

**IKSURF!**ISSUE **106**

AUG/SEPT 24

**WELCOME TO IKSURFMAG**

For issue #106, Rou Chater reflects on Ellie Aldridge's gold medal win at the Paris 2024 Olympics and questions whether kitesurfing's Olympic debut was a triumph or a missed opportunity. We feature a travel guide to Qatar's Fuwairit Kite Beach, tell you all about Oman's Downwinder, a behind-the-scenes look at the FLYSURFER INDIE kite,

head to Mykonos with the Cabrinha crew, and interviews with industry leaders like WOO's Leo Koenig and Jim Gaunt. We explore the rise of Zara as the Big Air World Champion, tech reviews of the Eleveight XS-Pro and Naish 2025 Pivot, and insight into Rita Arnaus's recovery journey. Don't miss our techniques, stories, and more!

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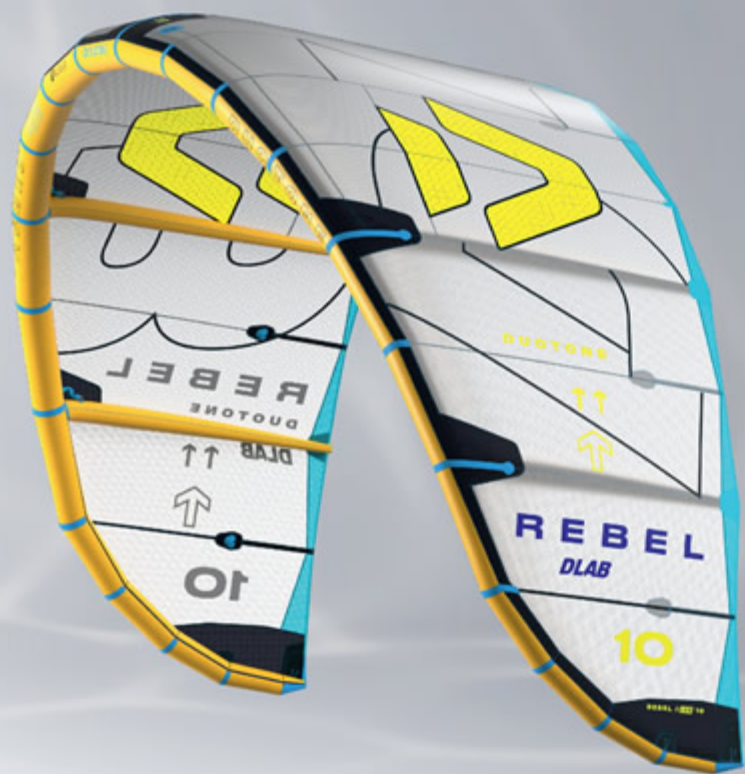
INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

**IKSURF!****106**  
AUG/SEP 24**-PARIS 2024 SUCCESS OR FAILURE?-**

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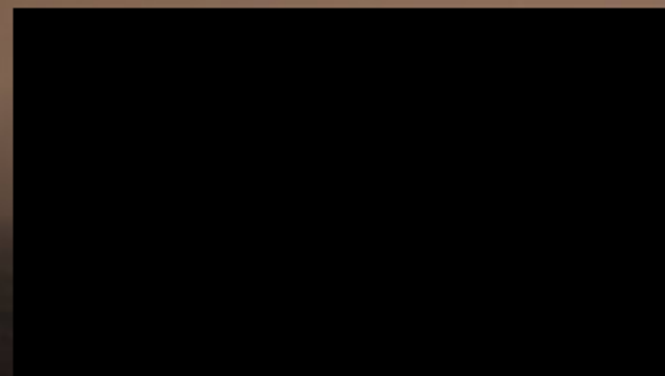


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EDITORIAL



WAS KITESURFING IN THE OLYMPICS A HUGE SUCCESS OR A LOAD OF S\*\*T?



KITESURFING DISNEYLAND - FUWAIRIT KITE BEACH



GETTING THE SHOT: CABRINHA MOTOX



WOO TECH ARTICLE



THE INTERVIEW - JIM GAUNT



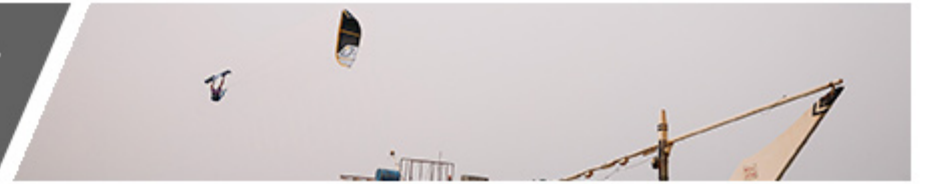
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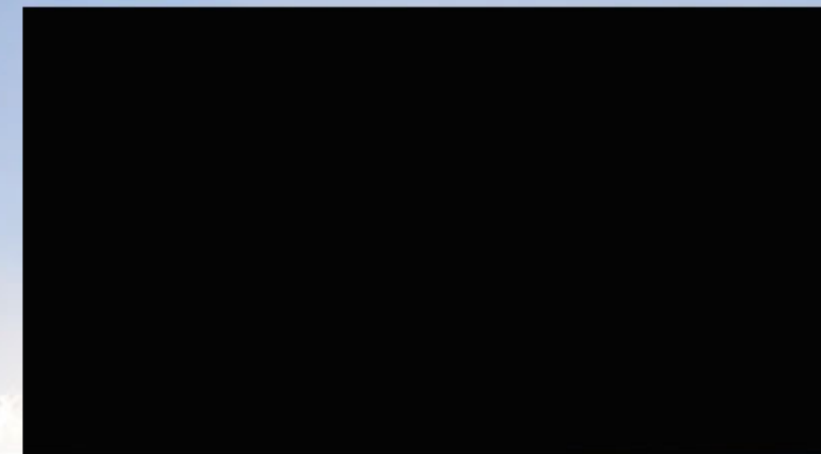
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I'm going to allow myself to be a little patriotic in this issue. We're a global magazine with more US than UK readers, so apologies if this washes over you. As a born-and-bred British citizen, I can't help but turn this editorial over to the joy I felt at watching Ellie Aldridge win her gold medal at the Paris 2024 Olympics.

Ellie was a lifelong dinghy sailor who switched from dinghy racing to kiting full-time when the announcement was made in 2018 that kite racing

would feature in the 2024 Games. She joined the Royal Yachting Association's Kite4Gold program which took a small group of young ladies and fast-tracked them into seasons kite racers. No one can question the dedication, passion, and hard work that she has put into the sport. In an incredibly short space of time, she has mastered the art of foiling with a kite, something I've still not mastered over a far longer time scale.

Ellie's tactical knowledge of the race course, honed over years of racing dinghies, sets her apart. This gives her a big advantage; she's been a regular on the podium at many of the events in the lead-up to the Games. I knew she had a good chance of a medal, but gold is always such a big ask for any athlete. With the disappointment of not being able to see many of the races televised, Ellie transformed the finals day medal racing into a moment I will never forget. Thanks to the BBC covering all the medal winners, she put kitesurfing firmly on the map in the UK, too.

I took great pleasure in asking anyone I came across if they had heard of Ellie Aldridge after her win, and sure enough, everyone I spoke to had heard the name. Some people even knew about foiling and had seen small snippets on TV. It's the kind of penetration into the minds of the masses that doesn't happen often. Her domination in the medal races made them incredibly captivating to watch, and I must have repeated them a few times with family and friends over the weeks after the Games.

Her laid-back, humble demeanour just adds to the appeal, and I am sure Ellie will become a fantastic ambassador for our sport not just here in the UK but globally as well. More than that, I hope she continues to race and win all over the world in the run-up to the 2028 Games in Los Angeles.

Well done, Ellie. You made us proud!

*Rou Chater*  
Publishing Editor



# WAS KITESURFING IN THE OLYMPICS A HUGE SUCCESS OR A LOAD OF SHIT?



Kitesurfing's Olympic debut was supposed to be a groundbreaking moment for the sport - But did it live up to the hype or was it lost in the winds of poor coverage and missed opportunities? As the excitement of the Games fades, Rou Chater takes a hard look at what happened in Paris 2024.





**“ KITESURFING HAS A LONG HISTORY WITH THE OLYMPICS, WHICH SPANS ALMOST HALF OF ITS EXISTENCE AS A SPORT. ”**

Paris 2024: The debut of kitesurfing in the Olympics arrived on July 26th with the kind of fanfare only the French could produce. For the next three weeks, the Games enthralled the planet globally. Did kitesurfing get a fair representation, though?

For us kiteboarders, it marked the first time the sport had been involved as one of the

sailing classes in the Olympics. Needless to say, there was a lot of excitement, not just for the athletes but for kiteboarders worldwide, to see our beloved sport being beamed around the globe to the masses.

Personally, I've never been a massive fan of the Olympics. I'm not one for watching sports, and I have little interest in athletics or swimming, which seem to make up most events in the Games. The event has also been mired in corruption scandals and seems to be a very well-oiled money-making machine for a select few, which also doesn't sit terribly well with me.

However, I do recognise the challenge it presents for competitors and the glory bestowed upon an Olympic medalist. I can also appreciate how inspiring it is for youngsters and adults alike to become more involved in sports, which is so important in this era of lethargy.

It's a bit of yin and yang if you will; there are positives and negatives, as with all things. Kitesurfing has a long history with the Olympics, which spans almost half of its existence as a sport. Did you know it was officially voted in as an Olympic class by the International Sailing Federation in 2012 for the Rio 2016 games? For this article, it is worth noting that ISAF became World Sailing in 2015.





**“ KITE RACING IS A UNIQUE DISCIPLINE OF KITESURFING, AND THAT'S THE BEAUTY OF OUR SPORT. WE CAN DO SO MUCH WITH SO MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF CRAFT UNDER OUR FEET.”**

At the time, kite racing was a huge discipline within the spot, with big fleets in the US, Europe, and worldwide. There were large tours and race regattas happening all the time. I was a keen racer back then, competing in the UK and racing against the force of Olly and Steph Bridge from Exmouth, who regularly won world championships.

The sport was well poised to be in the Games in 2016, and kite racing was at a pinnacle of participation. The backdrop to its inclusion was the hard work and lobbying done by a handful of riders and the International Kiteboarding Association under the stewardship of Marcus Schwendtner. They believed the fastest route to getting the sport into the Games was by getting kite racing classified as a sailing class.

Back then, kite racing was very much sailing with kites, and it still is to this day. The way the regattas run, the starts, the courses, and everything else are transferable to a different sailing class. As kilters, we inherently didn't want to be sailors, but it is what it is. Kite racing is a unique discipline of kitesurfing, and that's the beauty of our sport. We can do so much with so many different types of craft under our feet.

ISAF was limited to eight sailing classes in the Olympics, so simply adding kitesurfing wasn't possible. The IKA lobbied to include kitesurfing, but this would have to come at the cost of another class, which was windsurfing at the time. In the end, kitesurfing was in, and windsurfing was out for Rio 2016.



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**“ THE ROYAL YACHTING ASSOCIATION IN THE UK HAS A STORIED HISTORY OF WINNING MEDALS IN THE OLYMPICS WITH A TRAINING PROGRAM THAT IS SECOND TO NONE. ”**

At this time, it felt very much like kitesurfing was the young upstart going up against a sailing federation that had been around for over a century. It was also interesting to see what happened in the various countries where the sailing governing body, not the kitesurfing one, trained Olympic hopefuls.

This made total sense. The Royal Yachting Association in the UK has a storied history of winning medals in the Olympics with a training program that is second to none. This was born out around the world, and rightly so. Even though it hurt personally as a keen kite racer, it was easy to see why the RYA would take existing trained racing athletes and transition them into the new class.

Then, six months later, at another ISAF conference, there was a reversal of the decision; windsurfing was voted back in, and kitesurfing was out! I wrote an article about it here:

<https://www.iksurfmag.com/kitesurfing-news/2012/11/kite-racing-the-olympics-and-my-view/>

For the next eight years, kitesurfing was left out in the cold. Finally, in 2020, it was announced as a sailing class for the Paris 2024 Games. Why the history lesson? It gives you a bit of a backdrop of a small, young, cool sport going up against a huge sailing federation with over a century of history and a board of directors that doesn't look like your typical kiter.







**“ IT WAS VIEWED OVER 50,000 TIMES AND SHARED 12,500 TIMES IN THE SPACE OF A WEEK ”**

By 2020, the racing scene globally had diminished considerably. The sport had changed and became an expensive arms race where you needed the latest and greatest gear to win. This put a lot of people off. Big Air was the discipline of the day, and the Olympic dream had already been dashed a while back for many, and they'd lost interest.

Over the next four years, the hopefuls from around the globe jostled at the various events with the hope of being one of the 20 men and 20 women to qualify for the Games. During that time, the format bounced around a bit, with talk at one stage of a “team” male and female relay race, but in the end, enough medals were found to offer both the men and the women a trip around the race course in Marseille.

Like many of you, I was super excited about watching the racing on TV. We published an

article explaining the format and how to watch the spectacle, and it was viewed over 50,000 times and shared 12,500 times in the space of a week, which is pretty unprecedented for a web article on our site. Clearly, the excitement in the global kite community was palpable.

Unfortunately, that excitement was quickly met with disappointment...

Filming at the Olympics is done by the Olympic Broadcasting Service. They are tasked with filming every event live and putting them all out as streams.





**“ USUALLY, A MEDAL HUNT IS FOLLOWED BY THE SPORTS WITH THE MOST PARTICIPATION AND THE FLAGSHIP SWIMMING AND ATHLETIC EVENTS. ”**

Broadcasters then choose to purchase these streams to show to their audience and can choose to add their commentary or use the stock commentary provided by the OBS. There is no filming by anyone except the OBS within the Olympic venue; even the spectators are limited to the cameras they can use. Anything bigger than a phone and the security guards may ask you to leave the event.

As you can imagine, this is a money-making machine. The IOC vigorously protects its interests where filming is concerned, and the streams they sell don't come cheap. In addition to the available streams, they sell the rights to broadcast the games. In 2015, the European broadcast rights were sold to Warner Brothers Discovery for a reported 1.3 billion euros.

Similar deals exist worldwide, but broadcasters like the BBC, ABC, and NBC will purchase the rights from these holders. This year, the BBC paid WBD for broadcasting two streams at a time. They had one network channel dedicated to it and another second broadcast stream running throughout the games. Rather than bringing you all the action live, they could then pick and choose what to show and when.

The decision on what to show is based on what's in the national interest; usually, a medal hunt is followed by the sports with the most participation and the flagship swimming and athletic events. The BBC only paid for two full streams this year, so the coverage was minimal. The chances of seeing any kitesurfing on the national broadcaster's channel were pretty much zero unless your country won a medal...

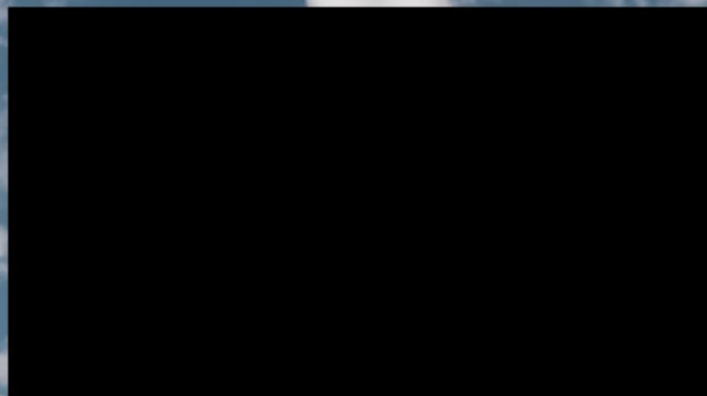


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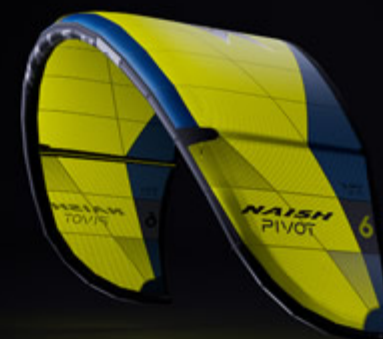


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**“ THE SHEER NUMBER OF SAILING EVENTS AND THE COSTS INVOLVED FOR THE BROADCASTERS TO STREAM THEM ALL, AND YOU CAN START TO SEE A STORM BREWING... ”**

For this reason, I opted to pay for a subscription service that promised to stream every Olympic event live like many of you. In the UK, that was Discovery Plus; Peacock was the choice in the US. The premise was simple: pay the monthly subscription fee, watch all the kite races live, and cancel the subscription after the Olympics. Easy.

Let's just say this isn't how it worked out for anyone...

The kite racing events didn't start until the second week of the games, kicking off on the 4th of August. The sailing featured six different classes, with Lasers, 470s, 49ers, Nacra 17s, IQ Foil (windsurfing), and Formula Kite all representing. With so many events, there is a lot to fit in, and the schedule looks packed. The sailing started on the 28th of July, with full days of racing planned until the finals of the kite event on the 8th.

This is where things started to unravel: factor in the weather, which never plays ball when you want it to, the sheer number of sailing events and the costs involved for the broadcasters to stream them all, and you can start to see a storm brewing...

Ultimately kitesurfing ended up on the wrong end of a shitty stick at Paris 2024. It wasn't broadcast at all in Europe until the final day of the event when all the other sailing classes had finished, and kitesurfing was the only sailing class out on the water in Marseille. In the US, there was a bit of coverage of the racing the day before finals day,







**“THE KITERS WERE FLYING AROUND THE COURSE LOOKING FANTASTIC, BUT IT WASN’T SHOWN.”**

but you had to wade through the replay of the day's racing to find it 27 minutes in on Peacock. Unlike other fleets shown in their entirety, kitesurfing got a bum deal.

This meant the supposed and oft-lauded global spotlight the Olympics was meant to deliver never happened. This was a massive disappointment for the competitors, the people who had campaigned to get it into

the Olympics, and us, the kites who were keen to watch it. The BBC in the UK had to give it a bit of coverage as Ellie Aldrige took home the gold in an incredible last day of racing for the women's fleet. Likewise, I am sure Austrian TV was giving Valentin Bontus a bit of love over there as he took home the gold for the men.

Despite five days of racing, albeit hampered by the wind, Discovery Plus only showed the last day's medal races, which meant the casual viewer was denied the spectacle of 20 kites hitting the start line at 25 knots.

Although the medal races only featured four riders on the course, they were still incredibly exhilarating to watch and about a thousand times better than the show any of the other sailing classes had put on.

Here lies the rub. We were shown holding screens of Marseille harbour for days as the dinghy classes and windsurf racing were postponed. At the same time, the kites were flying around the course looking fantastic, but it wasn't shown. I watched many of the sailing events, and seeing all the Lasers parked thirty yards from the start for three minutes before pootling across the line at barely six knots was a joke compared to what the kites were doing.



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## “ KITESURFING PROVED ITSELF TO BE FAR MORE DYNAMIC AND EXCITING THAN ANY OTHER CLASS AT THE GAMES ”

Despite asking lots of questions to the powers that be, I am still trying to find an answer to why a preference for coverage was given to a one-design dinghy class designed in 1970 with under 250,000 boats worldwide. There are way more kiteboarders globally than Laser sailors, and kitesurfing is more exciting and entertaining to watch. Yet WS, the IBS, and all the broadcasters somehow didn't get the memo.

Surely, the message should have been spread that kitesurfing would offer the best chance of seeing races complete and not postponed or delayed, as kitesurfing can hit speeds of 30knots plus in just 10knots of breeze. Surely, the message should have been spread that 20 kites hitting the line at 25 knots at the same time was better than a bunch of dinghies parked “hove to” (dinghy speak for stationary) for three minutes would be more entertaining for the casual viewer.

It felt like kitesurfing was treated as the annoying little upstart of a sport it was back in 2012. We had this incredible opportunity, and we were robbed of the limelight by some outdated boats that offered no entertainment in the conditions found in Marseille. Kitesurfing proved itself to be far more dynamic and exciting than any other class at the games, yet it received the smallest amount of coverage.

The Olympics were meant to be a spectacle like no other, and kitesurfing was meant to play a big part in it. Yet, sadly, for reasons I am yet to discover,







**“IT DEFINITELY REACHED PEOPLE WHO IT MIGHT NOT HAVE DONE BEFORE, BUT IT COULD HAVE BEEN SO MUCH BETTER.”**

our sport was overlooked, ignored, and consigned to the shadows of the event.

In my opinion, it's a travesty that cannot be repeated. I have absolute respect for the

racers who put in all the effort and showed how incredible our sport is when other classes just couldn't sail. I praise the athletes who made the finals and put on a show for the public. To those who took home the medals, I salute you.

Everyone involved in the decisions that sold kitesurfing down the river at the Olympics needs to take a long, hard look at themselves.

They should be ashamed that we watched postponement screens and no action for days when our fantastic sport provided plenty of action. WS and the IKA say it was never filmed, and it was out of their hands, but I have it on good authority that it was filmed, and the footage shown on Peacock backs this up. In the end, the decision lies with the broadcasters as to what they show the public, but surely there should have been guidance from WS in the lead-up to the event, and this is what I find so difficult to understand.

I have asked David Graham, the CEO of World Sailing, for comment, but I am still waiting to receive a response. I did speak to Markus Schwendtner from the IKA about it, and he's just as disappointed as we are. What is positive is how many people saw kitesurfing at the Olympics, albeit only a short highlight or snippet here and there. It definitely reached people who it might not have done before, but it could have been so much better.

Let's make sure that in 2028, kitesurfing is front and centre as the premier sailing class in the event and not a sideshow that gets overlooked despite its obvious appeal for creating incredible action for the viewers.

In my opinion, the athletes put on the most incredible show that sadly wasn't shown, and for me, this debacle highlights just what a load of sh!t the Olympics can be if you end up on the wrong side of it. The eight medal racers had their moment in the sun, but for everyone else to be overlooked by the broadcasters is a shameful situation that shouldn't be repeated.



Rou Chater travels to Fuwairit Kite Beach in Qatar and discovers a purpose-built shrine to kiteboarding that is truly unique. It's not just the incredible hotel; the wind blows every day, and the endless turquoise lagoons mean this place should be on your bucket list. It's truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience!

# KITEBOARDING DISNEYLAND





**“ IT'S A VAST GLASS ATRIUM FILLED WITH ONE OF THE MOST STYLISH KITE-INSPIRED INTERIORS YOU WILL EVER FIND. ”**

I first went to Qatar in June 2022. It was my first big trip after COVID-19, and the Global Kiteboarding Association signed an agreement with Qatar Airways to sponsor the world tour. They wanted some journalists and riders out there for a few days to see what they were building and what Qatar had to offer to the kiteboarding community.

Before that trip, Qatar had never really been on my radar as a destination to visit. I'd heard a lot about kiteboarding in the Middle East but never been able to sample it myself. Sadly, I didn't get to kite during that trip as I was in full photo mode for the short time we were there. I bagged a front cover for the magazine with Aaron Hadlow but not a session on the water.

With unfinished business, I was super keen to head back there, and last month, I finally got the chance to tick another kiteboarding destination off the list. When we were there in 2022, we were shown a model of what the hotel and kite school would look like. Nothing could have prepared me for what I discovered just two years later.

Walking into the lobby at the Fuwairit Kite Beach Hilton is an experience; it's a vast glass atrium filled with one of the most stylish kite-inspired interiors you will ever find. With VW campers, cool scooters everywhere, and art dedicated to our sport that's larger than anything I've ever seen,





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**“YOUR WILDEST KITEBOARDING DREAMS HAVE BEEN RECREATED AND PLACED FIRMLY ON THE MAP.”**

it feels like you have stepped into Willy Wonker's chocolate factory, except it's not chocolate; it's kites.

The whole resort is purpose-built from the ground up on a site popular with kiteboarders in Qatar for the last twenty

years. Sarah Lord is the pioneering force behind this incredible destination. With support from Qatar Airways and Discover Qatar, it's as if your wildest kiteboarding dreams have been recreated and placed firmly on the map.

While the hotel is purpose-built, the spot itself is entirely natural, and it's something of a phenomenon. Right out the front, a large lagoon stretches as far as the eye can see.

White sand adorns the beach, and the sky is an azure blue to match the turquoise water. The lagoon is littered with sandbars and small islands, creating incredible flat water spots. The warm wind blows steady, and surprisingly strong for the Middle East.

The season here runs from October until the end of July, with cooler temperatures to April; you'll need a shorty wetsuit if you visit. You'll experience warmer board-short conditions as summer starts to get going from May to July. August and September are hotter,





and the wind is less predictable. If you love the heat, come later in the season; if you want to stay cool, head here earlier. It's as simple as that. The wind blows most days from 8 am until 6 pm, and we were blessed with over 25 knots for the entire duration of our stay.

It's a perfect spot for all skill levels. Beginners will enjoy the flat water, consistent winds and plenty of space, and everyone else will love it for those exact reasons, too.

**"EVERYONE ELSE  
WILL LOVE IT FOR  
THOSE EXACT  
REASONS."**



## ELITE SURF/KITE BOARD BAG WITH SLIDER WHEELS

The Prolimit directional surfboard boardbag for traveling and daily use, featuring patented and newly developed Prolimit slider wheels.

The slider wheels are a new and patented innovation by Prolimit. Uniquely constructed wheels, which can be mounted UNDER the bag, lift the bag to a comfortable height, roll better, and with the Slider base, the wheels can be mounted quick and easy and stowed away when you travel by air in the separate Slider wheel bag.

**WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED.**



**PROLIMIT**





**“THEY HAVE EFOILS, ELECTRIC JET BOARDS TO KEEP YOU ENTERTAINED, AND PADDLE BOARDS FOR EXPLORING.”**

It's perfect for flat water and freestyle, and you can even find some small waves on the ocean side of the lagoon on really windy days. We had 25 knots plus daily, which was great for sending some jumps and loops and doing some unhooked tricks. At high tide, there is enough water in the lagoon to foil, and at low tide, there are some incredible spots on the ocean side that you can play on. You can foil in the ocean at all states of tide, too; you'll just need to walk across the lagoon at low tide to get there.

The hotel is part of the Hilton Tapestry Collection and is second to none. It has incredible rooms, a fantastic restaurant and pool area, and a well-stocked bar with beers priced at £10 per pint, which is very reasonable for Qatar prices. If you come during happy hour, most drinks are half-price, so that's cheaper than most pints in the UK.

The real jewel in the crown, though, is the incredible kite centre; it's unlike any other I have seen before, not just in size but also in the amount of gear and the incredible staff working there. You don't need to bring anything but your harness when you visit; they have all the latest kites, boards and wing gear from Duotone. If there isn't any wind, they have efoils and electric jet boards to keep you entertained, as well as paddle boards for exploring.



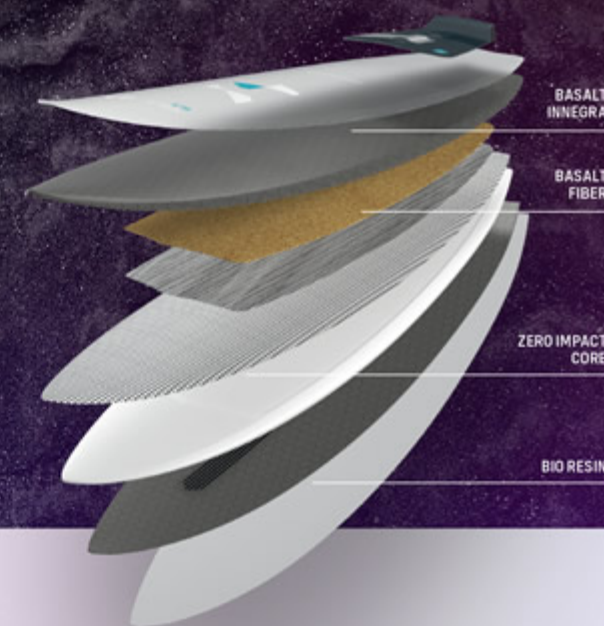


The staff are all fantastic and accommodating; just rock up, ready to roll, and they will set your kite up and have you on the water in no time. They all kitesurf, even the beach staff, so they are knowledgeable about the conditions and what you need. The instructors are all IKO qualified, super patient with the students, and equipped with Bluetooth headsets. It would be a great place to come and spend a week learning to kite; you'd make progress quickly here. A combination of the conditions, staff, and equipment makes it one of the best places to learn to kitesurf.

**“ JUST ROCK UP,  
READY TO ROLL, AND  
THEY WILL SET YOUR  
KITE UP AND HAVE  
YOU ON THE WATER  
IN NO TIME.”**

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**DUOTONE**



## VOLT <sup>S/L/S</sup> CONCEPT BLUE

# TAKE YOUR RIDING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

SMALL WAVES



VOLT SLS  
CONCEPT  
BLUE

CONCEPT  
BLUE INFO





**“ IT’S GOT THE LAGOONS OF BRAZIL WITHOUT THE CROWDS, THE WINDS OF EGYPT BUT WITH A LITTLE MORE PUNCH, AND A RESORT HOTEL THAT IS QUITE SIMPLY OUT OF THIS WORLD ”**

In the evenings you can play pool, play table football and enjoy a drink while watching the sunset. There is also an outdoor cinema, a five-a-side beach, a football pitch, and a volleyball court. A ridiculously well-equipped gym and stunning yoga studio finish what's on offer here. There is certainly plenty to keep you entertained. If you can make a trip to the Souk one evening just to sample a bit of local Qatari life, the hotel will soon get its own shuttle bus to bring downtown Doha closer to the spot.

The transfer is only an hour, which is short by the standards of many places. At night, the lights of Doha light up the journey; by day, you can see some of the stunning buildings, too. It's an easy spot to get to from Europe and beyond, with many direct flights operated as Doha is a transit hub. It's one of those airports with direct flights from just about every corner of the world, so this incredible spot should be within your reach.

If you have done a fair bit of travelling on your kiteboarding journey, you'll want to put this on the list. It's got the lagoons of Brazil without the crowds, the winds of Egypt but with a little more punch, and a resort hotel that is quite simply out of this world and like nothing I have ever seen before.







**“THE WATER IS FLAT, THE WIND IS WARM, AND CRASHING REALLY IS A PLEASURE WHEN THE WATER FEELS LIKE A BATH.”**

I loved kiting here. As many of you know, twin tips aren't my thing, but I got right back into big air riding and busting out the old repertoire from days gone by. The water is flat, the wind is warm, and crashing really is a pleasure when the water feels like a bath. It's a great place to come and improve your riding, learn to ride, or hone those high-end tricks you've wanted to work on.

As word gets out about this place, it will become more popular, but with only 50 rooms at the hotel, it's almost guaranteed not to be busy on the water. If you want a different experience from your kiteboarding holiday, where luxury and excellent conditions meet in a melting pot of kitesurfing awesomeness, get to Fuwairit Kite Beach. You won't regret it!



Getting the ultimate big air shots with Cabrinha's new MotoX Design Works kite. After weeks of tracking forecasts and waiting for the perfect conditions, they finally hit the jackpot in Mykonos.

# GETTING THE SHOT

## BIG AIR IN MYKONOS





Three months ago, the call went out: "Let's chase a storm!" Their mission? Capture the ultimate Big Air shots with Cabrinha's new MotoX Design Works kite. After weeks of tracking forecasts and waiting for the perfect conditions, they finally hit the jackpot in Mykonos. The result? Stijn Mul snagged IKSURFMAG Issue 106 cover shot!

Three months ago, James called: "Hey Stino, we need to shoot the all-new MotoX Design Works kite; please keep an eye open for an upcoming storm somewhere around Europe, and let's plan a storm chase trip!"

Stino responded: Alright, James, let's do it!

Stino Mul - For the past three months, Wouter (my buddy from Oneosevenmedia house), James (marketing manager at Cabrinha), and I have been checking the forecast weekly to find a place in Europe with the best conditions for Big Air. And when we say Big Air, we mean 40+ knots.

Cabrinha and I have been working on a new high-performance big air kite with Cabrinha's Design Works team for the past year. To launch the kite, we wanted to create a WOW effect and put the kite front and centre with its own launch and a new big air carbon twin tip board that we had also been fine-tuning. We aimed to shoot in a stormy location to create the best shots possible and have people



**" CABRINHA AND I HAVE BEEN WORKING ON A NEW HIGH-PERFORMANCE BIG AIR KITE WITH CABRINHA'S DESIGN WORKS TEAM FOR THE PAST YEAR."**



# XS

FREERIDE  
**EXTREME**  
SERIES

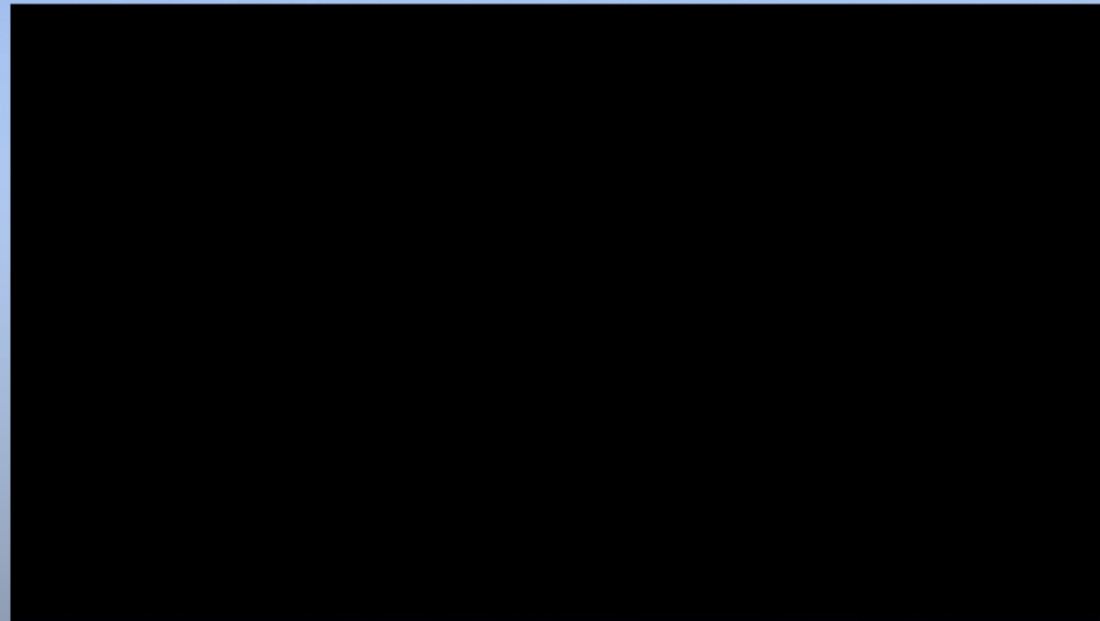
## PRO



THE ULTIMATE  
**BIG AIR**  
WEAPON

 **ALUUJA**  
COMPOSITES

ELEVEIGHT 



Rider: Thibault Mounier / Picture: Keril Halisite

ELEVEIGHT.WORLD





“NONE OF US HAD EVER BEEN TO MYKONOS BEFORE, SO WE FELT OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONE”

experience a new Aluula kite that feels completely at home in the Big Air / Freeride market.

After 4.5 weeks of classic hot and windless summer conditions and not spotting a single strong forecast, James sent a screenshot of the Windguru forecast to our group chat. We'd been following the forecast for Mykonos as it always seems to get more wind than other parts of Greece, and the spot there comes alive quite often throughout summer. There are also plenty of flights in and out from around Europe, making it the perfect place for a last-minute trip! We locked in Wouter, the videographer, and then all the last-minute logistics like accommodation, car rental, and flights, and we got ready for a few days of Mediterranean action!

None of us had ever been to Mykonos before, so we felt out of our comfort zone. Finding the perfect shooting location was a bit of a mission. The first day, the plan was to wake up around 07:30 to check out the first spot, but at 06:30, James already woke us up and said: "Guys, look at that light and the wind; it is looking AMAZING out there, we're going now!". We rushed out of bed towards the kite spot without eating any breakfast and started riding in the strong winds that had arrived. This was the first session of six that we would cram into the next two days. The strong wind and long lines helped me fly to the moon but didn't create the exact shot we had hoped for. After a quick breakfast, we drove to another spot on the north coast, where the windsurfers were shredding! Here, we were spoilt with an unbelievable backdrop of mountains and coastline that showed off the rugged beauty found away from the touristy areas of the island. Immediately, we all had big smiles and knew it would be a great place to ride. This time, I





**“IT WOULD BE BEST IF YOU CAN ADD AN INVERTED ROTATION TO THE LOOP, SO AT THE APEX, YOU’LL BE UPSIDE DOWN LOOKING DOWN ON THE KITE BELOW YOU”**

took out a bar with shorter lines. The shorter the lines, the lower you can send the kite in front of you. I started with 12-meter lines and pulled some pretty extreme kite loops. After one hour of shooting with the short lines, I went to the beach for a drink and

checked some shots. I saw how insane the pics looked, and we agreed to give the shorter 10m set a go.

James said, “It would be best if you can add an inverted rotation to the loop, so at the apex, you’ll be upside down looking down on the kite below you?” I laughed: “holy shit, that is going to be hard, but I will try!” This was the first time I rode my 8-meter on 10-meter lines. With the first loop, I already felt that kitemove would be very aggressive.

The whip and forward acceleration you get on such short lines in high wind can be scary but also exhilarating. The slack and free fall for a split second requires expert kite handling and no messing up with a kite that can climb incredibly fast in the window.

The wind picked up even more after a few minutes back out on the water! I felt a nice gust coming, took off from the back of a wave and went vertically up. I pulled the loop with my left hand and tried to reach out to the board with my right hand. WHAT A FEELING! There was just so much G-force on my body



" I FELT IT WAS THE MOMENT TO GIVE MY 100%. I SHOT THE KITE UP, LEFT HAND GRIPPING THE BAR AND PULLED INTO MY RIBS "



that I couldn't get down to grab.

After this jump, I saw James sprinting over the beach and waving at me to jump closer to the rocks and land. The wind here was more turbulent, with holes behind the rocks, so I had to get comfortable before adding the rotations and grabs. After James had repositioned and I was comfortable, I felt it was the moment to give my 100%. I shot the kite up, left hand gripping the bar and pulled into my ribs, sending the kite below me and spinning into the inverted backroll at the same time! That was the one I was sure of it! I cruised back to the beach with my heart rate pumping over 160 bpm and asked James if we got what we needed. The answer..."Yes, I think we got something..."

What a crazy experience that was. It was crystal clear blue

# WOO WORLDS

GLOBAL KITE COMPETITION 2021



SEPT.  
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\$25,000  
PRIZE POT

GLOBAL KITE COMPETITION FOR EVERYONE, WHEREVER YOU ARE

COMPETE ON YOUR OWN OR AS PART OF A TEAM

CASH PRIZES AND KITE GIVEAWAYS FOR THE BEST PERFORMANCES

REGISTRATION OPEN TO ANYONE ON WOO KITE APP

TOTAL HEIGHT SOLO + TEAM  
HIGHEST JUMP SOLO + TEAM  
TOTAL DISTANCE SOLO + TEAM  
GPS DRAWING  
BEST VIDEO

For more information about the competition or events visit - [wooworlds.com](http://wooworlds.com)



water, the most radical setup I had ever rode, and two of the best camera guys on the same beach filming my riding. It felt like perfect harmony. After that sick session, the trip wasn't over, but we all knew that that last session was the banger. Riding in this environment is different to competing in a competition. It's not always easy to match the same adrenaline levels, and repeatedly doing the same tricks to make sure photo/video composition is perfect uses a different set of skills. Exactly a week later, I made it onto the podium in the Gran Canaria world tour stop with the same setup, albeit back on slightly longer lines! I think the confidence I found in the new kites was game-changing. The Moto X just helps you go to the moon in full control, no matter how challenging the conditions are.

**James Boulding** - Getting a cover is never easy; a lot of elements have to line up, and editors have pretty strict criteria for what makes it to the hallowed page number one. With a recent trip to Mykonos, it was a bit of an unknown, having not been before, but with the pressures of a new product launch and wanting to shoot big air, which requires really strong wind, it looked like the best bet.

Stino worked hard to get the shot. It's always a lot more work than you think, and there is a good amount of risk involved, too. For the cover shot, we found this incredible location with rocks in the foreground and a desert landscape behind, which was the perfect frame for the trick. All we needed now was a lucky gust and for



“GETTING A COVER IS NEVER EASY; A LOT OF ELEMENTS HAVE TO LINE UP, AND EDITORS HAVE PRETTY STRICT CRITERIA FOR WHAT MAKES IT TO THE HALLOWED PAGE NUMBER ONE”





**"IT IS OUR FLAGSHIP PERFORMANCE KITE, BUT I THINK WHAT MAKES IT SUCH AN INCREDIBLE KITE IS HOW EASY AND INTUITIVE IT IS TO RIDE"**

Stino to be able to pull the move at the right time. Watching Stino soar on this new setup from minute one was really inspiring and the levels of fun and stoke he'd return to the beach with after each session was very motivating for everyone involved.

The MotoX is a hugely popular kite for Cabrinha; we currently have it in the standard build and the Apex construction, which uses a more responsive leading-edge material called Ultra HT. For the Design Works edition, Pat Goodman, actually started out making aluula versions of the Nitro but found the stiffness was so incredible he decided to see how removing two struts would feel and see how the stability was affected. There was still lots of structure and support in the canopy due to the aluula airframe, and the advantage in steering was very evident so this spawned the beginning of the Works Moto X Design.

It has a vast wind range and can handle gusts better than any other kite in our line up. This allowed Stino to take it into some really tight spots with sketchy wind that made the conditions extremely challenging. It's a limited edition from Cabrinha, and it is our flagship performance kite, but I think what makes it such an incredible kite is how easy and intuitive it is to ride.

As for the shoot in Mykonos, it was a huge success, and it's fantastic to tick another location off the list and another cover to add to the books.



# THE NEW WOO 4.0

QUESTIONS ROU CHATER WORDS LEO KOENIG

In this exclusive interview, Rou Chaters sits down with Leo Koenig to talk about WOO's latest release. From pinpoint accuracy to bulletproof reliability, Leo shares the vision and hard work behind WOO 4.0—this conversation is packed with insights you won't want to miss!







**“ WE WANTED TO MAKE 100% SURE THAT WE SOLVED THESE TWO ISSUES. IT WAS A TON OF HARD WORK, BUT WE ARE HAPPY WITH THE OUTCOME. ”**

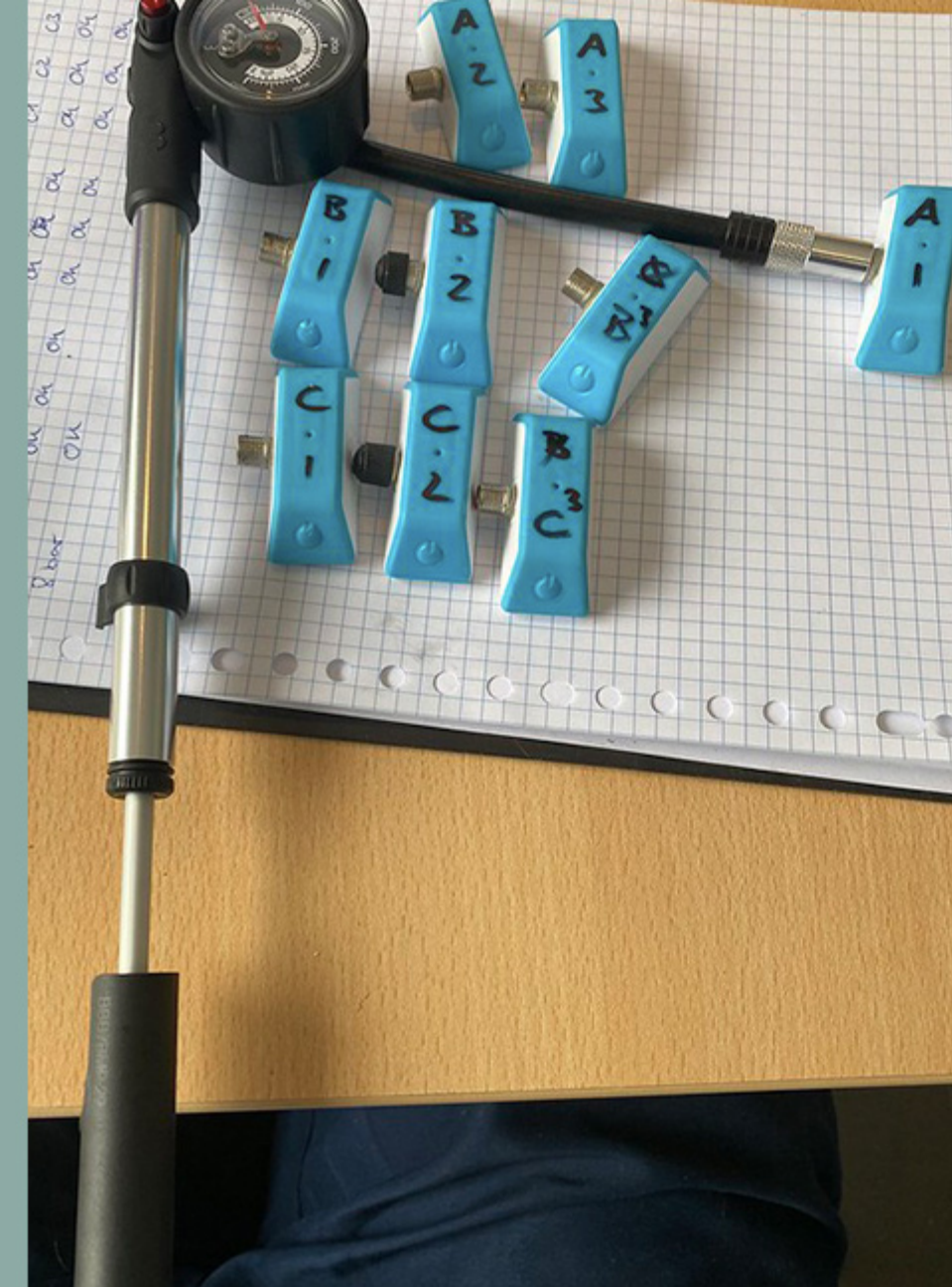
Hi Leo, Thanks for giving us time to discuss the new WOO 4.0 and some updates over previous versions. It's a big step forward in terms of design and durability. What were the goals when you started the project?

Hi Rou, thanks for taking the time to talk to me! When we started the project, we had two goals, and two goals only - to make WOO 4.0 bulletproof in terms of reliability and pinpoint accuracy. When we talked to our customers, they all loved WOO, but too many mentioned that they had had bad experiences with their WOO devices. They also said the difference between WOO 3.0 devices was still too big regarding height measurement. That all yielded into a 30-page long requirement document containing over 30 individual requirements solely related to accuracy and reliability. We wanted to make 100% sure that we solved these two issues. It was a ton of hard work, but we are happy with the outcome.

**What are the main differences between the WOO 4.0 and the 3.0 regarding the build and materials?**

The main differences are the removal of the charging pins and the introduction of wireless charging. That removed the primary source of failure - corroding pins. As a second step, we completely re-engineered the waterproofing seal. We re-engineered the geometry and spent tens of thousands of dollars testing different material combinations in a lab, particularly regarding the plastic resin and epoxy.

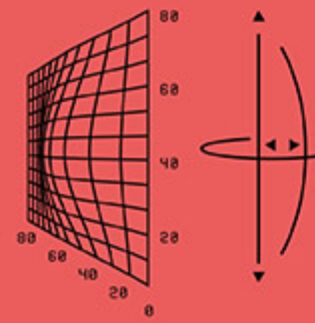




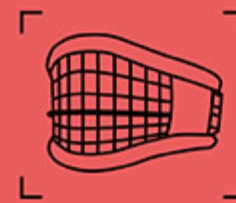
We also removed the screws. The result of this work is that the WOO 4.0 is ten to twenty times more waterproof than the WOO 3.0. We measure this by glueing little valves into the WOO housing and inflating it with pressure. WOO 3.0 could withstand about 2 bar of pressure (about the pressure used in a car tyre). WOO 4.0 can withstand up to 35 bar. At that pressure, the unit explodes, but the glue joint still does not fail.

Duck for cover!

**“THE WOO 4.0 IS TEN TO TWENTY TIMES MORE WATERPROOF”**



Designed within the Ergo\_Concept



Introducing the new  
**3D FIT TECHNOLOGY**

- Less pain
- More performance
- More water time



RIOT CURU

SURFING ELEMENTS







## “ WE HAVE A NEW MCU WITH TWO PROCESSOR CORES AND MUCH MORE POWER. ”

### And what about the internals? What's changed inside in terms of the tech?

A lot has changed there as well. First off, we had to fit wireless charging into the device. Second, we have a new motion sensor, which is five to ten times better than the sensor used in WOO 3.0. Third, we have a new MCU with two processor cores and much more power. Lastly, things like the gas gauge (the chip calculating the battery's state of charge) have

also been updated. We also introduced Shelf Mode, which disconnects the battery from the circuit board when the WOO is untouched. That ensures that the battery isn't drawn down slowly during winter months. That preserves battery health over time and ensures there is some charge on the WOO when you return in the spring! All this also leads to a drastically increased battery life - WOO 4.0 can record at least 24 hours without a charge!

### Has the software that runs the device and records the data changed at all?

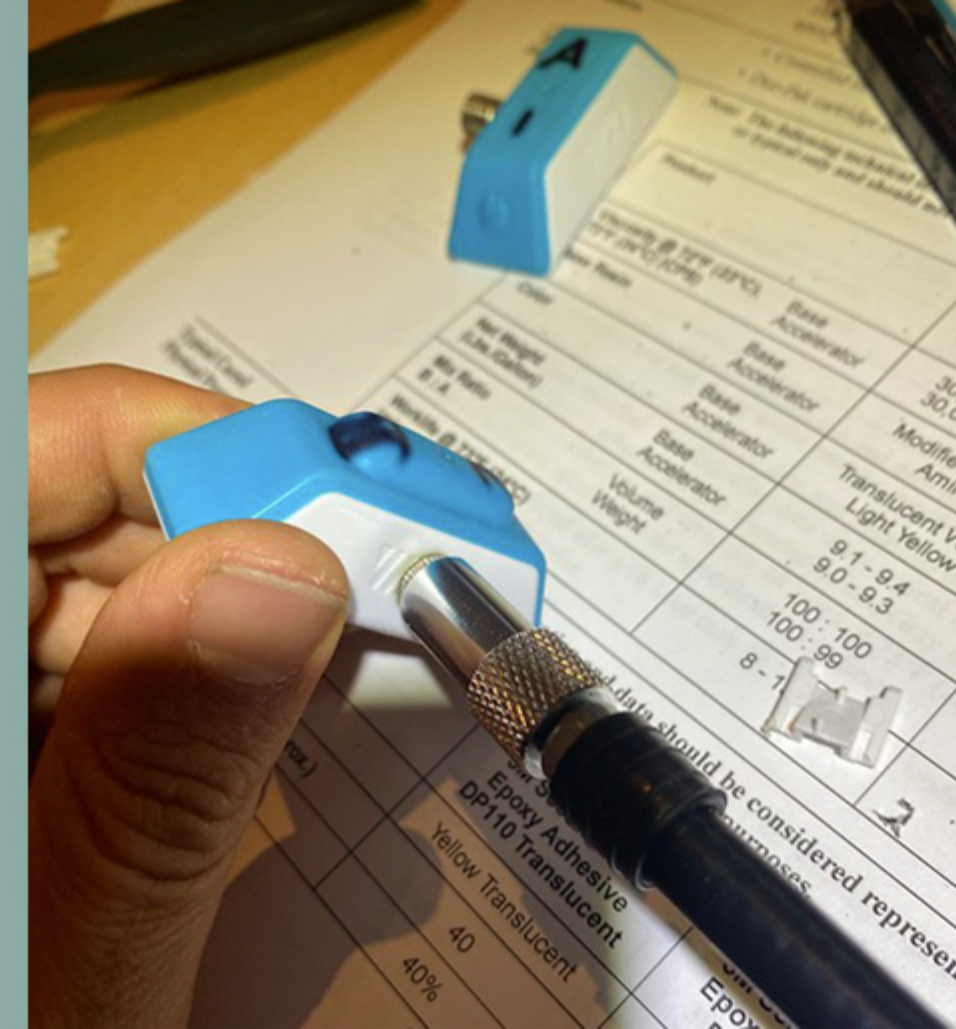
There is not much in terms of the algorithm

that calculates the jumps, actually. However, Juan, the brain behind our tech, had to rewrite the whole rest of the firmware to take advantage of the two processor cores and the multithreading technology (the ability to run processes in parallel). Of course, the new motion sensor, wireless charging, new gas gauge, etc., had to be added as well, so all in all, it was basically a complete rewrite of the firmware.

### How much more accurate is the device now?

If I had to put a number behind it, it would be 5-10x more accurate. We are converging to a point where multiple devices deliver nearly indistinguishable results on a board. That's where we want to be - to have a level playing field for those who use WOO.





How durable is it? The company has had issues in the past. How can a rider who's been put off be confident about the new device?

WOO 4.0 has been in the field for a year, and nearly 10,000 devices have been shipped. We can track warranty rates, and if there were a big issue, we'd know by now. Recall rates are minuscule compared to the industry standard and what we saw with WOO 3.0. But, for someone with doubts, I'd say try to find a friend with a WOO 4.0 and ask about the experience. Of course, everything we discussed in this interview thus far should already give a lot of confidence, but nothing beats a genuine world opinion from someone owning the product.

“NOTHING BEATS A GENUINE WORLD OPINION FROM SOMEONE OWNING THE PRODUCT.”

# HARLEM THRIVE

Introducing the lightest 3-strut, all-round performance kite on the market.



## MADE FOR EVERY RIDER

Designed by  
Ralf Grösel & Aaron Hadlow

Crafted at  
Brainchild Production

harlemkitesurfing.com





**“ IF YOU DON'T HAVE THIS DATA, YOU CAN ESTIMATE JUMPS AT BEST, NO MATTER HOW GOOD THE ALGORITHM IS. ”**

**Why is having the device connected to the board so important?**

There is a short and a long answer to this question. The long answer is covered in an 80-page whitepaper on our website. The short answer is that the only way to measure jumps in kiteboarding reliably is when the sensor is a) on the board and b) the same sensor for everyone. It mainly concerns the signal you get - board vibration and orientation are necessary to determine takeoff and landing. If you don't have this data, you can estimate jumps at best, no matter how good the algorithm is. This all matters because no one wants to be beaten by a friend after a year-long battle because of bad reading, defeating the purpose and deflating the game's fun.

**There are a few watch or phone-in wetsuit options out there now just as an app with no separate hardware; what makes the WOO 4.0 better than these options, which are often cheaper?**

They have their place for those who value convenience and don't care about accuracy. However, as soon as there is some element of comparing yourself to a friend or even progressing for yourself, which is the whole point of measuring something to begin with, you need an accurate measurement. A WOO is the more convenient option in the long run and for day-to-day use. Phones and Watches have limited battery life, and in our testing, we showed up on the beach with an almost empty watch too many times.







**“ WE HAVE HAD A VISION OF MAKING KITEBOARDING ATTRACTIVE TO SPECTATORS WHO HAVEN'T HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT KITEBOARDING. ”**

Also, frustration is involved when you feel like your jumps aren't measured correctly and when you realise that crashing your jumps gives you a meter or two extra on your watch. So, we feel that many customers will eventually realise that the only way to enjoy the playing field of "jump height" is to get a WOO.

**Do you have any accurate data you can share with us?**

Yes, of course, even in comparison with other available options. For those wanting a deep dive, there is a test video on the internet (google Timo's test WOO). We've also done a lot of internal testing over the summer, and if we find the time for it, we will be releasing some of the footage of that as well.

**Since WOO was founded in 2015, every year went by with a big step forward or innovation. What's next for WOO?**

It almost feels odd to say this after 11 years of doing this, but we are far from done. Since day one, we have had a vision of making kiteboarding attractive to spectators who haven't heard anything about kiteboarding. What the pro riders do, particularly in Big Air, is beyond amazing, and they deserve much more attention and recognition than they currently get. We'd love to change that in the interest of the riders and the sport overall. The fact that we have this super-accurate sensor now allows us to think further. What we're working on these days will create shockwaves in the community. I am sure about that,



**“ NEW APP FEATURES WILL ROLL OUT OVER THE COMING MONTHS, EACH PROVIDING A TON OF FUN AND VALUE TO OUR COMMUNITY ”**

and it may just be the biggest step we've taken as a company. You can probably tell that I am fired up about it.

Of course, there is always the community and app side of things. This year, WOO Worlds will have Wing disciplines for the first time, and the prize pool is yet again close to \$100,000. And new app features will roll out over the coming months, each providing a ton of fun and value to our community. So, it's been a busy summer thus far, and luckily, there is no end in sight - We love innovating and won't stop until we at least get close to the apex of our potential.







THE INTERVIEW

WORDS ROU CHATER

# JIM GAUNT

## WHEN PODCASTS GO WRONG

Rou Chater gives us a glimpse into the ups and downs of living in Wales and the challenges like constant rain and unreliable internet—a fact Rou discovered during a recent podcast recording with Jim Gaunt for this issue's 'The Interview'! Despite technical setbacks that left the recording unusable, Rou found inspiration in Jim's history in the kiteboarding industry, from his beginnings in windsurfing to his role as the Editor and Publisher of Kiteworld Magazine to joining the Ozone team. We've got it all right here!



Rou Chater sits down with Jim Gaunt for a podcast, but the Welsh weather and the internet have other ideas...

Living in Wales has many advantages. The surf is incredible; it's windy most of the time, so that we can kite a lot, and there aren't many people. Paradise is never perfect, though. It rains almost every day, and because we are so remote, life staples such as the internet and a decent mobile phone signal are sometimes rather elusive.

I have a decent full-fibre connection at the office, but the office is set on 45 acres of farmland, so it's easy for things to go wrong. Usually, the connection is fine unless the weather is terrible, which is most of the time. Last week, I sat down to do a podcast with my good friend Jim Gaunt and used Riverside FM, an online podcast tool. It records audio locally at both ends of the connection and then merges them. It's great, but it decided to have a meltdown last week.

We battled through the interview, and Jim was a star, but when I sat down to edit it, I realised it might be tricky. About three hours into the edit, I realised we might have a problem, and after eight hours, I decided to give up before having a brainwave that took two hours but didn't work. About ten hours invested, and I'd come up with nothing broadcastable.

The issue was on my end; the audio was poor quality despite using high-end recording equipment, and even worse, there were delays, overlays, and dropouts. Then, in the last two-thirds, only about ten minutes of my track was recorded compared to the hour or so of Jim. It was time to admit defeat.



"WE BATTLED THROUGH THE INTERVIEW, AND JIM WAS A STAR, BUT WHEN I SAT DOWN TO EDIT IT, I REALISED IT MIGHT BE TRICKY."

ASSISTANT EDITING, OLD SCHOOL METHODS, 2004  
PHOTO CHRISTIAN BLACK



“ HE’S CURRENTLY WORKING WITH OZONE ON MARKETING BUT HAS A STORIED HISTORY THAT HAS DEVELOPED ALONGSIDE THE BIRTH AND EXPLOSION OF KITEBOARDING. ”



However, the plan was always to do a story on Jim and his journey in the kite industry and with more than enough ammo from a lifetime of working alongside him, I figured I could create a noteworthy piece all the same; after all, I have Jim's full two-hour transcript so now I can make up my side so I sound even better...

If you've never heard of Jim Gaunt in the kite industry, you might have lived under a rock. He's currently working with Ozone on marketing but has a storied history that has developed alongside the birth and explosion of kiteboarding. Jim is most famous for his role as the Editor and Publisher for Kiteworld Magazine, which was the go-to print media for our sport for 20 years. It was there at the beginning, and I'm genuinely sad it is no longer there.

But how did that all come about? Well, even though he's a few years younger than me and looks a lot younger and skinnier than me, we could have led double lives... Jim learned to windsurf at a young age, taught by his father, just like me; he then worked as a windsurfing instructor in Manly, Australia, at the same windsurfing school I'd worked at. Our paths had never crossed at this stage, but we shared a tenacious passion for teaching windsurfing and doing the sport ourselves.

Jim even taught at AquaSports in Surrey, where I'd taken my first windsurfing instructor course! These are the sorts of parallels you couldn't make up, but I guess the watersports world is small. Jim used to spend his winters windsurfing in South Africa. In 2001, he met Hugh Miller, who was there with none other than Aaron Hadlow, Rob Claisse, Stav Thraves and a few other kiting pioneers from back in the day.



PRESENTING AT THE UK INDUSTRY AWARDS,  
IN COLLABORATION WITH ROU CHATER. THE  
POOR MAN'S ANT AND DEC



Hugh was the publisher of the newly formed Kiteworld Magazine, the first independent, i.e. non, windsurf magazine spin-off.

Jim pitched his talents as a writer to Hugh, and the rest is history. He ended up getting a job on the team, moving to Brighton, and immersing himself in the booming kiteboarding scene of the time.

Kiteworld afforded Jim some incredible opportunities to travel, and he remembers fondly the time he and the crew went to Hawaii for the first time to cement the magazine in the heart of the kite community there.

“IMMERSING  
HIMSELF IN THE  
BOOMING  
KITEBOARDING  
SCENE OF  
THE TIME.”

# EXPLORE

## THE BAHAMAS



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" WHICH IS JUST A LOVE OF BEING INVOLVED AND BEING AROUND THESE INCREDIBLE ATHLETES AND INDUSTRY TYPES. "

DON'T GIVE UP THE DESK JOB, BRIGHTON, CIRCA 2006  
PHOTO LEIGH WINGELL

This was in the early 2000s when legends like Lou Wainman and Elliot Leboe were the kings of Kite Beach alongside some of Jim's heroes like Robby Naish. It's not bad for a kid from Ripon who started out windsurfing on a lake to end up interviewing some of the biggest names in watersports and working with some of the best photographers around. Jim remembers fondly the excitement of getting sent slides to look at (for the younger audience, this is what life was like before digital) It was so exciting at the time to receive these FedEx

courier packages full of slides of images. You'd have a message from someone like John Bilderback or whoever it was, and maybe they were in Teahupoo or Hawaii, and something really exciting had happened. They would tell you on the phone and send in a package, and then it would arrive as a special delivery. We'd open it up in our office in a loft above a second-hand lawnmower shop. We're looking at these slides and these beautiful images of fantastic wave sessions over this slide box, and just, the contrast couldn't have been more.

But, you know, we'd all huddle around the slide box, which was only like a foot square, a little light box, and take turns to look through the magnifier at these images. And yeah, it was an entirely different experience. Still, knowing that we were the first and only people to have seen these images and would be able to break the story if you like, it's only kiteboarding, but I guess you are breaking a story. But yeah, there was loads of stuff like that. It was such an exciting time to be in the industry.

I first started hanging out with Jim when I got involved at Kitesurf Magazine in the UK; I was the editor there in 2004 when Jim was an old hand in the magazine business. We travelled a lot together over the years and were lucky enough to share some of the best experiences of our lives, from scoring world-class One Eye all to ourselves to trips through the desserts of Morocco and beyond. The magazine life afforded us the kinds of adventures one can only dream of, although they come at a cost.

It's arguably the worst-paid position in the industry, with brands often wanting to keep budgets to a minimum, which makes it very hard to run a magazine with the costs involved. However, there is a passion that Jim and I shared, perhaps him even more than me, which is just a love of being involved and being around these incredible athletes and industry types. I always recall the diligence with which Jim approached his job. I remember the 100th issue of KiteWorld hitting my desk; by then, he was the owner and publisher of the magazine and had worked his way up from tea boy and staff writer. I recall flicking through the pages and wondering how we would top the quality of journalism and photography should we ever get to the hallowed 100 issues. It would be a few years before we got there,



of course, and I think our team did a damn fine job on ours, but Jim's 100th edition will stay in my memory for a long time.

Sadly, all good things come to an end, and after twenty years of Kiteworld, with the magazine industry changing so much over those years, Jim felt it was time for it to come to a natural end. He'd been working a little with the Global Kitesurfing Association, helping with media for events, and when the role of media director for the organisation arrived, he felt it was a natural time to end one career and embark on another.

When it came to wrapping the mag up, I looked at it and thought, it's given me a lot. I've been really lucky to do this. And I thought it was time to try something else. At the time, I'd also spent a couple of years helping Jörgen, who was setting up the GKA, pull the initial media team together and organise some of the events. Everything crossed over quite nicely. And I wanted to leave Kiteworld in a good place; people remembered it well, and I felt good about it. Rather than slogging away, you guys were doing such a good job digitally that, you know, it was time to try something else.

I had a good relationship with Clinton Filen, the Airush brand manager. He introduced me to Juergen and suggested I could set up a media team or get people together. I initially helped with photographers and videographers, organised the event team, distributed the content, and brought the magazines onside to cover it and get behind it.

Jim spent just over two years heading up the media for the tour. It was a relentless job, with over ten events worldwide and lots of travel. Around this time,

" WHEN THE ROLE OF MEDIA DIRECTOR FOR THE ORGANISATION ARRIVED, HE FELT IT WAS A NATURAL TIME TO END ONE CAREER AND EMBARK ON ANOTHER. "





“ IT’S A FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL WITH THE WORLD TOUR AND COVER EVENTS AND BE SURROUNDED BY IT. ”



OZONE'S ALL ENCOMPASSING DEVOTION TO PUSH ALL ASPECTS OF KITESPORTS IS BIG DRIVE FOR JIM RIDER JOHANN CIVELL  
PHOTO RIDE-UP TEAM - WARECK ARNAUD

his daughter Juliette was getting a little older, and he felt he needed to spend more time at home with Dan, his wife.

Juliette was young when I switched and was full-on travelling for the tour, and I did ten events, I think, that year, and it's quite a long time to be away, and it's hard work at the events, you know, the media team have a hard job. You're first to the beach, last to leave, and your workday starts at the end of the competition, even though you've been at the event all day. You need to be driven. You need to have a lot of energy. You need to be creative in a short space of time.

So, I started to wind it down, and I started to manage the events a bit more from home, which was working, but, you know, I didn't feel like it was that fair to the team who, you know, were at all the events working hard. And I thought that there was someone better who could enjoy it for what it is. It's a fantastic opportunity to travel with the world tour and cover events and be surrounded by it. Also, outside of actually doing the event work, you're in these amazing locations. If your life is set up to adapt to that and make the most of it, it's brilliant. So yeah, I enjoyed it; the team there are great, and everybody on the tour works so hard. My family situation and desire to be away from home just came to a natural end.

Jim then transitioned from selling adverts and writing stories about brands as a magazine publisher to joining Ozone, one of the premier brands in the industry. I asked him how that came about and why he felt he had an affinity with the brand...

Well, back in the day, when Kiteworld was launched, Ozone was one of the first brands on board to get behind it. They have a big paragliding heritage and





MATT TAGGART - MOTIVATING  
MARKETING DRIVING FORCE BEHIND  
THE EARLY DAYS OF OZONE  
PHOTO BERTRAND BOONE

a huge paragliding brand, so they were already friends with Hugh. So all the main guys, Matt Taggart at the time, Rob Whittal, the designer. Iain Hannay, who's the General Manager now, and they were British-based. It was already a familiar feel, but they were very supportive of Kiteworld.

Matt Taggart, who remains as one of the company directors, was full-on man managing all the marketing back then. He was just so full of enthusiasm and ideas, and I liked how they approached us with interesting characters. Someone in the snow was always doing something that had never done before. They had foil kites; they were getting into tube kites, and they had this crazy paragliding kind of synergy going on as well.

" SOMEONE IN  
THE SNOW WAS  
ALWAYS DOING  
SOMETHING  
THAT HAD  
NEVER DONE  
BEFORE. "

YOUR LIFETIME IS IRREPLACEABLE  
YOUR LIFETIME IS IRREPLACEABLE  
YOUR LIFETIME IS IRREPLACEABLE  
YOUR LIFETIME IS IRREPLACEABLE



Dare greatly. Live wild.  
Your lifetime is irreplaceable.  
Call the crew and ride!



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So I always had a good relationship with them, and like you say, the products were always really good, fun to fly, engaging, performance-based, but not showy; there was no bravado with the brand; they always let the products do the talking.

I always had a good relationship with them and enjoyed the company's products and atmosphere; they weren't very forceful and weren't always trying to push too hard with content. And had a nice way of acting as a business. When I stopped Kiteworld, I had a good relationship with Iain then. I was doing the World Tour, and Iain just emailed me one day and said, hey, you know, wonder what you're up to and if you might like to have a conversation or just see what's going on.

I'd never worked for a brand. As editors of magazines, we spend so much time interacting with brands, and you have so many products and see so much marketing. I always found that the other side was the dark side of the brand. So it's really interesting working on the other side now. It's great fun. We have this really lovely structure. It's a relaxed atmosphere in the company, but it's professional.

It's all about products and the fact that we have our own factory, which is massive. We employ a thousand people full-time to work on Ozone paragliding, kites, boards, and accessories. It's an incredible side to the business, and everything revolves around that.

One of my first big jobs with the brand was to head to Vietnam and make a marketing film about the factory; it was an incredible experience. It's such a unique asset to own your own production facility and have control. They just never really shouted about it.

SNOWKITE PIONEERS SINCE THE BEGINNING, OZONE HAVE A TRUE PASSION TO CONTINUE HELPING RIDERS EXPLORE THEIR BOUNDARIES  
PHOTO BERTRAND BOONEJPG COPY



"THEY'RE QUITE HUMBLE IN THEIR APPROACH AND ALWAYS LET THE PRODUCT SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES."



RIDER JESSE RICHAMAN  
PHOTO SLATER NEBORSKY, OZONE



" FROM THE TOP DOWN, YOU HAVE INPUT AND ACCESS TO ANY PART OF THE COMPANY; NOTHING, NOTHING'S IMPOSSIBLE, AND IDEAS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME "

They're quite humble in their approach and always let the product speak for themselves. And it is a big thing, you know, to control the manufacturer and only make what's ordered.

Ozone have a really fast turnaround between when innovation happens and being able to launch it to the market because there are no long lead times. We also do as much sustainable production work as we can and evolve processes to be more eco-friendly. From the top down, you have input and access to any part of the company; nothing, nothing's impossible, and ideas are always welcome. So it's exciting, it's an exciting brand to be with.

As you can see from this small excerpt, Jim's a really interesting and thoughtful guy, and I'm gutted that technology got the better of us despite our best efforts. We've chatted, and we'll do round two for the podcast when we have a more stable connection, or perhaps I'll drive down to see Jim for the weekend, and we'll do it that way!

Watch this space as they say, and I hope this article has got you keen for more...



Zara Hoogenraad became the Big Air World Champion in 2024 after overcoming self-doubt, personal loss, and countless challenges. Her story is a testament to resilience and the belief that no dream is too big, inspiring others to pursue their dreams no matter how impossible they may seem. Read all about her journey exclusively in IKSURFMAG!

WORDS ZARA HOOGENRAAD

# THE ROAD TO BIG AIR WORLD CHAMPION





“YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE PERFECT TO ACHIEVE YOUR DREAMS;  
YOU MUST KEEP PUSHING THROUGH THE TOUGH TIMES.”

PHOTO SVETLANA ROMANTSOVA



Recently, my biggest dream came true—I became Big Air World Champion 2024. But it wasn't just about winning this title but the journey full of passion, hard work and challenges. Here's my story, hoping it encourages others to chase their dreams, no matter how impossible they might seem.

#### A NEW GOAL

Two years ago, I became Vice World Champion. I felt lucky to have come that far at that time, believing the other women were much better than me. However, this achievement sparked a new goal: to become a World Champion. If your goals don't scare you, they need to be bigger.

My journey started as a tiny spark fueled by passion and hard work. I dedicated myself to training hard, eating healthy and maintaining a positive mindset. Doing something I love makes me happy and helps me grow. However, my biggest challenge has always been my mental state—dealing with fear, self-doubt, and not being proud of myself.

Feeling scared and doubtful is normal. These insecurities push me to work harder and improve. When things go wrong, I pick myself up and keep going. Every setback makes me stronger. Negative thoughts and self-doubt are always there, and there are times when I almost give up. But I've learned that having these feelings is okay; they are a part of life. The key is to push through them. Doubts and fears can be turned into motivation. You don't have to be perfect to achieve your dreams; you must keep pushing through the tough times.





## INSPIRATION

My biggest inspiration is my boyfriend, Giel, one of the world's best and most influential kitesurfers. His dedication and passion show me that with hard work, anything is possible. The women in the sport have also been a massive source of inspiration for me. The progression of athletes like Mika, Angely, Nathalie, Pippa, Jasmine and Lana motivates me to push my limits. We continually inspire each other to be our best.

**"HIS DEDICATION AND PASSION SHOW ME THAT WITH HARD WORK, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE."**











**“AS I PREPARED FOR THE FINAL TRICK, GIEL YELLED, “BOOGIE DOUBLE LOOP, IT’S NOW OR NEVER!”. I HAD NEVER DONE THIS TRICK BEFORE, BUT I HAD NO CHOICE.”**

#### THE ROAD TO THE CHAMPIONSHIPS

One week before the World Championship, my grandma passed away peacefully. I thought about returning to the Netherlands for her funeral on the same day as the Championship, but my family urged me to stay and compete. Despite feeling guilty for not being at her funeral, I took it as my strength to compete. Besides that, my close

friend and training partner, Nathalie Lambrecht, suffered a severe knee injury. Seeing her dream of becoming a World Champion shatter was heartbreaking, but I promised her to compete for both of us. With my grandma and Nathalie in mind, I entered the World Championship.

#### VICTORY AND AFTERMATH

The final was the most chaotic and intense one of my life. I tested my skills, resilience, and ability to adapt to pressure every moment. After landing three single loop scores, I switched to my 6m Pace for double loops. While having an awkward landing,

a plastic strap piece broke, forcing me to return to shore for my spare board. I attempted my next trick with my spare board, but I hadn’t tightened the screw enough, causing the whole strap to loosen during the landing of my trick. I couldn’t edge and ended up riding straight into the rocky beach. Luckily, I didn’t crash and still managed to put on a score.

With no spare board left, I borrowed one from Giel. The straps were too big, but there was no time to adjust them. I had one last attempt. As I prepared for the final trick, Giel yelled, “Boogie double loop, it’s now or never!”. I had never done this trick before, but I had no choice. With adrenaline pumping, I went for it. Somehow, I landed it perfectly.



The whole beach erupted in cheers. Overwhelmed with emotion, I started crying, realising that I might have just become World Champion.

As I reached the shore, someone from the organisation ran to me with the Dutch flag, confirming I had won. Giel came running towards me in tears. Tears of happiness streamed down my face. Despite all the doubts and challenges, I did it. My dream came true.

Competing with a big smile on my face has been my secret weapon. I compete so much better when I'm enjoying myself, and the experience I've gained has taught me to keep my head cool.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

Winning the world title is a dream come true, but my journey doesn't end here. I am excited about pushing the limits further and inspiring more people. My next goal is to push for more women's divisions in competitions, starting with the Queen of the Air 2024, to ensure future generations have greater opportunities.

The greatest gift I can give you is the encouragement to follow your dreams. This journey has shown me the power of believing in yourself. Never forget that you are capable of achieving amazing things. My passion has been my driving force. Passion fuels motivation, and remember that with hard work, dedication, and a positive mindset, no goal is too big to achieve.

**"THIS JOURNEY HAS SHOWN ME THE POWER OF BELIEVING IN YOURSELF. NEVER FORGET THAT YOU ARE CAPABLE OF ACHIEVING AMAZING THINGS."**





WORDS NOUSSA DENKLER & MIRIAM JOANNA  
PHOTOS MIRIAM JOANNA & DANIEL ZINELDIN

## BEHIND IN SCENES

# THE INDIE

When FLYSURFER decided to introduce a new kite to their lineup, they aimed for something that would embody the essence of independence and creative freedom. Enter INDIE, a kite designed for performance and those who crave a lifestyle that breaks free from the ordinary; in this feature, Noussa Denkler & Miriam Joanna share their behind-the-scenes experience.







**"IT WAS A UNIQUE VISION THAT PROMISED TO BRING SOMETHING TRULY SPECIAL TO THE TABLE"**

Just before New Year's, I got a message from Christoph Hesina at FLYSURFER. He asked if I wanted to be part of their next product shoot. I was intrigued when he mentioned Morocco and hinted at a 60s-themed concept. But when I found out that Miriam Joanna was the creative force

behind the shoot, I was excited. Miriam has this unique, art-like style that's hard to describe. The promise of a Moroccan adventure was impossible to resist.

The concept was different from anything the kitesurfing scene had ever seen. Miriam Joanna and Daniel Zineldin wanted to create a visual narrative, blending the free-spirited 60s with Morocco's hidden gems. "It was a unique vision that promised to bring something truly special to the table,

though still had to understand it fully," recalls Noussa. What made this shoot truly unique was the entire production process behind it. The team began by sketching out a full storyboard and even animating it. Daniel Zineldin then got to work crafting all the props—everything from a vinyl disc and backpack patches to fake license plates and even an entire magazine! And as the cherry on top, they hired Samuel Tehrani, an actor from a Sundance award-winning film. "Impossible" is definitely a term that doesn't exist on our shoots!



The shoot took place across four different locations during one of the busiest times of the year. Starting in Marrakesh, the team captured stunning visuals, including vibrant colour contrasts against the city's red brick architecture. However, not everything went according to plan. For example, in some shots in the beautiful Jardin, Majorelle didn't make the final cut due to permission issues.

From Marrakesh, the team travelled to the coastline, immersing themselves in nature. "The funniest part about the whole trip was that the cars and people you see in the video were not planned at all," says Noussa. "Miriam and Daniel had a vision, and somehow, everything fell into place. I'm talking about retro cars, 'tourists,' and 'dancers'—we found them all along our way."

When it came time to shoot the promotional video for INDIE, Morocco was the perfect backdrop. Known for its rich cultural history and iconic ties to figures like Jimi Hendrix and Bob Marley, Morocco is a country that has long embraced individuality. The landscapes, from the vibrant streets of Marrakesh to the serene coastline, offered the perfect setting for a story that would encapsulate the essence of the INDIE kite.

Here are some interview snippets from the magazine:

*What's your secret ingredient for the delightful insanity in "Indie"?* Miriam Joanna: (Chuckles) "Well, they say the best films are made when you're slightly unhinged, right? I might not be running a circus, but 'Indie' sure felt like one. It's my wild ride into uncharted territory. I live by the 'no fear, no regrets' motto, pushing boundaries to capture the raw energy of kitesurfing. I don't shy away from any challenge—whether it's diving into the ocean with the camera or pushing the crew to their limits for that perfect shot."

**" KNOWN FOR ITS RICH CULTURAL HISTORY AND  
ICONIC TIES TO FIGURES LIKE JIMI HENDRIX AND  
BOB MARLEY, MOROCCO IS A COUNTRY THAT HAS  
LONG EMBRACED INDIVIDUALITY. "**







Daniel, stepping into Miriam's world – how's the wild rollercoaster treating you? Daniel Zineldin: (Laughs nervously) "It's like hopping on a rollercoaster without a seatbelt. Exciting, terrifying, and every now and then, you question your life choices. Coming from a background in visual storytelling, diving into the unpredictable world of action sports was an exhilarating challenge. Every day brought something new, a crazy twist to the story we were creating on the Moroccan coast."

**" EXCITING,  
TERRIFYING, AND  
EVERY NOW  
AND THEN, YOU  
QUESTION YOUR  
LIFE CHOICES. "**



BEYOND THE

**HORIZON**

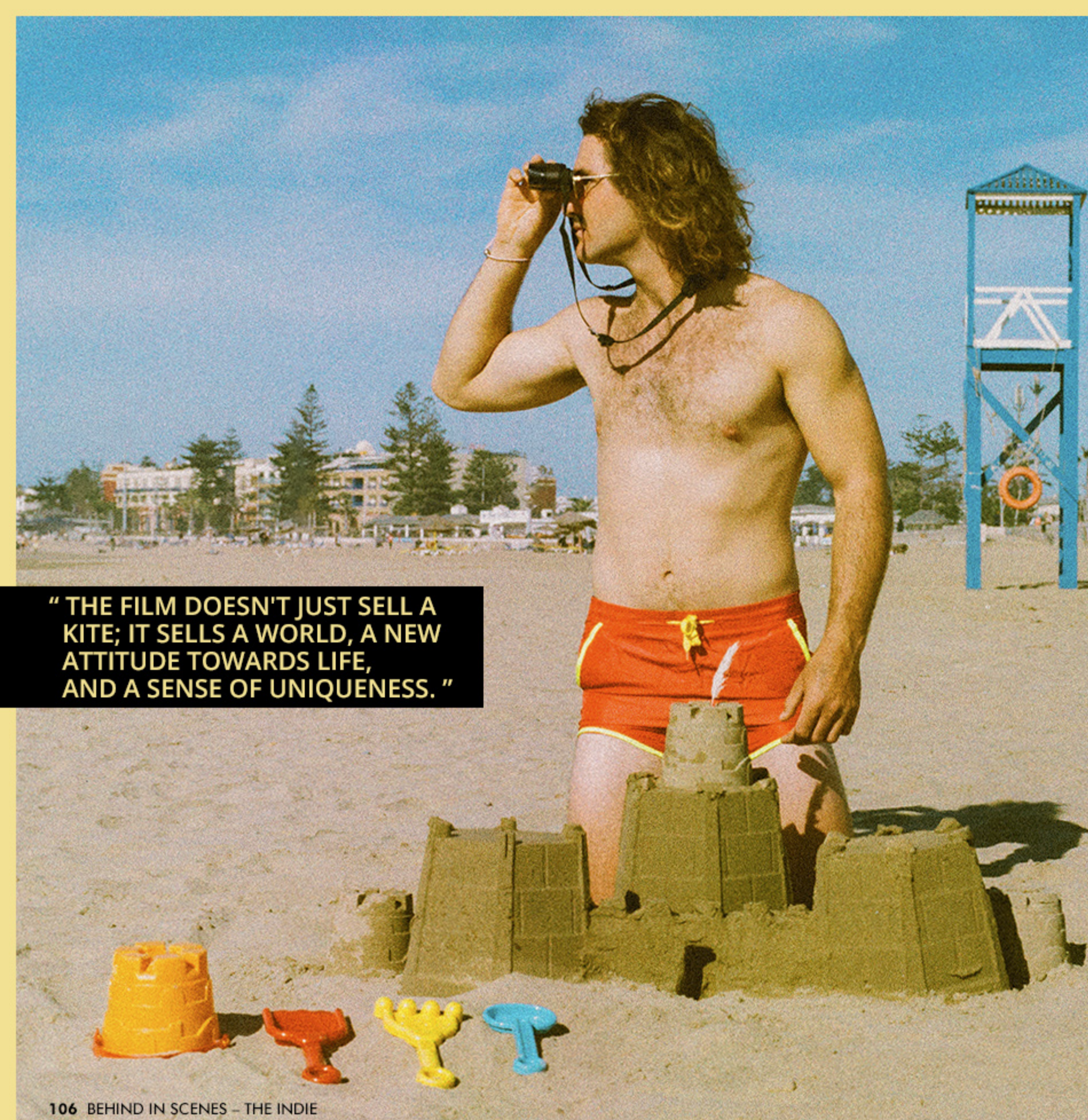
Elevate your perspective, embrace

**HORIZON X NOBILE**

and take your kitesurfing to the next level

*#ikitenobile*





**" THE FILM DOESN'T JUST SELL A KITE; IT SELLS A WORLD, A NEW ATTITUDE TOWARDS LIFE, AND A SENSE OF UNIQUENESS. "**

*Miriam, how did you manage the dynamics on set, especially in such challenging conditions?* Miriam: "It's all about channelling that fearless energy. I believe in creating an environment where everyone gives their absolute best, even when the going gets tough. We're a family on set, navigating the chaos together. And in the end, that camaraderie translates into the intensity you see on screen."

Before you press play, you might wonder, "What's INDIE?" The short film created to answer that question is more than just a product showcase—it's a satirical and humorous narrative that builds a mythos around the kite. The film doesn't just sell a kite; it sells a world, a new attitude towards life, and a sense of uniqueness. The narrator draws parallels between "INDIE" and "hippie" cultures, crafting a fictional universe where the INDIE kite is the ultimate symbol of freedom.

**Frank the Lifeguard:** Since this video shoot took a completely different approach to product placement, the team decided to incorporate an authentic 1960s-style TV spot, focusing heavily on the product, true to that era. From previous shoots with Theo, Miriam knew he would be the perfect fit for their lead TV spot character. He's incredibly versatile—whether it's playing the cheesy lifeguard, Frank, or transforming into Jacqueline, the lip gloss-wearing, straight-haired flight attendant.

#### **THE INDIE**

The INDIE is more than just equipment—it's a gateway to a lifestyle defined by freedom, creativity, and individuality. Through the lens of the short film and the experiences captured in Morocco, the INDIE kite invites you to join a community that celebrates the spirit of independence.



Whether you're a seasoned kitesurfer or just starting, the INDIE kite offers a ride that is as unique as you are.

FLYSURFER has always been a brand that advocates individualism, and INDIE is a testament to this philosophy. "INDIE," short for "independent," has long been associated with works created outside the mainstream. The entertainment industry represents creativity unfettered by commercial pressures, allowing artists to explore new ideas and push boundaries. The INDIE kite carries this ethos into the world of kitesurfing, offering riders the freedom to express themselves on the water, unhindered by limitations.

The INDIE kite allows riders to experience the pure joy of kitesurfing with complete control and the ability to ride in various conditions. Riders embrace the unexpected and explore the boundaries of what's possible on the water. It is designed to make you feel independent, light, and agile. Whether carving through waves or soaring above the water, the INDIE kite uplifts your spirit and fills your sessions with joy. It's perfect for freeride, progression, and hydrofoil enthusiasts, offering versatility across different wind conditions. Riding with the INDIE kite is more than just a sport; it's a lifestyle—a positive, inspiring experience that opens your mind to new possibilities.

At the end of the film, viewers aren't just introduced to the INDIE kite—they're welcomed into a community, an insider circle where satirical humour and a shared appreciation for independence reign supreme.

We hope you enjoy the film!

**" WHETHER CARVING THROUGH WAVES OR SOARING ABOVE THE WATER, THE INDIE KITE UPLIFTS YOUR SPIRIT AND FILLS YOUR SESSIONS WITH JOY. "**





# OMAN DOWNWINDER

## - A JOURNEY BEYOND THE MAP -

WORDS SUKIE ROBERTSON PHOTOS NAIM CHIDIAC RIDER RUBEN LENTEN

In a world where Google Maps knows every nook and cranny, there's still space for discovery that echoes through Oman. In this exclusive feature, Sukie dives headfirst into adventure during the 'Oman Downwinder' and shares her experience with us. Read all about it right here in the latest issue of IKSURFMAG!





With its ancient allure and hidden treasures, Oman welcomed them with open arms and steady winds. From the bustling coastlines to the serene desolation of Barr Al Hickman, they brought new challenges and breathtaking vistas each day. Guided by Marcello's vision and bound by the thrill of the ride, they carved out a path seldom trodden, a path where the only constant was the rush of the wind and the camaraderie of fellow adventurers.

Join us as we unravel the tale of Oman—a land where the map ends and the spirit of exploration begins anew.

We try to find these mythical uncharted locations. Be the first to 'discover' a spot; be the ones with the knowledge and, let's be frank, bragging rights to these new dream places. Sadly, and in the same breath luckily for us, however, we are in 2024 when spots have been found, and Google Maps, Surfline, Windguru, and a whole host of other publications are documenting the live conditions to us in real-time with cams, pictures, and charts.

Now, I am not so naive as to say Oman is undiscovered—far, far from it. However, what we got to experience this week was a small snippet of the adventurous spirit, this voyage of discovery, which we all search for.

Oman, situated in the Middle East, is bordered by sea to the North and East, Yemen to the South and Saudi Arabia and UAE to the West. Oman is the oldest Arabian country with an interesting history (its capital was once situated in Zanzibar!); it has a hugely varied interior and one which is well worth visiting.



**“WHAT WE GOT TO EXPERIENCE THIS WEEK WAS A SMALL SNIPPET OF THE ADVENTUROUS SPIRIT, THIS VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY, WHICH WE ALL SEARCH FOR.”**





# HEAD PROTECTION REDEFINED

IMPACT CAP

**MYSTIC**

boundless waters

[mysticboarding.com](http://mysticboarding.com)



**“ WE HAD DIFFERENT STYLES, PERSONALITIES, ABILITIES AND BACKGROUNDS AND WERE ALL BROUGHT TOGETHER WITH THE DAUNTING PROSPECT OF TRAVELLING A 500 KM COASTLINE ”**



On our trip, we stuck to the coast for kitesurfing, but the mountains provide a wealth of hiking, biking and climbing opportunities for unrivalled adventure. Likewise, other than kitesurfing, the diving here is phenomenal, with whale sharks, dolphins, and a host of whales being frequent visitors.

Politically, we tend to hear very little about Oman, and that is one of the beauties of this beautiful country. It keeps to itself and is a remarkably safe place to visit. Adhering to local customs is expected and encouraged as a primarily Muslim culture. Alcohol can be found in a few hotels, and women are advised to cover their arms and legs in public. The latter is a good idea for all to adhere to simply because the sun beats down from rise to set. The advice I was given before arrival was 'there is one sun for each person in Oman'. Although I found this true, the heat was completely manageable in the breeze. However, ensuring I was adequately protected from the Sun by covering up and applying lotion was essential to ensure a burn-free trip for a fair-skinned kiter like myself.

This kite trip was one with a difference. The brainchild of Brazilian Marcello, who came to Oman for work some 11 years ago and now (one Disney-style love story later) finds himself living here, operating Sea Beach Lifestyle. And this is where we come in. Marcello had an idea to bring together a group of kites from all over the world to travel by kite up the coast of Oman. So he made it happen. We were a group from Oman, Brazil, Cape Verde, the UK, the Netherlands, Italy, France and Canada. We had different styles, personalities, abilities and backgrounds and were all brought together with the daunting prospect of travelling a 500 km coastline in only eight days. And did we do it? Yes, we did.



**“ TO RIDE DOWNWIND WITH SPEED IN A RANGE OF DIFFERENT WIND AND WATER CONDITIONS CAN BE FAR MORE CHALLENGING THAN FOLKS REALISE ”**



Starting roughly halfway down the coast of Oman in Duqm, the first day shot us out from the start line with a bold, gusty 30 knots of wind. Our crew of 13 kitesurfers were accompanied by boats, a jet ski, a camera crew, a medical team and a land support crew who, as the journey progressed, picked up those who needed a rest and provided transport when conditions did not align. The gusts calmed, and the wind swung more cross shore than off as we continued on our way, with each rider choosing their weapon, a twin tip, or a sit or surfboard with kites of 7-10 metres.

Travelling via kite harbours its own set of challenges. Initially, of course, wind is a requirement. And a certain amount of wind, ideally consistent in speed and direction, so that that equipment can be chosen and stuck with. Secondly, we want some on-water support if things get a little spicy and we need instant help. Thirdly, there are some key access points where riders can be refuelled, boats launched and landed, and camps set up. And lastly, riding directly downwind for hours on end is hard. Physically and technically. When we start kiting, we long for that upwind 'click' to

happen, and it feels like all we do is ride downwind. But to ride downwind with speed in a range of different wind and water conditions can be far more challenging than folks realise and add into the mix wind shadows and variable conditions along the way. You could have a recipe for disaster.

Luckily for us, Marcello had thought of it all, and our crew experienced some out-of-this-world phenomenal scenery while kiting (have you ever seen sand fall from the desert directly into the sea whilst turtles swim by?), epic flat water lagoons, and fun waves to ride all while being safely covered by sea and land.



Over the course of eight days, our caravan of kites and crew covered the distance we set out to. Not all was done by kite; at times, the trucks were loaded to take us to the next destination, over dusty desert roads past gazing camels or along the beach itself. Some nights, we would check into a hotel or, more excitingly, arrive at a waiting camp set up in advance, which would appear out of the sand as we would kite or drive toward it.

These camps were beautifully rustic, with heavy canvas tents sleeping 2- 4, a large communal area for food and relaxing and some showers and toilets.

We ate together each night until our bellies were full, and the food had disappeared to tales of the day's adventure. Our crew became one big unit, seamlessly knowing our roles. The days started to have their simple rhythm as we travelled across the desert and sea.

The Omani kitesurf scene is small and centred primarily around Masirah Island. We had the privilege of staying on Masirah for two days and having numerous kite sessions in warm, flat lagoons and over beautiful wavy reefs. Originally planned for one day only, we all loved it so much that we decided to stay longer. Marcello and his team here adapted seamlessly to the conditions and desires of the group.

Made up of Omanis and a selection of expats, the strong wind has bred a community of fearless kitesurfers. There is a simple love of kitesurfing in Oman, and while the number of kitesurfers may be small, the stoke is big. Heading to a new spot, let alone a new country to kitesurf, can sometimes be intimidating, and certainly, when you hear stories of the sometimes violent localism at popular spots, Oman could not be further from this. The community here loves to kite; sharing this with new people is a passion they all bestow.



**“ THERE IS A SIMPLE LOVE OF KITESURFING IN OMAN, AND WHILE THE NUMBER OF KITESURFERS MAY BE SMALL, THE STOKE IS BIG. ”**





**“ A COUPLE OF LOCAL KITERS JOINED HANNAH'S FAVOURITE SPOT, HER AND RUBEN, FOR WHAT COULD ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS A 'HOW-TO' IN BIG AIR KITEBOARDING ”**

There is a reason many riders are starting to arrive in Oman for months on end, to Masirah in particular. This small Island just off the East Coast is littered with spots. But perhaps the crowning jewel, certainly for the spectators, is the small harbour north of the Island, just near the Ferry Port. Here, the wind is perfectly offshore behind a small road to the end of the port—the perfect arena. A couple of local kites joined Hannah's favourite spot, her and Ruben, for what could only be described as a 'how-to' in big air kiteboarding, for which the swelling crowds were audibly appreciative.

Close to Masirah on the mainland is the reserve of Barr Al Hickman, which we passed through mid-week. Feeling more like finding your way through Mordor than desert, the team used GPS devices to ensure we did not stray from the path on our way in.

To the untrained eye, it all looks deceptively similar; however, the 'roads' were visible to those who frequent the spit. The spit is simply that - a long lone sandbar jutting into the Arabian Sea with two prominent lagoons running parallel to the sea and perpendicular to the wind. There are a couple of established camps to stay at, or we had our trusty camp set up and move with us. Early mornings bring flocks of flamingos to bathe and preen in the warm waters, and stingrays are the lagoons' residents. We were warned to walk into the water with feet shuffling to alert any nearby rays. However, stings are incredibly rare, so general sensible caution is all that is required.

The beauty of Barr Al Hickman, aside from the near-perfect kitesurfing conditions, is how remote it is. The only touch of human life is those who are visiting and camping at the same time as you. There is no cell reception, no gas stations, and no shops.



Everything you need must be brought in with you, including all water, food and fuel. Water, of course, is a big requirement in the heat. You will sweat more than you realise, so drinking at least 4 litres per day is recommended, more if you can, and adding some electrolytes into the mix is a good idea, too.

Most folks will stay here for 3 or 4 days. The Muscat kitesurfers come down for weekends at a time during the season to make the most of some kitesurfing and off-grid time with friends. Our day and a half here left us all wanting more, and personally, this was my favourite spot of the trip for the remoteness, scenery and conditions.

They brought us back to reality on our last day with a bump. Our closing ceremony was held inside an old fort, illuminated by the Arabian sun, and was the perfect setting for the final hours of our trip. Here, we reflected on what we had achieved before our team said our goodbyes and split.

Marcelo and crew, along with Mitu and family, stayed for the following week's annual wave riding clinic at Assilah, one of Oman's top wave spots. The rest of us went back to our normal lives, many via Muscat to work or to fly back to our home countries.

Marcelo achieved the extraordinary by bringing together this eclectic mix of nationalities and styles. Our adventure together in this land was bonding and enriched with new experiences, scenes, and challenges. And is this not also the beauty of kitesurfing? The beauty of all sports? Of travel? And ultimately, the vehicle to community, connection, and freedom we all desire.

**“OUR ADVENTURE TOGETHER  
IN THIS LAND WAS BONDING  
AND ENRICHED WITH NEW  
EXPERIENCES, SCENES,  
AND CHALLENGES.”**

RIDER HANNAH WHITELEY





**“IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR TRUE ADVENTURE - AND MORE SPECIFICALLY, FOR ADVENTUROUS KITESURFING - YOU'D BE HARD PRESSED TO FIND CONDITIONS MORE IDEAL.”**



Big air, this explosion in high wind requirement has met its match with Oman. Typically, the winds blow 25-35 knots June-August, allowing for a short and intense season. The book's end months of May & August provide good conditions without the consistency of those peak seasons. In fact, during our

10-day trip this July, we had only one day with wind only in the morning. Such is the consistency of wind in this part of Oman. However, the further north it becomes, the hotter it becomes, and the reliability drops. Muscat, specifically the northern Gulf of Muscat Sea, does have wind, albeit much lighter and

considerably hotter, but you can still find sessions year-round. There are a few kite schools in Oman, primarily Masirah and Barr Al Hickman, and the scene is steadily growing nationally and among travellers. The wave spot of Asilah provides the perfect beginner/intermediate waves to hone your skills without dire consequences but with plenty of potential.

Oman offers immense scope for exploration. It might not be the place to come if you are after nightlife and parties. However, if you are looking for true adventure — and more specifically, for adventurous kitesurfing — you'd be hard pressed to find conditions more ideal.

To get the most out of a trip here, I'd recommend renting a 4x4 or, even better, a pair of 4x4s. Why? Because in Oman, you're likely going off-road, and without one, you're definitely getting stuck. Why a pair of 4x4s instead of one? Because this is absolutely a trip best done in a group. It is remote, beautifully off-grid, wild, and unashamedly freeing.

Contact Marcelo to take the hassle out of the organisation and for any information. Not only will he provide a wealth of information, but you will end up with a friend for life. His genuine stoke for kiting in Oman will undoubtedly rub off on you and only inspire your trip further.

Oman Downwinder is a project developed for Oman Tourism Development Company (OMRAN Group), in collaboration with Sea & Beach Lifestyle and Oman Sail and it is part of the efforts to uncover the untapped potential of Oman's picturesque coastline for adventure enthusiasts. This initiative marks a significant step toward diversifying Oman's tourism sector with a focus on adventure experiences.



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# TRIED & TESTED

- Mystic 2024 Impact Cap

**MYSTIC**

**IMPACT CAP**

WORDS & PHOTOS  
THE IKSURFMAG TEST TEAM



BRAND MYSTIC

MODEL IMPACT CAP

SIZE S/M

YEAR 2024

“ MYSTIC'S GEAR IS ALWAYS SOLID, AND THEIR ATTENTION TO DETAIL IS ALWAYS A WINNER FOR ME ”



#### AT A GLANCE

When I first opened the box, I was expecting a bulky helmet, but I was surprised at how slim and low-profile the helmet was. The cap is made of 1cm EVA impact foam that is shapeable/mouldable to your head. I won't lie; it's a snug fit, but that's a good thing; it feels comfortable and secure. Adjustable velcro straps at the back, flex ear strap, and a push-fit clip on the chin made it quick and easy to adjust. Even though it's incredibly slim and at a glance, you might even double-think how much protection you're getting, the EVA foam looks and feels solid.

Another thing I noticed was the need for more space it took up. Unlike regular helmets, the soft shape makes it much easier to compact in my bag and feels like one less bulky thing to carry to the beach - a bonus when I often look like the buckaroo mule heading to the beach!

The cap is available in three colourways: black, red, and off-white. It is also available in three different sizes: XS/S, M/L, and L/XL. The one I got to test out was an XS/S in off-white.



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

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QUESTIONS JEN TYLER PHOTOS CHRIS MORGAN

# INSIGHT

## RITA ARNAUS

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Rita Arnaus has been going through a tough season of recovery and renewal. From a grueling ACL tear to a broken arm that tested her resilience, Rita shares her challenging and inspiring journey back to the competition arena and coaching the Duotone Young Blood camp in IKSURFMAG's latest Insight feature with Jen Tyler.







" WATCHING ALL THE PROS HITTING THE RAILS, I WAS SO EXCITED THAT I GOT DISTRACTED. I MISSED AN ICY PATCH, SLIPPED, AND FELL. "

**Rita, it's been a while since we've had a catch-up! How are you doing now after your recent injuries? Going from a torn ACL straight into a broken arm is brutal can you share with us how the accidents happened...**

Hey everyone, thanks for having me back. It's truly been a rollercoaster. But as you know, I always try to find meaning and positivity in setbacks.

I tore my ACL during the first competition of the year in Qatar 2023. After a year of recovery, everything was going great. I felt confident and decided to go on

was going great. I felt confident and decided to go on a snow trip since I had missed the previous winter. I was really looking forward to getting back on my snowboard.

I was happily snowboarding in Switzerland, wearing all my protective gear—knee pads, wrist guards, helmet, etc. As it often goes, it was on the day's last run. We had just stopped for a bite to eat and were heading back down. Finding the wrist guards quite uncomfortable, I took them off and decided to take a shortcut through the snowpark. Watching all the pros

hitting the rails, I was so excited that I got distracted. I missed an icy patch, slipped, and fell. A week later, I had a plate and eight screws in my right wrist.

Honestly, I felt dumb and useless. But I believe everything happens for a reason.

**What were the biggest challenges you faced during your recovery process?**

I don't have the words to describe how devastated I felt. Less than a year ago, I was staring at my knee covered in stitches and my leg looking super lean. Now, it was my poor arm, devoid of any muscle mass.



I tried to hold myself together. There were happy days, but I remember January feeling like one of the worst months of my life. The amount of effort and mental strength I had to muster was immense. Going through another rehab process and enduring the pain that comes with it—during the winter season, no less—was tough. The cold weather and cancelling my kite plans made it hard to find anything nice to focus on.

But enough of the drama! That experience taught me a lot. I must say I have developed significant resilience, mental toughness, and body awareness. I believe nothing but greatness is coming my way!

**How did you stay motivated during your rehabilitation period?**

Honestly, I've always believed that everything happens for a reason. I felt that with my knee injury, I still needed to take it easy, and this was a sign to do just that. Last November, while in Brazil, I pushed my knee too hard by returning to freestyle too early. Even though I was trying to be cautious, I ended up with tendinitis next to my kneecap.

So, I saw this new setback as a sign to slow down and take the extra time needed to continue working on my knee rehab. I wanted to make sure I came back stronger than ever.

**How did you maintain your fitness while your knee and wrist were healing?**

Maintaining my fitness during the healing process wasn't a problem, as gym workouts were the only thing I could do. Fortunately, my wrist doctor did an excellent job with the surgery, and my recovery progressed quickly, allowing me to start lifting weights sooner than expected. Before I could lift weights,



**" I HAVE DEVELOPED SIGNIFICANT RESILIENCE, MENTAL TOUGHNESS, AND BODY AWARENESS. I BELIEVE NOTHING BUT GREATNESS IS COMING MY WAY! "**



A woman with long dark hair, wearing a grey crop top and white pants, is laughing heartily. She has sunglasses on her head and a watch on her left wrist. She is surrounded by other people in a social setting, possibly a camp or festival, with wooden walls in the background.

**" THEIR EXPERTISE AND DEDICATION  
MADE A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN  
MY RECOVERY PROCESS. "**

I got creative with my workouts, focusing on leg machines and exercises that didn't strain my injured wrist. I used various leg machines to keep my lower body strong and engaged in cardio exercises that didn't stress my wrist or knee. This way, I could maintain a good fitness level and stay positive throughout rehabilitation.

**Did you explore any alternative therapies or treatments for your injury?**

The most effective therapy for me has always been consistency, no matter the method. Therefore, I opted for traditional treatments supported by a skilled team of physiotherapists and doctors. Their expertise and dedication made a significant difference in my recovery process. While I focused on regular physiotherapy sessions, I also incorporated various exercises to strengthen my muscles and improve flexibility. I followed a structured rehab program, which included strength training, mobility exercises, and a gradual reintroduction to sports-specific activities. This consistent and comprehensive approach ensured I healed properly and was well-prepared to return to my athletic pursuits.

**We'd love to hear about your involvement with the Duotone Young Blood camps! Can you share with us what you've been up to? What's your favourite part of the project?**

I have wanted to get involved in this for a long time. I believe the younger generation is crucial for the future of our sport, and there is nothing more rewarding than seeing them motivated and being able to help and guide them through their journey. I always wished I had more help and guidance during my beginnings, as I had to navigate it alone. So, it's a pleasure to join this project with the support of Porsche.





**" THE MENTAL GAME, THE PHYSICAL DEMANDS, THE TRICKY CONDITIONS, THE ADRENALINE, AND THE FOCUS. I CAN'T WAIT TO COMPETE AGAIN! "**

The vision is to awaken the passion of kids aged 8 to 18 for action sports like kitesurfing, foil wing, SUP, and biking and teach them the right techniques to enjoy these sports safely. At the camp, Duotone and Porsche will support the selected young talents, providing everything needed to start their pro kitesurfing careers. We will also highlight the incredible benefits of kitesurfing for both body and mind, such as improved health, confidence, mental strength, and focus.

**Will we see you at Dunkerque for the next GKA freestyle stop at the end of August?**

Oh my gosh, yes! I'm so looking forward to it. After spending half a year rehabbing my injuries, getting back to the water, and attending a few events—one in Dakhla and another in France—I realised how much I miss competitions. I miss everything about them: the mental game, the physical demands, the tricky conditions, the adrenaline, and the focus. I can't wait to compete again!

**What's next for Rita Arnaus?**

I'm excited to return on tour and compete at my highest level again. In addition to returning to the

competitive scene, I plan to participate in various kite events and host several kite camps. I'll focus on creating more professional content, so there's plenty to look forward to! Stay tuned to all my social media channels for updates and behind-the-scenes glimpses of my journey.

**Sounds great, Rita! We look forward to seeing you on the water!**

Thanks, Jen!



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# TECHNIQUE

WORDS & PHOTOS CHRISTIAN & KARINE



Whether you've been blessed by a windy, warm winter or cursed by a windless, wet summer—and please feel free to play with the word order to suit your past couple of months—there's not much that beats the anticipation and excitement of your next session. To really stretch the balloon of expectation, we have a couple of blinders lined up that will hopefully cover most of you.

If you've got your wings and are now getting off the water, and dare we say back onto it, in a controlled manner, there is absolutely no reason not to think about a rotation. Many folks find it easier to get their heads around the back roll first, so read on as we take the back out of the back roll and get you rotating towards September. If you've been following the medley of pop tricks over the past few issues, we're ramping it up another notch. This time, we're heating it up with some extra style points, adding a grab into an already steazy front to blind, with an Ole out for good measure!

So whether you'll be sitting at home mentally preparing and bursting at the seams or rushing straight down to the beach and giving it the beans, enjoy...

## 1 / BACK ROLL



[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)

## 2 / FRONT TO BLIND OLE



[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)

**New 2024 clinic calendar up on:**  
<http://www.ckperformanceclinics.co.uk>



## HOW TO BACK ROLL ▶

The beautiful back roll, admired and feared in equal measure, a coming-of-age move, your first rotation. Previously, it was also known as the back loop (before kite loops came about), and although our intention is not to discuss nomenclature, for learning's sake, there are three ideas that we'd like to introduce you to for this move.

Firstly, let us start by dropping the "back", as there's nothing back about it! You'll move forward to take off, look over your front shoulder to help you rotate, and land facing forward. Let's rather think of it as a vertical 360 spin under your kite, nothing inverted, and no flipping intended.

Secondly, we're going to take you through this as a small jump. Yes, you'll give the kite a little send so it lifts and floats you. We're not talking about a popped "back" roll, which is considerably harder and can encourage you to spin into all sorts of unpleasant mistakes, which we'll look at in a future article. The little jump variant that you're about to learn means that you'll be in a better position to control your kite, you'll be able to rotate slowly and still make it around, and most of all, you'll be using a skill you already have, jumping.

Thirdly, if there is one word to describe what you'll be doing, it's extending. We say this as the opposite is all too common when learning this. You want to be extending up into your rotation so that you can rotate around your lines. It's all too easy to succumb to the temptation of curling up into a ball and rolling back, but we want extending forwards.



Understanding which direction you rotate is very important. The best way to think of it is that you'll be carving up into the wind and continuing around from there. If you quickly look at the sequence, you can see Karine jumping on port tack, riding from right to left. She's taking off, turning up into the wind and carrying on around until she can look downwind again.

OK, let's have a butcher's at some key moments and see how you need to tackle them.

### APPROACH PIC A

For your first attempts, you're aiming for a small jump; one metre is plenty. It's all about confidence, so sending yourself into the stratosphere is not on the cards. As such your approach should be comfortable. Start off with your kite at 1 or 11 o'clock. This way you can still edge against it, any higher and you can't.



Speed-wise, you need to be moving but don't want to be blatting full tilt. You need some power to ride upwind and get airborne, but please don't be hanging on. Position your hands on either side of your centre line. They don't need to be butting up against it as this will make it hard to steer the kite, try a thumbs length out. And finally, make sure that the coast is clear and that there is enough water in case it doesn't quite go according to plan. Karine has a good edge; she's riding comfortably upwind, her hands are centred, and her kite is at 11 o'clock. The coast is clear, and the water is deep, she's ready.

### SHORT SHARP SEND PIC B

The key to any intentional small jump is a short, sharp send. You still need to move the kite so that it generates lift, but you don't want to send it too far.





Theoretically, you're trying to get it to around 12 or a fraction behind. If you move it too slowly, you won't get any lift, and it'll be hard to hold your edge. You can see that Karine has steered her bar back to move the kite up, but it won't be for long...

**LEVEL & OUT PIC C**

Levelling your bar is a crucial moment in your rotation. It's something you need to do before take-off. While you're still on the water and riding, you know what and where the level is. You won't have a Scooby once you lift, rotate, and who knows what? The purpose of levelling is twofold. Firstly, it's to stop the kite moving, and secondly, it's to hold it there. If you can keep your kite at or around 12



as you rotate, you'll have lift and support with very little movement, and it'll enable you to rotate vertically around your lines under the kite. This is what you want. As per any jump, you also need to feather the bar out to follow the sweet spot as the kite moves up to keep your edge while still feeling some tension on your lines. Karine is still edging, and as the kite lifts, she eases the bar out so that her kite can trace the edge of the window as it climbs to 12. Once she feels it start to lift, she levels the bar to stop her kite from moving any further.

**CARVE PIC D**

You need to carve the board further upwind to initiate your back roll. You can only do this if you have



feathered your bar out. If you pull in, there is no way to turn up whilst edging. Turn your shoulders and trunk whilst driving against your edge to carve the board further upwind. It's imperative that you keep your shoulders level as you do this. This is when it's just too easy to lean back and negatively impact the move before you've even taken off. The kite should now be still around 12. You can see that Karine has dropped her bum low and is driving it further upwind, breaking at the waist so that she can keep the bar out on the sweet spot as she pushes through her feet.

**EXTEND AND TURN TRUNK PIC E**

We're not going to let this one lie. It's a simple picture, but so much here makes a good back roll.





At the same time turn your shoulders and twist your trunk to follow on from the carve and rotate upwind. Once you're extending it, you can pull the bar in for a lift. Looking at Karine, you can see that she hasn't thrown her head into the rotation; she's turned her entire body. This enables her to keep her hands in front of her whilst her legs and board come with her. We can't overstate the importance of not turning away from the bar. Your hands and the bar should lead you around the rotation. The bar stays level.

#### HALFWAY HOUSE PIC F

You will set the rotation in motion by carving up, extending, and turning your body. It won't be a fast spin, but this is a good thing! If all has gone well, you'll find yourself looking upwind, over your hands



and through your bar. Karine's bar is still level; she's kept it that way since before she took off. Her hands are level, and her shoulders are level. This all means that her kite will be above her around 12-ish. The great news is that even if you stop here, you'll just float down facing the wrong way. There'll be no power, no pull and no wipeout! One last thought to consider: don't look at your kite. Tilting your head back to look up will knock you off balance and disorientate you. Keep your eyes on the horizon, bubble in the middle.

#### TURN HEAD PIC G

As exciting as the view upwind may be, you can't hang around for long. You need to finish your rotation. This is where your head comes in useful. Turn your head to look over your front shoulder and



bring your hands and the bar with you. From here on, it's like swinging on a rope under a tree. If you lift your knees, you'll feel more balanced, and it'll help you turn more easily. Turning your head and leading with your eyes, you'll see what's coming: the water, downwind, and where you'll touch down. Once you have your bearings, you can dive into the kite as you would for a jump. This will help pull you around and give you a sense of direction for landing. Here Karine has turned her head, she's still leading with her hands but she's looking where she's going. As she's spotted where she'll land, she's steering her kite forward to dive it.

#### LANDING GEAR DOWN PIC H

Like a jump, drop your legs to get the board underneath you so you can land over it. At first, just getting around,





even if it means landing on your bum and water-starting out, is perfect. Once you have the movement and feel comfortable rotating, you'll start to know where you are and can then work on diving the kite with a bit more oomph and landing dry, even if it's across the wind.

Excellent. It doesn't sound too bad.

### TOP TIPS

Choosing the right conditions to learn something new is always key. In the case of your back roll, a bigger kite and gentle power will give you more feeling and float, whilst the kite will be less whippy and easier to control. Once you're on a small kite and powered, things can happen more quickly and, should we say, energetically.

Besides levelling the bar and extension, you need to concentrate on kicking before pulling. If you pull too early on the bar, it's impossible to carve up and impossible to extend. You won't rotate, and the kite won't stay at 12.

Walk through this on land without a kite to get the idea and visualise that you're moving forward and your hands are leading. Walk from left to right or right to left whilst rotating and leading with your hands so that you keep moving in the same direction as you will in a jump. At no stage should you be turning your head away from your hands or your body against the forward flow.

Excellent, there you have it!

### KEYSTONES

1. Upwind, comfortable
2. Short, sharp send
3. Level bar & Out
4. Carve, extend then pull
5. Lead with hands, finish with head





## GRABBED FRONT TO BLIND OLE ▶

**Kite – Cabrinha Moto X 8m**

**Board – Cabrinha XO 133**

Ok, Ladies and gents, it's time to spice things up. For starters, we're going to take your popped front, add some heat to the main with a tail grab, stick it to the blind for a stylish landing, and then Ole out to add the biggest cherry on top! Fear not if that sounds like a proper mouthful and leaves you a tad breathless. It reads more exhausting than it is and will surely be tasty regardless. A proper summer offering for us here in the northern half.

We've been through the hooked popped front to the blind, and hopefully, you've been practising your Oles at every possible opportunity. Adding the grab does, however, change things a little. You'll not be used to letting go for a start; rotating with just one hand and then throwing the blind from a slightly stalled rotation will also be something fresh to get yourself acquainted with. Before diving in, it's also worth reminding yourself that this is a hybrid move. By hybrid, we mean that although you'll be popping to take off, you'll also drift the kite up towards 12 for some extra float and time. It's not a foot-to-the-floor kite at 45 grins and bears its move, but more a floaty, smooth crowd-pleaser.

### YOUR APPROACH PIC A

Your approach should be well-dialled by now, but as we often say, it won't hurt to remind you. Come in on an edge with speed. It doesn't want to be a massive



upwind edge, but enough so that you're resisting the kite and have tension in the lines. Your kite should be in its happy place around 11 o'clock (in this case), or 1 if you're going the other way. Ensure your bar is trimmed close enough to drop away from it when you carve without pulling on it and have space to sheet out when you Ole. And finally, get your hands centred on the bar. You are ready! You can see that Karine has ticked all these boxes.

### FLATTEN OFF TO CARVE PIC B

Once you're ready and have spotted a flattish bit of water, you need to bear off the wind.

Bearing away suddenly helps the kite fall back in the window a bit and allows you to get into the perfect

position to pop. Front leg straighter, bum over back foot, shoulders back and upwind, and head looking forwards. It also helps you land off the wind, which is a must if you want a smooth blind touchdown. Bear away by softening your knees and sitting, rolling over the board so that it flattens off. Once you're in position, with your weight over the tail and the nose up slightly, you can carve into your pop. Drop your weight and turn the board upwind. As it's a hybrid move, you can tweak the kite a little on the bar as you carve. Here Karine flattened her board and dropped into her default popping position before carving up hard and steering her kite up. So far, everything is pretty similar to what you've been practising:)





C

### THE POP PIC C

Even though you've asked the kite for a bit of help, your take-off is still coming from you – no waiting for the kite to lift. This means no pulling on the bar. Leave it on the sweet spot and explode against your edge through your back leg, kicking yourself upwind and away from the board. As you kick, release your front hand! You won't have long to get your grab so the sooner you set things in motion, the better. You also need to initiate the front roll. As you kick and release, lift your front knee, turn your head to look behind you, and resist the temptation to throw your head down. The final piece of the jigsaw for take-off, stop your kite moving. Do this by steering it forward with your front hand, a little wrist crank to get it



D

moving with you. Looking at Karine you can see she's stamping hard off her back leg, and she's released her rear hand. She's steering the kite forwards a touch to stop it going any further whilst she's turning her head to initiate her rotation. That's a lot in one frame!

### ALL ABOUT THE GRAB PIC D

As soon as you're off the water it's all about getting the grab as soon as possible, whilst also making sure that you rotate. Fortunately, these two, a tail grab and a front roll, go together like a horse and carriage. Bring your back knee up towards you to get the tail closer. As you do this, look at where you want to grab the board, ideally around the fin on your heel-side edge. By looking you'll turn your head further which helps keep the rotation going. Final thought here, make sure your



E

bar is in on the sweet spot. This way, you'll have some support, and you can make sure that it's coming with you. Karine is looking for her grab, lifting her back leg, and has her bar in, steering her kite gently forwards.

### THE GRAB PIC E

As you rotate and your back knee brings the board nearer, the tail should be grabbable! You can make things easier still by dropping your front foot, which will lift the tail even more. You can also feather the bar out a tad. With the kite suddenly not pulling and lifting, it'll feel less strenuous to grab it. At this point, all your focus will be on the grab. You can see that Karine is focused on her board, she's dropped her front foot, grabbed her tail, and she's eased her bar out a smidgen. Perfect!





ROTATE PIC F

With all the focus on your grab, your head is no longer leading you through your rotation. As such and unbeknown to you, you've unwittingly slowed and stalled your rotation. You've still got a way to go, so time to get a wiggle on. The good news, it's an easy fix. Turn your head, look over your shoulder and set your eyes on where you think you'll land. Before you know it, order is restored, and you'll come round. As you do, hold your grab for as long as you feel comfortable and confident to do so. Here Karine has her eyes on the prize, she's rotating around and is still holding the tail.

THROW IT PIC G

Timing is key. Just like the non-grabbed version, blind is a landing, so you'll have more success if you



treat the blind as a separate entity as opposed to an extra half rotation. It'll be easier to throw your blind if you can feel the kite, so dip it down with your front hand. As you do this release the grab. Turn your head and shoulders away from the bar, dropping your rear shoulder. Keep your body locked and tight so that your hips and board turn with you, scissoring your legs as you rotate. Karine has released her grab, whilst turning her head, shoulders and hips away from the kite, forcing her feet and board round. Although she's dropped her shoulder, she keeps her head up so that she stays over her board.

STOMP IT PIC H

Three pieces to make this stick. Bar out, nose down, chin up. Before you land you need to get the bar out, this way your board and legs won't get left behind.



To get the board as far around as possible make sure you land on what was the nose of your board. This way, it'll pivot those extra few degrees when it hits. To make all this possible, you need to be over your board, and the simplest way to do this is to keep your chin up. Karine has her bar pushed out, facing upwind, her head up, and her back leg slightly bent. This way, she lands over the board, old nose first, which will help pivot the board more downwind and prevent her from edging against the kite.

THE CHERRY SEQUENCE 1

Now that you're comfortably back on the water, it's just a little matter of an Ole to contend with. Once you're on your feet you need to get rid of any possible tension in the lines before you can consider the Ole. Your aim is to get weight off the balls of your feet and





onto your heels. This will turn the board towards the kite and give you room and slack to Ole. The secret is not to rush. Make sure your bar is all the way out by pushing your hand up. Leave it there and turn your head towards your free hand. You can see that as Karine turns her head, it rocks her weight onto her heels, and the board literally carves downwind.

Wait to feel the tension go. With no tension, you can now comfortably move the bar across in front of your face. As you do this you can pull in on the bar to steer the kite back down which will give you some pull as you come through the Ole. And don't forget to get vocal – "Ole"!

#### TOP TIPS

Try and find some flat water. Once you have, build up to this with some fronts to blind and then add the grab.

This is a hybrid move, and for learning purposes, it's fine if your kite goes a bit too far. It'll make landing tricky, but you'll have more time and confidence to grab and then throw the blind.

Remember that it's a front-to-blind, not one and a half. So, wait and just before you land, release the grab and throw the blind.

Don't worry about the Ole, it's a pure showboating, feel good, claim of the century add on. Make sure you stick your landing, then you can turn your head, weight your heels and get vocal.

OK, have a look at the **sequence** for a step-by-step visual.

#### COMMON PROBLEMS

Not getting the grab. Make sure you look at the tail!

If you turn your head too much, thinking about getting a quick rotation you'll miss it. If it seems out of reach, straighten your front leg.

Stopping on landing. If you've got enough momentum and speed coming in, then the only reason for this is that the kite is too high and has drifted behind you. Try popping with less kite AND tug the kite down before releasing your backhand.

Falling in backwards/catching your heelside edge. This is often the result of not sheeting the bar out when throwing the blind. Your feet get left behind and you'll catch your edge. Also don't rush the Ole, by leaning back to make room for the bar to pass. Make a point of landing and shifting wait first. This is only possible if you trim your bar and head downwind to pop.

Burying the nose of the board and sinking when Ole-ing. If you're making the landing, setting the Ole in motion only to then nose dive. This is usually because you're rushing into Ole and turning your shoulders too much as you turn your head. The Ole shouldn't be aggressive if you shift your weight onto your heels first.

#### KEYSTONES

1. Off-the-wind approach
2. Stamp, release backhand and look back
3. Focus on grab, no rotation
4. Turn your head to continue
5. Throw blind, don't rush Ole





RIDER SANTIAGO CISNEROS PHOTO SAMUEL CARDENAS

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WORDS JEN TYLER PHOTOS ARITZ BELATEGI

# KITE BOAT CRUISES - THE SEASON IS ON!



Whether you're a beginner or a pro rider, Kite Boat Cruises offers the perfect blend of action and relaxation. Discover secluded beaches, ride on the most gorgeous turquoise waters, and unwind with gourmet meals aboard the luxurious Windchaser 1 or Lagoon 52. Led by Aritz and the crew, this isn't just a trip - it's your ticket to paradise! [Click here to find out more.](#)







**“ THE TURQUOISE WATERS, UNTOUCHED BEACHES, AND SERENE BEAUTY OF THE EXUMA NATIONAL PARK CREATE A PLAYGROUND LIKE NO OTHER! ”**

**THE KITE BOAT CRUISES 2024-2025 SEASON IS ON!**

Welcome to the Kite Boat Cruises 2024-2025 season! Whether you're a seasoned kiteboarder or just beginning, this adventure through the breathtaking Bahamas offers an experience that caters to all levels and styles. The turquoise waters, untouched beaches, and serene beauty of the Exuma National Park create a playground like no other!

But this isn't just another kiteboarding trip; it's an invitation to discover the hidden gems of the Bahamas, places that few are lucky enough to explore. Imagine spending your days riding all day and then relaxing on a secluded beach at Norman's Cay, where the sun sets in a blaze of colours, and the only sounds are the crackling fire and the laughter of new friends. Led by Aritz and the crew, the Kite Boat Cruises team combines expertise in kiteboarding with a passion for creating unforgettable experiences. With years of exploration under their belts, they've uncovered the most beautiful spots, making sure your journey is anything but ordinary!

There are two sailing options to choose from: the Lagoon 52 (GOA 10) and the 58-foot Windchaser 1.

The Lagoon 52 is a luxurious 52-foot catamaran with five double cabins, accommodating eight guests plus crew. Each cabin has private bathrooms, 220V/USB plugs, and air conditioning. Designed for eco-friendly sailing, it features solar panels and a freshwater maker.







**“YOU’LL HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO PUSH YOUR LIMITS AND CAPTURE INCREDIBLE MEMORIES.”**

This boat offers a serene escape, with the opportunity to go kitesurfing, snorkelling, and paddle-boarding on deserted beaches away from crowded bays.

The Windchaser 1 is a 58-foot luxury catamaran with six double cabins and eight guests plus crew. Similar to the Lagoon 52, each cabin includes private bathrooms, 110V/USB plugs, and air conditioning.

The catamaran is environmentally friendly, with solar panels and a high-capacity freshwater maker. Guests can enjoy different watersports and activities while having an exclusive and peaceful sailing experience.

Onboard, the experience is elevated, with every single detail meticulously planned. Equipped with the latest kiteboarding and foil gear from North Kiteboarding, you'll have everything you need to push your limits and capture incredible memories.

The crew and guests' support and encouragement are contagious. Everyone

cheers on each other as you try new tricks or simply soak in the views. Whether you're perfecting your kiteboarding skills or just enjoying the ride, every moment is designed to be unforgettable.

And then there's the food—an experience in itself. After a day of adventure, you'll be treated to gourmet meals prepared fresh onboard by skilled chefs. From freshly caught fish to dishes that rival any top restaurant, the cuisine will refuel you for the next day.

With top-rated reviews on TripAdvisor, Kite Boat Cruises' commitment to customer satisfaction shows in every aspect of the trip, from the food to the personalised service.



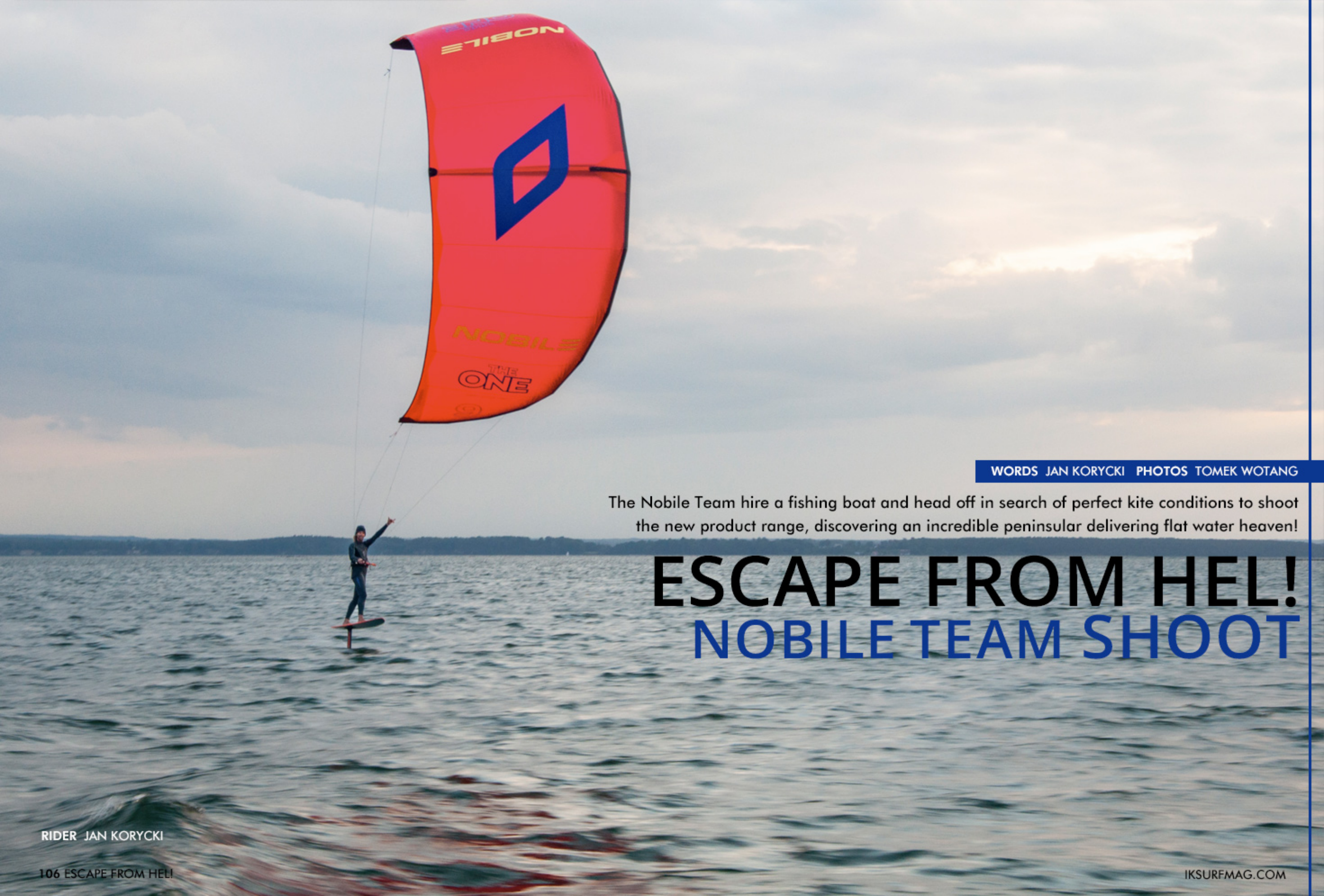
**“ YOU’RE IN FOR AN ISLAND-HOPPING, KITEBOARDING, AND SNORKELLING ADVENTURE THAT WILL LEAVE YOU WITH MEMORIES TO LAST A LIFETIME ”**

As the sailing season is in full swing, now is the perfect time to book your adventure. Whether you book a cabin or gather friends to charter the entire boat, you're in for an island-hopping, kiteboarding, and snorkelling adventure that will leave you with memories to last a lifetime. Don't just take our word for it—check out our Travel Guide video and see why this is the ultimate Bahamian escape.

So, are you ready to set sail? Fly directly to Nassau from most major European or US cities, and you're just a short hop away from paradise. Pack light, bring sunscreen and a sense of adventure, and open your heart and mind to an extraordinary journey. The Kite Boat Cruises 2024-2025 season is calling, and your next great escape is just a click away!







WORDS JAN KORYCKI PHOTOS TOMEK WOTANG

The Nobile Team hire a fishing boat and head off in search of perfect kite conditions to shoot the new product range, discovering an incredible peninsular delivering flat water heaven!

# ESCAPE FROM HEL! NOBILE TEAM SHOOT

RIDER JAN KORYCKI





“SUMMER ON THE POLISH SEASIDE GETS PRETTY CROWDED, AND MORE AND MORE KITESURFING ENTHUSIASTS VISIT THE RELATIVELY LONG PENINSULA TO SCORE A SESSION ON WINDY DAYS. WE NEEDED TO SEEK A MORE REMOTE LOCATION TO AVOID THE CROWD AND PRODUCE QUALITY CONTENT OURSELVES.”





**“TERN SANDBAR, THE SO-CALLED SLIM PENINSULA THAT HISTORICALLY CONNECTED THE MAINLAND WITH THE HEL, IS A GREAT REMOTE LOCATION WITH SPECIFIC WIND DIRECTIONS THAT DELIVER EXTRA FLAT OFFSHORE CONDITIONS THAT ARE A DREAM FOR KITEBOARDING. THE NAME COMES FROM MILLIONS OF BIRDS THAT TEND TO REST THERE SINCE IT IS A RELATIVELY ABANDONED LOCATION.**



"IT IS PRETTY TRICKY TO SCORE SINCE, DEPENDING ON TIDES, IT SOMETIMES STICKS OUT AND SOMETIMES GETS FLOODED, SO IT IS NOT ALWAYS A WIN-WIN SITUATION.

WE CHOSE THE PERFECT DAY, AND TO OUR LUCK, NO ONE ELSE WAS AROUND. WE RENTED A VINTAGE SHIPPING BOAT WITH A DARING LOCAL CAPTAIN AND SET OFF INTO THE HEART OF HEL BAY."



# BATTLE FOR THE LAKE

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**"IT TURNED OUT TO BE A FANTASTIC DAY, STARTING AT 5 AM AND ENDING AT SUNSET. WE MANAGED TO CAPTURE SOME STUNNING PHOTO AND VIDEO CONTENT. WE HAD AN AMAZING DAY SESSION WITH OUR LOCAL TEAM RIDERS, KAROLINA AND KASIA, WHO ARE TRUE EXPERTS IN THE AREA. THAT IS HOW YOU MAKE GREAT MEMORIES."**





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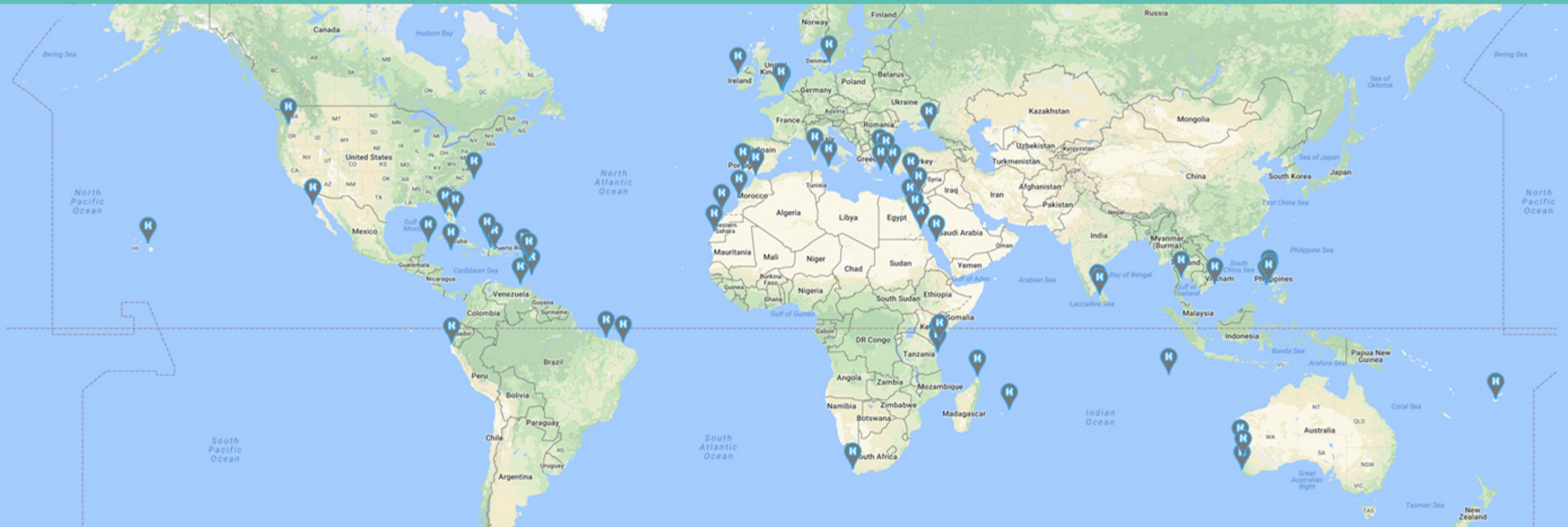
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PHOTOS ELEVEIGHT TEAM & KERLI HALLISTE

# TECH FOCUS

## ELEVEIGHT XS PRO

Eleveight recently unveiled their latest high-performance kite, the XS Pro, after nearly three years of development.

Constructed with cutting-edge Aluula material and perfected through extensive testing, this kite is designed to push the boundaries of big air riding. The XS Pro promises an unparalleled riding experience, offering speed, precision, and the ultimate challenge for riders seeking to elevate their big air game.







**"THE PRO RANGE PROJECT WAS STARTED NEARLY THREE YEARS AGO AS WE KNEW THAT ALUULA MATERIAL HAD GREAT POTENTIAL."**

**Congratulations on the launch of the new kite; how long have you been developing the XS Pro?**

Thanks. We are very proud of our new Pro range and all the work that went into it. The Pro range project was started nearly three years ago as we knew that Aluula material had great potential. Still, initially, we were sceptical about using it as a raw material until we could find a way to ensure its durability. We had great feedback regarding Aluula's performance, but the construction technique caused some issues.

Now, with the updates and improvements in Aluula material and the related reinforcements, the whole production process has become easier, with increased durability in the long term. The XS Pro has had many

prototype revisions over the years with different material combinations. Still, we finalised the development process at the beginning of 2024 and are more than happy with the performance outcome.

**Which team riders have you been working with closely to test it, and who led the kite's design?**

Peter Stiewe is the mastermind behind our products and co-founder of Eleveight, and he's been the driving force behind our Pro range. Peter loves being challenged to develop state-of-the-art performance kites, and the XS Pro was a great quest. Our current XS is already an absolute beast regarding hangtime, lift, and general power generation. Still, we wanted the XS Pro to be more dynamic and direct with an

increased loop speed while following the same DNA.

Arthur Guillebert was our first rider to get his hands on the new XS Pro. Together with Peter, they refined some general parameters and tested the kite in different conditions, from warm winds in Brazil to niking conditions in South Africa. Later, a near-final version was also tested by our French and Estonian team riders with a crew consisting of Jojo Heurto, Kaimar Halliste, Martin Rahnell, Madis Põdra and Thibault Mounier. We could see and feel that we were on the right path as the team were so excited; they pushed the limits, and it was hard to get our prototypes back into our hands. If riders start to fight for a kite, then you know that the R&D team did a fantastic job!





**" THE LOOP SPEED IS INCREDIBLY FAST, AND IT HAS AN EXTREMELY DYNAMIC LIFT THAT WILL PUSH YOU TO THE NEXT LEVEL IN HEIGHT. "**

**Aluula is the de rigueur material of the moment. What does it offer the XS Pro, and is it worth the extra investment for the average rider?**

Aluula has a lot of advantages for high-performance products like the XS Pro. It is not only lighter in weight but also much stiffer, more reactive, and more dynamic in flying performance. Particularly for the very popular big air discipline, high-performance products make absolute sense to be able to push for the extra meter in height or the radical loop.

The XS Pro is like our high-performance racing car. It offers much more direct flight characteristics, the loop speed is incredibly fast, and it has an extremely dynamic lift that will push you to the next level in height. The stiffer frame structure has less deformation in extreme winds and much better recovery than traditional materials, which makes the kite very well-performing in the high-wind conditions used by the big air riders.

Considering the high price level, the question of the extra investment is more than relevant for an average rider. We have to be careful what we communicate to the end consumer. Only some people can drive a racing car, and you need skills to utilise the extra performance level. Our Pro range is more targeted towards the ambitious rider who can use higher-level products.

We sometimes need to remember that traditional construction is much more suitable for many riders. A bit more flex in the inflatable structure also helps with progression and has a much more intuitive and balanced flight performance. The price point is also better, making the sport more affordable for a broad range of people.



**How does the XS Pro's construction support its performance in different wind conditions?**

The good thing about Aluula products is that their performance advantages go both ways. Firstly, Aluula is much lighter than normal Dacron, and the overall kite weight is up to 25% lighter. Secondly, we can construct the kite with a smaller diameter leading edge, which impacts aerodynamics and flying speed and reduces weight. Both factors greatly impact lower winds, and the XS Pro starts and performs much better in the lower wind ranges.

The other advantage it has is performing in a high wind range, as the stiffer frame structure leads to more form stability and less deformation, which is very noticeable in stronger winds. The kite also has more flying speed and is more reactive on very windy days, and of course, durability plays a big role in these conditions as well.

**You stuck with a five-strut design. What advantages does this bring over a three-strut big air kite?**

Both kite DNAs have some advantages and will favour different riding styles. A 5-strut design like the XS has a higher aspect ratio and generates constant power, which is noticeable in the upwind performance, especially when jumping. The XS also has a massive vertical lift and super long hang time as the kite is made for height and is the go-to kite if you want to chase some records. Furthermore, the loops are fast and powerful, with much horizontal forward momentum. In short, the XS offers a lot of raw power for the big air riders who want to go high. A 3-strut design like our RS or the upcoming RS Pro may be used more by technical big air riders seeking a less powerful kite that is faster at looping, perfect for the double loopers.

**"THE XS OFFERS A LOT OF RAW POWER FOR THE BIG AIR RIDERS WHO WANT TO GO HIGH"**





**"YOU WILL GET A MORE HORIZONTAL FORCE THAT FEELS LIKE YOU ARE ROCKETED INTO OLD-SCHOOL LOOPS."**



**What other design features should we be aware of in this new kite?**

Apart from using Aluula as a high-end material for the leading edge, we also used XT light material for the struts, as we found that this helps the XS Pro perform better, offering more twists in the struts and an increase in loop speed.

We also focused on developing the canopy tension for a cleaner profile for the XS and the XS Pro. The panel cuts in the kite are made to distribute the force more efficiently so the kite can withstand the strong force when jumping and looping.

The XS Pro also features our new 3D bridle deflector to reduce bridle catch, protecting the kite from inverting.


**How fast is it through the loops, and can weekend warriors expect to be able to pull doubles with it if they have the guts to pull the trigger?**

Absolutely yes! Of course, you need many skills and guts for doubles, but as I said in the beginning, the XS has very powerful speeds, and you will get a more horizontal force that feels like you are rocketed into old-school loops. Doubles are possible but with fewer board-offs and more extra power!!!

**It's billed as an extremely big air kite. Does it have other tricks, like foiling and freeride, or is this a pure thoroughbred?**

The XS DNA is made as an extreme freeride kite focusing on jumping. The XS Pro is the racing version with extra performance. Nevertheless, the kite is still an excellent freeride with a lot of grunt and fast turning, which is great for any freeride session in all conditions. It is a fun kite with extra power that quickly unlocks some doors, regardless of your style.





**“ IF YOU ARE ALREADY INTO BIG AIR, THE XS PRO WILL HELP YOU PROGRESS FURTHER AND PUSH YOU TO THE NEXT LEVEL. ”**

**What sort of rider should think about buying the XS Pro?**

We market the XS to radical riders favouring big air as their discipline—the XS Pro targets even more ambitious riders looking for the absolute top in big air performance.

**How easy is it to unlock the performance of**

**the kite, and is it easy to fly for the amateur big air junkies?**

You can compare the XS Pro with a racing car. You will feel the performance instantly, and it is a lot of fun. However, to unlock the performance, you also need a certain level of skills. One thing is to access the power and feel it, to experience the massive lift

and forward momentum. The other thing is to control it and land smoothly and safely.

If you are already into big air, the XS Pro will help you progress further and push you to the next level. If you are beginning your big air adventure, our normal XS or RS is most likely a better companion.



QUESTIONS JEN TYLER  
WORDS EWAN JASPAN  
PHOTOS FRANCK BERTHUOT

# TECH FOCUS

## NAISH KITEBOARDING

### 2025 PIVOT

Join Jen Tyler and Ewan Jaspán as they break down the 2025 Naish Pivot—a versatile, three-strut powerhouse designed to excel in waves, foiling, freeride, and big air. Discover the tech innovations and design tweaks that make this kite a standout in every discipline.

Let's dive into the details!





**" WE HAVE FOUND WAYS TO ADD CONTROL AND FORWARD DRIVE TO GIVE YOU EXTRA VERTICAL LIFT AND EASIER EDGING IN HIGHER WINDS "**



The Pivot is your do-it-all three-strut kite, perfect for waves, foiling, freeride, and big air. Is it more suited to any particular discipline this year? Did you focus more on one aspect, or were you keen to keep it on a broad spectrum of use?

Over the previous years, the Pivot was more focused on big air riding. Still, we wanted to maintain its 'do-it-all' abilities, so it was a fine line to balance between making it too fast flying forward and aggressive towards big air and keeping the drift and consistency that the kite is known for. With the introduction of the Psycho, we have put 100% big air performance into that kite. This is not to say the Pivot is not an excellent big air kite, as in the last years, we have found ways to add control and forward drive to give you extra vertical lift and easier edging in higher winds to hold down more power.

**What changes did you make to the kite's handling? What should we expect when we launch it?**

When you launch the kite, you will notice a larger range of depower. With the all-new profiles, specific to each size, and the optimised aspect ratios, we have been able to enhance user control across all wind speeds, making a kite you can trust to advance your riding.

**Who was the lead designer, and what are the main differences between the 2025 Pivot and us?**

I am the kite designer at Naish, so that's me! That is not to say it is not a total team effort, though. Des Walsh is instrumental in the process; he is imperative from early ideas to bridle work to testing. We also have his son and Naish Team Rider, Tim Walsh, a vital test rider who tests between Maui and Hood River with Des and me. We have many other test riders,





**“ THE Q STANDS FOR QUALITY, AS EVERYTHING WE DO IN OUR KITES IS THOUGHT THROUGH WITH USER BENEFITS IN MIND. ”**

and between the three offices of Naish in Maui, Hood River, and Holland, we have a wealth of experience and skills that we can lean on to make the best possible kite.

#### **What are the benefits of the redesigned bridle system?**

We have spread some bridle points to distribute the load evenly across the wingtip, resulting in higher control and stability. A bridle adjustment also changes the kite between high and low wind settings. The high wind setting allows the kite to drive further forward in the window and excels in big air riding and styles where you need more depower, like

cross/offshore wave riding. The low wind setting has the kite sitting deeper in the window, giving more sheet in-and-go power, and also gives the kite better drift for cross/onshore wave riding and kite foiling.

#### **How does the new Pivot differ from other kites in this popular category on the market?**

One thing that sets the Naish kites aside from others is the build quality. Hence, we are launching this Pivot as the inaugural kite in the Q series product line. The Q stands for Quality, as everything we do in our kites is thought through with user benefits in mind. We use only Teijin materials for the LE, Struts and canopy.

Teijin is the industry leader in premium performance, durability, low elongation and UV stability, meaning your Naish kite will last over time. We use strong and proven bladders mixed with the all-new bladder cap construction and premium one-pump valves, meaning bladder explosions or leaks are almost eliminated, so over time, you'll spend more time on the water and less time in repair. This year's bridle lines have been upgraded to TLS bridle lines with a clean locking splice. They are more aero and hydro-dynamic, giving increased efficiency while flying and easier water relaunch as the line breaks the surface tension of the water easier due to the reduced thickness in the line.







In terms of performance, the Pivot can excel in all disciplines; unlike more all-around kites, you will see the Pivot on podiums in multiple disciplines worldwide, showing its true potential, which can outdo any other all-rounder.

#### **What are the benefits of the Diagonal Load Seam?**

The diagonal load seam runs from where the steering line attaches on the wingtip all the way to the centre strut of the kite. New this year, we added another seam running from the wingtip to the second strut as well. This distributes the steering forces throughout the kite, making the kite react faster. The seams also provide rigidity to the canopy, meaning over time, the kite does not bag out and feel worse.

#### **What is the significance of the Profile Lock Seam in the new Pivot?**

The Profile lock seam is another feature new to '25. This seam runs along the deep point in the kite profile, where the canopy has the most stress. It locks the profile in and gives a tight, crispy feel that lasts session after session, helping your kite drive forward deeper into its lifespan.


#### **What feedback have riders given about the 2025 Pivot?**

Just the fact that not only have we worked on having the whole lineup have a similar feel throughout the size range, but also how each one we have managed to have perfectly balanced and perform exactly how it should. It is a true evolution of where the Pivot was from previous years, but in the last two seasons, we have modernised the performance and build quality to excel above all others. We are confident that we are as close to perfection as possible,

**“ IN THE LAST TWO SEASONS, WE HAVE MODERNISED THE PERFORMANCE AND BUILD QUALITY TO EXCEL ABOVE ALL OTHERS. ”**







**" THE TEAM IS EVER-LEARNING AND EVOLVING, AND WE ARE STOKED WITH HOW THINGS ARE RIGHT NOW AT NAISH. "**

but we will still strive for gains in future models. Many riders love the Pivot as a kite they can take anywhere and do anything with, feeling confident that their gear is helping them be better kiteboarders.

**Great product video! Can you tell us a little more about the shoot? Where was it, and who was there?**

The video was shot between two locations. Firstly, we shot in Maui at some new locations with Tim, Robby, and myself. Maui is a great place to shoot because you never must stress about scoring conditions. You know you can lock it in; it will be windy, and there will be waves. It's ideal for any kite shoot. Part two of the shoot was in Venezuela with Stig and the Kite Bros team. The shots they logged were incredible, the location is idyllic, and the product stands out. The new colours shone in that lighting, and we were stoked with the look. Stig is great at being able to make the shoot happen and consistently delivers high-quality shots mixed with Andy Troy's video and photo skills.

**Anything exciting coming up at Naish that we can keep our eyes out for?**

Always!

We are finishing the products for our Q1 launch, including some much-anticipated ones. The Boxer will be revamped, and the Psycho will have a Q series launch. Otherwise, there is only a little I can speak of exactly here. Still, we are doing some exciting work with new materials to hit the sweet spot in the market between performance and pricing, which is imperative for the customer. The team is ever-learning and evolving, and we are stoked with how things are right now at Naish.



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# EVENT FOCUS

## BATTLE FOR THE LAKE 2024

The most hotly anticipated action sports festival on the Emerald Isle, Pure Magic's Battle for the Lake, is back for their 15th edition. The event, which will encompass kitesurfing, windsurfing, SUPing, surfing, wingfoiling, live music acts, and plenty of other festivities, will take place on the windswept shores of Achill Island, County Mayo, from the 27-29th of September 2024.







**“OFF THE WATER, THE EVENT WILL SEE SOME OF IRELAND’S MOST CELEBRATED MUSIC ACTS TAKE TO THE STAGE FOR A FULL WEEKEND OF MUSIC”**

The competition has rapidly been gaining popularity as spectator numbers soar into the thousands and social media explodes with talk of the groundbreaking format; not to mention the support it’s garnered from some of the kitesurfing industry’s biggest and best athletes.

Combining surf culture, music, and plenty of craic, the festival will play host to Mayo Mayhem, a 2 star IWA Wavesailing Competition; the Irish SUP Wave Classic; the Achill Surf Open; and The WOW Show, an invitation-only extreme kiteboarding event.

The Wow Show, arguably the highlight of the Battle for the Lake weekend, will see 10 of the kite world’s most renowned pro riders taking to Achill’s frigid

waters to battle it out in 10 unique heats. The concept was born last year and commemorated on social media with that selfie of pro rider Kevin Langeree jumping over an exhilarated crowd.

This year, attendees will have categories like extreme beach starts, synchro rounds, dark slides, super stylish mega loops, and the rather curious ‘sheep attack’ all to look forward to. Expect the unexpected as they say over there!

Thanks to Achill’s amphitheatre-like beach, riders are able to bring the action right up close to spectators on the shore, where they pull the wildest tricks possible in an effort to wow the crowd. The event breaks away from the standard kite competition format; that of

that of traditional course racing, freestyle, or downwind slalom -- in favour of off-the-wall heats that encourage riders to express their creativity, style, skill, and personality.

Off the water, the event will see some of Ireland’s most celebrated music acts take to the stage for a full weekend of music, from electric tunes to traditional Irish folk.

This year’s lineup includes Jiggy, Aindriais de Staic & the Latchikos, Attention Bebe, Havana Roots, Sexy Tadhg, Bog Bodies, The Circus Ponies, Guillaume Yaouank, Amos, Moses, Graham Sweeny, Swiftie, January Winters, Dj Pierr and many more still to be announced.





**"THE LOCATION OF THE EVENT, ACHILL ISLAND, SITS ALONG THE HERALDED WILD ATLANTIC WAY AND HAS EARNED ITSELF A SPOT ON THIS YEAR'S LIST OF 50 BEST BEACHES IN THE WORLD"**

The location of the event, Achill Island, sits along the heralded Wild Atlantic Way and has earned itself a spot on this year's list of 50 best beaches in the world. But unlike many of the other entries on the list, Achill is home to the fierce wind and water conditions brought on by frequent Atlantic squalls -- which may not be to everyone's taste but to a kitesurfer, it's a veritable dream come true.

Battle for the Lake is hosted by Pure Magic Watersports, whose team is comprised of brothers Francois and Chris Colussi alongside Catherine Etienne. Tickets for the Battle for the Lake event are on sale now at [EventBrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com). Details, accommodation, and prices are as follows:

#### **Price**

Weekend Pass: €90

Night Pass (Friday or Saturday): €65

\*free for kids under 12 years old

#### **Accommodation**

Camping Available for €20/person/night with our partner Keel Camping

(You can also book a BnB or little cottage on the island)

**[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)**





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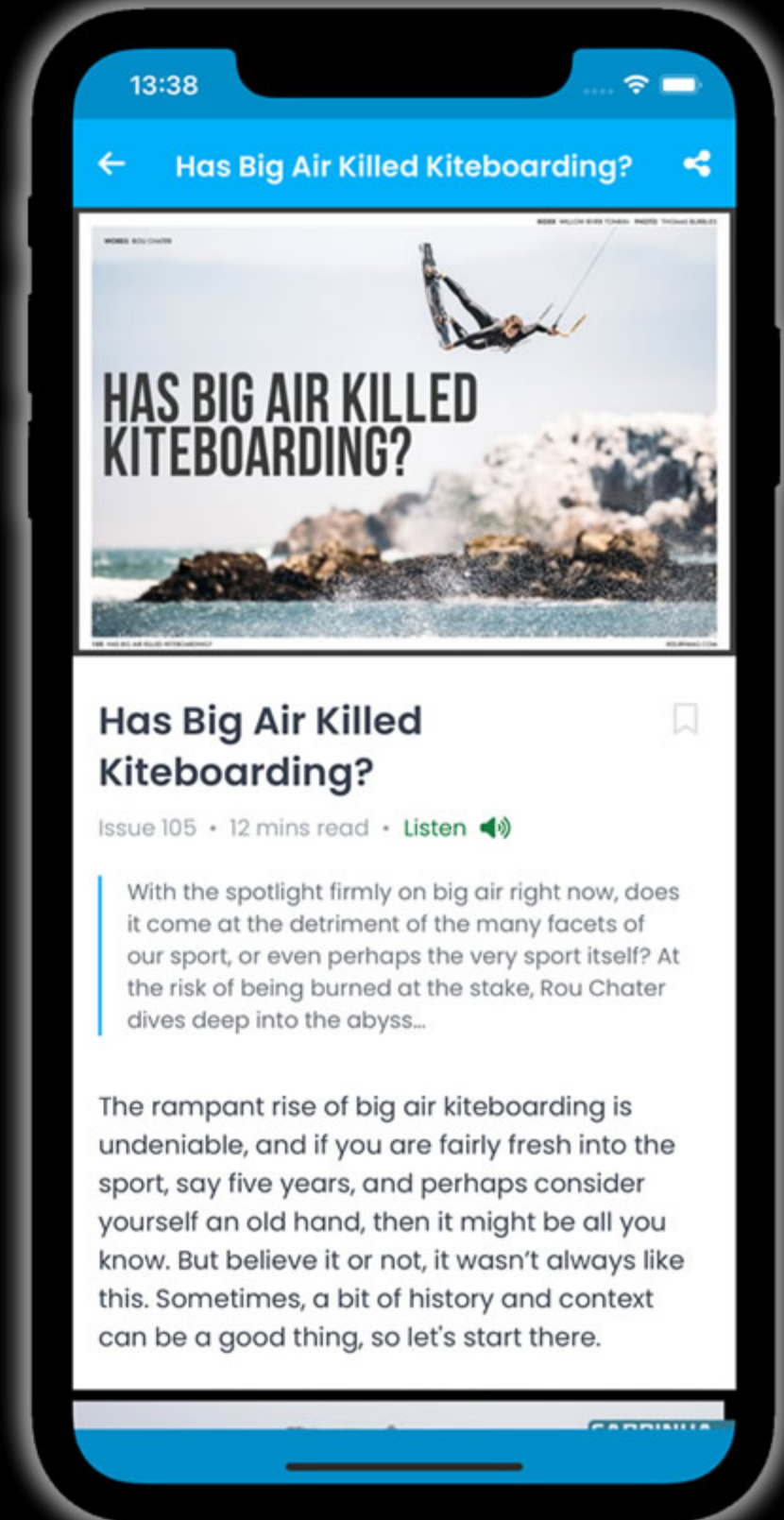
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SPLIT GOALS: NOBILE'S CARBON SPLIT DELIVERS PURE PERFECTION  
PHOTO TOM EK WOTANG



*Lightroom*



KING FU JAN BURGDOERFER OWNING THE MOMENT LIKE A BOSS!  
PHOTO MORITZ BECKER



*Lightroom*



SANTIAGO CISNEROS STRIKES GOLD - WHAT A BACKDROP  
PHOTO SAMUEL CARDENA



*Lightroom*



FLY FISCH SOAKING UP THOSE GOLDEN RAYS ON LAKE CONSTANCE, AUSTRIA  
PHOTO DIETMAR STIPLOVSEK

*Lightroom*



GOOD LUCK GETTING ANDREW TO LEAVE THE PARADISE VIBES OF ATLANTIS BEACH, BONAIRE  
PHOTO ARNAUD FLY.MEDIA.PRODUCTIONS



*Lightroom*



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

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

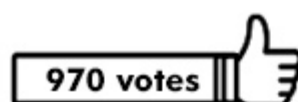
Put the popcorn on, it's Movie Night!

# MOVIE NIGHT

#1

## KITESURFERS FIGHT AFTER SHORT TACKLING

BAKL takes the spotlight with a clickbait thumbnail you can't ignore! Witness jaw-dropping megaloops, 20m+ jumps, and epic banter as four of the world's top big air kites go head-to-head for a \$4,000 prize. Let the battle begin!

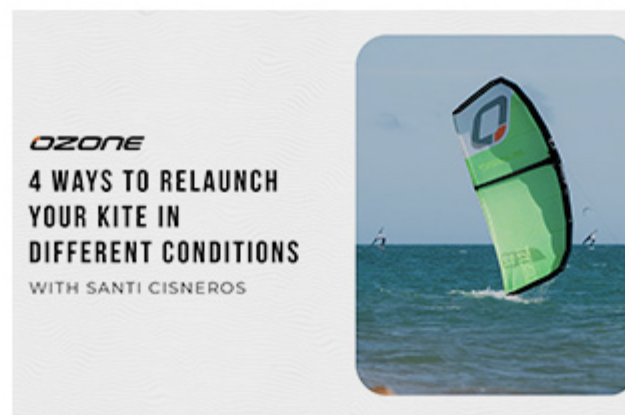
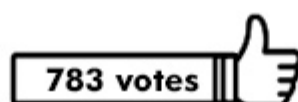


[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#2

## 4 WAYS TO RELAUNCH YOUR KITE WITH SANTI CISNEROS | RIDER TIPS

Santi Cisneros shares four essential techniques for relaunching your kite from the water in various wind conditions. Whether you're dealing with light breezes or strong gusts, these tips are sure to simplify your life!

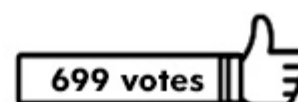


[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#3

## #3 SETTING TRIM & STOPPER (FOR DIFFERENT HEIGHTS & WIND SPEEDS)

Alex Buss from Kitesurf College's detailed tutorial on setting trim and stopper for optimal kite performance comes in hot at #3 on our Movie Night list - Discover the secrets here!

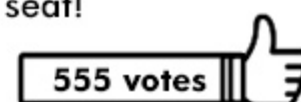


[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#4

## BEST CRASHES | GKA BIG AIR KITE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS GRAN CANARIA 2024

OUCH! Get ready for some serious movie drama with the 'best' crashes from the Big Air Kite World Championships in Gran Canaria - this one will keep you on the edge of your seat!



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)



RIDER THEO DE RAMECOURT PHOTO MIRIAM JOANNA



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