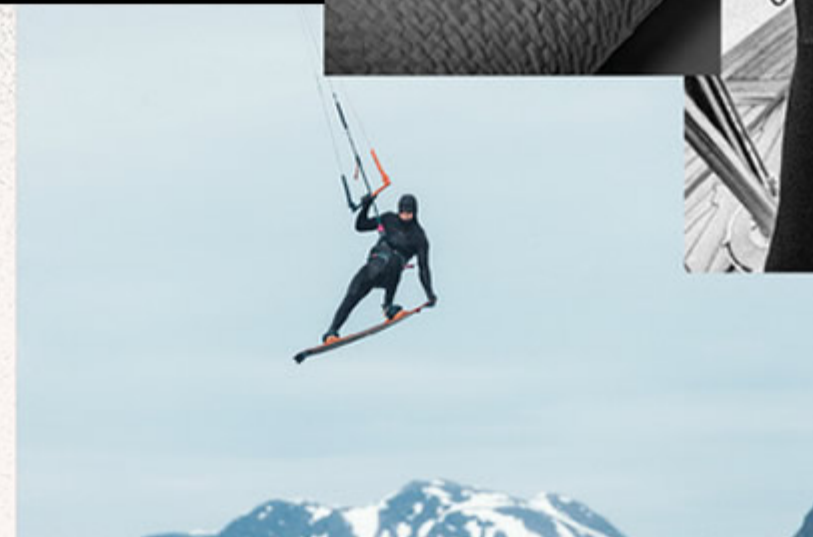
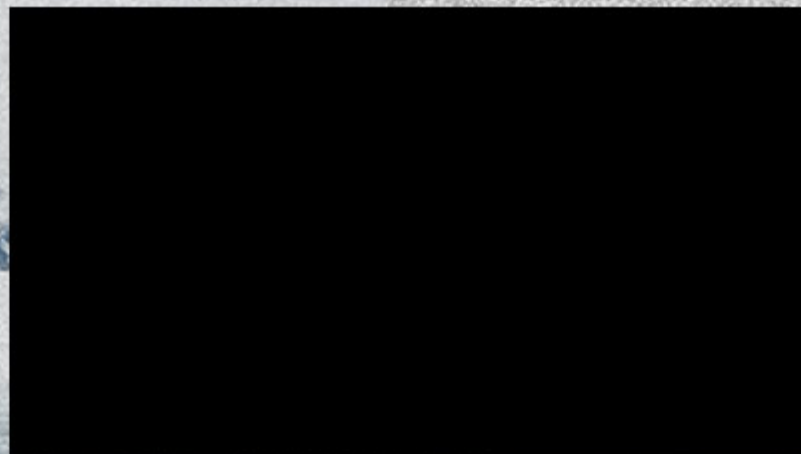
You and your brother Mattia have done board sports for years; which sports are you into, and how did you first get into them?

We are into all watersports! My dad got us involved, and taught us the basics of surfing when we were young. My first go at kitesurfing was when I was about 10. We only had a few kite lessons where my brother and I didn't want to listen to my dad, but he also taught us how to kite.

Growing up, where did you spend your vacations? What was your favourite holiday?

We spent our holidays in many different places! We went to Mauritius a lot, and this was where I had my first-ever kitesurf lesson. Mauritius is one of my favourite places! I started wave riding there, and our recent trip to Mauritius in August was the first time I tried winging in waves; it is such a fantastic place!

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" IT WAS SUCH A FUN DAY, AND SEEING THE WHALES MADE IT EVEN MORE INCREDIBLE! "



Any holiday we went on was primarily based on kitesurfing. We used to go to Cape Verde a lot, and that's where I properly got into kitesurfing!

Can you describe the best session you've ever had in Mauritius?

One of the best sessions in Mauritius was this year while my brother and I were tow foiling each other. So, we are both on foils; one is on a kite, and one has a rope attached to the harness with a twin-tip handle, which we used to tow each other into waves.

We were doing this at Manawa Reef when we saw a humpback whale in the distance! So, we decided to go check it out, and a whale breached super close to us with its calf, which was amazing and terrifying as we were on foils and couldn't see where the whale went underwater! We spent all day on the water towing each other; it was such a fun day, and seeing the whales made it even more incredible!

Back in 2018, in your first-ever competition, you scored a spot on the BKSA podium with little

training or event experience. I'm impressed! Tell us about that event!

It is funny because the event was only a 20-minute drive from our house, so when we heard about it, my brother and I thought we might have a go at competing for fun since it was so close. I had never competed, and honestly, I didn't even know the names of different tricks or even some of the tricks I was doing! I'm super happy I did that competition, as that's how I started competing.



In July 2019, you came 1st at BKSA and, that same year, raced at the KiteFoil World Series. Which competition did you enjoy more, and why?

They were very different competitions. The BKSA competitions are always good fun, and you meet many new people. I was happy with my performance there, but I preferred the KiteFoil World Series as I learnt a lot. I had barely flown a foil kite and had to race on it! It was a very hectic event with men and women in the same category, and there were 82 people on the start line. I could have done better in that competition, and I was still trying to understand what the flags meant and even where the finish line was! However, that event taught me a lot and only made me improve in the future.

"I HAD BARELY
FLOWN A
FOIL KITE AND
HAD TO RACE
ON IT!"

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When did you first get into big air kiting?

I started to get into big air when I first came to Cape Town in 2019. My brother and I saw all the pro riders looping and going massive. So, we started learning to loop, but, to be honest, we didn't know what we were doing. So, we learnt through trial and error and tried to practise whenever we went out kiting!

Who is your most influential and inspirational rider?

Angely Boulliot is one of my biggest inspirations. I watched her videos for years and knew who she was when I started kitesurfing. It is insane to compete with one of my biggest role models and see her kite so well in person.

In the 2021 BAKL event, you took down some big names! Can you tell us about that event?

Yet again, with this event, it just so happened we were in Cape Town, so of course, we wanted to give it a go! Although I was new to looping and did some loops in the competition, I had never looped in that much wind. It was fun to compete against my brother, too. Alessa Mensch and I were the only girls competing, and we were just so excited to participate!

Let's get to the good part - congratulations on coming 2nd at the BAKL in Cape Town and becoming the first woman EVER to land a double kite loop in competition - that was epic! Did you know you were going to attempt it in the event?

Thanks! It was such a hectic but fun day of competing. I still can't believe I'm the first woman to land the double loop. It's funny because I remember saying to my boyfriend a few months before,

"IT WAS SUCH A HECTIC BUT FUN DAY OF COMPETING. I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE I'M THE FIRST WOMAN TO LAND THE DOUBLE LOOP."



PHOTO ANA CATARINA



"I'm going to do the double loop in the competition, and I want to be the first woman to do it". Still, I wasn't sure I would do it, because the only training I did was as soon as I arrived in Cape Town in December; before that, I hadn't trained for at least a month due to university. Therefore, my goal was to do my best and do something completely different. With some advice about double loops from some of the guys, I felt more confident to do it.

"MY GOAL WAS TO DO MY BEST AND DO SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT."



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© NICOLE LAIBEN RIDER: JAMES JENKINS

" I WANTED TO DO WELL AND THOUGHT A DOUBLE LOOP WAS ONE WAY TO GET SOME GOOD POINTS, BUT I ALSO DIDN'T WANT TO INJURE MYSELF. "



Have you ever landed the trick before? What was going through your head in that heat?

I had never attempted a double loop before I did it in that heat! I had never looped the 5m kite either! I tried a few loops on it just before my heat started to get a feeling for the kite, and after that, I knew I could do it. Before the heat, I was so nervous because I wanted to do well and thought a double loop was one way to get some good points, but I also didn't want to injure myself. I saw Angely do a huge kite loop board

off, and then my brother put the 5m in the air for me, and I went and grabbed it straight away. During the loop, I wasn't scared; I kept pulling and focused on not messing up the landing.

Let's talk about the F-ONE 'Sultans of Wind' shoot; what a video! Our readers even nominated it as one of the best kiteboarding movies of 2022! Tell us some of your highlights from the trip...

Where we went in Oman was mainly desert, and it was cool to see camels everywhere. The kite spots we

went to were empty and so beautiful. We kited in a big lagoon where we were the only people riding. We also kited in the harbour, surrounded by fishing boats, with a beautiful town in the backdrop. It was a cool experience, as all the locals loved watching us kitesurf!

We kited in this one spot (which wasn't really a kite spot) with immaculate waves, but the wind was very sketchy, and it was full of rocks. We had some nice waves until the wind started to drop. Marcela and I were both on 6m kites, and it was impossible to get back upwind.



Further down, the beach was just rocks, so you couldn't land there. There was a small island in the sea, also surrounded by rocks. The launch spot was upwind, and there was no way we would make it back.

As we were drifting downwind, my kite fell out of the sky next to this island, and my lines managed to get super tangled. With no wind, I couldn't relaunch the kite, and I was drifting towards the rocks very quickly, with the waves pushing me even closer. I had to pack up my kite, thinking it might make it easier to paddle away.

"THE LAUNCH SPOT WAS UPWIND, AND THERE WAS NO WAY WE WOULD MAKE IT BACK."

Matchu Lopes
W#2

James Carew
W#1



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" THE RIP WAS SO STRONG THAT I WAS PADDLING FOR AGES, NOT MOVING ANYWHERE. HONESTLY, I HAD NO IDEA HOW I WAS GOING TO GET IN. "



PHOTO LOUIS ARNAUD LAVASIER

The rip was so strong that I was paddling for ages, not moving anywhere. Honestly, I had no idea how I was going to get in. The F-ONE guys flew their drone to see where I was. They managed to contact a fisherman to rescue us, and I was so happy when I saw the boat arrive - my arms were so dead from paddling. Mitu managed to make it in, but Marcela and Hendrick ended up further downwind, unable to go to the beach as it was a military base. The boat came and helped them too. It was a great session but not such a fantastic ending!

On the trip, we also all managed to learn a dance! It all started whilst we were camping; Mitu was our dance teacher, and the aim was to learn the dance he was showing us. At the end of the trip, we all knew this dance pretty well, even though some of us weren't great at the beginning!

What exciting plans do you have for 2023?

I haven't got anything planned yet, but I will try to train and go to as many big air events as possible. I will also be competing in some race foiling events too. So, the plan is to train hard and start getting prepared for the upcoming competitions!

RIDER LORENZO CASATI



PHOTOS JAMES BOULDING

The start of 2023 marked the highly anticipated release of the new Cabrinha 03 collection. With loads of changes behind the scenes in the company coupled with some exciting athletes joining the crew, all eyes are on Cabrinha. The team gives us the low down on the latest gear they love in this feature!

INTRODUCING

03

" TEAM RIDERS WITH 15+ YEARS OF HIGH-LEVEL PERFORMANCE
PLAY THEIR PART IN A COMPLEX ROAD TO PRODUCTION "

THE CABRINHA 03 SHOOT TEAM IN CAPE TOWN

The 03 range of kites sees the largest materials and design updates of any new product range in Cabrinha's history. One intrinsic area that funnels into the test program is the regular product feedback from team riders. One thing that differentiates Cabrinha from others in the industry is the calibre of experience and fine-tuned feedback that these athletes are able to deliver.

Across all disciplines of product, from surf to freeride to freestyle, team riders with 15+ years of high-level performance play their part in a complex road to production each kite undertakes during its development cycle. Product photoshoots are often the first time a team rider finally comes together with the final version, so James Boulding asked some key riders about the kites they love to use and how the new developments translate in terms of handling and user experience.





RIDER LORENZO CASATI

“ THE KITE HAS A VERY COMFORTABLE, PREDICTABLE FEELING THAT CAN HELP YOU PROGRESS IN ALL AREAS ”

CONTRA

Dubbed the 'session saver', the kite needs no introduction. It's been around for some years, and the 15m always finds a spot in my quiver as the go-to when the wind is light. With the new 03 features, the kite has upgraded performance in key areas. What stands out the most is the ability to hold in the sky with little to no wind. The wind range is equally impressive, from low-end grunt to the depower. I'm able to push this kite freestyling in boots or take out a beginner for the very first time. The kite has a very comfortable, predictable feeling that can help you progress in all areas of the sport. Talk about versatility!
- JAMES BOULDING

CONTRA AETHER

The Contra Aether is unbeatable for freeride kitefoiling, thanks to its lightweight, one strut design. This kite has an incredible capability of flying in almost no wind, and with the wide range of size choices, it's an extremely fun kite in stronger wind on the smaller sizes. I love the fact that you can try rotations and kiteloops and have complete confidence it won't stall. – THEO DEMANEZ



SWITCHBLADE

Confidence. That's the first feeling I get when flying a Switchblade in any sort of conditions. Pat Goodman has put his finest work into this new design, a pulleyless, supercharged Switchblade. From light wind to gusty and gnarly conditions, I always feel in control and able to commit to whatever discipline I'm into. From freestyle to looping or riding a surfboard, it's the one kite I can fly with my eyes closed and always know where it is and how it is going to react. – ALBY RONDINA

ACE HYBRID

The Ace Hybrid is my go-to board for riding straps. The thin rails make the board really grippy, and the new double concave bottom helps a lot in landing soft but with a nice locked-in feel. The new shaping on the deck is perfect for doing the craziest board off also without using the handle. The Hybrid core gives the board a pretty insane live feel under your feet, keeping the board light and with plenty of pop. – ALBY RONDINA

“ FROM FREESTYLE TO LOOPING OR RIDING A SURFBOARD, IT'S THE ONE KITE I CAN FLY WITH MY EYES CLOSED ”



"THE NEW MOTO X IS EXTREMELY RIGID AND STABLE EVEN WHEN REALLY OVERPOWERED IN CRAZY CONDITIONS"

RIDER CAMDYN KELLETT

MOTO X

WOW. Just wow. The most fun, fast and lifty kite I have tried in a while! It's crazy where new designs and materials have taken the performance of three strut kites. The new Moto X is extremely rigid and stable even when really overpowered in crazy conditions; it has a very soft and direct feel on the bar, delivers smooth power and has got unbelievable lift! – ALBY RONDINA

The Moto X is one of those kites you need to feel for yourself. It has the smooth feel of the Switchblade but a very different feel in the bar and is on a different level speed-wise. It pulls hard but really drives upwind; it also drives through a loop really well. I normally wouldn't consider a kiteloop on a 12m, but I had nearly no issues with the Moto X coming around and catching me, which was pretty nuts for a 12m! I suspect the smaller sizes will be good for double loops as the kite is so fast. Too fast for unhooked freestyle in the smaller sizes, I imagine, but I think this is what makes it shine for big air and looping, especially in the larger sizes, and will also allow it to work really well in the waves. Between the light feel in the bar and sky and being super powerful and quick to turn, it is exactly what I'd hope to feel in a fast yet boosty three strut kite. Normally I'd never give up my 8m and 9m Switchblade in the quiver, but I think times may be changing... This is a totally new Moto, not just a refined version of the previous model. – EVAN NETSCH





FX

The FX2 fits perfectly in my quiver as my do-it-all kite. It's the perfect combo of freestyle and progressive big air riding. The modern shape provides optimum hangtime combined with great forward drive, with the refinements of the Cabrinha 03 collection. The hybrid frame provides a more direct response which pushes this kite to another level of performance. The FX2 is a simple do-it-all kite you'll want in your board bag. – **LUCAS ARSENAULT**

COS – Cabrinha Operating System

The COS is the perfect connection between me and my kite. It gives me complete control and awareness while in the sky and allows precise input when I need it most. The ergonomic new safety system gives me complete confidence in the wildest of conditions while allowing a full range of movement when the bar is pulled in and levered on either side during kiteloops. It's a do-it-all bar for any level of kiteboarder. – **LORENZO CASATI**

“ THE ERGONOMIC NEW SAFETY SYSTEM GIVES ME COMPLETE CONFIDENCE IN THE WILDEST OF CONDITIONS ”

RIDER KEAHI DE ABOITIZ



DRIFTER

The Drifter has been a staple in the Cabrinha range for a long time, but it's nice to see a fresh new look for 2023. A completely new shape and bridle allow faster turning and better performance without compromising that drift stability we've all come to know and love. For those that like a lighter bar feel, the A setting makes for the lightest bar pressure on a Drifter yet, but the B setting still delivers that solid, reliable feel that allows you to focus on wave riding without worrying about the kite. I love that it's still a kite I can trust in what heavy conditions are thrown at me! – KEAHI DE ABOITIZ

“ THE A SETTING
MAKES FOR THE
LIGHTEST BAR
PRESSURE ON A
DRIFTER YET ”

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CUSTOM DESIGNS
T-SHIRTS
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NITRO

The all-new Nitro gives me a lot of confidence during my kite sessions. The kite makes a session so much more fun and gives me a bunch of motivation to practise new big air tricks. The Nitro is super reliable, and you can fly incredibly high, which allows me to do multiple rotations during a loop without any problems and also take my board off when I am upside down. I am landing new tricks every session. I am certain I will break new height records in strong winds this year. Last week, I landed my first double loop and S loop on the first attempts without any fear. This is a game changing feeling in a kite. – *STINO MUL*

The Nitro is a performance freeride big air big hangtime kite that we've developed specifically for boosting. It's one of those kites where you get on it, and you just go, 'WOW, this is why I started kitesurfing!' It's just so much fun going really fast and boosting huge airs. It's an absolute blast in addition to being a performance freeride big air kite. – *PAT GOODMAN*

“ YOU CAN FLY INCREDIBLY HIGH, WHICH ALLOWS ME TO DO MULTIPLE ROTATIONS DURING A LOOP ”

Kiters are creatures of habit, following the wind to the top kite spots in the world, like migratory birds with colourful wings. But the best spots tend to have the biggest crowds. Discovering new locales with steady wind and quiet beaches is the real treasure. This issue, we take a look at an up-and-coming destination, Fuwairit Kite Beach in Qatar!

ON THE SPOT - FUWAIRIT KITE BEACH



PHOTO SVETLANA ROMANTSOVA - QATAR AIRWAYS GKA KITE WORLD TOUR

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" THE AERIAL SHOTS OF THIS UP-AND-COMING HOT SPOT SHOWED A STUNNING, FLATWATER LAGOON "



Having an unforgettable session in one of the world's best kite spots is a goal of many kites. We see dream destinations in magazines and in videos and picture ourselves being the next kiter to make our mark on these dream spots. Kiteboarding meccas like the big air hot spots of Cape Town and Tarifa, the waves of Mauritius, the lagoons of Brazil, the river playground of Hood River, and the flatwater slicks in Cape Hatteras have long been favourites of the international kiteboarding community.

However, those who have experienced sessions in spots on the hot list have likely realised that, with popularity, comes massive crowds. In Cape Town, there's a constant battle for space on the water in the high season. The same can be said for those hoping to learn freestyle in the lagoons of Brazil, or wave riders trying to catch a wave at One Eye in Mauritius - it's hard to find space and make it through without upsetting the local shredders!

How did these top spots earn their stripes? What does it take to be dubbed a "World Class Kite Destination"? And, most importantly, how do we as kites discover these spots before they take off?

Well, if you were watching the recent GKA event at Fuwairit Kite Beach in Qatar, you may have glimpsed a spot that is on its way up. The aerial shots of this up-and-coming hotspot showed a stunning, flatwater lagoon that opens up to the Persian Gulf. With what looks like ideal conditions for beginners and progression-minded riders, this may very well be the next must-visit spot for kites on the hunt for new places to experience.



RIDER BRUNA KAJIYA
PHOTO SVETLANA ROMANTSOVA _ QATAR AIRWAYS GKA KITE WORLD TOUR

At the recent Visit Qatar GKA Freestyle Kite World Cup, viewers watched as defending Freestyle World Champion, Gianmaria Coccoluto, started the season off strong by claiming the top spot on the podium. Former Freestyle World Champion, Bruna Kajiya, surprised spectators by starting her competition season on Airush equipment, which helped her claim 1st place in this event, beating defending Champion Mikaili Sol. It was an action-packed event with off-the-chart talent, and we're excited to see what the rest of the season brings from the GKA.

"IT WAS AN
ACTION-PACKED
EVENT WITH
OFF-THE-CHART
TALENT"

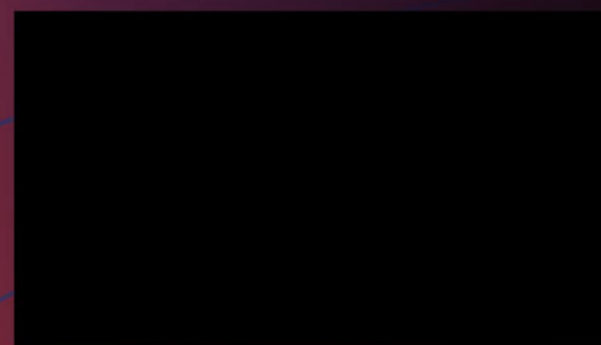
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MORE WATER TIME





"FUWAIRIT IS AN IDEAL BASE FOR VISITORS WHO WISH TO EXPERIENCE QATARI CULTURE WHILE BASED AT A FULLY-EQUIPPED KITE SPOT."

With this competition being the first time most viewers have seen this beautiful spot, you might wonder what it's like outside of an event week. Of course, being featured as a World Tour stop brings along with it a whole lot of hustle and bustle, but you can be sure that once the GKA crew moved on, preparing for their next stop in Salinas Del Rey, Colombia, there was more than enough room to make kitesurfing dreams a reality in this just-discovered spot in Qatar.

We did some digging to find out all about this area; with input from the Fuwairit Kite Beach Tapestry Collection by Hilton - the beachfront resort on the spot, and the crew behind the scenes at the Qatar Airways GKA Kite World Tour, we've got everything you need to know before you go to Fuwairit Kite Beach!

Fuwairit is a small fishing village located only an hour north of Doha in Qatar's northeast. Primarily flat terrain with low, rocky structures and shifting dunes are characteristic of this coastal village, which has only recently been recognised as a prime destination for kitesurfing. While you may assume it's a dry

desert, it's a haven for hawksbill turtles and seabirds. Close to historical and natural landmarks, Fuwairit is an ideal base for visitors who wish to experience Qatari culture while based at a fully-equipped kite spot.

The windy season in Fuwairit starts in November and goes through until the end of June. Wind ranges from 16 to 25 knots throughout the year. Steady winds during this main windy season blow side to side onshore, offering predictable conditions for visitors. June is the "shamal season", when the region experiences stronger winds up to 35 knots.

The sense of space in Fuwairit is amazing. Whether you're learning to kite or working on your bag of tricks in the shallow lagoon on the doorstep of the kite centre or exploring the vast open waters of the Persian Gulf, this is a fantastic location for twin-tip, foil or wingfoil riders looking for a well-equipped holiday.

Fuwairit Kite Beach Tapestry Collection by Hilton is a world-class resort designed for World Champions and first-timers alike, thanks to its unique combination of wind, topography and warm crystal-clear water with an extensive wind season. The Fuwairit Kite Beach Tapestry Collection by Hilton and Kite Centre stand just a few metres from the water's edge, so whether you're in the kite centre, in the Rider restaurant or by the Hang Loose bar, by the pool or on your bedroom patio, you're sure to get an incredible view of the action - if you're not a part of it! What better spot for the kick-off event of the 2023 GKA Kite World Tour?



" THIS IS A FANTASTIC LOCATION FOR TWIN-TIP, FOIL OR WINGFOIL RIDERS LOOKING FOR A WELL-EQUIPPED HOLIDAY. "

The competition area is right in front of FKB, which offers an ideal setup for a freestyle event, with everything in place at one location. It's not just a perfect location for the organisers and athletes, as we saw on the event live stream, but the potential for spectators is hard to beat. There's a raised platform on the roof of the hotel to give you an elevated view over the lagoon. Very few events or free riding locations in the world bring the action so close to top-of-the-line resort accommodation.

Sometimes, as kilters, we wonder about our relevance in the greater scheme of things. After all, explaining to strangers on planes that kitesurfing is not windsurfing is not yet a thing of the past.



PHOTO QATAR AIRWAYS GKA KITE WORLD TOUR





There's still a lot to be learned internationally about our sport. However, inclusion in the upcoming 2024 Paris Olympics and support from major brands like Porsche and Qatar Airways, has certainly raised the profile of our small sport.

Walking into the Fuwairit Kite Beach Tapestry Collection by Hilton, you will have the immediate impression that kiteboarding is the biggest sport on the planet and that you, a friendly neighbourhood kitesurfer, are the centre of attention. The FKB Tapestry Collection by Hilton is designed and dedicated to everything kitesurfers love about the kitesurfer way of life.

"THERE'S STILL A LOT TO BE LEARNED INTERNATIONALLY ABOUT OUR SPORT."

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freeride
big air



re vengeance
lightwind
freeride



re solve
freestyle
freeride

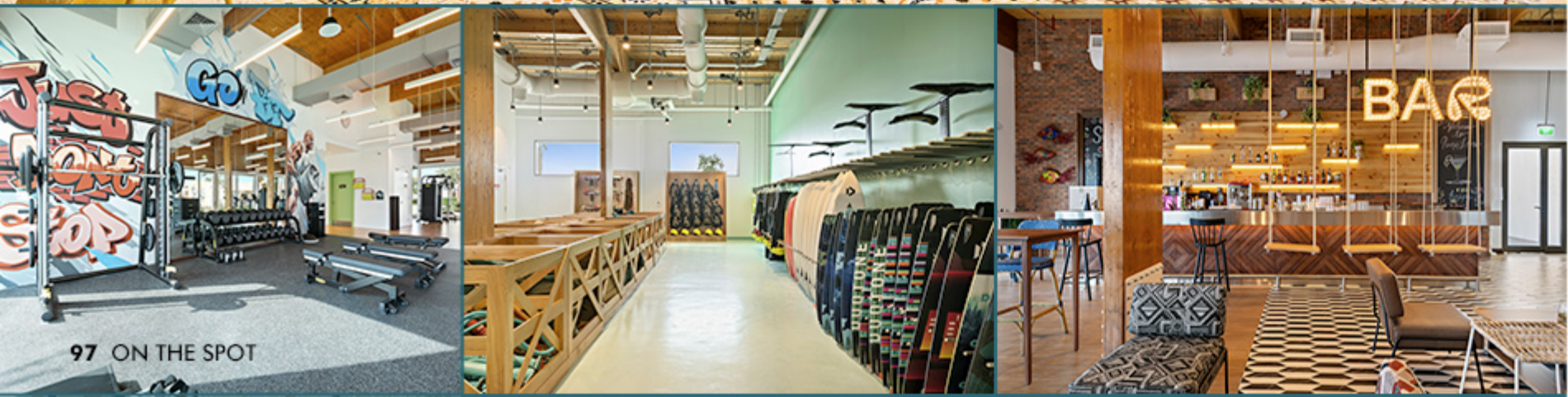
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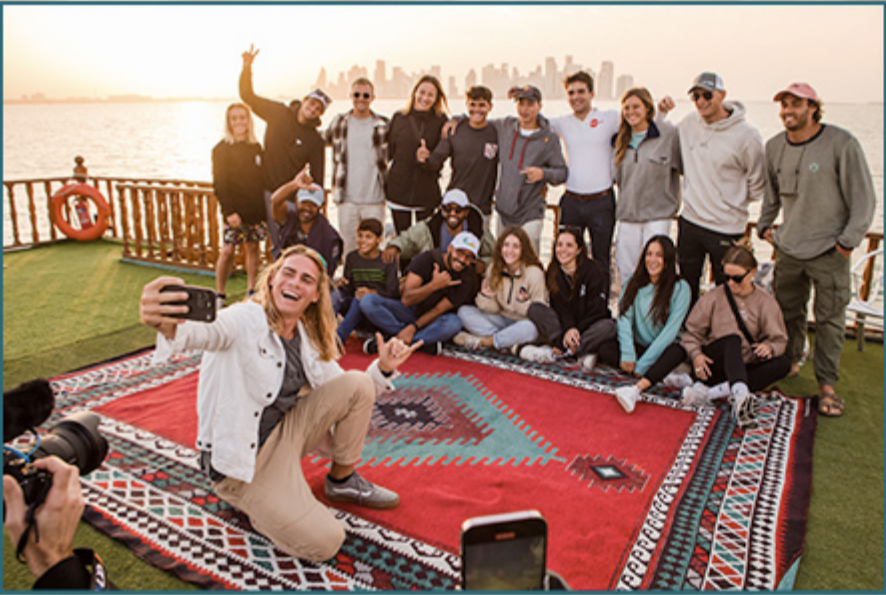
" YOU CAN ENJOY EVERYTHING FROM HOMEMADE FOOD TO FUN OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES "

Of course, there's a lot to be seen outside of the Fuwairit Kite Beach area. North Sedra, just 15 minutes from FKB, showcases the Qatari culture, a must-visit, especially if it's your first time in this region. There, you can enjoy everything from homemade food to fun outdoor activities, and it's a great place to visit during the winter season in Qatar. The Panda House Park (Al Khor) is the home of the giant panda pair, Suhail and Thuraya. A bit further afield, you can travel 30 minutes from FKB to see the Al Zubarah Archaeological Site, Qatar's first UNESCO world heritage site.

The GKA crew had the opportunity to travel around the area and shared a few of their top picks, with the favourite being dune bashing, just south of Doha, where you'll find the 'inland sea'. Within Doha, they enjoyed Code Wake, a wakesurfing and wakeboarding experience at the Pearl Qatar,







where there are also plenty of cafés and restaurants to grab a bite. There's an abundance of shopping to be done in Qatar, with large shopping malls scattered everywhere, but a must-see is the traditional market of Souq Waqif.

Travelling to Fuwairit Kite Beach is about as easy as it gets. Being only an hour north of Doha, a major international airport, you can fly here from almost anywhere in the world, in many cases on a direct flight if you're travelling from a major city.

" YOU CAN FLY
HERE FROM
ALMOST
ANYWHERE IN
THE WORLD "

Rider: Victor Emanuel
Picture: Sara Baig

Eleveight 



CVC Composite Vacuum Sandwich Construction



CURL
PERFORMANCE SURF
5'7" / 5'10"

ESCAPE
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CURL+
PERFORMANCE SURF
5'7" / 5'10"

ESCAPE+
FREESTYLE SURF
5'0" / 5'2" / 5'4"





Getting to FKB is as simple as ordering an Uber or hailing a local taxi, or you can contact the hotel to request a private shuttle. Either way, you'll be on the water in no time!

" FKB IS A PARADISE; A RESORT DESIGNED TO ENHANCE AND ENRICH THE LIFE OF KITESURFERS "



FKB is a paradise; a hotel designed to enhance and enrich the life of kitesurfers from the moment they wake up to the time they go to bed. With near-perfect conditions and warm crystal-clear water, this destination has been one of the world's best kitesurfing secrets. Now, it's on the map, so this is your chance to get a taste of what a world-class spot looks like without a world-class crowd!

For bookings and inquiries email Fuwairit Kite Beach Tapestry Collection by Hilton at DOHKB_RES@hilton.com or call +974 4030 1555.



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14

WINTER 2022



PARATAISI - PERI ROBERTS

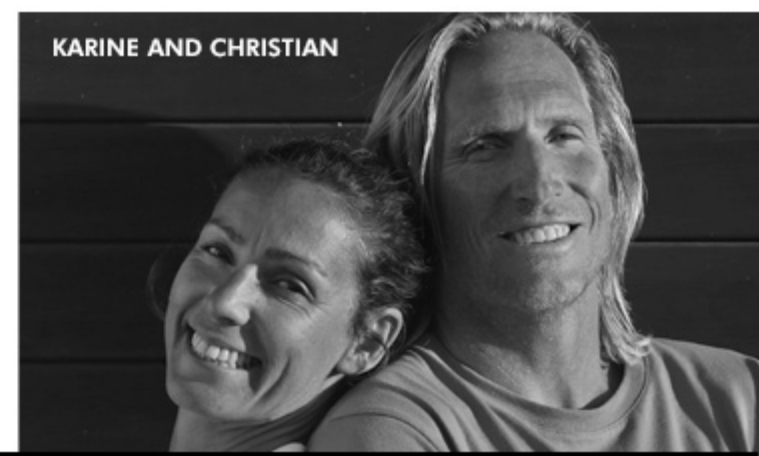
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TECHNIQUE

WORDS & PHOTOS CHRISTIAN & KARINE



What's it going to be for the first edition of 2023? So many tricks, moves and skills to choose from, there is definitely an exciting "year of kite" ahead. We've decided to start with a little something that'll add nicely to the popped back roll that we did a few issues back. The popped back roll to toeside. Looks sweet and feels oh so right, something for the weekend, indeed.

Have you ever wondered how many times you turn around in a session? They say that variety is the spice of life, so adding another string to your bow when it comes to transitions must be the way forward. There has to be room in your life for the inverted, boned, back roll transition. One hell of a name and an even better manoeuvre. Enjoy, C&K.

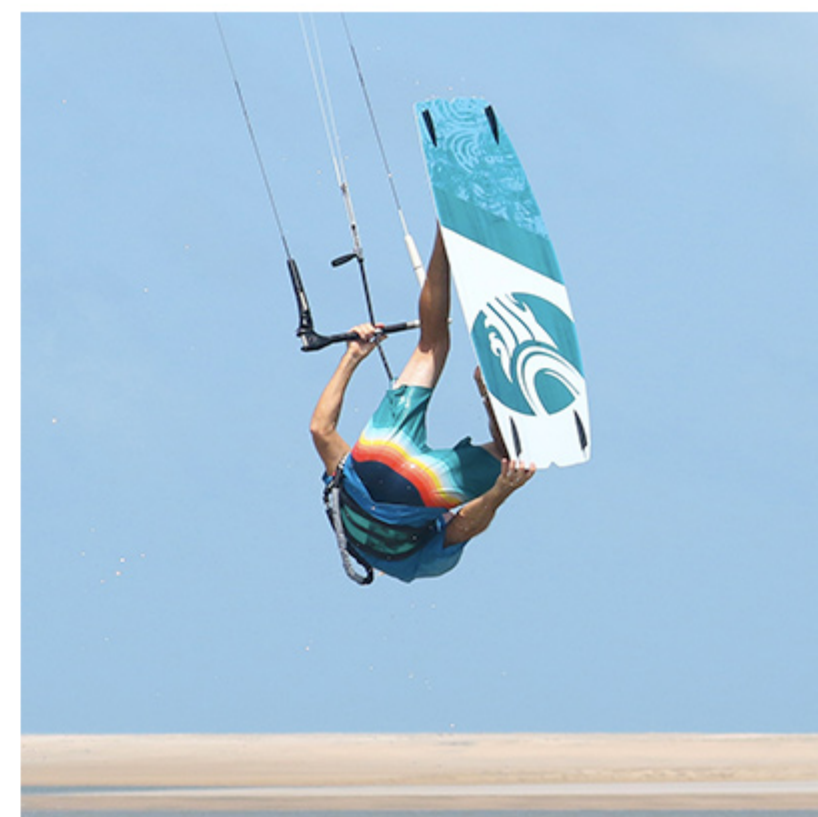
New 2023 clinic calendar up on:
<http://www.ckperformanceclinics.co.uk>

1 / POPPED BACK ROLL TO TOESIDE



CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE

2 / BONED INVERTED BACK ROLL TRANSITION



CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE

POPPED BACK ROLL TO TOESIDE ►

KITE – Cabrinha Switchblade 8m

BOARD – Cabrinha XO 136

Now that you've got your popped back rolls in the bag from issue 95, it's time to add the killer combo, a toeside landing. This is such a classic move; it feels fabulous, looks brilliant and is a fundamental stepping stone to so much more. If you fancy some freestyle in the future, it's a must, and even if you don't, you'll learn so much about rotation control and improve your pop and landings that you'll be ready for a whole host of embellishments.

The back roll to toeside is just that; your back roll should be the same, whilst the landing is an add-on. Without starting on the common problems, we say this because the misconception of this move is that you should rotate faster and further in order to get yourself around to toeside, one-and-a-half back rolls, so to speak. In fact, the more controlled your back roll, the more straightforward the toeside landing will be. We should mention that a solid toeside is very beneficial on the side you'll be landing! Ok, let's see how you'll piece this together.

APPROACH PIC A

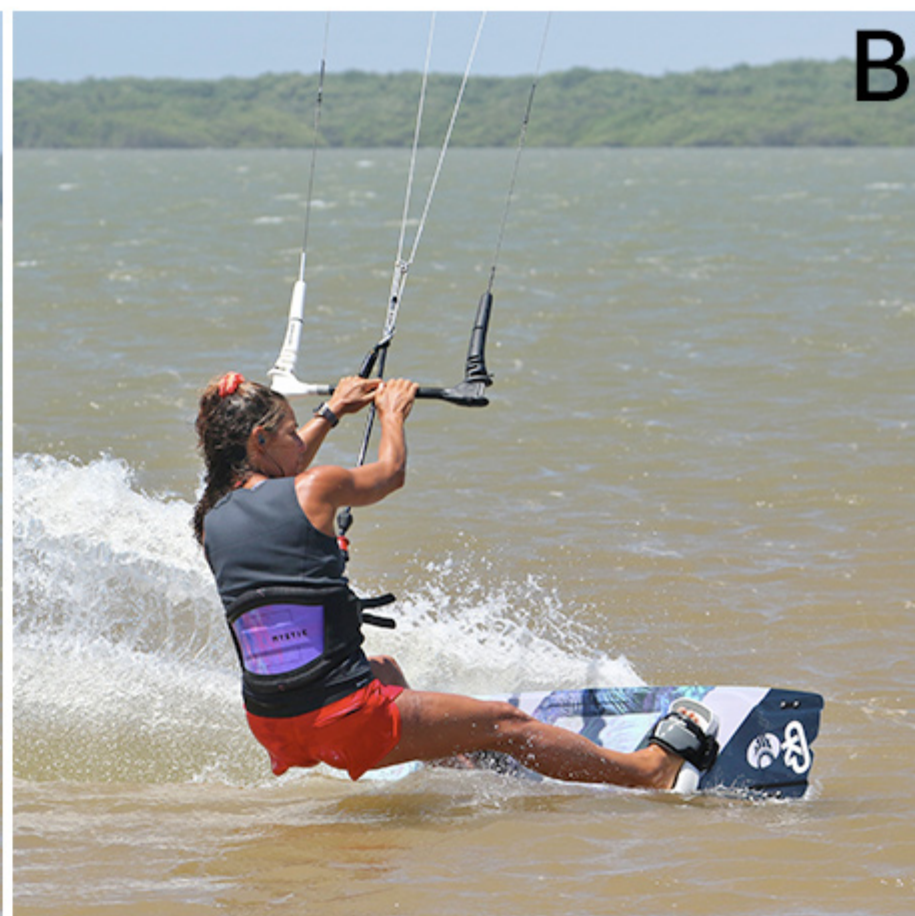
If your popped back roll is under control, you should have this nailed. However, a quick reminder won't hurt. With your bar trimmed enough that you can easily reach it, search out some flattish water. Park your kite around 11 or 1 o'clock and move your hips back towards your back foot to get your weight on the curvy tail part of your board, your default popping stance.



Just as per your popped back roll, it's essential that you bear away into the move. This should be from an edge, so that you have tension before bearing off. All the same reasons apply, and if you want time to think about when to add the toeside, it's even more important that you can take off before you turn completely into the wind. You can see that Karine's back knee is soft, which releases her edge and allows her to push her board off the wind. With her weight back, she's performing a little wheely, so her board is ready to carve back up while her bum and shoulders remain upwind of the board. Her bar is on the sweet spot, and her kite is parked at 1 o'clock.

THE CARVE PIC B

Once again, this should already be in your armoury.



Your aim is to get back onto your edge so that you have something to stamp against to launch yourself up and around. Your weight is back, so as soon as you drop your bum and bury your edge, the board will carve up. All the while, you need to resist the urge to pull on the bar or send the kite, both of which will pull you off your edge. Looking at Karine, her weight is back, her kite is still at 1 o'clock, her bum low and upwind of her board, and as such, she can apply pressure through her back leg, hence the plume of water as she drives against her board. Her shoulders are still parallel with the water, which helps apply the pressure through her back leg. If you lean back, you'll soften your back leg and likely pull on the rear hand. Karine's bar is out on the sweet spot, and she's looking forwards, using the board to turn, not her head.



POP & ROTATION PIC C

Nothing will happen unless you make the call. It's all about keeping the resistance and then stamping against it without compressing first. We always talk about extension; this is what makes you go up, the rotation has already started due to your carve. Once you've kicked off and you're on the up, you can then turn your head. This is more about seeing where you are and being able to anticipate, even if it does also help with your rotation. It's imperative that you kick off before pulling on the bar. Pull too early, and you won't be able to stamp against your edge. You can

see in the pic that Karine is extended from her head to her feet. Her shoulders, hips and board are all turning together, and she has now turned her head so that she can see where she is.

LOOK PIC D

In the popped back roll, we talked about airtime, how there's so little, and it's over in a flash. However, you've likely found that as you've banged out more and more, time does, in fact, move more slowly, and you have more of an idea of when you're coming around. This is only possible if you turn your head and,



dare we say, keep your eyes open. You've also possibly felt that magical millisecond moment of float. This signals that you're not spinning but have successfully popped, and as such, your rotation is controlled. If you look at Karine, she has just passed that moment, knowing that everything is ship shape and on track. If you didn't know any different, this photo could be from a back roll to heelside. Karine is looking where she thinks she'll land; she's dropped her front shoulder and can get some weight onto her front hand. She would then drop her undercarriage for a smooth landing. But not today, sunshine - you're going toeside!!!



E

LEG THROUGH PIC E

This is where it all changes. Rather than letting your legs and board drop, you're going to bring your back leg through so that you can land toeside. Before we do that, we should ponder how you'd like to land toeside. Ideally, you don't want to land on an edge, so you'll be aiming to land slightly off the wind. As such, this is the way you should be looking, downwind. Now back to your back leg. The movement is very similar to switching to toeside on the water or popping to toeside. The impetus comes from your lower body, legs and hips, whilst your upper body stays put. With your front shoulder down and your eyes focused downwind to stop your rotation, you should be able to bring your back leg through, lifting your front foot and twisting your hips.



F

Here Karine lifts her back foot through, extending her leg to push the board across in front of her - all the while looking where she wants to go.

STAY OPEN PIC F

As your leg comes through to toeside, the next job is to make sure that you don't turn your body upwind. If you do, it will encourage you to over-rotate and land on an edge. The trick is to keep your shoulders open. By this, we mean that your chest will be facing forwards, even as your hips twist under it. The simplest way to keep your upper body from moving is to release your front hand and push it forwards out in front of you. This way, you counter the momentum of your lower body. In the photo, you can see that as Karine releases her front hand, she makes an effort to keep it forward.



G

TAIL FIRST PIC G

A tail first landing is preferred as it will be softer and should be achievable due to the nature of the move. With your leading shoulder dipped and your leg coming up and over to toeside the new tail will be happy to engage first. As you land, concentrate on keeping your shoulders open and on holding your free hand forwards. This will help you continue onto your default toeside, flatter on the board, rather than twist upwind straight onto an edge. Karine lands tail first and absorbs the impact with her back leg. She keeps her free hand forward, and therefore her shoulders open and, as such, can land flat rather than on an edge. Once you're balanced, you can carve up onto your edge.



TOP TIPS

A good up and round is key, so try a few popped back rolls first to get your bearings. Landing downwind will be so much easier if you make sure to bear away enough before popping. And we can't emphasise enough the importance of keeping your shoulders open as you bring the board through. Remember, it's not one-and-a-half back rolls; it's a back roll with a toeside landing:)

Have a look at the sequence to see a step-by-step visual, and check out the video for the full monty.

COMMON PROBLEMS

Over-rotating and landing on your edge. Avoid the

temptation to sneak your kite up too high, as this will encourage you to spin around your lines. Rather keep your kite still and concentrate on your pop.

If you're struggling to get your pop. Don't forget to bear away.

If you find that you're coming around to toeside but have no height. Chances are you're stalling the kite during your rotation. Either trim in a bit more or make an effort not to pull the bar right in after you stamp.

If you're getting round but find yourself landing in a compressed ball. This is a result of pulling your leg through crunched up. Make sure to extend your front leg as you bring it through. You'll be surprised by the difference.

KEYSTONES

1. Bear away
2. Pop up and around
3. Turn head and look for the landing
4. Lift extended front leg through
5. Shoulders open and front hand forward



BONED INVERTED BACK ROLL TRANSITION ▶

KITE – Cabrinha FX2 9m

BOARD – Cabrinha XCal Wood 138

There are literally hundreds of ways to turn around in kiting. The trusty transition can be anything from a cooling sit down to a multi-rotational kite looping mishmash and anything in between. The good news is we have plenty to challenge us and no excuses not to add another one to our repertoire. Today it's the boned inverted back roll transition, which we hope you'll agree has the potential to add a lorry load of style to an all too frequent change of direction.

Before attempting this, it would be prudent to have a command of the necessary foundation, a well-honed back roll transition, or BLT, as formerly known. There are two main challenges to cracking this transition. The first is that it'll be over considerably quicker than you can say its name. So, there's a lot to get aligned in a short space of time. The second is keeping the kite in a position from which you can dive it and pull yourself out of the move, which is further complicated with smaller kites. You'll be releasing your front hand post take off, leaving what will be the hand you need to dive to finish, your new front hand, on the bar. That said, it'll be worth the effort, so let's crack on.

YOUR APPROACH PIC A

As we have alluded to, kite control and position make such a transition tricky to nail. Back rolling is one thing, grabbing is another, and once you add a bit of inversion and tweak out your front leg, it's more than



easy to rely on the bar for some comforting support. The result? A kite drifting casually around the edge of the window into a position from which no amount of dive will give you any chance of keeping your locks dry and coming out of the move with gusto. The good news is that there is a solution, actually two. The first one is your approach. You should approach with a bit more speed than you might for a standard air gybe or BLT. The reasoning behind this is that as long as you're moving when you come down, you can glide out of this if you land flat and pointing off the wind. Assuming that the kite doesn't drift too far, you have time to get some power on before gurgling down below the surface. So, approach as if for a slow jump, kite at 11 or 1 o'clock, decent edge, but not holding too much power, and weight biased toward your back



foot to help encourage some rotation on take-off. Here you can see that Christian is coming in on a decent, yet not massive edge. He's looking upwind, kite at 11 and bar on the sweet spot, while keeping a bit of speed.

THE SEND PIC B

And here comes number two, your second get-out-of-jail card! Your send should be a positive steering of the kite up to just past 12 o'clock. The usual applies, as the kite starts to power, you should feather the bar out to follow the sweet spot, which will also enable you to drop your bum low and resist the lift from the kite. So far, so normal. However, the difference is in the levelling. Normally you'd level the bar and stamp. Here you'll tweak the kite forwards,



so the bar goes past level. In this scenario, Christian has sent, feathered, dropped and is about to kick off. BUT, you can see that he has steered the kite forwards a touch. Thus, you don't just stop the kite from going any further back, you actually want it to move a touch forward again!

YOUR LAUNCH PIC C

The process. A hefty kick followed by a helpful pull on the bar. You need to make sure you give a serious kick against your edge to counter that extra speed that you carried in and give yourself enough carve to start your back rotation. As soon as you have, pull the bar in, and now you should level it to stop the kite from moving any further forward! In preparation for the inversion, you need to be dropping your shoulders



back and lifting your knees. This is a fulcrum movement around your hook. Use your hands to push your shoulders away from the bar, keeping your midriff tight so that your legs start to lift. Looking at Christian, his bar is now level, and he's turned his head into his rotation. He's pushing his shoulders away from the bar, dropping his head back and using this leverage to bring his knees up and board up.

JUGGLING PIC D

As you rise and rock back, both your hands have separate yet simultaneous tasks. Release your front hand and reach out towards the nose of your board as you lift both knees. At the same time, use your back hand to let the bar out to the sweet spot. This is essential, as it will allow you to invert and will prevent



you from supporting yourself on the bar and steering the kite back. Christian is lifting his knees, his head is rocking back, hand reaching out, and he's let the bar out towards the sweet spot. So far, so good.

THE MONEY SHOT PIC E

This is your goal. Grabbing the nose of the board, keeping your front leg bent and in close, while boning out the other one, pushing it up towards the heavens. So how do you arrive here from the previous still? It's all about your front shoulder. Up until this moment, your rotation should have been quite slow. However, once you have the grab, you can turn your head, looking down at the water. This will drop your leading shoulder and lever your board up. The trick is to recognise when the board is lifting and,



at the same time, extend your back leg to bone it out. The further you drop your shoulder, the higher you'll point your board. Lest we forget, your bar should still be on the sweet spot whilst you make every effort not to hang on it. The main takeaway from Christian in this shot is his bar, level and on the sweet spot, holding the kite nice and steady above him.

GRAVITY PIC F

How long you can hold your grab depends on how much float you have but also on the position of the board. As soon as the board comes through the vertical, it will fall victim to the forces of gravity and start to drop. As soon as it does, it's your cue to return your seat to its upright position, buckle up and

prepare for landing. Let your legs drop under you but try to keep your knees bent, which will give you a fraction more time to position the board. Release your grab. As your head returns to its rightful position above you, look at where you'd like to land and get your free hand on the bar and dive the kite. In his upright position, Christian has both hands on the bar and is diving his kite with meaning, holding the board up on bent knees whilst focusing on where he thinks he'll land.

TOUCH DOWN PIC G

Your landing is the result of what went before. If the kite didn't drift too far, it will now pull hard as it dives from up high. As the kite pulls, you can follow the



power and aim your board towards it. Touching down tail first on a flat board means that you'll move as long as there is some momentum. And don't forget; if you dived your kite hard, you will need to level your bar again, otherwise it's going straight in the drink. Christian comes down to a relatively soft reception and levels his bar to keep his kite dry.

TOP TIPS

The cliché, a sum of all its parts, does fit this move rather well. Even if you can back roll, invert, bone and combine them all, the move itself is still a challenge. As such, we can't recommend strongly enough that you get all the ingredients sorted first before combing them into this final tasty morsel.



You can practice the forward redirect with a normal air gybe first, just to get used to the amount you need. It's actually a fun technique that can lead to a plethora of new tricks.

As with all things back roll, a slow rotation is key. If you're spinning into this, you'll struggle to get yourself upside down and boned out, as there just won't be enough time.

OK, have a look at the sequence and watch the video to see how we mix all the ingredients into one! :)

COMMON PROBLEMS

Unquestionably the biggest problem will be the kite drifting too far back and, as such, you'll struggle to finish the move. The redirect is key, but even so, if you keep the bar pulled in, your kite will move. Feel the sweet spot.

If it's working a treat, but your board isn't boning up. This is the result of scissoring your feet in order to extend your leg. Resist the sensation to bring your extended leg "through". Instead, hold your grab and push both feet up.

KEYSTONES

1. Send and redirect forward
2. Kick and level
3. Fulcrum back and grab
4. Shoulder down, bone up
5. Level, level, level - dive





FORTALEZA

MANCORA

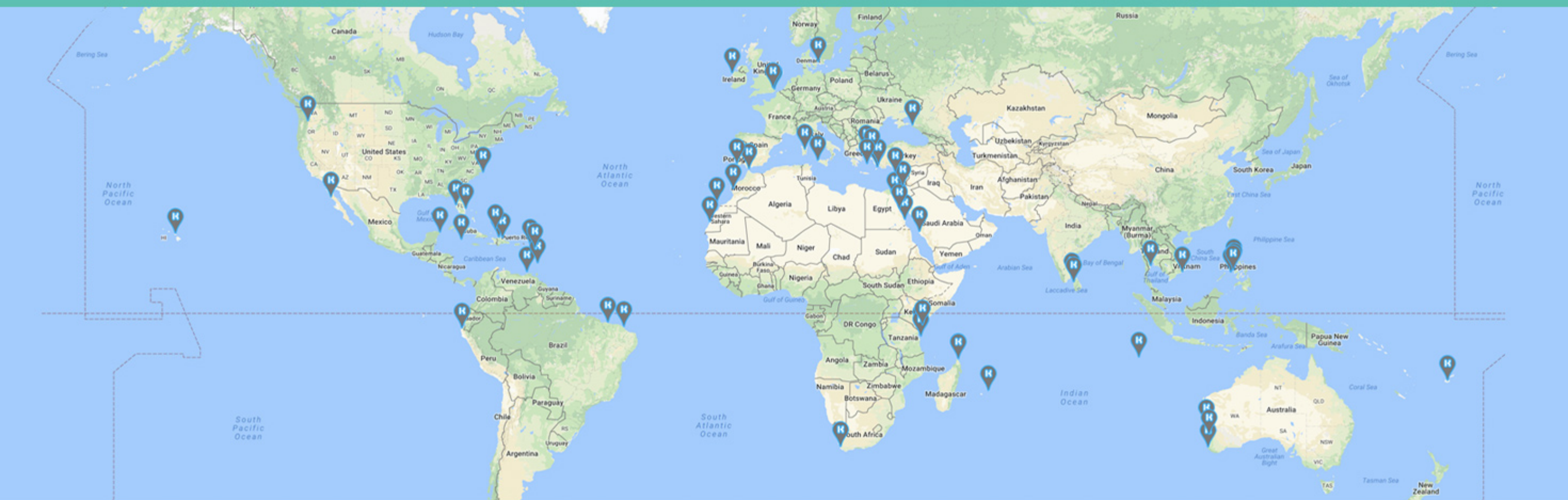
CABARETE

LANCELIN

DAKHLA

GOING ON A KITE HOLIDAY?

Don't go anywhere without checking our travel guides first! We have over 100 in-depth guides to some of the best places in the world! Get all the information you need, check the weather, book accommodation, organise flights and pack your bags for the trip of a lifetime!



CAPE HATTERAS

MAURITIUS

UNION ISLAND

CAPE TOWN

MAUI

TRIED & TESTED

This season, our test team has been living a life of extremes. From foiling the new North Code Zero in board shorts in clear Caribbean waters to a winter wave session in a 6/5 hooded ION wetsuit on the coast of Wales, we've had a wide variety of conditions. There's something for everyone in this issue, from the foil frother who will be excited to read about the dream North foil set-up we tested to the wave addict who will appreciate our deep dive into the latest in surf fin technology. There's also some of the latest gear from Duotone and Cabrinha and a close look at the latest Ride Engine board bag - all just in time for your next kite mission!

KITES

North Code Zero
Cabrinha Moto X

BOARDS & FOILS

Duotone Jaime
North Scoop Mini
North Sonar 1050MA

ACCESSORIES

ION Seek Select
Ride Engine Navigator Trolley V2
Quobba Fins
AK Speed Dialer Fins

WORDS & PHOTOS THE IKSURFMAG TEST TEAM

PHOTO THIS PAGE

RIDER LUKE MCGILLEWIE GETTING DIALED
IN WITH THE AK SPEED DIALER FINS

PHOTO MITCHELL DOYLE MARKGRAAFF



BRAND NORTH KITEBOARDING

MODEL CODE ZERO

SIZE 9M

YEAR 2023



"IF YOU ARE INTO FOILING AND LIKE RIDING SMALL WAVES, THIS COULD BE THE KITE FOR YOU!"



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

AT A GLANCE

This is a new kite from North Kiteboarding, and we were excited to get it on the water. One strut kites have always been a bit of an anomaly in the past, great in light winds but with a poor top end wind range. Would this be the holy grail we've all been looking for? The design team have stripped this kite back to its bare minimum, with the single strut and the leading edge built with N-Dure Dacron, which is considerably lighter and stiffer.

The trailing edge is a double canopy layer to further reduce weight, and the usual clutter we find on some kites has been completely stripped back. The wing tips get a little bit of extra protection with the DuraLite chafe protectors, but this kite is all about being light. North say that this huge weight reduction adds a blistering amount of low-end performance, allowing you to ride a size smaller than you might imagine.

Sizes: 3m, 5m, 7m, 9m, 11m

IN THE AIR

The Code Zero gets its name from sailing, where a Code Zero is a big sail designed to excel in sub-par wind conditions.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)

BRAND CABRINHA

MODEL MOTO X

SIZE 9M

YEAR 2023

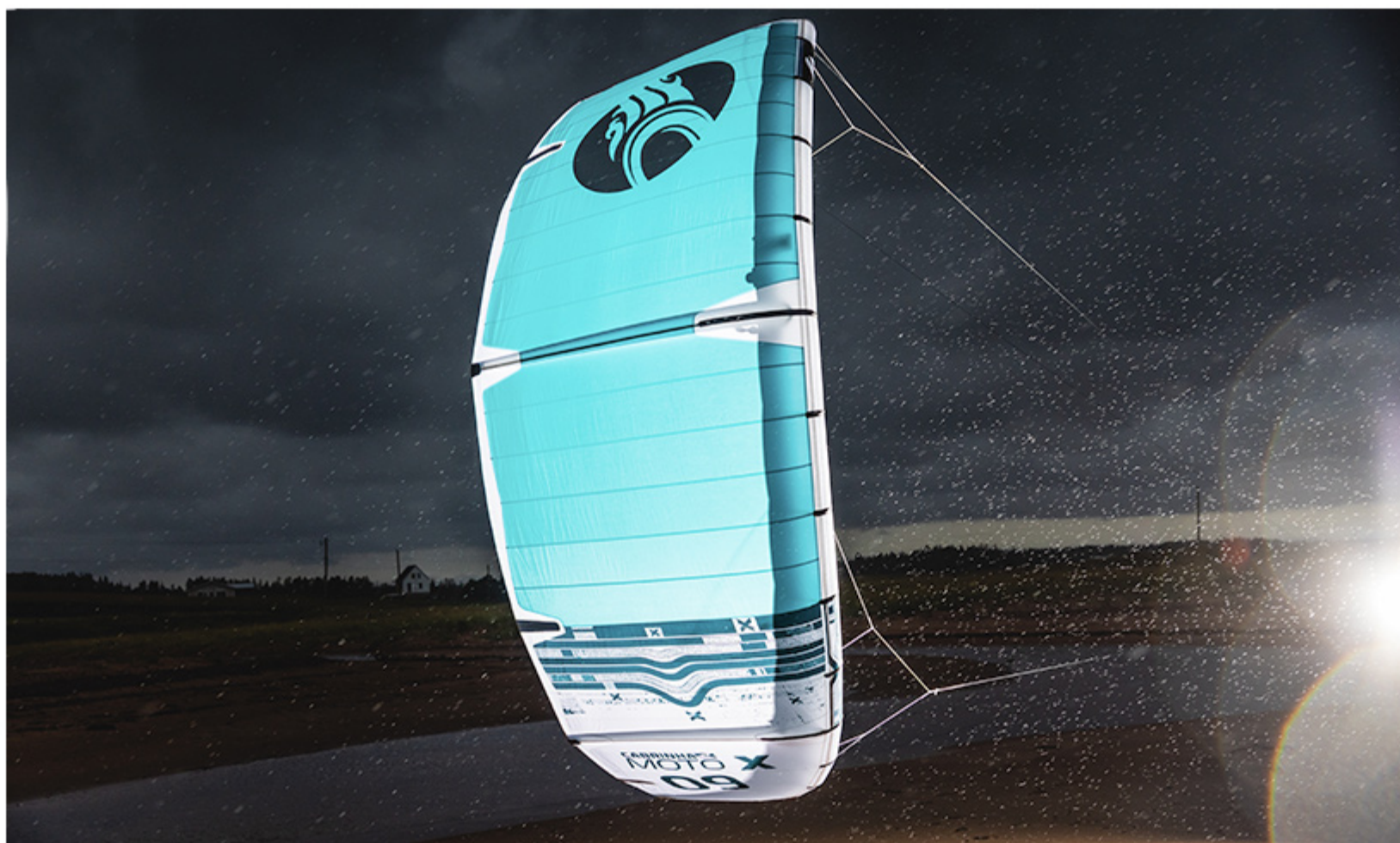


"A GREAT CHOICE FOR BEGINNERS AND INTERMEDIATES, AS WELL AS EXPERT RIDERS LOOKING FOR A KITE WITH PLENTY OF POWER AND SPEED."



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

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



AT A GLANCE

New for 2023, the entire Cabrinha range has had a lot of work put into it, and the Moto is no exception. It's the three strut do-it-all kite in the Cabrinha range and is perfect for the rider who wants to ride a twin tip, foil and surfboard and not be held back by their kite choice. Cabrinha has been putting a lot into development lately, too, investing in the Cab Design Works team, who constantly develops the Cabrinha product range.

The Moto is packed with features and new materials. For 2023 they are using a multi-faceted approach to the material choice, too, with different kites getting built in different ways according to the use case. There are three different frames, the Lite Frame, Hybrid Frame, and Apex Frame. The Moto X is a Lite Frame kite, which uses High Tenacity Dacron Lite for the leading edge and struts. This material is considerably lighter and stiffer than standard Dacron, giving the Moto X a solid frame that should offer unrivalled performance.

It also uses Pure Arc Segments, which are designed to keep the arc of the kite constant. In a traditional kite,

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)

BRAND DUOTONE

MODEL JAIME SLS

SIZE 139 X 42CM

YEAR 2023



"A BRILLIANT BOARD FOR TWIN TIP BIG AIR YET ALSO CAPABLE OF THROWING DOWN IN MULTIPLE DISCIPLINES..."



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AT A GLANCE

If you're looking for the ultimate board that ticks every box out there, then the 2023 Jaime SLS does not disappoint. The SLS is a perfect fit for riders who enjoy Big Air, Freestyle or even simple freeriding. With the Jaime coming in two construction options, the SLS is the premium version, offering ultimate performance. This board is jam-packed with new design features that see the Jaime have its biggest changes to date. The 2023 model has had a massive Big Air influence in its design, which coincides with the popularity of that discipline of kiting skyrocketing.

Jaime is arguably the most popular twin tip to ever grace the kiteboarding scene and is certainly the most popular within the Duotone range. The all-new double rocker line ensures locked in grip when ripping through the water. With enhanced grip, you're able to generate impressive pop to perform those Big Air manoeuvres.

The SLS twin tips in the Duotone range are very light yet super solid, making them incredibly durable. The mix of carbon and Innegra makes up the SLS construction.

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BRAND NORTH KITEBOARDING

MODEL SCOOP MINI

SIZE 110 X 45CM

YEAR 2023

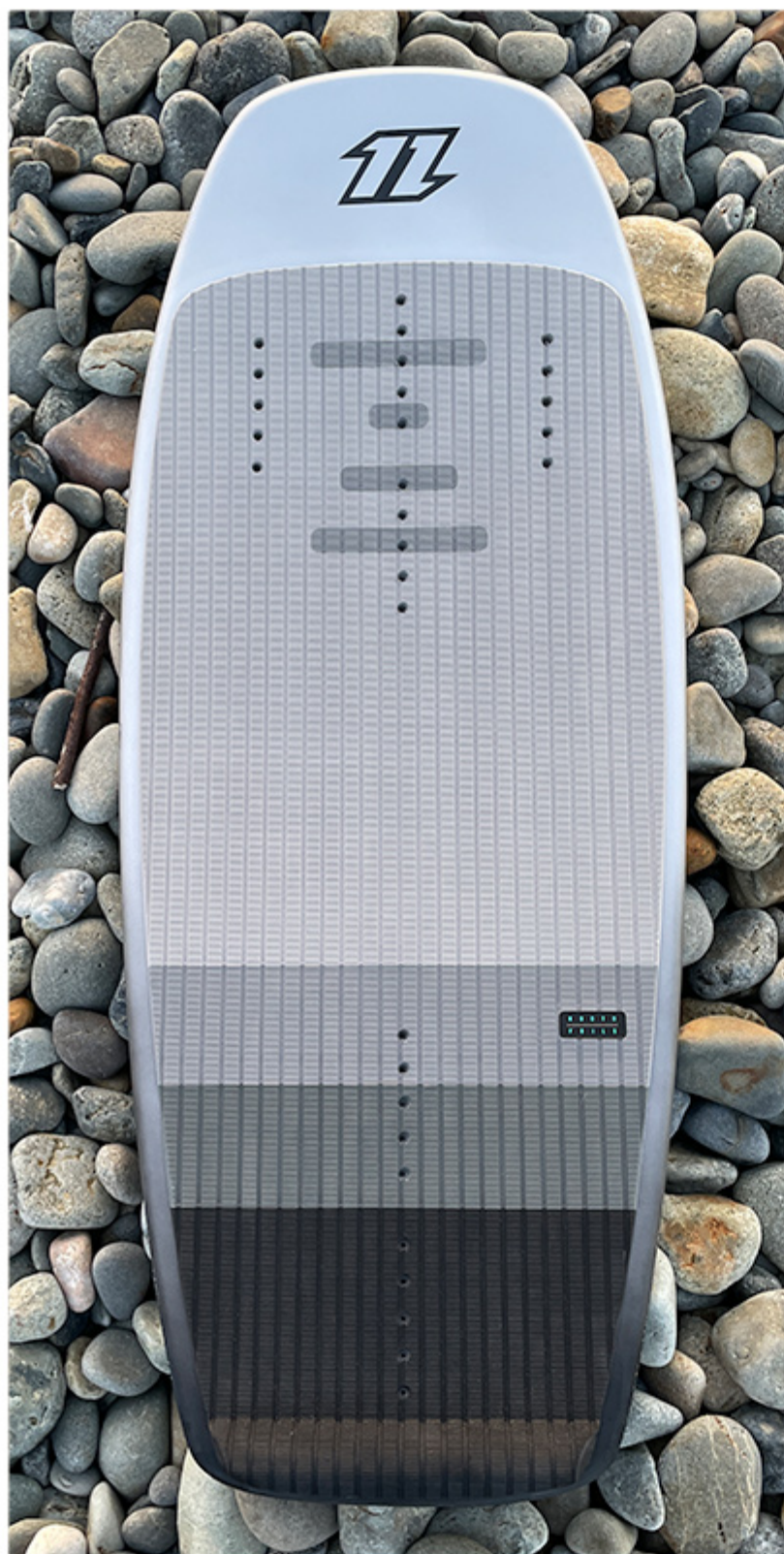


"A BOARD FOR EXPERIENCED FOILERS LOOKING FOR A SMALL BOARD TO LET THEM FEEL AS FREE AS POSSIBLE."



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

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



AT A GLANCE

Looking for a minimalist foil board that's light and stiff? The Scoop Mini from North Kiteboarding could be the answer. It's a small board at 110cm or 3'7 ft depending on your persuasion. With a hybrid carbon construction and a high-density foam core delivering just 10l of volume, this is a board for experienced foilers looking for a small board to let them feel as free as possible.

It's a simple design with a full deck pad and a full quota of inserts for every strap position imaginable. On the underside, you will find a slight concave, and there is plenty of nose rocker for those pesky touchdowns too. The board features the Drop Box track system too; by splitting the two tracks into four and having bolt-sized holes at the top of each track, you can leave your bolts attached to your mast and simply drop the mast plate into the board and tighten. Simple and clever!

Size: 3'7" / 110 x 45cm

ON THE WATER

This is going to suit most experienced riders, especially with the multitude of strap configurations, and of course,

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BRAND NORTH KITEBOARDING

MODEL SONAR

SIZE MA1050

YEAR 2023

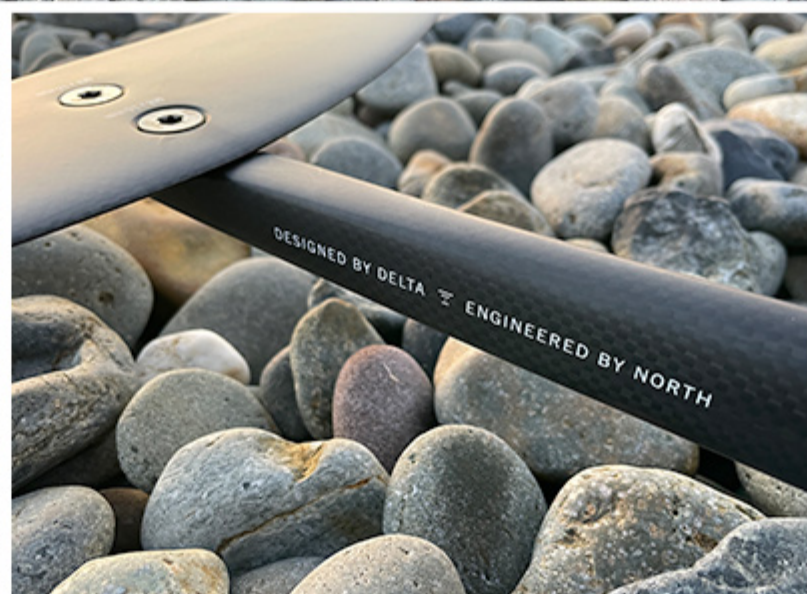


"EVEN THE FRESHEST OF KITERS TO THE FOIL REVOLUTION WILL FIND A FRIEND HERE."



TO SEE MORE PHOTOS,
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AT A GLANCE

The North Hydrofoil system is based around the Sonar mast, fuselage and rear wing set-up. Choose how you want to ride and select the set-up that suits you. Then you can add from a myriad of front wings to complete the package. All finished in high-end prepreg carbon; it's as light as it is sexy... Plus, it comes packaged in a very high-quality padded bag to keep all your swanky parts in pristine condition.

In this issue, we've been testing the Sonar 1050MA on the Sonar CF set-up. We have the 700mm and 600mm fuselages, too, with the 270 rear wing and the 85cm mast. Opening the box is a real treat. Everything is so well thought out, from the padded sections of the bags to the exquisitely finished carbon parts to the smaller details like specific bolts for each part that are marked on the component as well as the bolt, so you can't put the wrong one in the wrong place.

Once you've put it together, you can appreciate the work that has gone into it. There are no gaps or loose bits, just a very stiff, solid set-up ready to give you some smiles on the water.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)

BRAND ION

MODEL SEEK SELECT

SIZE 6/5 HOOD FRONT ZIP

YEAR 2023



"ONE OF THE
WARMEST SUITS
AROUND, PACKED
WITH THE LATEST
TECHNOLOGY
AND MATERIALS"



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AT A GLANCE

This is the premium cold-water suit from ION, released last year. It was one of the warmest suits we had ever worn with some clever features, and we were keen to get our hands on the new model to see what's new.

Active Flex is a feature that the high-end ION suits enjoy, offering maximum flex in all the right places. A new rhombus shaped outside lining offers superior flex, and ION has used the highest quality materials to ensure the ultimate feel when you are wearing the suit.

On the inside is the Graphene_Plush lining, which was new last year; this was the secret to the suit's warmth, and it is back for the 2022/23 season. The arms and shoulders feature the Hot_Stuff 2.0 lining to increase flexibility and warmth in that area. There is also a new silicone print on the material covering the zip; this grips itself to effectively close the material and ensure you don't get wind or water through the zip.

The unique hood with internal seal is back again, too, and there is a smooth skin on the back panel and hood to reduce wind chill on the water.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)



BRAND RIDE ENGINE

MODEL NAVIGATOR TROLLEY V2

SIZE 162 X 46 X 24CM

YEAR 2022



"A TRAVEL TOUGH BOARD BAG WITH ALL THE FEATURES YOU COULD POSSIBLY WANT, AND THEN SOME."



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CLICK [HERE](#)



AT A GLANCE

Going on a kite trip is always something to look forward to, but with that comes the inevitable dread of your gear arriving damaged - or not arriving at all! While there's not much we can do to solve the disaster that is a disappearing board bag, we do have some control over the state that our equipment arrives in.

A top-quality board bag is an absolute must, and if you've ever seen airline staff loading and unloading luggage, you know it's not worth skimping out. Of course, you could choose a lighter bag that allows you to pack a little bit more gear, opening up a little bit more risk of damage. But, for those that don't need the disruption of a last-minute board repair before that first session in a new spot, a durable travel bag is the way to go.

The Ride Engine Navigator Trolley V2 is, to put it simply, everything you need in a board bag and more! I picked up the newest V2 edition of the Navigator Trolley for a kite trip last year, and was immediately surprised to see how much thought was put into all the little details.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)

BRAND QUOBBA FINS

MODEL CARBON GLASS SERIES

SIZE MIX SET M/L

YEAR 2023



"BY REDUCING THE TURBULENT FLOW, THEY CAN MAKE THE FIN MORE EFFICIENT, GIVING YOU MORE SPEED AND PROJECTION THROUGH THE WATER."



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AT A GLANCE

Fin technology has been rather stagnant, well, at least for the last 20 years or so. I recall the early days of windsurfing and the amount of experimentation that was going on with fin design. These days for surfboards, it's usually three or four and sizes from small through to XL. Of course, you can look deeper at the rakes and profiles, but they largely follow a tried and tested format.

Along come Quobba from Western Australia to change all that. This is the bit where the record would scratch, and the music would stop at the party as they walk in. By using computer fluid dynamics, or CFD for short, they were able to model a fin that would be more efficient than the standard fin shape. The result is something as weird as it is wonderful.

It was thought that most of the turbulent flow from a fin was around the tip, but in 2005 Anthony Livanos discovered it was actually around the base of the fin. This is where Quobba has concentrated its efforts. By reducing the turbulent flow, they can make the fin more efficient, giving you more speed and projection through the water.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)

BRAND AK DURABLE SUPPLY CO.

MODEL SPEED DIALER THRUSTER FIN SET

SIZE MEDIUM

YEAR 2022



"IF YOU ARE
LOOKING FOR A
TOP-PERFORMING
FIN FOR
STRAPLESS
FREESTYLE, THE
AK SPEED
DIALERS ARE
YOUR BEST
MATCH."



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

For those who don't know, AK Durable Supply Co. is a Cape Town-based watersports brand distributed internationally. They primarily focus on creating boards and watersports accessories, including harnesses, fins, surf grips, etc. AK Durable Supply Co. has slowly been expanding its range, and they have everything you would need to set up your new board. You won't see an AK kite out there, but you may see some of the most talented watermen and women on the water riding AK accessories.

If you've embraced the way of the wave and committed to directional surfboard riding, you may have already dove off the deep end when it comes to tricking out your surfboard. After all, in the waves, a board isn't just a board. There are your traction pads, front grips (if you're into that kind of thing), and a whole host of surf fins that can really tweak the way you ride.

We've been testing the new and uniquely shaped AK Speed Dialer fins for the past few months. These fins are compatible with Future fin boxes and are designed to allow the rider to control and carry more speed,

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RIDER ELSIEN ZIJLSTRA
PHOTO ANTONIO HERRERA TRUJILLO

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BECOME A SUPPORTER

THE INTERVIEW

MIKE MAC DONALD

WORDS CRYSTAL VENESS

What - or who - comes to mind when you hear "Get High With Mike"? You are most probably right! Big air kiter and industry personality Mike Mac Donald, known online as Get High With Mike, has had quite an influence on the Cape Town and global big air kiteboarding scene. In this Interview, we find out all about Mike and get a look behind the scenes of the Big Air Kite League!



RIDER MIKE MAC DONALD
PHOTO THOMAS BURBLIES

Mike, we've got to get the obvious one out of the way... Tell us the story behind "Get High With Mike"!


Haha! I love this question. As I recall, my sister actually came up with the name. It is indeed a double entendre. I was a not-so-secret cannabis enthusiast at the time, with a business making and selling bong. I was brainstorming names for my coaching business with my family and we had such a laugh about this one! So I went with it. It was perfect because I love being edgy. It sets a precedent that makes me feel free to be my own person.

When did you first start kiting? What - or who - inspired you to fly a kite for the first time?

I started kiting nine years ago. Surfing was my first love, but we had a season when the waves were a bit slow, and I was desperate to get my fix somehow. I saw some amazing kiting photos from Kyle Cabano, and those photos inspired me to buy my first kiting setup!

Was big air always in your blood, or was there a clear moment that triggered it?

Big air isn't in the blood, but extreme living definitely is. One of the defining characteristics of big air kites is that we love to take calculated risks. I've always been drawn to sports like motocross or charging big waves. I feel most alive when I've got the elements telling me to pack it up and call it a day, with the voice inside my head fighting back and telling me to take the elements on.



"IT WAS PERFECT BECAUSE I LOVE BEING EDGY. IT SETS A PRECEDENT THAT MAKES ME FEEL FREE TO BE MY OWN PERSON."

"ONE THING LED TO ANOTHER, AND HERE WE ARE - BIG AIR KITING IS NOW MY LIFE"

I remember watching KOTA at Big Bay in 2013 and being so inspired! I hadn't even started kiting yet, but I remember thinking that if I tried hard and gave it my full focus, I could fly like those guys one day. One thing led to another, and here we are - big air kiting is now my life!

It's hard to think of a better place in the world for big air than your home town of Cape Town. Tell us why you love this spot!

Easy! Cape Town regularly delivers 40+ knot conditions. Sometimes we're even lucky enough to score 50+ knots!

But that's not all: the wind is typically steady, the kickers can be steep, and the run-ups to the kickers can be long and flat. If these conditions weren't enough, combine them with the fact that you can do a 5km downwinder from Sunset Beach, flying off of kickers one after the other before you finally reach Doodles.

Unfortunately, the conditions aren't like that all that often and some seasons are better than others. But even when the wind isn't blowing, Cape Town is the most magnificent place I've ever been to. The people, the lifestyle, the sports, the weather, the food, and the natural splendour. I've been travelling non-stop for

the past six years, and Cape Town is still at the top of my list, which is why Jasmine and I have decided to build our lives here.

What's your favourite kite spot outside of South Africa? Why?

Brazil! The weather's wonderful, and the people are awesome! If you go up North towards Guriu, Tatajuba or Macapa, it's 30 knots every day in season. Some people only enjoy staying in remote, sandy places for a short time, but I work remotely, so I'm happy to spend three months there every year.



PHOTO MICHAL JAGNIATKOWSKI

You were the mastermind behind The Big Air Kite League. What was your goal with BAKL?

I wouldn't say I was a mastermind. I was trying to solve quite a simple problem: There were so many amazing riders in the world, but there weren't enough spots in competitions to give them all a chance. We basically only had KOTA and Megaloop, and the same fleet was getting in every year. There was so much talent just begging for a chance to shine!

I have been in many bodyboarding and surfing competitions throughout school and university.

**" THERE WEREN'T
ENOUGH SPOTS
IN COMPETITIONS
TO GIVE THEM
ALL A CHANCE "**

RIDER ALEXANDRA TORRES
PHOTO ANTONIO TRUJILLO



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BIG AIR KITE LEAGUE EVENT IN TATAJUBA, BRAZIL
PHOTO KAGIGLIO

"THEY'RE KITING WITH SUCH POWER
AND IT'S HONESTLY INCREDIBLE TO
SEE HOW FAR THEY'VE COME!"

The organisers would put these simple comps on with minimal effort, and we loved them! So I rallied a few helpful volunteers (thank you, Dennis and Andrea!), and we ran the first edition of The Big Air Kite League.

All the riders were frothing after the first one, so we decided to keep it going. And now here we are! It's 2023: we've got the best riders in the world competing - not only because they rallied to our war cry but also because BAKL has fostered their talent. These athletes regularly go head-to-head and push one another to conquer new tricks and new heights.

There were 20 riders in KOTA 2022 (including the Golden Ticket round), and 13 of them were regular BAKL competitors. There were nine new riders in 2022, and 8 of them came from the BAKL.

The recent event in Cape Town was absolutely epic and showed some massive progression in the world of big air. What was the most exciting part of the event for you?

I'm going to have to choose two things! One was the level of the women riders. Seeing them flying at the kickers and throwing huge loops was epic! They're kiting with such power and it's honestly incredible to see how far they've come!

The other was the insane steez with which the guys were performing their tricks. Not only are they performing kiteloop board offs with 4+ rotations, but now they're holding the board in their hands while they pull their heli loops, demonstrating insane control. Cohan was definitely a favourite to watch. I wonder where they're going to take it next...

It was groundbreaking when Francesca Maini and Angely Bouillot became the first women to land double loops in competition for the first time without having ever tried them before the event! What's your take on the rise of women in big air?

For the longest time, Angely led the charge in women's big air. She was doing late backs five years ago - before me, by the way! Five years down the line and women from all over the world have been inspired by her, and they've joined her to blaze the trail of women in big air. These ladies are brave and strong yet gentle and compassionate. Have you seen the Valkyries in Wonder Woman? The badass chicks who ride winged horses and vanquish evil fuckers? These women are just like the Valkyries!

The ladies have only just gotten started; 2021 was the first year of regular competitions for them and 2022 was the first year with a women's division in The Big Air Tour. Huge congrats to Justine Avril for winning The Big Air Tour in 2022! What an amazing accomplishment.

We've seen the role that competitions play in the development of our sport, and if they continue to face off against each other, who knows how good they're going to get!

P.S. I agree with Adrian Kerr that Francesca should focus on big air! As well as all the other women. They may not realise it, but they're at the forefront of something really special in women's kiting!

RIDER ANGELY BUILLOT
PHOTO ARNAUD _ FLY.MEDIA.PRODUCTIONS

" IF THEY CONTINUE TO FACE OFF AGAINST EACH OTHER, WHO KNOWS HOW GOOD THEY'RE GOING TO GET! "



RIDER COHAN VAN DIJK
PHOTO ARNAUD _ FLY.MEDIA.PRODUCTIONS

**" I CAN'T WAIT TO INTRODUCE THE WORLD
TO THE TEAM THAT WILL ROCK THE WORLD
OF BIG AIR KITING IN 2023 AND BEYOND! "**

What about big air in general? It's the most popular sub-category of kiting. What do you think is coming up for the future of this discipline?

It's clear that the riders haven't reached their physical limits yet, and the gear is developing rapidly, so I think the progression will continue to be off-the-charts! As for the growth of the sport, we at BAKL have some huge things planned for 2023. I'm excited to share the news with you when we're ready!

You've got a lot on your plate with BAKL, your vlog and technique guides, the new shop in Cape Town, and kiting! How do you find enough time for everything?!

Haha! Don't forget about my Advanced Kite Coaching or my other e-commerce business! The short answers are delegation and an understanding of the value of my time. I highly recommend reading "The 4-Hour Work Week" by Tim Ferris. I don't actually work 4 hours a week - I could if I wanted to, but I love my work! So nowadays, I hire people to do the things I'm not good at or that I don't enjoy (typically, the two go hand-in-hand) and spend my time where it makes sense. My default is to do everything, but I've learnt that I need to delegate.

I'm excited to be hiring a few people to help take BAKL to the next level! I can't wait to introduce the world to the team that will rock the world of big air kiting in 2023 and beyond!

What is your go-to kite and board setup for sending it?

I love my Carved Imperator 7 135cm with 1.7" fins and my Core XR7 7 in 40+ knots. Those are the sessions I live for!

"I TURNED ONTO MY BACK TO PREPARE FOR THE IMPACT AND SLAMMED INTO THE WAVE. IT WAS THE HARDEST CRASH OF MY LIFE"



RIDER MIKE MAC DONALD
PHOTO ESLAM PICO

You're well-known for always wearing an impact vest when you ride, which came in handy during your recent gnarly crash. Can you tell us what happened? How are you doing now?

Haha, I didn't realise that was well-known! So I was riding a prototype kite, and we were filming the session. My mind was in the wrong place (thinking about prototypes, haha), and I wasn't in the moment. I hit a kicker, planning to do a boogie, a trick I've done a thousand times, but I didn't bring the kite up to 12 during my take-off. Instead, I left it around

10 or 11 o'clock. The next thing I knew, I was getting pulled super-fast into an oncoming wave. I turned onto my back to prepare for the impact and slammed into the wave. It was the hardest crash of my life, and I was on fire with pain. I was still conscious and body-dragged to the beach, coughing up blood. My wife and cameraman rushed me to hospital, where they discovered I had a lung contusion and a minor compression fracture to my T-3 vertebra.

If I weren't wearing an impact vest, I would have been mega-fucked-up! Pro tip: wear it under your wetsuit

(watch my YouTube video if you want to learn why).

Do you think more kites should consider using some extra safety equipment?

Sure! For starters, impact vests are a must! Helmets might be a good idea. I'm on the fence about them. I think it's extremely rare to need one, but Andrea just had a gnarly crash where the board went smashing into his helmet, and he's stoked he had it on. CTI knee braces being used as a preventative measure might be a thing of the future. Let's see!

It takes serious dedication to stick new, extreme tricks, especially with the memory of old injuries haunting you. Do you often think about the potential risk when you ride, or are you able to leave these thoughts on the beach?

I felt super confident after my knee and ankle injuries 14 months ago. I was starting to progress again and try new tricks, which was hella exciting! I don't think I'll be afraid to push my limits again after the back injury, but let's see. Over the years, I've learnt to expand my comfort zone little by little rather than trying to make huge leaps. This strategy won't allow me to keep up with the BAKL shredders, but I'm happy to race my own race and do my best to stay injury-free.

Your wife, Jasmine Cho, has been on an insane progression track. What's it like watching your partner doing crazy megaloops?!

Ya, she's absolutely crushing it! She's riding with insane power in her edging and throwing huge loops with rotations. There's a tiny part of me that's scared for her, but that's the irrational part. The rational part of me has total faith in her abilities, her judgment and her talent as an athlete. I feel like the luckiest guy in the world that I get to share this sport at this level with the woman I love!

How did you two meet? Was it love at first kite?

We met at a kite spot in Hood River, and she was looking like an absolute babe - and still is, of course! I was riding upwind of her one day, and she was trying her best to land her first board offs.

"I FEEL LIKE THE LUCKIEST GUY IN THE WORLD THAT I GET TO SHARE THIS SPORT AT THIS LEVEL WITH THE WOMAN I LOVE!"

RIDER JASMINE CHO
PHOTO MICHAL JAGNIATKOWSKI
INSET PHOTO ORI RAMON



RIDER JASMINE CHO
PHOTO THIAGO DOS SANTOS MARTINS



RIDER MIKE MAC DONALD
PHOTO ALAN VAN GYSEN

"I HAVE THE WHOLE YEAR PLANNED
OUT IN MY CALENDAR, AND THIS YEAR
IS LOOKING INSANE!"



She wasn't managing to get the board back on, and she had some big crashes, but I loved seeing her tenacity and courage. I was really impressed! Quickly but surely we got to know each other, fell in love and I shortly there-after I proposed to her, haha! I knew she was the one. I've never met anyone like her.

**What do you have planned for 2023?
Which trip or project are you most
excited about?**

I don't know about you or the readers, but I never used to know what I was doing three months from now. Nowadays, I have the whole year planned out in my calendar, and this year is looking INSANE!

We'll be running 4 big air comps, 5 big air clinics, have a 6 week surfing trip, freediving training in Egypt and more on the calendar. I will travel with my videographer and bring my spectators along for the journey.

The years fly by these days! Soon we're all going to be dead, haha. We better make the most of it!

On that note, I'm going to get back to some fun work. Thanks to everyone who's taken an interest in my journey, and thanks IKSURFMAG for the interview. What an honour!



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- WORDS BRANDON SCHEID PHOTOS ERIC DURAN -

A trip with the Ride Engine crew is sure to be an off-the-charts adventure, and this one was no exception! On a mission to find endless, uncrowded, peeling waves, the RE team set off to Chile. In this exclusive article, Brandon Scheid takes us along for the ride in the land of lefts!



INTO THE TIME MACHINE



" WE NEEDED SOMEWHERE WITH
BEAUTIFUL BACKDROPS AND ENDLESS
DAYS OF WIND AND WAVES "

More often than not, when people imagine their dream kiteboard and surf vacation, they conjure up images of azure waters, palm tree lined coastlines, and tropical sun-soaked sessions in boardshorts. This concept that the idyllic kitesurfing vacation is somehow intimately tied to warmth is a mainstay of the kite/surf "travel industry" After all, who wouldn't want to have a picturesque tropical wave paradise all to themselves? However, because so many like-minded people share the same tropical vacation dream, you may find that when you arrive at your previously imagined location, it's a

bit more crowded than expected.

What if I told you that if you only expand your location expectations, there are endless, uncrowded, peeling waves and windswept shores around the globe? Those open-minded individuals willing to say yes to a little bit of adventure and not afraid to don some thicker neoprene will find their efforts greatly rewarded. After all, there is a lot more swell in the colder regions of the planet than in the tropics.

Enter the RE crew of willing adventurers and our fearless leader/planner Gary Siskar.

Always one for an off-the-charts adventure, Gary chose the location of this year's annual product shoot with a careful hand. We needed somewhere with beautiful backdrops and endless days of wind and waves, somewhere off the maps, where the crowd wouldn't become a factor. Luckily for us, during the previous year's RE group trip to Peru, we heard about Jesse Faen's amazing house on the central coast of Chile. He often spoke of long powerful empty point breaks, daily dense, strong wind, and a pristine, untouched coastline. These conversations must have stuck in the mind of trip leader Gary because when it came time to pick a location, Chile magically found its way to the top of the list.

" CHILE HAS THIS FUNNY WAY OF CONSISTENTLY EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS, ESPECIALLY IF YOU HAVE VERY FEW TO BEGIN WITH "



A few months later, bleary-eyed from travel, we all met up and traded travel stories in the small cafe at the arrivals zone of the Santiago airport terminal. While we awaited coffee and our first empanadas, fuel for the six-hour drive ahead, we started to try and flesh out our imagined ideas about where exactly we were going. Luckily, we had two seasoned Chile veterans in tow, Jesse and Manuel. Jesse Faen has been coming to the area for over two decades and has helped put central Chile on the map in the world of professional surfing. Manuel Selman hails from Chile and has had many a trip to the zone of famous points we were about to set off towards. Fortunately, the long drive ahead would provide ample time for them to fuel the group's stoke and get everyone mentally set up for what was in store for the coming days. Although, no amount of adjective-filled explanation, long winded stories, or minute details could prepare us for what lay ahead.

Chile has this funny way of consistently exceeding expectations, especially if you have very few to begin with. For all of us, save our trusty guides, this was our first trip to the rugged coasts of Chile. As we got closer and closer to our final destination, you could feel the energy of the group begin to grow, culminating in our first view of the coastline, complete with long lines of breaking swell.

If I were to describe the region we arrived at, it reminded me of what California's central/northern coast would have been like in the 50s. The undulating coastline is filled with big rugged headlands protruding out into the cold water. A very pervasive marine layer sets the tone for the area's weather, and the fauna is skewed towards the coastal rainforested vibes of the PNW. Because the central Chilean coast is not on the mainstay traveller's map,



many visitors either stop at Punta Lobos or keep going south, leaving the area relatively unpopulated.

Most of the small towns in the area were either based around a robust fishery, small-scale agriculture, or logging. There was a small sector of hotels, vineyards, and restaurants; however, most of the region was refreshingly relatively rural, with small towns filled with happy people. We were surprised to find most of the local Chileans living a lifestyle most of us would be jealous of; a life outside, surrounded by close family and friends, in a beautiful region of the country.

There was, to our surprise, a small budding surf culture in the immediate areas surrounding the region's various world-class point breaks. It seems wherever in the world clean waves break, there is interest in riding them. Although the rigours of a small-town fisherman allow little time for recreation in the sea, we found plenty of frothy Chilean surfers in the lineups and surf school programs swelling with kids excited to boast of the great waves in their small hometowns. I've had the great fortune to travel all over the globe, and I have never had more positive experiences in the lineup than I did in Chile. That was if there was even anyone in the lineup with you. Most days, we surfed and kited alone.

The conditions, on the other hand, were far from forgiving and friendly. The coast of Chile is quite rugged, and most of the waves break on or around rocky headlands or outcroppings. While some of the points hold sand, making the bottom a bit more forgiving, most heave right onto kelp-covered rocky shelves. Not only are the waves breaking in somewhat hazardous places, the waves themselves are also extremely powerful.

" NOT ONLY ARE THE WAVES BREAKING
IN SOMEWHAT HAZARDOUS PLACES,
THE WAVES THEMSELVES ARE ALSO
EXTREMELY POWERFUL. "



" LUCKILY, DURING OUR TRIP, WE HAD ENOUGH WIND TO HELP US ATTACK THE LARGE, POWERFUL FACES. "



The coast of Chile is bathed in large, long periods of south swell for the better part of the year. One look at a surf forecasting site will set the tone for what's to be expected, and power is the name of the game. Tall open faces and cavernous pits await all who dare enter the sea.

Conveniently for our purposes, a lot of these large points are exposed to the barrage of the southerly winds, and boy, oh boy, does it blow. A typical windy day will start socked in with a heavy marine layer. As this begins to burn off and the inland temp rises, a hard wind line can be spotted offshore. This wind line hits the coast like the flip of a switch, and the cold and dense winds begin to blow. Most of the true windy days saw gusts well over 30 knots, causing us to reach for the 6m kites in the peak of the day's wind, something most kitesurfers only dream of.

There's nothing worse than really big waves and light wind, and luckily, during our trip, we had enough wind to help us attack the large, powerful faces. With a plethora of waves to choose from in the area, we would often spend the early hours on caffeine and egg-fueled recon missions. This meant a bit of time driving from spot to spot, gathering intel for the day's shooting location, something every surfer can relate to.

Life in search of conditions is filled with constant excitement and numerous letdowns. You have to be willing to drive just a little bit further, look around the next corner, and carry stoke about the possibility of the unknown, something this particular crew of adventurers was very good at. Never was there disappointment arriving at a location, only the desire to explore a bit further with the hopes of finding the session of our lives just a little further down the road.



" THE LARGE WAVES WERE HEAVING ONTO THE REEF BREAK, A RANDOM RIGHT-HANDER. "



It was this very attitude that led to some of the best sessions of the trip.

One standout was the day we proved you can go right in Chile. The forecast for the day was very strange, with winds from the NW, opposite of the normal direction and less ideal for left-hand points. With the assumed down day, we headed off to explore a bit and shoot some b roll for the video and photo marketing collaterals. When we arrived at the beach location, complete with a massive arch and sea caves, we noticed a bit of breeze on the water.

The swell was maxed out, and the large waves were heaving onto the reef break, a random right-hander. As we got deeper into the shooting, my wind spidey sense started tingling. I was convinced there was a session to be had, and on my frontside nonetheless. No one else on the trip was seeing what I was or had any desire to go out into the questionable wind and relentless waves. They opted to run beach support crew as I got in the neoprene and mentally prepared for a probable beating. I ended up being reasonably powered on the 9m SST and slowly coaxed my

way deeper and deeper onto the peak. After several close calls, and a few fun waves, I ended up putting my kite down in the water. As I was on the inside, I immediately hit my release and started swimming for the beach. Luckily, the kite washed up on the sandy shore, and the support crew was able to wrangle up all the gear. I feel like I got away with a little something special that day, going right in the land of lefts.

Perhaps the greatest session of the trip was a sunset at La Serena, one of our most ridden spots on the trip. The break known as La Serena, with its long walls and exposure to the SW winds, breaks down a long sandy beach with only a few rocks in the water.



This made it the most forgiving of the waves in the area, lending confidence to the group. This truly is one of those kitesurfing dream waves. A proper set wave would reel off down the long point, allowing for 10+ turns. And its low-lying headland made for relatively smooth wind all the way into the inside section of the wave.

During one of the better days of swell, we struggled to get solid wind conditions on the wave, and the group was hemming and hawing on what to do. Gary and I decided we would give it a go on our big kites (9m) and see if we could spark the group's stoke. While the wind was a bit funky, Gary and I traded off on perfect waves for the better part of an hour as the rest of the crew scrambled to get all their gear together. By the time everyone got out and got a few waves, the wind pulled back out, and we all ended up walking back up the beach. However, it felt like Gary and I got the best of it, and we were so amped to have had such a great session. It ended up being the last great kitesurfing session of the trip, one I'm grateful I motivated for, and a stellar way to end our adventure in this remote part of Chile.

"WE WERE SO AMPED TO HAVE HAD SUCH A GREAT SESSION. IT ENDED UP BEING THE LAST GREAT KITESURFING SESSION OF THE TRIP."



RIDER BRANDON SCHEID

WORDS CRYSTAL VENESS

TECH FOCUS

ELEVEIGHT CURL+ V3 & ESCAPE+ V3

Q&A with Robert Bratz
(Co-Founder & Global Marketing Manager)

The newest surfboards in the Eleveight lineup, the Curl+ and Escape+, are an eye-catching pair that have just been updated to the latest V3 models. We checked in with Robert Bratz to find out what goes into creating these hand shaped boards!

RIDER WELINTON EMBOACA
PHOTO SARA BAIG



What sets these boards apart from the original models of the Curl and Escape?

All of us in the Eleveight Brand Team are avid wave riders, and we wanted to create a board with a pure surf feel. Aside from having a shape designed for performance, the essential criteria had to be the construction, specifically related to the flex and rebound. To achieve this for the Plus range, we use our proven Carbon Flex Construction. The CFT follows a classic surfboard construction but is tailor-made for the demands of modern kitesurfers. To ensure that production meets our goals, all boards in the Plus range are hand shaped in Portugal, the home of surfing!

Tell us more about your production in Portugal! What made you choose this location?

Kite-powered surf riding is a great passion in our whole team and is also a reason why Peter Stiewe, our CEO/Co-Founder and board designer (as well as myself), are located in Portugal. Initially, we were looking for a local factory to help us with the sampling process. But, after a short while, we realised the potential for handmade Portuguese production. Portugal has a great tradition of surfboard manufacturing, and having a skilled supplier in our close reach allows for fantastic communication and a great work relationship.

The implementation of new ideas, the prototyping process, and quality control is very easy when you have a face-to-face relationship; each visit to the factory is always a real delight for us. The whole manufacturing team shares the same passion for state-of-the-art products, and it is a good feeling to work with people with the same spirit and values.

PHOTO HELEN FISCHER



" ALL BOARDS IN THE PLUS RANGE ARE HAND SHAPED IN PORTUGAL, THE HOME OF SURFING! "



"OUR FOCUS HERE WAS TO ENSURE MAXIMUM VERSATILITY AND EXTRA DURABILITY"

What benefit does hand shaping offer?

The hand shaping process in Portugal offers many advantages. Firstly, we can produce smaller batches and react to the demand of the market. Secondly, European production makes shipping faster and more affordable, and in certain ways, we have less impact on the environment. Finally, we can update our shapes quicker and also arrange custom-made orders. The production process offers us more flexibility, and we can serve the customer better.

What are the most significant changes in the V3 versions of the Eleveight surf lineup?

Our latest Plus version is the third generation of custom-made boards in Portugal. The Escape+ V3 has an updated shape which is a bit more versatile, and comes in sizes 5.0, 5.2, and 5.4. For the Curl+ V3, we used the same sizes, but the shape is slightly updated.

The CFT construction is different to the previous models. We are using a high-density PU foam laminated with polyester. The alignment of the carbon stringer changed to reflect the latest research in surfboard technology. We also changed the set-up of the Biax layer to offer the best ratio between weight and durability.

What is the difference between your standard CVC construction and the CFT technology used in the Plus line?

Our CVC construction, used in the Escape and Curl, is a very durable and light composite sandwich construction. We use an EPS core and epoxy resin for this construction tweaked with PVC reinforcements and carbon stringers. Our focus here was to ensure maximum versatility and extra durability,



" THE RESULT IS A BOARD WITH A DISTINCT SURF FEEL WHICH ACCELERATES PRECISELY HOW YOU NEED IT TO ON A GOOD WAVE "

which becomes handy when you try the latest strapless freestyle tricks or simply need the best travel companion.

Our CFT construction instead focuses on flex and a dynamic drive. We use PU foam with a wood stringer, a construction well-known in classic surfboard production. To make the boards more suitable for the specific use of kitesurfing, we reinforce the critical parts with an integra vector net and a carbon stringer on both the top and bottom. The result is a board with a distinct surf feel which accelerates precisely how you need it to on a good wave, like the ones we're lucky to have in Portugal!

What performance difference can a user expect to feel in a CFT board versus a CVC board? How does it change the ride?

Both constructions feature the same shape DNA. The Curl and Curl+ are for medium to high waves with a focus on down-the-line riding. The Escape and Escape+ are more versatile and great for smaller and weaker waves and for any sort of strapless freestyle action.

But if we go more into details, then the CFT construction offers a bit more flex which you will feel in the turns. The arc of the bottom turn is a bit tighter and has more momentum, the rails have more bite,

and the transition into the top turn is more dynamic. Also, the general riding and landings are a bit smoother due to more flex. The CFT construction can really make a difference for the pure strapless rider who is looking for the distinctive surf feel and buoyancy of a real surfboard.

The Curl+ V3 is a wave performance shape, and the Escape+ V3 is a freestyle shape. If a rider is unsure what shape would be the best choice for them (and both aren't an option!), what aspects should they consider when deciding?

When you decide to buy a new kitesurf board, the main question would be where you want to ride it and



"IT IS HEAPS OF FUN, AND WHEN IT COMES TO STRAPLESS FREESTYLE, IT SHOWS A REAL COMPETITIVE SIDE."

what is your preferred style. Most of us have fairly average conditions with weaker surf and side-to-onshore conditions. Here, we need a board which is very versatile, generates speed easily, and has less swing weight. In smaller surf, it is also nice to mix up the session with some strapless freestyle jumps. A shorter shape with a bit more tail area will be the best companion for these conditions. In this case, I would always use one of our Escape models as my go-to weapon. The board offers a great spectrum in all conditions and turns on a dime in smaller surf. It is heaps of fun, and when it comes to strapless freestyle, it shows a real competitive side.

Are there any scenarios where a rider would choose the traditional Curl or Escape over the Plus versions? What would they be?

This comes down to rider preference. Both constructions offer advantages and disadvantages; it's a bit like with twin tips, as not everybody needs a full carbon board. A lot of kitesurfers prefer a durable construction or want to have the option to ride with straps, in which case our CVC construction is more suitable. Travellers also benefit from a more durable CVC construction as it's more impact resistant, keeping your board safe on long journeys.

WORDS CRYSTAL VENESS

TECH FOCUS

PROLIMIT BOARD BAGS

Q&A with Warren Jeffree
(Product Designer & Art Director)

A great travel bag is essential for travelling kitesurfers who want to ensure they - and all their gear - arrive in one piece! Prolimit Product Designer Warren Jeffree gives us a closer look at their extensive lineup of board bags, carefully crafted to suit the precise needs of the kitesurfing community.





Warren, in your opinion, what makes a board bag or travel bag great?

Generally speaking, a good travel bag and board bag should provide sufficient protection from the elements, as the average consumer will put them through harsh conditions. Key materials are there to do a job and work together to make sure your toys are protected at all times.

What features or components have Prolimit board bags been designed with, and why?

At Prolimit, we use only the best components and

materials. We have taken into account the full process of a traveller, from the beginning to the end of their travelling experience. Our bags fold completely open, so the user can stack their bags carefully with enough room for extra contents to be stowed. Easily reachable zipper pullers make it hassle-free to close and open. Bigger wheels help lift the base of the bag to help clear over different terrain or rough surfaces. Air vents are there to prevent damp build-up, and we also include a business card holder so your bags can display your identity at all times. We've even implemented an internal pocket so you can always store your screwdriver in a designated place. We also design our

bags with an easy roll-up and store feature for more efficient, compact storage.

Zippers tend to be the first point of failure in a board bag or travel bag, especially as kites expose their gear to corrosive environments. What type of zippers does Prolimit use, and how do they hold up to the elements?

We use coated zippers which are non-corrosive, with big zipper pullers which help relieve unnecessary tension on the zippers. Straps around the bag take the load off the zippers, and the durable coiled teeth withstand sand and saltwater.



" WE'RE ALWAYS TAKING FEEDBACK AND STAYING IN TUNE WITH WHAT'S CHANGING IN THE INDUSTRY. "

Do you recommend any maintenance or cleaning routine to ensure that your board bags have the longest possible lifespan?

Because our zippers are coated, there are fewer chances for salt build-up. That being said, correct cleaning and storage methods will contribute to the longevity of your Prolimit board bag. Once your travels are finished and you are home, fresh water

with a good flow helps remove the salt build-up. Before storing your bag, ensure the zipper and bag are 100% dry. Storing your gear while still damp or wet will cause salt build-up, mould and damage. Lastly and most importantly, use your bag frequently and don't let it sit in the back of your garage or store room for a long period of time!

If that's not permission to book a kite trip, I don't

know what is! So, given your extensive lineup of board bags, what should consumers consider when deciding which bag they want?

We have a big range to cater for any specific requirement. Each bag from our lineup indicates what it can carry. Therefore, the consumer should consider their quiver and setup before their travels and marry that with the ideal bag. Our Traveller Elite is probably the most sturdy kite travel bag in the industry, with 700D, EVA high-impact foam and skate wheels.

How do you achieve the right balance between a lightweight bag and a durable bag that offers sufficient protection for equipment?

We have a big range which covers most travellers' needs. If you are looking for a bag that's light and durable, have a look at the Golf Ultralight. You will notice it still contains the same materials as our other bags and is a great everyday bag. Constructed from our heavy-duty 700D and 600D woven polyester, this bag can be rolled up and has a loop that will keep the bag rolled up and small enough to fit in a compact space. A balance of strong materials and simplicity is key to having a lightweight bag that is durable enough for everyday use.

What is the main reason for new changes and innovations in the board bag category?

We update our bags and work on them consistently. As board shapes change, so do the bags, so we're always taking feedback and staying in tune with what's changing in the industry. Make sure to have the correct fit and size for your board. Whatever board you're riding, we've got you covered!

JULIA CASTRO // A BIG DAY ON FUERTEVENTURA

WORDS JULIA CASTRO PHOTOS JESÚS RENEDO / SAILING ENERGY

As I write this, I have this sort of fear running through my veins. If you didn't know, Fuerteventura is a paradise for watersports, but, Houston, we've got a problem.



When the Coronavirus pandemic started, we, the people born on the island, thought all the tourists would go home and only come back after it was all done. But what happened was unexpected. Many tourists decided to stay, and right after the pandemic "ended", they started to buy all available properties in Fuerteventura. Housing prices increased 3x, as did the number of people on the water.

I don't blame them; I was born in Fuerteventura to parents from elsewhere; 40 years ago, they also discovered the quality of life Fuerte had to offer and made it home. But, such an increase in three years was just too much for the locals. Now, every wave, kite or windsurf spot has too many people on the water and, on top of that, people don't know the basic sailing rules, creating a dangerous situation.

Why do I tell you all of this? Because by writing this, I am afraid you also will want to come en masse to enjoy our paradise. I just hope that if you do, you will respect the locals. I hope that if you see 15 people on the water, you go find another spot because 15 people sharing a couple of waves is already a lot. I hope you ask before going on the water how the spot works, so we don't have to rescue you, especially on a big day like this one. Well, here I go...

THE DAY WE WERE ALL WAITING FOR

Reading the forecast here is not easy; there are a lot of variables, and the forecast changes drastically every two days. If you see epic wind and waves coming up in a week, there's a big chance it won't happen. But, one day, I checked the forecast ten days in advance, and a wild forecast appeared, with Hawaii-like conditions. We're not lucky enough to have epic swells every day, but wintertime is perfect for those "once in a lifetime" sessions. I expected the forecast to decrease as the big day approached, but this time, it did not change a bit.



On The Fly

JULIA CASTRO //

A BIG DAY ON FUERTEVENTURA

I planned to drive to the spot and sleep in my van so I could be the first on the water, but with unseasonable rains over the past few days, it was too muddy to reach the spot. I parked as close as I could without getting stuck, hoping for sun the next morning to dry the way. The next morning, surprisingly, there was no wind. I could not believe that, after everything, the forecast wasn't going to happen. Not ready to give up, I drove to the spot with my good friend and one of the best

sailing photographers in the world, Jesús Renedo from Sailing Energy, where we waited for several hours. The waves were pumping; I won't want to say how big they were because you can see for yourself from the photos... but we were missing about 5 knots of wind. Big wave kiting is tricky because the waves are so big that they momentarily and almost completely take the wind away for a few seconds. Your kite control must be flawless, and you have to be familiar with this

scenario and choose the perfect kite. If your kite is too small, it will fall straight from the sky; if your kite is too big, you'll ride perfectly in between waves, but on the wave with the added speed it gives you, you'll be way too overpowered to ride.

I don't know how much time I spent on top of a small rock, viewing the conditions from the highest point I could find, and trying to choose what size of kite I would go with. In the end, I chose the Duotone 9m NEO SLS and joined Philipp Koster (5x Windsurf World Champion) and Josep Pons (one of the best windsurfers in the Canary Islands) on the water.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)

JAMIE OVERBEEK //

BEST DAY OF MY LIFE

Dutch teenager Jamie Overbeek became the youngest athlete to land a podium after a storming run to the final of the 2022 Red Bull KOTA in Cape Town. The Ozone Big Air team rider's runner-up place, with two other teenagers alongside him on the podium, marked a remarkable changing of the guard at the iconic contest. Here, Overbeek, still 16, talks to Ian MacKinnon about his remarkable KOTA run.



Ian MacKinnon: You were in the Porsche Golden Ticket qualifier for KOTA but came second and were lucky to get in the main event, where you stormed to the final. How did that feel?

Jamie Overbeek: It felt amazing. If Airton Cozzolino hadn't been injured, I wouldn't have gotten into KOTA. Then in the first round, I was up against Marc Jacobs (then reigning "King") and Andrea Principi. I was just thinking to myself I'm never going to win, but I'll just do my best. That gave me a lot of energy to push through to the final. When it came to the final, it was just something else.

In the quarter-final (against three-time KOTA winner Kevin Langereef) and semi-final (against Beto Gomez) I thought, I can't be beaten now. My goal was to get further in the competition instead of getting kicked out early every time. As I got further and further, I just didn't want to lose any more. I wanted to win, and I would've been disappointed to go out in round three.

IM: You had your family and friends as your support team on the beach in Cape Town. How important was that for you?

JO: Jerome Machire, a friend from my home spot in Workum, my brother Sean, and mum Lynda, were caddying.

PHOTO RED BULL CONTENT POOL



On The Fly

JAMIE OVERBEEK //

BEST DAY OF MY LIFE

My dad, Pete, was filming. It meant a lot to me to have them there. Everyone was doing what they were told to do. Sean was holding the double loop kite (6m2 Ozone Enduro V4) in the air. Jerome had my 7m2 Ozone Edge V11 when I needed to change. I could just hook in and go. My mum was landing kites and giving me food and drinks and telling me when my heats were coming up.

IM: Were you nervous or fearful of pulling such massive and complex tricks in those extreme conditions?

JO: Not at the beginning. But in the quarters and semis, I definitely was a bit nervous because it was

PHOTO SAMEUL CARDENAS



semis, I definitely was a bit nervous because it was gusting to 50kts. I had to do the craziest and most difficult tricks to win the competition. That was definitely a bit scary. But I just did them and landed them. I would never have done the tricks I did in those winds if it had not been in competition. It's scary. But I did them.

IM: Amazingly, during the competition, you did some tricks you'd never done before. What were they?

JO: I think it was a boogie double loop and a double loop board-off. I felt I had to do them. The others in the final had many days of double loop training sessions. But I hadn't because back home in Holland,

we don't really have the wind, so there were only one or two days for double loop training sessions. But during the competition, I just figured that if I could do a normal kite loop board-off, then I could do a double. I just sent it.

IM: Did you have many crashes during KOTA that made you think twice before pulling more tricks?

JO: I had one big crash in the final at the end. There were about 30 seconds left in the heat, and I came to the beach for one more jump. Then, I just thought, I've done enough; I did my best. I'm not going to injure myself now, right at the end. About a week and a half after the final, I still had some pain in my upper leg and ribs from that crash.

IM: You described your second podium step at the 2022 Red Bull KOTA as the best day of your life. You must have dreamt of glory, but did you think it would happen like that?

JO: For sure, it was the best day of my life. I knew I had the potential to do it. But not this early, in my first-ever KOTA. I thought I could get on the podium eventually, but not this soon.

IM: Now that you've finished school, what are your plans, hopes and dream for the future?

JO: I definitely want to ride in more competitions. Not all the competitions, but the main Big Air events and one or two of the BAKL stops. That'll be the Red Bull Megaloop Challenge, KOTA, the GKA Big Air Worlds, and the GKA event in Barcares, France. My dream is still to get first in KOTA, and I hope I can get more podium places in the next few years. I'll be kiting for my work, and I just want to keep enjoying it.

Read the complete interview, including Jamie's kiting journey, his competition experience, and his thoughts on the rapidly rising stakes in Big Air, on our website!

FOIL FOCUS // ARMSTRONG

Armstrong Foils released its much-awaited MA range just two months ago. These MA (Mid Aspect) foils are designed to deliver a next-gen combination of glide, low stall speed, intuitive carving and instantaneous breach recovery. If you're a foil frother, you've more than likely already seen the video announcing the release.



SURF 205



FLOW 235

But did you catch the release of the all-new stabilisers that just dropped a couple of weeks ago? The Surf 205 and Flow 235 were developed in conjunction with the new MA range, offering a fine-tuned ride for foilers who know what they want out of their session.

Check out the Surf 205 stabiliser if you've got waves on your brain. This tail wing offers high manoeuvrability and the potential for critical turns, the ideal set-up for those who want to step up their foil surf game and experience ultimate freedom on a wave.

If you like a smooth ride, give the Flow 235 a try. This wing is all about stability and predictability and will be a do-it-all tail wing to use across several disciplines. With this stabiliser, you can push your progression with confidence.

Click here to learn more about the new MA range at Armstrong Foils, and stay tuned for our review in an upcoming issue of IKSURFMAG!





On The Fly

ELOI RONDEAU // A SNOWKITE FIREWORK

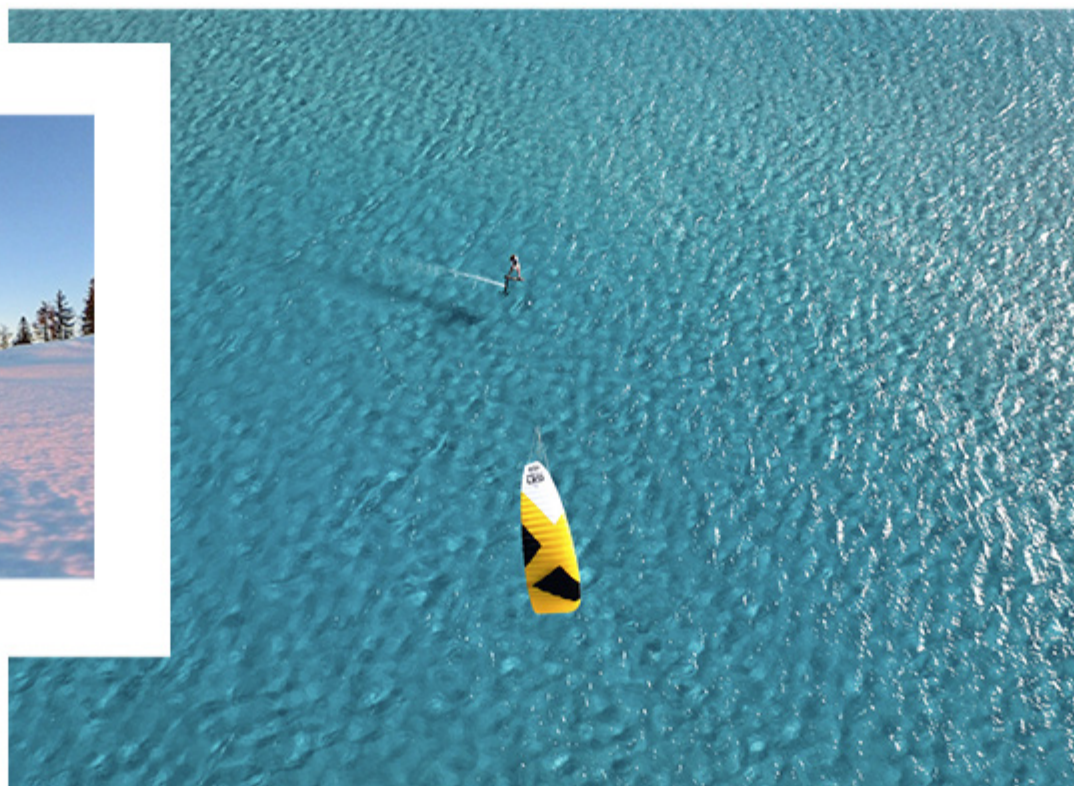
Gin Kiteboarding has been one of the majors in the snowkite industry for a while now. What keeps us thriving every day in that industry is our passion for nature and thrills, with no limitations whatsoever. We want to push forward the idea of going back to basics - just a kite connecting you to the wind. The secret sauce is pretty straightforward at Gin Kiteboarding: a Shaman or one of our closed-cell kites, combined with a Gin Ice Bar, and you will be in for an unparalleled ride.

To emphasise that state of mind, Gin Kiteboarding is lucky enough to count on passionate and relentless riders who embody the brand and its values, as Eloi Rondeau has since 2018. He is the type of person who would ride day and night if he could, constantly pushing to master new tricks and techniques, but never without a good dose of fun. Although he kites intensely all year long, he will always be seen as Gin's French snow king.

Where does your passion for sliding sports come from (especially the ones hauled by a kite)?

Eloi Rondeau: As a child, I caught the kite virus, which, as I grew up, turned into a regular practice of kite and paragliding. It turns out that my region offers perfect conditions for these activities; wide areas, wind, lakes, and mountains; Auvergne is a perfect playground to juggle between disciplines. As I liked skiing, I had a preference for snowkiting from the beginning,





On The Fly

ELOI RONDEAU // A SNOWKITE FIREWORK

which is now my speciality. This led me to take part in many competitions on snow in racing or freestyle disciplines. I was the French Champion of Snowkite Freerace in 2019 and second at the World Snowkite Masters 2021 in Freestyle Skiing.

How much of your time do you spend on your passion?

ER: Too much, according to my relatives, but never enough for me! The good thing about practising various sports is that I can easily adapt to the weather conditions, allowing me to do something almost daily. In the summer, I can practically fly or glide every day. In the winter, it depends more on the weather.

Do you have a treasured secret spot?

ER: A secret spot is meant to remain secret, right? Of course, I have a crush on my home spot, Les Estables, a small village surrounded by wide spaces covered in snow and overhung by the mythical Mont Mézenc. But there are many magical places that I would be happy to help riders discover. Without being chauvinistic, when the snow is there, Auvergne offers some of the most beautiful snowkiting spots I have ever ridden: Cézallier, Sancy, Mont Lozère, and more.

In which direction do you see kite and snowkite evolving?

ER: The arrival of single-skin kites has really facilitated

the practice of snowkiting. Nowadays, we almost exclusively see these types of kites on the spots. On the water in our country, the foil has clearly revolutionised the kite practice. This allows kites to make the most of recurring light conditions on our lakes. The association of a half-single skin like the Marabou and a foil seems the perfect combo for the majority of riders around me.

Speaking of evolutions in kiteboarding, Gin Kiteboarding also support Alan Roura, a world-class sailor who recently took part in the Route du Rhum. I could easily see those big boats towed by a kite someday! I participated in the development of a kite boat in Brittany, and I can say that the feeling of piloting a kite while sitting in a boat is truly amazing!

And while we are at it, let's dream a little bit more. Maybe we will see snowkite at the Winter Olympics?!

Which Gin kites are you currently using?

ER: For me, the strength of Gin Kiteboarding is to offer kites adapted to every discipline, so I use almost all of them! Thanks to its reduced weight, minimal bulk and secure 5th line, the Shaman is perfect for high-mountain rides or multi-day hikes on the vast plateaus around my home.

The Marabou 2 is for when you can't choose: kitefoil, snowkite, and kite skate, all in perfect safety.

I use the future Quiver tube kite to face the strong Tramontane in the south of France, specifically for freestyle, unhooking or big kiteloops.

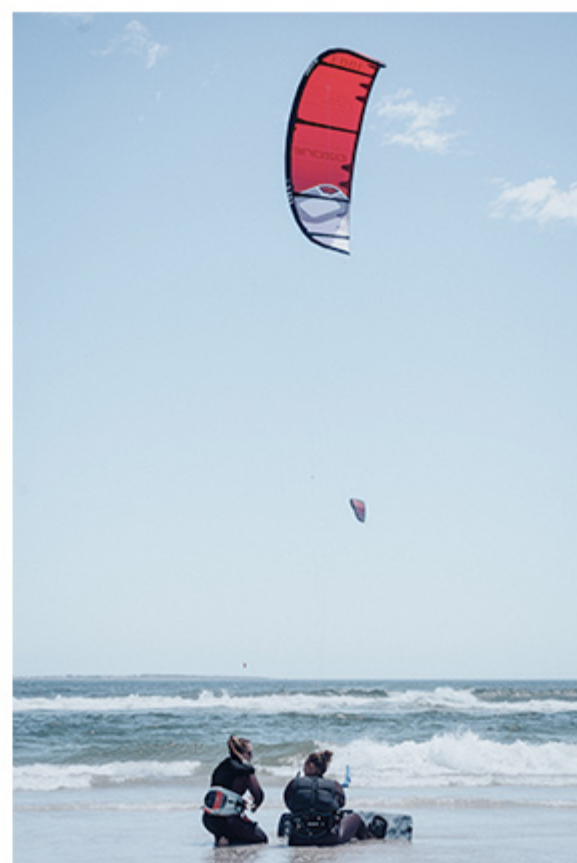
And, of course, the Spirit, my favourite kite that goes with me everywhere. The 10m could be my only kite, both on water and on snow. By playing with the line length, it goes from a race kite to a freestyle and slope-flight kite. It's probably the best kite I have ever had!

MICHAELA PILKENTON //

BIG AIR IS FOR EVERYONE

Michaela Pilkenton, Naish International Team Rider and Big Air kite competitor, spent part of her winter in Cape Town to train, compete, and give back to her community. In the midst of a busy schedule, she carved out a windy weekend day to host a free women's Big Air kite clinic.

PHOTOS JULES KUHN



"There are not a lot of resources out there for women by women in the Big Air space," shares Michaela. "I did it for free because I'm genuinely passionate about helping women of all levels progress, especially in Big Air. I want there to be access no matter how much money you do or don't have."

"The bond women develop through coaching, and learning is super special," says Michaela. "We're able to communicate with each other in a relatable way. I feel like it's easy for the dudes to tell us to just go out there and send and put a lot of pressure on us. Women working together can talk about the fear, share how hard it can be to be a woman in a mostly male discipline, and support each other through the emotional side of the sport."

Scott Trudon, Naish Brand Manager, is extremely proud of this clinic. "Michaela is an exceptional human who truly cares about women in kiteboarding and shares her knowledge and stoke every chance she gets. Naish is very fortunate to have her on our International Team not only as a World Class Rider but as an ambassador for women's kiteboarding."

Click here to read the full article covering everything that went down at Michaela's free Big Air clinic!



On The Fly

MICHAELA PILKENTON // BIG AIR IS FOR EVERYONE

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On The Fly

PHOTO REEL //

CAUIPE LAGOON, BRAZIL

Andrew Gadelha Da Rocha shared his highlight reel from an amazing day with his friends at the Cauipe Lagoon in Brazil. As Andrew says, "It was just the perfect conditions and the perfect spot. Cauipe is paradise, and what better place to ride the LIEUWE Shotgun Paradise Series than here?"





PHOTOS ANDY TROY

On The Fly

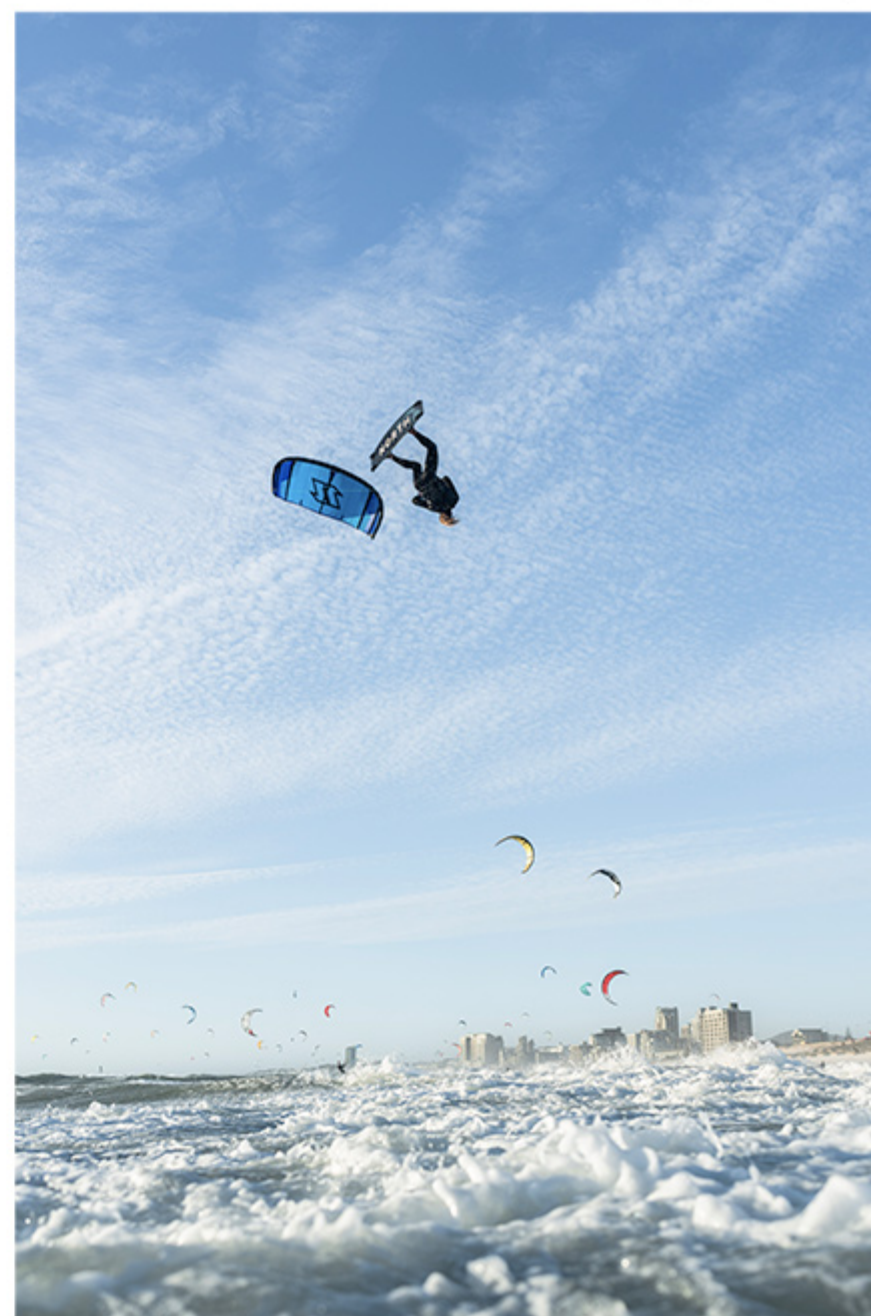
TEAM MOVES // COHAN VAN DIJK JOINS NORTH

It's that time of year when riders are changing teams left, right, and centre, with some major surprises in the world of pro kiting! With the meteoric rise in popularity of the Big Air discipline, it's no wonder that kite brands are on the hunt for the next big thing in Big Air! North Kiteboarding, who has represented some of the biggest names in the Big Air world, has set its sights on 20-year-old Cohan Van Dijk, the

the latest addition to its roster of talented athletes.

North Brand Direction Mike Raper says, "Cohan has been on our radar since a young age with his wake background, freestyle prowess, and now Big Air domination. We're excited to see what his future holds as he joins our team of athletes progressing the sport."

[Click here to read more about Cohan Van Dijk!](#)



On The Fly

EVENT ROUND-UP // 2022 SNOW KITE MASTERS

This past December, the SKM Snow Kite Masters event celebrated its 20th anniversary in the Serre Chevalier Vallée. The event welcomed avid snow kites from near and far to celebrate the opening of the snowkite season at Col du Lautaret. This has long been a community-oriented event with freestyle, racing, and gear. At SKM, snow kites of all skill levels are welcome; maybe you'll be at the next one? Here's to 20 years of pushing the boundaries of snow kiting and to another 20 years to come!



PHOTOS BERTRAND BOONE



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

LIGHTROOM

CAN YOU IMAGINE A MORE PRISTINE PARADISE? RIDE ALONG
WITH ELLIE DIMITROVA AND LUKAS VOGELTANZ IN ZANZIBAR...
PHOTO NICOLA BAGAROV

Lightroom

LIGHTROOM

LOUKA PITOT MAKES IT RAIN WHEN THE SUN SHINES ON THIS MAGICAL INDIAN OCEAN WAVE
PHOTO LOUIS ARNAUD LAVASIER

Lightroom

LIGHTROOM

WOJTEK ANDRZEJEWSKI GETTING TWEAKED AND INVERTED - WHAT WOULD YOU CALL THIS GRAB?!
PHOTO ROBERT HAJDUK



Lightroom

LIGHTROOM



Lightroom

LACI KOBULSKY PUTS THE STYLE INTO FREESTYLE IN THIS SIGNATURE NIGHT SHOT
BY LEGENDARY PHOTOGRAPHER ANDRE MAGARAO
PHOTO ANDRE MAGARAO

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LIGHTROOM

KAIMAR HALLISTE ON THE SPOT WITH HIS FURRY FRIENDS IN HIS DREAM KITE VANI WHAT MORE DO YOU NEED?!
PHOTO KERLI HALLISTE



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LIGHTROOM

ELSIEN ZIJLSTRA ADDING A POP OF COLOUR TO HER SESSION WITH THE LIEUWE PARADISE SERIES - TARIFA EDITION!
PHOTO ANTONIO HERRERA TRUJILLO



Lightroom

LIGHTROOM

NEW WOO WORLD RECORD HOLDER JAMIE OVERBEEK IS AT THE TOP OF HIS GAME IN THIS ICONIC SOUTH AFRICAN KITE SPOT
PHOTO SAMUEL CARDENAS



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LIGHTROOM

EXPLORING THE STUNNING COASTLINE OF
SARDINIA ON A KITE AND SAIL ADVENTURE!
PHOTO THE ACTION CRUISE

Lightroom

IKSURFMAG.COM

In this special edition of Movie Night, we're featuring the best of the best videos released in 2022, as voted by YOU in the IKSURFMAG Readers Awards!

With 23 incredible videos nominated for the prize, the competition was tough. Every creator and rider deserves applause for their efforts in delivering the kitesurfing public top-notch content, but the creative geniuses and talented athletes behind these top 4 videos were a cut above the rest.

Get ready to be impressed; it's Movie Night - Awards edition!



#1

THE HITCHHIKER BY MAREK ROWIŃSKI

Taking home the (well-deserved) win as THE BEST movie of 2022 is THE HITCHHIKER by Marek Rowiński! Coco wasn't the only person that left an impression on the Taiba lagoon last summer – what a vibe!



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#2

ARCTIC KITE GLÄMPING (4K)

Coming in hot at number 2 is Arctic Kite Glämping - A week of kiting and glamping in the Käsivarsi wilderness area sounds like the best adventure ever! Mika, Ari, & Jaakko embark on a journey they won't soon forget!



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#3

RECONNECT - JALOU LANGEREE

Last year, Jalou Langeree retired from professional kiteboarding, and her difficult journey was documented in RECONNECT - a true tale of vulnerability and strength. This must-see film is one of the most powerful movies of 2022.

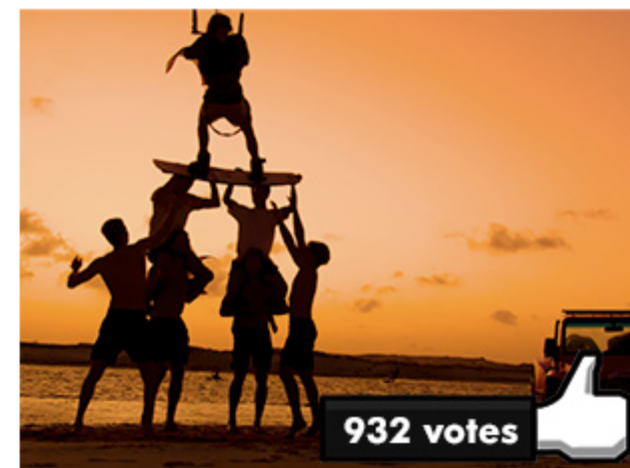


[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#4

NAISH HOUSE BRAZIL

Landing at number #4, join the Naish crew for an insane adventure in the lagoons of Brazil, featuring a rail session, freestyle action, big air sends, beach buggies, and much, much, much more... It's all here in this 31-minute feature film!



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

RIDER RAMIRO GALLART
PHOTO ANDRE MAGARAO

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