

THE KITEBOARDER



2019 FREERIDE GEAR REVIEWS

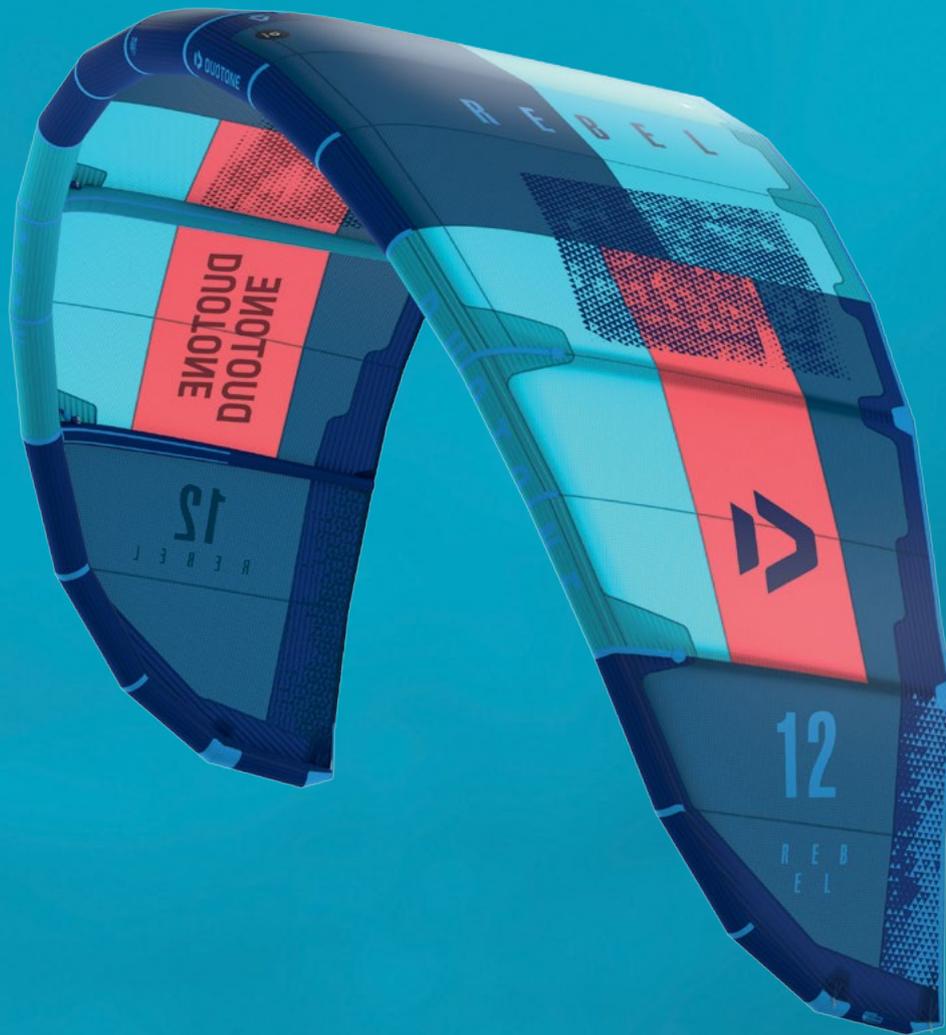
REBEL

NOW BY DUOTONE

“THE REBEL IS THE BENCHMARK FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE FREERIDE KITES, IT BOOSTS INCREDIBLY, HAS MASSIVE AIRTIME AND IS THE BEST CHOICE FOR HOOKED IN TRICKS. ESPECIALLY GREAT FOR MY STYLE, IT ALWAYS DELIVERS PLENTY OF TIME IN THE AIR.”

TOM HEBERT





RELATED PRODUCTS



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CC1 BLUE



2019 FREERIDE GEAR REVIEWS

20 - AIRUSH

- Ultra
- Union
- Wave
- Amp
- Apex
- Switch

34 - BLADE

- Trigger

38 - CABRINHA

- Contra
- Drifter
- Moto
- Switchblade
- Ace
- Cutlass
- Spectrum
- XCaliber Carbon
- XCaliber Wood

60 - CORE

- GTS5
- Nexus
- Choice
- Fusion

72 - DUOTONE

- Dice
- Evo
- Neo
- Rebel
- Jaime
- Jaime Textreme
- Select
- Soleil Textreme
- Pro Wam
- Whip
- Pro Whip

98 - ELEVEIGHT

- RS Series

102 - FCD

- Blunt

104 - F-ONE

- Bandit
- Breeze
- 51TS
- 850 IC6
- Pocket
- Mirage 800
- Mitu Flex
- Slice
- Trax HRD Light Tech
- Trax ESL
- WTF Lite Tech

130 - FLYSURFER

- Soul

134 - KANAHA

- Mucho Macho

136 - LIQUID FORCE

- NV
- Wow
- Legacy
- Lunar Lander
- Messenger

148 - NAISH

- Triad

154 - OZONE

- Alpha
- AMP
- Catalyst
- Reo
- Code
- Torque

168 - SLINGSHOT

- Rally
- RPM
- SST
- Turbine
- Celero FR
- Crisis
- Dwarf Craft
- FKite Foil
- Misfit
- Mixer



On the Cover

For the 2019 Freeride Gear Test, Tkb trucked over 120 kites and boards to La Ventana, Mexico for one of the largest and most comprehensive kiteboarding equipment testing sessions in this magazine's history, and quite possibly the entire industry!



LIVE FREE



RIDE FREE

J. Bouling

CABRINHA
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MEET THE TESTERS

For the 2019 Freeride Gear Test, Tkb trucked over 120 kites and boards to the never-failing windy destination of La Ventana, Mexico for one of the largest and most comprehensive kiteboarding equipment testing sessions in this magazine's history, and quite possibly the entire industry! With the help of 14 carefully vetted obsessive kitesurfing souls, we put every piece of equipment through the ringer — we used, miss-used and sometimes downright abused, every piece of equipment.

When it comes to testing there is a tremendous amount of subjectivity that leeches into the process, from the variability of conditions to the diversity of personal tester preference and the wide range of riding styles. However, at the Tkb Freeride Gear Review, we try to hone in on objective assessments of kite equipment for strengths and ideal use to help the end user decide which equipment to demo and eventually integrate into the idealized quiver.

One of the ways we aim to bring objectivity to our testing is by expanding the size of our team beyond one or two magazine staffers to a divergent group of testers that bring to the test a broad spectrum of style, skill level and equipment experience. We pack our pre-wind mornings with presentations by brand representatives in order to help educate testers on equipment highlights and host Q&A sessions to get an in depth understanding of the equipment. This year the individuals that comprise the testing team are as diverse as the 70+ models of equipment we push into the spotlight. The 2019 team integrates kilters of all age groups, sizes and gender and includes testers with retail and industry experience. Aside from highlighting tester quotes in each of the product reviews we have collected their profiles and personal reflections on this years test here to lend insight into the kiteboarders behind the process.



TIB ANGHEL

"Somewhat of a wind addict, a minister of the house of stoke, an expert beginner who is constantly striving to refine his technique through epic adventures with present and future friends."

Weight: 170 lbs.

Experience: 5 years

From: Montreal, Canada

Personal gear: Airush Wave and Ultra II, HB Anti BIAx 5'2", Moses Onda 91 cm with 633

Riding style/home conditions: Strapless and foil freestyle.

Local spot(s): Around Montreal and Champlain Lake; 10-15 knots, gusty, choppy with occasional waves.

Favorite pro kiter / most impressive kiter / most influential / sexiest kiter / your personal kite hero? Keahi due to his ridiculous effortless smoothness on every wave and trick.

If you were going to be reincarnated as one piece of kite equipment what would it be? A foil wing so that I could see all the wonderful creatures which lurk under the surface.

What was the main thing you learned about kiteboarding gear during the test week? A hefty amount of wax on a surf pad gives you wings!

What kite and board would you want to purchase for yourself and why? If I couldn't pick my existing quiver again I'd choose the Liquid Force WOW V4 because...WOW! Pivotal turns, nimble, great drift, and lightweight; somehow even managed to boost big and provide great hangtime. For a board, the Duotone Pro Wam—a light, playful, pop-a-looza, smooth turning, and overall a joy to ride.



KRISTIN VINCENZO

"I am a former windsurfer who started kiting 2 1/2 years ago. I started foiling about 3 months ago. I am a communications professional who has been working for a kiting retailer for almost a year. I grew up in the Pacific Northwest, but I call the East Coast my home now."

Weight: 130 lbs.

Experience: Two and a half years

From: New York, NY

Personal gear: 2019 Duotone Rebels 7,9,12 and Ocean Rodeo Prodigy 5m

Riding style/home conditions: Freeride on ocean waves in New Jersey and flat (ish) water on Long Island, NY.

Local spot(s): NJ: Sandy Hook, Kite Island. NY: Oak Beach, Plumb Beach, Great South Bay, Napeague, Coney Island and Tobay Beach. Fall, winter and spring are the best for our area, but the winds are typically gusty. Waves and chop, with some slicks in the GSB. Average 20-25 knots. Summer is the lightest season, but the wind is smooth. The average wind speed during the summer is 12-18 knots.

Favorite pro kiter / most impressive kiter / most influential / sexiest kiter and/or your personal kite hero: My favorite pro kiter is Moona Whyte because I hope to be a great wave rider someday.

If you were going to be reincarnated as one piece of kite equipment, what would it be? A Control Bar. I think it's the most important piece of equipment for kiting—the piece that makes it all possible. The kite and board are important, but without a bar, it's not possible to kite. A good bar provides safety and control for a kiter at any level.

What was the main thing you learned about kiteboarding gear during the test week? I have tried a lot of equipment in the last year, even some of the equipment that I tried during the test week. The main thing that I learned is that kiting equipment performance can really vary depending on the conditions that you are kiting and your own level of expertise. As I improve my kiting, I want different things from a kite or board. Now that I'm foiling, I look at wave kites differently than I did when I was using a TT in the waves. Although most kiting gear now is good across the board, I definitely have more specific needs from different kinds of kites now that I can kite different conditions more comfortably.

What kite and board would you want to purchase for yourself and why? I would love to purchase the F-One Pocket board, Mirage foil, and Cabrinha Drifter or F-One Breeze kites. As a new foiler, I was able to make real progress in a couple of days on that equipment, much more than my own gear. The other light wind kites and foilboards and foil that I tried were not as 'fun' for me. Although I like my current gear and the gear I tested, I definitely felt like the F-One board and foil, and the Drifter and Breeze, would be the equipment that would help me progress faster.



OZONE
SERIES OF RACING SAILS

RED BULL

OZONE

FLY

OZONE

SPY

OZONE

ICE





MIKE DOUCET (AKA KITER MIKE)

"If it's windy I'm out there, 159 days this year (2018)!"

Weight: 200 lbs.

Experience: 7/8 years

From: Lexington, MA

Personal Gear: 2018 Rebels, 2018 Clouds, 2018 Jaime, 2018 Crazy Fly Raptor Pro, Slingshot Alien Foil board

Riding style/home conditions: Freeride, surf, foil, all-around.

Favorite pro kiter / most impressive kiter / most influential / sexiest kiter / your personal kite hero? Nick Jacobson.

If you were going to be reincarnated as one piece of kite equipment, what would it be? The kite. Love the feeling of flying.

What was the main thing you learned about kiteboarding gear during the test week? Kiting gear can be very specific. You like it or dislike it according to what you enjoy doing.

What kite and board would you want to purchase for yourself and why? I'd get the Duotone Rebel and Jaime (newer models of what I currently have). I like to boost and this combo does the job/fits my style.



GIUSEPPE 'PEPPE' MOLINARIO

"Washington DC area scientist saved by kitesurfing. I'm from Rome originally and have been living in Washington DC. I just finished my Ph.D. in Geographical Sciences, where I studied deforestation and agriculture in the Congo using satellite imagery and maps. Now I'm in between things and places. Some have said I spend more time in a hammock than on the water — clearly not true as proved by me being here, but I do think we should review hammocks next year as well."

Weight: 220 lbs.

Experience: 6 years

From: Rome, Italy via Washington, D.C.

Personal gear: F-One Bandits, F-One Trax LW 144 (2016), Shinn Street 140 2016, Slingshot Celeritas

Riding style/home conditions: Freeride!

Local spot(s): Outer Banks, Cape Hatteras. Chesapeake Bay. Lewes, Delaware, Assateague National Park and Porto Pollo in Sardegna, Italy. In the Chesapeake Bay conditions are typically in the mid-teens to upper 20s mph, and choppy, thermal wind except for northerly fronts. In the Outer Banks it's more frontal and steady and winder, with the epic days over 30 mph, especially closer to the winter and the best seasons being spring and fall. The entire mid-Atlantic wind dies in the summer except for storms, and the foilers get all the action during other times.

Favorite pro kiter / most impressive kiter / most influential / sexiest kiter / your personal kite hero? Ruben Lenten for straight up madness in the Stormjees video, Kevin Langereer inspires me to go to the moon, aka a few feet, Mitu Monteiro riding at One Eye or Teahupoo and that new Cal style guy doing ridiculously giant old school trickery.

If you were going to be reincarnated as one piece of kite equipment what would it be? I want to be a strapless surfboard (without a leash.)

What was the main thing you learned about kiteboarding gear during the test week? One man's trash is another man's treasure. There's something for everyone and a lot of people ride gear that doesn't help them progress.

What kite and board would you want to purchase for yourself and why? The Ozone Alpha, impossibly small with that nifty compression bag instead of a normal kite backpack (all kite bags should have compression straps). Despite being a single strut this kite had my screaming like a little school girl as I jumped over the back of wave after wave on a strapless board that was glued to my feet. Unexpectedly it was stable and turned responsively. The strapless board is the board I'd keep for myself: the Duotone Whip Pro was stuck to my feet, felt smooth and absorbed all the chop. It made me feel way better than I am, giving me the most confidence-inducing surf sessions I've ever had. I feel like I gained 20 sessions of strapless practice in one.



CHRIS MYLES

"I design things and love to fly kites when not making things. I am always moving around exploring the world and never wanting to sit still for too long in order to experience something new. My favorite thing about moving around is all the beauty within the world and the people in it."

Weight: 165 lbs.

Experience: 5 years

From: Portland, OR

Personal gear: Slingshot RPMs, LF Space Craft, 6' Rusty Dozer surfboard

Riding style/home conditions: Freeride / learning in waves.

Local spot (s): The Gorge. Gorge weather, everyone knows what it is like! Gusty, punchy, cold, hot in the summer, large rollers in the Columbia, sometimes too windy, sometimes just right, sometimes too light.

Favorite pro kiter / most impressive kiter / most influential / sexiest kiter / your personal kite hero? Nick Jacobson, Jesse Richman, Jake Kelsick, Paula Novotna and Don Montague!

If you were going to be reincarnated as one piece of kite equipment what would it be? The kite as its closest to the stars.

What was the main thing you learned about kiteboarding gear during the test week? That community makes the whole entire sport. Sharing new kite tricks and tips with new friends.

What kite and board would you want to purchase for yourself and why? The Soul was amazing, a very powerful kite that you can fly a few sizes smaller than a LEI. Had a paraglide feel to it when jumping, flies with a regular 4 line bar and packs down super small for traveling. The Ozone Torque board was an amazing board to jump with. The edge held super well on toeside and the footpads were ultra-comfortable. This board was also VERY light and had awesome graphics. For a directional, the Duotone Whip CSC was super floaty and felt like my feet stuck to the board — the ability to carve and changing of foot placement felt super locked in and stable.



JOE CHEHOCK

"I grew up skiing North Idaho powder and mountain biking single-track. When I first tried kiteboarding I knew it was the beginning of an epic romance — it's a multi-dimensional sport that continues to feed my appreciation for the elements, warm salty water, and new challenges. I'm currently learning to foil!"

Weight: 180 lbs.

Experience: 6 years

From: Seattle, WA (but the SF Bay Area was home for the last 8 years)

Personal quiver: North (now Duotone) Rebels, Evos, and a Neo, Liquid Force Envy, Nobile NHP Carbon, Liquid Force Impulse Foil + Galaxy board, Litewave Wing, cheap ass foam surfboard

Riding style/home conditions: Freeride most the time and surf when I feel like making the drive.

Local spot(s): (Bay Area) 3rd Ave San Mateo, Sherman Island; (Seattle area) Golden Gardens, Edmonds Beach. My local Bay Area spot was 3rd Ave which usually has a steady 18-22 knots with

some gusts, chop and small swell. I'm just getting acquainted with the local Seattle spots, but as soon as we have a winter storm I'll be hitting Golden Gardens and Edmonds Beach.

Favorite pro kiter / most impressive kiter / most influential / sexiest kiter / your personal kite hero? Greg Boyington aka 'LMG'. Greg was a pillar of the Bay Area kite community. He often shared his local stoke for the sport and brought me out for my first time kiting at Sherman Island. Greg passed away several years ago, but his legacy and big smiles will always live on.

If you were going to be reincarnated as one piece of kite equipment what would it be? I'd be a strapless surfboard so I could catch massive floaty airs and dance across shallow reef breaks watching the fish scatter.

What was the main thing you learned about kiteboarding gear during the test week? Refining my tastes and personal preferences was a big take-away. I want my gear to be an extension of my body — reactive and responding to input before I even have to think. It was challenging to find a kite that didn't perform well, however I tried many boards that were a total fail — too floaty, excessive spray, painful straps/pad... the list goes on.

What kite and board would you want to purchase for yourself and why? I've been riding North kites for the last 4 years and the rebranded Duotone line-up didn't fail to impress. My favorite kite/board combo was the Duotone Dice paired with the Select board. I rode this setup on my second day and was totally dialed in as soon as I hit the water. The Dice is super responsive with plenty of feedback. Paired with the Select I felt totally invincible; locked in and charging on rails. The Duotone Click bar was the most innovative pieces of equipment I used all week, and the Select strap/pad setup was way more comfortable than most the of other brands, despite being impossible to adjust in the water.



HEAT

WARRIOR
CANYON





CAM LEWIS

"Active and sporty and almost 62 years old with an ambition to master kites and foiling in 2019 to incorporate with my other professional sailing activities. I am outgoing and thrive with new challenges and hope to be kiting for many years to come. I enjoy off-road mountain bike activities, big boat racing — especially on big tris and cats — and am currently working on a 2019 Transpac LA to Honolulu project with a MOD 70 Tri, hoping to get one on the starting line with a new owner."

Weight: 195 lbs.

Experience: 15 or so years on and off; most progress in last 10 months with new/better gear. Lots of miles with kites on ice and snow.

From: Lincolnville, ME

Personal quiver: 2019 Rebel Duotone kites, 2019 Duotone KTB Select Textreme 138

Riding style/home conditions: All around — I travel to kite but will be exploring more options in Maine around the mid-coast Vero Beach area.

Local spot(s): TBD. No local spot around my house yet. There is a lake in front of my house but its too puffy with lulls, etc.

Favorite pro kiter / most impressive kiter / most influential / sexiest kiter / your personal kite hero? I do not have any favorites or even really follow who is who and what is what in the kite world right now. Surely I recognize some of the big names, yet do not worship anyone of them. I am wide open to be impressed by tricks and jumps and technology yet have no sports heroes in any sport — you are only as good as your next race....

If you were going to be reincarnated as one piece of kite equipment what would it be? Something that would fly in the same effortless manner as a Giant Wandering Albatross through the southern oceans on an unobtainium foil and be made from natural fibers and powered by the sun and oceans energies.

What was the main thing you learned about kiteboarding gear during the test week? Holy Crap Batman — there is a lot on with the arms race to make kites easier to fly, better efficiency and lighter and stronger with simpler tuning and rigging systems.

What kite and board would you want to purchase for yourself and why? I have a good kit right now (2019 Duotone and Ion gear) and the test reinforced that I made good choices.



DAVID KIRKUP

"I sit at my desk all day dreaming about kiting. When the wind blows and I am at work there is definitely a lot of envy for those who are out kiting! In the summer kiting is on a lake with occasional trips to the Pacific Ocean; winter involves snowkiting on skis or trips to Caribbean destinations. I would say I am an intermediate rider who enjoys getting out and riding. I'd like to boost higher and learn to ride surf and foil board. Ambitions are good and give reason to get out for another session."

Weight: 215 lbs.

Experience: 5 years

From: Sylvan Lake, Alberta, Canada

Personal gear: 2018 RRD Obsession MK10, RRD Poison and BS45

Riding style/home conditions: All-around freeride, low altitude boosting and learning basic tricks.

Local spot(s): Sylvan Lake, Gull Lake, Keho Lake and Oldman Dam. Conditions range from light wind in central Alberta to gusty high wind, 10 to 40 knots gusting to 60!

Favorite pro kiter / most impressive kiter / most influential / sexiest kiter / your personal kite hero? I have met Lewis Carter at Squamish Spit, such a smooth rider!

What was the main thing you learned about kiteboarding gear during the test week? I learned that there are many different styles of kites and you need to adapt your riding style to the kite ... and I only have one style and I need to learn different riding styles to become a better more efficient kiter!

What kite and board would you want to purchase for yourself and why? I would purchase a 3 strut kite ... I really enjoyed the Duotone Dice and Evo kites with none Click bar and the Duotone Select board. I can't really explain why I liked the kites other than their smooth power, predictable handling and good bar feedback — I always knew where the kites were. I liked how the Select was stiff and handled the chop well with minimal spray, held an edge and its good upwind ability. The Cabrinha X-Caliber board came in a close second when the footpads were adjusted properly. It was similar to the Select; it had a slightly softer feel in the chop but still had a firm feeling. I found that once Cabrinha's 360 degree Velcro attachment point under the H20 pad was adjusted to my liking, the footpads became comfortable because of the neoprene-lined fit. It was snug but allowed for flex depending on how tight the footstraps were adjusted.



DAVEY BEARD

"Admitted kitesurfing addict who chases the wind around the world. Will work for kitesurfing."

Weight: 185 lbs.

Experience: 19 years

From: Santa Barbara, CA

Personal Gear: North (Duotone) Dice 2015, F-One Diablo 2015-2017, Duotone Jaime, Slingshot surfboard, Mikelab foils

Riding style/home conditions: Mainly foilboard racing with some occasional surf and twin tip action; lighter wind, flatter water with occasional waves.

Local spot(s): Leadbetter Beach, 10-15 mph fairly steady wind, flat water/small swell.

Favorite pro kiter / most impressive kiter / most influential / sexiest kiter / your personal kite hero? Sorry, too busy progressing to follow the media buzz on who's who. I'm usually just jealous of who's already out on the water while I'm on the beach.

If you were going to be reincarnated as one piece of kite equipment what would it be? A super comfy harness because I'm hooked.

What was the main thing you learned about kiteboarding gear during the test week? Foil kites don't work well for freestyle moves because the lines go slack when you load and pop. A fast turning kite can always be slowed down with adjustments/bar/lines, but a slow turning kite can't be sped up.

What kite and board would you want to purchase for yourself and why? Airush Union was the kite I had the most fun on. It had the most pull for size while still having a wide wind range and was fast turning with good responsive control. The Duotone Dice was a close second, but I think the Union jumped a bit higher. For boards, I would choose the board I currently have, the Duotone Jamie. This board has such good edge control and pop—you don't even need fins. The FCD 5'2" was incredible — definitely my pick for a strapless board if I'm going to throw down the cash. It was so lightweight with a great shape: was super great at pointing upwind while still feeling loose and carvey through turns. We were worried about it getting destroyed during testing being so lightweight but it seemed to hold up well with no dents or dings.



BRYAN WALDBERG

"I'm a Southern California native that loves the outdoors and adventure sports. I'm an outgoing software engineer that can't wait for his next windy day off."

Weight: 180 lbs.

Experience: 6 years

From: San Diego, CA

Personal gear: 2015 LF Envy, 2014 LF Overdrive, 2014 Slingshot Rally

Riding style/home conditions: Freeride with a bit of surf.

Local spot(s): Silver Strand and Pacific Beach Drive. Light wind in the ocean with closed out waves.

Favorite pro kiter / most impressive kiter / most influential / sexiest kiter / your personal kite hero? I have to go the sappy route and say that my personal kite hero is a fellow member of Tkb's test week, my dad. He is the one that got me into kiteboarding and is still riding strong. He has been an amazing role model and I look up to him, even if he won't try a kiteman. It's either him or Kevin Langere, because of a mid-air selfie pizza bite.

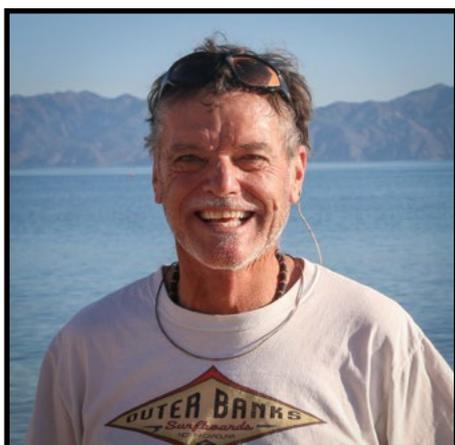
If you were going to be reincarnated as one piece of kite equipment what would it be? I'd be a center strut, gazing down on the world and soaring through the air.

What was the main thing you learned about kiteboarding gear during the test week? I learned that gear varies largely and can be tailored to your specific preferences, but at the same time all of the modern equipment will work and can let you have a fun session on the water.

What kite and board would you want to purchase for yourself and why? I'd choose the F-One Bandit 12m and the Ozone Code. I had one of my most fun sessions on the water with this equipment. The kite was very responsive for a 12m. It boosted well, had great turning speed and the timing of everything worked well for me. The board had a great combination of flex and edge hold that allowed me to ride with a carvey style as well as pop well when I wanted to get some air. As far as surfboards go, the Duotone Whip was my favorite. It instilled a lot of confidence and allowed me to progress my skills quickly while still being nimble and fun to whip around.







MICHA DASSLER

"Just today I launched a 44.3-foot jump. HAPPY HAPPY HAPPY! I really like to travel to European kiting destinations as well as the Caribbean... life is good."

Weight: 180 lbs.

Experience: 19 years

From: Pompano Beach, FL and Wheatley, Ontario

Personal gear: 2018 Clouds, 2018 Core XR5, 2018 Soul, 2018 Carved Emperor twin tip, 2015 Aviso surfboard, 2016 Slingshot Angry Swallow surfboard, 2018 Moses foilboard and wings

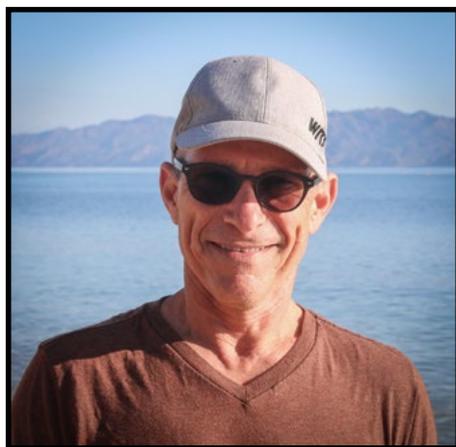
Riding style/home conditions: Surf, all-around, foiling.

Local spot(s): NE 16 St. Pompano Beach in winter, Rondeau Bay, Lake Erie Canada in summer. In Florida waves up to 10 feet, winds 10 - 30 mph; in Canada, choppy or flat, winds 10-30 mph.

Favorite pro kiter / most impressive kiter / most influential / sexiest kiter / your personal kite hero? Don't really have a hero but most impressive I would say is your very own editor, Brendan Richards!

What was the main thing you learned about kiteboarding gear during the test week? Keep an open mind, think outside the box.

What kite and board would you want to purchase for yourself and why? I really liked the Blade 10m and Cabrinha Drifter as well as the Fletcher Chouinard (FCD) surfboard. The FCD surfboard was extremely light, perfect for smaller to medium size waves and was good in choppy conditions. In larger waves I would want something more sturdy and heavier. I use Boardriding Maui Clouds for foiling and have a 4.8m, 6.2m 8m, 10.4m and 13.4m. The Clouds are considerably faster, but the Souls have definitely a wider range e.g. the 6m Soul could replace three Clouds, my 6.2m 8m and 10.4m. I would NEVER use Clouds on a twin tip, however, I will certainly use the Souls on a TT — they deliver high and lofty jumps (the company's heritage is producing paragliders). I don't think I would use the 10m Soul with a surfboard though; too slow. Maybe the 6m and surfboard, but only if the waves are smallish — a LEI kite will most certainly relaunch MUCH easier.



JEFF 'EL JEFE' WALDBERG

"I came into the sport in my 50's without a surfing or windsurfing background. Saw some kites out and knew I had to do this. I'm older but still active with mountain biking and running and some snow sports. Kiting has become my number one passion and I/we as a family try to go to spots where there's wind (Hawaii, Turks & Caicos and Mexico)."

Weight: 160 lbs.

Experience: 12 years

From: Oak Park, CA

Personal gear: 2017 LF Envy, 2010 Cabrinha Switchblade, 2018 Airush Ultra, Ocean Rodeo Mako, 2009 Underground 132 twin tip

Riding style/home conditions: Freeride mainly but getting into strapless surfboard.

Local spot(s): Leo Carrillo, Zero's. Some flat if there is kelp but can get waves and occasional chop. Spring and summer is when it gets warm inland and this produces the needed wind. Being a twin tip guy I need 15mph and up to get out using my 12m.

Favorite pro kiter / most impressive kiter / most influential / sexiest kiter / your personal kite hero? Favorite kiter would have to be Francis Osorio Rivera who is an amputee. Being a physical therapist I can really appreciate the hard work that she had to do to get to this point. She inspires and exemplifies how anyone can become part of the kiteboarding community.

What was the main thing you learned about kiteboarding gear during the test week? That it's like the "blind men and the elephant". Each one feels something else depending on where they stand. Depending on ability, type of riding, and type of equipment you have previously used, you are going to get something slightly different from each kite. I just wanted to have other slightly older, intermediate level riders get a sense of what's out there for them.

What kite and board would you want to purchase for yourself and why? I just purchased the Airush Ultra after trying a few single strut kites during test week. I liked the simplicity, responsiveness and feel of these kites and since I both travel with my gear as well as walk long distances from my car to the beach, it's nice to have a kite that's so compact and light.



DYLAN DOBBYN

"I'm a full-time rider involved in the local kite community. When I'm not riding, I'm either teaching somebody else to ride or having a beer with buds talking about the day's session."

Weight: 190 lbs.

Experience: 7 years

From: Nahant, MA

Personal gear: Ozone v9 Edges, Carved Emperor TT, Lift foil with Slingshot Hypermilller deck, Naish Global surfboard, Woo 3.0

Riding style/home conditions: Freeride flat water and surf. Little bit of everything except freestyle/park features.

Local spot(s): Boston / Cape Cod area — windier than the “windy city”! Side-off smoothness with 2-3ft kickers. 12 and 9M conditions fall, winter, spring. Foilboard in summer.

Favorite pro kiter / most impressive kiter / most influential / sexiest kiter / your personal kite hero? Jesse Richman for being a fearless, fun loving, great guy. You can just see it in the way he rides. Toby Braeuer, Jake Kelsick for doing what they love and passing it on. Nick Jacobsen is a nut!!! There's really just too many great folks to list them all...

If you were going to be reincarnated as one piece of kite equipment what would it be? I'd come back as Kevin Langeree's kite. What a blast it would be to mega-loop and watch him go for it. Does he ever crash?

What was the main thing you learned about kiteboarding gear during the test week? Picked up a few foil kite tips. Flysurfer Soul and other freeride foil kites are great for wind range, spinning and sliding. Three strut higher aspect inflatables (Duotone Evo, Airush Union) are great for freeride. Manufacturers seem to have figured out how to keep 3 strut canopies stable under high loads and looping.

What kite and board would you want to purchase for yourself and why? I'd choose the Duotone Evo for its boost and good all-around capability. For boards, the Core Fusion TT for its great grip, pop, and lightness and the Airush Amp II surfboard for slashing the 3-4'ers.



DRAY MURRAY

"I love kiting! Took my first lesson in 2000 and for the last 19 years I have been working at Murrays.com selling kite gear. We don't get strong winds consistently in the Santa Barbara area so we are enjoying foiling a lot. I'm really loving the evolution of the sport and the continued diversification of disciplines and gear."

Weight: 190 lbs.

Experience: 19 years

From: Santa Barbara, CA

Personal gear: BWSurf 2018/AE2, Airush 2018 Ultra, BWSurf 2018 Stallion, Liquid Force 2018 Impulse Foil

Riding style/home conditions: Strapless surf and foiling.

Local spot(s): Ventura, CA; 15-25 mph and small to medium waves.

Favorite pro kiter / most impressive kiter / most influential / sexiest kiter / your personal kite hero? Who is not inspired by Kai Lenny right now? He is seemingly doing every watersport and is able to make the most of almost any weather condition. To me that is the goal, to be able to play every day and enjoy the conditions that we have to their fullest.

If you were going to be reincarnated as one piece of kite equipment what would it be? I would want to be a 9m kite, perfect foiling in light winds, kiting waves in the 20-30mph range, or pushing it on a twin tip in 25+.

What was the main thing you learned about kiteboarding gear during the test week? There is a lot differentiation of gear within the same discipline. Wave kites for example differ widely. Some are geared towards low end power, while others are geared towards the higher end of their wind range with lots of depower and like to be flown aggressively to generate power. These differences further separate gear and suit differing conditions and riding styles. So with some searching everyone should be able to find something to match their local spot and style.

What kite and board would you want to purchase for yourself and why? I really enjoyed the versatility of the Airush Ultra. It's light, quick and drifts really well which makes it great for both foiling and waves. RE: boards, I am really liking the progression of the 'Tomo' style boards; they go upwind really well, their surf performance is continually getting better, they are great for strapless airs, and they are super easy to travel with. So I would go with the FCD Blunt because it is remarkably light and held up to our week of abuse really well.



MARKO BARTSCHERER

"I have been kiting since forever and a day and rediscover my love for it every time I go out. To pay for my gear I work as a Systems and Software engineer building cool gadgets."

Weight: 220 lbs.

Experience: 18 years

From: San Diego, CA

Personal gear: I have a pile of gear that I collected over the years. My go-to kites are the F-One Breeze and Furtive. For boards, I mostly ride my Lift with a Camet raceboard or Slingshot Kneeswagger. When the wind comes up I like to use my T-9 Skimboard, Litewave Kick-S and DV8.

Riding style/home conditions: We have both great surf and flat water conditions with light wind, I mostly foil but love wave riding and jumping around on my twin tip.

Local spot(s): All over San Diego County, but my main spots are Silver Strand J-Street and Mission Bay. 9-12mph wind. Glassy surf and butter flat water in the bay.

Favorite pro kiter / most impressive kiter / most influential / sexiest kiter / your personal kite hero? LaRoy Rutledge (local San Diego kiter). He is older than Betty White, builds his own gear and kites every day.

If you were going to be reincarnated as one piece of kite equipment what would it be? Kite leash; everybody uses/needs it but doesn't care about it much.

What was the main thing you learned about kiteboarding gear during the test week? There is a lot of good gear out there, also a few stinkers, mostly it comes down to your riding style. It is a good idea to ride and test before you buy.

What kite and board would you want to purchase for yourself and why? Well, I bought the F-One Mirage foil right after the test, so that and the F-One 51TS foil board are one for sure. There were many exciting kites in the test this year but if I had to pick just one I would say the Bandit, I love the balance they found between solid jumping, reasonably quick turning and grunt to get you out of trouble.



AIRUSH ULTRA v2

Sizes Available: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 17m

Sizes Tested: 7, 10m



AIRUSH SAYS:

The Ultra V2 has redefined our lofty expectations of what a kite can do. The light weight and stability have opened up places we could never have kited, in marginal conditions we would not have considered kiteable.

With unbeatable performance, weight saving features, and an exclusive Airush Load Frame for maximum durability, the Ultra kite has been the go-to kite for foil riders, wave riders and snow kites alike.

When considering the Ultra evolution, a focus on segmentation reduction through the canopy and leading edge Lightweight Single Strut geometry increases the skin tension per panel. Fewer segments result in more tension between each segment point. This increases the responsiveness of the Ultra V2, while maintaining stability.

Visit for more info: www.airush.com/kites/ultra-2

TKB SAYS:

Nailed it! Yes they did, with this second version of Airush's single strut medium aspect foil/freeride kite with sweptback wingtips. Tester's praise for this kite was universal for its lightweight, drifting and turning performance that was described as a 'delight' to fly. The Ultra uses a large diameter Boston valve that requires the larger nozzle of the standard pump attachments and with a fairly thin LE and single strut this kite pumps up quick and easy. There are two wingtip steering settings to choose between low and high bar pressure and the single-setting front bridle has three pulleys. The pigtails are color-coded and labeled with tags for those new to rigging, the front bridle pigtails end in loops and the wingtip pigtails end in knots. One of the most apparent things about the Ultra V2 is its lightweight build that is apparent from the moment you pick up a kite bag to the quick and nimble flying you experience in the air. Despite its overall light weight the Ultra does utilize Airush's unique Dyneema load frame construction for a seemingly good build. The first thing we noticed about the Ultra is its nice progressive bar feel with light to medium bar pressure. Single struts tend to be a little mushy in the bar feedback department, but the Ultra's progressive bar feel with minimal steering input needed really impressed the team. Testers highlighted the Ultra's direct steering and the canopy's ability to dump all the power for complete depower ability. When you couple the crisp kite feel with its impressive drift and in the air stability, you have a winning combination of kite performance that really shines in freeride cruising and foilboarding segments. The steering response is good even when the kite is depowered and the steering arc is a tight pivotal turn. Although you will feel some flutter when you depower the kite (it is a single strut afterall), it's minimal and it doesn't seem to overwhelm the bar. At one point during the test we flew the Ultra in massively overpowered conditions, which isn't the ideal setup to test a single strut kite. The canopy had a decent amount of flutter, but with a little bit of extra bar tension the kite behaved fairly well for a canopy with so little supporting its air frame. Again, the virtue of this kite is in the lower end of the power envelope, on a surfboard or a foilboard, yet this kite can also handle the load of casual twin tip riding. Sometimes testers forget that a single strut can't compete with the explosive boosting power or direct steering of a performance freeride kite like the Union, yet across the board our tester's loved this kite and recommend it as a great traveling freeride kite that packs down super light and ideally serves as the perfect foilboarding quiver for all conditions.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Drift and lightweight construction excels in low wind, and the performance doesn't let you down when the wind starts to crank. No backstall, drifts effortlessly, bar response is immediate, steady pull through pivotal turns. Lofts between a hanglider and parachute - silky soft landings." // Dray Murray



"Ridiculously light and packs small - very easy to fly. This featherweight kite is a strong adversary for the heavyweights in all disciplines, freeride, freestyle, wave riding and foiling." // Tib Anghel



"Easy to control, depower and drift kite that will make you feel like a kid holding a balloon. Great foiling kite with 100% depower. Not my pick for twin tip riding, but responsive kite that steers even when depowered, fast turning kite for foil or surfboard." // Dylan Dobbyn

AIRUSH UNION v4

Sizes Available: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14m

Sizes Tested: 9, 12m



AIRUSH SAYS:

The Union v4 has been re-designed from the bottom up to improve key areas, delivering even more lift and hang time when going for big air, along with quicker and more responsive steering. The shape has been refined to sit slightly further forward in the window whilst retaining the light and ultra-responsive steering. The wingtip design prevents back stalling, while the increased linear power delivery has made it even more suitable for freeriding, freestyle, and wave riders alike.

The Union is the natural step up for the Lithium user looking for increased high end jumping performance and more forward steering. Ideal for the freestyle rider wanting unhooked performance and a more forgiving feel. For a more direct response and totally fresh feel, the new fixed bridle adds another dimension for an intermediate to advanced rider. It offers a direct response and uses less bar input for immediate steering and more crisp feel for improved kite looping.

Visit for more info: www.airush.com/kites/union-v4

TKB SAYS:

The Union v4 is Airush's explosive boosting big air lift freeride kite that Airush markets as the next step up beyond the Lithium in the freeride category. With its 3-strut airframe and medium to higher aspect canopy with square wingtips the Union earned Tester's respect as a user-friendly yet high performance boosting machine. The leading edge feels fairly slim and the overall weight of this kite is impressively light while still using the Dyneema load frame construction. The Union features a fixed single setting leading edge bridle for direct steering and power response and three wingtip settings to select between more/less bar pressure, which we rode on the stock less bar pressure setting at the end of the wingtip. The Union's wingtip pigtails end in knots and the leading edge bridle ends in loops and the Union came with a Boston valve which requires the larger of the standard hose fittings that come with all pumps for a quick and easy inflation. The Union is one of those performance freeride kites that you can feel likes to fly a little bit farther forward in the window and when you get a gust this kite really likes to accelerate and build more and more power, the kind of power you can turn into vertical lift. We were really impressed with this kite's boosting power, making jumps really fun with good hangtime. In terms of steering response this kite has a fairly direct feel and the steering arc is a bit wider than both the Lithium and the Wave, both of which feature a more pivotal steering path. The Union's steering is one of the qualities that make this kite such a strong, big air lifting machine. Tester found the Union to have medium bar pressure with the power delivery being fairly progressive, but not as sheet and go as what you find with the Lithium. The Union wants to be flown a little more aggressively but the power delivery across that throw is intuitive. In terms of relaunch the Union delivered a steady relaunch every time. Nose down in the water at the bottom of the window, with a solid pull on the kite it rolled up onto a tip and began to taxi towards the edge of the window. Unlike the Wave, the Union did not hot launch from the bottom of the window, but reliably released its wingtip at the edge of the water. Based on tester feedback, the Union could double as a progression kite for a more aggressive beginner, but ultimately this kite is the bread and butter of a freeride kiter looking for explosive boosting power that also offers a very intuitive feel and is fairly user-friendly. We'd consider using this kite in the waves for the odd session, but its primary place of use would be big air/performance freeride and scoring a spot on the Woo scoreboards. Overall, the Union is an excellent choice for big air specialists that also demand user-friendly all around ease of use.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Smooth turning kite, smooth power delivery, great performer on all fronts, friendly in the air with plenty of power." // Joe Chehock



"Quick kite response, predictable, bar pressure just right to feel the kite w/o being tiring. A pocket ace for the intermediate and advanced rider who expects predictable, quick kite response and solid boosting and easy relaunches." // Tib Anghel

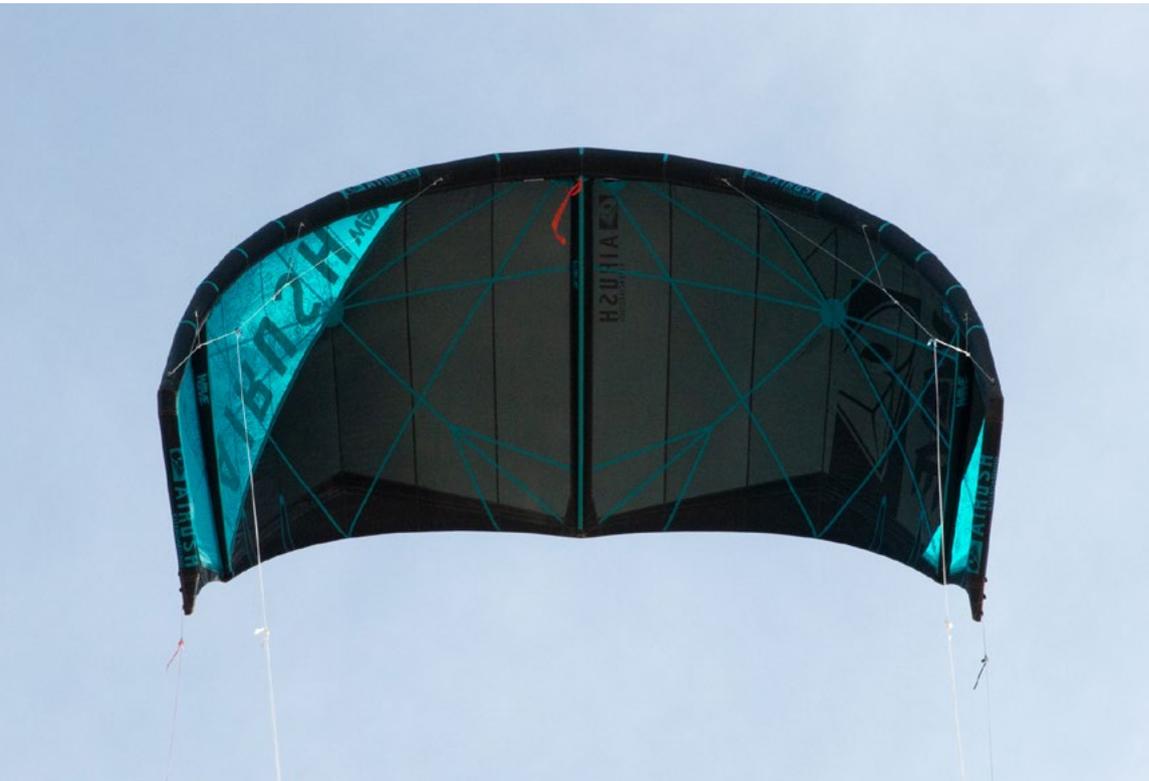


"Diagonal canopy supports for folks expecting many years out of a kite. Nice, light feeling, flat LE with excellent boosting performance and good turning speed and great upwind ability." // Dylan Dobbyn

AIRUSH WAVE v8

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

Sizes Tested: 9, 12m



AIRUSH SAYS:

Wave and strapless riding have come a long way since we first introduced the Wave kite, but through ongoing development, we continue to take those driving turns, big strapless forwards, and smooth power delivery to a new performance level. The Wave V8's updated shape is focused around refinement, while customization through bridle options give a fresh perspective. With the optional fixed bridle, riders can pick between more direct steering and on-off power delivery without pulleys or a smooth and progressive ride with amazing gust response with pulleys. This fixed bridle has been designed specifically for each size of kite in the V8 range, giving the rider the most efficient and precise bridling. The benefits of the unique construction of Airush Kites is evident in the Wave, where the Load Frame, absolute premium materials and years of construction refinement deliver the perfect balance of light weight drifting capabilities and precision turning with durability and reliability.

Visit for more info: www.airush.com/kites/wave-8

TKB SAYS:

The Airush Wave is a medium to low aspect 3-strut kite with fairly sweptback wingtips that testers gave excellent reviews for its drifting ability, user-friendly turning and surprisingly fun boosting. The Wave comes with two bridle options, one with pulleys, the other without. We had the bridle with three pulleys which is designed to offer a softer, more progressive sheet and go feel. The wingtips offer three attachment points to adjust bar pressure and the front bridle has pigtails with loops and the wingtip attachment points end in knots. The construction on this kite feels lightweight with a noticeably thinner diameter leading edge. The Wave uses a Boston valve which requires the larger of the standard fittings that come with all pump hoses for quick and easy inflation. The Wave features fairly responsive steering input and in terms of turning, its steering arc is a tight pivot style turn that is very easy to control. The in/out sheeting on the bar feels fairly progressive, although in underpowered conditions we had to tune the kite with the power cleat to avoid over-sheeting and stalling the kite. Testers rated the bar pressure between medium and medium plus and all commented on this kite's extensive drift capabilities as well as stability in the wind window and noted that it likes to sit a little deeper in the window. As a surf kite, you wouldn't expect the Wave to score strong in the boosting department, but all testers commented on how fun this kite was for user-friendly and fun jumping. In terms of lift and pull, the Wave actually has a nice medium pulling power which is smooth through gusts, and seemed to have good range—the canopy completely depowered during gusts. When it comes to relaunch this is one of those kites that when its nose down in the water at the bottom of the window, the Wave will turn and hot launch for a quick relaunch. This is a great feature for a wave kite when you need to get it up before the next set wave chunders the canopy into a bowtie. Testers highlighted the Wave for its drift capabilities and user-friendly power and steering, as well as its quick relaunch, but also commented universally on its fun jumping potential with good boosting lift and middle of the road hangtime. The Wave is a kite that will excel mostly in the surf realm, but its characteristics make the Wave also an excellent candidate for foilboarding and the all-around freeride kiter who mixes waves, with big air and the foil.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Love this kite, does almost everything with unbelievable boosting on a wave kite. Comfortable from the get-go. Slightly heavier bar pressure, good turning speed, great bar design (best QR reconnect system)." // Micha Dassler



"Pulled when I wanted and let off when I needed depower, drifted with ease, going downwind was a joy. Stable with good upwind ability." // Kiter Mike

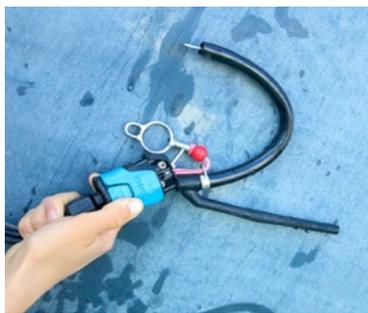


"Felt instantly comfortable, stable, easy to fly, surprisingly fun to jump for a kite that sits back in the window. Great turning wave kite with jumping fun." // Marko Bartscherer

AIRUSH BARS

CORE BAR V4

CORE CLEAT BAR V4



Our Airush kites come with two types of bars, the Core Bar V4 and the Core Cleat Bar V4. The Core Bar comes with the above the bar power straps for adjusting depower and the Core Cleat Bar which features an above the bar cleat for adjusting power. The Core bars are largely the same except for the power management mechanism for powering and depowering the kite.

The Core bar V4 is an adjustable length bar (50-60cm) that features a single center-line safety flag depower with a low V and a reduced diameter PU-coated depower/throw line for durability and longevity. The center lines end in knots (color coded blue) and the outside lines end in loops (color coded red and white). This bar features a sliding stopper to adjust travel, yet there is no adjustment for changing the overall length between the quick release and power control. The Cleat Bar features Velcro on the power tuning toggle to keep extra slack in place while riding and the above the bar power straps are always kept in place and within reach. These bars feature a below the bar hand swivel integrated into a push away quick release with a quick release travel guard. To trigger the quick release simply use one hand to slide up the square shaped release handle but when it comes to resetting the quick release it is a two-handed process. One hand has to hold the release handle in the open position, the other hand has to thread the pivoting gate through the end of the loop and then back into its closed position before releasing the handle to slide back. Last year we felt the swivel wasn't that easy to move, yet this year the swivel seemed much more easy to rotate.

You can adjust the length of the outside lines by folding over the integrated floats and removing the internal leader lines out through a hole in the floats. Adjusting the outside line lengths is done by connecting to one of three knots (the stock setting is the shortest setting). The bar diameter is thin and offers medium density cushiness – it has a ton of texture with ridges, and grooves that create a grip pattern that is fairly diverse. Your hand will get accustomed to the proper feel of the bar in your hand and likely discourage accidental bar reversal. In addition, the smooth aluminum insert is labeled with an Airush logo when the bar is properly held, and when the bar is reversed you see 'wrong way.' The bar ends are rubbery for accidental facial contact and the floats are integrated into the bar ends and very helpful when grabbing extra tension on the outside lines. New this year, the bungee is tucked into the float and is semi retractable which means the bungee stays out of the way while riding and wrapping, but are useful for clean stowage when the bar is not in use.

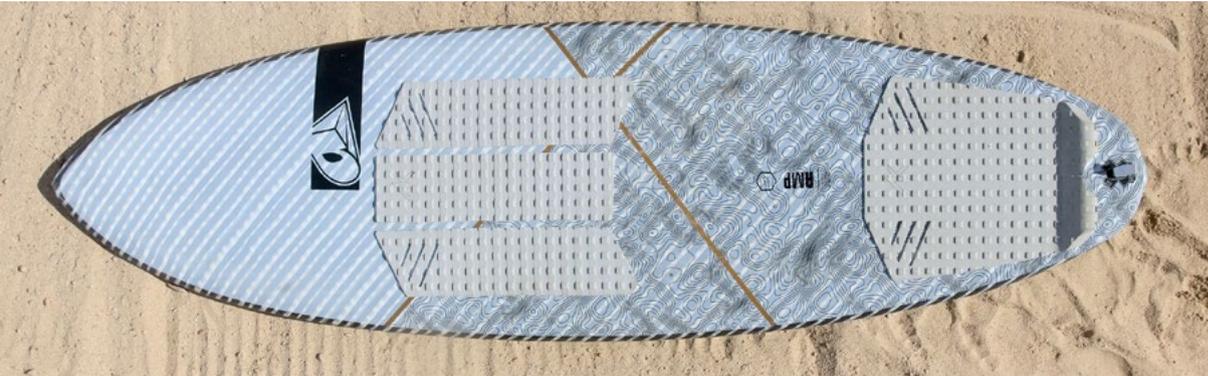
Visit for more info on the bar: www.airush.com/kites/#kite-bars



AIRUSH AMP II v2

Sizes Available: 5'2", 5'4", 5'6", 5'8"

Sizes Tested: 5'4" (163cm), 19" (48.6cm), 2.3" (5.8cm), 25.4L



AIRUSH SAYS:

The AMP II was developed directly from our favorite dedicated all-round surf shape, combining a flat rocker for high speed and control, with a higher curve outline to optimize the maneuverability. The narrower diamond tail is ideal for kiting, as it maintains control at high speed while the wider center and fuller nose work with the flat rocker to optimize the low wind performance. The bottom shape features a single to double concave through the center section to absorb chop and offer a smooth ride. The winger channels introduce more rocker into the tail section for added snap off the top, while keeping a fast rail rocker for drive through the bottom turn. The AMP II is the ultimate blend of drive and maneuverability, ideal for less powerful surf and onshore days. Ride it one size smaller for higher wind and flat water boosting or one size bigger for surfing and kiting crossover. The AMP II sets a new paradigm in smaller wave performance, but will surprise you in all conditions.

Visit for more info: www.airush.com/boards/amp-ii-v2

TKB SAYS:

The Airush Amp was one of our favorite boards for bump and jump strapless freestyle with the Reflex Carbon Inegra construction in the 5'4" x 19 size. This board is super fun with a surprisingly light construction, making it potentially one of the lightest boards in our test. The Amp bottom shape features a single concave through the tail and thruster fin box configuration. The Amp has a bit more volume — you can feel it in the deck with a bit of quirkiness and a bit of rail chatter going into the wind from being such an active shape. The Airush Amp feels great for more aggressive and confident riders who want a quick and nimble responsive board for pushing the limits. We tend to expect a little bit of rail chatter on the upwind legs from a board this light and responsive, yet it went upwind quite well and felt efficient through the water. The tail feels loose and skatey, not super locked in, but rather ready to break loose for fun slashes off the top. Having a nice skatey tail can make the board really fun in smaller surf and might be more acceptable for more aggressive surfers looking for an aerial board. In this size range this board is probably optimal for small to medium surf and with its extremely lightweight carbon construction, it helped us land even the most half-assed strapless trick attempts. The Amp II comes with a split front and back pad; we did think that the front pad could cover a bit more width, particularly for strapless freestyle (if we installed the pad, we would have just put the panels slightly wider apart for more deck coverage). Overall, this little potato chip was super fun and playful, a great board for learning strapless freestyle with easy rotations and durable construction that seems like it will hold up to your best beatings. The Amp is a great alternative for those surfers looking for a playful freestyle stick who want nothing to do with the modern planing hull parallel rail thing.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



“The carbon Amp is so light, it’s amazing for strapless airs, even in light winds. Its also quite strong, our test board is showing no wear from the constant tester abuse. The stubby shape with rounded tail is quite agile and stable in the chop and can carve comfortably for super fun in small to medium swell.”
// Dray Murray



“Fast, sharp turning, locks into track at speed, can be twitchy, fast slashing board for quick moves.” // Dylan Dobbyn



“Wide board that was really easy to switch feet in transitions, floats with good buoyancy that keeps you up. This board was easy to progress on.” // Chris Myles

AIRUSH APEX TEAM v4

Sizes Available: 135 x 41cm, 138 x 42cm, 140 x 43cm

Sizes Tested: 138 x 42cm



AIRUSH SAYS:

The Apex Team is our premium freeride/freestyle crossover board. Coming from the same roots as the Apex, the Apex Team combines the traditional construction and shape with our high-performance Carbon Fiber Torsion Flex technologies. Not only is this board built with a full carbon construction, but it also features our Carbon Nano Rod Technology – the biggest innovation in twin tips since the wood-core. The Airush Nano Rod Technology utilizes 3mm diameter carbon rods embedded through the Paulownia wood core in an arc formation. This allows the board to have amazing torsional response and strength without the need to change core thickness. The Apex Team brings the smooth elements of a freeride board together with the more aggressive elements of a freestyle board allowing riders to push their riding level while experiencing the benefits of a lightweight, high-performance construction.

Visit for more info: www.airush.com/boards/apex-team-v4

TKB SAYS:

This year we tested the Apex in the Team construction that features carbon glass around a wood core with Airush's unique nano rod technology. At first glance, we noticed the Apex's flatter rocker and squarer tips and wider template which is Airush's recipe for a more freestyle weighted freeride board. Compared to the Switch, the Apex features a significantly stiffer flex pattern that allows you to load a ton energy into the kiteboard and turn it into good unsent amplitude. Everything about the Apex is more geared towards more performance riding, ideal for the more aggressive freestyle kiter that does everything with more speed and skill. The Apex is a bit more skatey, which was noted by all testers. Compared to the Switch, the Apex requires a bit more work to keep this board on edge and rocketing upwind. The Apex feels incredibly efficient in the water with its single concave bottom and testers generally found that the Apex was fairly comfortable through the chop. When you put the stiffer flex pattern together with the wider squared tips you get a machine that wants to squeeze bigger jumps out of every session and stick bigger more powerful tricks. The Apex doesn't forsake freeriding comfort altogether as testers reported comfortable chop handling but it does require a rider with confident edge control and the desire to push the performance limits.

The Apex comes with three stance width settings on the board and the AK Element straps offer tons of duck settings to adjust your stance. The Element straps offer quad adjustments that are very straightforward and easy to adjust. The footbeds are a nice comfy rubbery pad with tons of ridges on the back and you can adjust the density of the pad by choosing between three inserts to place under the strap upon installation. We rocked the medium density and got tester feedback that ranged from really good to a bit on the firm side.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Pops well but felt loose and skatey on edge. Screams upwind and goes through chop well." // Joe Chehock



"Strong in the chop, gave the boost of the day, wonderful footstraps, wide width gave stability, a bit of splash off the tips." // Chris Myles



"Slightly wider outline with lower rocker, sharp rails. Loads and pops nice with clean release, but not enough side cut to be carvy. Freeriders who like jumping will love the pop, Medium flex softens the chop but its stiffer than most." // Dylan Dobbyn

AIRUSH SWITCH

Sizes Available: 138 x 41cm, 140 x 42cm

Sizes Tested: 138 x 41cm



AIRUSH SAYS:

With the same amazing freeride performance as the Switch, the Switch Team offers a lightweight high response carbon construction. We combine this carbon construction with the Airush Multi-zone Biotech core; a vertical Paulownia wood core sandwich. This multi-layer construction creates a consistent density from the natural material. These two technologies take the standard Switch model to a new level, creating an extremely responsive freeride board which excels when loading, popping, landing and cruising. Featuring the Full-Flex Tip Technology found in the Switch, the Switch Team also features our full Carbon Torsion Control lay-up construction. This brings all the best elements of a high-performance carbon fiber competition board into our all-round freeride machine.

Visit for more info: www.airush.com/boards/switch-team-v2

TKB SAYS:

The Switch is Airush's freeride board for all around fun riding, combining ease of use with forgiving and friendly handling to match the needs of progressing kitesurfers and those looking for a comfortable ride. This year we tested the Team construction which incorporates carbon glass over a wood core and high-tech stuff like carbon nano rods, all aimed at keeping the weight down. Compared to the Apex we tested, the Switch had a little more rocker and pulled in tips that make the board a bit more playful, and much easier to use for rail to rail carving and friendly transitions. Testers noted the Switch's excellent upwind ability and efficiency through the water as well as its ability to smoothly track through the chop. Even in the choppiest conditions, this board was really fun and easy to set on rail and charge through the chop. The Switch is super fun for carving — it has just the right amount of grip with the tail fins and outline — transitioning through carves along the board's rails is predictable and intuitive. The Switch features a softer flex pattern than the Apex and combined with the carbon construction this board finds a very nice balance with forgiving flex that also delivers some good load and pop, all while keeping the overall weight of the board on the lighter side of things. Overall, The Airush Switch continues to be a cream of the crop freeride board with really fun but user-friendly performance that gets the upwind job done in the bumpiest of conditions while also scoring high in carving and jumping. The Team technology brings a reduction in weight that amplifies the Switch's freeride performance, making the Team construction a must-have choice for the Switch.

The Switch comes with three stance width settings on the board and the AK Element straps offer tons of duck settings to adjust your stance. The Element straps offer quad adjustments that are very straightforward and easy to adjust. The footbeds are a nice comfy rubbery pad with tons of ridges on the back and you can adjust the density of the pad by choosing between three inserts to place under the strap upon installation. We rocked the medium density and got tester feedback that ranged from really good to a bit on the firm side.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"A solid option for freeriding and freestyle due to its good upwind ability, great edge control and smooth landings. Pads are fairly firm." // Tib Anghel



"Comfortable pads and straps, smooth ride through all waters. Great carving, load and pop, and good upwind ability and chop handling. Hard not to have fun on this board." // Marko Bartscherer

BLADE TRIGGER v11

Sizes Available: 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14m

Sizes Tested: 8, 10, 12m



BLADE SAYS:

Following a decade-long journey of meticulously perfecting each and every aspect of the kite, the Trigger enters a new era of versatile, high-flying, attention-grabbing rides. Fit for all level riders and virtually any weather condition, this kite allows you to perform smooth sequences while constantly adding new tricks to your arsenal while taking advantage of its great jumping ability, quick turning and skill building attributes. Don't be surprised if you find an upgraded version of yourself each time you go out there. No matter where your kiting spot is, expect to see the yellower-than-ever Trigger shining brightly in the sky, popping out of bags all over the beach or pulling you up high for another big air maneuver.

Visit for more info: www.bladekites.com/kite/trigger

TKB SAYS:

The Blade Trigger is the classic all-around performance freestyle kite with its 3-strut air frame and medium to high aspect canopy with a soft sweptback leading edge and pulled back wingtips. For the last few years the Trigger has boasted a small diameter leading edge and a light canopy with reduced dacron usage on the trailing edge for a solid but lightweight build. The Trigger features a single pulley front bridle with two adjustments to switch between 'standard' and 'advanced wave' trim modes. The advanced wave mode will move the attachment point farther forward on the leading edge and gives you a bit more depower, but for the majority of our freeride testing we rode the Trigger in the standard mode which means the kite had less depower, a little less bar pressure and bigger jumping. The wingtip features a single attachment setting while inflation is quick and easy with the Max Flow inflation system. This is probably one of the most efficient and fastest inflation valves, but it does require a proprietary wide-mouth pump nozzle attachment to make it work (although you can fake it with the skillful use of a lot of duct tape). Testers cited the Trigger's light to medium bar pressure with exceptional crisp steering response. When you put any pressure on the bar this kite wants to turn and turn fast. The Trigger wants to fly relatively forward in the window and seems to want to pull and accelerate yet with good stability. The power delivery across the bar throw is fairly smooth and intuitive. The Trigger does feel like a kite that wants to be flown more aggressively to find the power, rather than the 'sheet and go' type of progression kite, but when it comes to boosting airs the Trigger delivers the goods. This kite truly shines when you go for load and send jumps, with the lifting boost that the Trigger airframe generates being of the kind that borders on insane. Some of the first jumps on the Trigger made us rethink our flight pattern and work in a kitemloop to keep the landing fairly soft and easy. In terms of relaunch, the leading edge isn't quite as sweptback as some of the other freeride kites and as a result the relaunch requires a bit more input when its nose down in the bottom of the window. We still classify the Trigger as fairly easy to relaunch, but it's not quite as willing to roll up off its nose when directly downwind as say a delta kite, at least not without grabbing a leader line and applying pressure to one wingtip. Once you apply some pressure the Trigger flips up and taxis to the edge of the window and releases from the water, and it did this reliably every time. The Trigger continues to impress testers with its performance freeride lift abilities combined in a generally user-friendly package that makes this kite a great option for generally more aggressive freeriders and those that like an active surf kite.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"I was delightfully surprised at how well this kite performed, it being a new brand for me. I would definitely fly this kite again with it surprisingly solid feel, easy handling and decent turning speed." // Kristin Vincenzo

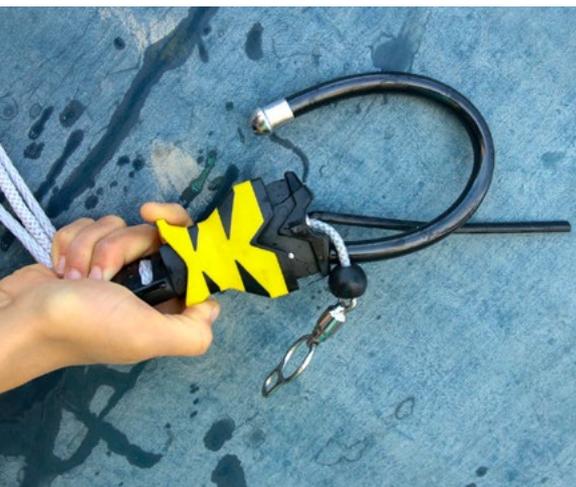


"Boosts, very stable and turns well, where do I get one? Medium bar pressure, excellent boost, hangtime and great upwind ability. This kite was a nice surprise - stepped up and performed!" // Kiter Mike



"Always a sleeper in the test but never fails to impress. Quick responsive turning that will shoot you into orbit, with performance that is not for the faint of heart. Like the adjustable length throw, slick QR system; swivel can be hard to turn." // Dray Murray

BLADE UNIBAR



The Trigger came with Blade's Unibar which features a single center-line safety depower system on a fixed length bar (45, 52, 60cm) which has the center lines end in a knot for rigging purposes. The Unibar features a low-V split on the center lines and an above the bar cleat with a magnet built into the power toggle to secure excess slack to the metal cleat for no-mess riding in depowered conditions. Blade removed the above the bar swivel from the past and integrated it into the quick release body for a below the bar hand swivel that cleans up the rigging quite a bit. The new system is an auto-rotating system that un-swivels the center lines when you sheet in the bar. Like most auto untwists systems, we found ourselves intentionally sheeting the bar in all the way just to initiate the auto-swivel, otherwise twists left in the throw line tended to create additional friction in the travel of the bar and this was noted by many of the testers. The quick release handle is visually easy to see with its bumble bee yellow coloring; the release handle has enough tension that it won't prematurely release and the system is fairly easy to reset with two hands, one holding the handle open, the other inserting the end of the loop back into position and releasing the handle back to normal position. The Unibar has a Spectra depower/throw line that doesn't feature a sliding stopper but the Unibar does have an adjustable length throw to dial in the distance between the tuning cleat and the rider. This bar comes with 23m lines that utilize 19m base lengths with 4m extensions to get to 23m. The outside steering lines end in loops (pigtails color coded black and yellow) and the center lines end in knots (color coded gray). The bar ends feature integrated floats that are relatively compact and molded into the soft bar ends which are a nice feature if your forehead unexpectedly meets the bar. There is a semi-retractable bungee for stowing the lines after wrap up. The outside lines are not adjustable in length. The bar grip stands out with its medium diameter and its angled upward bow as it approaches the bar ends. The bottom of the grip is a smooth but firm EVA and the top is a softer ridge line with bumps dividing finger holds. The color coding on the bar is fairly obvious with yellow coloring on the grip indicating the left side, and the insert shows a Blade logo on the insert when you are holding the bar in the proper orientation. Overall, once you figure out the auto-untwist feature the Trigger has a good mix of functional features combined with a good comfortable grip.

Visit for more info on the bar: www.bladekites.com/unibar3rd



CABRINHA CONTRA

Sizes Available: 13, 15, 17, 19m

Sizes Tested: 13, 19m



CABRINHA SAYS:

The Contra is perfect for any rider that wants to extend their game into the light wind arena with a responsive, light wind kite.

Light wind used to be considered the archenemy of kiteboarding. That was until Cabrinha introduced the Contra light wind kite with its unmatched efficiency and performance combination. Every riding style and discipline now has a kite to bridge your riding into the light wind arena.

The Contra's lightweight 3-strut hybrid design performs incredible things in what used to be known as the unrideable realm. A true light wind performer in any and all riding categories.

Visit for more info: www.cabrinhakites.com/collections/kites/products/contra

TKB SAYS:

The Contra scored rave reviews this year as a dedicated light wind weapon to keep you going on your twin tip or surfboard when the wind hits foilboarding conditions. Designed with a 3-strut low to medium aspect canopy, the Contra offers a fixed single setting front bridle with two attachment settings on the wingtips to choose between “lighter steering impulse/increased depower travel” or with the farther forward setting B, “direct steering/shorter depower travel.” The Contra comes with Cabrinha’s large diameter bayonet style inflation valve that requires no nozzle on the end of your standard pump hose for a quick and easy pump up. The front bridle connection points end in a knot and the wingtip pigtailed end in a loop. The Contra is a super stable kite with fairly crisp bar dynamics for its larger size. The Contra sports a linear power progression along the throw of the bar and felt extremely resistant to over-sheeting and stalling even in the lighter wind sessions. The Contra sits deeper in the window with loads of the grunt pull that you would expect from a large low-wind kite, yet it was very usable power because of the kites surprisingly large amount of depower. The ability to release that power from the canopy made the grunt very usable for staying upwind and at all times served up a comfortable ride. The Contra’s steering arc was wider because of the size, but the steering response was quite good for a kite of its size. The bar pressure surprised us with light to medium tension which we did not anticipate, and is particularly notable because it comes with good feedback and fairly quick inputs to the kite. Overall, testers were really impressed with the Contra in both the 13m and 19m sizes and hailed it as an excellent choice for those not ready to submit to the foilboard for light wind sessions.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



“Easy flying, light bar pressure, good relaunch, with middle of the road turning speed and really good depower.” // Cam Lewis



“Good pull while handling gusts extremely well. Stable kite, not super fast turning but user-friendly intuitive flying; let’s you do what you want to do in light wind, great kite for light wind progression.” // Bryan Waldberg



“Much lighter weight construction than model from two years ago, really good power, light bar pressure, slower turning speed but will keep you off the beach on light wind days and you will actually have fun using it!” // Kristin Vincenzo

CABRINHA DRIFTER

Sizes Available: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13m

Sizes Tested: 9, 12m



CABRINHA SAYS:

Specifically designed for kitesurfing in waves and strapless surf freestyle, the Drifter has the ability to engage and disengage its power on command.

While catching a wave you want all the power you need but while surfing, you often want the kite to completely disappear while you surf on your own power. It's in this moment of pure surfing where you want a kite that 'drifts' down the line with you in a stable and predictable way. We dubbed this phenomenon Drift Stability and it is the crucial ingredient in a performance surf kite. This is why the Drifter has no equal.

Visit for more info: www.cabrinhakites.com/collections/kites/products/drifter

TKB SAYS:

The Drifter is Cabrinha's dedicated surf kite sporting a medium aspect canopy and 3-strut airframe with sweptback square wingtips that testers praised for its easy all around handling, solid middle of the road pulling power and incredible drifting capabilities. The Drifter comes with Cabrinha's large diameter bayonet style inflation valve that requires no nozzle on the end of your standard pump hose for a quick and easy pump up. The Drifter utilizes a single setting front bridle with a single pulley on each side to change the angle of attack and two wingtip settings to choose between "lighter steering impulse/increased depower travel" or with the farther forward setting B, "direct steering/shorter depower travel." Testers indicated the Drifter has medium plus bar pressure, just a little bit more than the Moto, and a little less bar pressure than the Switchblade. With good direct steering response, the Drifter's steering path feels like it has a little bit more of a wider steering arc than some of the other surf kites that utilize a very pivotal style turn, yet nonetheless is fast and easy to put in all the right places. Testers commented on the Drifter's excellent depower, as you can noticeably feel complete depower when the bar reaches the outer end of the stroke. The Drifter wants to be flown through the window and doesn't have quite the 'sheet and go' feel of the Moto, but power delivery is progressive and intuitive. The Drifter's standout quality is its ability to drift downwind and absorb the excess line tension that often occurs while riding down the line. Aside from carving with the wind, one way to test this is to jump fairly high and leave your kite directly overhead as you plummet towards the water. The kite will overfly the window and the lines will slack when you hit the water. The Drifter floated back into the wind window every time; no matter how poorly we flew this kite it absorbed the overflying slack, reengaging line tension high up in the window. When you're surfing down the line in side-on and onshore conditions you really want to maintain line tension and control at all times, and this drifting ability appears to be built into this kite's DNA. The relaunch on the Drifter was nearly instant; with just a little bit of input into the bar, the kite rotated onto a wingtip and released from the water at the bottom of the window with a quick hot launch. This gave us the confidence that in a pinch the Drifter would be back in the air before the next big wave rolls through. Testers identified the Drifter as an excellent wave kite but also found it to be fun and dependable in freeride jumping. The direct steering and steady power were found to be user-friendly and capable of solid air when aggressively flown making this an excellent crossover option for surfers and foilboarders while also being great for those who still want to boost some air on their old twin tip now and again.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Really good drift, pretty fast turning, no uncomfortable pull, was gentle but still had power. This is a great kite for strapless riding, less pull than other wave kites, great drift for turns on a surfboard." // Kristin Vincenzo



"Super stable in the air, felt quick for its size, and stayed in the air even with slack in the lines. Always knew where the kite was in the sky - could even be a great kite for a beginner." // Chris Myles



"Steady drift, clean power delivery, playful, lively even in the larger sizes. Stronger bar pressure but smooth power delivery, responsive turning and a consistent pull through turns. Fun nimble and easy to fly." // Joe Chehock

CABRINHA MOTO

Sizes Available: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14m

Sizes Tested: 8, 10, 12m



CABRINHA SAYS:

Designed for riders who appreciate versatile, predictable kite performance, the Moto kite is a triple threat for any type of riding in a wide range of conditions. It excels in three of the most exciting disciplines the sport has to offer: Freeride, Freesurf, and Foilboarding.

The all-new Moto leads us into a new era of performance kitesurfing that smashes all conventional thinking. This versatile Freeride / Crossover kite is light to the touch and provides a precise and linear power delivery. The lighter weight and quick response is made possible with its 3-strut hybrid plan form.

The Moto performs its best in challenging wind conditions. Generous depower tames the gustiest winds and widens its wind range considerably. The Moto's fast turning speed not only puts this kite into a performance category of its own, it enhances the kite's amazing versatility.

Visit for more info: www.cabrinhakites.com/products/moto

TKB SAYS:

The Moto is the latest kite from Cabrinha with an entirely new platform that delivers crossover performance that straddles the freeride, freesurf and foilboarding disciplines. What that basically means is that the Moto is built to be incredibly user-friendly while delivering responsive flying characteristics such as nimbler turning and easy to use power delivery. The Moto is a 3-strut platform that comes with a medium aspect canopy shape and has a sweptback leading edge with fairly squared wingtips. The Moto features the large diameter bayonet style inflation valve that requires no nozzle on the end of your standard pump hose for a quick and easy pump up. The Moto offers a fixed single setting front bridle with two attachment settings on the wingtips to choose between “lighter steering impulse/increased depower travel” or with the farther forward setting B, “direct steering/shorter depower travel.”

The first attribute we noticed with the Moto is its super comfortable light to medium bar pressure and easy sheeting action. In terms of power delivery, the Moto lands in the sheet and go category with more user-friendly power access. As you pull on the bar, the Moto tends to deliver a substantial amount of pull without having to aggressively fly the kite very hard to find the power. This kite sits a little bit deeper in the window and the steering feels very direct with a steering arc that is a bit wider than a tight pivot. Testers highlighted the Moto’s good depower upon sheeting out as well as its solid drift capabilities and stability in the air. In terms of lift and big boosting, the Moto’s intuitive steering makes big air fun and its jumping performance a respectable middle of the road. This kite doesn’t quite match the performance freeride lift of say the Switchblade, yet when aptly powered an experienced kiter will have no problem getting good altitude—it’s just this kite is built for all around usability and comfort rather than endless lift. The relaunch was fairly quick and reliable, with just a little bit of input into the bar, the kite rotated off its nose from the bottom of the window and relaunched dead downwind of the window and back into the air. The Moto is Cabrinha’s all-around kite that capably crosses over the categories of progression, surf, freeride, foilboarding and freeride while scoring high in comfort and user-friendly intuitive flying.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



“Smooth power generation, quick sweeping turns. Loved jumping and unhooking on this kite. Great relaunch, upwind ability, fast turning speed and stable.” // Davey Beard



“Very direct and powerful kite, generates power through the turn, great pop but not as much hangtime.” // Dray Murray



“Cabrinha quality, predictable steering and power. Excellent stability, medium bar pressure, good turning speed and great power.” // Jeff Waldberg

CABRINHA SWITCHBLADE

Sizes Available: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14m

Sizes Tested: 9, 11, 12m



CABRINHA SAYS:

Designed for the discerning rider who values unrivaled predictability and uncompromising high end performance, the Switchblade is made for those that want style, power, performance and craftsmanship.

The Switchblade's reputation for being the world's highest performance freeride kite not only comes from the thousands of customers who hail its praise, but from its countless world titles. Fastest sailing craft in the world (2010). King of the air (2017). Worlds highest tow-up jump (2018).

What's most amazing about the Switchblade is that all this performance comes in one of the easiest to use packages. Its balance and power delivery make this kite light to the touch and simple to fly. Whether you are working on your freestyle game or testing your limits in boosting incredible air, the Switchblade will deliver with a class of predictability and reliability that can not be found anywhere else.

Visit for more info: www.cabrinhakites.com/collections/kites/products/switchblade

TKB SAYS:

The Switchblade is back for another iteration of Cabrinha's big air machine that delivers nose-bleed height with massive boost. The Switchblade features a 5-strut medium aspect canopy with a sweptback leading edge, a shape that Cabrinha has historically tied to the 'bow kite.' Known for its massive lift potential, this is the kite that most people use for general freeride big air and it continues to be the proper tool to land yourself on the top rung of the Woo scoreboard. The Switchblade comes with Cabrinha's large diameter bayonet style inflation valve that requires no nozzle on the end of your standard pump hose for a quick and easy pump up. Testers found the Switchblade to have a little bit heavier bar pressure than some of the other Cabrinha models we tested, landing it with medium plus bar pressure overall. The Switchblade wants to be flown a little bit more aggressively compared to the sheet and go feel we found in the Moto. You will need to fly the Switchblade actively, and the upside of this is that when you properly send this kite it will take you straight to the moon. Historically the Switchblade has been Cabrinha's freeride kite, yet the Switchblade seems to have evolved into more of a big air performance freeride specialist. The steering on the Switchblade is fairly direct, maybe, with a little bit of windup into its maximum turning speed. The steering arc is a little bit wider and not quite as pivot style as some of the other kites, yet this is one of the reasons why the Switchblade delivers in the big air department. You can feel the crispness of the canopy in gusts with the 5-strut airframe. Delivery of power feels really direct and when it comes to jumping the hangtime on this kite is right up there with its lift capabilities. When it comes to relaunch, we dumped the Switchblade nose down in the middle of the wind window and it basically auto-rotated off its nose and launched directly into the sky from the bottom of the window. Just a little bit of input and the kite will flip up onto a wingtip deep in the window and launch, just be ready for the instant load. Relative to the Moto and Drifter, the Switchblade doesn't feel as if it has quite as much depower built into the stroke on the bar. The canopy always seems to have a bit of pull, but that's the pulling power you want to beat out all your friends in the big air game, right? As the kite segments continue to be defined and narrow, the Switchblade continues to lead the pack in the performance freeride category with Cabrinha's legendary high-quality construction.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Solid canopy, super stable, easy to fly for all around riding. Does everything well and very forgiving, great for learning jumps, great for year two of the progressing kiter." // Dylan Dobbyn



"Good strong kite with definite overall feel, super stable and big boosting, slower turning in the bigger sizes, solid feel that you know where the kite—it's a surefire big air winner!" // Kiter Mike



"Great session even through big holes in the wind. Relunched well, great upwind ability, super stable and good turning speed in the larger size." // Cam Lewis

CABRINHA BARS

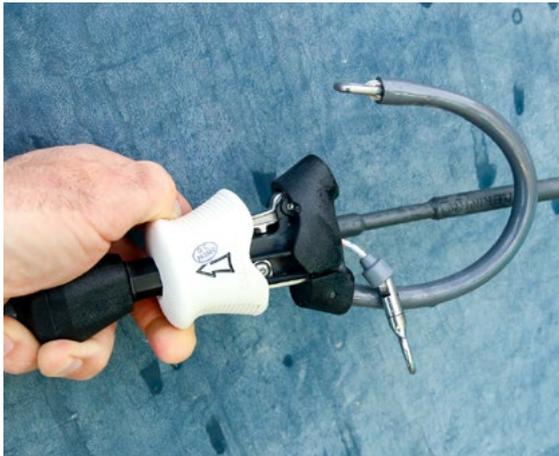
1X W/ TRIMLITE



OVERDRIVE W/ TRIMLITE



OVERDRIVE 1X W/ RECOIL



This year we tested our Cabrinha kites with three bars, firstly the 1X with Trimlite (non-adjustable bar ends with above the bar cleat), secondly the Overdrive 1X with Trimlite (on-the-fly adjustable bar ends with above the bar cleat) and finally the Overdrive 1X with Recoil.

The Overdrive 1X with Trim Lite is a dual adjustable length bar (48cm/56cm) that riders can adjust on the water while riding. This bar features a streamlined single center-line safety depower system, low V, and a fixed length PU-coated sheeting/throw line which combines above the bar tuning via a cam cleat. The quick release is a clean system which integrates a below the bar hand swivel which doubles as a quick release travel guard and an easy to grab (white colored) push away quick release handle. With a little bit of practice, you can get the quick release handle to lock open with the gate in the open position when pointed down. When you insert the end of the loop back into the release you can just nudge the release handle and it closes. For most riders it is probably considered a two-handed proposition, but with practice and proper orientation it becomes a fluid and reliable process (some testers patted themselves on the back for proving the release can be opened and reset with a single hand...albeit with practice and not in the water and under fire). The Overdrive system is a fairly straightforward design for adjusting the bar length on the fly. It can be done on the water, but it does require two hands, one to hold the bar in place, a second hand to pull on the small pull tab that releases the lock. It then takes two hands to shift and lock the bar ends into the narrow or wide position.

When it comes to tuning the kite, the Overdrive 1X can come with either the Trimlite (above bar cleat) or the Recoil system (above bar power strap with extension handles). For those riders that prefer a simpler bar layout the Trimlite cleat system is probably the better option. Many testers commented on the extra weight and complexity of the Recoil system, but testers with shorter arms noted that it does deliver the tuning controls closer within reach.

For all the Cabrinha control bars, the center lines end in a knot, the outside lines end in loops and the bar ends are padded for those chaotic wipeouts. The floats are integrated and fairly unobtrusive and while the bar bungees are not retractable they do have a groove that stow away while riding to keep them from flapping about. Testers commented on the 1X's slightly thicker grip diameter and liked the rubber texture of the hand grip. The adjustable Overdrive bar ends don't feature adjustable length outside lines like the 1x Trimlite this is mostly likely because the bar ends have the Overdrive mechanism taking up much of the bar end space.

1X with Trim Lite - We were also given the 1X with Trim Lite which is a fixed length bar (44cm, 52cm and 60cm) that features a streamlined single center-line safety depower system, low V and a fixed length durable plastic sheeting/throw line which combines above the bar tuning via a cam cleat (the alternative power control option to Cabrinha's Recoil system). The center lines end in a knot and the outside lines end in loops. The outside lines are adjustable; simply pull the outside line through a small gap in the side of the integrated bar floats and you can adjust between three knots (stock is on shortest setting). Compared to the adjustable bar ends of the Overdrive, the 1X with Trim Lite is overall a lighter bar and requires smaller more streamlined floats. Testers commented on the 1X's slightly thicker grip diameter, symmetrical in the hand, and liked the rubber texture of the hand grip. When it comes to bars, everyone is a critic, and Cabrinha has three great options to address just about everyone's needs.

Visit for more info on the bar: www.cabrinhakites.com/collections/bars

CABRINHA ACE WOOD

Sizes Available: 133 x 38.5cm, 135 x 40cm, 138 x 41.5cm, 141 x 43cm

Sizes Tested: 135 x 40cm, 138 x 41.5cm



CABRINHA SAYS:

The Ace Wood is specifically designed for Freeride creatives looking to bend the rule of gravity with a forgiving, all conditions board.

The Ace Wood is a highly versatile performance freeride model. Its outline is a hybrid of freestyle and freeride which opens up a world of options when it comes to its range of use. This all-wood version is erasing the lines between riding genres to create an exciting new approach to kiteboarding. The wood construction will tame rough and choppy waters allowing you greater edge control. Greater edge control leads to greater pop, greater pop leads to big air. What you do when you are up there is all up to you.

Visit for more info: www.cabrinhakites.com/collections/twin-tips/products/ace-wood

TKB SAYS:

The Ace Wood is a freeride board that has a little bit more rocker that pushes it into the hybrid zone of a board that satisfies the rider looking for both freeride and a bit of freestyle performance. The wood construction gives the board a little extra weight and dampening which allows it to grind through the chop with confidence. You can feel the wood construction offers a little bit more of a stiffer flex pattern than the Spectrum and the Ace, with its rounded tail lends to fun carving and user-friendly handling in the chop. The Ace Wood feels a little more sturdy when it comes to load and pop, where more aggressive riders can rail into the flex pattern a little harder and it gives you back a little more pop for that deeper load. The Ace also feels as if it has a little more rocker than the Spectrum—its edging and tracking is a little bit looser so you might spend a bit more energy on your back foot heel pressure to keep the rail and fins engaged, which makes the board feel marginally more loose and playful. Overall, the Ace is an excellent all around freeride board that can venture into more aggressive freestyle without sacrificing a ton of user-friendly and comfortable performance.

This year Cabrinha has done a complete redesign on the H20 pad and strap combo and the result is a major upgrade in terms of functional tuning and comfort. The new footbed features a really nice rubbery feel with a wide footprint that offers different textures for the heel and under the arch. The H20 strap has a unique adjustment option that is not apparent from just looking at the strap, and this confused a few of our testers. There is a 360 compression strap adjustment that needs to be made upon install of the pad to the deck—this gives the H20 an incredibly wide spectrum of adjustment, meeting the needs of every size foot—just beware that you need to set the compression strap (its a Velcro overlap under the pad) with the pads off the board. If the quad adjusters control the top of the pad, the compression strap controls the under surface of the strap, and when set properly this setup earned the highest praise from the testers. Each quad adjuster has forward and aft attachment settings allowing complete adjustment of the straps position over the footbed. With this type of adjustment you can control the shape of these straps to get the fit you are looking for. Testers found the straps fairly wide and all-encompassing, spreading the load across the entire length of your foot. Easy to install and tweak, the new H20 design offers a ton of adjustment and unparalleled comfort—it's safe to say that the H20 is one small step forward for Cabrinha and one giant leap for twin tip pad and strap design.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



*“Goes upwind without a struggle, not super light, but fairly easy to control. Great pads, super comfy.”
// Kristin Vincenzo*



“Held its edge well and worked good in light wind. Comfortable straps and pads, middle of the road weight with good load and pop, great carving and excellent locked in edge control for going upwind. Gets the job done.” // Kiter Mike



“Excellent edge/grip with comfortable pads. It rides like a caddy — very comfortable, friendly and soft landings with excellent upwind edging that makes it an excellent board for all around cruising.” // Joe Chehock

CABRINHA CUTLASS

Sizes Available: 5'2" x 18.75" x 2.04", 21.45L, 5'5" x 19.6" x 2.08", 24.09L

Sizes Tested: 5'2" x 18.75" x 2.04", 21.45L



CABRINHA SAYS:

The all-new Cutlass is specifically designed for riders who like to mix rail to rail surfing with aerial trickery.

There are days when you just wish your board was turbo charged. For these days you need the Cutlass. A short and moderately wide outline, a fast rocker line, and a quad fin set up. All the elements needed for sharp turns and quick acceleration.

The Cutlass is the ideal board for small to mid sized waves or no waves at all. It's perfect for mixing strapless freestyle and surfing in any type of wind conditions. Due to its fast rocker line, the Cutlass will be your go-to board when the winds are less than perfect.

Visit for more info: www.cabrinhakites.com/collections/surfboards/products/cutlass

TKB SAYS:

The Cutlass is one of the few boards in the test to come with a zero concave flat bottom, featuring a wider, fuller template for playful all-around performance in small to fun-sized surf. With the quad fin box configuration on the swallow tail, the Cutlass is gently suggestive of a fish-style shape and feels really efficient even in underpowered situations. With its extra width and the flat bottom, the Cutlass feels really fast through the water and just wants to fly upwind with a solid fairly locked in feel for controlled edging through the chop. The Cutlass finds an excellent balance between reactive playfulness and reliable user-friendly tracking which makes it quite predictable. Many of the boards have a fair amount of dome built into the deck, but the Cutlass features a fairly flat deck that brought back memories of riding skimboards. The deck ends in a step rail which keeps a bit more volume under foot until you get to the rail where it steps down into a tighter rail, the tighter rail possibly helping this board feel so controlled when cutting upwind. The combination of volume and tight rails seems to work quite well in the Cutlass and when it comes to strapless freestyle this board becomes super fun and playful. The quad tail doesn't feel super locked in, which makes it fairly loose and friendly for front rotations to blind or pop shuvits. From our experience in the chop, the Cutlass could be an excellent choice for hacking apart small to medium surf, shoving the tail into a pocket and breaking loose, little floaters and the like. That flat deck and wider playful template kept bringing back memories of skimboards with an ultra efficient and skatey feel, yet the Cutlass is stable enough for those just progressing into strapless surfing. The Cutlass is a little bit different than everything else that's out there, something that is more playful with a ton of range, yet easy to use and efficient for lighter sessions or long slogs back to the top of the reef. The Cutlass has a wide-ranging fun factor that works for small and medium surf with decent strapless freestyle chops that will keep all levels of riders entertained in a variety of conditions. The Cutlass comes with an extra long deck pad for the back foot and features three forward/aft inserts down the center line of the board to dial in the perfect strap position.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Remarkably fun board. I was skeptical of the bamboo construction but it is light and tracks upwind really well, even in chop. Liked the deck, felt great underfoot. Lots of performance in a very small package, well balanced for strapless airs, quick turns and tracks well. Rounded rail wants to bite and carve upwind when more rail line is engaged." // Dray Murray



"Medium weight, good turning, solid edge control with good chop handling and decent upwind ability. Can feel a little big and bouncy." // Kiter Mike



"Seemed like a good beginner strapless board, but it was too floaty for my size. Excellent upwind ability, overall light weight but hard to steer. Wide deck was stable for switching feet, but I would want a front pad." // Kristin Vincenzo

CABRINHA SPECTRUM

Sizes Available: 133 x 40cm, 136 x 41cm, 140 x 42cm, 144 x 43cm, 148 x 44cm, 152 x 44cm

Sizes Tested: 140 x 42cm, 144 x 43cm



CABRINHA SAYS:

The Spectrum is designed for riders who need an all terrain model with a wide range of use.

Developments in design and construction have allowed us to deliver an all-terrain, all-round freeride model with the DNA and performance characteristics of a much more expensive model. The Spectrum has excellent upwind tracking which keeps you tight to the zone. Its softer flex pattern makes this one of the nicest rides in choppy waters. But it's not just about comfort. The softer flex makes this board adaptable to whatever riding the day delivers.

Visit for more info: www.cabrinhakites.com/collections/twin-tips/products/spectrum

TKB SAYS:

The Cabrinha Spectrum features a really nice and playful feel with the softest flex pattern of all the Cabrinha boards we tested this year. The Spectrum features a rounded template with slightly pulled in tips that testers highlighted for tracking well upwind through solid chop. The rounded tips seemed to cut through the nastiest chop with ease. Despite the rounded template the Spectrum still feels like it tracks really well in a straight line without much attention from the rider. The Spectrum's softer flex pattern makes everything forgiving, making it ideal for riders who value ease of use and comfort as well as those just getting into the sport. When it comes to load and pop, you can feel the extra flex in this board and you don't get as much load and release that big air specialists are looking for. Compared to the Ace, the Spectrum had a little bit more tracking stability coming from the fins and the tail, which makes controlling the edge a little easier. Additionally, the Spectrum's template and tracking yielded fun rail to rail carving and cruising. Overall, the Spectrum is one of those boards that features all around freeride performance that is friendly, comfortable and ideal for general freeride and progressive learning.

This year Cabrinha has done a complete redesign on the H20 pad and strap combo and the result is a major upgrade in terms of functional tuning and comfort. The new footbed features a really nice rubbery feel with a wide footprint that offers different textures for the heel and under the arch. The H20 strap has a unique adjustment option that is not apparent from just looking at the strap, and this confused a few of our testers. There is a 360 compression strap adjustment that needs to be made upon install of the pad to the deck—this gives the H20 an incredibly wide spectrum of adjustment, meeting the needs of every size foot—just beware that you need to set the compression strap (its a Velcro overlap under the pad) with the pads off the board. If the quad adjusters control the top of the pad, the compression strap controls the under surface of the strap, and when set properly this setup earned the highest praise from the testers. Each quad adjuster has forward and aft attachment settings allowing complete adjustment of the straps position over the footbed. With this type of adjustment you can control the shape of these straps to get the fit you are looking for. Testers found the straps fairly wide and all-encompassing, spreading the load across the entire length of your foot. Easy to install and tweak, the new H20 design offers a ton of adjustment and unparalleled comfort—it's safe to say that the H20 is one small step forward for Cabrinha and one giant leap for twin tip pad and strap design.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Very comfortable pads, good in chop at slow speed, great for beginner and intermediate riders looking for a predictable board." // David Kirkup



"Plush foot hugging Rolls Royce-like bindings only help compliment the Spectrum's smooth ride through chop, cushioned landings and solid edging." // Tib Anghel



"The Spectrum charges upwind and edges on its rails; it's a board I could ride long distances with great carving and a solid feel. Comfy straps/pads, easy to adjust." // Joe Chehock

CABRINHA XCALIBER CARBON

Sizes Available: 135 x 41cm, 138 x 42cm, 141 x 43cm

Sizes Tested: 138 x 42cm



CABRINHA SAYS:

Designed for advanced freestyle riders who demand reflex and rebound from their board, the XCaliber has a history of putting riders at the top of the freestyle podium.

Its refined outline and use of carbon create the perfect platform to launch into progressive freestyle maneuvers. With the XCal it's all about reflex. The more you push during liftoff, the more it will push back giving you incredible spring and pop. The same stiffer construction makes landings stable and predictable with very little deformation on impact.

Visit for more info: www.cabrinhakites.com/collections/twin-tips/products/xcal-carbon

TKB SAYS:

This year we got the chance to test the wood and carbon constructions of the XCaliber back to back. Both feature the same rocker and bottom shape, which is a relatively high rocker board with square tips that are the telltale signs of a deck designed for freestyle performance. This is the board for people doing uncent jumps, handlepasses, and kiteloops, where you're really looking for a stiffer flex pattern that allows you to go into a maneuver with tons of speed and load all the kite's energy into the board and transfer that into vertical lift. The most apparent characteristic about the XCaliber is the increased rocker that allows you to load and pop. The rocker helps create extra lift along with the square tips that give you more surface area to launch. The boxier outline means that this board may not be quite as user-friendly in terms of toe to toe rail carving and casual freeriding, but in terms of handling chop it was actually quite fine, although it requires a bit more skill to keep the skatey rail engaged and tracking upwind. It takes just a little more energy to control that rail and that's why it's more suited as an intermediate/advanced board. Since we had tested the wood version of this board, we found the carbon construction made the XCaliber a little bit lighter in your hand on the beach, and could be felt as well in the water when you load and pop the board out of the water. If you are riding freestyle with pads and straps as opposed to boots, that extra weight saving might steer you towards the carbon. While it does feel lighter it does have a slightly more stiff feeling of flex. If you compare the stiffness of the carbon to wood construction, we weren't sure if the carbon helped for load and pop, but we did think that the wood was a bit more forgiving on hard landings. Testers did note that they preferred the carbon over the wood version in underpowered conditions, presumably because of the light and more active feeling that comes with losing some weight. If freestyle is your thing, like passing the handle, landing blind, doing butter slides or just jamming around and bonking off stuff, then the XCaliber is definitely a high performer, but the choice between carbon and wood will be a nuanced one. Those more focused on all around freeride will likely prefer the carbon and those new school freestyle purists may prefer the wood version.

This year Cabrinha has done a complete redesign on the H20 pad and strap combo and the result is a major upgrade in terms of functional tuning and comfort. The new footbed features a really nice rubbery feel with a wide footprint that offers different textures for the heel and under the arch. Testers found the straps fairly wide and all-encompassing, spreading the load across the entire length of your foot. Easy to install and tweak, the new H20 design offers a ton of adjustment and unparalleled comfort — it's safe to say that the H20 is one small step forward for Cabrinha and one giant leap for twin tip pad and strap design.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Stable and smooth at high speed, the XCaliber is a precision tool which will eat up anything you throw at it." // Tib Anghel



"This board goes! Lighter weight, carves good with great pop, the XCaliber carbon feels great jumping, carving and in the chop." // Kiter Mike



"Loose, easy to carve board, great comfortable ride with good pop." // Marko Bartscherer

CABRINHA XCALIBER WOOD

Sizes Available: 135 x 41cm, 138 x 42cm, 140 x 43cm

Sizes Tested: 135 x 41cm, 138 x 42cm



CABRINHA SAYS:

The XCaliber Wood is designed for intermediate to advanced riders looking for a freestyle model that can perform in varied water conditions.

Nothing beats the feel of a natural wood core when it comes to a high performance dampened ride. The XCaliber Wood shares the same shape as its carbon counterpart but has a completely different ride, especially in less than perfect water conditions. The wood construction absorbs the chop like no other giving you a softer ride and the ability to edge when the going gets tough. Better edging leads to better pop. And in freestyle, pop is everything.

Visit for more info: www.cabrinhakites.com/collections/twin-tips/products/xcal-wood

TKB SAYS:

This year we got the chance to test the wood and carbon constructions of the XCaliber back to back. Both feature the same rocker and bottom shape, which is a relatively high rocker board with square tips that are the telltale signs of a deck designed for freestyle performance. The first thing you notice is the significantly skatier tracking and stiffer flex pattern that requires greater load and release skills to unleash the board's pop potential. The XCaliber has tons of bottom shaping, yet the fins and rail don't offer as much traction, so upwind riding requires more effort and control into managing that rail and those fins to keep the board rocketing upwind but with that what you get is a more playful board for freestyle. Those squared tips give you a ton of boost from loading the tip and releasing it out of the water. The wood construction is a bit heavier than the carbon version and may offer just a bit more flex for load and pop. The wood flex is a bit softer in feel while the carbon XCaliber feels just a bit crisper. When you land you can feel the board flex around the landing compared to the carbon version which seemed to be a little stiffer. The XCaliber is definitely a board for more aggressive riders that know how to use the boxier outline and stiffer flex pattern to wring every inch of performance out of this type of freestyle board.

This year Cabrinha has done a complete redesign on the H20 pad and strap combo and the result is a major upgrade in terms of functional tuning and comfort. The new foot bed features a really nice rubbery feel with a wide footprint that offers different textures for the heel and under the arch. The H20 strap has a unique adjustment option that is not apparent from just looking at the strap, and this confused a few of our testers. There is a 360 compression strap adjustment that needs to be made upon install of the pad to the deck - this gives the H20 an incredibly wide spectrum of adjustment, meeting the needs of every size foot - just beware that you need to set the compression strap (its a Velcro overlap under the pad) with the pads off the board. If the quad adjusters control the top of the pad, the compression strap controls the under surface of the strap, and when set properly this setup earned highest praise from the testers. Each quad adjuster has forward and aft attachment settings allowing complete adjustment of the straps position over the footbed. With this type of adjustment you can control the shape of these straps to get the fit you are looking for. Testers found the straps fairly wide and all-encompassing, spreading the load across the entire length of your foot. Easy to install and tweak, the new H20 design offers a ton of adjustment and unparalleled comfort — it's safe to say that the H20 is one small step forward for Cabrinha and one giant leap for twin tip pad and strap design.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Very smooth ride through chop, cuts through chop, very little spray, good load and pop. Comfortable pads once you take the time to properly adjust them." // David Kirkup



"Beautiful board with comfortable bindings. Loose board but easy to carve, better in powered up conditions." // Marko Bartscherer



"True freestyle board, felt stiff and skatey. Felt the edge breaking away sometimes and felt heavier in my carving turns. Great load and pop, liked the comfortable footpads. // Chris Myles



CABRINHA 

LIVE FREE. RIDE FREE.

 J. Boulding & P. Sobolev

FREE RIDE



NEW

MOTO & XO MOTO

Versatile Freeride Crossover

Sizes: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14



CORE GTS5

Sizes Available: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.5, 15, 17m

Sizes Tested: 8, 10, 12m



CORE SAYS:

You're addicted to life in the fast lane but in a good way. And when you go, you go big! We feel the same, riding our newest GTS. Our 5th gen Universal+ Series allrounder delivers the superpowers unhooked riders demand without messin' up the original formula. We know how badass the GTS4 is. Its signature Future-C powered kiteloops, and unhooked confidence is something we're proud of. Now, experience a decade of iterative magic with our new and improved GTS5. Our freestyle ninja won't let you down until you're ready to land a perfect kiteloop transition. The GTS5's power-on-demand looping puts you in total control of the kite's speed, turn radius, and horizontal drift. Go ahead, test the new GTS5, and find out why our megaloop champs Josh and Steven ride 'em! The GTS5 carries over its proven ExoTex 3 Strut Frame, Radical Reaction Tips, and Short Bridles. We optimized the leading edge diameters and tip geometry to improve flight stability especially when looping. We can't forget to mention our new CIT Modes which customize the GTS5's handling characteristics. In Wave mode, riders dial in compact turns and more depower. Whereas Freestyle mode adds more grunt and bigger turns. The GTS comes out of the bag in Allround mode which provides excellent depower, grunt, and hangtime.

Visit for more info: www.corekites.com/us/kites/gts5

TKB SAYS:

The Core GTS5 is back with a C-shaped 3-strut platform that features a slightly pulled back leading edge that transitions into square-shaped wingtips. The GTS5 has its own proprietary large diameter inflation valve that is super clean and simply uses the female end of a standard pump hose. Just insert the hose without an attachment and twist to lock (it's worthy to note that some pump hoses such as the stock North hose or aftermarket pumps like WMFG have a female fitting that is too large to fit Core's valve, so keep a regular hose on you at all times.) With the large size aperture the kite inflates very quickly and a valve stays closed until you screw in the stopper. When it's time to deflate you pull a 2.5 inch plastic finger (hidden in a pocket of the center strut and attached by a small tether) into the valve to allow the air to deflate. The Core GTS5 features three settings on the front bridle which allows you to choose between: wave/depower, freeride/all around and freestyle/power. There are three settings on the wingtip to adjust bar pressure and the turning speed. Compared to earlier iterations of the GTS5, this version features a shorter length bridle which is a plus when you drop your kite in the surf and on failed kitemoops. One of the first things we always notice about the Core product is the solid construction that strikes an excellent balance between strength and light weight. Testers found the kite to have nice light to medium bar pressure that retained good measured balance between feedback and comfort into the larger sized kites. The bar feedback felt lively and responsive while the power delivery was fairly progressive for a freestyle shaped kite with large square wingtips. Testers overall thought the GTS5 had direct and responsive steering response that made the kite very intuitive to fly. In the turning department, the steering path was not quite as pivotal and tight as the XR5. Instead, the GTS5 had a little bit more of a rounded steering path. Testers noted that the boosting felt good although perhaps not explosive on the all-around setting but user-friendly and easy to obtain both good boost and hangtime. The GTS5 definitely felt like it had some good pop and slack for unsent freestyle riding and in terms of relaunch, was probably not as good as the other delta/pulled back LE designs from Core (XR5 and Section) but the relaunch was reliable every time. When we placed the kite in the water dead downwind on its nose, with a little bit of pressure on one side of the bar the kite rotated onto a wingtip, but it did take a little time for it to taxi to the edge of the window to clear the wingtip and launch. Overall the GTS5 is a solid option for the kiter that is leaning towards wakestyle/unsent freestyle, but also crosses into surf, general freeride and big boosting. With its direct steering input, and fairly crisp turning response, this is a comfortable and balanced kite that can freestyle its way through just about everything.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"C-shape characteristics with an effective bridle setup that gives it large range, lots of depower and aggressive pop, lift and speed. Generates speed through turning arc and feels like strong freeride kite with freestyle chops." // Dray Murray



"With its quick turns and readiness to boost at a moment's notice, this kite is a weapon of choice for freestyle. Needs to be flown to generate power and relaunch needed delicate touch and noticeable heavier construction." // Tib Anghel



"Consistent smooth power, nimble in the air for a 12meter kite, responsive bar pressure, fast turning, well-rounded freeride machine that delivered smooth consistent power with plenty of feedback." // Joe Chehock

CORE NEXUS

Sizes Available: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.5, 15, 17m

Sizes Tested: 8, 9, 11m



CORE SAYS:

Meet the multi-talented Universal+ Series Nexus with fully customizable handling. An athletic kite that is never too cool to learn a new trick. Whether it's on your favorite surfboard or twintip, the Nexus brings exceptional versatility to wave and freestyle riding. Our latest design is a product of the phenomenal Section 2, the indomitable GTS and fourteen years of intensive kite development. An allrounder that instantly endeared itself to our wave+ prodigy, Willow and megaloop rockstar, Akkie. Amazing things happened when we spliced the genes of the GTS4 and Section 2 into the Nexus. Take for example the Nexus' CIT, the fancy acronym behind the kite's adjustable handling modes. It lets you finetune the kite's power and turn radius. Akkie likes his megaloops big and powerful, so he selects the CIT's freestyle setting whereas Willow prefers the wave mode for tighter loops (on his bottom turns). The wave mode also makes the kite turn faster, increases depower and doesn't pull you off your strapless board. In allround mode, the Nexus pulls a little more, increases hangtime (woohoo!), and turns a little slower. The all-new Nexus inherits many of CORE's best innovations including its linear power delivery, three strut frame, and Radical Reaction Tips from the GTS. It also acquired the incredible handling, huge wind range, and Surf Profile from the Section 2.

Visit for more info: www.corekites.com/us/kites/nexus

TKB SAYS:

The Core Nexus is all new for this year and features a low to medium aspect canopy with three struts and fairly sweptback wingtips with battens on the trailing edge. The Nexus features Core's proprietary inflation valve that requires a normal size pump hose without an attachment on the end to be inserted into the valve and rotated to lock (it's worthy to note that some pump hoses such as the stock North hose or aftermarket pumps like WMFG have a female fitting that are too large to fit Core's valve, so keep a regular hose on you at all times.). With the large size aperture the kite inflates very quickly and a valve stays closed until you screw in the stopper. When it's time to deflate you pull a 2.5 inch plastic finger (hidden in a pocket of the center strut and attached by a small tether) into the valve to allow the air to deflate. The wingtip features three settings which are labeled as 'super easy, easy, medium' and the front bridle features three settings to adjust between wave, all around, and freestyle. The front bridle pivots on three pulleys and the center lines end in a knot and the outside lines end in loop. We tested this kite on the stock setting at the edge of the wingtip, 'super easy' and the leading edge 'all-around' setting in the middle. The bridle uses two pulleys and a slider to change the angle of attack. One of our main goals was to understand the difference between the Nexus and the GTS5. The consensus was that the Nexus in its stock settings has a little bit more bar pressure than the GTS5. That said, our test group agreed that it had very comfortable medium bar pressure. The Nexus features noticeably sweptback wingtips and has a little bit more of a progressive power delivery, with a little bit more of that 'sheet and go' feeling compared to the GTS. Where the GTS5 had a more of a wakestyle pop and slack or load and release kind of feel, the Nexus has a more constant pull type of feel. The turning style was significantly tighter, and very responsive with a little bit heavier bar pressure. The Nexus felt as if the kite was initiating the turn a bit quicker and the turning path was a tighter pivot-style turn. The Nexus feels like a very active kite; for someone that's a very aggressive kiter, the boost was impressive on this kite as well as the hangtime, making this a really fun kite for someone looking for bigger air/freeride performance. The Nexus felt like it offered a little bit more range than what you would find on the GTS5 and overall, its water relaunch ability was probably a bit faster as well, mostly due to the sweptback leading edge profile. The Nexus with the front bridle attachment moved forward is also an excellent option for the surf, with its direct steering, pivot style turn and solid depower. Overall this is a really fun kite that the beginner to intermediate+ rider will enjoy if they are looking for a cross between the XR5/Section and the GTS5. With the three bridle settings on the leading edge you can cover a lot of ground from freeride to surf, but the Nexus's meat and potatoes is all around freeride boosting and cruise riding with some surf sessions thrown in on the side for good measure.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Well built kite, turns fast for that 'jack of all trades' feel with adequate pulling power for its size that excels across all." // Jeff Waldberg

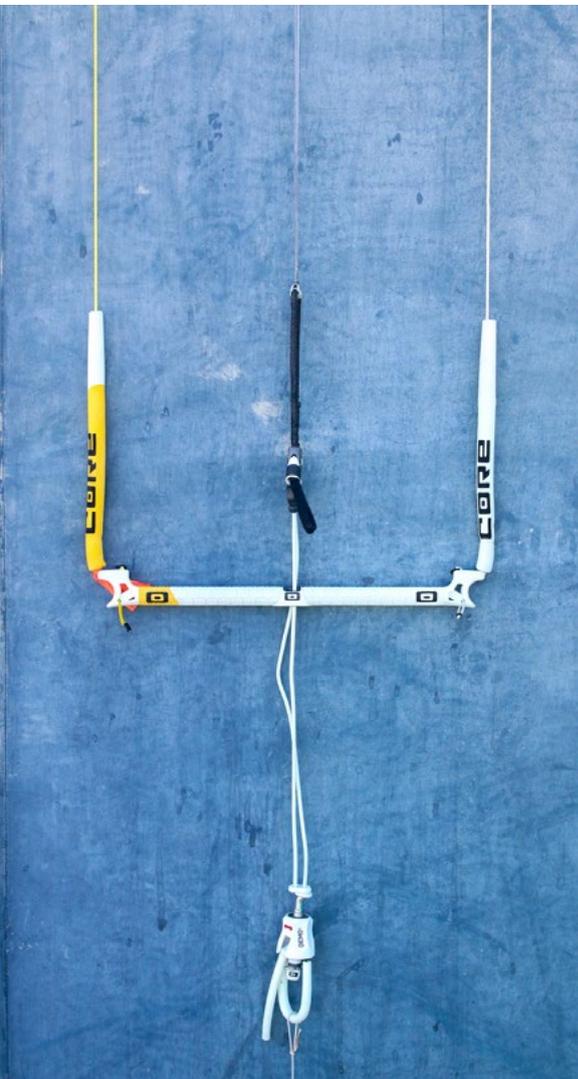


"Easy to fly, fairly quick turning speed, medium bar pressure and very friendly kite even when overpowered. It had good power without a ton of grunt." // Kristin Vincenzo



"So fun and fast, the bar pressure felt heavier and the boosts very smooth. The loops of this kite were fast and distributed the power evenly and didn't feel overpowered. Amazing boosts that loft you to the sky with easy landings and the bar feels great in your hands." // Chris Myles

CORE SENSOR 2S BAR



The Sensor 2S is the middle of the Core range of control bars. The 2S is a dual adjustable length bar (46/52 cm) designed to control all size kites with its standard 24m line length with the center lines ending in knots and the outside lines in loops. It comes equipped with a double PU-coated spectra sheeting/throw line, replaceable plastic insert, no sliding stopper and a non-removable donkey dick. The Sensor 2S features a single center-line safety depower with a high V, above bar depower and a custom clam cleat with a Velcro tuning handle to keep the depower control toggle from tangling.

Core bars have long been known for their twisting quick release with auto swivel 'S-System' that doubles as a quick release guard and integrates ceramic bearings for longevity. As we have said before, it's an effective system if you practice with it and is less prone to accidental releases. Yet, it is immensely important that riders new to the system should dial in some muscle memory so they're ready to address any problems in a pinch. The length of sheeting/throw can be adjusted for varying arm lengths of kites or the type of riding. The non-molded foam floats are connected to the bar ends with the tips of the bar being hard. While the outside leader lines allow riders to adjust the length of the outside lines for stretch or tuning (by choosing between two knots), the bar ends are easily swapped between 46/52cm by changing to a separate knot on the bar end. The bar's center insert has a Core logo on one side and a stop logo on the other to prevent you from grabbing the bar backwards. One of the most noticeable aspects of this control bar is that it weighs close to nothing yet you get all these features. The Team praised the bar's simplicity with a medium plush stamped grip, commented on its fairly narrow diameter and its small but sufficient bar end winders with non-retractable bungees. It's an amazingly very feature rich bar designed into a compact and lightweight package.



Visit for more info on the bar: www.corekites.com/us/bars/sensor-2s



Photo: Thomas Burdiles

CORE CHOICE 3

Sizes Available: 133 x 40cm, 135 x 41cm, 137 x 41.5cm, 139 x 42cm, 141 x 42.5cm, 144 x 43.5cm, 147 x 45cm

Sizes Tested: 137 x 41.5cm, 141 x 42.5cm



CORE SAYS:

Fun or maybe, you're new to freestyle. And you're not sure whether being locked into boots is your thing right now. So, you'd rather hedge your bets and ride a board that's just as much fun in straps as in boots. We made the Choice 3 for you too. Its new full-length deep Vee hull smooths out nasty chop. And together with its optimized outline and mega channels, this comfortable allrounder rips upwind with reduced spray. The Gen3 springs into action with the same proven CNC milled Paulownia and Cartan carbon sandwich construction used in the prior model and its adamantine cousin, the Bolt 3. Only now, the board is around 200g lighter without reducing its carbon or wood content! Our build method delivers outstanding flex properties; encouraging good freeride flex when gybing, controlling chop; and reducing bad flex (aka negative rocker) when landing hard or freestyling. But wait, there's more! The Choice 3 also gets deeper channels that reduce the wetted surface area (and by extension, water resistance) thereby increasing board speed. We finished the board with a shiny, UV blocking topcoat. Whew! That's a lot of new stuff!

Visit for more info: www.corekites.com/us/boards/twintips/choice-3

TKB SAYS:

Of the two Core boards we tested, the Choice is the shape with carbon construction and handling that is best suited for the more aggressive kiter looking for more high performance from their equipment. The first thing we noticed about the Choice is its stiffer flex profile and increased rocker which lends to a little bumpier ride through the chop compared to the Fusion, but delivers for the hard charging freerider, most particularly in the boosting department because of its greater ability to load and store energy for explosive pop and a denser flex for more controlled landings on bigger airs. Compared to the Fusion, the outline feels a bit fuller to give you a bit more surface area to load and release. For those that want a board that can handle heavier loading, the Choice delivers excellent load and pop for the skilled freestyler, but for the entry level kiter the performance aspects may take longer to dial in compared to the more user-friendly ride you get out of the Fusion. The Choice comes with an aggressive bottom shape that combined with its rocker, has a bit of a skatey feel in terms of tracking, which makes you focus a bit more on heel and foot pressure while going upwind. In the larger scheme of things, the Choice compared to the other boards within the performance freestyle category, is quite easy to control upwind and testers felt the Choice was still friendly enough in the chop, with not a ton of tip spray. The Carbon construction keeps the weight down, with testers giving mixed reactions, some saying it felt very light and fast, others indicating middle of the road liveliness with the stiff flex pattern, which makes sense for a freestyle oriented board. The Choice will bring a smile to the face of a hard charger and is a board we'd recommend for the advanced freerider looking for a performance board that will match a more aggressive approach to riding.

The Choice came with the Union Pro bindings which feature a quad adjustment strap setup with easy to use Velcro adjusters. The board comes with three stance width options and a number of stance duck options to dial in the perfect feel. The pad itself features a lower profile pad that hugs the deck and the footpads feature a nice rubbery feel with a ton of ribbed texture. The heel offers nice cupping and there's a little bit more aggressive arch and toe bump shaping which helps keep your foot glued into the strap. Testers gave the Union Pro excellent marks for adjustability and comfort.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"The Choice is a lightweight and smooth handling twin tip. The stiffer flex pattern gives less board feel."
// Joe Chehock



"Very light, nice amount of rocker, tracks nice with channel, grippy straps, sharp rails slice through the water. Rocker gives skatey feel that takes adjustment. Very versatile." // Dylan Dobbyn



"Clean looking, bigger board, great jumper and good chop handling." // Marko Bartscherer

CORE FUSION 3

Sizes Available: 133 x 39cm, 135 x 40cm, 137 x 41cm, 139 x 41.5cm, 141 x 42cm, 144 x 43cm, 147 x 44cm, 152 x 46cm

Sizes Tested: 137 x 41cm, 139 x 41.5cm



CORE SAYS:

Just about anything is possible on your new Fusion 3, the Swiss Army® knife of kiteboards. New riders will kite longer than ever with the board's session-extending deep V hull. Lucky freestylers in spots like Squamish's hallowed Spit will find even more pop with the improved hull channels. And a few brave souls will harness the Fusion's Cartan carbon fiber construction and Hood River's legendary summer winds to challenge another WOO record. Regardless of your skill or adventure, the new Fusion 3 delivers next-level awesomeness.

Our latest Fusion leverages a decade's worth of board building expertise from Carved Customs -Europe's leading custom board manufacturer and know-how from their latest masterpiece, the Emperor 6. The 3rd generation is measurably lighter and features a new multi-channel hull, progressive rails, a deeper rocker line, and slightly wider tips. Our engineers also invested considerable effort fine-tuning the CNC milled Paulownia wood core, the backbone of the Fusion's unmistakable, smooth riding, energetic feel.

Visit for more info: www.corekites.com/us/boards/twintips/fusion3

TKB SAYS:

The Fusion is Core's classic freeride all around board that sports a ton of bottom contouring that features a double concave running full length with a V-hull down the middle and channels along the rail. The template is a bit wider than most of the boards in the test which makes the Fusion a bit more forgiving for going upwind in underpowered conditions. Testers found the Fusion to be extremely user-friendly in chop conditions and in terms of tracking and fin control, the Fusion is middle of the road in terms of grip, finding a nice balance that makes edging feel comfortable and secure without a ton of work on the rider's part, while the tail feels loose enough to be fun and playful for more aggressive riders. In regards to rail to rail caving, the wider template and squarer tips make this board a little less agile, but testers nonetheless reported excellent carving in transitions. The Fusion really shines with its comfortable flex pattern. The Fusion works great for load and send jumps and makes landings soft on the knees and forgiving. One of the nifty accessory features that comes with the Fusion is the soft foam-covered grab handle, which is great if your kite ever rakes you over the board, a feature better appreciated by beginners. The Fusion is a well-mannered all around board that screams upwind in comfort, ideal for the new kiter, but comfortable and user-friendly to keep in the quiver through all the stages of a progressing freerider. The Fusion could quite possibly be the Cadillac of all around freeride boards.

The Fusion came with the Union Comfort bindings which feature a single adjustment strap that is a fairly straightforward pad system. The footbed offers a subtle diamond grip EVA pattern, with a little bit of arch to support your foot, and a subtle step for your toes. There's a good amount of contour or cupping under the heel that keeps your foot in place. The strap is a single adjustment strap with a clothlike surface over the top of your foot. Adjustment is straightforward and easy. The board comes with three stance width options and the pad offers a single option for duck, so it's set it and forget it simple.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Slices through the chop with good upwind ability; solid edge controlling and easy to ride." // Kristin Vincenzo



"Comfortable pads and very light design, holds edge very well; this board made me feel like I could keep carving harder on my transitions, allowing me to progress. Great for progression and boosting." // Chris Myles



"Clean looking bigger board, great jumper and awesome chop handling. Bigger early planing board that handled the chop like a champ and was fun to jump." // Marko Bartscherer



CORE'S LASER FOCUS

We are kiteboarding. And after twelve super awesome years in the kite business, we haven't strayed from our original business model. We still don't make clothes, neoprene, or other stuff. Making other stuff gets in the way of our laser-focused kite, bar and board production.

With that said, there are a lot of choices in the kite market. Make your next kite purchase easier than your morning coffee order with CORE's Universal+ Series of kites: a three kite family of high-performance allrounders. Although each kite in the Universal+ Series is built for all riders and all conditions, they each have one special "superpower".

Are you an expert kiter and know exactly what you're looking for? Then consider checking out our Specialized Series. Here, you'll find our dedicated, no-compromise, surf and wakestyle line of kites. Learn more at corekit.es/specialized

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CORE KITES, BARS & BOARDS KITEBOARDING ESSENTIALS



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RIPPER 3
Allround Wave



720
Freestyle Wave



CHOICE 3
Freestyle+ | Freeride | Wakestyle



FUSION 3
Freeride+ | Freestyle



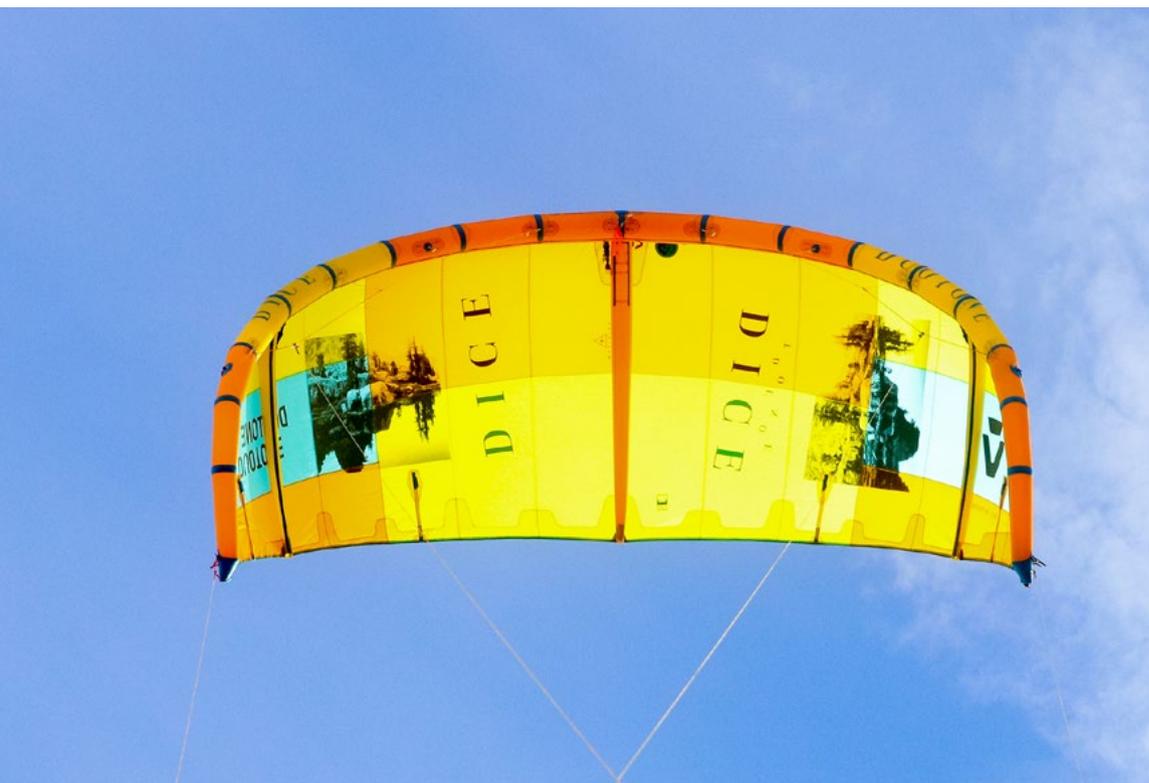
SENSOR 2S/2S+
Unibody 4-Line Bar
plus S-System

SENSOR 2S PRO
Full Tectanium
4-Line Carbon Bar
plus S-System

DUOTONE DICE

Sizes Available: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13m

Sizes Tested: 8, 10, 12m



DUOTONE SAYS:

The DICE is a versatile kite for riders who love to throw down freestyle tricks but also like to party in the waves. With an increased radius profile, a slight delta shape and a redesigned, slightly thicker leading edge, the DICE is a progressive freestyle kite capable of incredible pop and great slack for performing tricks. The smaller sizes below 10m increased the structural stiffness, avoiding any twisting and can handle any wind speeds - perfect for breaking height records and extreme loops. The wing tip area was updated last year to allow for a more dynamic turn and improved handling. This will enable you to achieve bigger jumps and gain more control during loops; it also makes the DICE very effective in the waves. With highly responsive steering the kite feels right at home in cross-onshore conditions where you need to follow the kite down the line. Excellent drifting capabilities mean it is also at home in cross-offshore conditions too. It can be flown as a 4-line or 5-line set up depending on your style or preference, and there are tuning options to tweak the handling too. The hard setting now has a 20mm longer pigtail, making it the perfect set up for Freestyle/Wakestyle moves, offering massive slack. Delivering outstanding pop and release for incredible freestyle performance and dynamic handling for wave riding prowess, roll the DICE and you'll get a winning combination.

Visit for more info: www.duotonesports.com/kiteboarding/kites/dice

TKB SAYS:

This is the first year that the Dice is marketed under the Duotone brand and continues to be the kite that straddles the divide between a load and slack freestyle session and surf/freeride cruising. The Dice is Duotone's freeride kite with hints of Vegas freestyle performance and the surf steering dynamics of the Neo. When it comes to inflation, Duotone's large diameter inflation valve dubbed the 'Airport Valve II' connects directly with Duotone's pump hose without the use of a nozzle and the inflation system's twist valve rotates with the insertion of the hose to keep air in the system. Deflation happens through both the inflation valve and a dump valve on one side of the kite, making both inflation and deflation quick and easy. We flew the Dice with its stock 4-line configuration, featuring a single setting front bridle with a single pulley and wingtips with three settings that allow you to choose between soft, medium and hard bar feedback. Like the Evo and Rebel, the Dice is designed to fly with Duotone's 4-line bar, but a 5-line conversion package can be bought for those that want the 5th line experience. The Dice comes with front bridle attachment points that end in knots and wingtip pigtails that end in loops. We flew it on the medium setting and found that the Dice has a nice middle of the road medium bar pressure, a little bit more than the Evo and roughly equal to the Neo. The Dice's steering path feels a little bit more pivot style than the Evo and the Dice feels like it wants to fly a little bit deeper in the window. When it comes to power delivery the Dice feels a bit more like a traditional freestyle kite. When you load up the kite it creates power and then you can feel a bit of a release mid-trick. When it comes to surf the steering on this kite is quick enough to keep the kite in active flying onshore conditions. The Dice is a confidence inspiring kite that will drift with you while carving yet doesn't offer as much downwind drift as say the Neo. When it comes to jumps, the Dice's intuitive steering delivers some good boost when flown aggressively. The Dice doesn't deliver the same explosive boost you get from the Evo or the Rebel, but it's drift and mid-window flying makes it arguably more suited for riders crossing from freestyle into the surf. When it comes to waves and freestyle, you don't really want a kite with intense amounts of lift, rather you want a steady pulling kite that's predictable and agile. When it comes to relaunch, the Dice is reliable but not quite as quick to relaunch as the Evo, Neo or the Rebel. That said, the Dice does pivot fairly easily onto a wingtip when nose down in the water, and taxis to the edge for a reliable relaunch without much skill. To some it may be more challenging to discern the differences between the Evo and Dice, as these kites tend to have a large area of overlap and the differences largely have to do with feel and small performance differences. Overall, the Dice is one of Duotone's great all around freeride kites that blends the qualities of an unsoft freestyle kite with qualities you find in a surf design. The Dice is great for the freestyle rider that still hits the waves and a general freerider that is willing to fly a more aggressive kite with stronger feedback to cover the entire spectrum of big air, handlepasses and surf.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"The Dice feels like the Porsche of the Duotone lineup: super responsive with excellent bar feedback, clean power delivery, and aggressive jumping ability. Good drift, snappy load and pop and excellent upwind ability." // Joe Chehock



"Super clean and stable kite, reacts well to steering and offers lots of range through power and depower. Steering is quick and responsive, excellent jumping and good turning speed even in the larger sized kites." // Chris Myles



"Dice has that C-kite style feel with stable and solid flying that generate solid pull through the turns and gives you instant confidence." // Marko Bartscherer

DUOTONE EVO

Sizes Available: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14m

Sizes Tested: 7, 9, 12m



DUOTONE SAYS:

The Evo is the best allrounder with an incredible wind range, precise power delivery, amazing stability and responsive handling, making it the choice for any type of conditions or riding style. The EVO was a real standout kite of last year; completely redesigned on three struts, it is now a dedicated three-strut all-rounder that impressed everyone who flew it. With incredible hangtime and massive boosting capabilities, it became one of Duotone's most popular kites. The EVO is a delta-shaped kite designed to offer fantastic upwind performance and huge jumps. It has a dynamic turn that lends itself well to playing in the waves, and the kite is perfect for those riders looking to try their first freestyle moves too. It doesn't matter what your style is on the water; the EVO is truly capable of handling it all. The structural stiffness of the smaller sizes has been enhanced, making them rock solid even in gusty and strong winds. Reduced bar pressure makes the kite easy to fly and very forgiving, appealing to a lot of riders across the ability spectrum. Sheet and go handling further enhances the rider experience, meaning the incredible performance of the EVO is available to everyone. If your riding isn't confined to a particular discipline and you like to keep your options open for freestyle, big air and waves, then you need the EVOLUTION!

Visit for more info: www.duotonesports.com/kiteboarding/kites/evo

TKB SAYS:

This is the first year that the Evo will be marketed under the Duotone brand and the second year that the Evo will be built on a 3-strut platform with a medium to high aspect layout that has sweptback wingtips and a delta style shape. This year Duotone has made some changes, stiffened up the structure a little bit, but for the most part this is the user-friendly freeride kite that delivers similar performance to that of the Rebel but with the standard sheet and go type of feel. When it comes to inflation, Duotone's large diameter inflation valve dubbed the 'Airport Valve II' connects directly with Duotone's pump hose without the use of a nozzle and the inflation system's twist valve rotates with the insertion of the hose to keep air in the system. Deflation happens through both the inflation valve and a dump valve on one side of the kite, making both inflation and deflation quick and easy. The Evo offers three settings on the wingtip for changing between Hard, Medium and Soft settings and the single setting front bridle makes use of a single pulley for adjusting the kite's angle of attack. The Evo comes with front bridle attachment points that end in knots and wingtip pigtailed that end in loops. We tested it on the medium setting and we would say for those thinking about purchasing an Evo, its standout qualities are its nice light to medium bar pressure, fairly swift steering response with a nice direct feel, and substantial boosting power. Overall the kite's turn isn't quite as tight as say the Neo. Instead, the Evo has a little bit of a larger steering arc, yet turns quite fast. When it comes to boosting big air this is probably the Evo's primary area of strength, yielding impressive lift on sent jumps that we quantified as explosive. Accessing the Evo's lift is intuitive and its boosting power launches you really high with a decent amount of hangtime that requires just a little bit of management to keep a nice soft landing, making this one of Duotone's all-around kites that flirts with big air freestyle. The steering was a little bit more intuitive for us on big air compared to the Neo, as the Evo seemed to always track where the kite was in the window with good feedback that created kite awareness. These days the Evo is best compared to the Rebel, as they both are 4-line kites that deliver in the performance freeride big air department. One of the biggest differences between the Rebel and the Evo is that bar throw for the Evo is a bit longer compared to the Rebel's and the Evo's longer bar stroke may be more intuitive and the power delivery more progressive. The Evo seems to want to fly more comfortably in the middle of the window with better drift and more depower, while the Rebel likes to charge to the front of the window and create lift. While the Rebel and Evo are both specialist within the big air freeride realm, we'd choose the Evo for those that are looking for more general freeride cruising or the occasional surf session. The same qualities that make the Evo one of our favorite freeride kites also makes it a top choice for foilboarding as well.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Flies great with excellent boost and turns well with no downsides. Super stable, comfortable bar pressure, excellent turning speed, jumping, hangtime and upwind ability. This kite is so fun you may never want another kite.." // Kiter Mike



"Super fun and reliable, steady pull throughout turns, balanced bar pressure and always knew where the kite was in the window. Huge lift, easy relaunch and love the Click bar. This is the Swiss Army knife that does it all." // Joe Chehock



"Stable kite, drifts well, responsive steering, smooth power delivery. Medium bar pressure, steers well and is very predictable. Found it difficult to adjust the Click bar while riding." // Giuseppe Molinaro

DUOTONE NEO

Sizes Available: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12m

Sizes Tested: 6, 8, 11m



DUOTONE SAYS:

The Neo is a high-performance purebred wave-riding kite with incredible handling and excellent drifting capabilities that can also perform for freeriding and foiling. If you like nothing better than carving smooth bottom turns and smashing off the lips, then the NEO is the kite for you. Developed by Ken Winner alongside our pro wave riders and World Champions Airton Cozzolino, Matchu Lopes, Sebastian Ribeiro and Patri McLaughlin, this is the kite of choice on the GKA Strapless World Tour. Now with improved handling, thanks to the special Flex Segment which is integrated into the leading edge. This unique feature allows the kite to twist more when it is turning; this increases the responsiveness of the kite and results in a fast more dynamic ride. Of course, the NEO is still incredibly powerful and thanks to its lightweight, yet tough design the drifting ability is unsurpassed. Combined with the revolutionary Click Bar, you get a huge depower throw and the ability to dump all the power from the kite in an instant. Not only is this feature important during critical moments on the wave, it is also crucial for landing technical strapless tricks. The kite can be tuned to a freeride setting, which is great for cruising, boosting and foiling too. No matter what kind of conditions you ride, onshore, offshore, from small to flatwater strapless freestyle, the NEO is the only wave kite you'll need!

Visit for more info: www.duotonesports.com/kiteboarding/kites/neo

TKB SAYS:

This is the first year that we've tested the Neo under the Duotone label. Largely, this is the dedicated surf and freeride kite that has a long track record from all the years when Duotone was called North. The Neo is Duotone's dedicated wave kite with a 3-strut frame and slight delta-shaped canopy which offers incremental changes for this year. When it comes to inflation, Duotone's large diameter inflation valve dubbed the 'Airport Valve II' connects directly with Duotone's pump hose without the use of a nozzle and the inflation system's twist valve rotates with the insertion of the hose to keep air in the system. Deflation happens through both the inflation valve and a dump valve on one side of the kite, making both inflation and deflation quick and easy. The Neo features two settings on the front bridle for adjusting between high depower and medium depower, and uses a single pulley to help adjust the kite's angle of attack. We rode our Neo in 4-line mode but it can also be flown in 5-line mode with either the Trust bar or the Click bar with the addition of an optional 5th line package. The Neo comes with front bridle attachment points that end in knots and wingtip pigtailed that end in loops. This year we tested the front bridle in the high depower setting and we tested the wingtip steering setting on the softer setting. The first impression continues to be the Neo's gutsy power deliver with a ton of good grunty power in every size. The Neo likes to sit deeper in the window, yet this kite has a ton of depower in the bar stroke but when you sheet the kite in the canopy loads up and delivers tons of pull. Testers commented on the bar pressure feeling medium plus, noticeably more bar tension than the Evo. The steering response felt fairly crisp with a direct steering response and a steering path that is a pivot style that seems to turn on the front bridle for a tight pivot style turn which doesn't generate a ton of power but makes it easy to put the kite where you want. We did notice in the smaller sizes that sometimes in the middle of a big boost the kite turned fast enough that we had to pay extra attention to track its position. We tested the Neo's drift while carving off the wind and its stability by overflying jumps and the Neo scored really well. With regard to boosting the Neo had a solid amount of lift and a fair amount of hangtime which reiterates our thoughts that the Neo is not only a surf kite but an all around freeride option too. If you want a kite that sits a bit deeper in the window for onshore surf conditions you can adjust the bridle setting, and if you like more kite feedback into the bar you can change the Adaptive wingtip setting to hard. The relaunch on the Neo was excellent. This is one of those kites that when its nose down in the water at the bottom of the window all you have to do is yank on one of the bar's leader line and the Neo promptly stands on a wingtip, pivots and launches from the bottom of the window. This is a nice characteristic to have for a kite that you're going to use in the surf because a lot of times you don't have a lot of time to dilly dally with your kite in the water before the next set waves cleans you out. Overall the Neo has the making of a surf specialist with all around freeride capabilities for someone that wants to do some jumping. We also endorse the Neo as a foilboarding option on the high depower setting for someone who likes a bit more pull.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"This is a kite for the rider that doesn't want to worry about the kite — it is very stable, generates the right amount of pull and is easy to depower." // Marko Bartscherer



"Grunty kite that still turned quickly and had good boost. Stays in control even when I was overpowered. Overall, good all around kite with a little heavier bar pressure but fun all around." // Bryan Waldberg



"Turns well with a grunty feel just as fun on a twin tip or surfboard. Goes upwind well, slightly heavier bar pressure, turns fast, super stable. Overall, a very versatile well-rounded kite that will make any kiter happy." // Kiter Mike

DUOTONE REBEL

Sizes Available: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15m

Sizes Tested: 7, 9, 12m



DUOTONE SAYS:

The Rebel is the all-time classic freeride kite, legendary performance, big air superiority and a stunning hang time. Last year the Rebel had a significant overhaul that saw the design built around a 4 line set up. The kite was a huge success and this year Ken Winner has been working hard to make the best even better! Updates on the 2019 model include a smaller, reduced diameter leading edge and a flatter center shape profile. The goal was to improve the handling and boosting capabilities of the kite. The thinner leading edge makes the new Rebel more efficient, but also allows it to twist, increasing the turning speed and making the handling very dynamic. The new flatter profile in the center of the kite adds power and improves the flying characteristics. More importantly, the kite now jumps higher and floats for longer; massive airs are even easier on the new Rebel! The kite can be flown in the standard 4 line set up, or if you wish, there is a 5th line upgrade available too. The Rebel works perfectly with the Click Bar in either 4 or 5 line configuration. As ever the wind range is huge, there is plenty of low-end power, and the high-end is incredible with the 5-strut design keeping the canopy stable even in gusty conditions. Sheet and go handling makes the Rebel incredibly easy to fly, it's suitable for riders just starting out on their kitesurfing journey as well as pro's who want to boost to the moon and everyone in between. This iconic kite has long been the freeride standard all other kites try to emulate, now the bar is set even higher, the new 2019 Rebel will blow you away.

Visit for more info: www.duotonesports.com/kiteboarding/kites/rebel

TKB SAYS:

This is the first year that the Rebel is marketed under the Duotone brand, it being one of the longest standing and most popular kites in the big air/performance freeride segment. Perhaps old news, but the Rebel is now a 4-line kite for the second year in a row, but with the option to convert the stock bar into its historical 5-line mode. The Rebel is known for its legendary status as a big explosive lift kite with good hangtime and Ken Winner's tweaks this year haven't changed that. The Rebel uses Duotone's large diameter inflation valve dubbed the 'Airport Valve II' which connects directly with Duotone's pump hose without the use of a nozzle; the inflation system's twist valve rotates with the insertion of the hose to keep air in the system. Deflation happens through both the inflation valve and a dump valve on one side of the kite, making both inflation and deflation quick and easy. The Rebel comes with Duotone's adaptive wingtip design which offers two options for a soft and hard setting. The front bridles use a single setting layout with a single pulley to change the angle of attack. The Rebel comes with front bridle attachment points that end in knots and wingtip pigtailed that end in loops. The 5-strut airframe gives you a stiff airframe that delivers crisp power delivery and very strong power that allows you to feel every gust transfer into the pull of the kite with excellent acceleration. The Rebel wants to be flown actively in the window because it is not quite the sheet and go kite like the Evo, but the Rebel has this punchy feel that pulls strong from the edge of the window, as if it's just asking to be unleashed. The steering response is fairly direct and the steering arc is perhaps a little bit wider than the Evo, with middle of the road turning speed that is quite easy to place the kite for maximizing lift when jumping. We really noticed gusts transferring into direct acceleration and when we sent the kite for a big air, the lift was literally mind-blowing. Historically, the Rebel has always had a fairly short bar throw, with the kite transitioning through its angle of attack range along a smaller distance of bar movement. This year the Rebel feels like the bar's throw distance is a little longer than before, but it's still shorter than the Evo, which might explain why power delivery can feel punchy and a little less progressive than the Evo. The bar pressure on the Rebel is medium plus and feels a little bit heavier than the Evo, and since the Rebel is a big air pulling machine, the canopy doesn't offer quite as much depower as the Evo. For those kites that want an aggressive flying machine, you can crank every last inch of power out of the Rebel and that makes it extremely fun when it comes to big air launching. Sometimes in the middle of a jump as your moving the kite across the window on a big jump you'll feel a second pulse of lift that indicates that this kite is squeezing every inch of power out of the wind. Compared to the Evo, the Rebel seemed to deliver a little bit more hangtime and potentially softer landings for those who know how to actively fly the kite. In terms of relaunch the Rebel when nose down in the water tended to react quickly to bar inputs that caused it to roll over onto a wingtip and taxi to the edge of the window, typically releasing at the edge of the window rather than the hot launch that we experienced with the Neo surf kite. This being the Rebel's second year as a 4-line kite, we think longtime Rebel aficionados should still be incredibly happy with the changes that are made to this kite as it continues to be a high caliber lift machine that excels in all around freeride, but most particularly as a performance big air boosting kite.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"The boosting machine with terrific feel, easy turning and good upwind performance. Good grunt, amazing lift with excellent hangtime. This is a must have kite for the guys that love big air." // Kiter Mike



"Boost and lift are impressive, pulls hard with stronger bar pressure and slower turning speed. Jumps really high and stays up there." // Giuseppe Molinaro



"Boost machine, with smooth big radius looping turns, great upwind ability for easy floaty jumping. Loved the Click bar, offers easy/accurate power control." // Dylan Dobbyn

DUOTONE CLICK BAR



The Click bar is back for its third year although branded under the new Duotone label with a few changes like an updated color scheme that visually sets off one side of the bar along with the introduction of a smaller bar version. The Click bar now comes with either the smaller fixed length 42cm wide bar with 20-22m lines or the original 49cm length with 22m or 24m lines. The Click bar features a single center-line safety depower system, and an adjustable attachment point that allows you to swap back and forth between a high and low-V (it's worth noting that you don't have to re-thread the entire length of a line through a ring to accomplish the change). The outside lines end in knots and the center lines end in loops. The Click bar features a molded plastic throw line that untwists itself after you spin, a sliding stopper and Duotone's proven push away quick release. The quick release when opened horizontally, locks into an open position, holding the gate open. Reassembly still requires two hands: one hand holds the loop in position and pushes on the catch button while the other hand raises the quick release handle so the catch can move back into its closed position and then the handle is released.

The Click bar settles the debate between above or below the bar tuning by placing it exactly at your fingertips. The twisting motion for powering up takes a little bit of focus while riding and the button for depower is easily accessed at all times. While it's a big shift from the systems we have come to know, seamless controls like this are the future of the sport. The ratchet knob built into the bar end is easy to grab a hold of and easy to rotate while kiting and easy to tune on the fly. The Click bar also integrates a visual indicator that reveals the position the bar is set to – this is actually a very nice feature. Compared to other systems, the mechanics of Duotone's Click bar is entirely closed, which means you won't be washing it out. The Click bar features retractable bar bungees, soft bar ends and integrated floats with a fairly dense EVA grip that feels asymmetrical in your palm with subtle raised bumps between fingers, and a very comfortable stamp pattern the entire length of the bar.



Visit for more info on the bar: www.duotonesports.com/kiteboarding/bars

DUOTONE TRUST BAR



The Trust bar also received a colorway upgrade to the new Duotone colors for this year. The big change last year was making the Trust bar a standard 4-line bar with an optional 5th line aftermarket upgrade package (yes, it looks as if the 5-line freeride kites are going the way of the dinosaurs). Essentially, you can switch back and forth between 4 and 5-lines from the same base bar purchase. The Trust bar is a dual adjustable length bar that comes in two options, 42/49cm and a 46/53cm length. On the smaller bar you can choose between 19 or 22m lines and on the longer bar, you can choose between 24 and 27m lines. Duotone feels line length is an important tunable feature to match with your kite and style of riding. Our kites came with the 4-line base version with the single center-line safety depower that runs up to one of the bridles. The center lines are knotted for rigging purposes and the outside lines end in loops. The adjustable length spectra throw line features a tuning cleat with a magnet on the depower strap to keep it in place. The Trust has a push away quick release with a below the bar hand swivel that also functions as a quick release travel guard. At the time of purchase, you can select from four different chicken loop options (Wakestyle, Freestyle, Freeride and Rope Harness). The Rope Harness Kit is a super short loop with a metal center for rope traveler based harnesses. The second and probably most common is the Freeride kit which is smaller than the standard-length chicken loop for regular freeriders who won't be unhooking. Then there's the Freestyle loop that is the standard length most kites are offered with and finally a Wakestyle kit which features an extra-large loop for those that are unhooking on a regular basis. We tested the bar with the Freestyle loop, but we think the Freeride loop is an excellent idea for those kites that won't be riding unhooked. The Trust features a spectra trim/throw line, a sliding stopper for long tacks and a firm molded chicken finger to prevent accidental unhooking. The padded bar ends are tunable and offer integrated floats and retractable bar bungees for a clean wrap up. In addition to adjusting the length of the bar, you can adjust the length of the outside lines by pulling the bar ends apart and choosing from three color-coded knots for length options (green/blue/red). The bar grip is fairly plush EVA with middle of the road texture which makes the Trust a very comfy bar and continues to be a bar that gets rave reviews during our test week.

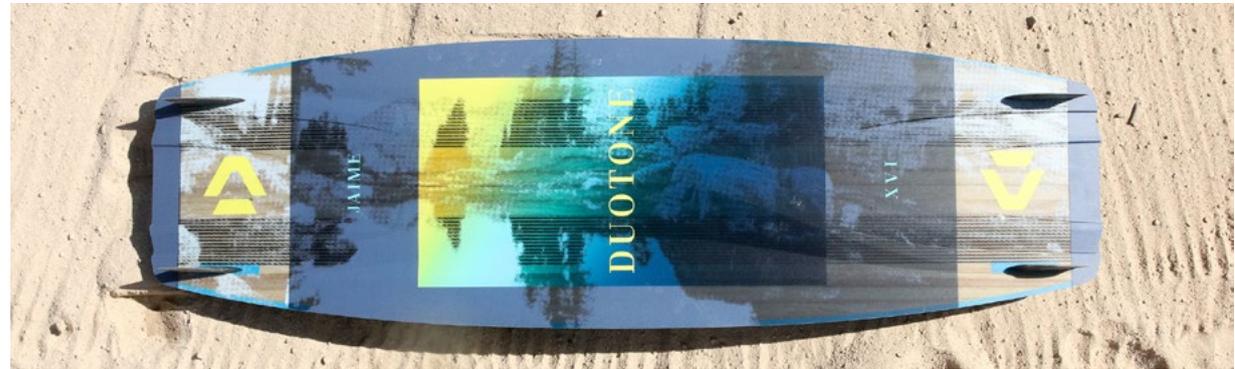


Visit for more info on the bar: www.duotonesports.com/kiteboarding/bars

DUOTONE JAIME

Sizes Available: 130 x 39cm, 133 x 40cm, 136 x 41cm, 139 x 42cm, 142 x 43cm

Sizes Tested: 139 x 42cm



DUOTONE SAYS:

The Jaime is a board that needs no introduction, it has plenty of fans all over the world and has inspired the style and progression of thousands, yet it is again completely redesigned to again set the benchmark. It is the go-to board at your local spot and all your travels all over the world. The Double Diffusor Bottom provides plenty of grip for blasting upwind, and the board is fast and dynamic through the water. Perfect for hooked and unhooked tricks, the board rides exceptionally well with straps thanks to its unique shape and flex. Wide tips offer a massive amount of pop, and the medium flex ensures comfort in all conditions. If you want to boost massive airs, throw down some freestyle and land mega loops at Mach10, this is the board for you.

Visit for more info: www.duotonesports.com/kiteboarding/boards/twintips/jaime

TKB SAYS:

The Jaime is Duotone's classic board that does just about everything well, straddling the freeride and performance freestyle worlds with a very fun and comfortable twin tip that can take on just about everything. While Duotone now offers the Jaime twin tip in regular and in carbon Textreme construction, it's worth pointing out that the classic Jaime was already a lightweight smoking rocket of a board. One of the most noticeable aspects of taking the Jaime for a spin is its user-friendly upwind tracking. The Jaime bottom shape offers a unique center concave that transitions into a quad concave in the tail. The rocker and the outline work with the fins to help the Jaime lock in an edge and blast upwind without a ton of rider input. The Jaime's outline and medium flex cuts through chop with a luxuriously smooth ride. That same flex pattern works to give you good load and pop; this board just feels active and approachable for all levels of riders. The Jaime ranks high in carving with its outline and pulled in tips making this board fun to carve rail to rail and slash in the small swells. The Jaime formula is unbeatable, mixing comfort and intuitive handling with sporty performance that only the most hardcore freestylers could want for more. The Jaime is an excellent progression board for newer kites that will keep this along for the ride clear into the advanced stages of freeride and initial stages of freestyle.

Our Duotone twin tips came with the Entity pads and straps system. The Entity features the new snap adjustment straps that replace the standard Velcro enclosure for the snap system you find on the back of a standard baseball hat. The Entity pad offers a ton of adjustment with the board offering a track system for a large and infinite degree of stance width adjustment and a large number of options for adjusting duck. The Entity's position relative to centerline can also be adjusted and the binding has a nice low-profile frame that hugs the deck and feels very secure. The footbeds have a nice rubbery feeling with medium to soft plushness, subtle heel cupping and soft toe bumps that allow your toes to really bite into the pad. The center of the footbed offers a little bit of contour under the arch of your foot and the entire setup ensures that your foot has a sure grip on the board. The straps themselves are dual adjustable and each anchor point can be moved forward or aft in the binding to get the perfect coverage for your foot. The straps have a soft velvety fabric feel underneath that testers really liked. Tester reviews were always emphatically positive on the Entity's comfort, although the snap based closure system on the straps had its fans and its critics. The snaps might take a little bit more effort to lineup compared to Velcro and is probably an exercise best left for the beach with two free hands. It's a nifty design, but whether it moves the ball forward for you is largely a person to person decision. Overall, the Entity is one of those pad and strap systems that received universal raving praise for its comfort and control.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Loved the straps and the way they wrapped my feet like a comfortable loafer. Smooth handling, super upwind ability and great pop. Not a single downside — loved this board, it rocks!" // Kiter Mike



"Grippy edge control, floaty, nice pop, soft landings. Skatey but carves well in chop, fun and playful with nice handling. Straps difficult to adjust while in the water." // Joe Chehock

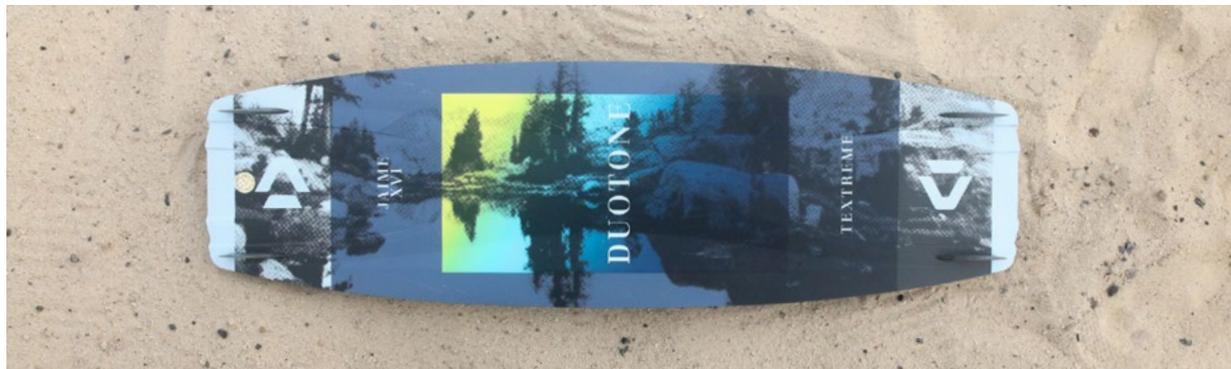


"Decent flex, goes nicely through chop, good all around board. Great carves and turns, great load and pop and excellent upwind ability. Love the straps/bindings, easy to adjust and extremely comfortable." // Micha Dassler

DUOTONE JAIME TEXTREME

Sizes Available: 133 x 40cm, 136 x 41cm, 139 x 42cm, 142 x 43cm

Sizes Tested: 136 x 41cm



DUOTONE SAYS:

The most high-performance freeride and freestyle board on the market today, suited to both hooked and unhooked riding! This year it's completely redesigned and equipped with the new and fantastic Double Diffusor.

How do you make the best even better? The Jaime offers the completely new Double Diffusor Bottom for outstanding grip and maximum comfort, the unique grab rails make any sort of board offs look easy. It is specifically designed to be ridden with straps and has been given the Formula 1 treatment with a Textreme Carbon Construction makeover, the results are just stunning. The unique blend of carbon not only reduces the weight of the board, it also makes it even more responsive and creates an exhilarating ride on the water! Fast, with a dynamic pop, the Jaime Textreme is perfect for the advanced freeriders and freestylers looking for an impressive all-rounder that can take everything you throw at it. From huge airs and board offs to mega loops and handle passes the Jaime Textreme won't let you down, it's the ultimate twin tip for the discerning rider who knows exactly what they want.

Visit for more info: www.duotonesports.com/kiteboarding/boards/twintips/jaime-textreme

TKB SAYS:

This may sound cliché, but how do you improve upon a board that strikes such an excellent balance between comfort and performance? Easy — just make it noticeably lighter without sacrificing any of its worldwide-acclaimed qualities. The very first thing you notice when you pick up the Jaime Textreme off the beach is how refreshingly light the board feels in your hand. This savings in weight is not only welcomed on the beach, but more so as you navigate the rocks at the shoreline, during waterstarts, while rocketing upwind in light wind sessions and probably most pronounced, when you boost big massive airs with a much lower swing weight on your feet. With the Jaime Textreme, Duotone has done a great job of losing the weight while keeping its performance attributes true to the Jaime's reputation. The carbon construction may give the flex pattern a little stiffer of a feel, perhaps a bit more crisp with a bit faster reflex. Everything from carving, transitions, bump and jump — all feels more responsive and crisp with the board's lower weight. There may be some aficionados that fixate on the slight difference in load and pop and the feel of landings you get between the traditional Jaime and its carbon upgrade, but our thoughts are that the advantages of the lighter weight sporty ride makes every freeride aspect of this board so much more fun and active than the Textreme and is the way we would go.

Our Duotone twin tips came with the Entity pads and straps system. The Entity features the new snap adjustment straps that replace the standard Velcro enclosure for the snap system you find on the back of a standard baseball hat. The Entity pad offers a ton of adjustment with the board offering a track system for a large and infinite degree of stance width adjustment and a large number of options for adjusting duck. The Entity's position relative to center line can also be adjusted and the binding has a nice low-profile frame that hugs the deck and feels very secure. The footbeds offer a nice rubbery feeling with medium to soft plushness and have subtle heel cupping and soft toe bumps that allow your toes to really bite into the pad. The center of the footbed offers a little bit of contour under the arch of your foot and the entire setup ensures that your foot has a sure grip on the board. The straps themselves are dual adjustable and each anchor point can be moved forward or aft in the binding to get the perfect coverage for your foot. The straps have a soft velvety fabric feel underneath that testers really liked. Tester reviews were always emphatically positive on the Entity's comfort, although the snap-based closure system on the straps had its fans and its critics. The snaps might take a little bit more effort to lineup compared to Velcro and is probably an exercise best left for the beach with two free hands. It's a nifty design, but whether it moves the ball forward for you is largely a personal decision. Overall, the Entity is one of those pad and strap systems that received universal raving praise for its comfort and control.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Obviously lighter than its regular construction brother, nice carving, excellent upwind. Fun allrounder, sweet board, got to have it in carbon." // Micha Dassler



"Good edge handling and control but still a little skatey for buttery sliding turns. Nice pop, fun and friendly board in chop, smooth turner and snappy pop. Straps and pads are extremely comfortable." // Joe Chehock



"Instantly feels right, obvious why its always been so popular. Very similar to the regular construction but super lightweight, excellent carves, load and pop, and great upwind ability." // Kiter Mike

DUOTONE SELECT

Sizes Available: 132 x 39cm, 135 x 40cm, 138 x 41cm, 141 x 42cm

Sizes Tested: 138 x 41cm



DUOTONE SAYS:

The new Select is replacing the famous X-rRde and is the perfect board for riders looking to improve and advance their skills. A step up comfort board which offers increased performance for freeriding and those first freestyle tricks, coupled with incredible carving abilities for shredding waves. A soft flex achieved with the brand new Space Flex Technology makes the board comfortable and forgiving to ride even in the roughest of seas. Grab rails assure you'll always get the right grip on your board no matter in which situation. The Step Mono Concave shape on the bottom increases the grip and upwind abilities of the board while weight is reduced thanks to the Carbon Beam, which also improves the responsiveness of the ride. Just as much fun in the waves as it is flying through the air or cruising upwind the Select is an all-rounder that will make you look great on the water, whatever your style.

Visit for more info: www.duotonesports.com/kiteboarding/boards/twintips/select

TKB SAYS:

The Select is Duotone's progressive freeride all around board which replaces the X-Ride model this year. The Select boasts a little softer flex pattern than the Jaime and features slightly pulled in tips that give it a really user-friendly and playful feel. Testers reported excellent edging ability and high marks in its smooth riding through the chop. The Select doesn't offer quite as locked in a feeling as the Jaime — its tracking and grip is a little looser and playful, yet testers said its upwind ability and ease of use was unparalleled. Testers praised the Select for its smooth rail to rail carving and transitions. We tested the regular construction of the Select which offers middle of the road weight that feels good in your hands, but if you're looking for the ultimate featherweight comfort we'd bet it's worth giving this board a try in the carbon Textreme construction. Words like 'predictable' and 'intuitive' frequented tester feedback, with many testers praising the Select's super forgiving and soft landings; likely the softer flex pattern and pulled in tips help with dissipating impacts. For sticking those bigger airs with harder landings you will find the Select isn't as firm during impact, but you can't have it both ways—at some point you have to choose between comfort or hard-charging performance. The Select doesn't quite have the load and pop for aggressive jumping that you get with the Jaime, but for all around freeriding the Select offers fun and reliable handling that newer riders will find very useful through the course of early progression and beyond in general cruisy freeride enjoyment.

Our Duotone twin tips came with the Entity pads and straps system. The Entity features the new snap adjustment straps that replace the standard Velcro enclosure for the snap system you find on the back of a standard baseball hat. The Entity pad offers a ton of adjustment with the board offering a track system for a large and infinite degree of stance width adjustment and a large number of options for adjusting duck. The Entity's position relative to center line can also be adjusted and the binding has a nice low-profile frame that hugs the deck and feels very secure. The footbeds offer a nice rubbery feeling with medium to soft plushness and have subtle heel cupping and soft toe bumps that allow your toes to really bite into the pad. The center of the footbed offers a little bit of contour under the arch of your foot and the entire setup ensures that your foot has a sure grip on the board. The straps themselves are dual adjustable and each anchor point can be moved forward or aft in the binding to get the perfect coverage for your foot. The straps have a soft velvety fabric feel underneath that testers really liked. Tester reviews were always emphatically positive on the Entity's comfort, although the snap-based closure system on the straps had its fans and its critics. The snaps might take a little bit more effort to lineup compared to Velcro and is probably an exercise best left for the beach with two free hands. It's a nifty design, but whether it moves the ball forward for you is largely a personal decision. Overall, the Entity is one of those pad and strap systems that received universal raving praise for its comfort and control.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Easy rider, eats chop for breakfast. Great grip on the pads, easy on the knees; soft landings, perfect board for La Ventana's chop." // Dray Murray



"Excellent edging ability, comfy soft pads (easy/in/out), crushed it in the chop. Smooth turning, locked edge control and flies waaayyyy upwind." // Joe Chehock



"Locked in holding an edge and handless chop nicely. Comfortable footpads, minimal spray, and excellent carving." // David Kirkup

DUOTONE SOLEIL TEXTREME

Sizes Available: 132 x 38cm, 136 x 39cm

Sizes Tested: 136 x 39cm



DUOTONE SAYS:

The Soleil Textreme is completely new to the range, especially designed for kitesurfing women, offering that extra bit of performance due to the extremely light Textreme Carbon. The Space Flex Technology makes it even lighter than it anyway is, yet makes it durable and giving this piece of art that little bit of extra pop. The narrow outline is one of the reasons the Soleil is smooth even in rough conditions, making the ride always controlled and comfortable. The Carbon Beam construction provides the board with a lively feel that is very reactive to rider input. Rail to rail carving is a dream while the pop is impressive. The softer flex in combination with the Space Flex Technology ensures the ride is smooth, even on the choppiest of days and the Step Mono Concave bottom gets you going early. Of course, also the Soleil Textreme is equipped with the new rail handles, making handling of the board easy and helps you with this extra grip for any kind of grabs and board offs. With the Soleil Textreme you get a female specific board which performs at any time on the water, but also could be art decorating your house. Either way, you'll always have a smile on your face using the Soleil Textreme.

Visit for more info: www.duotonesports.com/kiteboarding/boards/twintips/soleil-textreme

TKB SAYS:

The Soleil is the smaller person (female) oriented board of the Duotone lineup that is geared, much like the Select (which replaced the X-Ride this year), towards all around freeride performance. We tested the Soleil in the Textreme version which features the carbon construction that when combined with the narrower outline yields an amazing low overall weight. The flex pattern is geared for both smaller riders and general freeride use, which gave the Soleil excellent reviews for a comfortable and smooth ride. Words like ‘predictable’ and ‘intuitive’ frequented tester feedback for the Select, with many testers praising the Select’s super forgiving and soft landings — being the smaller model of this board, the Soleil feedback was similar. Testers gave the Soleil solid marks for its chop handling ability and felt the Soleil had a fairly grippy feel that went upwind extremely well. Note, most of our testers were men, but that did not prevent the Soleil from scoring high reviews from testers of both sexes. The narrower template works great for smaller riders and delivers really great carves from rail to rail. The softer flex pattern works well for load and pop with smaller riders and when combined with its user-friendly and comfortable cruising characteristics, the Soleil scores high points as a general freeride board for smaller riders of all skill levels.

Our Duotone twin tips came with the Entity pads and straps system. The Entity features the new snap adjustment straps that replace the standard Velcro enclosure for the snap system you find on the back of a standard baseball hat. The Entity pad offers a ton of adjustment with the board offering a track system for a large and infinite degree of stance width adjustment and a large number of options for adjusting duck. The Entity’s position relative to center line can also be adjusted and the binding has a nice low-profile frame that hugs the deck and feels very secure. The footbeds have a nice rubbery feeling with medium to soft plushness, subtle heel cupping and soft toe bumps that allow your toes to really bite into the pad. The center of the footbed offers a little bit of contour under the arch of your foot and the entire setup ensures that your foot has a sure grip on the board. The straps themselves are dual adjustable and each anchor point can be moved forward or aft in the binding to get the perfect coverage for your foot. The straps have a soft velvety fabric feel underneath that testers really liked. Tester reviews were always emphatically positive on the Entity’s comfort, although the snap-based closure system on the straps had its fans and its critics. The snaps might take a little bit more effort to lineup compared to Velcro and is probably an exercise best left for the beach with two free hands. It’s a nifty design, but whether it moves the ball forward for you is largely a personal decision. Overall, the Entity is one of those pad and strap systems that received universal raving praise for its comfort and control.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



“Great board, flies upwind with little effort, easy to control, very friendly and steers very well as it glides through chop. Great board for smaller kilters of all levels.” // Kristin Vincenzo

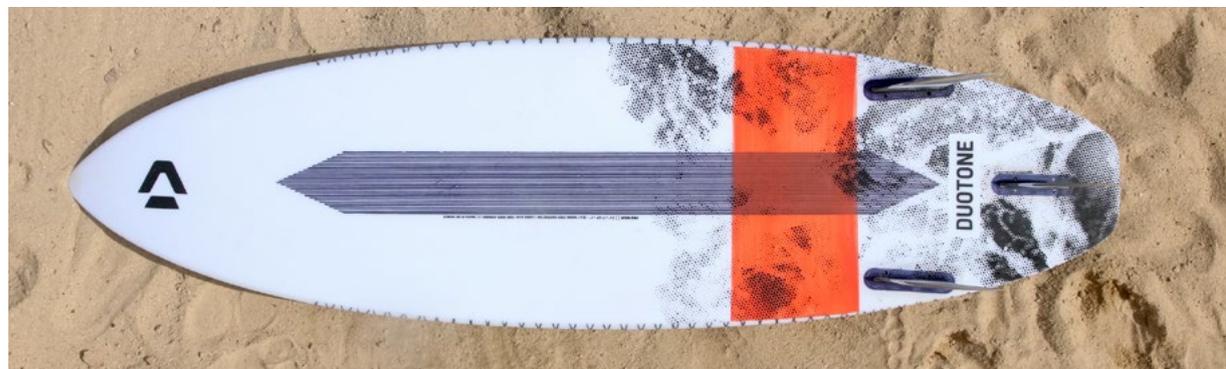


“As a dude, I want one of these lady boards as it met all that I expect a board to do with a light, smooth through chop ride which is easy to edge and delivers friendly pop.” // Tib Anghel

DUOTONE PRO WAM

Sizes Available: 5'6" X 17 5/8" X 2" 20.4L, 5'8" X 18" X 2 1/8" 23L, 5'10" X 18 5/16" X 2 1/4" 25.4L, 6'0" X 18 9/16" X 2 3/8" 27.9L

Sizes Tested: 5'6" X 17 5/8" X 2" 20.4L



DUOTONE SAYS:

The Pro WAM is the ultimate high-performance all-rounder. The fuller outline makes the Pro WAM slightly more compact than most traditional squash tail shortboards and is the key to its unique do it all abilities. It has excellent handling in light winds and smaller waves while still retaining the impressive high speed and sought after big wave performance that riders love. The Pro WAM excels in most conditions from small to large waves. It is the one board does it all board for all your travels, being capable of handling all sorts of conditions. The subtle grab rail, optimized volume distribution and double concave deck complete one of the most impressive surfboards in the Duotone range. This season also as a 5'6" version for lighter riders. For 2019, we are using a more labor-intensive, multi-step vacuum bag process that yields a super strong, lightweight board with a custom, hand sanded finish. The most substantial change to the light team construction is that we no longer use a full bamboo sandwich. The cork shock absorber, which used to be concealed under the bamboo sandwich, is now clearly visible under the deck skin and allows the deck to flex and absorb shock like a custom PU board with minimal to no heel denting, thanks to the underlying reinforcements and the remarkable memory properties of cork. Pure surfboard feel in an ultra light but durable construction.

Visit for more info: www.duotonesports.com/kiteboarding/boards/surfboards/pro-wam

TKB SAYS:

The Duotone Pro Wam features Duotone's Light Team construction which makes this board feel incredibly responsive with its lower weight yet durable feel. The first thing we noticed about this board is its narrower performance-oriented template and its sunken deck that makes the board thinner with your feet mounting lower in the depth of the board. This makes this board a lower volume shape that doesn't feel quite as floaty or corky as the other surfboards in the test. The Pro Wam feels like it has thinner rails and lower volume which seems to work really well in the choppier conditions with the board going rail to rail with precise and quick rail carving. The Wam flies upwind through choppy conditions with no chatter or instability and works great as an all-around freeride cruiser, but with the potential for much more. The Wam at 5'6" feels like a performance shape which will dominate in small to medium-sized waves with the rail and tail feeling really reactive — it wants to carve really tight turns for perfect slashes. For head high and bigger waves we would like to test a bigger version of this board. The Wam features a classic shape with a $\frac{3}{4}$ length deck pad with lined texture that testers loved for both its comfort and control of the board. In terms of strapless freestyle the Pro Wam with its longer length was still one of our favorites for boosting big airs and rotations; its lower weight, lower volume and tight rails helps make big airs possible and sticks to your feet through the turns. The Wam comes with pronounced grab rails that make getting to the water much easier, as well as facilitating those grabbed aerials. The Wam is an excellent performance surfing all-rounder that mixes tighter rails and lower volume for excellent control and precision carving in choppy surf.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Much quicker feel than the Whip CSC, feels more advanced, with greater turning speed and flies upwind — it's a lot of fun!" // Kristin Vincenzo



"Nimble, quick edge to edge, goes upwind well and great carving. Edge is friendly while trying to lock in upwind." // Dray Murray



"A joy to ride thanks to its plush pad, chop-eating channels, dialed in edge control and precise turning." // Tib Anghel

DUOTONE WHIP CSC

Sizes Available: 5'0" X 18" X 2 1/8" 21L, 5'2" X 18 1/2" X 2 1/4" 23.4L, 5'4" X 19" X 2 3/8" 26.4L

Sizes Tested: 5'0" X 18" X 2 1/8" 21L



DUOTONE SAYS:

Built using the Bamboo Tec Construction the Whip is an extremely durable and versatile board. It uses an identical shape to the Pro Whip CSC, featuring the new subtle winger just behind the front fins, which reduces the tail area of the board. This new feature allows the board to perform tighter snaps and gives a more precise and controlled feel when on the wave especially when traveling at high speed down the line. The deep twin channel, which was introduced last year, is back and offers incredible directional stability while still allowing for impressive maneuverability. The deck of the Whip CSC features a double concave for a better connection to your feet, and there are subtle grab rails making strapless tricks easier. The Bamboo Tec Construction offers fantastic flex and strength to deliver an impressive feel on the water. The Whip CSC is a modern high-performance design that will excite you on the water and allow you to take your riding to the next level.

Visit for more info: www.duotonesports.com/kiteboarding/boards/surfboards/whip-csc

TKB SAYS:

The Whip CSC is Duotone's standard construction version of their modern planing hull. When you review the top level featherweight construction version against the standard version you often expect reviewers to downgrade feedback on the heavier board, but in the Whip's case, the review team gave equally glowing reviews of the regular Whip. The regular version of the Whip comes with three forward/aft inserts for straps, the front foot is centered on the board and the back foot has an option to set the back strap with some duck. The first thing we noticed is that the rails feel a little bit thinner and tighter than most of the other surfboard designs out there and the overall volume seems lower with less thickness. The bottom shape features deep twin channels running from the nose to the tail which seem to give the Whip exceptional directional stability. The Whip has a really locked in feel that powers confidently through the chop, blasting upwind. With the Bamboo Tec's extra weight and density over the Pro version, the regular Whip board may feel a little bit more stable and predictable. Carving turns in the small windswell of La Ventana, the rail felt active yet predictable while committed carves using the entire rocker line were easy to control. With a bit more back foot pressure the board really wants to engage in tighter turns, which might be ideal for tight slashes in smaller waves. When it comes to carving, the Bamboo Tec version feels very much the same; if there is extra flex, it comes with extra weight and a hardier construction feel. When it came to load and pop for strapless airs this is where the difference between the deluxe Pro version and regular Whip becomes most apparent. The additional weight requires a bit more effort to release cleanly and reduced amplitude on strapless airs. Most noticeably, the board doesn't quite float as much through the trick as the Pro version and requires more board angle to keep the wind pushing the board against your feet. While this is obvious to the more advanced riders, the beginner and intermediate riders and those not focusing on their aerial game will not find the weight to be a downside. The rail has a substantial bevel that makes grabbing the rail in tricks really easy, giving you a ton of confidence in gripping the board for getting in and out of the water as well as waterstarts. Testers reported the Whip as an excellent platform for perfecting footwork during jibes and tacks. The Whip comes with a front and back foot deckpad that has a fairly smooth linear texture. The pad itself felt fairly thin and dense which yielded excellent board feedback and input into the board. The tester feedback on the standard Whip CSC was excellent and outlines this board as a solid option for the progressing surfer looking for an easy user-friendly surfboard for all-around freeride and small and medium-sized waves.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Fun surfboard that made it easy to progress on my jibes. The stability kept me standing through my foot switches, yet it still carved well. Skatey but controllable, this board is confidence inspiring and I'd recommend the Whip to all level of riders." // Bryan Waldberg



"Very solid board that takes chop well; put your foot anywhere and it never feels bouncy. I really like this board because of its ability to slice through turns and eat up the chop while being a great board to progress on." // Chris Myles

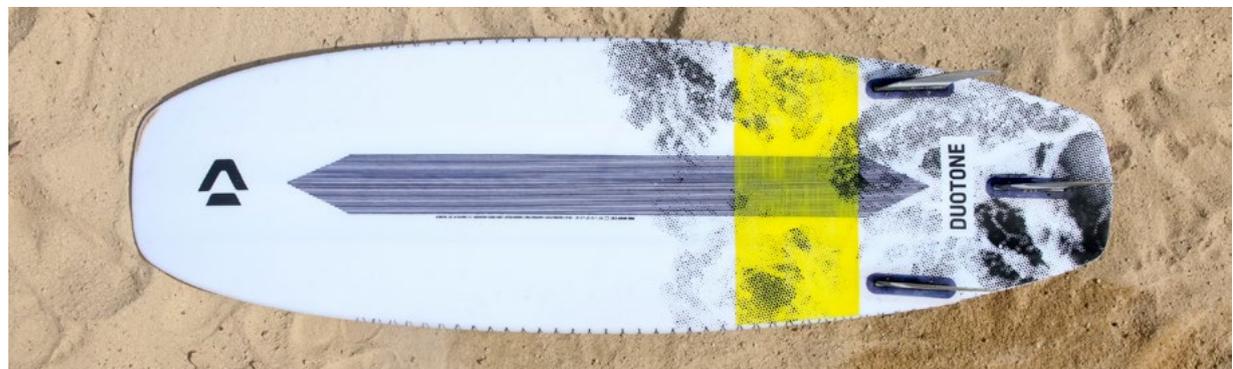
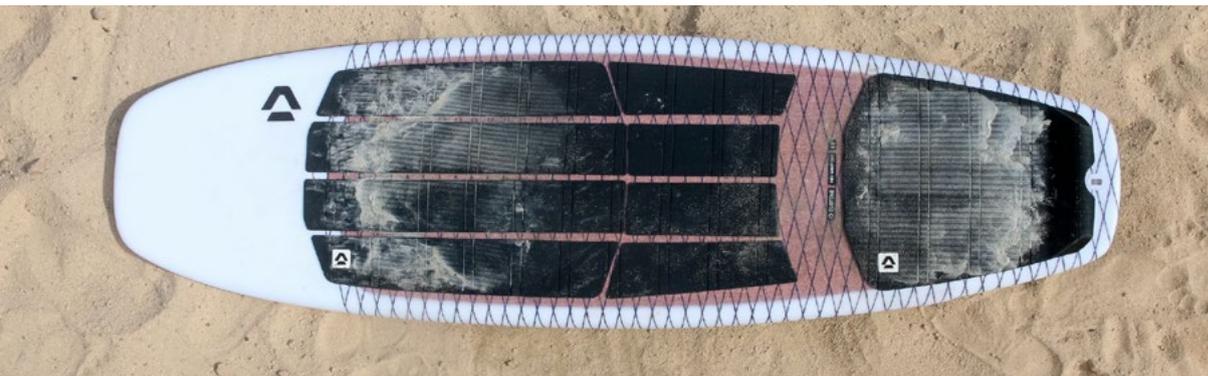


"This board inspires confidence with its comfortable pad, its ease of edging as well as its great pop, although not as soft a ride as the Pro." // Tib Anghel

DUOTONE PRO WHIP CSC

Sizes Available: 5'0" X 18" X 2 1/8" 21L, 5'2" X 18 1/2" X 2 1/4" 23.4L, 5'4" X 19" X 2 3/8" 26.4L

Sizes Tested: 5'2" X 18 1/2" X 2 1/4" 23.4L



DUOTONE SAYS:

The 2019 Pro Whip CSC features a subtle winger in the outline behind the front fins, which reduces the tail area slightly. This prevents the tail lifting out during high-speed turns and also allows for tighter snaps and more precise and controlled rail and fin release. The deep twin channel running from the nose to the tail gives the Whip incredible directional stability and a very balanced and controlled feel while still allowing for maximum maneuverability. The result is a modern board with remarkable control, balance, speed and the ability to carve smooth arcs and radical top to bottom vertical snaps. The Pro Whip also features a double concave deck shape, optimized volume distribution to aid control and a subtle grab rail for strapless tricks. The Pro Whip utilizes our Light Team Construction and is the ultimate weapon when you want to shred small to medium sized waves.

Visit for more info: www.duotonesports.com/kiteboarding/boards/surfboards/pro-whip-csc

TKB SAYS:

This year the Pro Whip CSC got a new tail template and features Duotone's impressive Light Team construction with a thruster fin setup. The first thing we noticed is that the rails feel a little bit thinner and tighter than most of the other surfboard designs out there and the overall volume seems lower with less thickness. The bottom shape features deep twin channels running from the nose to the tail which seem to give the Pro Whip exceptional directional stability. The Pro Whip has a really locked in feel that powers confidently through the chop, blasting upwind and feeling fast and efficient. With the lower volume and the subtle winglets in the tail template, the Pro Whip feels as if it has a little bit more control in terms of turning. Carving turns in the small windswell of La Ventana, the rail felt active yet predictable while committed carves using the entire rocker line were easy to control. With a bit more back foot pressure the board really wants to engage in tighter turns, which might be ideal for tight slashes in smaller waves. The rocker felt conducive to easy load and release for popping strapless airs and the flex felt really good, despite the fact that lighter construction processes and materials often come with stiffer flex. The light weight on the Pro construction is very apparent and makes riding this board feel lively and fun. The Pro construction really becomes apparent in strapless airs with really low swing weight for rotational airs and a lower overall weight which helps the board stick to your feet on the higher airs. The rail has a substantial bevel that makes grabbing the rail in tricks really easy and gives you a ton of confidence in gripping the board. The Pro Whip comes with a front and back foot deckpad that has a fairly smooth linear texture. Our test board came smeared with a bunch of wax and although the wax on the pad was a little ugly, it made for excellent grip. The pad itself felt fairly thin and dense which yielded excellent board feedback and input into the board. For the person slashing some small to medium surf with some strapless freestyle mixed in, the Pro Whip CSC is also a great travel companion.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"I did my first jumps with this board because it was glued to my feet. Really light and flexy without being bumpy or squirrely, this board made me feel like a better kiter than I am." // Giuseppe Molinaro



"Great board, rides like the Whip CSC but lighter and super stable for foot changes. Great upwind ability, super light, great for carving. If you're looking for an easy to ride, stable strapless board, this will help a new strapless rider progress without struggle." // Kristin Vincenzo



"Straight rails go upwind with ease even in chop, with great deck pad and massive pop. Extra taper in the tail allows it to carve rather well. The Pro Whip is a great all around board for strapless freestyle with bottom channeling that makes landing nice and soft." // Dray Murray



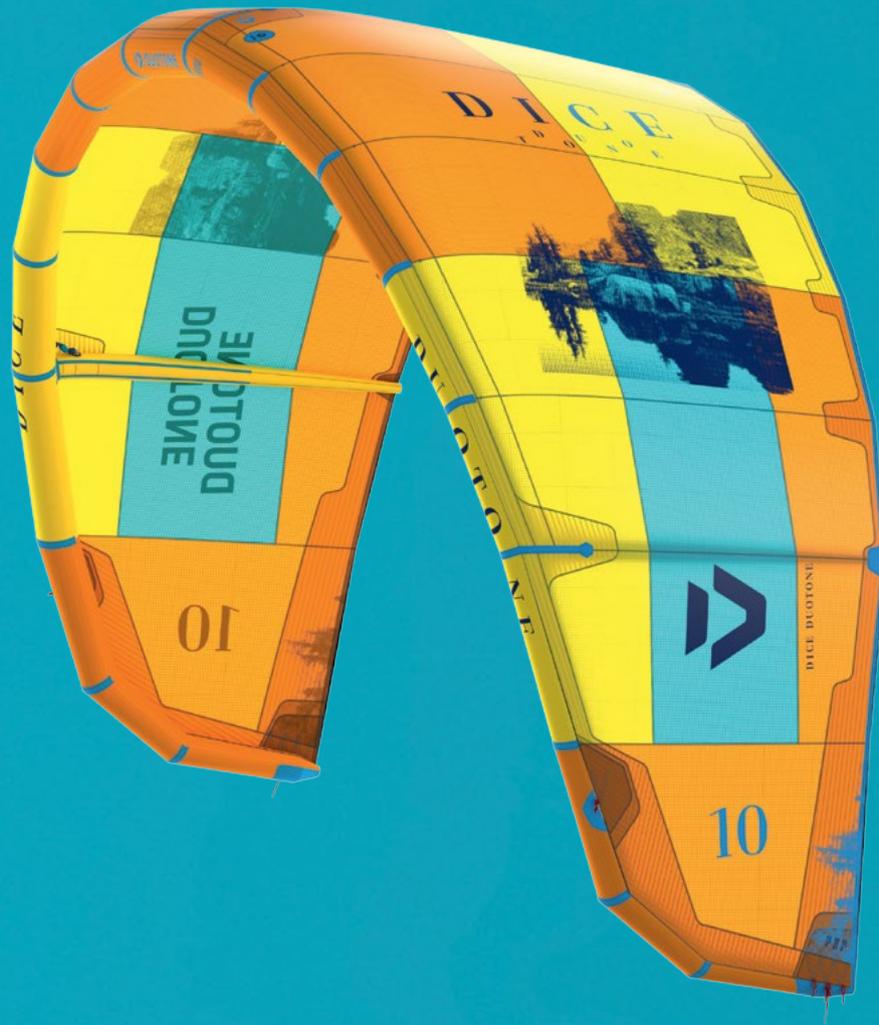
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ELEVEIGHT RS

Sizes Available: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 17m

Sizes Tested: 7, 10, 12m



ELEVEIGHT SAYS:

Tame any storm, ride any spot and excel in any style – the RSeries is the one kite to truly stand out in every situation. It is our most versatile wing. The RS is a four line Delta-Hybrid kite with a medium to high aspect ratio. Hence it has a strong grunt, an incredible Big Air performance and covers a massive wind range. A two kite quiver is usually enough to cover almost all condition. We designed its turning axis to sit on the shoulder to balance tip and pivotal turning characteristics. Therefore, in surf you can whip it around in a tight loop to support your next hack into the lip, in Big Airs you can loop it in a wider circle to get that explosive forward momentum. Whatever style you choose, the RS' responsive and precise steering supports your riding. Due to the staggering lift and long hangtime, the RS is a favorite for riders that want to go big. It is also a very comfortable kite that handles gusts, pulls you upwind and relaunches with ease. Highest quality materials such as the new X4 Ripstop canopy made by Techno Force™ and the high temperature resin finish used in Teijin Dacron from Japan make it last and last and last. The RS will be your best companion at every spot and in any condition.

Visit for more info: www.eleveightkites.com/products/kites/rs-series

TKB SAYS:

Although just one year old, Eleveight's product designer is no newcomer to kiteboarding. The former lead designer for Best Kiteboarding, Peter Stiewe now has his own company and a complete product offering including kites, twin tips and directionals. For our 2019 Freeride Gear Test, Eleveight sent us the RS, a 3-strut medium aspect delta-style canopy with pulled back wingtips that is marketed as a performance freeride and all-around cruiser. The RS features a medium length single setting bridle that utilizes one pulley to change the angle of attack. There are two wingtip attachment points that adjust between turning speed and bar pressure with the stock connection point set on the fastest turning speed option. The RS uses a large diameter bayonet style inflation valve that requires no nozzle on the end of your standard pump hose for a quick and easy pump up. The first thing we noticed with the RS is its performance freeride bow-kite type feeling, with its nice light bar pressure and progressive smooth power delivery. The kite feedback felt crisp in the smaller sizes and a hair subdued with the larger canopy sizes. The RS' turning arc is pivotal in its steering path and the steering response is middle of the road with a little bit of wind up needed. Testers found the turning speed to range from average to a little bit slower, which is what you might expect from a performance freeride kite. The standout feature of the RS is its explosive boosting power and massive hangtime – yes you get both with this kite, extreme height and a long flight path. The RS feels like a performance big air kite that you can send with accelerative lift and the kind of canopy that delivers parachute-like hangtime and soft landings. When we dumped the RS in the water we found the relaunch to be really easy from nose down in the bottom of the window. With just a little bit of input into the bar, the RS rolled up onto a wingtip, launched right into the air, which is what you would expect from a delta-shaped leading edge. The RS scored high marks for going upwind well with strong pull from the edge of the window and fairly good depower even in the larger sizes. The RS is a really comfortable performance freeride option for the rider that loves boosting big airs. With reasonably good steering it's not the ideal option for those that fly their kites aggressively, but with light bar pressure and excellent lift it's a great option for beginner to intermediate+ riders chasing big air with massive floaty hangtime.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Lift and hangtime for days! Great power, super stable, easy depower and great range. Excellent medium aspect kite with the lift of an aggressive delta/c-shape and the hangtime of a high aspect kite. If you want stomach dropping boosting that won't drop you, this is it." // Dray Murray



"Great all-rounder, powerful trigger pulling boosting machine and turns on rails. This is the Swiss Army knife kite –boosts and loops great with great upwind ability." // Dylan Dobbyn



"A real plow horse in terms of power delivery, boosting and hangtime. Slower turning speed, good window stability, great upwind ability and excellent lift." // Tib Anghel

ELEVEIGHT CS VARY BAR



The RS came with the CS Vary Bar which is an adjustable length bar (42/50cm or 47/55cm) that features a single center-line safety depower system with a low V and a spectra rope depower/throw line that offers an adjustable length throw (comes stock in longest throw adjustment) and the power tuning is via a Clam cleat that features a lightweight toggle that uses a bungee integrated into the tuning line to keep the toggle from getting tangled. This year there is no sliding stopper for speed control. The bar's center lines end in knots (color coded gray) and the outside lines end in loops (color coded red and blue pigtails) and has no line extensions. The safety system features a push away quick release with a built-in hand swivel that also acts as a QR travel shield. Eleveight's quick release is one of the few groundbreaking systems on the market that allows itself to be reset by simply placing the open end of the loop back into the quick release body where it will reset by simply clicking back in place. The process of resetting is still a two-handed process because it takes a bit of force to push the loop back into the gate. With sufficient force this system works every time. This year the length of the center lines is not tunable like last year, but the outside lines are tunable by pressing on two little triangle tabs on the side of the bar end. This releases a clear plastic insert out of the bottom of the bar end which allows you to both change effective bar length and adjust between three knots to change the length of the outside lines (stock set to shortest line length). The bar ends feature retractable line bungees with padded bar ends that feature integrated floats. The color coding on this bar is fairly minimal – some of the printing on the bar as well as the bungees are color coded, but the grip is muted colors of grey. The center insert is plastic and looks to be easily replaced after wear with the removal of two small Philips head screws. The grip has a ton of dimpled indentations for a good solid grasp, and features firm EVA and a symmetrically round grip that tapers larger near the center for what testers found to be a very comfortable feel. Overall, the CS Vary comes with a ton of functional features and adjustability in a nice mid-weight that earned solid marks for comfort and usability.

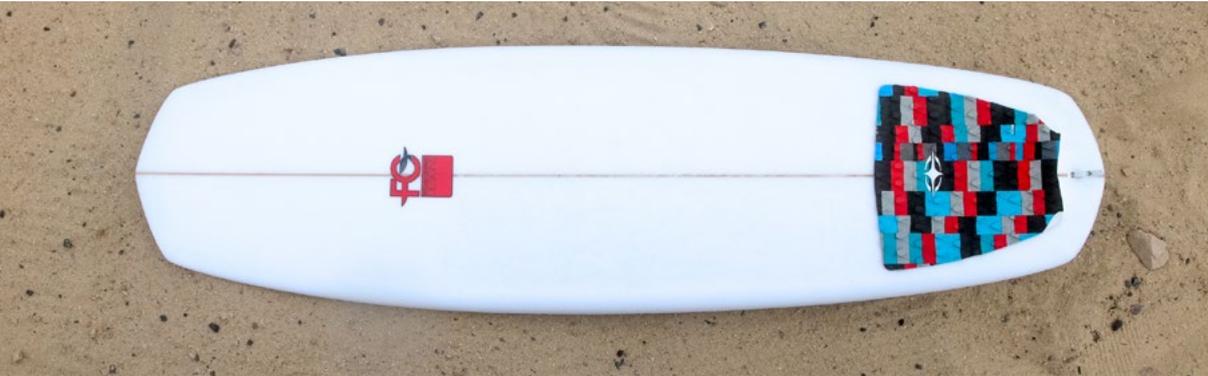
Visit for more info on the bar: www.eleveightkites.com/products/bars/cs-series



FCD BLUNT

Sizes Available: 4'8", 5'0", 5'2", 5'4"

Sizes Tested: 5'0", 5'2", 5'4"



FCD SAYS:

Everyone seems to have a cut-off-nose style board these days, but with our kite-optimized rocker and features, the Blunt is becoming a favorite in all conditions. Carves a very tight radius turn instead of having to "fight" the rocker and fins. The quad fins and concave/4-channel bottom give you edge control and speed to get you upwind faster when it's light. Overcomes bad current with speed and power and planing area and sticks to your feet in the air during strapless freestyle tricks. Pre-shaped deck depression/grab channels lower your center of gravity and make it feel like your "old favorite" while featuring MARKO composite "iFoam" for chop-dampening control, flex, maneuverability.

Visit for more info: www.fcdsurfboards.com/blunt

TKB SAYS:

While we've seen the Blunt from afar, this is the first year FCD is pumping out this modern planing hull concept in production numbers. While the board is marketed as a quad, our 5'2" model (pictured) came with five boxes for thruster or quad setup and we tested our boards in quad setup. The Blunt features a single concave fading into a quad concave tail with a lot of bottom channels. We found the Blunt to be a really stable and fun higher volume take on the parallel rails/modern planing hull concept. The Blunt is a fun all-around shape in small surf and wind swell chop, which we found worked good even in underpowered conditions with a fairly efficient rocker. The Blunt tracks really well with a locked in edge as it went through the chop and was smooth and steady with very little rail chatter. It's a great option for 'flippy tricks' freestyle with its overall light weight which feels really good for doing little pop shuvit airs, yet we also got the sense the construction could take the repeated beatings. The light construction seemed to help with swing weight and helped us cheat the finish of a strapless front roll in the lighter winds. The deck features a gentle concave with subtle rail indents for grabs on airs and helped negotiating our rocky (barnacle-infested) launch. In terms of turning the Blunt liked bigger turns and asked for a good romp on the tail to initiate tight pivotal turns. We could see the Blunt with its straighter rail working in bigger surf, but the full nose you have in FCD's Shrike model is more optimal for bigger performance surfing. The Blunt in the bigger size offered a little bit more volume than some of the other cutoffs we tested and did a fine job of blending durability with a lightweight feel, with a really efficient feeling in the water and all around easy handling. The Blunt is at the top of our list for travel and all-around freestyle and small surf slashing sessions.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Very friendly board that flies upwind and is easy to control for a beginner strapless rider." // Kristin Vincenzo



"Very light, very efficient and holds an edge well. Very fun for strapless airs and soft landings. Confidently holds an edge and drives upwind even in chop at speed with impressive construction that is both remarkably strong and light weight. It felt like a PU board with the strength of a kiteboard." // Dray Murray



"With my weight too far back it bounced a bit, but once I shifted onto my front foot it tracked super strong. The toeside edging was wonderful with excellent carving and easy to progress on." // Chris Myles.

F-ONE BANDIT v12

Sizes Available: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17m

Sizes Tested: 8, 10, 12m



F-ONE SAYS:

The best “one quiver kite” on the planet still gets better over the years. Incredible control is coupled with a handling experience you will never forget. No matter what your level or style, the BANDIT is the kite that delivers. Our primary focus is to develop the wind range, the lateral pull of the kite, the feedback and feeling at the bar and the maneuverability. The Riding Range has always been a key are for the Bandit, a wider wind range means you can enjoy longer sessions in more varied conditions. With predictable and consistent power delivery and incredible bar feedback, the new Bandit ensures every session is a good session. There will be no more complaints about gusty winds or struggling for control when overpowered. This year the handling on the new Bandit has been further improved so that every kite feels smaller in the sky. You’ll find the 12m flies like a 9m and that feeling is priceless. Many kites don’t fully appreciate the importance of lateral pull in their kites. When we ride, we are always fighting the forces from the kite by edging the board to create forward motion. For many years we have been working to reduce the lateral pull felt by the rider, this means you can enjoy longer, more comfortable sessions with less effort. The new Bandit offers the perfect balance between power and lateral pull, with fantastic low end and incredible comfort in the middle and at the top of the wind range.

Visit for more info: www.f-one.world/product/kite/kites/inflatables/bandit-xii

TKB SAYS:

The Bandit is back with its 11th year as a 3-strut delta shape with a medium aspect canopy that continues to conquer a wide range of freeride tasks with user-friendly handling and crisp performance that once again received rave reviews. The Bandit employs a single setting short to medium front bridle that utilizes two pulleys to change the kite's angle of attack and the biggest change for this year is the V-bridle bridle concept on the wingtips which allows you to change between maneuverability and bar pressure (tension) by changing an attachment knot within the bridle. For the record, wingtip bridles are not new, in fact they were all the rage in 2008 (some with pulleys) but these were all gone by 2011, perhaps because single attachments were presumed to provide more direct input, or LE wingtips grew in diameter and strength to support a single load point. Your guess is as good as ours, but here we have an Adjustable V-Bridle, the difference being that the forward and aft adjustment is in the bridle and we like that method better than moving pigtails on attachment points. The striking quality of the Bandit is its maneuverability and range, with an incredibly crisp steering response that wants to initiate turns quickly with small inputs on the bar. The turning speed of the Bandit is fast across the entire line and the steering path is a tight pivot that builds steady power even while turning. With this direct and fast steering you can put the Bandit just about anywhere and find good power when it is lacking, it also requires that you pay attention to the Bandit during big jumps to keep track of where your inputs are going. The F-One marketing materials talk about improved 'lateral pull,' and what we take this to mean is that the Bandit has improved power delivery or pulling power that is middle of the road and smooth, not over-powering. The sheeting on the bar feels progressive, more so than the Breeze, and the bar pressure was found to be a very comfortable light to medium with the sheeting action happening in a smaller throw distance. This means the bar stays closer to the body which is helpful for smaller people; essentially the kite moves from powered to depowered with smaller movements of the bar. The Bandit is the master of balance; good pull but with great depower, excellent lift and good hangtime, but smooth power delivery while cruising upwind. Testers found the Bandit to be an extremely comfortable kite that has some 'sheet and go' feel for the progressing kiter, but with its quick response and speed it can be aggressively flown for the more advanced riders. The Bandit is no slouch in the big air arena, with tons of lift and decent hangtime the Bandit eggs you on to send it to the moon and then screams upwind to do it over and over again. When it comes to dropping the kite in the water, the Bandit has excellent relaunch with the recovery being really quick. Take one look at the delta leading edge and you can see that it doesn't want to sit nose down at the bottom of the wind window, instead, with just a little bit of bar input, the Bandit rotates onto a wingtip and releases from the water deep in the bottom of the window like a surf kite. The Bandit once again offers an equation that accomplishes all the needs in the freeride category that make it a candidate as a surf kite, as well as a big boosting performance freeride kite, and even a good foil kite with the depower. The Bandit might have a little bit more power and quick turning speed than what the tentative foilboarder wants (perhaps the dedicated foilboarder ought to check out the Breeze) but that's what you get with a kite that covers so much ground. If F-One has made changes to the Bandit, it's still the tried and true formula for those Bandit lovers out there that does just about everything extremely well.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Loved this kite — fast and ultra-responsive very quick loops with no flutter. Very boosty with loads of loft for a gentle let down. Made me feel very powered with a direct launch and edge upwind. It's so fast; overhead you definitely want to keep an eye on it." // Chris Myles



"Quick handling, responsive smooth power delivery. Every design detail instantly stands out, great all-arounder that stands out from the pack with smooth handling, responsive steering and consistent power delivery. A kite I could trust in any conditions. Only downside is the valve requires a special hose adapter." // Joe Chehock



"The Bandit is a space shuttle with a parachute for re-entry. It boosts HUGE with hangtime for days. Very agile kite, with great range, while being one of the most aggressive freeride kites in terms of turning speed, flying speed and boosting." // Dray Murray

F-ONE BREEZE v2

Sizes Available: 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17m

Sizes Tested: 7, 9, 11m



F-ONE SAYS:

The BREEZE V2 is for anyone who wants a light weight set up that offers incredible handling with great low-end performance. Now with a range of sizes from 3m to 17m, it is the perfect kite for light wind freeriding, and foiling in any conditions. Thanks to its stability and light weight, the Breeze can show off interesting performances in light wind wave riding too. Our design and test team have worked tirelessly to bring significant improvements to the BREEZE V2. You'll discover the new kite has a more stable canopy when depowered and the overall range of the kite has been widened. Across the range of sizes, the handling has been finely tuned; the larger sizes are even more responsive, making them perfect for maneuvers. The smaller sizes are optimized to handle stronger winds with total speed control and great stability while foiling. In the air, the BREEZE V2 is so intuitive to fly you can forget about the kite and concentrate on the riding. This unique characteristic makes it perfect for beginners and advanced riders alike. The kite has also been designed to work with a low front V on the bar to untangle lines after those inevitable kite crashes. The BREEZE V2 is available right now; if you want a lightweight, one-strut kite that can put a smile on your face in 8knots, the decision is easy, let's get breezy!

Visit for more info: www.f-one.world/product/kite/kites/inflatables/breeze-v-2

TKB SAYS:

We've always thought of the Breeze as a light wind kite but this year we had the option to test this single strut freeride kite in its smaller sizes. The Breeze is F-One's mono strut kite which generally serves as a great travel kite with its light weight and compact fold-up size as well a good representative of the latest movement towards minimizing airframe weight in search of more agile flying characteristics. The Breeze sports about the same aspect ratio canopy as the Bandit and integrates F-One's high flow inflation valve that uses a proprietary pump hose attachment that comes with the kite and a push button spring-based valve that must be in the closed position before inflating. To release air you untwist a cover and depress a spring actuated button to release the air. The system works great for fast inflation—the only potential downside to the system is keeping the attachment on hand (Editor's note: a little of duct tape on a standard valve can get you on the water in a bind). The Breeze features a single setting front bridle with two pulleys that adjust the angle of attack. This year the Breeze has its wingtip attachment point upgraded to the same load sharing V-bridle that is now found on the Bandit, which offers two adjustment positions by altering the geometry of the V. Overall the Breeze is a great option for those looking to pack light on travel trips, or those focused on foilboarding or casual freeride cruising. When you minimize Dacron and lower the airframe weight you tend to lose a bit of crispness in the kite performance, which becomes noticeable when ridden in loaded up situations (like aggressive twin tip riding), but when ridden in the low end, the kite's lower weight delivers excellent drift, quick and agile flying with effortless rider input. The Breeze's bar dynamics may not be as tight as the Bandit, but in exchange you get the real benefits: which is a nice agile tight pivot turn and really direct and responsive steering. Testers praised the Breeze for its solid range among the sizes and its good upwind ability. Testers found the bar pressure to be middle of the road and the bar feedback, particularly when over-sheeted, wasn't as clear as the Bandit, so you have to be aware in underpowered conditions of the wing's stall point. Testers gave the Breeze high marks for its low wind performance, sailing through holes in the wind and generating good power when needed. You can still boost big airs with the Breeze; although this isn't the ideal use for this kite, this mono strut can still play ball with good lift. The canopy feedback into the bar isn't quite as tight with this aggressive type of riding, but that's the tradeoff for a travel kite. The Breeze really comes alive when foilboarding, where it has tons of depower, excellent drift, a steady amount of power when you need it and a fairly 'sheet and go' feel. In overpowered situations the Breeze felt fairly controlled during depowered angle of attacks, but there was some bar wash from the moving canopy. Like all single strut kites, the tradeoffs you make for lightweight performance have to be balanced by using these kites in the ideal type of riding and conditions it was designed for. When the Breeze is properly flown within its range it feels quick and nimble, highly responsive and user-friendly which puts it at the top of our list for stuffing in a backpack and heading off for our next travel adventure.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Really light kite, great for light wind and foiling; had great power and was stable when the wind picked up. Medium bar pressure, good turning speed, and great hangtime in the light wind with nice manageable power for foiling." // Kristin Vincenzo



"Kite and bar works well together for a really fun time. Great hangtime on jumps, with good turning, nice bar pressure, and good upwind. Even as a twin tip rider I really loved this kite — one of my favorites for stable, predictable and fun riding." // Jeff Waldberg



"Good depower, excellent upwind, good power and wide range. Clam cleat close to the cockpit made power adjustments easy. Can be fluttery when depowered." // David Kirkup

F-ONE LINX BAR



Our F-One kites came with the Linx control bar which had a significant redesign last year. The control bar is a dual adjustable length bar that comes in two sizes (38/45cm and 45/52cm) and features a new single center line safety depower that flags the kite on one line and an option to switch between low and high V (high V for the Bandit kite and low V for the Furtive/Breeze – note that you have to thread the entire length of one center line through a small piece of hardware mounted high up to switch modes). The center lines end in loops and the outside lines end in loops as well and the flying lines do not have any built-in extensions. The Linx features an above the bar cleat for adjusting power and a plastic-coated trim/throw line for durability. There is no sliding stopper and while you cannot adjust the length of the bar throw along the plastic, you can adjust the distance to the power tuning cleat. The quick release was also redesigned last year to feature a built-in swivel above the push release which also works as a travel guard. The release and reset process is a two-handed process. When you slide the release handle away from you it locks into position, to reset, you place the loop back into the gate, then raise the release handle with one hand and use the thumb of your other hand to push the locking gate down while letting go of the release handle to slide back into place. While it's not automatic, with some practice it becomes intuitive, reliable, quick and easy. The below the bar stainless steel ball bearing swivel rotates easily and allows you to untwist your front lines after rotational tricks with no problems. The bar ends feature integrated floats with retractable bar bungees and the outside lines can be adjusted for stretch. The Linx comes with an additional float above the center lines; this is to maintain positive buoyancy if you become disconnected from your bar. With some effort you can pull out the bar end inserts from the bottom and adjust the outside line length between five knots as well as the bar width. Testers liked the new grip, noting that the diameter is on the small side with an asymmetrical ridge on top that makes for a smooth ergonomic grip with a printed rubbery feel. The grip is firm underneath and a bit more cushy on the top where your fingers wrap around the bar. Overall, the Linx gets excellent feedback for comfort, options and performance.

Visit for more info on the bar: www.f-one.world/product/kite/accessories/linxbar



Photo: Matt Georges

F-ONE 51TS V2 FOILBOARD

Sizes Available: 5'1" x 20"

Sizes Tested: 5'1" x 20"



F-ONE SAYS:

The F-ONE 51 TS foil board is a unique model blending the great qualities and resilience of a tough topsheet construction with the ease of use and performance. The bottom V and generous rocker on the nose also make the occasional touch-downs more manageable. Two new features on the new 51TS board are the inclusion of twin tracks to mount any foil equipped with a 4-blot top plate. Also footstraps inserts have been recentered in order to offer a better stability. Built around an injected foam core with protective top and bottom sheet layers, the 51 TS is ready for a life-long service. The solid cap construction will preserve the edges of the board when the latter is laid on its side together with the foil while ashore. Length is important to keep firm directional control and width helps providing some tolerance in feet placement. So at 156cm long by 51cm wide, this board has enough of both to offer control and stability to help manage the foil with ease. Its slim design allows for easier water-starts as the board sits more stable on its side and results in more inflight control. The bottom V and generous rocker on the nose also make the occasional touch-downs more manageable. The 51TS foilboard is the ideal first board purchase to start foiling.

Visit for more info: www.f-one.world/product/kite/kitefoils/boards/foilboard-51-ts

TKB SAYS:

The 51TS foilboard gets its name from its width. At 51cm wide and 156cm long (5'1") this board comes in durable twin tip style construction with thin rails that feature a little bit of very gentle chime and a subtle concave through the bottom. The 51TS features a fairly good nose scoop in front of you with some good rocker which makes this board an ideal entry level board because of its resistance to porpoising as it is really difficult to stuff that nose all the way underwater. The construction is durable which makes it ideal for the person whose just learning how to handle a foilboard — anyone who's been down that road knows that just bringing a foilboard through the parking lot and in and out of water can give it quite a beating. The 51Ts sports a ¾ deck pad and comes with a duct/windsurfing/racing stance with five forward/aft inserts in the front and the backfoot gets three forward/aft settings down the center line. The pad has a nice level of plushness that makes it comfortable riding the board for a while but also gives you good foot control and input into the board and therefore allows you to control the board/foil with confidence. With its thin rails, the 51TS handles rail contact with the water fairly well; not quite as well as the surf-style constructions with chimed rails, it's just that accidental touchdowns while edging are not quite as smooth but certainly not game ending. In terms of volume, the board has fairly low volume; when it comes to waterstarts the board sinks in the water and some people find that's easier to waterstart than a board that has a ton of buoyancy. Once you are standing on the board accelerating towards foilup speed that is when volume is always your friend, yet the 51TS has a wide enough outline and long enough nose to make acceleration quite easy to reach foil up speed and get in the air. In this respect, the 51TS is a good board for someone in the beginner and intermediate stages of foilboarding. Those foilers with more advanced skills might be looking for something that's a little bit smaller with less swing weight in the nose for more aggressive turning, and if that's the case you should check out the F-One Pocket board because that's probably your ideal candidate. Overall the 51TS has a nice flexible feel. It's not quite as stiff as some of the surfboard foilboard constructions out there but it offers unparalleled durability with all-around good handling that works for entry-level and intermediate foilers.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



“Great neutral buoyancy board, perfect for learning and maybe surf, but a little too much for intermediate and advanced riders who prefer smaller boards.” // Davey Beard



“Comfortable deck and easy to move in the water when waterstarting. Thinner construction but still feels like it has decent volume. Great beginner board.” // Kristin Vincenzo

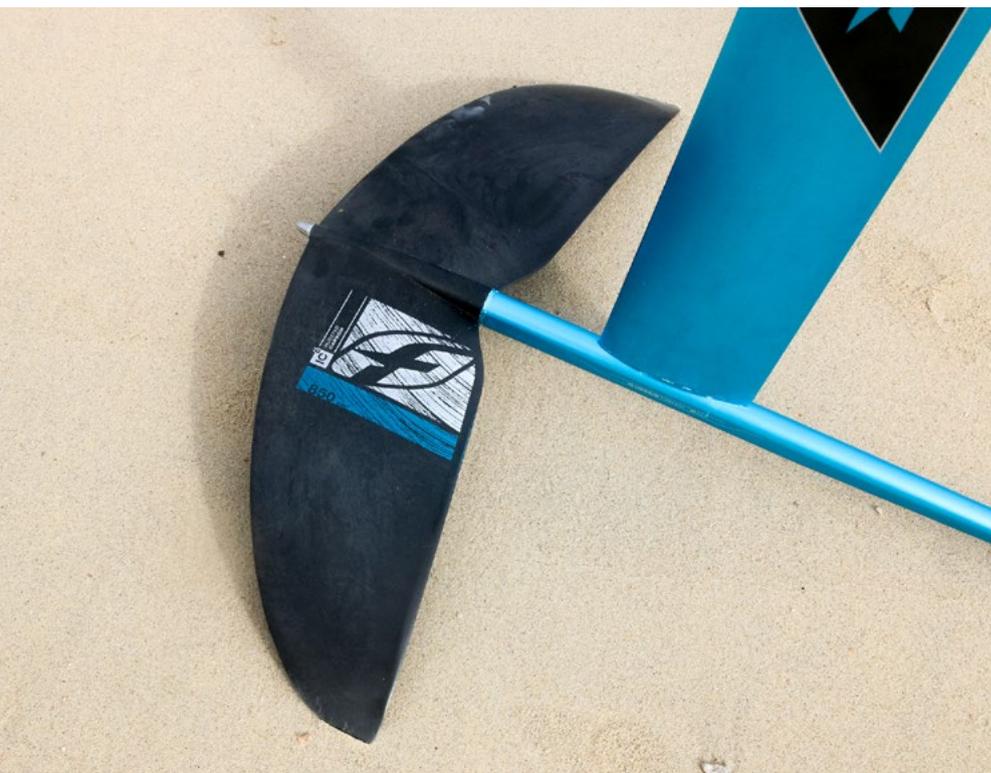


“Big deck for easy footwork and surviving touch/bounce and goes. Easy peasy for starting, riding on water and feet switches, great first setup.” // Dylan Dobbyn

F-ONE 850 IC6 FOIL

Sizes Available: Area: 850cm² Weight: 1.09kg

Sizes Tested: Area: 850cm² Weight: 1.09kg



F-ONE SAYS:

The IC6 850 V2 is designed for anyone looking for a first foil purchase or simply for a versatile setup able to deliver tons of fun on the water. Made in our specific technology called Injected Carbon, our wings and stabilizers are very tough and very durable. This technology makes our IC6 wings a lot more ding resistant than conventional carbon wings. The front wing has a metal insert where the connector extending out of the wing is fully machined via CNC for a very solid and perfect assembly. The fuselage and mast are made of aluminum. The fuselage plugs directly into the aluminum mast and at the top a 4-bolt plate that can be plugged in to get the foil compatible with any boards fitted with tracks. Alternatively, a selection of optional standards like KF, DeepKF or Tuttle heads is also available. This foil is not only versatile but it's also very intuitive and predictable. The take-off is really progressive, the ride in the air super smooth. You have complete control on the speed and on your path. 850cm³ is the size of the front wing and it was especially designed to have the largest possible range of use. It can fly at very low speed, its handling is impressive when carving and it's got a very nice speed potential up or downwind.

Visit for more info: www.f-one.world/product/kite/kitefoils/hydrofoils/ic6-850-v-2

TKB SAYS:

The F-One IC6 with the 850cm wing is a durable wing that offers a medium foil up speed and much faster high-end speed with extremely stable performance. We tested the IC6 which uses an injected carbon construction to form its front wing, which makes it more durable (and presumably more affordable) than a wing with a carbon fiber glass layup. Our setup came with the 300 cm trailing wing along with a 75cm aluminum mast with a 60cm aluminum fuselage. The front wing attaches via a skewer and a nut, and two star drive bolts connect the fuselage to the mast and four star drives connect the baseplate to the board. Putting the IC6 together is fairly easy and straightforward with a single star drive screwdriver and wrench. In terms of weight, the IC6 setup is middle of the road, neither shockingly heavy or light. This wing is not so much a freeride/carving foil as it is a foil that will hit higher speeds and allow you to cover a large distance. The 850 wing doesn't feel as fast as the Mirage 800 wing, or as crisp, but it does foil up at a little bit slower speed which means it's going to be a little bit more accessible for beginner/intermediate foilers trying to build skills. It takes a couple of power strokes to get the board going through the water before you engage a nice smooth liftoff. It's not quite as slow or smooth as some of the surf wings we have tried, but not as challenging nor fast as the 800cm either. In terms of input and control, like much of the F-One line, this wing is very stable. The yaw/side to side axis is very stable, along with the roll and pitch axis, all of which is balanced and designed to make this wing feel sure-footed and predictable when hitting higher speeds. The 850cm is perhaps a little bit more playful than the Mirage 800, but still a very stable platform that is focused on high speeds. The IC6 850cm has a wide steering arc and requires quite a bit of input on the yaw axis and roll axis to initiate carves (to put it simply: this wing is inspired more by race than by surf) but when it comes to locking in a rail and flying upwind or tearing off and running with the wind, you will feel like you have a very stable platform to focus on control while giving you some extra brain space to focus on kite placement, the water whizzing underneath you, or taking in some of the quickly moving scenery. The IC6 850cm will probably find a great home in the hands of a beginner to intermediate foilboarder that is purely aimed at going fast, nailing tacks and looking to cover some distance with a wing that is both predictable and user-friendly at higher speeds.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Super easy foil for beginners. Slower than the Mirage and very easy to steer, I did my first jibes ever on this foil. If I had started on this foil I would have progressed faster. It's stable and super friendly." // Kristin Vincenzo



"Stiff construction rides with a really locked in, very stable feel. Moves slowly left to right (yaw) and its fun to pump." // Dray Murray



"Hard to stall, great flying speed range. Medium stable yaw and roll. You could learn on this foil and keep it through intermediate riding." // Dylan Dobbyn

F-ONE POCKET FOILBOARD

Sizes Available: 5'0" X 18" X 2 1/8" 21L, 5'2" X 18 1/2" X 2 1/4" 23.4L, 5'4" X 19" X 2 3/8" 26.4L

Sizes Tested: 5'0" X 18" X 2 1/8" 21L



F-ONE SAYS:

"The F-ONE Bamboo Pocket foilboards were crafted to reduce the momentum and drag of the board to bring your maneuvers and carving to the next level. "Minimum size for maximum fun!" this is the mantra behind these boards. By reducing the length it is possible to enlarge significantly the possibilities for all kinds of maneuvers and further engage into carving. These pocket boards share similar DNA on the bottom with a double concave and some distinctive bevels. Their outline is adapted specifically to this very compact shape, with the maximum width carried almost all the way forward. This keeps the boards very easy to use and accessible to all intermediate and advanced riders. Built with a bamboo sandwich laminate over a lightweight EPS core, these boards are fitted large deck pad for total comfort and they come with a track system on the bottom to match any foil equipped with a 4-bolt top plate. Very playful with immense potential for all kinds of tricks or simply for carving some lines, these boards are available in 130x47 and 120x46 sizes. They will soon be the obvious choice for a large number of riders who like to play with the freestyle and carving potential of foiling.

Visit for more info: www.f-one.world/product/kite/kitefoils/boards/foilboard-pocket

TKB SAYS:

The F-One Pocket foilboard is one of our favorite freeride boards at 130cm x 47cm with 21.1 liters of flotation. The Pocket is a super fun foilboard that finds a happy medium between flotation and keeping the volume minimalist for more intermediate to advanced riding. The Pocket has enough volume to get a confident beginner through to the intermediate level, past those initial learning steps. The Pocket features chimed rails that make accidental rail touchdowns easy to recover from. The board has a little bit of volume so there's some buoyancy for waterstarts, which if you're riding a higher aspect wing might be important to get up to lift off speed. The Pocket features a small amount of rocker in the nose that will help you keep the board from pearling but it's not super aggressive, so repeated porpoising will risk burying the nose. The Pocket features a nice $\frac{3}{4}$ deckpad with a diamond grip. It's got a nice amount of plushness but yet is thin enough to give you good contact control to transfer your inputs to the wing. It's got five forward/aft insert options for your front footstraps in the ducked windsurfing/racing stance and three forward/aft options centered in the back, so there's a fair amount of adjustability in the straps. Overall, the shorter length and low volume feels really good for carving and turning with a minimalist outline that feels nice and crisp with all inputs going directly into the foil. While the board is geared to the intermediate and advanced riders, we believe confident beginners could use the Pocket to get through the initial stages of foilboarding.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Light, shortboard which is really playful; great for pumping, carving and leaning over hard upwind."
// Dray Murray



"For a new foiler, this was comfortable, stable and easy to handle in the water for waterstarts." // Kristin Vincenzo

F-ONE MIRAGE 800 FOIL

Sizes Available: Area 650 cm², Area 800 cm²

Sizes Tested: Area 800 cm²



F-ONE SAYS:

The F-ONE MIRAGE kitefoil wings range is made of 2 sizes to suit all freeride and freestyle needs. Extremely easy to control, these wings offer smooth take-offs, effortless turns and fantastic stability. Flatter in the middle with tips accurately arched down the three wings share a similar arch profile which provides plenty of control and total maneuverability. Their aspect ratio is compact, providing more freedom in all maneuvers. They also have a refined twist distribution which not only helps with the glide but also make the power of the wing more manageable when carving lines. To maintain optimal control, we build these wings in carbon pre-preg. And the larger sizes also have a foam core to keep them light. All sizes share the same metal insert with the FCD connector fully machined via CNC for a strong and perfect assembly. The MIRAGE wings fit all 2018 F-ONE foils, and also previous versions. All perfectly balanced, the MIRAGE wings are very accessible to any skill level with the larger sizes and will impress the most advanced riders with the smaller sizes.

Visit for more info: www.f-one.world/product/kite/kitefoils/hydrofoils/mirage

TKB SAYS:

The F-One Mirage with the 800cm Carbon fiber wing is a speed demon freeride machine that rockets upwind like no other. This year we tested the Mirage with the 800cm Carbon fiber front wing and the 300cm back wing all mounted on the 85cm extruded aluminum mast and a 60cm kite fuselage. This wing overall has a really crisp very solid feel underfoot and overall handles high speeds with a lot of stability, control and ease. You can really feel the efficiency of the wing in the water; it has a really clean feel without any vibration or unwanted feedback — you literally feel the essence of speed under your feet. This wing is a higher aspect freeride wing and borderlines a race wing feel. The foil up speed on the 800cm is pretty high as it takes a couple of power strokes to get the foil up to foiling speed. We tested the 800cm with the F-One Pocket 130 and it took a little bit of effort to get the board speed into the lift range, but once you get this foil up onto speed it just wants to accelerate. When the 800cm gets into its zone it feels as if it wants to point to the moon with a really high upwind angle. For those looking for speed and crossing large distances this is really a high quality, easy to use wing for high-speed foiling. As far as freeride/carving goes, this is probably not the F-One model you would choose to carve up small waves. The 800cm has a really broad turning arc and its foil up speed is so high you're screaming past waves with no ability to slow down and match the speed of the wave. With regards to input, the 800cm is very stable on the yaw axis; to turn the board you've got to put really aggressive side to side input into your front foot to initiate turns. The roll axis is fairly stable as well along with the pitch axis, which all translates to an extremely stable ride at high speeds. Because the inputs are so large and the response is slow, the 800cm is easy to control when you're doing mach five. As expected, the 800cm wing doesn't pump well at low speeds; you really just need to use the pull of the kite to get into the wing's ideal speed range. When you do drop below foiling speed, the 800cm does drop like a rock. Unlike a freeriding carving foil, the 800cm is not designed to play around at low speeds — you want to crank up to ludicrous speed and keep it there. The longer mast at 85cm helps keeps the wing buried when you're going fast and the aluminum mast feels crisp and responsive with no flex. The 800cm also felt super comfortable off the wind. Even though going downwind can be scary, particularly when you factor in the speed of this foil, the 800cm had that potential but overall, the wing felt quite comfortable. Putting together the foil is quite easy will all the same sized star drive bolts and the wing nut holding the front wing onto the fuselage. This setup feels well built but fairly light for carrying on the beach. Overall, the 800cm Mirage is your super stable speed demon that's a great partner for covering some miles or pushing top speeds if you're looking for a production foil with a top end that feels limitless.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



“Very accessible foil, very stable on all axes, tops out in the low 20mph range. Very stable with the yaw axis responding slowly and deliberately.” // Dray Murray



“Medium stable ya and roll, needs a little speed to fly. Good for going fast, more challenging to learn transitions with low speed.” // Dylan Dobbyn



“Very fast and super fun foil that's easy to steer. Very easy to control with stability.” // Kristin Vincenzo

F-ONE MITU FLEX

Sizes Available: 5'2 x 17.7" 20.2L, 5'4 x 18.1" 21.8L, 5'6 x 18.1" 22.8L, 5'8 x 18.5" 23.9L, 5'10 x 19.1" 25.4L

Sizes Tested: 5'8 x 18.5" 23.9L



F-ONE SAYS:

Mitu is very meticulous and involved when it comes to his Pro Model. There's no shortcut with his testing. His approach is fueled by a lot of curiosity and a very fine analysis on how the board operates. Totally focused from day one, he invests all his experience into the tests. Offshore, side-off, onshore, Ponta Preta, Kite-beach, surfing, jumping, the board must tick all the boxes to be this all-in-one ripping machine. With the compact outline, the deep single concave remains the DNA of the MITU PRO MODEL which is known for its easy planing, sharp acceleration and great directional stability. The bottom features a channel at the front of the board to help while landing fins front. The maneuverability is really impressive and takes advantage of a much refined rockerline. Travelling back along the bottom of the board, the concave fades progressively towards the back marking a rounded kick in the rockerline which further helps making the turns smooth and effortless. Built with HD foam of various densities together with fiberglass and epoxy resin, this construction also features some deck stringers for more durability. The comfort while riding is further enhanced by the shock absorbers and the full pad. The MITU PRO FLEX has some deck inserts built-in so they can be equipped with foot straps. They come with a thruster fin setup and a set of F-ONE FLOW RTM fins.

Visit for more info: www.f-one.world/product/kite/boards/surfs/mitu-pro-flex

TKB SAYS:

With the addition of the Slice to F-One's directional board lineup, the Mitu has shifted rolls and has gotten a little bit of reboot now that the Splice is handling the freestyle. Whereas there used to be a really aggressive channel in the nose, the Mitu now sports a general deep single concave that goes right down the center into a swallow tail. In terms of performance, this board is now being tuned towards performance surfing with the feel of the template along the entire rail being very predictable and offering solid turning. This board handles the chop really well with the rail cutting effortlessly upwind through chop giving you a really locked in and stable ride. With the latest changes, the Mitu feels a bit more stable than the Slice. When it comes to turning the Mitu feels dialed for dominating medium to head high plus waves with really solid edging as you weight the rail and shift to the tail for tight but predictable response. It turns on a dime once you stomp on the tail but going into that turn the board is very comfortable and controlled. In terms of strapless freestyle, the Mitu is still a good choice for popping out of the water, and while the Pro Flex construction isn't the lightest you can get the Mitu in, it does quite well for strapless tricks. The Pro Flex construction definitely has the softer flex feel and doesn't have the tinny feel that comes with carbon boards but you do pay for that in terms of a bit of weight. The Mitu came with a $\frac{3}{4}$ deck pad with diamond grip that testers highlighted for its excellent grip and comfy plush factor. The pad features a nice toe bump on the front and a tail kick at the end to keep your feet connected to the board. The Pro Flex version of the Mitu comes with inserts for straps with two for aft options, a single down the center front strap and two duct options on the tail. Overall, we felt this year's Mitu is an upgrade to a board that was already quite capable in the surf, but the new Mitu delivers a higher standard of rail control and precision that wave-oriented kitesurfers desire in a dedicated surf shape.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Very accessible do it all machine. Easy to ride and lots of performance both in the waves and for strapless freestyle. Handles chop well, love the thick pad and the Pro Flex construction is easy on the knees." // Dray Murray



"Super light and easy handling. Good carving and good load and pop with great edge control and solid upwind ability." // Kiter Mike



"Smooth through chop, sharp turning abilities and surprising pop. A luxurious ride through the chop which gives confidence through turns and foot switching. Rails seem slippery and difficult to grab." // Tib Anghel

F-ONE SLICE FLEX

Sizes Available: 5'1 x 17.9" 21.5L, 5'3 x 18.3" 22.5L

Sizes Tested: 5'3 x 18.3" 22.5L



F-ONE SAYS:

The board has a straighter rocker and a parallel outline, which fades into a dynamic winger tail to increase its maneuverability. The squared off nose keeps the length to a minimum, and the volume along with the thickness of the SLICE have been specifically tailored for kiting to ensure the highest possible level of performance. Underneath you'll find a single concave with central channel which has been extended and now runs along the entire length for more directional stability. We've kept the rails of the board thin to allow you to hold a better edge and also to increase the pop, making freestyle tricks easier. The distinct kick in the rocker line around the fins has been emphasized to get more pop out of the board. The nose is pulled up slightly to help nailing the landings while the long channel provides the stability required. The board delivers plenty of speed, both on flat water, for tricks, and in the waves too. The flatter rocker line enables the board to carry itself through weaker sections of the wave and the thin rails and pulled in winger tail make for dynamic turns on the face. The thruster fin set up offers maximum versatility across a wide range of conditions, while also making the board easier to use.

Visit for more info: www.f-one.world/product/kite/boards/surfs/slice-flex

TKB SAYS:

The Slice is F-One's take on the tomo/modern planing hull/cutoff nose concept. We tested the 5'3" size in the Flex construction with the thruster fin setup and full length concave with a single channel running through the entire board. The Slice features winglets and a pulled tail that F-One calls its dynamic winger tail which increases the turning you get out of the tail. The Slice is a pretty active board with an active rail that bobs through the chop, so it really helps to use a bit of front foot pressure to keep the rail solidly engaged when riding these type of conditions. The Slice feels a bit narrower than some of the other modern planing hull shapes that we tested and the winger tail makes the board very reactive when you lay it into a turn. Just a little bit of back foot pressure goes a long way with this board. In terms of aerials, the tail shape and rocker has good pop and the ESL version delivers a weight that is middle of the road, which means it's not quite as light as the carbon version e.g. it takes a bit more effort to get some amplitude in airs and it doesn't stay connected to your feet quite as long without really using the angle of the board and wind to maintain compression — popping it out of the water and keeping it on your feet is a little more challenging. The Slice's Flex version comes with a $\frac{3}{4}$ length deck pad and it has inserts for straps with two for aft options, a single down the center front strap and two duct options on the tail. The $\frac{3}{4}$ diamond grip deck pad features a nice toe bump on the front and a tail kick at the end to keep your feet connected to the board. This construction feels as if it has a slightly softer flex than the carbon version we've tested, but also a bit more weight which makes it more of an all-rounder for freeriding and small surf with decent capabilities for strapless freestyle.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Fun with small waves and chop. Responds to every ripple, feels like a longer board, very stable, great for dialing new moves." // Dylan Dobbyn



"Loved this board — I want one. Great shape, nice pads, turns well, good construction with no downsides." // Kiter Mike



"Very loose and skatey. Loved the pads and easy on the heels for landings. Bottom contour absorbs landings as well, great for strapless freestyle more so than waves." // Dray Murray

F-ONE TRAX ESL

Sizes Available: 134 x 40cm, 135 x 42cm

Sizes Tested: 134 x 40cm



F-ONE SAYS:

The TRAX ESL is all about having fun on the water. This new board is based on the long TRAX heritage and implements some of the latest thinking developed on the WTF?! to offer a unique blend of comfort, performances and ease of ride. The general rocker is moderate to ensure the board offers early planing and keeps the legendary glide which is the true signature of the TRAX. The rocker line is split into three distinct stages with a flatter section in the center, which is key to achieve a good upwind angle and good tracking on the water. The rails are inspired by the HRD, with taller sections in the feet area for some better lift and balance, and they were kept thin everywhere else to get an easy grip. The deck shape is stripped down for more simplicity and better contact between the bindings and the board. The 3D work in the middle section, another heritage of the TRAX, helps keeping the center of the board with a solid feel for more accuracy and control when riding. The TRAX ESL is available in two sizes, which should fit a large range of users. The proportions of the shape are inspired by the latest freestyle developments whilst the dimensions are kept more manageable. All versions come equipped with our UNIBox 50m fins, which offer better speed and improved glide thanks to their thinner profile.

Visit for more info: www.f-one.world/product/kite/boards/twintips/trax-esl

TKB SAYS:

This year the Trax comes in two trim levels, the Lite Tech and ESL versions. While the two share the Trax name, the boards have very different shapes and construction.

The Trax ESL has a V-hull down the center and double concave with a subtle single channel out the tips while the Trax Lite Tech has a single concave through the entire length of the board. The ESL has a little bit more of a complicated bottom shape and in terms of rocker, it feels like the ESL version has a little bit of a straighter rocker template as well. The ESL still has the HRD rails, but look to be a little thinner and toned down. The Lite Tech version of this board is a little bit heavier than the ESL construction, so when you pick the two boards up there is a small but noticeable difference with the ESL being the lighter board. The ESL also has a lighter flex pattern, so the ride feels a little bit more forgiving, and the flex for load and pop is a little bit more user-friendly for less aggressive riders — landings and just about everything is bit of a softer experience. The ESL is fairly steady when edging upwind; the tail and rail tracks stable and feels fairly locked in. Compared to the Lite Tech version, the ESL has a little bit more hold and the tail feels a little bit more secure. On both constructions, if you push on the tail hard, the fins will wash out. Testers highlighted the ESL's excellent chop handling ability, user-friendly performance and recommended this board for the progressing kiter or the casual freeride cruiser that prizes comfort over aggressive performance.

The Trax came with F-One's Platinum3 bindings which features a smooth rubbery footbed that has quite a bit of contour built into them with fairly dense and middle of the road grippy texture. The strap is a single Velcro adjustment, and since we had to make some adjustments on the water, we were reminded of the big plus of mono-adjustment straps: that they are easy to adjust with two quick motions. Testers commented on the straps comfort, their firm footbeds and ability to adjust to a wide spectrum of foot sizes.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Feels indestructible, comfortable pads, good upwind ability, on the skatey side, not for advanced riders." // Micha Dassler



"Soft flex, large rounded rail, easy, soft, forgiving, eats up chop. Great for beginner riders with choppy home spot." // Dylan Dobbyn



"Flexible board comfortable in chop. Firm footpads but comfortable, middle of the road weight, decent upwind ability with fairly loose edge control." // David Kirkup

F-ONE TRAX HDR LITE TECH

Sizes Available: 135 x 39cm, 136 x 40.5cm, 137 x 42cm, 140 x 45cm

Sizes Tested: 136 x 40.5cm



F-ONE SAYS:

The TRAX has a long heritage and is one of the most popular twin tips on the market. It is the ultimate freeride and freestyle board with a unique feeling on the water, offering both speed and comfort. The HRD Rail plays a significant role in the way the board performs, and it sets it apart from everything else out there. The construction mixes unidirectional and bi-axial fibers at 45° to achieve the best balance in bending and torsion. This results in a board which feels easy to ride at full potential with great comfort. On the water the TRAX HRD Lite Tech offers a smooth, forgiving ride, the HRD rail eliminates spray and feels very comfortable regardless of the water conditions. The flex has been tuned to provide the optimum pop off the water, and the extra flex in the tips really helps to launch you into the air. When it comes to landings, the wide outline and channeled base combine to smooth things out and allow you to retain control at all times. The board is so popular because it works for such a wide variety of riders; from experts in freestyle to beginners and everyone in between the TRAX is an excellent choice. Combining early planing, upwind ability and control there is plenty of performance at your disposal when you need it. From flat water to harsh chop the TRAX can handle it, you'll get a ride like no other.

Visit for more info: www.f-one.world/product/kite/boards/twintips/trax-hrd-lite-tech

TKB SAYS:

This year the Trax comes in two trim levels, the Lite Tech and ESL versions. While the two share the Trax name, the boards have very different shapes and construction.

The Trax HRD Lite Tech features an interesting bottom shape with a fairly constant rocker and a single concave down the middle that makes this board a little flatter in the middle with some good rocker in the tail. The Lite Tech version board comes with well-sized fins but it still feels fairly loose in the water yet tracks upwind efficiently. A fun to ride board with playful maneuverability, its tips are slightly rounded so it also handled the chop pretty well with no complaints. The Trax HRD Lite Tech was really fun and carvy off the waves with the chop and rail to rail performance giving us no problems. It has translucent channels which you can visually see when holding the board up to the light. Compared to the ESL version of the Trax, this Lite Tech version has a little stiffer rocker for better load and pop and has a little bit heavier overall weight for more intensive freestyle/freeride type kites. The Lite Tech has a little less edge grip than the ESL version which makes this board a bit more suited to more active and aggressive riding, yet testers reported excellent edge control and good upwind ability. The Trax Lite Tech features the HRD rails which is a reverse rolled rail which you can feel in the way this board smoothly slides through chop and carves. Testers commented on the board's good overall weight (though it's not quite as light as the carbon version of the Trax) and excellent scores across the board as a user-friendly twin tip offering solid performance and grip for more aggressive freeriders.

The Trax HRD Lite Tech came with F-One's Platinum3 bindings which features a smooth rubbery footbed that has quite a bit of contour built into them with fairly dense and middle of the road grippy texture. The strap is a single Velcro adjustment, and since we had to make some adjustments on the water, we were reminded of the big plus of mono-adjustment straps: that they are easy to adjust with two quick motions. Testers commented on the straps comfort, their firm footbeds and ability to adjust to a wide spectrum of foot sizes.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"I felt really strong on this board. Feels locked in, super comfy footstraps, light board, excellent carving and edge control." // Chris Myles



"Smooth handling with lots of edge control, pads firm, easy to adjust. Fun profile for smooth turns and great pop. Lightweight fun board for popping snappy jumps and ripping smooth carves. Instantly felt locked in." // Joe Chehock



"Made me smile through the lulls, nice upwind ability, edge control and stickiness with comfy straps and smooth handling in the chop." // Cam Lewis

F-ONE WTF!?! LIGHT TECH

Sizes Available: 136 x 41.5cm, 138 x 42cm, 140 x 42.5cm and in Next Generation sizing: 127 x 37cm, 130 x 39cm

Sizes Tested: 140 x 42.5cm



F-ONE SAYS:

The WTF (Win The Freestyle) has been designed from the ground up to be the ultimate freestyle competition machine that has been developed to allow you to perform the most demanding tricks with ease. The board features a new rocker line with a flatter section in the center of the board to allow it to plane early with increased rocker on the tips to keep those landings smooth. There is a dynamic transition between these staged rocker lines which are designed to give the maximum pop off the water. Pop is something we have to talk about with the WTF, every feature of the board has been built around not only giving the most pop possible but also making it easy to release it and control it. The outline of the board is both versatile and comfortable, the broad tips provide a huge platform for you to launch your tricks from, while also offering a stable landing area no matter how hard you are coming in from a move. The board is available in three sizes and all are quite large on purpose, the increased surface area helping to get you going early, but also providing a great platform for landing your tricks. This platform is further enhanced by the shaping on the bottom of the board, breaking the surface tension with ease and reducing the “slap” you can get from some boards.

Visit for more info: www.f-one.world/product/kite/boards/twintips/wtf-lite-tech

TKB SAYS:

The WTF is a high-performance freestyle board that you can feel from the second you pick it up with its dense wood core, high rocker and full outline. In addition to the conventional 140cm board, we were given the 130cm Next Generation small person version to test — which was size appropriate for one of our female testers, who found it "skatey but fun, easy to ride with good carving abilities, great load and pop and with comfy footpads." This year the WTF has gotten a straighter rocker in the center, yet testers still noted the high rocker and recommended riding with a bit more power to go upwind. With its freestyle background the WTF takes a bit more effort to lock in that tail because you can feel that rocker seesawing back and forth. With a bit more focus on controlling your rail the WTF locks in and goes through chop quite well. The rocker comes in handy for consistent load and pop performance. With its medium plus flex, you can put all the energy from the kite into the board, point the board into the wind and release it from the water for good reflex lift, ideal for wakestyle tricks. The bottom shape sports a double concave with a V down the center and the tracking feels fairly playful and loose in the tail. For general and upwind cruising the freestyle design isn't so aggressive that it is difficult, we'd just recommend riding with more power in your kite and a bit more aggressive heel pressure to lock the edge in. Overall, the WTF is best suited for the aggressive freestyle rider, but may also find a home with a performance-oriented freerider who's looking for a skatier board with more rocker and load and pop that leaves some room for progression into freestyle.

The WTF came with F-One's Platinum3 bindings which feature a smooth rubbery footbed that has quite a bit of contour built into them with a fairly dense and middle of the road grippy texture. The strap is a single Velcro adjustment, and since we had to make some adjustments on the water, we were reminded of the big plus of mono-adjustment straps: that they are easy to adjust with two quick motions. Testers commented on the straps comfort, their firm footbeds and ability to adjust to a wide spectrum of foot sizes.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Floaty and skatey, a little bouncy in the chop, amazing load and pop for boosts. Comfy pads, more of freestyle board because of rocker." // Chris Myles



"One of my favorites of the week — handles chop well, good pop and turns easily, very well made board with straps that are easy to adjust and very comfortable." // Jeff Waldberg

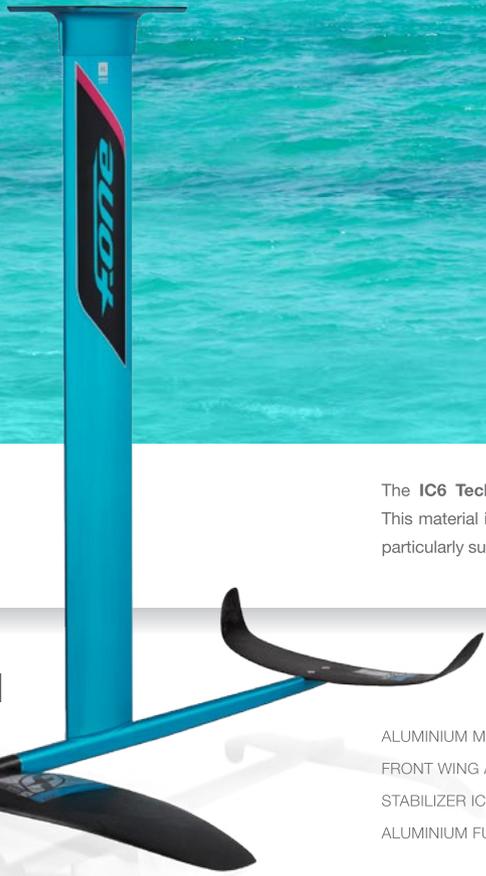


"Not quite as comfortable as the Trax, definitely stiffer flex but really great pop and fun ride." // Marko Bartscherer



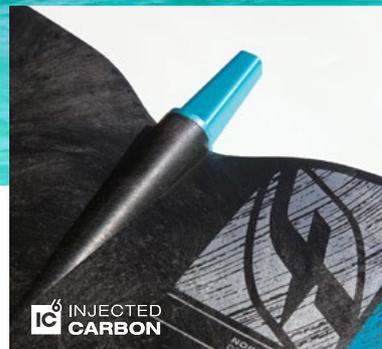
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ALUMINIUM MAST	65 / 85 cm	ACCESSIBILITY	██████████
FRONT WING ALU-IC6	850 cm²	FREERIDE	██████████
STABILIZER IC6	300 cm²	CARVING	██████████
ALUMINIUM FUSELAGE	60 cm	SPEED	██████████
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Photo: Matt Georges

Huge riding range

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Perfect balance between power delivery and lateral pull

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Ultimate link for a perfect feedback from your kite

B A N D I T

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THE BEST "ONE QUIVER KITE" ON THE PLANET STILL GETS BETTER OVER THE YEARS. INCREDIBLE CONTROL IS COUPLED WITH A HANDLING EXPERIENCE YOU WILL NEVER FORGET. NO MATTER WHAT YOUR LEVEL OR DISCIPLINE, THE BANDIT IS THE KITE THAT DELIVERS.

FLYSURFER SOUL

Sizes Available: 6, 8, 10, 12, 15, 18, 21m

Sizes Tested: 8, 10, 12m



FLYSURFER SAYS:

The Soul combines high comfort with a sporty character. The inspiring technical lightweight kite construction, the highest safety standards and precise control and bar feedback. The great water relaunch and improved drainage system bring it all together to make the Soul truly user friendly. Experience a new way of kiting!

The Soul gives you a sublime hydrofoil experience by using short flying lines (from 12-17m, depending on the size), to allow for the fastest maneuvers. This setup enables a more direct feel of the kite and generates less lift, which is perfect for learning a new aspect of the kitesport and adds safety whilst teaching on land or snow. The new bridle check can be done by measuring and comparing the black marked lines at the canopy to compensate stretch or shrink of the bridle. The SOUL combines all benefits of a foilkite with the same methodical relaunch of a LEI-Kite to make exercises as simple as possible.

Visit for more info: www.flysurfer.com/project/soul

TKB SAYS:

The Flysurfer Soul was the only freeride-oriented foil/ram air kite in this year's freeride gear test. Flysurfer is a longstanding foil kite manufacturer based out of Germany that has its roots in paragliding. While most people associate foil/ram air kites with racing, Flysurfer has been making ram air kites geared toward the average freeride kiter for many years and the Soul represents the culmination of that experience along with recent developments in paragliding and kite racing technology. The big sell with foil kite technology is greater efficiency that delivers more power per square inch and better upwind performance, while the downside tends to be slower turning response and non-linear bar response and power delivery. The Soul belongs to that class of kite that attempts to bridge the gap between foil efficiency and inflatable steering performance and ease of use. The first thing we noticed with the Soul is that launching is significantly easier than the high-performance foil race kites we've tested in recent years. Typically, you pre-inflate the main part of the kite and then launch with the tips folded over or 'dog eared.' During this launch process the Soul felt more stable and controllable before the wingtips fully inflated. Some foils you have to stall and then accelerate the kite to get the wingtips to unfold, but the Soul seemed to inflate its wing tips in a gradual but dependable process. The steering on the Soul is quite good compared to race foils with the turning response more direct and the turning seemingly quicker than its race-oriented brethren. The steering took a little adjustment compared to the freeride inflatables we tested, but we did notice that in urgent situations (kite headed for water) we could grab extra tension on the leader lines and the kite would turn in a complete pivot — this saved us from dumping the foil in the water more than a couple of times. Although this kite flies farther forward in the window compared to other freeride kites, it is an ultra-stable kite that never flew over our head. The Soul likes to be moving across the window rather than sitting deep and drifting. The Soul has a little more sheet and go feel than other race wings, but ultimately the bulk of the power comes from flying this kite actively, and by building up some apparent wind. In terms of relaunch, we dumped this kite in the water a number of times, rolled it over itself and every time it stayed inflated and relaunched without problem. To say that a sleeping bag is just as reliable as our freeride inflatables seems far-fetched but we were incredibly impressed with how this kite relaunched from the water, time and time again. Testers notice that it took quite a bit of time to deflate the kite at the end of a session (with the deflate flaps open, of course) but this is the flip side of building a ram air kite that holds its shape when you crash it in the water; this slow deflate is precisely what gives you a bigger relaunch window. Apparently the Soul's baffles are designed on purpose to be better at keeping air in rather than letting it out, and as a result, packing up takes a little bit more work. When it came to jumping, the efficiency of the Soul become apparent in both lift and hangtime, although the steering dynamics and timing on sending the kite for big air takes a bit to get used to. In terms of construction, the Soul uses two different canopy materials; a thicker ripstop on the nose for greater durability and a lighter version in the canopy. The bridles feature the typical complexity you get with ram air kites and by following recommendations to keep the bar connected to the kite when not in use, it made things relatively simple to keep things clean. Overall, the Soul is a very compelling reason to cross into the ram air realm for a high performing freeride kite. For those that are foilboarding, cruising big distances and boosting big air, the Soul is an excellent ram air option that combines user-friendly and high-performance efficiency in the same package.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"The Soul took my foil kite virginity — with its gentle non-intimidating controls and easy water relaunches, I couldn't ask for a better first foil kite time. Super stable, low bar pressure, slower turning speed but excellent relaunch." // Tib Anghel



"Huge wind range, with crazy grunt and loads of depower, the Soul has the range of 2-3 sizes of LEI kites. Lots of lift for massive boosts and the hangtime is incredible. Slow arcing turns makes big air very comfortable and easy to time. Very intuitive for an inflatable kiter to use and with great upwind angle of attack." // Dray Murray



"Relaxing kite, very little bar pressure and very floaty while still turning fairly quickly for a foil. Couldn't always feel where the kite was in the window, but felt like a luxury vehicle with gentle bar pressure and a nice cruisy ride, gentle but fun." // Bryan Waldberg

FLYSURFER INFINITY 3.0 AIRSTYLE CC BAR



The Soul came with the Infinity 3.0 Airstyle CC Bar which is a dual adjustable length bar (50/60cm) with a single centerline safety flag depower and a double spectra trim/throw line that splits through the bar's aluminum insert to integrate an auto-rotating swivel. The safety system uses a simple push away quick release with below the bar auto swivel, safety travel guard, and center routed safety depower and donkey stick. The center routed safety line runs up through the center a good ways and attaches to one of the center lines for a complete flag (note that the extra length of this safety line is designed to get a full flag on even the largest sized kites). The bar's power tuning uses a Clam Cleat that allows for adjustable length throw and the tuning toggle has Velcro that allows the excess slack in the power tuning line to attach to the cleat to keep things clean. All bar lines end in loops that larkhead around small stainless rings on the kite's bridle. Changing the length of the bar is incredibly easy by simply sliding the floats up and changing the knot to the inboard or outboard end of the bar. There are three knots for adjusting the length of the outside line lengths – just requires sliding up the foam floats and moving the bar's slip knot onto the desired setting (stock is the shortest knot). The color coding on the bar is subtle; the left (port) is signaled by red leader lines and the right side of the grip is green (starboard). The bar grip features a fairly dense UVA grip with some good texture and the smaller sized bar ends are hard plastic and feature separate foam floats. The overall bar weight is light to medium and the balance of options and streamlined designed makes this a straightforward but rich control system with functional features.

Visit for more info on the bar: www.flysurfer.com/project/infinity-3-0-airstyle-cc-bar



SOUL

FREERIDE, FREESTYLE, LIGHTWIND
6 / 8 / 10 / 12 / 15 / 18 / 21



- // X-LIGHT CONSTRUCTION**
- // EFFORTLESS BOOSTING**
- // SUPERB RELAUNCH & HANDLING**

The SOUL combines high comfort with a sporty character. The inspiring technical lightweight kite construction, the highest safety standards and precise control and bar feedback. The great water relaunch and improved drainage system bring it all together to make the SOUL truly user friendly. Experience a new way of kiting!



Photographer: Alex Schwarz

KANAHA MUCHO MACHO

Sizes Available: 37" x 17 1/2" x 3/4"

Sizes Tested: 37" x 17 1/2" x 3/4"



KANAHA SAYS:

The Mucho Macho 37" is the perfect weapon for Intermediate and advanced foil riders. It will blow your mind how super light and stiff this board is. The rocker outline allows you to effortlessly recover if you touch down on the water, a key design component that makes this board work so well.

Due to how stiff the board is, you will get instant feedback from the foil, like you are personally connected to it. The Mucho Macho's overall concept is that it will work for you and you will improve your riding skills to the next level.

All our boards come standard with our own made in house inserts and our exclusive 8 holes configuration that will allow you to fit all the major foil brands base plate positions. This includes 140 x 90mm and two positions of 165 x 90mm.

Visit for more info: www.kanashapes.com/product-page/mucho-macho-37

TKB SAYS:

The Kanaha Shapes Mucho Macho 37 features a custom approach to the performance foilboard that will appeal to intermediate and advanced riders. The Mucho Macho features a full carbon fiber construction with eight base plate inserts for a fair amount of mounting options to fit the various foil baseplates out there. The Mucho Macho is dressed in a nice $\frac{3}{4}$ length deckpad and has no inserts for straps, making this the board for committed strapless riders only. The Mucho Macho design is a fairly low volume board with a stiff flex pattern that helps the rider really feel the output of the wing and transfer input into the mast with precision and confidence. The board has just enough width and length for intermediate riders waterstarting with less power in the kite. There's just enough nose rocker to help you in a miscalculated touchdown without instantly pearling, but this board probably isn't ideal for the beginner rider whose doing a lot of porpoising; that sort of person might be better served by a longer board with more volume underfoot. We tested this board on an underpowered light wind session with a lower aspect foil underneath and had no problems getting the board onto plane and getting the wing into flight. The Mucho Macho's deckpad doesn't have a tail kick but it does have a semi-plush diamond grip pad that gives your foot really good traction with the perfect blend of plushness while still giving your foot a direct connection with the board. Intermediate and advanced riders will find this shape fun and the ideal board size for those that are up and riding 98% of the time. The Mucho Macho minimizes the swing weight while carving and the limited nose makes you feel like you're hovering on a magic carpet over the water. Overall, the Kanaha Shapes Mucho Macho is a really fun performance board for intermediate and advanced freeride foilboarders that are already spending the bulk of their time in the air.



OUR TESTERS SAY:



"A pocket hero is born! The Mucho Macho felt like an extension of my body and provided a telepathic connection with the foil." // Tib Anghel



"A bit more challenging for a beginner, but I can see that it would be fun for a more experienced foilboarder. Light and easy to carry, but light weight makes it hard to lock in place for H2O starts." // Kristin Vincenzo



"I love this thing. Perfect small shape for taking your surf foiling or freestyle foiling to the next level. Strap inserts would be a nice option for learning to jump." // Davey Beard

LIQUID FORCE NV v9

Sizes Available: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.5, 12, 13.5, 15m

Sizes Tested: 10.5, 12, 15m



LIQUID FORCE SAYS:

Redesigned with purpose. The NV Version 9 is just not a new colorway or slight change that has no impact on the performance of the kite. We looked at the ways in which the NV has excelled over the past 8 years and then took into consideration what we wanted the kite to do beyond any expectations. No doubt the NV is synonymous with stability and dependability in all conditions and styles of riding. The NV boasts a bold new complete airframe redesign. Squaring off the wingtips, combined with an entirely new leading edge to trailing edge profile has increased the handling and feel of the kite that will not only impress the freeriding specialist but will blow the mind of the wakestyle loyalist. Slight increase in leading edge diameter size, combined with integrated strut construction, has created a recipe for more responsive turn initiation and reactive feedback. This not only suits the needs of progressing riders but also the wants of aggressive unhooked trick masters providing smooth pull and controllable slack. Keeping true to the Liquid Force high-quality build, the NV V9 utilizes a simple, supportive bridle configuration that retains shape of the kite in the craziest of conditions. Bombproof construction points, such as the layered frame, and now the use of Teijin Triple Ripstop canopy material, will keep your confidence high to attempt that new trick over and over.

Visit for more info: www.liquidforcekites.com/product/nv-v9

TKB SAYS:

The boys at Liquid Force have been shaking things up lately and the new redesign on the NV reflects that never ending search for the perfect freeride/freestyle crossover kite that delivers all-around user-friendly handling that satisfies the performance requirements of big air and unhooked riders. The most visually apparent changes to the NV this year is the squared wingtips added to the 3-strut medium to low aspect airframe. The NV sports a single setting fixed bridle that doesn't use any pulleys to change the angle of attack and the wingtips offer three wingtip settings that allow you to adjust from less to more bar pressure, with the stock setting in the middle. All LF kites come with one of the quickest inflation systems, a large diameter inflation valve which requires a proprietary LF pump nozzle (the NV also has a standard 9mm valve if you lose the extra wide nozzle that comes with every kite and attaches to the standard pump hose). Overall the NV feels as if LF trimmed a bit of weight with overall lighter construction and this is reflected with its agile flight in the sky. Testers liked the NV's light to medium bar pressure, good steering response and middle of the road turning speed. With nice progressive power delivery across the bar's movement the NV has a 'sheet and go feel' and really good depower at the end of the bar's throw. Testers suggested moving the center line V upwards to give the canopy a more crisp feel in over powered conditions. In terms of steering, the NV felt fairly responsive to bar inputs with testers finding the turning speed middle of the road that meets the needs of both big air and unhooked riding styles. The steering arc seemed a little wider and in the larger sizes our testers continued to be impressed with turning speed, perhaps due to the lighter construction and boxier wingtips. When it comes to big boosting, testers gave the NV solid marks for user-friendly jumping that delivered good lift and even better hangtime. Overall the NV gets good marks as an all-around freeride kite that scores for its user-friendly bar dynamics, good middle of the road grunt with good depower and decent lift. The NV would work for the beginner through intermediate riders looking for a predictable boosting machine and easy going all around freeride cruiser.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Light bar pressure, easy turning, works well in fluke conditions. Middle of the road grunt, fun to fly and turned fast for the size." // Marko Bartscherer



"Loved the bar design, easy to know where the kite is, felt super reliable, nimble and fast turning. Super stable with plenty of feedback, playful and stable with great response — the do anything freeride machine, well-rounded kite for all conditions. Comfortable bar, the sticky grip is amazeballs!" // Joe Chehock



"Powerful kite, steady pull, very solid in the sky — can't Hindenburg. Great pop, and hangtime. Loves to be ridden over-sheeted and never backstalls, unhooked stability for days. Very connected feel." // Dray Murray

LIQUID FORCE WOW v4

Sizes Available: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14m

Sizes Tested: 7, 9, 12m



LIQUID FORCE SAYS:

The WOW v4, with a complete redesign, offers wave seekers and strapless surf freestylers a kite with effortless flying characteristics. Our goals for the WOW v4 were to improve response from the bar, increase turning speed, and tighten the axis point radius of the turning arc while retaining the superior slack line drift the WOW has always been known for. To accomplish this, our design change started with an exploration of a completely new profile and shape. Increased bar response improves the intuitive feel, rapid pivotal turning axis lets you precisely place the kite where you want it and the smooth power delivery can easily be dumped on demand to handle erratic and gusty wind or to grant complete depower for surfing without the power of the kite. The wingtips of the Wow v4 have evolved to be more elongated, so the kite can handle more rear-line tension. This helps eliminate back-stalling and provides rapid re-launch. It also permits a more aggressive use of the new profile in lighter wind, making it possible to size down and ride with confidence. Legendary Liquid Force bomb-proof construction combines with newly added performance features, including the use of Teijin Triple Ripstop canopy and an infused strut connection that adds stiffness to the overall canopy profile, making for a reactive platform that reduces distortion and flutter.

Visit for more info: www.liquidforcekites.com/product/wow-v4

TKB SAYS:

The Wow got a redesign this year with version 4.0 improving steering response and wind range in this 3-strut medium aspect surf kite with a sweptback leading edge with full wingtips. The Wow utilizes a single setting fixed bridle that uses no pulleys to change the angle of the attack on this kite. The wingtip attachment point offers three options to adjust bar pressure. The leading edge bridle ends in a loop and the wingtip attachment pigtailed end in a knot. All LF kites come with one of the quickest inflation systems, a large diameter inflation valve which requires a proprietary LF pump nozzle (the Wow also has a standard 9mm valve if you lose the extra wide nozzle that comes with every kite and attaches to the standard pump hose). When you look at this version of the Wow, you can see there have been subtle changes to the wingtips, as well as reinforcements along the trailing edge and back edge of the wingtips. The first thing we noticed about the Wow was the kite's nice long travel throw on the bar with really predictable progressive sheeting along the kite's entire sheeting range with really good depower in the canopy. This intuitive bar feeling is both ideal for getting the precise power you need out of the canopy while surfing as well as general freeride kiting of all skill levels. Testers liked the Wow's medium bar pressure, it being slightly more than the NV, yet very comfortable for excellent feedback. The Wow has good turning response with direct bar feel that continues through the larger sizes, and the turning arc is a fairly tight pivot turn that generates steady but not grunty power through the turns. The Wow is the LF model with the most amount of drift for onshore and side onshore riding; maintaining line tension was not a problem while driving downwind. Those testers that experienced a relaunch reported good to great relaunch. For those that rode the Wow with twin tips, the boost was fun and playful with intuitive middle of the road lift and decent hangtime, but not quite the lift you experience with the LF NV. Overall, the Wow gained converts for its user-friendly flying and strong drift and maneuverability that testers recommended primarily for surf, but also is a good option for general freeride cruising and foilboarding.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



“Quick, predictable with bar pressure that feels just right to fully exploit the Wow’s terrific drift, quick pivotal turns and surprising jumping abilities.” // Tib Anghel

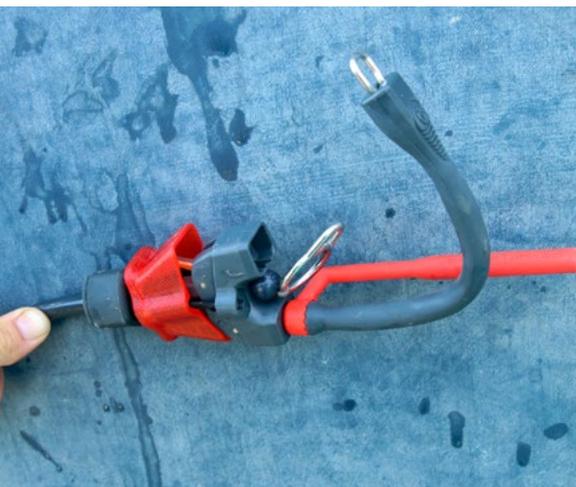


“Quick and pivotal, loves to jump, great lift and hangtime, fast through the window, easy to position anywhere you want it. Swing it deep and it generates loads of power as well as solid drifting with true to size power. Great bar and chicken loop design.” // Dray Murray



“Stable and responsive, fun, lively, drifts well, always knew where it was. Medium plus bar pressure with smooth power delivery with intuitive feel in the air. Turning is snappy with the perfect amount of feedback. Little bit of flutter when sheeted out in overpowered conditions, but strong performer on all fronts.” // Joe Chehock

LIQUID FORCE MISSION CONTROL BAR



This year the Mission bar received a color upgrade, getting a very clear red colored grip on the left and black colored grip on the right. Last year the Mission was an entirely new bar with an expansive list of features while still keeping the design clean and simple. The Mission Control features an adjustable length bar (available in two sizes: 40/46cm, or 49/55cm), durable large diameter PU coated sheeting/throw line, no sliding stopper, and a single center-line safety depower with an adjustable V (high or low by loosening a nut and changing height) – the safety line is routed down the center of the PU coated sheeting/throw line which is new this year and offers less friction when moving the bar up and down the throw. The Mission Control bar uses a stainless steel depower cam cleat and Velcro on the depower control toggle to keep excess slack from tangling. The Mission Control comes with a new quick release design that features a below the bar hand swivel/release with an integrated travel guard above the push away quick release. The quick release is designed to readily click into an auto reset position when the release handle is pushed away with the idea that reassembly on the water is quick and super easy by pushing the loop back into its gate. We found 80% of the time when you activate the safety system on land that the handle cocks into its locked position, then for reset all you have to do is push the end of the loop back into the gate and the release handle will drop down. Because of the solid force that it takes to push the loop back into the gate, it helps if it is a two-handed operation. 20% of the time we found the release handle doesn't lock into its cocked position and requires adjustment to put the handle in the lock position. We believe this happens when the handle is orientated with the release gate down and gravity interferes with the lock holding the handle in position (this typically happens when you are demonstrating the release on the beach and not in the water). By no means is this a deal killer, as we still consider this an awesome quick release, but the few times it doesn't work just think about how you are holding the quick release. The center lines end in a knot (color coded red and gray) and the outside lines end in loops (color coded red and gray); the bar's throw length is not adjustable and its floats are no longer integrated into the bar ends which is purposeful for a more flexible connection between the bar and the outside lines. The tips of the bar are soft and this year the bar end color coding is a bit more pronounced with both the grip and the bar end in red coloring to set off the left side. The outside leader lines allow riders to adjust the length of the outside lines for stretch or tuning with three knots (stock setting on shortest setting). Testers liked the smooth narrow diameter bar with rubbery grip and tapering that widens as your hands approach the center of the bar, although they noted it fairly dense and not as soft as some of the other EVA bars. Overall the Mission Control bar is a well thought out system that offers a good mix of features and safety in a very functional package that exemplifies clean but function-rich bar design.

Visit for more info on the bar: www.liquidforcekites.com/product/mission-control-system-v2



Wow V4

Precise control and agility
Stable, confident inspiring flight dynamics
Fast, tight turning axis

5/6/7/8/9/10/12/14 METER



Mission Control System V2

Simple, reliable safety system
Lightweight design
Best rider to kite control connection
Adjustable

2 SIZES AVAILABLE
STANDARD BAR WIDTH (49CM TO 55CM)
COMPACT BAR WIDTH (40CM TO 46CM)



Surf Loop

Rope use specific design
Extra small and compact
Easy to install

Compatible with MC
Control System V1 - V2



LIQUID FORCE LEGACY

Sizes Available: 136 x 41.7cm, 141 x 43cm

Sizes Tested: 136 x 41.7cm, 141 x 43cm



LIQUID FORCE SAYS:

What do you get from over a decade of board design and collaboration between kiteboarding pioneer Jason Slezak and legendary shaper Jimmy Redmon? You get the precise, refined twin tip that is the Liquid Force Legacy. Back for its fourth season the Legacy's full double concave hull, progressive rail concave, split "V" tip design and calculated flex pattern provides unmatched control and response on the water. The flow of the Legacy's outline combined with the subtle yet precise bottom contours simply plow through chop, as if it wasn't even there, while allowing for fast drag free water flow along the entire bottom of the board. This provides superior edge hold for fast upwind reaches, smooth downwind carves, powerful takeoffs, and feather soft landings. The channel free bottom results in a hand shaped organic feel, yet utilizes state-of-the-art materials such as the carbon center reinforcement and full vector net carbon weave bottom sheet for reduced weight, controlled flex, and added pop and life to the board. The Legacy, much like Jason, likes to ride everything and in every condition; from huge lofty airs, to powered park sessions, to playful slashes the Legacy will take everything that you throw at it and ask for more.

Visit for more info: www.liquidforcekites.com/product/legacy

TKB SAYS:

The Legacy is one of those performance freestyle-oriented boards that keeps enough of its mild-mannered freeride characteristics to remain user-friendly to most skill levels of kites. The Legacy is a hybrid that meets the needs of someone that sits squarely in the freeriding category yet still aspires to step up into freestyle type riding, be it S-bends, butter slides or handlepasses. The Legacy has a sturdy overall weight, but feels quick, light and playful in the water. With its subtle pulled in tips, fairly straight rocker at the center of the board and increased rocker in the tips, the Legacy feels fast and efficient with a template that lends itself to rail to rail carves. With regard to its tracking, the Legacy falls on the skatey side, with a medium to loose grip that requires extra attention to keep the rail and fins locked in, but also keeps the ride very playful and fun for more aggressive riding. Testers all felt the Legacy's weight and outline worked great in the choppy conditions, smoothing the way through bumpy upwind runs. The Legacy is a refined shape that has had years of tweaking to deliver the perfect middle of the road flex pattern that yields good reflex for load and pop, yet doesn't feel too stiff for general freeride through crappy conditions and is just soft enough that landings feel forgiving.

The Legacy comes with two inserts to adjust stance width and the Pro pad and strap system offers a number of options to dial in the stance duck for comfortable riding. The Pro strap is all-encompassing and soft with a terry cloth-like liner over the arch of your foot. The system features three Velcro adjustments that offer enough adjustment to get the right fit. The footbed has a soft rubber-like material that is both very comfortable and grippy. The footbed has a fair amount of contour under your arch and the heel cup is sufficient to keep your foot locked into the binding. The Pro setup continues to be one of our favorite designs that combines a compact low profile durable pad with supremely comfortable footbeds and straps that accentuate the kiteboarding experience.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Feels kind of skatey and loose, needs extra weight on the edge to hold it. Good upwind ability that did well in the chop." // Chris Myles



"Super comfortable straps, cuts nicely through all the chop, super smooth through the bump with great pop. The only thing that interrupts this magic carpet rides is the air time you get when you pop off the chop." // Marko Bartscherer



"Fun, floaty, carves well, skatey, straps are super soft and hold your feet with plenty of padding and adjustment. The Legacy turns smooth and has loads of pop and boasts some of the cushiest straps/pads in the industry." // Joe Chehock

LIQUID FORCE LUNAR LANDER

Sizes Available: 142cm

Sizes Tested: 142cm



LIQUID FORCE SAYS:

Driving off of the amazing sensations created on the water from the other boards in the Liquid Force Hippy Stick lineup, the Moon Patrol and the Space Craft, we are proud to present you the all new Lunar Lander. The Lunar Lander is the brainchild of long time team rider Jason Slezak and LF's engineering wizard Peter Mehrhof. Longing for the same plush ride, edge control, and displacement of water on landings from the double concave of the Legacy, Jason and Peter drew inspiration from progressive powder slashing and slope carving snowboards and transferred the most desired components from the frozen water realm of the mountains to the liquid realm of the oceans, lakes and rivers for your creative kiteboarding enjoyment. The Lunar Lander carries with it all of the great performance benefits of its parent board, the Legacy. The double concave to progressive rail concave bottom shape, center line tapered carbon reinforcement, and full bottom sheet vector net carbon weave lamination provides a butter smooth ride, precise flex, and lightweight lively feel. The full nose, directional outline, asymmetric rocker, and deep "v" tail shape all wrap up this new and exciting addition to the LF Hippy Stick family. The Lunar Lander comes equipped with a 6 fin setup which can be configured in a 4 x 4cm fin setup, for a more traditional twin tip feel, a 2 x 4cm for the nose and a 2 x 5cm fin setup to achieve more drive, projection and hold through turns...or any combination that your creative mind desires.

Visit for more info: www.liquidforcekites.com/product/lunar-lander

TKB SAYS:

Liquid Force continues to be an innovator in the freeride/asymmetrical/hybrid twin tip game with a series of shapes they call “The Hippy Stick Lineup” which now has three boards that work as conventional twin tips but also have some unique ingredients for those looking for something that’s a little more geared towards carving and directional surfyness. If you hold it up to the Legacy you will see a very similar bottom shape; a dual concave with a subtle V-hull in the center that trends into a quad concave at the tips, with a flatter center and scoop into the nose and a good amount of rocker in the tail. The Lunar Lander has smaller fins up front and slightly bigger fins under the swallow tail on the back. The big question we always ask when we see these asymmetrical boards is how well they ride in reverse, essentially upwind in reverse with the tail first. And in that respect, testers found the Lunar Lander works quite well. You can feel that the smaller fins don’t set a track quite as locked in as riding with the nose headed first. You can also feel a little bit of extra board behind your back foot, yet it goes upwind quite well and is quite easy to manage. If you don’t want to ride this board fakey, the directional component of this board encourages tomfoolery, the likes of loading up jumps toeside or carving toeside upwind, all bringing variety to the freeride twin tip repertoire. When you ride the directional nose first, the Lunar Lander really comes alive, giving you the surf feel for carving off little swells. The Lunar Lander is not super grippy in terms of how it carves which keeps it a little more fun and playful, and it’s not super pivoty in turning because your foot is locked into a strap a little farther forward on the tail. We noticed the template is a little wider up front which might give it a little more displacement volume and glide for a twin tip. If the Liquid Force guys dreamed this up as a snowboard riding through the powder, the Lunar Lander delivers on that directional skateyness and fun factor, while still being super fun for boosting big airs and all around freeride.

The Lunar Lander comes with two inserts to adjust stance width and the Pro pad and strap system offers a number of options to dial in the stance duck for comfortable riding. The Pro strap is all encompassing and soft with a terry cloth-like liner over the arch of your foot. The system features three Velcro adjustments that offer enough adjustment to get the right fit. The footbed has a soft rubber-like material that is both very comfortable and grippy. The footbed has a fair amount of contour under your arch and the heel cup is sufficient to keep your foot locked into the binding. The Pro setup continues to be one of our favorite designs that combines a compact low profile durable pad with supremely comfortable footbeds and straps that accentuate the kiteboarding experience.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



*“I was very skeptical but I ended up LOVING it! As the name suggests, it will get you to the moon with its crazy design. Skatey, but will hold an edge. Not for a beginner, but fun fun fun — what a surprise!”
// Micha Dassler*



“Fast! Great upwind, pads are boss, solid edge grip but a little skatey for the shape. Heavier construction, but fast and fun for charging upwind and making smooth directional carves.” // Joe Chehock



“Loved this board — super comfortable with great straps and good upwind ability while being turny with a smooth ride.” // Kiter Mike

LIQUID FORCE MESSENGER

Sizes Available: 5'2" x 18.5" x 2 3/8" 24.7L

Sizes Tested: 5'2" x 18.5" x 2 3/8" 24.7L



LIQUID FORCE SAYS:

Delivering confidence in the surf and high precision performance for strapless freestyle, the Messenger is more reliable than your mailman. This board has a blunt nose shape with a deep double concave that fades to a quad soft channel out the tail, allowing the board to handle down-the-line speed while keeping the board predictable and precise in the pocket. A 3+2 FCS compatible fin configuration rounds out the bottom design highlights, giving you a choice between a fast quad fin setup or a thruster for pivotal turning. The top deck shape features a slight contour under foot that delivers a non-fatiguing and controlled feel. Superior technical construction offers the best strength-to-weight ratio of any strapless kiteboard by utilizing an EPS precision-shaped core that's laminated with S-glass and vector net carbon weave in critical impact zones.

Visit for more info: <http://liquidforcekites.com/product/messenger-52/>

TKB SAYS:

We were pleasantly surprised when LF plunked down the brand new Messenger with its techy-looking glass layup and fun looking lines. The Messenger comes with FCS quad or thruster fin box configurations and we were given the board in the quad setup. The bottom features a double concave from the tip all the way to the back where it fades into a subtle quad concave. There's a nice gentle concave on the deck that you can feel and nothing really in the way of indentations on the domed rail for grabbing. The Messenger comes with a nice split deck pad featuring the standard diamond weave which yields good grip and solid comfort. It doesn't seem to have inserts yet there are black markings that seem to indicate strap placement and cutouts in the pad along the centerline. One of the first things we noticed about this board is that it sports a wider template with a longer nose than some of the other cutoff shapes. There's a substantial amount of rocker both in the nose and in the tail and you definitely feel the extra rocker in the tail in terms of turning response. When you stomp on the tail it really likes to turn which makes us think this board is probably going to dominate the fun factor in smaller crappier conditions where you're snapping quicker turns on some smaller sized waves. The Messenger rolls from rail to rail really easily and it felt a lot more maneuverable and active than some of the other compact shapes that we rode. It does track upwind pretty well without any annoying rail chatter. Despite the substantial amount of rocker in the nose and tail, this board still has a flat section in the center that helps it in lighter wind and still likes to lock in a solid edge, which gives this board a nice compromise between a board that is user-friendly busting upwind back to the top of the reef but also ends up being really fun, playful and active. In terms of freestyle, the Messenger sports a nice medium to light weight that makes it a very capable strapless freestyle option. The tail rocker made popping it into the air easy and the wider width helped keep the board compressed to our feet through rotations. The landings were comfortable and easy with the deckpad's diamond grip delivering a nice balance between plushness and hardness that makes sure inputs translate into the board for excellent response and feedback. The Messenger is an excellent freeride all around with good range, offering lively fun carving for small to medium/small waves and user-friendliness for strapless airs.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Well built with stylish look, handled chop well with solid edging, good level of flex. Traction pads were a bit coarse and not sticky — makes a nice light wind strapless board." // Bryan Waldberg



"Holds edge really well even in choppy conditions. Feels big for its length with wide nose and tail and probably the biggest of the 5'2" sized tomos in the test; great for heavier riders and those transitioning to directionals." // Dray Murray



"Beautiful board, pretty light and solidly built. Easy to start riding, fun and playful in the chop. Great strapless board to play in the swell with windy conditions." // Marko Bartscherer

NAISH TRIAD

Sizes Available: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14m

Sizes Tested: 7, 9, 12m



NAISH SAYS:

The new Triad is much more than an evolution of the Ride, it's been redesigned and re-engineered. We've taken the original iconic user-friendly design and developed it further to be even more versatile and provide a whole new riding experience. This new, three-strut frame provides greater stability. The center luff strut creates great low end power, allowing the kite to drift and providing great sheet-in-and-go. The stiffer center also increases the Triad's wind range, providing improved handling in stronger winds and gusty conditions. It also allows us to move the two outer struts lower for a more direct bar feel and improved turning ability. Its low aspect ratio and gradual curve in the wingtip produce smooth turns and very predictable flying. This is perfect for anyone who prefers steady movements over a more punchy kite. Mistakes are minimal with the Triad, so no need to worry if you oversheet it, dive it too hard, or overfly your kite. It also has great wing stability when resting on the water—so you have plenty of time to make adjustments before relaunching. Smooth-flying, stable and forgiving, the Triad gives riders plenty of time to react and plenty of room to grow, so you're in complete control at all times. From complete beginners, to kites looking to improve, to those seeking an easy-riding experience, anyone looking for an easy to control kite will enjoy the Triad.

Visit for more info: www.naishkites.com/product/triad

TKB SAYS:

The Triad is a brand new release for 2019 and targets the beginner freeride segment with its 3-strut medium to low aspect canopy with sweptback wingtips. The Triad features a high flow Boston valve that requires the larger inflation nozzle on standard pump hoses and Naish's proprietary internal check valve for easy inflation of the struts without the clunky distribution hoses. This system does require that you open the 9mm check valves on the struts when deflating the kite, and you will have to remember to close this valve once again upon inflation. The Triad uses a fairly simple medium length front bridle which offers a single setting (no tuning needed) and a single sliding pulley to change the kite's angle of attack. There's three settings on the wingtip for adjusting bar pressure with nifty arm muscle icons to guide you, and the stock setting in the middle. The front bridle attachment points end in a knot while the wingtip attachment points end in a larkshhead. The overall build quality of Naish's new Triad kite are solid, with small items like drain holes in the wingtips, super clean strut to leading edge attachments and ample protection where needed—all items that indicate excellent attention to details. The Triad also features Naish's Quad-Tex fabric which feels incredibly crisp and results a fairly light build of the kite. In the air, the Triad features nice light to medium bar pressure on the stock setting (we tested the heavier outboard bar pressure setting for BP and for handling, we preferred the smoothness and comfort of the stock setting) and is fairly responsive with good direct steering response and middle of the road steering speed; it has solid turning speed that is predictable, intuitive and very usable. The kite steers with a medium pivot and has a slightly larger turning arc with the standout highlight of the kite being it's smooth power delivery along the sheeting in/out of the bar; there's this very nice progressive power along the bar stroke that feels 'sheet in and go' and yet has a ton of depower at the very end of the stroke. One of the design goals behind this kite was to maintain a little more power along the bottom part of the stroke without sacrificing the range of depower at its top end. This is more conducive to beginner and casual kites that have haven't mastered power control issues and we think that is one of the performance aspects that made this kite very comfortable and easy to fly. One of our sessions was in extremely gusty wind in which the Triad's depower ability was incredibly important, as well as the sheet in and go power delivery for navigating the gusts which required less aggressive kite flying. The Triad was great for mowing upwind and it features a good amount of lift for the beginner intermediate just getting started with jumping. The intuitive steering and power control are ideal for those mastering small to medium sized airs, but if you're thinking of challenging Kevin Langere, King of the Air champion, you might think about upgrading to a high lift kite like the Pivot. The Triad felt incredibly stable in the air, passing all of our load and slack line tests even in the extra punchy wind session. In terms of water relaunch, we dropped the Triad in the water a couple of times and the sweptback LE helped the kite rotate quickly from the bottom of the window and the wingtips cleared really easily for a nice reliable relaunch in the red triangle every time. The Triad feels like it sits just a little deeper in the window, but offers steady, reliable and comfortable performance on everything from going upwind to fun-sized (not scary) jumping and all-around cruising. The clear target audience for the Triad is entry-level and progressing kites, but we'd also recommend this kite to capable but generalist kites that are looking for all around cruising comfort, relaunch reliability and general all around freeride cruising fun.

NAISH Torque ATB



Our Triad came with Naish's Torque ATB 55 (Above the Bar power adjustment) control bar which features new color coding with blue on the right and red on the left. This bar features a dual adjustable length bar (45-51cm) with a single center-line safety depower, low V, spectra sheeting/throw line, replaceable insert, no sliding stopper, and above the bar clam cleat power adjustment with an easy adjustable length throw. The quick release integrates a below the bar swivel which keeps the rigging above the bar refreshingly simple and doubles as a quick release guard. The quick release handle cocks in an upward position when released, yet it is worth noting that reassembly requires the rider put the end of the loop back in to the mechanism, raise the release the handle and then drop it back into place—its clean, functional and easy to use with two hands for reset. The Torque's center lines end in loops and the outside lines end in knots with clear line and pigtail color coding (center lines are grey, left is red, right is blue). Shipped stock with 24m non-extension lines, the bar's molded foam floats are integrated into the bar ends and are flexible enough to fold down quickly and easily for a painless wrap job. Retractable bungees have an easy to grab tab and a solid clip to ensure your lines stay on the bar between sessions while the Torque's adjustable bar ends make it easy to adjust the effective length of the bar and also allow you to tune the outside lines for length in the event of line stretch. Rounding out the design, the chicken finger is a rigid material that ensures against foul hooks and can be rotated out of position for easy hook and unhooking for the more aggressive freestyle riders out there. The grip has a nice rubber feel with a solid texture and an ergonomic shape that accommodates both riders with wide and narrow grip stances (smaller bar diameter in the center for narrow grip stance riders). Overall, the Torque has the unique distinction of packing a ton of useful features into a light to medium weight and well designed package.

Visit for more info on the bar: www.naishkites.com/product/torque-atb-55/





WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR



Whether you want the ultimate foiling and light wind weapon, high-end freestyle performance with added freeride versatility or simply a kite that puts a smile on your face every session, Naish has what you're looking for with the new Boxer, Dash and brand new Triad.

Built with our industry leading construction, Naish Kiteboarding continues to march forward and progress the sport the same way we have for the past 20 years: to make everyday on the water a good one, no matter the conditions.

FEATURING



QUAD-TEX

Naish • Teflon Coated | Ripstop Fabric

**SHARK
TEETH**

— TRAILING EDGE —

HT 
HIGH TENSILE THREAD



TRIAD, FOR ANYONE.

All-around Freeride

SIZES 4-12, 14

- Easy handling with forgiving control
- Smooth power delivery

BOXER, FOR ANYWHERE.

Lightwind Freeride/Foiling

SIZES 3.5-12, 14, 16

- Amazing low-end power
- Lightest single strut kite ever made



DASH, FOR THE NEXT LEVEL.

Freestyle/Freeride

SIZES 5-12, 14

- Fast-flying for kite loops & big air
- Great load, pop & slack

NAISH

OZONE ALPHA v1

Sizes Available: 4, 6, 8, 10, 12m

Sizes Tested: 8, 10m



OZONE SAYS:

The Alpha V1 is a unique single strut design that has redefined our expectations of inflatable kites. It's simple, incredibly lightweight and very effective – it is a winner for any quiver. The lightweight design translates to incredible low-end performance making the Alpha a very competitive choice not only for light wind freeriding, but also the expanding freeride hydrofoil scene in almost any wind strength. The power to de-power stroke is progressive and dynamic enough to provide smooth lift for transitions and jibes with a foil board. For high wind foiling in chop or waves, take a small size with shorter lines for loads of fun drifting the kite while carving swells across the wind. In the surf, the Alpha is perfect for drift style wave riding as it floats with you. The handling is direct and responsive which allows you to put the kite where you need it. The Alpha is not as dedicated to waves as the Reo, but it still delivers solid performance in cross-shore to on-shore conditions. Water re-launch is easy, by simply turning the bar or using the re-launch balls on the leader lines, the kite will roll over into the re-launch position. Going traveling? Take the Alpha with you, it's incredibly lightweight, packs small and can do anything you want to do on any given day. The Alpha V1 comes standard with an ultra lightweight Compressor Bag, perfect for traveling and day-to-day protection for your kite.

Visit for more info: www.ozonekites.com/products/water-kites/alpha-v1

TKB SAYS:

Ozone's new single strut freeride kite brings a new standard to the lightweight minimalist genre of travel and foilboarding kites. The first thing we noticed about the Alpha was its packaging, wrapped in a papoose-style pack bag that gives you the sense you could pack an entire quiver into just a small portion of your normal travel bags without coming close to your weight limit. The Alpha comes with a high flow Boston valve that requires the larger inflation nozzle and uses a single-setting fixed bridle that utilizes no pulleys and a single wingtip setting. The Alpha doesn't offer any kite handling adjustments, instead it focuses on being incredibly light and agile in the air. As with all single strut kites there is a tradeoff — you do have to think about the amount of flutter that you get with a canopy that is supported by only one strut and two wingtips, yet the Alpha does an excellent job of keeping the canopy under control. When flown in the high end you will notice when you sheet out some flutter but the feedback from that flutter doesn't overwhelm your bar feel. What flutter you will experience with this kite is much less than that experienced with earlier generations of single strut kites. The Alpha is ideal for foilboarding, where the loads required of the kite are minimal and you can fly the kite in its low end. The Alpha has good depower and flies in middle of the window with a nice direct steering feel. The Alpha doesn't feel quite as fast as the Reo, nor does it turn in such a tight pivot style steering arc as the Reo but still feels fairly direct in terms of turning, which is notable for a single strut. The overall sheeting feels fairly intuitive and progressive as you pull in the bar. Sometimes with single struts the sheeting can be a little bit washy but with this kite, the feel is fairly sharp and intuitive as you power up and the feedback is good. In terms of jumping it did create a fair amount of lift and it did have a fair amount of hangtime, which means that this kite could be an option for the traveling freerider that needs packability and a little bit of performance for all around riding, but you must keep in mind that single struts are always a compromise. Foilboarding is one area where power demand is minimal and single strut kites really shine without any of the compromises. When it came to relaunch, when the Alpha was in the water nose down in the center of the window it wanted to flip over immediately. By just applying some pressure on the bar the kite pivoted onto a wingtip and then taxied out to the edge of the window and relaunched. A lot of times with foilboarding you find yourself with the kite in the water and you tend to be in light wind conditions. You definitely want a kite that has a lightweight build and a kite that rocks over onto its wingtip fairly easy in order to get out of those situations. Overall the Alpha V1 is an excellent first stab at the single strut kite market for Ozone. Like many of the Ozone products, the build quality on the kite is solid with an excellent balance between durability and minimalism, with a fast, efficient and responsive canopy in the air that we recommend for foilboarding primarily and general travel freeriding secondarily.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Loved this kite! At 5'8", 160 lb.s and 60+ yrs old on a twin tip, I found this kite predictable, not too fast, not too slow and it handled gusts well fully powered and went upwind well." // Jeff Waldberg



"I would have chosen to fly this kite in lighter wind, but that said, it was very steady for a light wind kite, no fluttering and easy to handle. Not that fast turning, but easy and forgiving, great kite for strapless surfboard." // Kristin Vincenzo

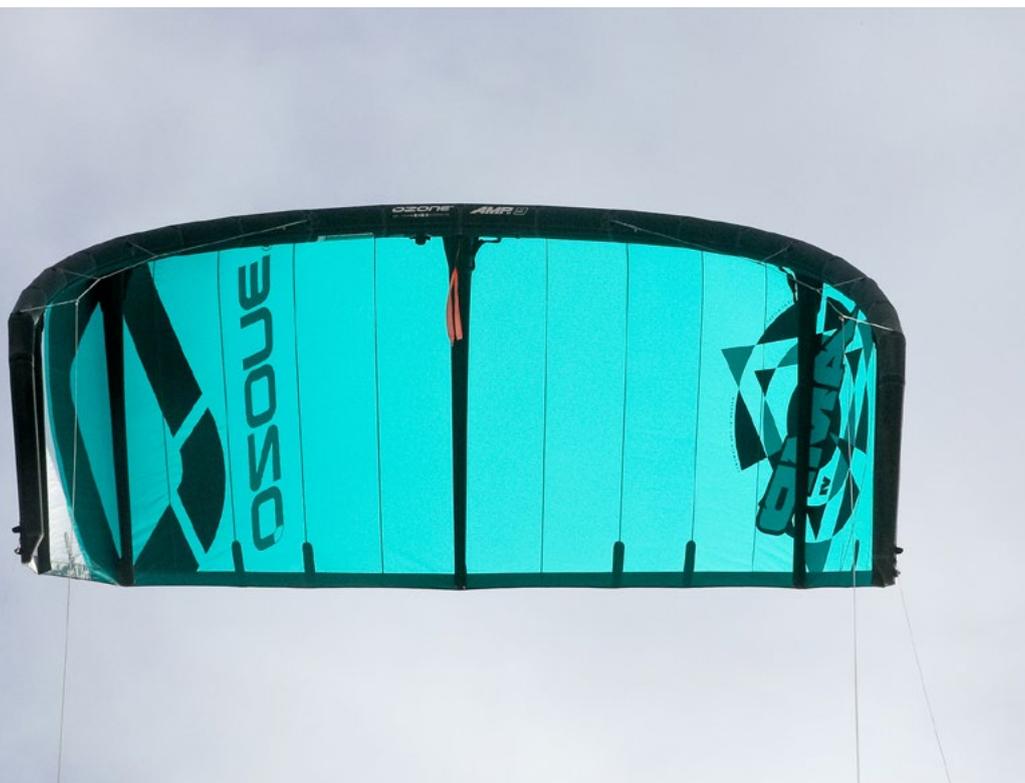


"Very consistent kite, moves at deliberate medium pace, good lift and hangtime, direct steering with med-heavy bar pressure and good sheeting range, great drift, stability and depower - all which make it an amazing foiling platform." // Dray Murray

OZONE AMP v1

Sizes Available: 7, 9, 11, 13m

Sizes Tested: 9, 11m



OZONE SAYS:

The AMP V1 represents a new paradigm in C-kite design. It is a progressive yet user-friendly Freestyle and Park-style kite, offering amateurs to pros the response, feedback and control needed to take their riding to the next level. The design team focused on creating a kite that was both predictable and adaptable for hooked and un-hooked riding. The AMP has been developed to grow with you; no longer are the progressive kites for just the Professionals. Whether you're learning your first un-hooked raley, boosting kite loops, or styling out advanced park and freestyle maneuvers, the AMP will keep you in control with the highest level of feedback, predictable turning speed and a similar feeling precisely tuned across all sizes. It is ultra smooth to fly and provides inspirational confidence to go for it! The AMP features three unique and easily interchangeable performance settings to complement your skill set and riding needs. The first being a 4-Line Bridle Mode Setting 1 – Freeride / Freestyle / Kite Loop and the second a 4-Line Bridle Mode Setting 2 for Unhooked Freestyle / Park. You can also fly the Amp in a 5-Line Mode – Unhooked Freestyle / Park (Advanced). There's no need to feel left behind, join the progression and stay AMP'd!

Visit for more info: www.ozonekites.com/products/water-kites/amp-v1

TKB SAYS:

The Amp is new for this year and brings to Ozone's lineup a competition freestyle 5-strut higher aspect platform for the rider throwing unsent wakestyle handlepass tricks. The Amp is a modern take on the classic C-kite style design that introduces some of the hybrid freeride characteristics you get with a bridle supported leading edge kite while keeping the load and slack power delivery of a dedicated freestyle kite that a tour riding athlete wants. The Amp features the standard Ozone inflation point which is a high flow Boston valve that requires the larger inflation nozzle. The Amp uses a fixed front bridle with no pulleys and two adjustment settings that switches between freestyle and freeride riding with wingtips featuring three turning options to select between bar pressure and turning speed. We tested the Amp on the freeride setting and the wingtip factory stock position in the middle. The Amp canopy doesn't have any battens but it does have some anti-flutter pads on the trailing edge. Testers acknowledged the Amp as one of the few kites in the test leaning the most towards freestyle. The Amp has that C-kite style feel with a little bit slower steering response and a larger steering arc that's a little bit wider than the tighter pivoting turn that you see in the world of freeride or surf kites. Much like the Reo or Alpha kites we tested, the Amp flies a little bit farther forward in the window and has the load, pop and release feel that gives you slack when needed. While this kite a hybrid style C-kite, it's not your 'sheet and go' kite that generates power by sheeting in the bar from anywhere in the window. When you need more power you have to fly this kite actively in the window with power strokes to get extra power, yet unlike a C-kite it has a fair amount of depower as you change the angle of attack, but not what you get from the Reo or Alpha we tested. When it comes to boosting the Amp, when properly timed, it delivers a really impressive amount of lift that feels explosive. It gets you up pretty high but this canopy shape requires a little bit more active kite flying to get extended hangtime, or even a soft landing. In this regard, the Amp is a kite for someone that's a little bit more experienced with sent jumps. Overall, the Amp is a fun kite ideal for intermediate and advanced kites that are largely focused on wakestyle/unsent freestyle or big gutsy kitemoops. This style kite does have a smaller range compared to some of the freeride 'sheet and go' kites tested so riders will need to be more selective about having the rights sized kite for wind conditions, this being the standard downside of these kinds of kites. Overall the Amp is a fun kite for more aggressive freestylers that specialize in handlepass tricks or committed King of the Air style kitemooing. If you miss the hey days of C-kites and want to mix that feel with more modern user-friendly handling, or plan on signing up for the wakestyle tour, the Amp is an excellent weapon of choice.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Less throw, slower turning, stays where you put it with a larger turning arc of any kite in the test – great for wakestyle. Excellent bar design." // Dylan Dobbyn



"Bar has excellent grip for unhooking, feels very steady, and turns slow and wide. Super stable and relaunches really well, but big arc for kite loops." // Davey Beard



"Wants to sit higher in the window than other kites, responds to input quick, fun and reliable, easy relaunch but not as much drift as other all-terrain models." // Joe Chehock

OZONE CATALYST V2

Sizes Available: 5, 6.5, 8, 9.5, 11, 13.5m

Sizes Tested: 8, 11m



OZONE SAYS:

The Catalyst V1 has been a great success but the Ozone design team is never at rest, searching to improve on this confidence inspiring model. The V2 takes it to the next level — it is based from the original design and has been reshaped and refined to enhance performance and accessibility for entry level to intermediate riders. The first thing you will notice is the V2 is very stable and predictable to launch, land and fly. It has “sheet in and go” power delivery, helping you to get up and ride easily. The wide wind range and progressive de-power lets you ride in variable and gusty conditions comfortably. The updated airfoil section produces efficient power even when the kite is at the edge of the wind window, helping you to ride upwind, giving you more time to spend improving your skills! The predictable power and lift makes first jumps a breeze with easy loft, good hangtime and smooth landings. Making life easy the water re-launch is incredibly simple and intuitive due to its unique shape and increased leading edge tube diameter. By simply turning the bar or using the re-launch balls on the leader lines, the kite will easily roll over into the re-launch position ready to take off from the water. The Catalyst V2 is the choice for anyone getting into the sport or for riders looking for a fun, confidence inspiring kite with ease of use at its heart.

Visit for more info: www.ozonekites.com/products/water-kites/catalyst-v2

TKB SAYS:

Ozone is back from the drawing board on their dedicated progression kite creating a very stable, predictable kite that is easy to use for those learning the ropes of kiteboarding. The Catalyst features a 3-strut low aspect canopy with sweptback wingtips which gives it a delta shape. The Catalyst features the standard Ozone inflation point which is a high flow Boston valve that requires the larger inflation nozzle. The front bridle is a simple fixed single setting bridle with no pulleys and the wingtips has two attachment points to adjust between turning speed and bar pressure, with the factory setting being the outermost setting. Tester universally praised the Catalyst as the ideal beginner kite because of its incredibly user-friendly and confidence inspiring handling and super stability in the air that refused to overfly the window. The Catalyst turns at a nice medium pace with a pivot style turning arc that has a steering response that is both predictable and user-friendly to someone that's still trying to dial in kite control. The power delivery along the bar throw is evenly progressive, the kind of sheet in and go that delivers an intuitive amount of power by just sheeting in the bar wherever the kite is in the window. This means the Catalyst doesn't require a ton of aggressive kite flying which helps people who are just getting their power control under wraps. In terms of bar pressure the Catalyst has medium plus bar pressure which is probably a good thing for those trying to develop their awareness for kite placement in the window and its turning. This is not one of those kites that initiates a radical turn when you take your eyes off the kites. You will feel the pressure on your hands through the bar and therefore the turning tends to be intuitive and intentional for those who are still familiarizing themselves with our sport. When it comes to relaunch the sweptback wingtips and semi-delta shape makes relaunch quick and easy. When the kite is down in the water, facing nose down directly downwind the Catalyst tends to rock back and forth on its nose, as it clearly wants to go in either direction with a minor tug of the bar. In our relaunch tests the Catalyst immediately rolled up onto a wingtip, started to roll and taxi towards the edge of the window. The one thing we noticed about the Catalyst is that it does tend to want to taxi to the side of the window before it wants to release its wingtip from the water. This is a great quality to have in a progression kite because the relaunch tends to be a kind of gentle launch from the edge of the window rather than a hot launch from the bottom of the window. Other kites, like the Reo, tended to launch immediately from the bottom of the window which is maybe better for more confident riders and surf situations. In terms of jumping the Catalyst is a great entry level kite to explore the first steps of getting air. It's not going to set any height records but it also won't hold an entry-level kiter back from learning how to jump; it certainly doesn't hold the same amount of lift and explosive boost that you find in the other Ozone freeride kites, including the Reo or even the Alpha. The Catalyst can jump for nice predictable jumps ideal for those learning how to boost. Testers universally acknowledged the Catalyst's user-friendly attributes that put it squarely in the beginner/cautious intermediate/school category. Overall the Catalyst stands for reliability and demonstrates all the qualities needed by someone just getting into the sport, a trusty friend to get people of all athletic skills through the beginner to intermediate stages of kiteboarding.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Super stable, slower steering speed with stronger bar pressure — this kite is definitely geared towards beginners." // Micha Dassler



"This low aspect 3-strut kite is super stable, grunty, slow turning with good relaunch. Great for beginners, but for those looking at a quick progression I would recommend the Reo." // Dylan Dobbyn



"Great kite for trying to ride a new board because I didn't have to think about the kite. It's stable and slow turning and was incredibly predictable." // David Kirkup

OZONE REO v5

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

Sizes Tested: 9, 12m



OZONE SAYS:

Since its introduction six years ago the Reo has been the reference for pure wave riding, setting the benchmark in performance and feeling. The Reo's unique flying characteristics allow you to maximize the potential of every wave, giving you the freedom to smash the lip, clear a section, carve turns or snap in the pocket. Fast direct handling and perfect drift combined with amazing de-power and the ability to absorb gusts means you can choose exactly where you want to place yourself on a wave to make that next move. The Reo V5 features our innovative Variable Bridle Geometry (VBG). The new bridle settings extend the kite's operating range, bringing another level of versatility to this already outstanding design. The Reo V5 features our new stronger and lighter strut construction. The wingtip shape has also been refined with our new tapered tip and slim line deflector. We understand the importance of aerodynamics and weight saving especially on a kite where drift is imperative, so every detail has been refined to be as light as possible while maintaining the strength and integrity you expect from an Ozone product. We've maintained the quick and easy re-launch - by turning the bar or using the Re-launch Balls on the leader lines, the Reo V5 will roll over and take off from the water in an instant. This is especially helpful if you're stuck in the impact zone and need to get out of there fast!

Visit for more info: www.ozonekites.com/products/water-kites/reo-v5

TKB SAYS:

The Reo is a 3-strut lower to medium aspect kite featuring the fifth iteration of Ozone's magic formula for a surf kite. The Reo inflates easily with a high flow Boston valve that requires the larger inflation nozzle, featuring a fixed front bridle that has two settings and three steering settings on the wingtip. Much like years past, the Reo features boxier wingtips and less sweep in the leading edge which makes it a little more C-shaped compared to the Catalyst. The newest feature for this version is the adjustable settings on the leading edge bridle. You can adjust the length of the front bridle attachment near the inflation point, which allows you to move forward/aft the pivot point of the leading edge bridle which changes the way in which the kite flies in the window. With the upper knot the kite flies farther forward in the window and has a little less bar pressure and by moving to the knot farthest away from the leading edge the kite sits back a little deeper in the window and you have a little heavier bar pressure and more bar feel on the wingtip. Like previous versions, testers commented on the Reo's overall highly responsive flight, with its highly reactive turning speed. Simple inputs into the bar transfer immediately into the canopy and the turning path tends to feel a little bit more like a pivot and turns in a fairly tight arc. The Reo doesn't generate a ton of power during the turning but with that said this kite does generate a fair amount of power when it strokes through the window. Testers found the bar pressure to be a nice middle of the road medium weight and the relaunch is excellent. When the kite was in the water nose down in the middle of the window, it pretty much doesn't want to stay in that position. The Reo rocks side to side waiting for some small input to roll onto a wingtip and launches out of the water from the very bottom of the window with very little effort. The Reo gets 5-stars for its relaunch. In the boosting department the Reo generates some really good lift for a surf kite, which is easily accessible because of its direct steering response. Hangtime is good but not on par with dedicated performance big boosting freeride kites. In the drift department the Reo works really good in terms of keeping the lines under tension while traveling with the wind. Using the longer front bridle attachment pigtail helps to put the kite deeper, which we would recommend for onshore surf conditions where line tension is always a challenge. Moving the front bridle attachment closer to the leading edge will give you extra depower and lighter bar pressure, which we'd opt for in side-off waves or foilboarding where pulling power isn't as desirable. One of the most noticeable qualities of the Reo is its overall reactive feel which combines a durable but lightweight construction with a shape that is remarkably responsive and easy to fly.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Easy to fly, medium bar pressure, quick turning speed, fast downloop turns, stable and delivers power quickly." // Chris Myles

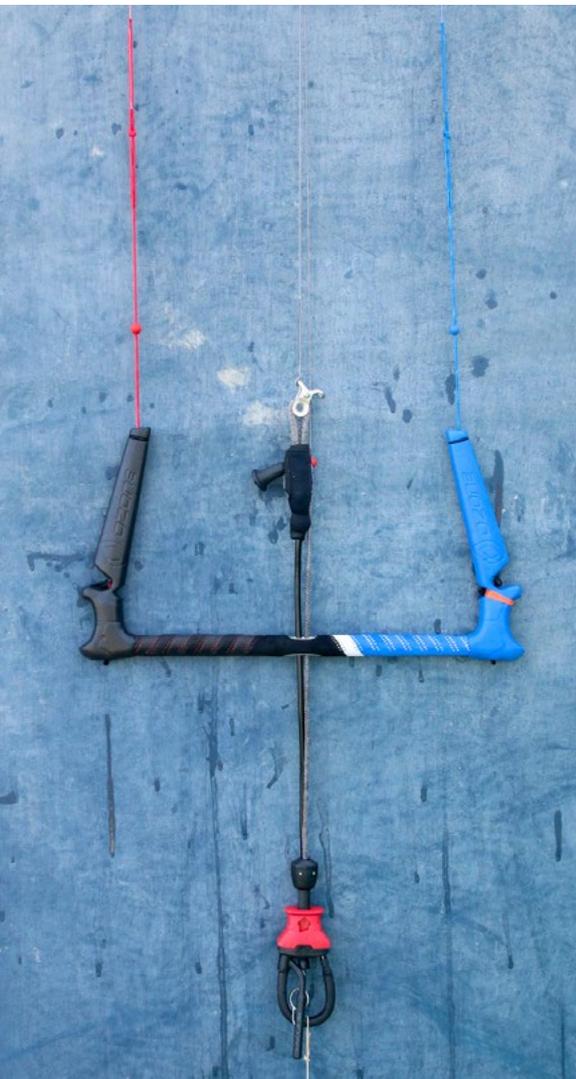


"Solid kite in and out of the waves — fast turning, great drift and easy to steer and very responsive. This a great wave kite with drift and hang, but makes it also great for kites learning to jump (as they often end up under the kite)." // Kristin Vincenzo



"Solid build, felt instantly comfortable with its stable and responsive handling. As long as you aren't a big air junkie you will love this kite — it is fun to fly and delivers great grunt power and turns quickly." // Marko Bartscherer

OZONE CONTACT V4 BAR



Ozone released the new Contact V4 control bar this year which is a 4-line bar that has received significant updates from Ozone's previous bar along with one massive upgrade in the quick release department. The Contact V4 features Ozone's new 'Seat Belt' technology which offers a completely new quick release design that features a groundbreaking mechanism that allows you to effortlessly reconnect your trim loop after a safety release by simply pushing the loop into its recess and it automatically clicks closed. There are a number of these systems on the market, but Ozone's by far is the easiest mechanism to reassemble. This is a colossal improvement, as it is simple and surefire in the way in which this system works. The scenario goes like this: there's a problem, you push the quick release, the kite depowers, but then you want to reconnect the quick release in the water and resume. Normally this is a 10-finger/two-handed struggle to hold the release open while you stick the loop back into its mechanism and close the gate apparatus to continue. Some models try to keep the release open upon release, but the Seat Belt design doesn't require you to hold the release open to reconnect the loop into its locked position.

The biggest question is whether the mechanism will behave under normal operating conditions and abuse with the usual sandy saltwater wear and tear, but as of our test, we were sufficiently happy with its reliable functionality. The quick release has the standard push away handle, a hand swivel above the release that also doubles as a travel guard and a molded locking finger to prevent accidental unhooking as well as a safety attachment point with suicide option. The Contact is a fixed length bar (available in 38, 45, 50 and 55cm sizes) that features a single center line safety depower with a low V. The center lines end in grey color-coded pigtails with loops for rigging purposes and the outside lines end in knots color coded with red and blue pigtails. The Contact features above the bar tuning with a cleat and a small carbon toggle that uses a bungee built into the tuning line to keep things clean in depowered situations. The bar has a plastic coated/PU throw line with no sliding stopper or adjustable length throw. The padded bar ends are tunable (three knots – stock is on center) and feature integrated floats and retractable bar bungees. The bar ends are soft in the event of accidental face contact. This year the bar got a significant color change with much less obvious colors; there is no longer red on the left side of the bar grip although the leader lines coming out of the floats are color coded for red and blue. The grip indents have very subtle red highlights for those that are looking closely. Testers gave the new bar solid praise for its comfortable grip that is both wider with a nice raised pattern and smaller indentations for a fairly dense grip.

Visit for more info on the bar: www.ozonekites.com/products/control-systems/contact-water-v4-control-system

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AMP v1

PROGRESSION
TO THE PEOPLE

THE AMP V1 REPRESENTS A NEW PARADIGM IN C-KITE DESIGN. IT IS A PROGRESSIVE YET USER-FRIENDLY FREESTYLE AND PARK-STYLE KITE, OFFERING AMATEUR TO PRO THE RESPONSE, FEEDBACK AND CONTROL NEEDED TO TAKE THEIR RIDING TO THE NEXT LEVEL.



WELCOME TO THE TEAM RUBEN LENTEN!

AFTER MANY YEARS OF MUTUAL APPRECIATION RUBEN IS COMING ON BOARD AS OUR NEW GLOBAL BRAND AMBASSADOR. RUBEN WILL BE RIDING OUR FULL RANGE AND TESTING OUT OUR NEWEST RELEASE, THE AMP V1.

“GOOD THINGS TAKE TIME. AFTER 3 YEARS OF TESTING ALMOST EVERY KITE ON THE MARKET I’M SO STOKED TO HAVE FOUND THIS GREAT BRAND TO MOVE FORWARD WITH WHO SHARE THE SAME VISION AND ABOVE ALL PASSION.”

Ruben Lenten

TEAM RIDERS: RUBEN LENTEN & ALEX LEWIS-HUGHES

OZONE CODE

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

Sizes Tested: 135 x 40cm, 141 x 42cm



OZONE SAYS:

The Code is an outstanding, all round freeride performance twin tip board that's fun, fast and smooth with massive pop potential. It has a refined combination of a progressive outline, medium rocker and flex, with a double concave bottom shape developed specifically for intermediate to advanced free riders. The name 'Code' represents the Ozone team coming together to take on the challenge of designing, developing and manufacturing boards that match the performance and quality of our Kites. We've worked with the same intense level of R&D that goes into our kites to bring the Code to life. Our new in-house production process uses the latest technologies to ensure every aspect of production is carried out perfectly to bring you a perfect no compromise board. A medium rocker and flex combined with a rounder outline gives this board excellent carving performance as it flows effortlessly from rail to rail. It's stable in fast power carves and gives you a very fluid consistent linear feeling. The Code has amazing control in choppy water and remains ultra smooth underfoot, even in gnarly chop. In overpowered conditions, the swallow tip design helps the board maintain its edge that allows the rider to perfectly load up for big boosts.

Visit for more info: www.ozonekites.com/products/kiteboards/code-v1

TKB SAYS:

Now that Ozone is taking their acclaimed approach to kites into the twin tip realm we get to test two models, the Code being the all around freeride progression shape featuring a nice V hull shaped with a spine lining a double concave with fairly good-sized fins. The Code is the first board they brought to the market, yet the construction details and design indicate a well thought out combo of performance traits for all around freeride comfort. Testers mentioned that the Code would be a top candidate as one of the optimal boards to cross the chop-infested waters of the La Ventana channel in comfort. The Code features subtle rounded tips that help it cut through chop with minimal spray and the bigger sized fins coupled with the mild rocker helps the Code track upwind really well. The spine and concave combo seems to cut through the chop making it a great option for beginner and intermediate riders that prize comfort and user-friendly cruising. The Code likes to effortlessly lock into an upwind track, feeling very secure without a ton of controlling input to keep the wheels on the road. With a softer more forgiving flex pattern compared to Ozone's Torque, the Code can be fun and playful, friendly for carving and easy to load and release for general jumping with forgiving landings. The truth is that Ozone may be Johnny-come-lately to the twin tip party, but in releasing the Code they've clearly done their homework and come up with a board that ticks all the boxes for a large part of the market. First time board buyers that want an all-around freeride board that will keep them comfortable while marching through the freeride progression should check out Code.

The Code comes with three inserts for adjusting stance width and the pad has a couple of settings for adjusting your stance's duck. The Ozone pads and straps system is fairly straightforward and easy. The footpads are comprised of relatively thick EVA with dual density zones incorporating a layer of memory foam. The setup sits a bit higher off the deck of the board, but also sit fairly flat against the board. The footbeds don't have a ton of arch contour, but feature some good texture under the heel and a subtle heel bump that is appropriately placed to keep your foot locked in. The strap is a single adjustment strap system that's got an overlapping Velcro strap adjusted on top that makes changes fairly straightforward but one dimensional. The under the strap material is cloth-like neoprene rounding out a comfortable, simple straightforward strap. This binding received solid reviews for comfort and while it doesn't have all the bells and whistles of some other systems, it does boast a very simple and easy setup.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Ozone did an incredible job with their first try at board shaping. The Code is a pillow through chop and hard landings. This board makes cruising around effortless." // Tib Anghel



"Found myself riding this board a lot when i needed a familiar ride to test kites. Really good all around fun board with no tip spray. Fun carving waves and handles chop great." // Giuseppe Molinaro



"I liked this board; it was eay on my joints and performed well for turns and chop. It would be a good board for someone who rides in chop and jumps and is looking for a soft ride with cushion." // Jeff Waldberg

OZONE TORQUE

Sizes Available: 128 x 38cm, 131 x 39cm, 134 x 40cm, 136 x 41cm, 138 x 42cm, 140 x 43cm

Sizes Tested: 136 x 41cm, 140 x 43cm



OZONE SAYS:

The Torque is all about riding bold, it raises the bar for solid edging, ease of loading, power retention and the all important pop factor. For aggressive freestyle it delivers explosive performance with great flex and hold to stick your landings. Without compromising the smooth performance for freeriding, it's fast and responsive.

The Torque carries the optimum width from the center to the tips, the square tip outline allows for straighter rails that have more surface area to load up against for an insane pop experience, whether you ride with boots or straps. The medium flex and rocker is a combination of the best of both worlds, soft landing and great upwind drive. A precisely tuned quad concave hull combats chop and projects from wave kickers. The stability and predictability of the Torque means it has never been so easy to boost high and progress with even the most advanced tricks - all the features needed for maximum performance, go send it and see!

Visit for more info: www.ozonekites.com/products/kiteboards/torque-v1

TKB SAYS:

The Torque is the second twin tip to be added to the Ozone line of boards, satisfying the more freestyle performance-oriented needs of riders. The Torque features a quad concave bottom and boxier/more fuller tips to give riders more pop on jumps. The flex pattern feels a bit stiffer than the Code, Ozone's all around freeride board, but in the broader scheme of dedicated freestyle boards the Torque features a flex pattern that isn't quite as stiff. The Torque keeps the ride forgiving while still having enough reflex to stomp out some big load and release for unsent airs. The squarer tips help the board in jumping and may cause a little bit more tip spray than the Code, but that comes with the fuller freestyle tips and straighter rails. Despite this, testers gave the Torque high marks for its chop handling ability, and found it went upwind quite well. Compared to the Code, the Torque is a bit more skatier and requires a bit more energy to lock down the edge and keep it tracking, but for a freestyle-oriented board the Torque tracks relatively easily with good grip. Testers felt the Code was easier to carve rail to rail than the Torque, but when it comes to load and pop, you can put a fair amount of energy into the wood core and get a substantial amount of reflex out of it. The rocker on the Torque isn't by any means aggressive, so the board feels fairly efficient and fast and led to excellent scores from our test team for upwind ability and range. Overall, the Torque is a board that offers freestyle performance while staying within the freeride realm of user-friendly and comfortable riding.

The Torque comes with three inserts for adjusting stance width and the pad has a couple settings for adjusting your stance's duck. The Ozone pads and straps system is a fairly straightforward and easy strap system. The footpads are a fairly thick EVA with dual density zones incorporating a layer of memory foam. The setup sits a bit higher off the deck of the board, but also sit fairly flat against the board. The footbeds don't have a ton of arch contour, but feature some good texture under the heel and a subtle heel bump that is appropriately placed to keep your foot locked in. The strap is a single adjustment strap system that's got an overlapping Velcro strap adjusted on top that makes changes fairly straight forward but one dimensional. The under the strap material is cloth-like neoprene rounding out a comfortable, simple straightforward strap. This binding received solid reviews for comfort and while it doesn't have all the bells and whistles compared to some other systems on the market, it does boast a very simple and easy setup.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"A smooth sailor through the chop, the Torque revs up to meet anything you throw at it. Nice medium weight, great load and pop with good edge control and excellent chop handling." // Tib Anghel



"Forgiving for a freestyle board. Held an edge well and excellent pop, good chop handling, easy upwind, great for anyone." // Bryan Waldberg



"Handled chop well, comfortable and carved upwind with good pop." // Kiter Mike

SLINGSHOT RALLY

Sizes Available: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14m

Sizes Tested: 7, 9, 11m



SLINGSHOT SAYS:

The Rally will take you where you want to go. Upwind, downwind, back rolls, front rolls, mega boosts, waves or flat water, the Rally has done it all. It's even crossed the Atlantic.* The Rally inspires confidence, knowing that it will make you a better rider no matter what you're up to, you're on the right kite. Great range and depower, easy relaunch, solid upwind ability, predictable performance in gusty wind, lofty hang-time and solid crossover surf performance.

The Rally features a Delta-C shape, tapered wingtips and fine-tuned three-point bridle system. This design yields more depower and a wider wind range than more traditional shapes and makes relaunching as easy as a gentle pull on one end of the bar. Tapered wingtip provides a tight pivot radius for fast steering and mellow, predictable loops. For jumping, the Rally's hybrid delta shape provides long, lofty airs that are great for staying under control and landing gently regardless of how high you go. For wave riding and foiling, the Rally's feathery downwind drift makes the Rally the ideal cross-over performer, while on the opposite spectrum it also unhooks relatively well for cross-over freestyle/wakestyle.

Visit for more info: www.slingshotsports.com/2019-Rally

TKB SAYS:

The Rally is back for another year as the jack of all trades with user-friendly delta-style freeride all-around performance. The Rally features a 5-strut delta shaped air frame with really sweptback narrow wingtips and medium length fixed single setting front bridle. The wingtips feature three settings for adjusting kite feedback with the stock setting located in the middle. The Rally uses a large diameter bayonet style inflation valve that requires no nozzle on the end of your standard pump hose for a quick and easy pump up. When it comes time to deflate, there's a standard dump valve that allows you to quickly deflate the kite without unthreading the bayonet valve. The first aspect of the Rally is that of all the Slingshot kites it probably features the lightest bar pressure, with light to medium bar pressure. The Rally has a distinct pivot style turn that rotates on a very tight axis while not creating too much pull through the turns. The Rally offers riders the 'sheet and go' feel on the bar with progressive power delivery that doesn't require aggressive kite flying to find the power. While the Rally is often described as being grunty, it also does an excellent job of releasing that power, particularly in the smaller sizes. When it comes to boosting big airs, the Rally is one of those kites that builds a ton of lift and then amazes you with seemingly endless hangtime. Despite the Rally's grunt, testers indicated the Rally trucks upwind really well. Because the Rally has little in the way of wingtips, it does like to slide down the side of the window, so it does require a bit more input to maintain its position at the edge of either side of the window, this being a characteristic of delta designs. When it comes to relaunch the Rally has always been an easy candidate with its sweptback leading edge. At the bottom of the window the Rally wants to roll up onto a wingtip and relaunch with very little input. The Rally has all the user-friendly characteristics of an all-around freeride kite that makes progression, general boosting and cruisey riding easy and fun. The Rally can be a great option for foilboarding with a bit more pull but generally will take a rider from zero to hero while traversing the worlds of freeride, surf and foilboarding.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Fast pivot style turns with on/off power. Very stable, quick pivot turning, smooth power through turns and reactive steering, fun and easy to fly. Bar ergonomics are comfortable but grip is aggressive." // Joe Chehock



"If this were a rally car it would be a diesel truck; lots of torque, just sheet in and stomp on the throttle and prepare for lift off. The Rally loves to boost and more, with nice soft landings. Great for heavier riders, so much power smaller riders could size down." // Dray Murray



"Solid kite that goes upwind well with lots of grunt, great for those that don't want to actively steer fly the kite. Medium bar pressure, good relaunch, solid pull that will take you upwind without any thought." // Marko Bartscherer

SLINGSHOT RPM

Sizes Available: 4.5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14m

Sizes Tested: 8, 10, 12m



SLINGSHOT SAYS:

For years, the RPM was fine-tuned to load, pop and go slack in the air before re-engaging. We had the tuning down to a science, and it helped give multiple freestyle world champions their gold medals. Our mission with the 2019 RPM was to change that — not to eliminate anything — but to shift the kite's tuning to where we see the sport shifting. At the level the RPM is designed for that means bigger, better, loftier in-air performance. From slack to soar, the 2019 RPM is the world's go-to kite for versatile freeride performance.

Visit for more info: www.slingshotsports.com/2019-RPM

TKB SAYS:

The Slingshot RPM is back for another year with a fairly giant shift in its targeted type of riding from years past. The RPM continues with its 3-strut medium aspect shape and C-style full canopy all the way into the squared wingtips but Slingshot has modified the canopy shape as well as the front bridles to shift the RPM away from load and slack wakestyle performance towards performance freeride big air and kitemoops. The RPM uses a large diameter bayonet style inflation valve that requires no nozzle on the end of your standard pump hose for a quick and easy pump up. When it comes time to deflate, there's a standard dump valve that allows you to quickly deflate without opening the bayonet valve. The RPM features a new front bridle that offers two attachment settings and utilizes a single pulley as well as some extra load shifting lines to change the overall angle of attack. We tested the kite in the 'Freeride' stock setting which is the forward setting on the LE that gives the kite a little more depower, forward flying which Slingshot says is better for freeriding and big air. The aft setting is designated for wakestyle with the kite sitting deeper in the window and is less responsive. Historically, the RPM is one of those kites that offered load and slack wakestyle performance balanced with a good dose of softer freeride characteristics, yet this year Slingshot has adapted the normal RPM feel to accentuate the big air boosting and kitemoooping performance that the majority of its freerider base prefers. Wakestyle purists will always have the Fuel and for those that want a hybrid, the RPM can still be tuned to its wakestyle setting. While the difference may visually seem subtle it felt like the RPM flew a little bit farther forward in the window and felt more user-friendly for loading up sent jumps for a solid amount of lift. Testers found the bar pressure to be medium with a fairly progressive power delivery. With the new changes the RPM still isn't quite the sheet and go kite style kite you find in the Rally, instead the RPM continues to want to be flown aggressively to build power, yet the upside is more lift and bigger loftier airs. The RPM continues to be stable, yet it clearly wants to fly farther forward in the window and generate good pull and lift with each gust. The RPM seems to have a slightly tighter steering arc, not as tight as the Rally or the SST, but the steering response continues to feel direct and snappy with fairly swift turning speed. The RPM has a reliable relaunch from nose down in the bottom of the window; it required an extra tug on the floats to get the kite to rotate onto a wingtip, but when it flipped the wingtip cleared the water quickly and the kite launched back into the air fairly deep in the window, making for a reliable launch. Inevitably, the tweaks made to the RPM place it a little deeper in the performance freeride category along with the Rally, with the RPM coming from the C-Shape pedigree. The two kites couldn't be more different, but they both excel in big air, with the RPM offering a bit more user-friendly handling along with improved big air lift and committed powered kitemoops. The question will be whether the smaller segment of wakestyle-oriented RPM riders will notice the difference in the pop and slack department. We think the RPM's repositioning is a better mix of qualities that will make this kite more appealing to the larger segment of freeride kites.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Strong, Solid feel, super stable, medium plus bar pressure, good upwind ability, turns great in the larger sizes, great boost, good hangtime. If you know how to use it this kite will rock!" // Kiter Mike



"New bridle system stays true the RPM feel. Turn and response better this year with very direct feel that lets you know where the kite is at all times." // Dylan Dobbyn



"Steady consistent pull, solid construction, super stable with very reactive steering. Instantly felt comfortable on this kite, being both stable and reactive." // Joe Chehock

SLINGSHOT SST

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

Sizes Tested: 9, 12m



SLINGSHOT SAYS:

The SST means surf, foiling, freeride freedom. Carve upwind for miles to find the best swell, slash harder than riders half your age, then dash downwind, swap your surfboard for a foil and do it all over again. The magic of the SST is in its amazing drift and responsive handling, even when depowered, sheeted out and drifting downwind. Where any other kite would barely steer at all, or fall out of the sky, the SST drifts like a feather remaining quick and reactive at the bar, almost as if it knows what you're going to do before you do it.

The SST is fine-tuned to fly deeper in the window than most kites. This, combined with the kite's shape and bridle setup, yields hero-level downwind drift and steering response even when tension on the lines is minimal. It's the park-and-ride performance that you dream about. It pulls you into position, drifts with you like a shadow, then re-engages at the flick of a wrist. To better hold up to the surf, the SST features reinforced surf-tough canopy paneling designed to take a beating if it goes through the wash and a condensed version of our IRS bungee that cannot get wrapped around the wingtips.

Visit for more info: www.slingshotsports.com/2019-SST

TKB SAYS:

The SST is Slingshots surf kite that is marketed with potential crossover for foilboarding and all around freeride cruising. The SST comes with a 3-strut layout with a fairly medium to low aspect canopy with sweptback wingtips. The SST features a single setting fixed bridle which is fairly short in length and three wingtip settings for adjusting kite feedback; the stock position is the most outboard of the three attachments with the least amount of feedback. The SST uses a large diameter bayonet style inflation valve that requires no nozzle on the end of your standard pump hose for a quick and easy pump up. When it comes time to deflate, there's a standard dump valve that allows you to quickly deflate without unthreading the bayonet valve. Testers found the SST controls to have nice medium to medium plus bar pressure but also commented that more of the kite power comes in the last three inches of bar throw. This keeps the bar close into your body during most riding and offers one of the big selling points of this kite which is really impressive depower. When you use the complete throw the SST dumps a ton of power and can still be responsive when sheeted out. In that sense, the power delivery may not be completely progressive like the other Slingshot freeride kites but it does have a fair amount of that 'sheet and go' feel. The SST turns in a noticeably tight pivotal axis with very quick and direct steering response, a welcomed performance characteristic that at times may require some extra attention until you adapt to this kite's willingness to turn. The kite does create a medium amount of power during its turning and feels fairly grunty overall but with excellent depower. The SST can be fun for some jumping but it's not the massive boosting or big hangtime kite you can find elsewhere in the Slingshot line. The SST is designed for drifting, maintaining steering control and depower which all works towards the end goal of placing the kite in the proper part of the window with the proper amount of power for performance kitesurfing. We tested the drift factor by boosting an air and then leaving the kite directly overhead while falling towards the water. Once we hit the water this eliminated all line tension and we watched the kite drift backwards and reengage high in the window. This data suggest the SST is super stable and has excellent drifting ability that you can pretty much count on to suck up line slack in onshore and side-on surf conditions. In terms of relaunch the SST scored pretty well. When the kite is nose down in the water at the bottom of the window it helped to grab some extra tension on one wingtip by grabbing the leader lines which induced the kite to rotate onto its wingtip and hot launch from the bottom of the wind window. With a more aggressive pull on the kite you can get the SST back up out of the water in a critical situation. The SST earned high marks among testers for its surf characteristics, but testers were quick to acknowledge that the SST is also an excellent user-friendly contender for freeride and surf foilboarding.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Great drift, really easy to turn — very happy on this kite. Fast turning, good power, without a lot of grunt, wasn't expecting much but this kite was so much fun with great drift and hangtime and enough power to pull you through the turns." // Kristin Vincenzo



"Loved the smaller sizes — great low end, fun boosts and hangtime with medium speed, pivotal turning, and lots of power in the sheeting range that just pulls in and throttles up." // Dray Murray



"This kite likes to be worked, but covers all the angles from riding deep downwind to blasting high upwind. Great surf kite, not that much boost but super stable. Bar grip is aggressive (does it come with MTB gloves?)." // Davey Beard

SLINGSHOT TURBINE

Sizes Available: 13, 15, 17, 19m

Sizes Tested: 15, 17m



SLINGSHOT SAYS:

With more power per square meter than any other kite in our lineup, the 2019 Turbine is a high-aspect, high-efficiency kite designed for hero-level shredding in wind as light as a mellow onshore breeze.

The Turbine's high-aspect shape favors power, efficiency and low-end performance. Known as the “Session saver”, a must-have for light wind locations. With long, lofty airs you can just sheet in and ride the elevator. Freestyle friendly, has drift and carry, pulls like a tank. Fine-tuned bridle helps with relaunching in low wind.

Visit for more info: www.slingshotsports.com/2019-Turbine

TKB SAYS:

The Turbine is back to a four-kite quiver that focuses exclusively on the light wind session. The Turbine is a 5-strut delta shape with sweptback wingtips. In many respects, the Turbine looks like a scaled-up Rally (Rally covers 7m-14m and Turbine 15m-19m) but you can see there are some weight reduction measures in the canopy along with other subtle changes in aspect ratio that make this the famous light wind pulling machine what it is. The Turbine comes with a fixed single setting front bridle and three wingtip settings that allow you to adjust kite feedback (bar pressure). The Turbine uses loops on the leading edge bridle attachment points and knots on the wingtip attachment pigtailed. Inflation of this larger sized kite is relatively quick with Slingshot's large diameter bayonet style inflation valve that requires no nozzle on the end of your standard pump hose for a quick and easy pump up. When it comes time to deflating, there's a standard dump valve that allows you to quickly deflate without unthreading the bayonet valve. The Turbine comes with medium plus bar pressure that testers noted for its heavier pull, but also earned unanimous praise for its park and fly power delivery. Everything about the Turbine happens a bit slower, with its large canopy the turning response becomes slower with size and the turning speed is about what you would expect from a large kite. The bigger riders in the test gave the Turbine good reviews for its sheet and go power and its phenomenal low-end grunt delivering the pull you need without aggressively flying the kite. Testers praised the Turbine for its predictable flying and found the canopy very static with very little flutter for its size. With all that immense pulling power, testers also found the depower fairly adept at releasing that pull at the higher end of the kite's range. The Turbine received an excellent review for water relaunch which endorses our previous experiences of relaunching this monster in the lightest of wind. Many kiteboarders are turning to foilboards as their light wind session saver, and that in turn changes how we think about light wind kites. But for the classic light wind twin tip rider or larger rider with a need for sheer grunt pulling power, the Turbine remains an excellent choice to get you on the water when the whitecaps just won't come.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



“Good, light wind kite. With less than 10 knots in the lulls it had impressive in air performance and easy relaunch. On a 15m with giant wind holes the Turbine worked great.” // Cam Lewis



“Solid pull with lots of power, gets you on the water in any condition. Turning is not the Turbine's strength, but you won't need it with the solid pull and power.” // Marko Bartscherer



“Very stable, slower speed, good for beginner and intermediate. Stays where you place it. Heavier bar pressure, slower turning speed, good hangtime, good relaunch and decent upwind ability.” // Micha Dassler

SLINGSHOT BARS

COMPSTICK GUARDIAN

COMPSTICK SENTINEL



Our Slingshot kites come with both the Compstick Guardian and Compstick Sentinel control bars. Both of these bars are fixed length bars that come in three sizes: 17" width with 20m lines, a 20" width with 23m lines (3m ext), and a 23" width with 27m lines.

The Compstick Sentinel features above the bar power tuning with single center-line safety depower, spectra sheeting/throw line with sliding stopper, adjustable length throw, tuning cleat power system with a toggle that uses a magnet to control excess tuning slack and a low V. The inside lines end in knots and the outside lines end in loops. The Sentinel offers a sturdy quick release that integrates a below the bar hand swivel which also doubles as a quick release guard. The quick release handle locks in the open position and resetting is fairly straightforward—simply place the end of the loop back into position and then depress a stainless steel tab that frees the release handle and locks the quick release back together. Testers did note that when you release the gate, there is a sharp edge on the handle that tends to pinch the finger on the tab. This could be easily fixed by sanding off the pointy ends on the red and white handle. The Compstick is the only bar in our test that featured dual outside line OS handles with no adjustment for outside line length. OS handles can be bulky and a point of tangle in spaghetti situations, but they can also save you in a dicey situation. The bar ends offer bungees for keeping the lines clean and the floats are separate from the bar ends. While testers liked the smaller diameter grip and raised volcano next to the insert which helps avoid pinched fingers, testers found the grip to be fairly dense with thin rubber ridges along the handle that make for a very aggressive yet solid grip. This year the bar got a color upgrade with the left side of the bar and the floats sporting a solid

red color for very clear and obvious color coding that is unmistakable. The Compstick features bomber construction and tons of features which makes this one of the heavier bars in our test and comes with bulkier foam floats as a result.

The Compstick Guardian features a single center-line safety depower, spectra sheeting/throw line, a low V, a sliding stopper and below the bar cleat tuning integrated into the push away quick release. There's no travel guard or below the bar hand swivel but the quick release is compact and keeps a large amount of throw travel within reach of the rider. This bar uses Slingshot's existing Guardian quick release system which puts the kite's tuning below the bar, which allows surfers to increase the amount of throw/sheeting while still being able to reach the tuning of the kite. Testers who are not used to below the bar sheeting often find it's difficult to get the leverage to operate the cleat, but with the proper technique (place the cleat on the side of your favored arm and sheet out while adjusting) this is a fairly easy and functional design for performance kites. The bar design and other rigging is the same as the Compstick Sentinel (see above). If the advantages of below the bar tuning systems is lost on you, then check out the Compstick Sentinel above.

Visit for more info on the bars: <https://www.slingshotsports.com/slingshot-kite/slingshot-kite-bars>



"I HAVE WON TWO TITLES ON THE RPM, ITS THE GREATEST KITE EVER MADE. HOWEVER IN THE PAST YEAR I STARTED COMPETING ON ANOTHER WORLD TOUR. ONE THAT INCLUDED BIG AIR. I FOUND MYSELF RIDING THE RPM FOR MY FREESTYLE TRICKS AND THEN SWITCHING TO THE RALLY FOR BIG AIR. I WONDERED HOW NICE IT WOULD BE TO HAVE ALL THAT PERFORMANCE IN ONE KITE. I DON'T HAVE TO WONDER ANYMORE."

- CARLOS "BEBE" MARIO



NEW MODIFIED OPEN C

WE DECREASED THE OPEN C ARC OF THE RPM IN FAVOR OF A FULLER AND DEEPER C. THIS IS A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TO THE KITE. ON THE BEACH, IT WILL LOOK ABOUT THE SAME, BUT IN THE AIR, ANYONE WHO KNOWS THE RPM WILL SEE AND FEEL THE DIFFERENCE RIGHT AWAY. THIS DIFFERENCE IN SHAPE HAS A BIG IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE- MOST NOTABLY IN OVERALL POWER, STRUCTURAL STABILITY, HANGTIME AND CONTROL IN THE AIR.

NOT THE RPM, THE NEW RPM.



NEW FLYLINE BRIDLE

THE 2019 BRIDLE (FLYLINE BRIDLE) IS A COMBINATION OF THE PULLEVED BRIDLE FEATURED ON PREVIOUS RPM MODELS AND THE BUNGEE IRS BRIDLE WE ENGINEERED A FEW YEARS AGO. WE INTRODUCED PULLEYS ON THE RPM TO GIVE THE KITE MORE STRUCTURAL STABILITY AND DYNAMIC STEERING, THEN WE REPLACED THE PULLEYS WITH OUR IRS BUNGEE SYSTEM TO ACHIEVE A MORE DIRECT FEEL AND SMOOTHER POWER DELIVERY AS THE KITE FLIES THROUGH THE WINDOW. THE FLYLINE BRIDLE COMBINES BOTH PULLEY AND BUNGEE, IN A NEW CONFIGURATION, THAT RESULTS IN A FASTER, HIGHER-FLYING, MORE POWERFUL RPM THAN EVER BEFORE.

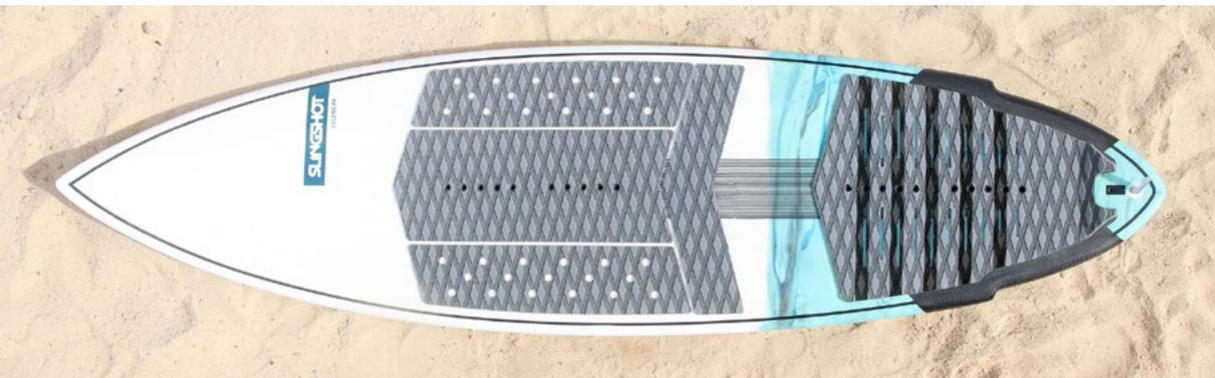


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SLINGSHOT CELERO FR

Sizes Available: 5'6" x 18 1/2" x 2 1/4" 23.75L, , 5'8" x 18 1/2" x 2 1/4" 26L, 5'11" x 20 1/4" x 2 3/8" 32.4L

Sizes Tested: 5'8" x 18 1/2" x 2 1/4" 26L



SLINGSHOT SAYS:

The Celero FR is like your favorite pair of jeans — comfortable, reliable and versatile. They never go out of style, never let you down and you trust their performance no matter what conditions you encounter during the day. The Celero FR is the most popular board in our lineup, and for good reason. Its classic shortboard shape has a familiar feel for any surfer and provides a perfect blend of performance and versatility for riders of all shapes, sizes and skill level.

The Slingshot Celero FR features a stout body, curved outline and mild rocker that blends from the center to the tail. It's a stable ride that planes easily and has good upwind and light wind performance. A modified winged thumb tail frees it up for a snappier feel during turns. Large carbon stringer patches on the top and bottom give the board strength where it's needed while keeping overall weight down. Additional carbon on the tail prevents breakage from heel impact.

Visit for more info: www.slingshotsports.com/2019-Celero

TKB SAYS:

The Celero FR is Slingshot's long heralded all around surfboard shape that testers found to be super stable and easy to ride. With a straighter rocker and a single concave bottom though the entire board, this board defiantly blazes upwind and tracks really well. Testers commented on the Celero's stability — it seems really comfortable locked into a straight line, and seems to have a rail that lends to bigger drawn out carving lines. The winged thumb tail makes the board much more responsive when you stomp on the pin tail, making the Celero very responsive to inputs. Testers noticed how the tail pad extends all the way back, with the raised kick located in the narrow part of the pin tail. This narrower kick stop didn't have as much grip for our foot, so we paid a bit more attention to foot placement in strapless freestyle. The Celero's thruster fin setup has a bit more of a locked in feel rather than loose and skatey; the Celero's grip during turns is solid and confidence inspiring, but hard to break loose. The Celero would seem to shine during heavy bottom turns where you would need full control and confidence in the rail and fins through the entire line. As testers noted, the Celero is really friendly pounding through chop making it a great freeride board for those looking for comfort and stability. The tail is narrow enough that when you stomp on it the Celero turns really well, making it a fun performer in windswell to medium-sized surf. Construction feels pretty tough and durable with the weight coming in a little bit heavier. That weight may make strapless freestyle require a bit more technique, but you know you can throw hard landings on this board and it will take it. Weight is often a plus in the waves — think tow-boards where the extra inertia smooths out the chop and gives you a bit more control over the board. Overall, testers gave the Celero FR props for its user-friendly chop handling and stability, with solid marks as a performer in small to large size waves.

The Celero FR came with a two-piece deck pad that covers $\frac{3}{4}$ of the board. There are five insert positions to dial in the perfect forward and aft position, all mounted down the center with no duck options. The deckpad's diamond pattern got solid reviews for its extra grippy texture and solid balance between comfort and density for input into the board. We noted the kick stop is a bit narrow and located all the way in the tail, but with a bit of adjustment it did the trick.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



“Relatively wide outline, steps into the pin tail for good turning. Put your weight back for increased edge to edge turning and place your weight forward for stability and upwind ease. Overall construction is heavy, stiff and strong.” // Dray Murray



“Stable, easy to ride, nice profile in chop. Deck pad was really grippy. The Celero felt very stable in choppy conditions and has a striking design that makes it stand out from the crowd.” // Joe Chehock

SLINGSHOT CRISIS

Sizes Available: 134 x 40.5cm, 137 x 41.2cm, 141 x 41.5cm, 146 x 43.2cm

Sizes Tested: 142 x 42cm



SLINGSHOT SAYS:

A dependable, user-friendly board designed for casual cruising, easy progression and a friendly feel in all conditions. It features a mild rocker that is great for progression and staying upwind. It features a lighter layup, that has a soft flex which gives it a fun and friendly feel. A great shape and build for entry-level or mellow riders with a lively wood core that has plenty of pop. A great all-around shape and rocker for a variety of wind and water conditions.

Visit for more info: www.slingshotsports.com/2019-Crisis

TKB SAYS:

The reviews for the Crisis ring true to its marketing blurb as your standard all around freeride twin tip that is both comfortable and forgiving with just a dash of freestyle built into it. The Crisis features a fairly simple bottom shape, really subtle single concave and some bigger sized fins. Compared to the Misfit, which has a little bit more of a stiff flex pattern, the Crisis has a nice friendly template that goes through the chop really well, with a fairly locked in feel that is not quite as grippy as the Misfit in terms of upwind tracking. The template and flex make this a great freeride board for fun carving, with some tracking grip that isn't super loose but great for reliable for rail to rail carving and jazzy bump and jump in the chop. The Crisis is an easy all-rounder with forgiving and easy to control tracking that doesn't require pro-caliber edging skills to keep it going in the right direction and the flex is great for casual yet fun load and pop.

The Crisis comes with three insert options for adjusting stance width and quite a number of options for adjusting duck built into the strap. The 2019 Dually pad and strap system features a rubbery feel with a subtle contour around the heel and two toe bumps but little in the way of a raised arch under foot. The pad has a diamond pattern with a density that falls on the firmer side, with a grippy rubbery texture. The strap features Velcro quad adjustments. All you have to do is peel up the top layer of the Velcro flap and then you can adjust the quad adjustment straps underneath. You can also change the location of each quad adjuster where it connects to the footbed so you can really dial in these straps to your liking. The straps have a neoprene style covering underneath that drapes over your foot and testers seemed to like this comfy feel. Overall the Dually is a slick design with a lower profile pad that sticks to the board really well with an excellent combo of adjustment and comfort for those that like a medium/firm connection to the board.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Beauty of a board with comfy pads. Bigger outline that planes up early. Great board for lighter wind, comfortable to ride." // Marko Bartscherer



"Surprisingly good feel. Comfortable pads and goes good upwind, smooth through chop, feels nice under foot with nice pop. Carving easily while slicing through the chop." // Kiter Mike



"Good upwind, great edge control with good pads. This would be good for light wind; a bit heavier in the larger size, but smooth through the chop." // Giuseppe Molinaro

SLINGSHOT MISFIT

Sizes Available: 136 x 40.5cm, 142 x 42cm, 146 x 43.5cm

Sizes Tested: 142 x 42cm



SLINGSHOT SAYS:

The Misfit is a board for riders who don't fit into any particular category of the sport and want one board that adapts and performs well in all conditions. Named after the determination we've always had to stand out, find our own way and refuse to conform to those around us. Easy upwind. Smooth transitions. Predictable pop. The Misfit features a shape, flex and rocker profile designed for a versatility in all conditions rather than specialized performance. Suited for all riding levels to get the best possible session, no matter what the conditions.

The Misfit features mild rocker, a relatively stiff flex and a bottom profile that favor upwind drive, plow-through-chop performance and all-around freeride handling. Laser-cut NACA channels give the Misfit contour in the tip and tail that help channel water to generate speed and grip. Although a competent freestyle crossover, the Misfit's mild rocker means it's better for all-around cruising and slashing than it is for sticking hard landings. Korroyd inlaid in the core, tips and tail of the board give it added strength while reducing weight.

Visit for more info: www.slingshotsports.com/2019-Misfit

TKB SAYS:

This year the Misfit got the nifty translucent tips, but mark our words, it continues to be the fast freeride slash and dash machine that fits the riding style of more aggressive all around freeriders.

The Misfit has the standard Slingshot tech: fusion sidewalls, carbon bedrock inserts and the featherweight Koroyd tips that let the light shine on through. We've been reviewing this board for quite a while and with its standout narrower width in the template, slightly straighter rail and not a ton of rocker, this board locks in on course and rockets upwind. Working the best for aggressive riders that are looking for a board that can take as much input and power that you throw at it, the Misfit seemed a bit more forgiving through the chop during this year's test and is ideally suited for the rider that wants massive edge control that can take a ton of load and be released for some massive big sent airs.

The Misfit comes with three insert options for adjusting stance width and quite a number of options for adjusting duck built into the strap. The 2019 Dually pad and strap system features a rubbery feel with a subtle contour around the heel and two toe bumps but little in the way of a raised arch under foot. The pad has a diamond pattern with a density that falls on the firmer side, with a grippy rubbery texture. The strap features Velcro quad adjustments. All you have to do is peel up the top layer of the Velcro flap and then you can adjust the quad adjustment straps underneath. You can also change the location of each quad adjuster where it connects to the footbed so you can really dial in these straps to your liking. The straps have a neoprene style covering underneath that drapes over your foot and testers seemed to like this comfy feel. Overall the Dually is a slick design with a lower profile pad that sticks to the board really well with an excellent combo of adjustment and comfort for those that like a medium/firm connection to the board.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"The Misfit ate up chop well, with good shock absorption for bumps and landings." // Jeff Waldberg



"Heavier construction, great to edge upwind, great load and pop, with good edge control." // Chris Myles

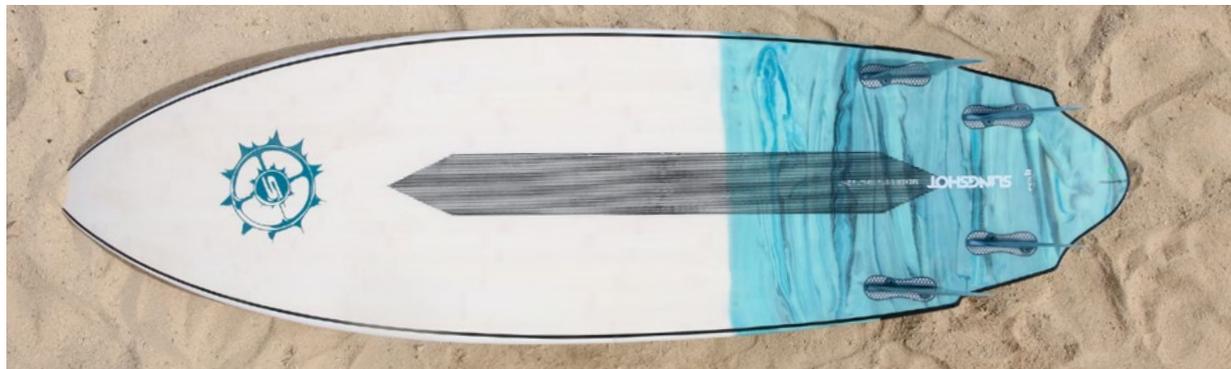
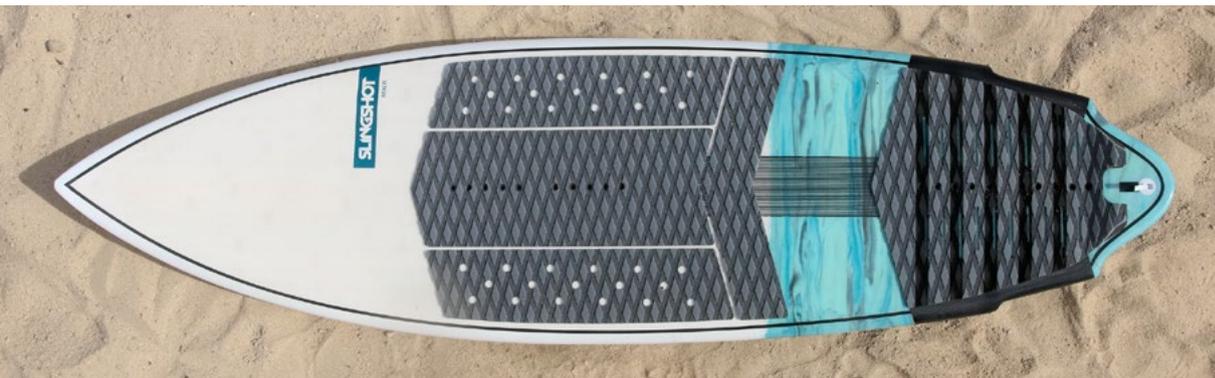


"Easy to ride, flexy and sexy in the chop with locked in edge control, flies upwind and pads worked great with booties." // Cam Lewis

SLINGSHOT MIXER

Sizes Available: 5'6" x 19" x 2 2/5" 23.75L, 5'8" x 19" x 2 1/3" 26L, 5'10" x 19.5" x 2 1/2" 32.4L

Sizes Tested: 5'8" x 19" x 2 1/3" 26L



SLINGSHOT SAYS:

Your choice for blending groveler and down the line conditions into a super fun day. It's like a mix of your two favorite cocktails. The best parts and pieces from all the Slingshot boards, shaken together with resin. The Mixer can be used in small mushy waves, riding down the line and larger ocean swells. High performance, quad-fin carver features a double-wing rounded pin tail and quad-concave bottom. Designed to bridge the gap between the classic shortboard feel and versatility of the Celero and the high-speed, down-the-line performance of the Tyrant.

Slash to your heart's content with the Mixer's quad-fin configuration and tail profile, which favors a more slushy back foot feel than a locked-in carve. The aggressive quad concave bottom profile helps channel water for speed and an early plane and provides grip and a locked-in feeling when laying into turns at speed. Large carbon stringer patches on the top and bottom give the board strength where it's needed while keeping overall weight down. Additional carbon on the tail prevents edge cracking from heel impact.

Visit for more info: www.slingshotsports.com/2019-Mixer

TKB SAYS:

The Mixer is the more playful all-rounder of the Slingshot lineup with its flatter rocker, quad concave bottom and double-winged rounded pin tail that make this board quick turning and better suited for small to medium waves and general freeriding. The first thing testers noticed was that the Mixer goes upwind really well; the extra width of the template under your front foot makes for a stable ride that feels incredibly efficient going upwind. Compared to the Celero we tested, the Mixer is a little bit more playful. It initiates turns a little easier and with its double-winged pin tail, you feel the Mixer wants to turn tighter slashy turns — just a little bit of back foot toe or heel pressure and this board goes rail to rail, making it quick and lively for smaller surf or carving it up in wind chop. In terms of the quad fin grip during turns, the Mixer still felt pretty locked in and grippy through the turns, perhaps a little looser than the Celero, yet very controlled and confidence inspiring, and not skatey at all. The flatter rocker and width makes this board feel efficient through the water, perhaps a good option for light wind sessions, or bigger riders looking for something that will give them some glide. The construction is extremely durable with some extra weight that makes pulling off strapless airs a bit more technical, but could be ideal for bigger riders looking for a board that can laugh off a good beating. Overall, the Mixer is a great freeride and casual surf weapon that is fun and playful yet controlled and predictable in a variety of conditions. The Mixer comes with five holes for selecting forward/aft strap placement, all mounted in the center with no duck options. The deckpad's diamond pattern got solid reviews for its extra grippy texture and solid balance between comfort and density for input into the board. Compared to the Celero FR, the kick stop is a bit wider on this board and substantial for keeping your foot on the board at all times.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



“Bigger board that rides like a smaller board. Surprisingly easy to ride, control and steer. Floaty, great for a bigger rider, with really good edge control.” // Kristin Vincenzo



“Good for light wind sessions, heavy solid board excellent upwind ability, locked in feel and good chop handling.” // Giuseppe Molinaro



“Wide and stable, great in medium to light wind, nice wide carving and forgiving with excellent stability. Would be a great first wave board.” // Dylan Dobbyn

SLINGSHOT DWARF CRAFT

Sizes Available: 3'6" x 18" x 2 3/16" 19.3L, 4'6" x 18" x 2 1/4" 25.2L

Sizes Tested: 4'6" x 18" x 2 1/4" 25.2L



SLINGSHOT SAYS:

If you've ever wondered what it feels like to float over the water on a magic carpet, the Dwarf Craft is as close as you can come without psychedelics. The Dwarf Craft is our solution for all the foilers in the world who learned on a boring, cookie-cutter board and are ready for something with a lot more flavor. The shorter of the two sizes (3'6") ends just past your front foot, which means all you see when you look up is water rushing by. It's an agile setup, great for pumping, trick progression and playful freeride foiling. The longer version (4'6") is a bit more stable, which gives less agile or bigger, taller riders the same minimalist sensation without feeling like a horse on a balance beam. Light, agile and user-friendly, the Dwarf Craft is one-board quiver. A concave deck provides responsive handling with subtle movement and moderately beveled edges aid in more aggressive leaning and edging than a flat-bottom board. The deck is covered tip to tail in a grippy EVA pad for comfortable strapless riding and transitions where you're dancing toward the nose of the board. Slingshot's signature sliding track system lets you adjust the position of the foil to fine-tune performance depending on rider ability and preference and the conditions.

Visit for more info: www.slingshotsports.com/2019-Dwarfcraft

TKB SAYS:

The Dwarf Craft is one of those iconic shapes that is fine-tuned to offer foilboarders everything they need in a small minimalist package. The Dwarf Craft features a nice reverse concave deck with substantial chine rails. Getting up and going is easy with this board. Even in underpowered conditions this board still has enough volume to waterstart, build speed and help you reach lift off. The Dwarf Craft has a fairly flat bottom which is good for getting going and feels efficient while having just enough scoop in the nose which makes touchdowns forgiving and can save you from the accidental porpoise dive. The chine rails work to keep the board's edge from grabbing on accidental touchdowns. We have a little test we like to do. We basically ride the board upwind purposefully stabbing the rail into every incoming chop at a low elevation. Unlike some other more conventional foilboards the Dwarf Craft handles the disturbance without getting thrown off axis and keeps heading in the right direction. As one of the testers pointed out, they liked how the short length and stub nose puts the water zooming by right under your feet. The Dwarf Craft's outline is great for aggressive carving and feels very reactive. For those that use straps, the Dwarf Craft comes with inserts for both a centerline and duck stance, so there's a ton of options to fit your style of riding. Overall, the Dwarf Craft is an excellent board. It's a little bit heavier than we anticipated, yet it's a very sturdy board and it also has a nice sliding track system so you can dial in the foil location to suit your strapped position. The pad is a full deck pad with some nice diamond grip and a kick in the back to keep your back foot on the board. The Dwarf Craft is fun and functional for upper-level foilboarders as well as a progression board for those with quicker learning curves. Whether you are hitting mach-5 and covering serious distances or freeride carving in the waves, the Dwarf Craft is a board that will do it all. We did test the Dwarf Craft with Slingshot's Half Straps. This being our first time trying these innovative training wheels, we were surprised by how stiff these hooks were – which gave us much more confidence in the support and connection to the board than we were expecting. For strapless testers, half straps still demand a level of constraint with regard to foot positioning just with the massive benefit of quick egress. The padding on the straps felt good, with a really comfortable and secure fit. The one aspect of half straps that we noticed most is the potential for hooking your lines or bar in the back strap. That's a personal decision, but the forward facing back strap could be a point of an unwanted tangle.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



*"Smooth, lightweight, comes right out of the water, planes easily, getting the foil up in nano seconds."
// Kiter Mike*



"Race style deck, but wider for freeride. Lots of float, easy to ride on water, chop touches are no problem. You can start on this board and keep it through advanced riding." // Dylan Dobbryn



"This is one of my favorite boards. Super forgiving to learn on and doesn't stick the nose. Volume to practice and balance on surface before lifting up with foil. Good chined rails for smooth upwind runs. Get it!" // Davey Beard

SLINGSHOT HGLIDE FKITE

Sizes Available: Front Wing 65cm , Mast 71cm

Sizes Tested: Front Wing 65cm , Mast 71cm



SLINGSHOT SAYS:

We have taken all the input we have gotten from our foil academy (thousands of users) to build the most dynamic and playful all-around kite foil package on the market, period. This is Slingshot innovation at its finest, and it's years ahead of the competition. Do your research ... you'll see what we mean. The 2019 Hover Glide FKite package is equipped with the Space Skate 65 (H4) front wing and the Space Skate is the obvious evolution for the FKite package. This is one of the most versatile foils in our line. Its size and surface area provide the lift and stability needed for learning, progression, tricks and transitions. Its unique dihedral shape provides a crazy level of dynamic carving control and self-centering flight that you have to feel to believe. All Hover Glide wings have been reengineered for 2019 with a new carbon composite material. The magic feel of the Space Skate (H4) wing comes from its arched 'batwing' shape that acts as a self-centering device as you ride. When you lean into a turn and let off, it wants to find level flight rather than continuing at the same angle and requiring rider input to correct. The result is a super playful and forgiving feel that lets you bounce from turn to turn like you're carving down a fresh patch of pavement on a longboard - hence its name, the Space Skate.

Visit for more info: www.slingshotsports.com/2019-Hover-Glide-FKite-Foil

TKB SAYS:

The Slingshot Hover Glide FKite foil is the zero to hero foil in this year's freeride test that covers the full range from the beginner foilboarder to fun/advanced carving for the experienced freerider. We were given the massive front wing, AKA the Spaceskate 65cm wing with the 42cm rear wing and a 71cm high mast which makes this is a really fun and playful carving foil. The SpaceSkate assembles with two sizes of allen wrenches with multiple mounting on the base plate and two settings on the fuselage. The most apparent feature we first noticed is that the Hover Glide FKite foil has a really nice and slow foil up speed, which is ideal for those just getting started with foiling, yet the slow threshold allows you to match the speed of wave energy for easy-to-use and extremely fun carving performance which will keep the attention of intermediate and advanced riders. This wing tends to be fairly reactive and playful on the yaw/side to side axis as well as the roll axis, with a little bit more stability on the pitch/up and down axis. This balance of inputs makes it really easy to avoid the porpoise effect while still being able to carve the foil as aggressively as you like. When it comes to turning, the wing feels like it has a really tight pivoting turn that yields snappy tight turns which works really well in smaller waves and choppy conditions, this being ideal for locking in extended downwind gliding in the short interval swell of La Ventana. The construction on the Hover Glide is very durable with an aluminum mast, aluminum fuselage and metal wings which gives you the confidence to take the foil into any situation; crash it into some reefs, drop it on some rocks and the wing is still 100% there. The weight of the full metal construction is noticeable, particularly when you are carrying this setup on the beach but once you get it on the water the weight really is a non-issue. When you go to foil up the wing has a little bit of buoyancy so it's easy to set the board on edge and get your feet in the straps or if you're riding strapless, apply some heel edge pressure to hold the foil in the starting position long enough to stroke your kite. While the slow foil up speed is one of the dominant feature of the Hover Glide, it's no slouch in the top-speed department. If you're trying to set some course records, best to look elsewhere, but for the freeride foilboarder the Spaceskate's top speed is more than enough to cover some distance to that distant reef break. We really enjoyed pumping the Spaceskate, it's drive is incredible and you can feel the foil accelerate with each stab. Overall, we think the Spaceskate is an excellent learning option, while other foils cater to the beginner by stabilizing all the axis', yet they often require a faster foil up speed. We believe the slower foil up speed of the Spaceskate is an equally compelling learning tool as well as the performance that surf-minded intermediate and advanced surf-minded foilboarders will enjoy. Bottom line, the Slingshot Hover Glide FKite foil with the Spaceskate wing is a really good beginner to advanced foil set up geared for endless carving fun that you just won't get tired of.

OUR TESTERS SAY:



"Foil engages at slow speed, has a playful surfy feel and is well-balanced on all axes. Fun for carving, pumping and practicing transitions." // Dray Murray



"Nice smooth ride, gets up easily, planes through the lulls, could be lighter, but smooth and easy turns." // Micha Dassler



"A well-balanced, predictable foil which is suited for both learning as well as progressing to wave riding and freestyle foiling." // Tib Anghel





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*PRIME SHELL
"PACIFIC MIST"*



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