The KITE mag.

THE ULTIMATE

TEST GUIDE

#3

RPX ALL NEW

XTRA FREERIDE

Rider: Stijn Mul
Photo: Sam Light

XTRA LIGHT

XTRA FAST

XTRA VERSATILE

SPEED | VERSATILITY | CONTROL

Featuring 88 less panels, a completely redesigned trailing edge, a 25% thinner bridle, and a 10% overall weight reduction, the all new RPX V1 is next step in freeride kite design.

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SLINGSHOT

F-one

IC6 950

AREA 950CM2
SPAN 65CM
A / R 4.4

EASIER THAN EVER

The latest front wing design is 950cm². It has been refined from the previous versions to extend the range of use. With more lift, the IC6 V3 is easier than ever to learn on and have fun whatever your foiling level. Using careful design, it can fly at very low speed but it can also accelerate with great maneuverability and a fantastic carving potential. The IC6 950 V3 is designed for anyone looking for a first foil purchase or simply for a versatile setup able to deliver tons of fun on the water.

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Photo - YDWER
Rider - LIAM WHALEY
Spot -CORSICA

WWW.F-ONE.WORLD

Watch them fly!
Rider **JANEK GRZEGORZEWSKI**
Photo **Thomas Burblies**

CORE

SKYSCRAPER

More power, more vertical lift, and maximum kite stability. It's so easy to earn your wings with the XR7's new canopy material CoreTex 2.0 and ExoTex Light struts. The added muscle and 8% weight loss make it more turny and playful than ever. So, begin your air venture on the confidence-inspiring XR7.

HIGH PERFORMANCE
BIG AIR / FREERIDE / FREESTYLE / WAVE

XR7

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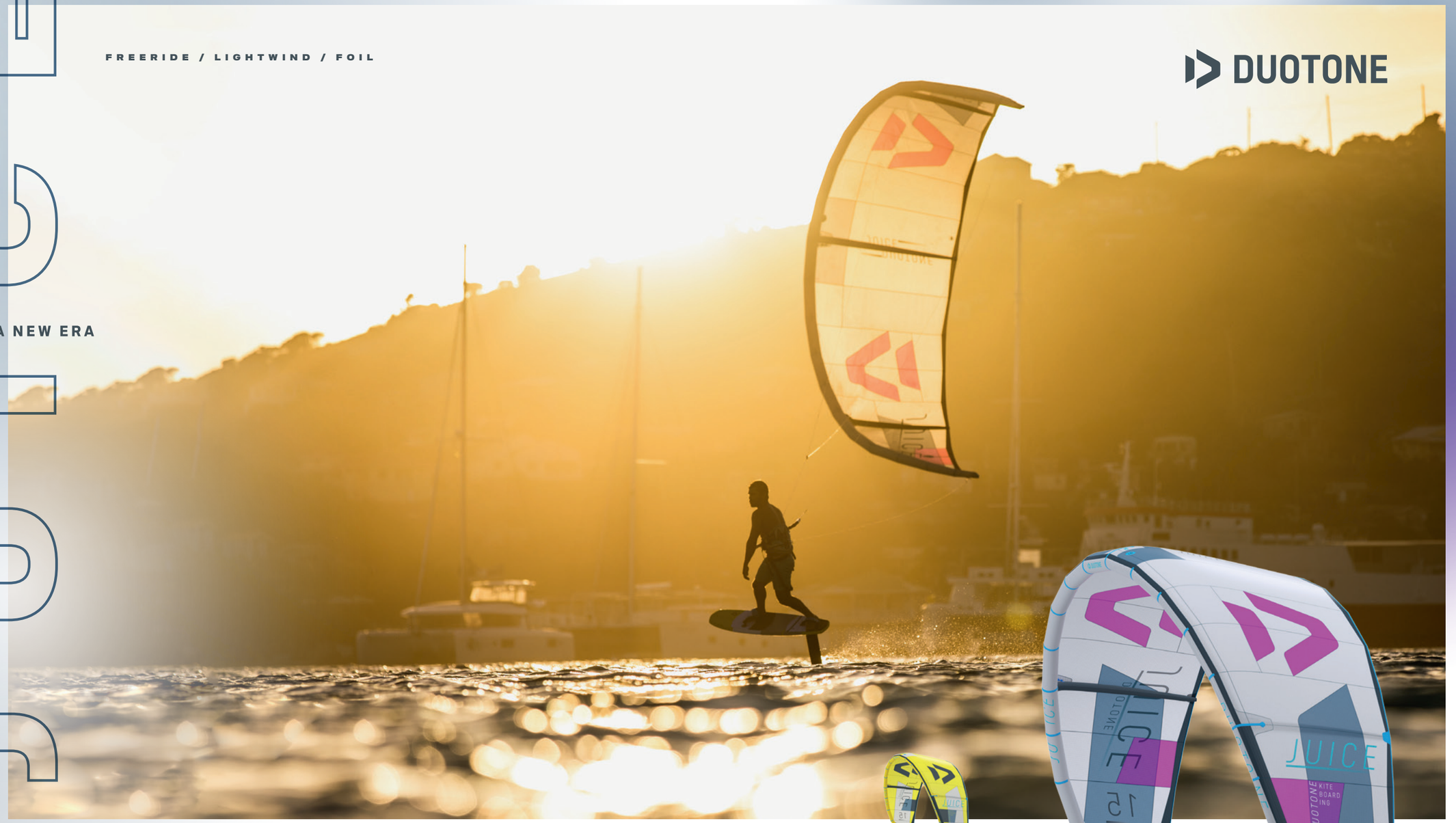
ExoTex LIGHT ® ULTRA LIGHT DACRON

FREERIDE / LIGHTWIND / FOIL

DUOTONE

JOIN THE POWER OF A NEW ERA



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TRINITY TX
DEVELOPED WITH TEIJIN FRONTIER CO.LTD

FOLLOW US

Welcome to the complete results of our third Ultimate Test, the most comprehensive assessment of kite gear that you'll find anywhere on the planet. We've ridden, measured, weighed and reflected on an insane amount of gear over a four month period…
Everything has been ridden back-to-back and in a range of conditions, and can assure you that we have found the very best gear that you can be riding. Please note that ALL of these tests and MANY MORE can now be found on the biggest online catalogue of kite tests at thekitemag.com/test-centre.

ALEX HAPGOOD
(EDITOR-IN-CHIEF)

RICH BOUGHTON
(TECHNICAL EDITOR)

We do like a challenge here at TheKiteMag.

You might think it is a dream to test all the very latest products from the top brands… But imagine getting stuck at customs in Spain with €85k of kite gear in your van. Imagine trying to fit 14 coffin bags full of gear onto a minivan in Morocco, and imagine sneaking 12 full foil set ups onto a nature reserve in Portugal before the sun comes up… We have done all of this and more in the first two Ultimate Tests.

So we are used to challenges, but this year has tried the patience of even the most optimistic riders on the team… You may have heard of the global pandemic. As it ebbed and flowed we made plans to test in Spain, Morocco, Portugal, the US, and assorted other destinations… But when it came to it, as lockdowns returned, and with our Technical Editor and most of our test crew in the UK, we decided to give ourselves more time to test than usual (to compensate for the fact that the UK isn't as consistent as Dakhla) and to get it done in the UK. Oh, and then Brexit happened, and suddenly we're spending days on end trying to explain that the €15k worth of kite gear stuck in customs is *definitely not for sale and will be going back from whence it came.* Yes, it has been a lot of fun…

But we got there, later than we would have liked to but, hopefully, you'll forgive us given the circumstances. And the good news is that you only have six months until the next test!

It has been an exciting and positive year for kite development. The pandemic seems to have triggered a massive surge in demand for windsports products amidst the perfect storm for the supply chain. We have seen Asian production slow down, material shortages due to snowstorms in Texas, shipping problems galore, and even the Suez Canal blocked up. It has been a series of events no one could have predicted, and getting the Ultimate Test done has been challenging at times, but no less fascinating than usual. It has also been great to see the gear really put to test in the slightly less glamorous cold water conditions in the UK which, let's face it, is the reality for a good cross section of our readership. (Perhaps the biggest 'gamechanger' for me this year was the electric wetsuit dryer and a strict two-suit rotation.)

I cast my mind back into the mists of my involvement with the industry and being sat (next to fledgling pro starlet Hannah Whiteley) at a dealer meeting in Tarifa over 10 years ago. A respected paraglider and inflatable kite designer, who was involved at the inception of our sport, was giving a highly technical hour-long presentation on modern kite design. He was bewildering most of his audience, but being of a geekier nature I was enthralled, and asked the generic question: "What's the biggest change we will see in kite design in the near future?" He replied, "We won't see major performance changes until the material – particularly that of the air frames – gets lighter, stronger and stiffer". Ten years later and we are starting to see this become a reality; brands have started lauding overall lightness as a marketing point, and the fact is that when it comes to flying objects, an intelligent low weight build has tangible performance advantages over a heavy durable one. The cynic in me might also say that another variable is that the material costs have now reached a level that makes it viable for the brands to start implementing it into their product ranges…

Whatever the reason, what we've been presented with this season are kites that are more sprightly, dynamic and sharper than ever, and with wind ranges that are increasing at both ends of the usability spectrum. So it genuinely feels like an exciting time in the world of kite design, with the industry in general undoubtedly going through a period of particular innovation and excitement…

RIDER: BRUNA KAJIYA | PHOTOGRAPHER: DIEGO CORREIA

PULSE FOCUS NAVIGATOR

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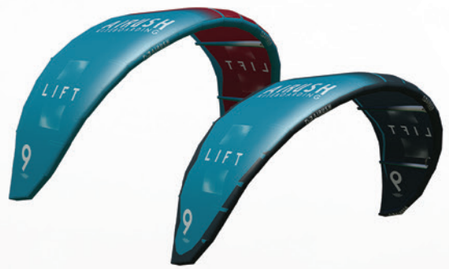
KITEBOARDING

GET LIFTED



THE NEW LIFT

is all about boosting, hangtime, and taking performance freeride to new heights. Designed for the rider looking for stability in the wildest conditions, exceptional hangtime and explosive power.

AIRUSH.COM

PHOTO: KYLE CABANO

THE NEW LIFT

RIDERS: SAM MEDYSKY

SNAPLOCK QUICK RELEASE

ACCESSORIES NOT INCLUDED

MICRO LOOP
Leveraging the completely new loop attachment system, we've created the most compact loop on the market. The Micro Loop provides an incredibly locked-in and controlled experience, significantly reducing the distance between the rider and the trim cleat. The seamless transition between the kiter and the kite ensures the most direct kite connection available. Through countless iterations, we've developed a unique chicken finger to make attaching and detaching the loop effortless. If you're not looking to unhook, this is undoubtedly the perfect loop for you.

MEDIUM LOOP
Playing off of the proven size of our previous QR, the Medium Loop offers a locked in feel while still allowing you to go unhooked at a moments notice.

SLIDER LOOP
Built from incredibly strong and durable stainless steel, our carabiner-style Slider Loop provides the ideal low-friction attachment for rope slider harnesses. If you're looking for the purest surf feeling or just loving riding toeside, this is the loop for you.

TECHNICAL FEATURES

ONE-CLICK RELOAD
Effortlessly reload your quick release with one simple motion.

INSTANTANEOUS LOOP CHANGE
Swap between four different loop styles in an instant. Whether you are sharing kites with a friend, or want to change up your riding style, it is now easier than ever.

RELEASE ON DEMAND
An ergonomic design paired with an increased quick release throw keeps you clicked in securely and releases on demand.

SHORTENED SYSTEM
We have brought everything within reach and enhanced your feeling of control by cutting over 3 cm off of the complete safety system.

FEATHER TRIM
A compact and lightweight trim cleat reduces drag on your center lines and gives you a more direct connection to your kite.

UNIBODY DESIGN
Utilizing a single piece of stainless steel that includes all the necessary features allows for an incredibly strong yet lightweight design.

OPTIMIZED TEETH
Refined tooth angle and shaping for easy and secure trimming.

PU TUBE COLLAR
An elongated collar around the PU tube along with orientation-locking geometry ensures the tube remains fixed into the cleat.

ENLARGED DRIVE SIZE
Forget about stripped screws with oversized 3 mm hex drive screws.

VELCRO FACE
Keep the trim line tangle-free and within reach with a velcro face on both sides of the cleat and on the trim line handle.

PRE-STRETCHED TLS400 FLYING LINES
Market-leading strength eliminates uneven line stretch while low-profile connections help reduce line tangle and drag.

FLAGGING LINE STOPPER BALL
Prevent the bar from getting too far away when activating the QR using the ultralight flagging line stopper ball.

FLEX-FLOAT
All-new floater design with an integrated flex section to reduce steering interference.

DUAL-DENSITY EVA GRIP WITH MEMORY CORE
Two distinct layers of EVA foam combined with a strategically placed memory-foam core provide an incredibly comfortable and intuitive grip without any slip.

SNAPLOCK QUICK RELEASE
The SnapLock safety system is a massive jump forward in quick release technology. In short, we've taken everything we've learned from being on the cutting edge of kiteboarding for 25 years and put it into one simple, sleek, and incredibly safe package.

TORQUE 2
CONTROL SYSTEM

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RRD

VISION

Ph: Francesco Leggio - Rider: Abel Lago

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CONTENTS

KITE TEST CRITERIA

ANGLE OF ATTACK FORCE TEST
We attached a Newton meter between the harness and chicken loop… Two readings are taken:

1) The initial reading is taken with kite in depowered position (bar out). The pilot sits braced against the floor with the kite at 45 degrees and, when it is stable, a wind meter reading and the reading o" the crane meter is to be taken. Repeated at least three times ensuring no anomalies in recordings.

2) The test is repeated as above but with the bar sheeted in all the way.

Both results are recorded and the difference between the two values is recorded. We found this to be a very solid indicator of the power a kite had on tap. So the higher the value, the more power the kite had.

TURNING SPEED
Subjective assessment of turning speed as perceived by individual riders.

• 10 Flies constantly up and down with no lag or stalling in turn.
• 7-9 Kite flies very quickly and has a quick turn which is fairly tight with little lag or stalling.
• 4-6 Kite flies steadily up and down with a small amount of lag or stalling.

BAR PRESSURE
Subjective assessment of bar pressure as perceived by individual riders.
NB: 10 is not necessarily a 'good' score, it just indicates that bar pressure is relatively low.

• 10 Bar pressure is light and almost unnoticeable and after a session. Rider's arms do not feel tired. Can comfortably ride with the kite fully powered all of the time.
• 7-9 Bar pressure is still light with only a small amount of fatigue after a session or when riding the kite fully powered.
• 4-6 Bar pressure is heavier and after a session the rider experiences some fatigue in arms. Rider feels they can only ride with the kite fully powered for a limited amount of time.

LOOP RADIUS
Loop radius was assessed in three ways. A static loop in light wind, a down loop turn, and a sent kite loop. The kite was assessed to see if when it was turned hard if it pivot turned (a tight turn) or if it took a large arc and flew low through the window. The kites were then assigned a value of 1-10, 10 being a tight turn and 1 a wider arc.

STABILITY AT ZENITH
The kite was flown at 12 o'clock. When stable it was then fully depowered and then powered again in quick succession.

• 10 Kite is stable at all points with no falling back.
• 7-9 Kite has little movement with only a small amount of falling back.
• 4-6 Kite falls back a small amount but after a short time it restores itself to the zenith.
• 1-3 Kite is barely at zenith, it falls back significantly into the window before catching itself or falls out of sky.

OVERSHEET TO STALL TEST
The kite was flown at 45 degrees. When stable it was then fully depowered and then powered again in quick succession.

• 10 Kite stays stable at 45 degrees and does not fall back at all.
• 7-9 Kite is relatively still with only a small amount of dropping back but quickly recovers itself.
• 4-6 Kite stays around 45 degrees and at times it drops back into the window but still recovers. • 1-3 kite barely stays in position, it drops back significantly into window resulting in power spikes on recovery or back stalling.

UPWIND ABILITY
Subjective assessment of upwind angles as perceived by individual riders. 10 is the 'best' upwind angle on a kite.
NB: 10 is not necessarily a 'good' score, for some kites you would want them to sit closer to the middle of the window so to have a lower score.

DOWNWIND DRIFT
The tester rides as hard upwind as possible before quickly heading directly downwind towards the kite.

• 10 Kite remains steerable and never looks like it will fall out of the sky.
• 7-9 Kite sits stable and does not look to fall out of the sky but loses a degree of steerage.
• 4-6 Kite sits relatively stable but loses steering and starts to fall slightly.
• 1-3 Kite rapidly loses steering and starts to fall out of the sky.

POP / SLACK TEST
The tester unhooked, loaded and popped for a basic Railey. On landing, they rode towards the kite and assessed how easy it was to hook back in / land blind / surface pass out of the maneuver.

• 10 Kite will slack out on landing and not pull on arm. Pass out would be easy
• 7-9 Kite slacks out a degree on landing allowing easy hooking back in or relatively easy. pass with little pull.
• 4-6 Kite has a small amount of pull on landing and e"ort is required to hook back in.
• 1-3 Kite still pulling hard on landing and hooking back in is difficult.

KITELOOP POWER TEST
The tester performs a downloop turn or a sent kiteloop. Subjective assessment of the amount of pull from the kite.

• 10 Very strong pull resulting in being pulled or almost pulled off edge on a downloop turn, or a huge pull in loop.
• 7-9 In downloop turn there is a large pull resulting in a downloop turn with a lot of speed, in a kiteloop there is a fairly large pull in loop.
• 4-6 In downloop turn there is a fair amount of speed maintained in the turn, in a kiteloop there is a noticeable but controllable amount of pull.
• 1-3 In downloop turn the kite pivots and little speed generated, in a kiteloop there is little power generated.

DUOTONE EVO SLS

The Evo is a long established kite, firmly placed in the competitive performance all-rounder category in the Duotone range. This year it has the application of new SLS materials giving an overall weight saving of 15% on the standard Evo, extending the raw low end and promoting early stable flying. Ralf Grösel has redesigned the kite from the ground up to take advantage of these new materials and make the Evo more performant.
He has not completely reinvented the wheel, and the base platform of the Evo is still the familiar three-strut kite with a relatively flat arc and sharply pointed swept wingtips. Familiar looks aside, there is a multitude of new build differences. The Penta TX material itself feels far more directionally stable than common or garden Dacron, with a super tight weave and a very shiny water repellent coating. Aside from that, the most dramatic change is perhaps in the struts which now have a narrower diameter and far more twist and flex ability to promote smoother and quicker turning. The Flite 99 bridle material is thin and strong, minimizing parasitic drag.
We had heard a lot of very positive feedback from team riders about the Evo SLS and were quite eager to give it a try, and the hype is definitely well founded. Perhaps the best term you could apply to the overall feeling of the new Evo is elegance. Immediately you feel even power delivery as the kite turns and can whip round a kiteloop with a delightfully smooth pull and progressive and smooth climb. Those redesigned struts allow the tip to twist, and solid wingtip battens are present to minimize any vibration during aggressive steering. The kite's enhanced efficiency means you can jump much higher than anticipated in average winds, without the need to be completely overpowered to get decent airtime. When things do hot up a little wind-wise, we found the top end to be extremely composed, and it is easy to access some quite extreme lift, which is amplified by the long throw on the Click bar. If you are heli-looping on your descent, don't be surprised if you get a decent second lift, much like last year's Rebel.

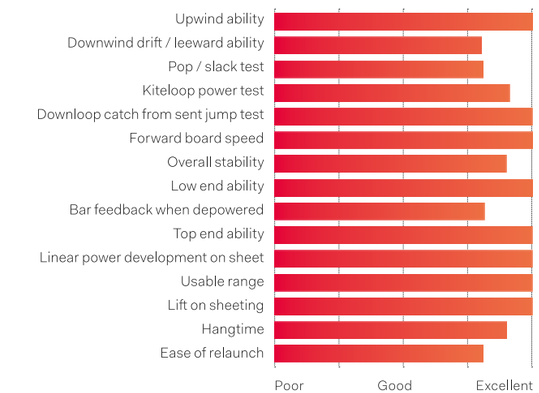
With a foil the Evo can really push forward upwind and achieve some serious upwind angles and it is well behaved enough to throw around and provide some entertaining freeride foiling.
In a way, the overall weight difference compared to a standard Dacron kite isn't the most interesting part of the SLS Evo. The controlled flex in the struts and the extra stiff air frame is what sets it apart. It is more lively, fun and agile than ever, with an extra sprightly performance and very accessible lift on sheet. The lightness on the bar reduces fatigue on the arms, and really lends itself to extended freeride sessions. The extended hang time for learning board offs and air tricks, and innate precision in the handling, make things as easy as it gets. It is a smooth luxury saloon that perhaps suits more of the market than any other in the Duotone range. The Evo has indeed evolved with the SLS material and its application reaches even further across disciplines.

TECHNICAL DATA

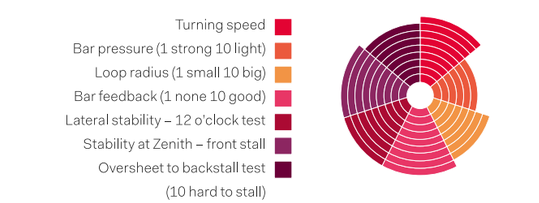
Physical Attributes	
Size tested	8
Kite Weight (kg)	2.42
Weight per m²	0.30
Pulleys per side	0
Leading Edge Hang Points	10
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	21.2
Diameter When Inflated	13.50
Recommended Pressure	7
Battens	4 rigid
Construction	
Canopy Material	Trinity TX
Trailing Edge Material	Mark cloth 160g intermediate
Bridle Material	1.6mm Kevlar
Canopy Sewing	3 step overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	folded single step
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Penta TX
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All
Overall Buildscore	9
Line Deflectors	yes
Self Rescue Handles	yes
Line Attachment	front knots rear loops
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	plastic cap
Tuning points	0
Valve type	airport valve
Notes	4/5 line convertable

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



Static Handling Attributes



NOBILE V-RIDE

Polish board giants Nobile are assigning fresh names to all their LEI kites across the range this year and the V-Ride replaces the previous T5 and improves upon the three-strut hybrid platform aimed for fun and uncomplicated freeriding. The T5 has had a serious lineage stretching back over a decade for Nobile and has had various guises, all the way back to the 555 which was among the first crop of SLE's.
Compared to the previous T5, there is far more of a wave application built into the V-Ride with an obvious crossover in positive characteristics towards general freeriding and foiling. Shape-wise, if you were going to sketch a hybrid kite on a napkin, it would look exactly like this. The build is minimal, but well-considered with scuff protection intelligently placed. It weighs in at almost exactly 3kg, which ranks extremely well for a 12m. The bridle is fairly long with a pulley per side, which allows the pivot point to shift inwards and get the larger canopy moving around the window well. The Dacron trailing edge scallops neatly into the segments of the canopy, and there is a fair amount of extra reinforcement around the struts, which means it will take a roll on a rocky beach without damage.
It is a stately freeride kite with a wave lilt. The low weight allows it to fly relatively early for a 12m and generates progressive smooth low end power and drift aplenty, even in the 12m, not a size usually notable for wave use.
Powered up on a twintip, you're presented with a well-balanced freeride nirvana: easy handling, gentle lift and a smooth curve acceleration. It's as if someone has smoothed out all the usual bumps of kiting. Feathering the bar releases power quickly; we would say the bar pressure sits at the lighter end of the spectrum, which means the weekend warrior will not suffer from a hint of tennis elbow, even on a longer session.

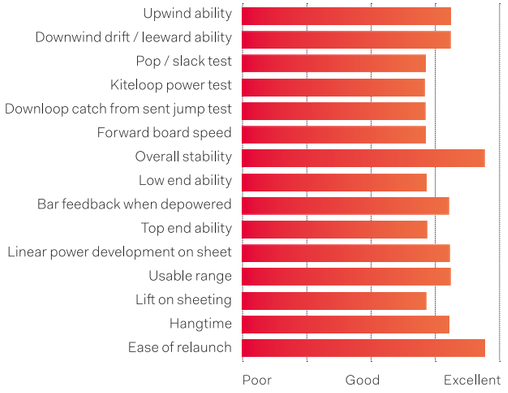
We took the 12m out in some lighter air hydrofoiling and found it to be impeccably behaved with the upper wind range extending a little further than we had imagined. When heavily depowered the kite retains its shape and handling well, and doesn't vibrate until it is at the bitter top end of the wind range and being thrown around.
The V-Ride is a luxury cruiser with gentle power delivery and excellent stability, leading to an unfussy and simple kiting experience regardless of your chosen board or water surface.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	12
Kite Weight (kg)	3.01
Weight per m²	0.25
Pulleys per side	1 slider
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	22.5
Diameter When Inflated	14.32
Recommended Pressure	?
Battens	0
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D2
Trailing Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Bridle Material	2mm Dyneema + 3mm Braded Polyester
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded Single Step
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	16
Overall Buildscore	7
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes
Line Attachment	Front Loops Steering Knots
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Neoprene Hat
Tuning points	0
Valve type	Bayonet

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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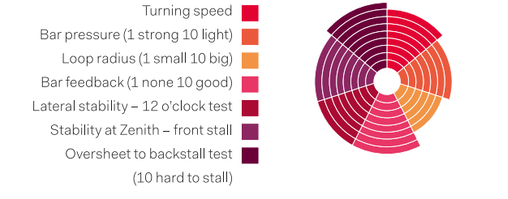


SLINGSHOT RALLY GT V2

The Rally has been a mainstay in the Slingshot range for over a decade, and the previous model perhaps displayed the biggest design overhaul of its lifespan, really bringing it up to speed as a far more modern freeride contender and confidently earning its GT badge. They have clearly been proactive with product development again in Hood River.

Technically speaking, the GT V2 heralds quite a comprehensive rework from last year. The base platform remains a three-strut delta with a fairly complete C-shape. The diameter of the leading edge has been decreased, pushing the kite upwind more and improving general agility. Split strut technology remains which fuses the struts into the 4x4 ripstop canopy. Twin sliders have been implemented into a completely reworked bridle system. Between the struts there's a healthy dose of batwing, which seems to minimize vibration for a smooth experience, even when depowered.

The Rally GT V2 is punchy in its power delivery and has that classic Slingshot feeling of having more power in its specified size than similar shaped kites. Its sheet and go capability is up there with the best and you don't need to finesse the kite at all; it seems to even out and ride through gusts and lulls very smoothly without much pulse through your harness, and seems to maintain a consistent background pull. Steering response is the best ever for a Rally, and the slightly ponderous turning speeds of the old models can be banished well into the mists of time.

Overpowered on the 8m, you could access some impressive and very floaty lift, and the perky handling allows some pokey little trainer kiteloops on tap as well, whether that's to give you a little boost round a transition or an all-out sent number.

For a kite perhaps geared more towards beginners and intermediates, the relaunch is an important factor, and the GT V2 is amongst the most simplistic on the market. The build, although slimmed down a little, will easily stand up to abuse from beginner and school situations, and that low-end instant grunt will be great for those first board starts. For the more established and capable rider, the GT V2 lends itself to old school hooked-in riding and delivers a true all-terrain experience.

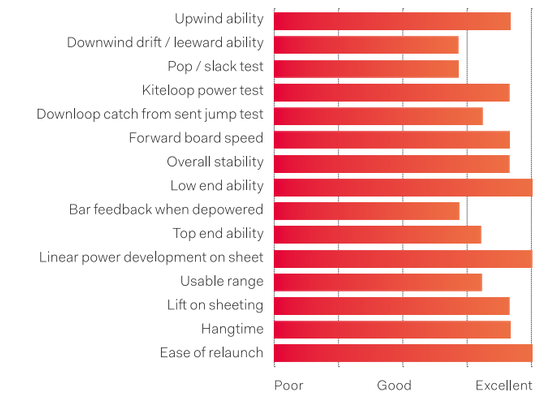
Slingshot are very much on the march with product development at the moment and the Rally GT V2 feels far more than a quick rework. The weight saving and material changes have really livened up the kite from last year, and it now packs a punch and has more far versatility for the serious free rider. It's the kite equivalent to the Willy's Jeep.

TECHNICAL DATA

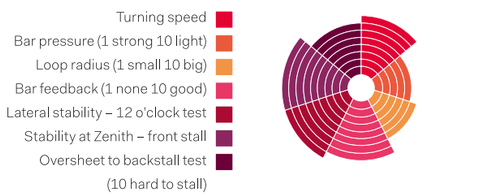
Physical Attributes	
Size tested	8
Kite Weight (kg)	2.75
Weight per m²	0.34
Pulleys per side	1 slider
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	24
Diameter When Inflated	15.28
Recommended Pressure	8
Battens	4 soft
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D4
Trailing Edge Material	Mark Cloth And Leech Line
Bridle Material	2mm Braided Polyester And 3mm Dyneema
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Folded Plus Single Stitch
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Single Stitch, Double Stitch Segments
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All - Kevlar
Overall Buildscore	9
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	No
Line Attachment	Front Loops Steering Knots
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Neoprene Hat
Tuning points	0
Valve type	Bayonet
Notes	Wide One Pump Hoses

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



Static Handling Attributes



CABRINHA MOTO

The Moto has been a stable product in the Cabrinha range for mixed genre riding, and our test team always admired the lighter bar feeling and the ability to throw it around the wind window without serious consequences, giving you the ability to throw some hero loops without ruining your knees. The latest incarnation retains the mid-aspect, full wing tipped, three-strut platform, but the Moto probably sees the largest design overhaul in its legacy, and it has been a two-year development process.

All the Cabrinha kites this year have their own unique-to-the-brand Nano Ripstop canopy material, which has a tighter weave than most cloths, and the plasma treated coating on the cloth is extremely water repellent. There has been a noticeable increase in segmentation across the kite's span in both the canopy and leading edge. This smooths airflow and keeps things nice and efficient. The High Tenacity Dacron is orientated cleverly on the warp axis to minimize stretch in that direction and provide a nice stiff airframe. The bridle has had a serious work-over to make the kite punch forward more in the window and remain ultra-reactive and smooth, which is where the most noticeable changes to its flying characteristics lie. There are some premium touches to the build with neat silicon one-pump covers, sensibly placed lightweight reinforcements, and a no compromises approach to build and materials.

Overall, the kite feels more focused and responsive than ever, and retains the trademark smoothness and amiable character of the previous model. For playful cross-discipline riding the Moto sets a definite benchmark of ease of use and accessible performance. With a twintip, the Moto provides confidence to motivate even the most conservative freerider into throwing down some moves normally outside their comfort zone. The climb out of a kite loop or bottom turn and forward speed across the window seem dramatically improved, without any spiky power delivery.

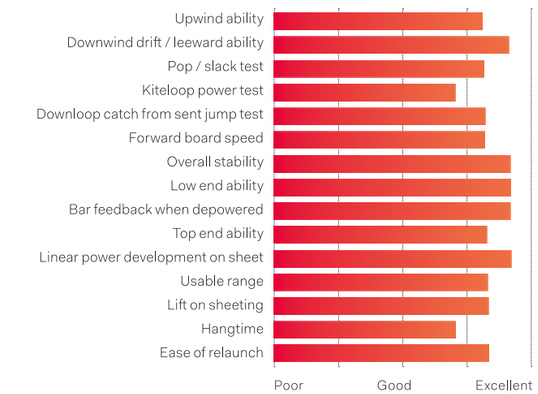
It sits well alongside the Switchblade as a more nimble, all weather and playful alternative for the rider who isn't afraid to switch between a few different styles of board. The wind range and handling in the low end has been massively improved; where the previous model could feel a little pregnant when underpowered, this revised model punches forward and flies much earlier. This has changed the game for the Moto when it comes to freeride hydrofoil use, where it really performs for a three-strut kite. The Moto's versatility has always been its shining point and the latest version increases its application ever further. It is a true all-rounder that will suit a lot of riders, and keep them progressing their skillset.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	10
Kite Weight (kg)	3.19
Weight per m²	0.32
Pulleys per side	0
Leading Edge Hang Points	6
Steering Hang Points per side	2
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	23.2
Diameter When Inflated	14.77
Recommended Pressure	7 to 8
Battens	0
Construction	
Canopy Material	Nano Ripstop (2 Core)
Trailing Edge Material	Two Layer Ripstop
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlaid
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded Double Stitched
Strut / Leading Edge Material	High Tenacity Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	13
Overall Buildscore	8
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	No
Line Attachment	Front Loops - Steering Knots
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Neoprene Hat
Tuning points	No
Valve type	Screw In
Notes	Silicone Covered Valves

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



Static Handling Attributes

CORE NEXUS 2

It is hard to imagine that a few years ago the three-strut all-rounder wasn't really a thing, whereas now it is the biggest sector in the market. As kiters we have realized that versatility does not have to mean compromise, and also that these kites really work, and work to a high level. With this market in mind, the Nexus arrived with considerable fanfare from CORE a couple of years ago. Part of their Universal+ Series of kites (which generally have a 'specialty' but are also usable in other disciplines), the Nexus sat itself clearly in the middle – a kite for waves and freestyle with no clear preference in either department. As with all their kites, the Nexus is on a two (ish) year design cycle so V2 of the Nexus has been refined over a solid period of time and is definitely not just a graphics refresh. The first thing that you'll spot with the new Nexus is wider tips with a distinctive knuckle. CORE are calling these their Radical Reaction Tips and they have been one of the main focuses for this incarnation, designed to improve turning speed and responsiveness without compromising the all-round appeal of the Nexus. The other significant tweak is the inclusion of ExoTex Light in the struts – developed for the X-Lite, this lighter weight Dacron has proved its worth and has now been rolled out to the Nexus 2 resulting in a weight reduction of around 10%.

On the water it immediately feels like a predictable and dependable partner. It sits exactly where you want it to be in the window when you are cruising around, and – even in super gusty conditions – it will move slightly in the window but delivers rock solid stability at the bar end. You have no doubts in the kite and even when overpowered with full depower on, the Nexus 2 was still comfortable to ride, or at least to get you back to the beach to downsize!

For riding in the waves, the Nexus 2 shares the same profile as CORE's wave-specific kite, the Section. Wider tips provide a quicker and more pivotal turn, which we really enjoyed. In cross or cross-on conditions the kite snaps around beautifully and the power delivery enables you to bottom turn and then switch it off as you ride back up the wave. It has to be said that after a few sessions I genuinely felt like a better waverider! If the wind switches offshore then the drift is great – there is plenty of depower and the Nexus 2 will do the easy bit while you focus on finding your top-to-bottom rhythm.

When you are done in the waves you can switch to the freestyle CIT mode. With this switch made, the Nexus 2 immediately has a noticeable bump in power. The kite remains stable, but when you sheet in you can feel that the kite has an extra chunk of power to be utilized, and if you send the kite and sheet in then it is an entirely different beast – like when someone you have known for years does something you would never expect... It loves to boost and is happy to loop, with the pivotal turning in the wave setting replaced by a wider, more GTS-esque arc. You can tell this is not just a token gesture: the Nexus has had the freestyle treatment and really works here.

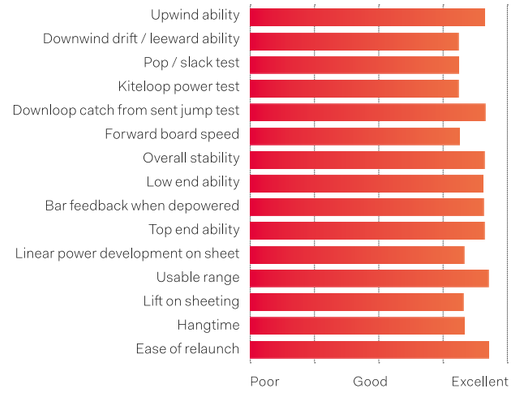
The Nexus 2 continues the popular format established in its predecessor and provides an extremely versatile tool. The risk of an ambitious all-rounder is always that it feels like a compromise in some areas, but the Nexus smooths this over with grace, particularly with the aid of the CIT settings to quickly tune your ride for the discipline.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	2.97
Weight per m²	0.33
Pulleys per side	2 pulleys - 1 slider
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	23.2
Diameter When Inflated	14.77
Recommended Pressure	8
Battens	2 Hard 4 Soft Battens
Construction	
Canopy Material	Coretex Triple Ripstop
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layers Ripstop + Mark Cloth
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema / 3mm Polyester
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Single Stitch Double Stitch On Segments
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Exotex Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All
Overall Buildscore	9.5
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes (Wing Tip Small)
Line Attachment	Front Loops - Steering Knots
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Large Plastic Cap
Tuning points	3
Valve type	Core Speed Valve
Notes	Bridle Storage Velcro

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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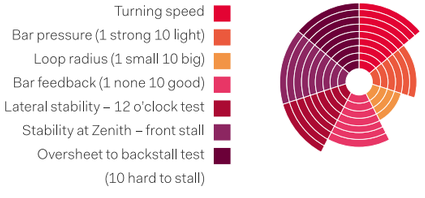
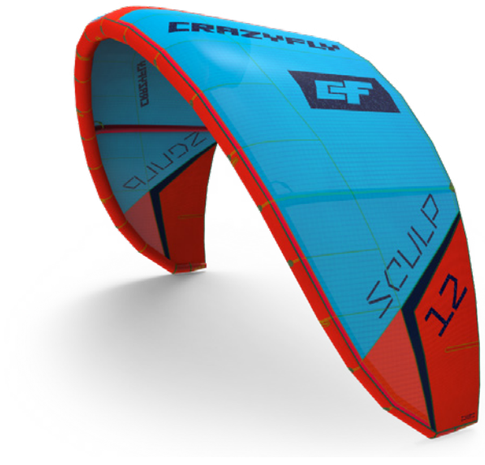


CRAZYFLY SCULP 2021



The Sculp has been a mainstay for the Slovakian brand for many years, and is likely to be their most universal and best-selling model. They are the only brand we are aware of that manufacture in Europe, and have a great open door policy on their factory. Kites purchased from new still include an industry busting three-year warranty, and why wouldn't you with that production facility so accessible. The Sculp is pitched as the ultimate all-rounder for freeride, foil and wave use.

That in-house build from CrazyFly just keeps on improving, and build is as usual very impressive with Triple ripstop making up the entire canopy. The airlock valve is familiar from iSUPs and is becoming one of the most used valves in the industry. It makes things as simple and effortless as it gets to get things up to a decent pressure and deflate. The build is meticulous, and it is evident how good their quality control is. The Sculp sports a generous sweep to the leading edge and the design is definitely a hybrid kite with heavy delta genetics, with quite a heavy scalloping in the trailing edge to control any vibration there. From the underside it looks quite like a batwing. They have tucked the seam at the rear of the leading edge in the mid-section to increase airflow, which is a good example of the attention to detail. Arptex material is used liberally over the wear areas which has a super tough weave similar not dissimilar to Kevlar.

In the lower echelons of the wind range, the Sculp is wonderfully playful and doesn't build up too much bar pressure as the wind increases, in fact we think the bar pressure has dropped considerably compared to previous iterations. Initiating jumps is a simple transaction, and a steady background pull means you don't need to constantly work the kite in the low end. Jumping is also notably predictable and develops surprising height without much effort, and it is an easy kite to get into a rhythm with for floaty rotations. Overhead it gives a lovely steady ground pull and harbors plenty of stability. In its top end, the background ground pull begins to build somewhat and you're going to need to engage your board more to keep things under control, and it lends itself to a more aggressive, powered riding style. We think the turning speed has been increased. The bar stroke isn't enormously long and you can rest the bar on the stopper nicely when overpowered.

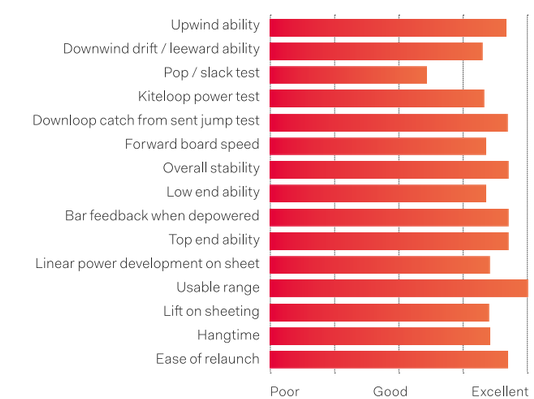
Next to the Hyper, the Sculp has far more rounded capabilities and is far more reactive on the bar giving you the ability to chuck the kite around a bit with dramatic consequences. Year to year there's been no sea change with the Sculp, more gentle tweaks to the handling and manufacturing. For the 2021 version the build in particular is getting very refined, and it is tighter, more playful and has longevity as a genuinely brilliant freeride kite with a surprisingly engaging top end.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	3.07
Weight per m²	0.34
Pulleys per side	none
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	23
Diameter When Inflated	14.64
Recommended Pressure	7
Battens	2 Rigid
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D3
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layers Ripstop + Mark Cloth
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Single Stitch Double Stitch On Segments
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All
Overall Buildscore	10
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes
Line Attachment	Front Loops - Rear Knots
Maintenance	10
Valve Protection	None
Tuning points	None
Valve type	iSUP
Notes	Kevlar Strut Tips

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



Static Handling Attributes

OCEAN RODEO CRAVE HL

Ocean Rodeo have changed the game materials-wise with the introduction of the ALUULA fabric, and with the HL-Series have implemented the fabric in an interesting way, blending it into the airframe alongside traditional Dacron, equating to a 20% weight saving on a standard construction kite. The ALUULA material is implemented in strips longways on the struts, on the hang points, and on the intermediate cloth where the canopy joins to the rear of the leading edge.

The Crave has been in the line-up for a couple of years now, and was engineered with the GKA Wave tour in mind where Ocean Rodeo had some key players involved. Competitors are expected to both ride waves and perform technical strapless freestyle. A kite that can depower and drift as well as provide decent pop and lift on a surfboard on flat water was required, and the answer became the Crave. The unique FST wingtip concept remains, which enables the kite's decent drive and power release round the turns, and makes initiating jumps combined with a little sheeting a very satisfying and importantly floaty experience.

In a pure surf scenario the forward pace and rhythm achievable with the Crave works well for small to mid-sized conditions where you need to shift the kite around. Drift-wise, its lack of weight shines and you can run towards it with some confidence. There is some good balance between fore and aft and the Crave doesn't seem to have a tendency to tip either way.

On a twintip, powered up, the Crave really lights up – it's a simple kite to initiate lift with. You can chuck some meaty kiteloops and expect decent catch and a predictable surge of power though the loop.

The Crave is a classic case of good all-round innovation being a bi-product of a kite designed with a leaning towards a specific set of GKA criteria. The end result is a peppy freeride kite with a far broader appeal than a slightly nonchalant pure wave kite. The Crave was previously a solid freeride performer, and this has only been enhanced by the weight saving achieved by the cunning blend of new materials, and sits at a far more attractive price point than its pure ALUULA equivalent.

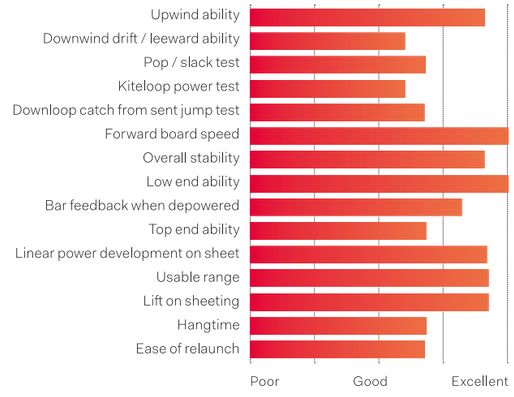
For the more casual consumer, it could be a little confusing as to what the Crave is aimed for but anyone seeking a decent freeride kite which functions well across disciplines certainly won't be disappointed.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	10
Kite Weight (kg)	2.85
Weight per m²	2.85
Pulleys per side	1
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	2
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	24.5
Diameter When Inflated	15.60
Recommended Pressure	9
Battens	6 Soft
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D2
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layers Ripstop + Leechline
Bridle Material	1.8 Mm Dyneema + 2mm Braided Polyester
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded Double Stitched
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Dacron and ALUULA
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	8
Overall Buildscore	8
Line Deflectors	Yes Elasticated Aluula
Self Rescue Handles	Yes (Small Wing Tip)
Line Attachment	Front Loops - Steering Knots
Maintenance	6 (No Zip)
Valve Protection	Rounded Plastic Cap
Tuning points	Zero
Valve type	Bayonet
Notes	ALUULA Strips on Struts & Canopy/Leading Edge Join

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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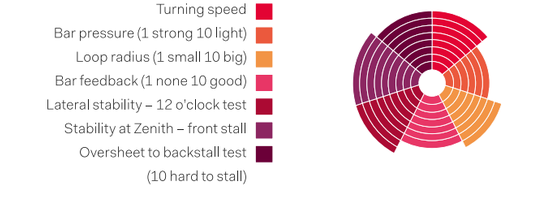


F-ONE BANDIT

Last year the Bandit went off in two defined directions. This was an extremely successful exercise for the long-standing kite range, meaning F-ONE could develop a really specialized wave kite with the Bandit S, and have less compromise and crossover built in to the original Bandit line, which, now in its 14th year, continues to be focused more at twintip, freeride and Big Air.

F-ONE have managed to maintain their famously high levels of prototyping and development through the pandemic, and quite a bit has changed, particularly with the build. A revised panel layout, most noticeable in the seaming of the trailing edge is evident. They've aligned the ripstop perfectly to the direction of load, and used the intermediate weight cloth to tighten up the trailing edge. As ever, the Bandit is very elegantly put together and makes the sensible balance between weight and reinforcement look effortless. A revised bridle system they've coined the 'spider' has been implemented, giving increased control over the kite's arc. Kevlar patches are strategically placed on the leading edge to prevent scuffing on launch, and the intermediate 130g cloth developed last year with Teijin is employed again, saving weight and increasing overall strength.

In the air, you can immediately feel the kite is more taut and rigid than last year and has a slightly lighter touch on the bar system compared to last year. The Bandit's party trick ability to creep you upwind without you noticing remains, and reduces fatigue where you would normally be engaging your rail to force the kite upwind. Its boosting properties are as present and accessible as ever, and the smoothness and predictability around the wind window speak volumes about the solid design.

The Bandit over the last few years has consistently harbored an extended wind range, but this has been extended even further than before due to the kite's inherent stability in the canopy. This year particularly, perhaps due to the revised bridle and trailing edge, the Bandit remains more composed and usable than ever in the top end, and offers an almost unrivalled consistency of power delivery throughout the wind range. It has that 'chuck the kite anywhere and get a predictable response level of functionality' that should be the hallmark of any decent performance freeride kite. It can deliver as much punch as you want it to, when you require it, without any unwelcome surprises.

Remaining a relatively lightweight kite in its category, the low-end responsiveness and scalable power delivery translates well into the realms of freeride foiling, where we gave it a good test one balmy autumn afternoon. This situation also reinforced what a smooth pulse through the turn the kite produced making more complex transitions a simple affair.

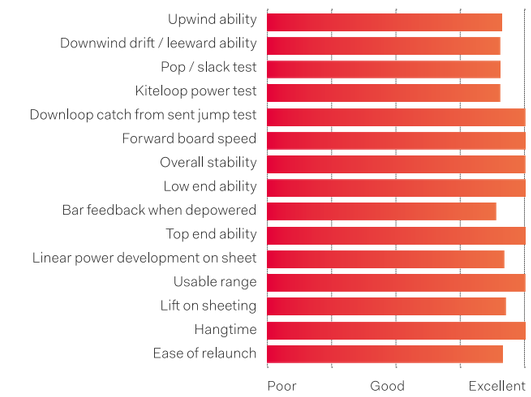
What surprised us about the Bandit last year was how much its Big Air credentials had improved and this carries through in spades for 2021, only improved by the further enhanced wing range and enhanced rigidity. The bar feedback lets you control your rotations immaculately which is reassuring as you can achieve some serious height on demand. The Bandit 2021 has been further honed as a practical, yet formidable performance freeride kite, which spans a huge proportion of wind and water situations for the day to day rider, and creeps well into the elite performance realms.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	2.78
Weight per m²	0.31
Pulleys per side	1 Pulley
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	2
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	22.5
Diameter When Inflated	14.32
Recommended Pressure	9
Battens	8 Soft
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D2
Trailing Edge Material	160g Folded Sewn
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema + 3mm Braided Polyester
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded Double Stitched Throughout
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	15
Overall Buildscore	9
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes
Line Attachment	Front Knots Steering Balls
Maintenance	9
Valve Protection	Neoprene Hat
Tuning points	0
Valve type	iSUP

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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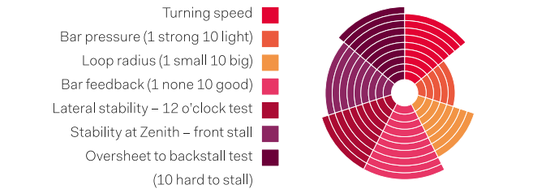


FLYSURFER BOOST

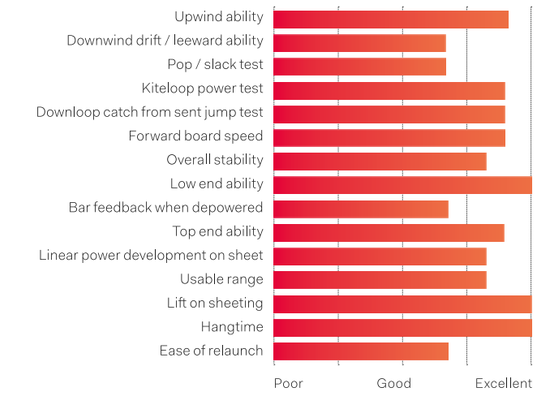
The BOOST is the flagship freeride kite from Flysurfer's LEI range. The German kite brand keeps on pushing the R&D using their technical background in paragliding (Skywalk paragliders) and soft kites (they produce some of the most respected foil kites for kitefoil racing on the market) and have complemented this with a comprehensive range of inflatables. The BOOST in its fourth generation is an all-rounder freeride kite delivering an incredible amount of lift, with an intuitive and direct bar feeling. It is fast and powerful but remains super accessible and allows the rider to throw it fast around the wind window without surprises. The reduced diameter of the leading edge, coupled with a five-strut design and a lightweight Dacron implemented, makes the BOOST a lightweight and fast-turning kite that will be incredible in the low range.
In the air the kite gives an instantly solid and direct bar feedback. The low end is impressive and will take you riding in conditions when you would have expected to require a much bigger kite. The rigid frame design holds canopy tension well into the top-end keeping the kite in full control and generates tons of power out of the lightest breeze. It is incredibly easy to handle, fast and super forgiving. It goes far into the edge of the window where it keeps a great amount of power and goes upwind effortlessly. The pulleyed bridle system provides a direct feeling to the bar and you always know where your kite is positioned. This direct feeling is really comfortable and the bar pressure is more present than most freeride kites but gives you an incredible amount of control.
When jumping, the Boost will give you a powerful and progressive lift. Once up in the sky it retains energy and float and will help you focus on your landings. It is a powerful jumping machine that remains easy to control anytime and looping it around is pure fun – the kite will loop fast and remains in good shape during the rotation. It will then climb back to the zenith rapidly and give you enough second lift and control to land anything. Despite the five-strut design the BOOST remains relatively light and is also a very usable tool for kitefoiling on lighter days. The increased aspect ratio and rigidity of the frame makes it feel really efficient and pushes some decent forward speeds.
The BOOST is an all-round freeride kite that will allow any rider to push their boundaries in every condition. The slack is effective and will allow you to throw unhooked tricks, shred some waves and throw big kiteloops with ease. It is a perfect single-kite quiver if you are looking for one model that does it all.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	3.52
Weight per m²	0.39
Pulleys per side	3
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	5
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	23.5
Diameter When Inflated	14.96
Recommended Pressure	Unspecified
Battens	6 soft
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D2
Trailing Edge Material	Dacron and leech line
Bridle Material	2mm braided polyester
Canopy Sewing	3 step overlay + load frame
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded single step double sewn
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All
Overall Buildscore	9
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	No
Line Attachment	Front loop rear konts
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	EVA top hat
Tuning points	2
Valve type	screw in boston style
Notes	High/Low split option on bar

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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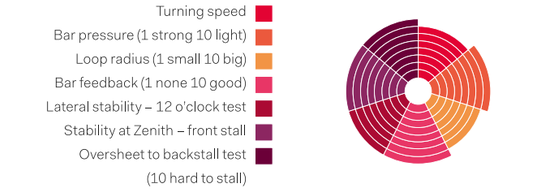


CORE XR6

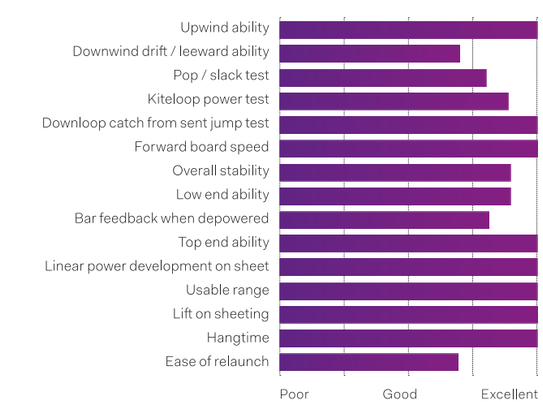
The CORE XR series now reaches its sixth iteration, with the XR5 breaking various jump height records over the last couple of years. It is on the same fusion of a delta and bow platform with five struts and a pronounced concave in the trailing edge. So how does the XR6 differ from the XR5? In our opinion mainly in the kite's handling and overall bar feel. The XR6 is still unashamedly genre-specific, which is a very good thing.
The first thing we noticed is that the turning speed has perked up a bit. The XR5 was a big rigid five-strut affair and required a little persuasion to initiate the turns. Some revised bridle positioning and a more rigid strut design seem to have made that initial crank on the bar give a much more noticeable reaction without being over twitchy. The bridling has definitely been made shorter and it runs the same double pulley system as previously. Bar pressure seems marginally higher than before giving a less remote bar response.
The XR6 seems far smoother throughout the entire depower range and seems to retain decent rear line tension even when fully cranked in on the sheeting system. When you power up the kite with vigor, you immediately notice it actively spanning out, presenting more sail to the wind and increasing power. This is quite a party trick and clearly helps it achieve the trademark lofty performance.
From a materials perspective a lot of the XR5's well-tested elements carry over. The ExoTex Dacron is noticeably very stiff and rigid, the CoreTex three core rip stop has a heavy, silky coating and seems built to last with no scrimping in UV protection. CIT modes on the leading edge allow you to tune to different riding scenarios, and various rear attachments are present to adjust the bar pressure and turning speed.
For the hooked freeriding, which let's face it is the vast majority of riders out there, the XR6 is up there with the crest of the marketplace, but quietly has the potential to unleash some serious boosting power. Think of it like the 'Lucrous' mode on a Tesla – it's there to unleash hell if you want it to. You can potter around as gently as you like with no surprises, or get high enough to give yourself a nosebleed.
With a hydrofoil, we were pleasantly surprised. CORE have definitely been on board with the light kite revolution, and the XR6 flies early and predictably considering it's a five-strut affair. All that sheeting ability and the more rapid turning speed make for some great freeride foiling, with a preposterously amplified upwind performance.
Overpowered boosting is where it's at with the XR6, and compared to the previous incarnation there seems to be even more vertical boost and a lot less downwind travel which the XR5 suffered from. Looping is maybe more dramatic on the CORE GTS but the XR6 does a pretty good job and is very precise and smooth in the air. The catch ability is also predictable and reassuring.
The XR6 continues to be a precision tool for straight vertical boosting and definitely fits the performance freeride brief with Superman flight ability and precise power control. It is a testament to how far the delta concept can be pushed and refined. It is unashamedly geared for straight vertical boosting and hooked-in freestyle, and feels smoother and friendlier than ever before.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	3.45
Weight per m²	0.38
Pulleys per side	2 Pulleys - 1 Slider
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	5
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	23
Diameter When Inflated	14.64
Recommended Pressure	8
Battens	2 Soft
Construction	
Canopy Material	Coretex Triple Ripstop
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layers Ripstop + Mark Cloth
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema / 3mm Polyester
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Single Stitch Double Stitch On Segments
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Exotex Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All
Overall Buildscore	9.5
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes (Wing Tip Small)
Line Attachment	Front Loops - Steering Knots
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Large Plastic Cap
Tuning points	3
Valve type	Core Speed Valve
Notes	Bridle Storage Velcro

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



Static Handling Attributes

AIRUSH LIFT

Originating in 2004, the Lift was Airush's formidable high-aspect all-out boosting machine, and the subject of early noughties kite legend. It is great to see this landmark model return to the product range, albeit now with a highly modern design and feature set.

Technically there are quite a few key points to digest. For the Lift, a stainless ring can be added to the bar system to achieve a high split in the front lines. The high Y setup gives more support through the bridling at higher wind strengths; we tested both geometries and can confirm it's well worth the relatively simple adjustment on the beach to gain an even more solid airframe, particularly in the raw top end of the 9m or if you're on the heavier side when gusty conditions are more prevalent. There is some adjustment available on the bridle for increasing the turning speed, and we much preferred the faster option.

Airush have implemented a fourth iteration of their load frame, which places high strength directional yarns taped across the canopy to form a web, controlling the stretch at 45 degrees to the warp and weft that D2 ripstop has. For a kite designed specifically to be used in high winds this application makes a lot of sense as, durability improvements aside, it is going to add a level of canopy control where it's most required. There is some shallow darting up the trailing edge that comprises of Dacron and a sewn-in leech line to prevent any movement there. Everything in the kite is geared towards solidity of airframe.

In the air, the first thing you notice is a truly huge range of sheeting ability. Angle of attack change brings the power on from nothing with almost foil kite-like efficiency. What is nothing like a foil kite however is the handling. Whilst there is barely any lateral twist in the airframe, the triple pulley bridle gets the kite moving admirably fast for a five-strut kite. A character trait of the Lift that really lends itself to massive jump potential is the ability to ride overpowered fully sheeted out, maintaining control and handling, then send the kite

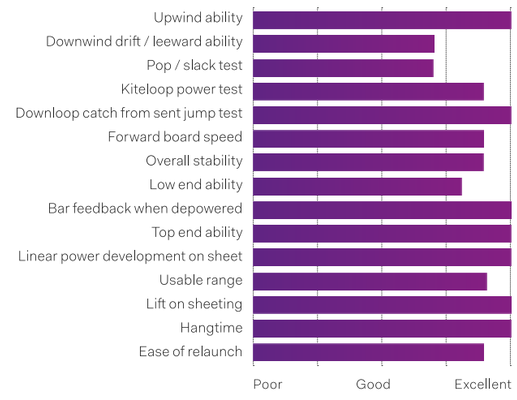
and take advantage of all that sheet. If a kite doesn't have that stable sheeted out resting state depowered it can make life difficult to build speed and go as high. The advanced handling gives you the option for a very comfortable heli-loop on your way down, but it descends so gently you may not even need to. The Lift lives up to its name, and is a well-conceived kite with a proud design direction, a range of unique build features and an impressive level of accessibility to ridiculous height and float. Don't be fooled into thinking it's a one trick pony and all about the bitter top end either, as its application for freeride in lower wind speeds really surprised us. It is a heady mixture of nimble and pure, erm, Lift

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	3.52
Weight per m^2	0.39
Pulleys per side	3
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	5
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	23.5
Diameter When Inflated	14.96
Recommended Pressure	Unspecified
Battens	6 soft
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D2
Trailing Edge Material	Dacron And Leech Line
Bridle Material	2mm Braided Polyester
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay + Load Frame
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded Single Step Double Sewn
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All
Overall Buildscore	9
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	No
Line Attachment	Front Loop Rear Konts
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Eva Top Hat
Tuning points	2
Valve type	Screw In Boston Style
Notes	High/Low Split Option On Bar

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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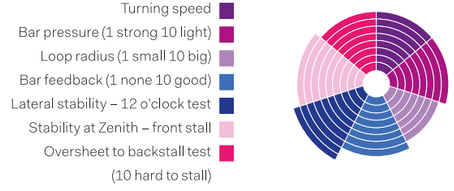


SLINGSHOT RAPTOR V1

The out and out boosting model seems to be an essential addition to most major brands this season and we could certainly be seeing a King of the Air and WOO effect strongly influencing design from established brands.

Slingshot join the party with the all-new Raptor model. It sits on an open C five-strut platform and has a very swept and open canopy design, meaning nearly all of it is projected in the wind and being useful. A pulley-less bridle keeps the feedback fairly sharp on the bar, but the kite is relatively docile in its turning speed; it is certainly not twitchy and intentionally so. They have incorporated some 4x4 ripstop from Teijin to stiffen up the canopy with a diamond layout in the leech. This should increase the kite's lifespan, and of course, there are the usual generous amount of Kevlar bump stops you expect from a Slingshot product. There are plenty of trim settings available to customize the kite to your riding style.

The low end is perfectly functional and pleasant feeling as a freeride kite, maybe lagging a little with the extra weight of the two struts. Where the genius kicks in, and where the intended design focus clearly lies, is when you go out maxed and give it some welly, sending it like an eager postman at the end of his shift. That docile turning speed lends itself really well to hucking some huge airs with bundles of glide and hang time where bar input errors can be extremely hazardous. It is genuinely difficult to over send the kite, which brings some pleasant consistency and predictability to your dangling. We were clocking a consistent 12m+ on the WOO without reaching anywhere the top end of the 10m, with those five struts equating to some reassuring stability in punchy gusty conditions as we rode out a couple of winter storms in the UK.

Looping the kite was quite interesting – the initial lift is easy to access and smooth, so it is easy to time your loop just before the peak of the jump and you can vary the amount of forward pull quite accurately, making it easy to gauge the kite's response. You can choose how deep the loop is which is great at that

critical moment. On the lower end of the kite we made some lovely low back-loop kite loops, with tons of power through the turning arc.

Crossing over to surfboard use, there is all that easy lift on sheeting accessible for strapless freestyle with a surfboard as it lets you down so gently. It has that magic ability to let you control your descent really accurately simply using the bar sheet. On a hydrofoil it was easy to tack and do your foot swaps with the lift on sheeting making you nice and weightless when you need to be.

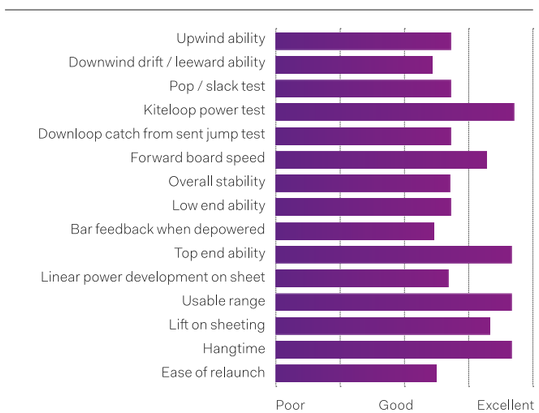
The Raptor is by far and wide the most accessible lift on demand in the Slingshot range, ideal for busting out some old school foot outs, nicely controlled loops, and clocking up some hefty (and from our testing very consistent) WOO scores. It is all about being hooked in, the massive top end and boosting ability, but there's a casual consistency about the kite that helps you trust it and progress your air skills.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	3.41
Weight per m^2	0.38
Pulleys per side	None
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	5
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	24.5
Diameter When Inflated	15.60
Recommended Pressure	8
Battens	2 Hard
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D4
Trailing Edge Material	Ripstop and Mark Cloth
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Folded Plus Single Stitch
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Single Stitch, Double Stitch Segments
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	15
Overall Buildscore	8
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes
Line Attachment	Steering Knots Front Loops
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Neoprene Hat
Tuning points	None
Valve type	Bayonet

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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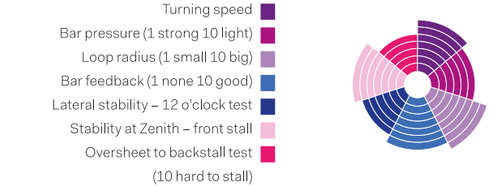


CRAZYFLY HYPER

CrazyFly have now established their Hyper model into something of a boosting benchmark. There are relatively few high-aspect five-strut kites left on the market, so when we get to test them in decent conditions it's something of a treat. With the Covid enforced UK based test this year we got to take the Hyper out in some dense cold wind and it didn't disappoint.

CrazyFly are a proudly European brand, and with in-house production in Slovakia the attention to detail is absolutely apparent as you first glance over the kite. The high contrast color of the stitching leaves zero room for error and is a bold testament to how well manufactured these kites are. The three-year warranty remains, which is unique in the industry. Materials-wise, it is sporting Teijin D3 ripstop and some unique Arptex patches over key wear areas. Another joyous addition is the new Airlock valve, which makes inflation as easy as it gets for a five strutter and may be familiar from iSUPs. In the spirit of 2021, there has been some weight saving implemented, noticeable in the trailing edge of the kite, which is now two layers of ripstop instead of heavier Dacron. As an example, they have shaved 400g off in the 12m, which is no mean feat.

In the 9m we tested, that weight saving was quite apparent, and makes for an earlier flying and generally more alert Hyper. Revised bridling and hang points have improved the steering response and handling no end, and it will now shunt that rigid frame around the wind window with a newfound ease which is impressive for a no excuses high-aspect kite with such an emphasized wide span. There is still zero flex in the airframe, and even in the bitter top end of the wind range there is barely a wobble. Boosting is obviously top of the menu and it performs even tighter than previously. The more reactive steering means redirection of power is more instant, giving you more upward acceleration and considerable hangtime. Bar pressure has most definitely been reduced from last year making the whole user experience easier to access. The

handling improvements mean that kite loops, whilst still requiring commitment, are far less scary than previously.

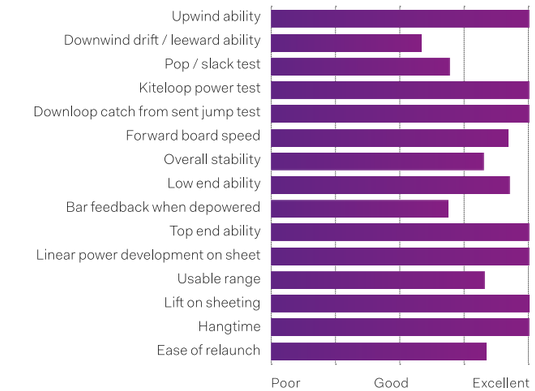
CrazyFly have made some great improvements to the Hyper this year. They have retained the character of the previous kite and made it far more agile. It is great to see product with such acute design focus as the Hyper. With some big boosting kites feeling a little homogenized, CrazyFly have stuck to outright lift performance and really kept with the formula, and this rework is much to their credit. If big boosting and airtime is your focus, this is a kite that continues to really justify itself in the category.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	3.42
Weight per m²	0.38
Pulleys per side	none
Leading Edge Hang Points	10
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	5
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	23
Diameter When Inflated	14.64
Recommended Pressure	7
Battens	none
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D3
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layers Ripstop + Mark Cloth
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Single Stitch Double Stitch On Segments - Twist
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All
Overall Buildscore	10
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes
Line Attachment	Front Loops - Rear Knots
Maintenance	10
Valve Protection	None
Tuning points	None
Valve type	iSUP
Notes	Kevlar Strut Tips - Dacron Wing Tips

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



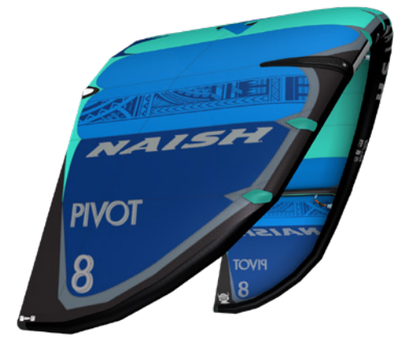
Static Handling Attributes

NAISH PIVOT S25

Season 25 yields another variant of the Pivot, making it among the longest standing flagship kite models in the Naish range. It goes without saying that the kite has proven itself with a couple of solid King of the Air wins along the way. Built around a three-strut swept tip platform, the familiar build elements from Naish are present. Quadtex ripstop from Teijin makes for a stiff, light and wear resistant canopy. Higher inflate pressures achieved by an iSUP valve make for a super stiff and lean airframe. Shark tooth darting elegantly creeps up each canopy segment, reinforcing the trailing edge, and helping eliminate vibration – this has been reworked this year into a smoother shape. For S25, a striking limited-edition skull and crossbones model, aimed for the inner buccaneer amongst us, celebrates a quarter century of Naish products.

The main change this year is a new bridle tuning point, which allows for enhanced wind range at the top end, giving the kite a serious power dump ability. We had a tinker with this and can report back that it is very effective. Our 9m test kite saw some epic strong and variable northern European conditions and handled them with grace. When perhaps we would normally reach for the 7m, you could drop the pigtails up a setting and ride far more comfortably, with the kite spanning out and moving forward, but seemingly remaining as poised as ever. We were genuinely surprised how far you could push overpowered riding whilst feeling in control.

What makes the Pivot such a historically successful model is a subtle blend of factors. First of all, it is the board speed. A skinny leading edger and easy access to power means the Pivot is full throttle from the get-go. The power delivery on the bar is exceptionally linear; you can really feather the lift you want to achieve when boosting, and glide down with control and confidence. With the ATB bar, there is a long friction-free bar stroke, and you can use all of it. The bar feedback provides an excellent translation of what the kite is doing



above you and its position in the window at all times. There is no vagueness at any point. The turning speed is perky to say the least, and initiating a turn requires minimal effort. A quick flick of the wrist, then choose your power on the bar stroke and you can throw a loop exactly to your liking. The progressive nature of the Pivot means it builds confidence in Big Air situations fast. It is an instantly familiar and predictable kite, which doesn't take an age to dial into, whilst yielding massive performance when you want it to. These factors also transfer over into a capable wave kite. The rapid and nuanced handling and adequate drift make it a pleasure to take out in chunky swell, and we even found ourselves foiling with it, where it was also remarkably fun.

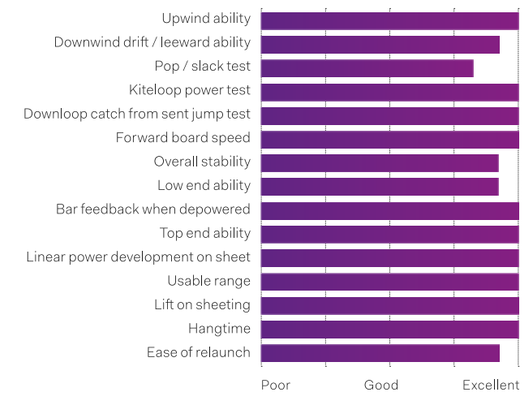
The Pivot is a kite that has ranked very highly amongst its Big Air peers for several years and hasn't needed massive design changes to continue to be extremely competitive. It allows you to scare the life out of yourself with exceptional high and loop capabilities, but the level of control and feedback achieved lets you operate with a modicum of safety and enhanced confidence. Hooked-in freeriding doesn't get much more fun than with the Pivot, and it continues to be a performance crossover masterpiece.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	3.16
Weight per m²	0.35
Pulleys per side	1 Slider
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	22.3
Diameter When Inflated	14.20
Recommended Pressure	7 - 9
Battens	None
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin Quad-Tex
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layer Ripstop + Leech Line
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema
Canopy Sewing	Folded 3 Step Overlay + Single Step
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded Double Stitch
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All - Kevlar
Overall Buildscore	10
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	None
Line Attachment	Front Knots - Steering Loops
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Eva Hat
Tuning points	2
Valve type	iSUP
Notes	Load Distribution Seam

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



Static Handling Attributes

NORTH REACH

So far North's new kite range has been quite discipline-specific and focused on the task in hand, with the Orbit aimed at boosting, the Carve very wave-orientated, and the Pulse catering for unhooked. All-rounders are a key kite for any manufacturer and perhaps the most difficult to pull off design-wise. North are filling the void in their ever-increasing arsenal with the new Reach model, an all-out freeride and cross-discipline machine.

With 13 sizes available between 3m and 17m they haven't messed around on options. For every conceivable size of human, it is going to be very easy to build a quiver here. It is a three-strut mid to high-aspect platform with a generously swept wingtip. In the spirit of 2021, there has been an eye kept on weight saving, and the trailing edge in particular has been whittled considerably in the center section with a minimum of Dacron implemented. It comes in around 100g less than the Carve in a 9m. A lightweight Kevlar strip runs up the struts to keep this airframe joint extra stiff. There are lightweight molded bump stops across the leading edge segments, offering well-placed scuff protection. The canopy has quite a deep profile in the front section and has a lot more segmentation immediately behind the leading edge, making for a super accurate canopy profile on the D2 cloth. A short pulley-less bridle and full wingtips make turning initiate immediately and provides positive feedback, and the bar pressure definitely sits on the lighter side, perhaps broadening its appeal.

The light and mobile nature of the Reach gets you going early for a 9m, and there is very consistent power delivery round the corners and a pivoty turning style. In surf it is balanced and nimble, ideal for more kite-driven surf style or onshore conditions. The Reach is really excellent in its low end and probably deserves more foiling credits that the rest of the North range.

It is an aspirational named kite with apt performance properties and makes everything easy, as a decent performance freeride kite should. For a strictly

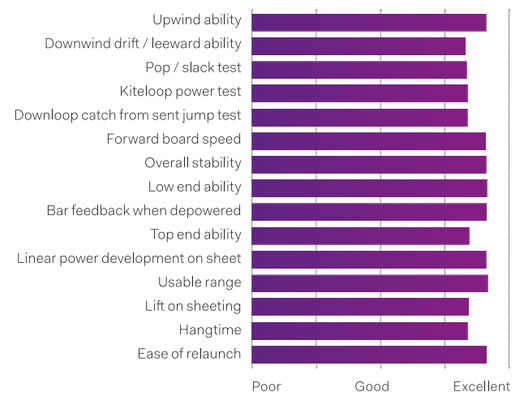
proposed all-rounder, it does an admirable job of performing strongly in all categories, and is testament to the slightly irritating and often uttered phrase sometimes applied to kite design: 'a good kite is a good kite'. You can see why some of the high profile team riders from North have started migrating onto it. The all-rounder category is a well established and competitive market sector, and the Reach punches high up the charts for a fresh entry.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	2.89
Weight per m²	0.32
Pulleys per side	none
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	2
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	23.2
Diameter When Inflated	14.77
Recommended Pressure	8
Battens	4
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D2
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layer Ripstop + Mark Cloth
Bridle Material	1.8mm Flying Line
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded Single Stitch
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All
Overall Buildscore	7
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes
Line Attachment	Front Loops - Steering Knots
Maintenance	9
Valve Protection	Neoprene Hat
Tuning points	None
Valve type	Hyperflow Bayonet

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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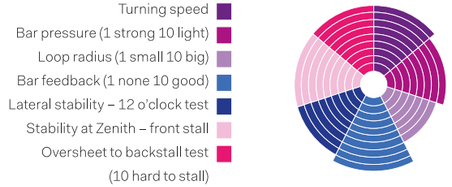


CORE GTS6

The GTS has garnered a serious reputation as a Big Air and overpowered riding machine, cultivating its image with countless photos featuring the kite at impossibly low angles in front of Table Mountain and low level short line gravity defiance. With heavy hitting riders like Steven Akkersdijk and Joshua Emanuel helping to guide development, we were intrigued as to how they would soup it up further for the next generation.

The core (sorry) principles of the GTS6 remain the same. We're looking at a three-strut future C-shape kite with quite full square wingtips and a short and minimal quad pulley bridle. The CIT bridle settings carry over from the GTS5, letting you tune the kite to your liking, with the tiny increments on the leading edge making noticeable changes to the flying characteristics. The major revisions this year include a fresh strut design, making them higher diameter, stiffer and lighter than before. The leading edge looks to have been beefed up a little in diameter.

Unhooked, the GTS6 is no slouch whatsoever. It is a kite that likes to be adequately powered and ridden with board speed, and in its range the pop and slack is in abundance; it is a definite level up from the popular Nexus range in terms of more purist unhooked work. Tune it down with the steering hang points combined with the CIT mode and its directness on the bar is formidable enough for even the most discerning freestyler to dominate a Brazilian lagoon until sunset.

Where the kite is designed to shine is, of course, in the top end. Take it out absolutely lit and hooked in, and the GTS6 lights up like a precision German Christmas tree. Forward board speed is rapid, and initiating a jump requires some timing and skill. Hit the kicker clean and time it all well, and it's going to lift you off the water like an ejector seat, providing plenty of reassuring overhead support. Post-loop, its legendary reputation to climb you out of a precarious situation remains accurate, and the level of catch on offer constantly

surprised us. You only needed to let a little bit of sheet out after the kite loop, and it will rush up and make it exceptionally simple to time a heli-loop for soft landings. When running downwind at a high rate of knots we were intrigued to see how well the kite performed leeward. Considering how C-shaped and aggressive it appears, it drifts with surprising balance. It also seems to take a gust on the chin a little more amicably than its predecessor, which would make perfect sense with the stiffer airframe.

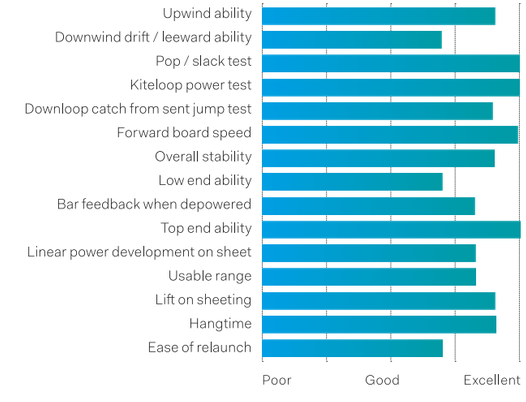
The GTS6 is a true evolution of the model – it's like someone has smoothed out the kite's characteristics even further making using the kite in extreme high wind all the more reliable. Purists are not going to be disappointed, as the GTS6 certainly hasn't lost even a hint of that gut-wrenching looping and boosting ability. In fact it may even have a little more g-force on tap than previously, but it performs with even more finesse. The range of use and versatility built into the settings is also noteworthy. When the sand starts flying down Table Bay, there are not many other kites we'd rather be rigging.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	3.13
Weight per m²	0.35
Pulleys per side	2 pulleys - 1 slider
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	22
Diameter When Inflated	14.01
Recommended Pressure	8
Battens	2 Hard Wingtip Battens
Construction	
Canopy Material	Coretex Triple Ripstop
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layers Ripstop + Mark Cloth
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema / 3mm Polyester
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Single Stitch Double Stitch On Segments
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Exotex Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All
Overall Buildscore	9.5
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes (Wing Tip Small)
Line Attachment	Front Loops - Steering Knots
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Large Plastic Cap
Tuning points	3
Valve type	Core Speed Valve
Notes	Bridle Storage Velcro

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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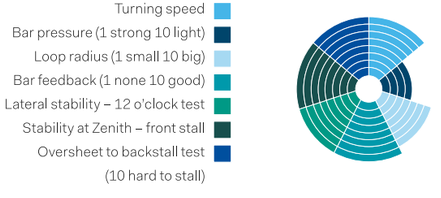


NOBILE GAME CHANGER

Nobile's R&D department have clearly been active through the pandemic, and with the Game Changer it appears they've decided to give their freestyle flagship 50/Fifty model a decent rework and fresh moniker. The design focus is based on a park-and-pop for unhooked freestyle, but also the ability for some powered loops and Big Air.

The Game Changer is quite an extreme hybrid C design, with a narrow leading edge for a 12m and full wing tipped C-shape with minimal sweep to the leading edge. Five-strut C-shaped kites are something of a rarity these days, and always a pleasure to whack some boots on and test. It is a stripped down and simplistic build with D2 cloth, and some scalloping in the back of the canopy to reinforce the segmentation along the trailing edge. The bridling originates from the very center of the kite and mimics the level of control you get from a traditional fifth line.

The Game Changer sits on the slightly more amiable freestyle-focused side of the market sector and the extra angle attack change you can achieve means you can dump more power than a traditional C-shape. There is some useful sheeting range available on the bar, which makes this all-out weapon a shade of comfort and practicality. The bar pressure sits at medium to firm, so there is little chance of any errors with bar inputs for more technical freestyle. The wingtip tuning points function well at dulling this even more, and you can make it a true wake tractor if required.

The five-strut airframe and tight pulley-free bridling keeps the arc extremely stable through the gusts, where the kite will just punch forward. It steams upwind, which is a good trait particularly as it is a wake-style focused kite where all tricks involve lengthy downwind travel. A little trimming is required to set up for unhooked, but all the loading and release traits and slack are present, as you would expect from this shape of kite. For the boost and loop performance we found it far less scary than its very C-shaped appearance. There is definitely some poke around the loop, but it is easy enough to feather out power as

the kite whips round with those big wingtips. We were surprised at how much height you could access with the 12m as well.

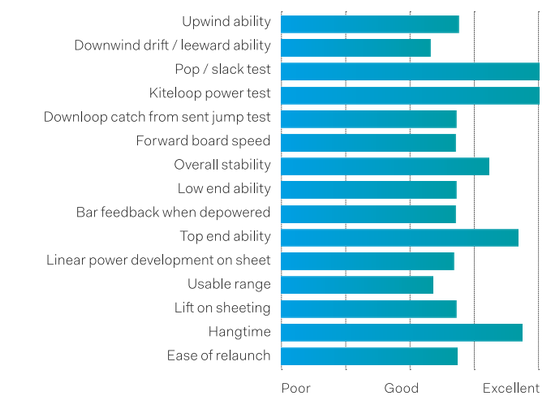
Overall the Game Changer is a great design exercise and a decent evolution of the 50/Fifty, and brings a good level of practicality to a very capable freestyle kite.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	12
Kite Weight (kg)	3.85
Weight per m²	0.32
Pulleys per side	0
Leading Edge Hang Points	9
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	5
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	22
Diameter When Inflated	14.01
Recommended Pressure	Not specified
Battens	0
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D2
Trailing Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Bridle Material	2mm Dyneema + 3mm Braded Polyester
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded Single Step
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	16
Overall Buildscore	7
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes
Line Attachment	Front Loops Steering Knots
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Neoprene Hat
Tuning points	0
Valve type	Bayonet

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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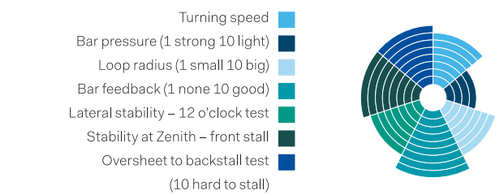


NAISH DASH LE

The Dash has been a mainstay in the Naish camp and sits alongside the Torch as a modernized freestyle-orientated performance kite for higher level or aspirational and unhooked riders. Season 25 from Naish has let them indulge in a little graphical nostalgia with the kite range, with the Limited Edition (LE) Dash sporting a massive skull and crossbones on a black canopy, harking back to the early Naish Series 25 years ago. If you don't remember the original Sky Pirate directional, look it up – it is a lesson in aquatic badass. People will automatically give you preferential right of way on this kite without a second thought.

Construction-wise, it is easy to get distracted by the striking limited edition graphics, but all the usual Naish bells and whistles continue to be there in force. The trailing edge Shark Teeth run reinforcement up every canopy panel intersection and make for a super controlled and long-lasting leech. Naish dispensed with the long running (and opinion polarizing) Octopus system last year, and you now have a simple-to-service high-diameter external system more in line with other brands, coupled with an iSUP valve for easy inflating. The Quadtex canopy material remains unchanged along with the hefty 11.5 PSI inflate pressure, making the airframe extremely rigid.

Some new settings have been implemented on the leading edge hang points to span the arc out for more lift and hangtime or make it more C-shape for unhooking. We had a good play around with this and it makes a tangible difference in the kite's bar feeling and performance, so it is definitely worth a few seconds changing the simple pigtail before you launch if you are looking at a perfect lagoon or some strong wind and kickers.

The Dash has superbly rapid steering and a powerful strike of power is produced across the window. This is no park-and-go family saloon; it is a manual sports car and a little rider input is required to get it up to speed. The Dash thrives on board speed and once you have some, it really lights up. Bar feedback has been dialed in perfectly, and particularly when you are in unhooked mode on the bridle, it gives you no surprises and has all the intuitive benefits of a 'real' C-shape kite without giving you instant tennis elbow. The purist can slow the

kite right down with the rear steering hang points.

Bridle set to boost mode, and the top end of the Dash in the Big Air and loop department is truly impressive. You need a little more technique and timing than with the Pivot to go massive, and can't just rely on pure sheeting, but when it all aligns the upward lift is quite intense, and the loop has some serious whip with the Dash turning more on its wingtip. With a skilled rider on the controls it is a mean and controllable kiteloop and the climb is rapid and predictable; it is not for the faint-hearted. What is also noticeable, particularly with a kite that likes to be thrown around, is how tight the canopy remains. There is a zero flap policy being adhered to in all positions in the wind window and smooth feedback through the bar.

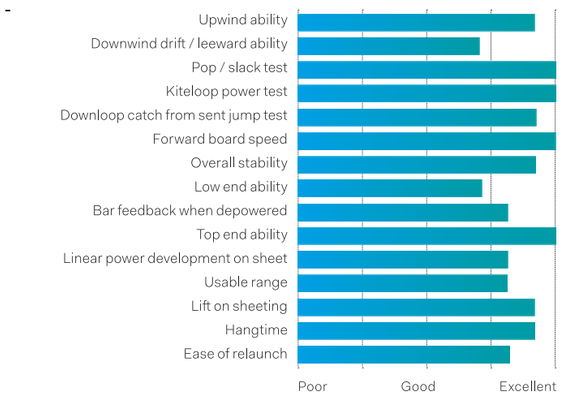
If you used to use C-shapes and then steered away, this could be a great renaissance kite for freestyle as it is forgiving and has the benefits of extra wind range and depower, and is really easy to chuck around, plus the very reassuring bar feedback isn't going to cause you problems. There are obvious choices and comparisons to be made against the Pivot, and we would summarize that the Dash has more punch in the turns, more unhooked application, and an almost equal top end. It is more versatile than you would expect and a very satisfying ride, and with the limited edition, psychologically the Pirate livery boosts the kite 35% in all performance criteria.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	10
Kite Weight (kg)	3.12
Weight per m²	0.31
Pulleys per side	None
Leading Edge Hang Points	6
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	22.7
Diameter When Inflated	14.45
Recommended Pressure	7-9
Battens	Darts On Segments
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin Quad-Tex
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layer Ripstop + Leech Line
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema
Canopy Sewing	Folded 3 Step Overlay + Single Step
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded Double Stitch
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All
Overall Buildscore	10
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	None
Line Attachment	Front Knots - Steering Loops
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Eva Hat
Tuning points	None
Valve type	iSUP
Notes	Wing Tip Drain Mesh

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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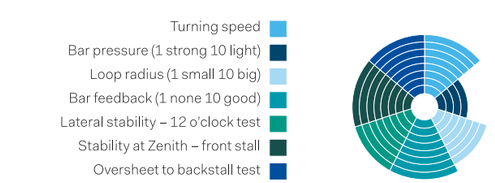


SLINGSHOT RPX

One of Slingshot's longest running models, the RPM, has been around for over a decade and has stood as a formidable World Championship winning freestyle platform. It kicked off the future C-shape concept, mimicked widely across the industry in various forms. This year, the slightly renamed RPX represents the most significant rework the kite has had in its recent history. The timeless three-strut platform remains, with the aggressively squared off wingtips, and it still retains that trademark RPM look and shape. So what's changed?

From a build perspective there has been some serious attention to detail focused on weight saving. The Dacron in the wingtips and trailing edge from previous models has been minimized, and instead the RPX sports a robust 4x4 ripstop from Teijin, which forms the canopy that has had a significant simplification in the panel layout. The leading-edge diameter is much leaner than previously, as are the struts which retain the canopy integrated split strut design from previous generations. The trailing edge has been completely reworked and is now formed from a narrow band of mark cloth with a sewn-in leech line.

The bridling has also had a serious makeover with drag-minimizing low-diameter Kevlar utilized with some neat, anodized sliders. The one-pump system is completely redesigned with updated 90 degree valves and high diameter pipes for easier deflation. All this weight saving has equated to a 9m kite coming in at 2.77kg on the scales, which is impressive for a three-strut freestyle focused kite with such full wingtips.

From a performance perspective, the RPX manages to retain a significant portion of its previous character, but feels instantly sharper. In audio visual terms, it has gone from standard HD to 4K. Power delivery through the bar is more direct on sheeting, and you get far more power increase for less sheet. The RPX also flies significantly further forward in the wind window, and clambers upwind far better than previously, which is particularly noticeable in the low end.

The newfound crispness translates well when it comes to getting the kite round the corners. The turning is far more snappy and can be fairly pivotal if required for freeride. For the purist, it is easy to tune down on the rear pigtails for less reactive park-and-pop style riding. Unhooked, the steady pull and downwind travel remain, which will please competent freestylers, and in this context it seems to remain as composed as ever.

The new materials and weight loss seem to equate to a noticeable Big Air performance boost. It is a kite that now jumps fairly high very consistently, and allows you to really choose how much pull you want through the loop, in both its turning radius and feathering the sheet on the bar. The bar pressure has been lightened a little perhaps, but the presence through the steering lines and fun, intuitive nature of the handling still shine.

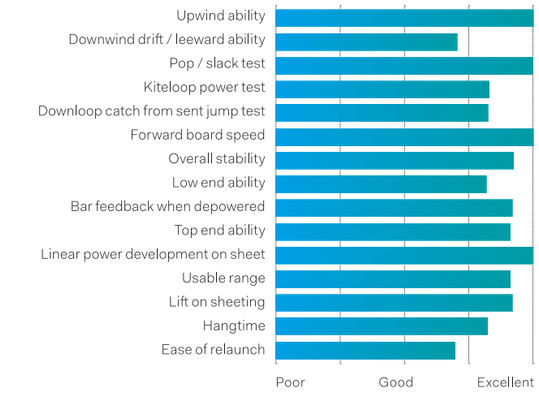
The RPX is a great update of a kite with a formidable lineage. Most of all it significantly modernizes the established platform, making it very competitive with its European neighbors. Our cherished American unit has been off to boot camp to shed some pounds and it has come back leaner and meaner, but thankfully it maintains the identity that made it so successful in the first place. It is chiseled and more focused, and the ideal kite for those more dedicated to a twintip who want some range and practicality with no compromises on park-and-pop unhooked performance.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	2.77
Weight per m^2	0.31
Pulleys per side	1 Slider
Leading Edge Hang Points	6
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	23
Diameter When Inflated	14.64
Recommended Pressure	8
Battens	6 Soft
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D4
Trailing Edge Material	Mark Cloth And Leech Line
Bridle Material	Kevlar
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Single Stitch, Double Stitch Segments
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All - Kevlar
Overall Buildscore	9
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	No
Line Attachment	Front Knots - Steering Loops
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Neoprene Hat
Tuning points	2
Valve type	Bayonet
Notes	Wide One Pump Hoses

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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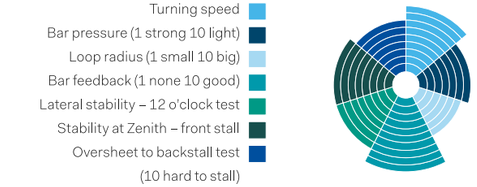


CORE NEXUS 15M LW

CORE have an interesting way of dealing with larger lightwind kites in their product range. Rather than homogenizing it all into one lightwind-specific model in the range, they take the individual product line and build lightwind versions, so that the kite's characteristics carry through to the big sizes and you have more continuity in your quiver. We've seen this over the last few years to great effect in the XR6 and GTS6 ranges also.

If you're familiar with the Nexus 2 in the smaller sizes, straight away you notice a far more swept tip, flatter arc and material differences with the smaller models. With a kite with so much surface area, a logical step is to make it as lightweight as possible for early flying. CORE have implemented CoreTex Light ripstop and ExoTex Dacron to save as much weight as possible. The struts are noticeably narrow in diameter and seem to flex to let the kite breathe a little and pivot around the turn. There has been some major weight shedding on the wingtips where an absolute minimum of Dacron has been used to frame the higher load areas.

In practice, CORE have injected as much agility as they can into a big canopy, to make this friendly colossus kite as entertaining as possible. They have truly catered for everyone, as above the 15m we tested, there is also a 17m in the range for heavyweights or extreme lightwind riding. CORE have worked their magic and implemented some power steering, so the bar pressure is relatively tame for such a big unit which definitely reduces fatigue and makes a long session comfortable.

On a twintip, which is where we feel the kite's attributes are most applicable, having all that canopy means you can gain some serious float around your transitions; the easy sheet to lift characteristic of the standard Nexus carries over to great effect for gentle floaty tricks involving sent jumps. On redirect, the kite lands you very gently and predictably with decent feedback, particularly once you dial into the Nexus 2's rhythm. For such a large kite, it does not feel too ponderous and makes an excellent platform to load and pop against for training unhooked tricks in controlled conditions with predictable response and long downwind travel. The upper wind range is also impressive and lends itself to massive floaty sent jumps that are easy to initiate, and multiple rotations are easily achieved. It makes a super friendly and predictable platform for airstyle, so dust off those board offs and you can hover like a bird.

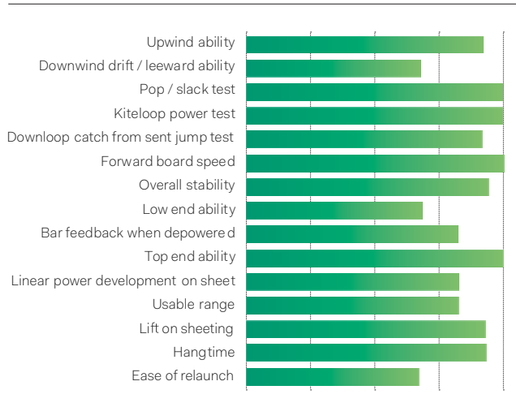
The Nexus 2 LW retains many of the positive all-rounder characteristics of the smaller sizes and optimizes them for lighter airs. Anyone that flies smaller kites will appreciate the familiarity in handling and enjoy not having to adapt their riding style that much for light wind.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	15
Kite Weight (kg)	3.81
Weight per m^2	0.25
Pulleys per side	2 Pulleys - 1 Slider
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	25.5
Diameter When Inflated	16.23
Recommended Pressure	7
Battens	2 Rigid 2 Soft
Construction	
Canopy Material	Coretex Light Single Core
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layers Ripstop + Mark Cloth
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema / 3mm Polyester
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Single Stitch Double Stitch On Segments
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Exotex Light
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All
Overall Buildscore	9.5
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes (Wing Tip Small)
Line Attachment	Front Loops - Steering Knots
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Large Plastic Cap
Tuning points	3
Valve type	Core Speed Valve
Notes	Bridle Storage Velcro

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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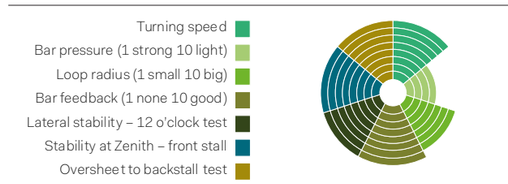


DUOTONE JUICE 15M

The Juice has been the mainstay in the Duotone product range for a while now as the lightwind-specific LEI. This year they've shaved off 25% of the overall weight, which for a high surface area kite specifically designed for low-end use is a significant reduction. They have also added the Flex Struts that traverse other models of the Duotone range this season. Interestingly, the Juice served as the test bed for the Flex Strut among other development concepts, as the effects were most dramatic on a larger kite in light wind.

For a 15m kite, the Juice packs down small and is noticeably light in the bag. We tested it with the super clean Click bar on standard line length. Tailoring your Juice size to your quiver and body weight and proposed usage is important, as it's designed to be a quiver topper, sitting over your chosen model as the all-encompassing lightwind kite. Your average 80kgs twintip rider is probably only going to require the 15m; heavier riders also have the option of a 17m if necessary with the tipping point of around 95kgs.

In the raw low end, if there's enough wind for the Juice to fly and climb reliably, you will almost certainly make it upwind with a decent sized twintip. It is a kite that thrives from apparent wind, and makes initiating a power stoke very easy. As soon as the kite is moving across the window there is a surprising amount of smooth power on tap, and it is a kite that feels eager to fly and be thrown around particularly considering its size. It generates useful power on the upstroke, and you can really take advantage of edging it up the window and creaming upwind. With all that canopy above you jumps are predictably lofty and controlled with really excellent hangtime. The long throw on the Click bar suits the Juice well, as you can really take advantage of all that lift on sheet available.

In the top end the Juice holds its composure well and you don't need to step down a size too early. As a lightwind kite for unhooked riding, it is extremely impressive to pop against and makes such an expansive canopy feel very versatile and pleasant to use. It feels eager to fly, and doesn't require much coaxing to generate power for aggressive edging and loading. It is going to extend your trick repertoire on those days where you may not have even bothered going out.

On a foil, as soon as you can get the board up onto the surface it's off, and surprisingly quick in a straight line. There is plenty of power dump available, and we were surprised at how much you could hold down, and for a big unit you can edge it upwind very well. For more power-hungry beginner foilers who perhaps lack the finesse to use a smaller kite effectively it is a perfect sturdy platform to boot around on.

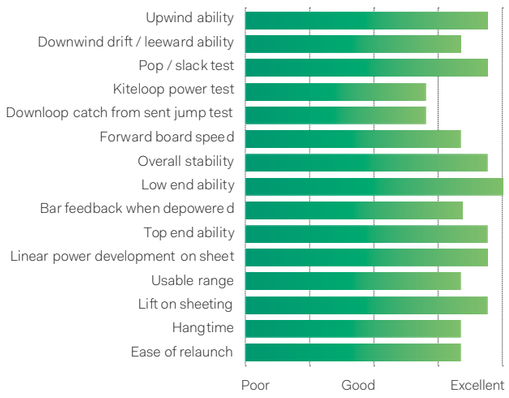
Far removed from your average lightwind tank of yesteryear or a scaled version of the existing model in the range, the Juice is a bespoke lightwind solution with high accessibility for all. Although uncomplicated to use, it feels like an elegant and futuristic design. Think of the Juice as an on-demand power source; it has a magic ability to generate a useful pulse when and where you require it without any complaint.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	15
Kite Weight (kg)	3.41
Weight per m^2	0.23
Pulleys per side	0
Leading Edge Hang Points	14
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	24.6
Diameter When Inflated	15.66
Recommended Pressure	7
Battens	4 rigid
Construction	
Canopy Material	Trinity Tx
Trailing Edge Material	Mark Cloth 160g Intermediate
Bridle Material	1.6mm Kevlar
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded Single Step
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Duotone Lite Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All
Overall Buildscore	9
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes
Line Attachment	Front Knots Rear Loops
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Plastic Cap
Tuning points	0
Valve type	Airport Valve
Notes	4/5 Line Convertable

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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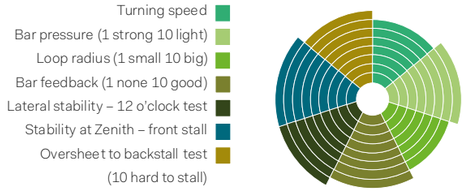


RRD PASSION Y26 15M LW

There have been 12 (that's right, 12!) versions of the RRD Passion throughout its history, which is enough to make anyone who has been involved in the kite industry feel downright elderly. Of late it has settled as a three-strut freeride kite with a focus on versatility in riding applications and being able to tackle a wide range of wind and sea states. The 15m we tested is lightwind optimized and sits under the 17m as one of the largest kites in the range.

The build, as ever with RRD, is superbly executed. The leading edge in particular is beefed up in between all the sections, and there is a liberal application of Kevlar over every conceivable wear area. A large screw-in valve is present which is an important factor when inflating a big old 15m. The canopy is comprised of Teijin D2 cloth and has some clever seaming to reinforce and spread load around the struts and wingtips. It is a well-conceived and quite intricate build, which shows the usual high levels of attention to detail you come to expect from an RRD production.

In use, the Passion in LW livery feels a more traditional lightwind kite for twintip-focused riders who want to tank around and not worry about having to clamber upwind. It is definitely on the grunty side with high levels of ground pull once in its power threshold, and packs quite a punch against other 15m kites in this class. Whilst definitely assertive through the front lines the Passion remains fairly light on the bar and easy on the elbows for such a beast. Elasticated rear lines take the slack out of the steering lines and improve the turning response, which is important for a larger canopy. It is a straightforward kite to use and truck around on that doesn't require much finesse and input from the rider. An uncomplicated experience – you point it, it pulls, and it gives you zero surprises. For a big unit, the default direction is upwind without having to put in too much effort. Initiating lift is relatively easy with its mid bar pressure which carries up the range from its smaller siblings. It whips

round a turn with a generous dollop of power and the large swept wingtips help to keep the big boy relatively mobile, and it can generate some pleasant floaty jumps and graceful transition. You can hang round under it rotating all day long and expect a soft landing.

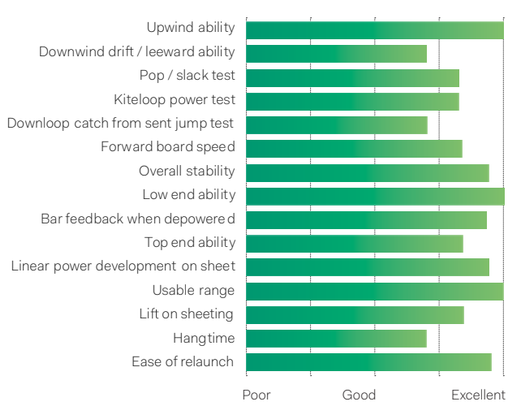
The elder statesman continues to dominate and the 15m Passion would top out a quiver really well, carrying the character of the smaller sizes into the lightwind realm, particularly for those focused on twintip riding. Its predictability, familiarity and consistency in power delivery is perhaps its biggest asset.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	15
Kite Weight (kg)	4.15
Weight per m^2	0.28
Pulleys per side	1
Leading Edge Hang Points	10
Steering Hang Points per side	2
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	27.5
Diameter When Inflated	17.51
Recommended Pressure	Not Specified
Battens	None
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D2
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layer Ripstop + Leech Line
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema + 3mm Dyneema
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded Double Stitched
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All - Kevlar
Overall Buildscore	9
Line Deflectors	Yes - Rigid
Self Rescue Handles	Yes
Line Attachment	Front Knot - Steering Loops
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Eva Hat
Tuning points	None
Valve type	Bayonet
Notes	Elasticed Rear Pigtails

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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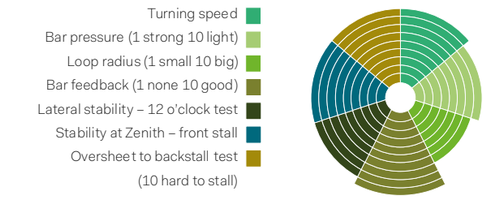


NORTH REACH 21 15M LW

North have given the larger sizes of their Reach all-rounder a comprehensive rework this year, with a sensible optimization for light wind. It is a kite that has slotted in very competitively in the three-strut performance freestyle sector, and the 9m we tested was a gem, so we were eager to see how a low wind fettled 15m would measure up as a quiver topper.

The Reach LW is a different beast from a scaled version of the smaller model. There are various material differences in place to ensure it is lacking as many grams as possible to provide that early flying ability, which is all the more sensitive at minimal wind speeds. The Dacron used on all inflatable sections of the kite is a lighter weight and it remains a three-strut kite, with low tube diameters. The bladders utilized this year are also manufactured from a lighter weight material.

You can see that there is some enforced camber built into the front of the profile, making the kite drive forward well in the wind window, which is an important attribute for a kite aimed for light wind use, particularly when used with a power-hungry twintip. Thin bridle lines are comprised from flying line to minimize parasitic drag, and their stiffness translates bar inputs well, keeping it responsive which is particularly important for a large light wind kite.

In the air, bar pressure is light for such a grand canopy, and the fore and aft balance achieved is impressive; it doesn't seem to have a tendency to tip forward or back in the raw end of its wind range, but sits there obediently. Turning speed-wise, there is nothing ponderous about the Reach LW considering the square meterage you're attached to, and it can be chucked around the wind window in a relatively athletic fashion. It is a far cry from the park it and edge, tractor-style large kite of yesteryear, and alongside the smaller sized Reach, you don't need to adjust your riding style or techniques a huge amount; it is more of a retiming exercise to get your tricks down. It is a kite you don't have to think about a huge amount to utilize, which is an attractive attribute

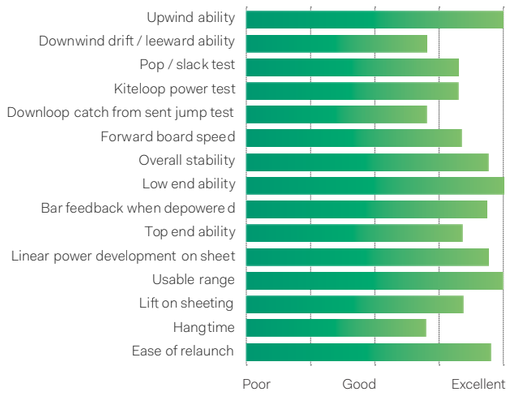
for a fuss-free low-wind session. North have done a great job augmenting their new freeride kite into a lightwind weapon. It is an ideal kite for marginal twintipping, that holds its shape well as the wind increases and provides some ridiculously floaty jumps when it comes into the power band.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	15
Kite Weight (kg)	3.87
Weight per m²	0.26
Pulleys per side	None
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	2
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	29
Diameter When Inflated	18.46
Recommended Pressure	5
Battens	4
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D2
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layer Ripstop + Mark Cloth
Bridle Material	1.8mm Flying Line
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded Single Stitch
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Lightweight Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All
Overall Buildscore	7
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes
Line Attachment	Front Loops - Steering Knots
Maintenance	9
Valve Protection	Neoprene Hat
Tuning points	None
Valve type	Hyperflow Bayonet

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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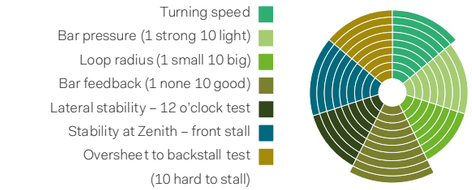


OCEAN RODEO FLITE A-SERIES 14.5M

The Flite has been the lightwind kite of choice from Canada's favorite kite brand, and this year we see the introduction of the new composite ALUULA material. It has always been an eager-to-please kite with a playful nature for a larger three-strut kite but we were intrigued to see how the revised material would affect the performance in such a critical area of the usage spectrum. We weren't disappointed.

As with all A-Series kites from Ocean Rodeo, the eye is immediately drawn to the gold and shiny new ALUULA cloth that makes up all of the inflatable sections. From all angles the Flite seems to have been on a diet, and every tube section is far lower in diameter than the Dacron equivalent, due to their enhanced stiffness. Teijin D2 cloth makes up the entire canopy, but that's where the standard part of the build ends. The construction of the kite has been completely redesigned to suit the new material with the triple-stitched, double-folded leading-edge seam a good example. Clearly a lot of thought and prototyping has gone into this before it has hit the market, which would explain the lengthy and secretive development process.

The 14.5m Flite comes in at 2.48kg on our scales, which is in line with most 9m three-strut Dacron kites. The statistics speak for themselves. The ALUULA version of the Flite without a doubt improves the characteristics of the kite in every way, and it is even more apparent on a larger kite specifically designed for light wind. The vigorous weight saving makes a considerable difference in most areas. What you experience is considerably earlier flying and stability in the raw low end, and much more defined and reactive handling, which is a revelation for such a large kite. The top end of the wind range extends much further than it should do. The Flite A-Series retains much of its predecessor's playful light handling and easy-going nature. It is the same amiable higher-aspect lightwind kite with the trademark aggressively tapered tips, but the clarity has been turned up to 11 and the range of use extended at both ends. It will

fly very comfortably in sub ten knots.

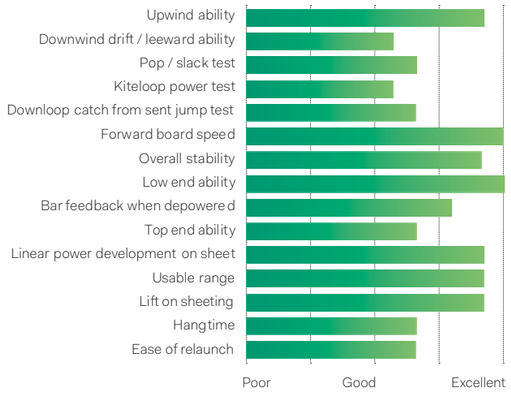
Ocean Rodeo should be congratulated for how far they have extended innovation with the Flite, and in many ways the lightwind biased application of the Flite is where the ALUULA fabric stands out most starkly in performance and more than justifies its price tag.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	14.5
Kite Weight (kg)	2.58
Weight per m²	0.1779310345
Pulleys per side	1
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	1
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	24.1
Diameter When Inflated	15.34
Recommended Pressure	9
Battens	6 Soft
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D2
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layers Ripstop + Leechline
Bridle Material	1.8mm Dyneema + 2mm Braided Polyester
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Triple Folded Triple Stitched Ridge Seam
Strut / Leading Edge Material	ALUULA
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	5
Overall Buildscore	8
Line Deflectors	Yes Elasticated
Self Rescue Handles	Yes (Small Wing Tip)
Line Attachment	Front Loops - Steering Knots
Maintenance	6 (No Zip)
Valve Protection	Yes Neoprene Cap
Tuning points	Zero
Valve type	Bayonet
Notes	Low Strut Diameter + Silicone Clip Covers

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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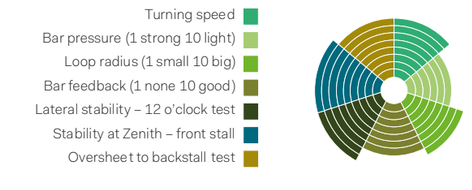


CABRINHA CONTRA

The Contra has been in the Cabrinha range since the dawn of time, I remember vividly a friend's 16.5m high aspect C shape with a huge crossover bridle and many struts, in the early noughties, that was the forefront of light wind technology at the time, and that has been the model's modus operandi ever since. Throughout its history, you'd usually find the Contra in larger sizes, however, with changing market trends, particularly the popularization of freeride hydrofoil riding both at home on Maui and globally, riders have been requiring more nimble light weight smaller sized kites for early flying, compact packing and ease of use. It makes perfect sense for Cabrinha to extend the range downwards, into smaller sized mono-struts to meet this consumer demand, and they have not been shy in producing six sizes from 3m through to 11m.

Out of the bag, we're presented with a mid-aspect, swept leading edge mono-strut weighing in at a competitive 2.44kg. All the usual high-end trimmings of a Cabrinha kite are present with their Nano Ripstop canopy and High tenacity Dacron making up the frame. The leading edge is relatively narrow in diameter for a 9m, and once inflated to the specified 8 PSI it makes for a solid little airframe. There's a simple pulley less and short low-diameter bridle present, and the canopy is segmented frequently across the Contra's span to maintain an accurate and smooth profile. The build is fairly minimal, as all good lightweight kites should be, and comprises of quality materials and detailed components, like the neat silicon covers for the one-pump hoses for instance. There is still a respectable amount of scuff protection present on the leading edge considering the low overall weight.

It flies early, as any decent mono-strut should, and like all Cabrinha kites recently it is smooth, notably smooth. Power delivery seems to build gently on sheet, and rear line tension remains through the entire depower range. Bar pressure is probably best described as light to moderate and not too remote. Around the corners, it continues with the theme of fluid power delivery and isn't going to pull you off the foil as the kite flies across the window on a transition. It is really simple to feather out the bar and make your turns at the speed you want to with a reassuringly creamy pulse of power available on demand.

What it has inherited from the existing Contra DNA is an air of efficiency. It creeps upwind well, even without a hydrofoil and its straight-line speed you can generate is impressive. You might want to put it on shorter lines for freeride foiling as it punches upwind so well. Extra drift is generally a positive attribute of the mono-strut platform due to their light weight, and the Contra is no exception. This drift capability will transfer well for lighter or more efficient riders in wave scenarios. It never really seems to overfly and balances well between its front and back lines.

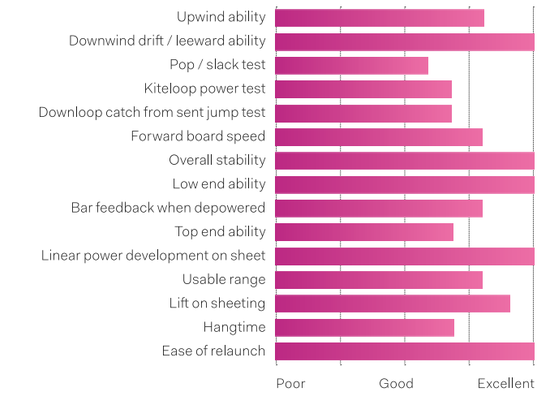
As a first venture into the now competitive realm of mono-strut kites, Cabrinha's design nouse and lineage shines through in the Contra immediately. It is a platform that is well optimized for light wind with effortless and gentle flying characteristics that transfer well across freeride disciplines and makes it a practical and sportive choice.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	2.44
Weight per m²	0.27
Pulleys per side	0
Leading Edge Hang Points	6
Steering Hang Points per side	1
Struts	1
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	22.5
Diameter When Inflated	14.32
Recommended Pressure	7 to 8
Battens	None
Construction	
Canopy Material	Nano Ripstop (2 Core)
Trailing Edge Material	Two Layer Ripstop
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlaid
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded Double Stitched
Strut / Leading Edge Material	High Tenacity Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	13
Overall Buildscore	8
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	No
Line Attachment	Front Loops - Steering Knots
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Neoprene Hat
Tuning points	No
Valve type	Screw In
Notes	Silicone Covered Valves

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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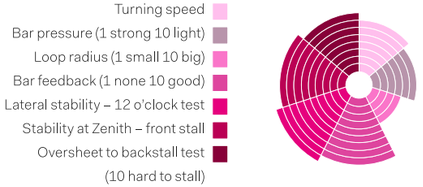


SLINGSHOT GHOST

Tony Logosz at Slingshot has been hydrofoil obsessed for much longer than most, and produces an enormous range of cross-discipline flying equipment in the Slingshot range. So it was only a matter of time before they decided to fill a little gap in their product range and release a foiling-specific inflatable kite in the form of the aptly named Ghost V1, a lightweight mono-strut naturally.

From a construction and innovation perspective, the single-strut is of course built into the canopy with the Slingshot trademark split strut, firmly integrating the strut into the canopy and minimizing any flutter. The aforementioned canopy is the same 4x4 canopy from Teijin, which spans the whole range. Coming over from the popular SST, the IRS bungees in the bridle help smooth out and perk up the steering. The Ghost also borrows some tech from the new Raptor, with heavily segmented wingtips further stiffening the airframe and improving turning response.

Above your head, you are immediately aware of how rounded and low-aspect the Ghost is, and how much static pull it can produce. Of course this makes perfect sense for a freeride foil kite, which doesn't need to drive upwind as a primary focus, as the hydrofoil does all this for you. This in a way liberates the Ghost to attributes in other areas without compromise. On 20m lines the Ghost generates a positive little boost to get you going, then sits like an obedient puppy lodged deep in the window producing a grunty and consistent power delivery. It sheds power fairly well on bar sheeting, but maintains that background pull essential for simplifying foiling maneuvers like tacks and foot transitions.

On turning input, the Ghost shifts itself around the sky in a stately fashion for a mono-strut design, which can sometimes have a tendency to be quite nippy. This matches the pace of those long drawn out foiling transitions where your bodyweight is supported throughout, much like with a soft kite. Running downwind with the Ghost is really easy – its lower aspect design means its leeward tendency is very stable and controllable.

Slingshot have released an extensive range of sizes from 2.5m to 17m. Whilst we tested the 8m, we are intrigued as to how the smaller ones will work, as there is potential for some serious high-wind reverse loop fun from a product that has been developed in the Gorge and with the exceptionally talented Fred Hope helping guide development.

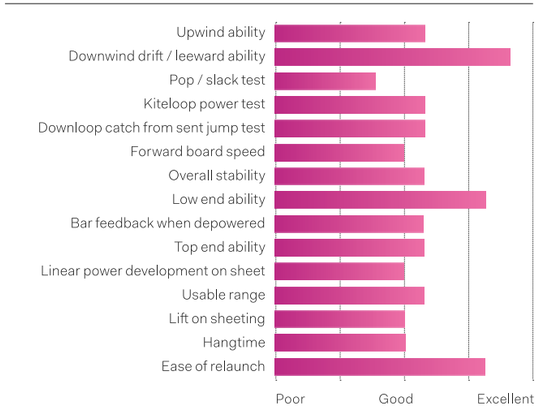
The Ghost takes a little practice to fly initially much like a foil kite, but once you adjust your flying style to it, the performance differences over something more mainstream make perfect sense, and it is very rewarding eeking out those hidden attributes. When using the Ghost, you have to remember it is relatively hydrofoil focused, and is not trying to compromise itself too much as a crossover kite. It is headed in a strong design direction, and fits its remit successfully.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	8
Kite Weight (kg)	2.31
Weight per m²	0.29
Pulleys per side	None
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	1
Struts	1
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	26
Diameter When Inflated	16.55
Recommended Pressure	8
Battens	4 Hard
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D4
Trailing Edge Material	Ripstop And Mark Cloth
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema With IRS Bungee
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Folded Plus Single Stitch
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Single Stitch, Double Stitch Segments
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All - Kevlar
Overall Buildscore	8
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes
Line Attachment	Sterring Knots Front Loops
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Neoprene Hat
Tuning points	None
Valve type	Bayonet

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



Static Handling Attributes

F-ONE BREEZE V3 15M

The F-ONE mono-strut staple Breeze reaches its third version. With F-ONE a brand with such an extensive and successful hydrofoil range, it would be daft not to have an exceptionally capable lightwind kite like the Breeze.
The Breeze has had some light fettling from the V2 in the subtle and incremental way F-ONE tend to develop on their product ranges. It seems to share little in common with either of the current Bandit ranges, and is very much a bespoke lightwind solution. We're presented with a higher aspect mono-strut kit with quite a complete arc, and a liberal sweep to the back of the wingtip.
The bridle system has two pulleys per side and balances the load up the leading edge well; these pulleys also allow the kite to twist a little to make for pivotal turning particularly without much rear line tension, which is important on a 15m beast like this. F-ONE's new 160g intermediate cloth makes an appearance enabling a little weight loss on the previous generations and replaces standard Dacron where practical. It looks like some attention has been paid to the trailing edge as this is beautifully fettled to provide a slight dart where each canopy segment joins. The iSUP valve now handles inflation and deflation and is a joy to use on a larger kite like the 15m we tested.
The 15m is a big old unit, and there's no denying on launch there is a lot of canopy above you. The well-implemented and relatively short bridling does a great job of giving a kite with all that power potential excellent mobility. When the wind really drops back on you, the Breeze has a magical ability to remain in an upright position rather than tip out. Those big swept tips clearly balance out any tendency to front stall and make a marked improvement in overall stability.
From a hydrofoil perspective the 15m is a good bet to get you through your first steps, as it is super stable at zenith, particularly for a bigger rider. A quick whip on the bar and it pops you up on the board with ease and drives upwind to the edge of the window well to shed wind if you do get overpowered. There

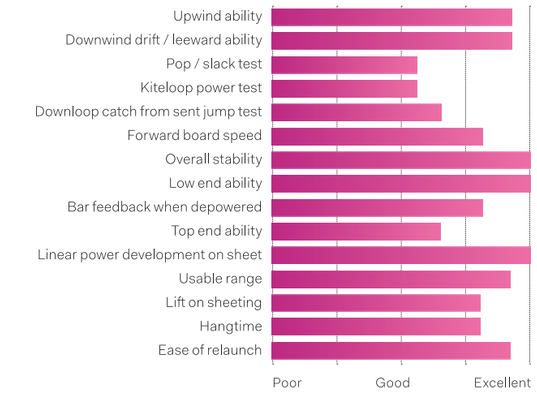
is also plenty of power dump available on the bar, and you can eek a surprising amount of top end out of it before things start to vibrate; this has certainly been extended from the V2. In the larger sizes, you need to pay attention to size choices if the kite is going to sit above you, and tailor it to your body weight and intended usage.
On a twintip, the 15m makes a lot of sense in lighter airs and heavier riders need not worry about deformation. The reverse launch from the water is exceptionally simple, pull both back lines and it winches up all that canopy gracefully. The Breeze continues to be a lightwind favorite and this 15m is a versatile quiver topper that is going to get you out in freakishly light winds and what's more provide some entertainment.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	15
Kite Weight (kg)	3.3
Weight per m²	0.22
Pulleys per side	2 Pulleys
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	2
Struts	0
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	28.7
Diameter When Inflated	18.27
Recommended Pressure	8
Battens	None
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D2
Trailing Edge Material	Teijin D2 + 160g cloth
Bridle Material	2mm sheathed Dyneema + 3mm braded polyester
Canopy Sewing	3 step overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	folded double stitched throughout
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	13
Overall Buildscore	9
Line Deflectors	yes
Self Rescue Handles	yes
Line Attachment	front knots steering balls
Maintenance	9
Valve Protection	neoprene hat
Tuning points	0
Valve type	iSUP

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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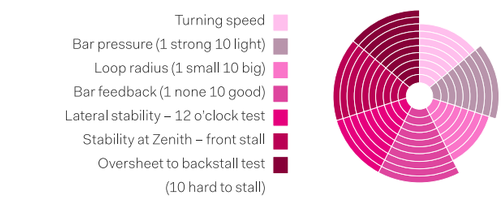
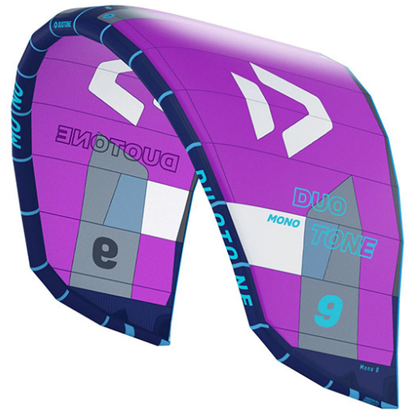


DUOTONE MONO

The Mono is back for 2021, the proven single-strut platform focusing on ease of use, early flying and pure simplicity. This year materials-wise all the inflatable tubes are made from LITE Dacron, which has a wider check pattern, alongside the proven Trinity TX canopy material that is used widely across the Duotone range. Wingtip bungees are a great enhancement for light wind and mean that the rear lines don't really go slack, perking up the steering response, which is noticeable when sheeted out. The lack of struts makes the pack-up size nice and compact, ideal for missions.
The Mono is purposefully ultra-low aspect and has a pronounced sweep in the front tube – it's like flying a huge letter D. Considering the low-aspect ratio, the lack of drag from the struts seems to allow the Mono to punch fairly well upwind, even without cheating on a hydrofoil. There is also very little back stall tendency, very light bar feedback, and massive power dump on sheet with the potentially long throw of the click bar only amplifying this. It has the early flying characteristics and competitively low weight you would expect from a single-strut kite, coupled with super light bar pressure and gentle feedback. Whilst quick enough, interestingly we wouldn't class the turning speed as ultra-fast, particularly on the full-length line setup. The Mono maintains enough steering response to make for a decent wave kite in light winds, particularly relevant for lighter riders that aren't going to load the airframe too much. A fairly unique attribute in the market today is five-line compatibility, so it is reverse compatible with older bar systems. For beetling around on a twintip the mono does a more than adequate job, particularly if you change the knots on the tips to provide a little more bar feedback. Whilst in the majority of situations the Mono is extremely composed, you can find a tiny bit of vibration if you throw the kite across the window aggressively.
Without a doubt, the Mono is absolutely ideal for school use, as it is a sturdy, early flying kite with predictable handling qualities and smooth simplistic power delivery. Relaunch is extremely straight forward, as due to that big sweep there is extraordinarily little suction on the leading edge, and the low-aspect ratio makes roll over or reverse launch with ease. If you let go of the bar system, the kite remains above you obediently.
For freeride hydrofoil aficionados, shortening the lines to liven it up and provide more constant pull through the turns, transforms the kite in the raw low-end light winds. This also perks up the handling and finds a nice rhythm and turning arc to match with your foil around transitions.
The Mono is the kind of kite that is going to supply you with no surprises and instill confidence, which for beginners, more sedate free riders and foilers is precisely what you need. It is a capable, friendly and reliable companion in the water.

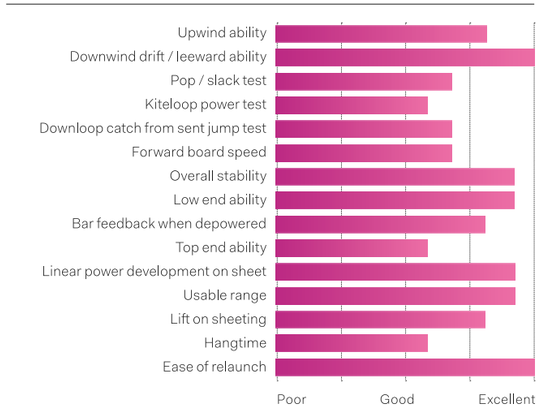


TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	2.36
Weight per m²	0.26
Pulleys per side	1 slider
Leading Edge Hang Points	12
Steering Hang Points per side	2
Struts	1
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	22.8
Diameter When Inflated	14.51
Recommended Pressure	7
Battens	0
Construction	
Canopy Material	Trinity TX
Trailing Edge Material	Mark cloth 160g intermediate
Bridle Material	1.6mm Kevlar
Canopy Sewing	3 step overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	folded single step
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Duotone Lite Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All
Overall Buildscore	8
Line Deflectors	yes
Self Rescue Handles	yes
Line Attachment	front knots rear loops
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	plastic cap
Tuning points	0
Valve type	airport valve
Notes	4/5 line convertable

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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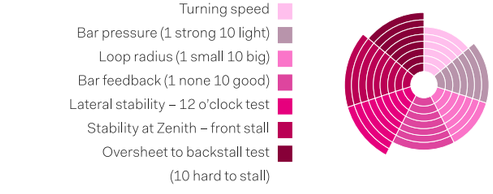


NOBILE THE ONE

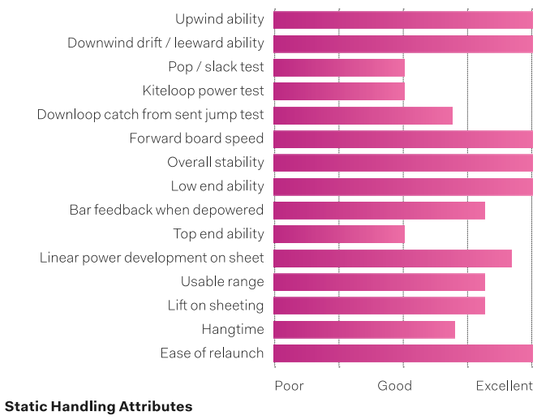
Polish powerhouse Nobile, perhaps most famous for their twintip boards, have developed an increasingly complete kite and hydrofoil line up.
The One, slightly unsurprisingly, is a mono-strut kite geared, as this product sector usually is, for lightwind free riding, early low end and hydrofoil use. But that's where adopting a formula in line with the more mainstream brands stops for the One, as it really is a standout product lurking quietly in this now busy little market sector.
Out of the bag, you're presented with a purposefully minimalist product with Teijin D2 cloth canopy and a narrow diameter and slightly angular leading edge. It sits mid-aspect compared to most single-strut kites and sports a very thin and efficient looking Dyneema bridle with twin pulleys. On more aggressive bar inputs, you can watch those pulleys shift and the whole kite twist across its wingtip, and make some seriously fast pivotal rotations on turning. Lively handling would be understating its cornering ability; it is one of the most perky and agile single-strut kites we've tried, even in the lower reaches of its wind range. Considering how intentionally light the build is and the complete absence of battens, there is very little vibration in the canopy, even under aggressive steering across the window.
We took the One hydrofoiling in some waves in some slightly onshore light wind, which is always a very telling situation for a kite's low-end stability. The drift it is capable of, and balance when running down the line fast on a foil, is extremely impressive. If you do manage to push the kite to start freefalling, rather than tip out, it hangs for a long time, giving you time to correct so the recovery is very predictable.
With a twintip, The One makes a good platform for lighter riders in underpowered conditions. If you're on the heavier side, whilst The One does an admirable job of controlling its shape, you will start to deform the kite a little if you really load it; this is forgivable as it's clearly not the intended design brief. It is perfectly adequate for trundling around in light wind, but perhaps a little too reactive on the bar for a school kite. The relaunch is pretty much instant, in fact keeping it on the water is perhaps the main challenge.
It is great to see a more boutique brand like Nobile going off the beaten track design-wise, and taking some risks with their products and in this case it has really paid off as they've produced one of the most playful kites for freeride foiling available. It turns on a dime, produces power exactly when you require it to, and remains very composed throughout its quite wide wind range. It has enough bar feedback and ground pull to get you round your transitions consistently with zero fuss. Nobile have made a big entrance to the single-strut market with The One – it is exceptionally light, agile and composed as a hunting cat.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	2.21
Weight per m²	0.25
Pulleys per side	1 slider
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	1
Struts	1
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	23
Diameter When Inflated	14.64
Recommended Pressure	Not specified
Battens	0
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D2
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layers 2 + Mark Cloth
Bridle Material	2mm Dyneema + 3mm Braded Polyester
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded Single Step
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	16
Overall Buildscore	7
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes
Line Attachment	Front Loops Steering Knots
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Neoprene Hat
Tuning points	0
Valve type	Bayonet

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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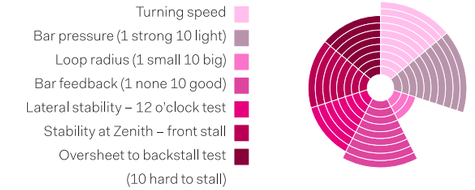


SLINGSHOT UFO

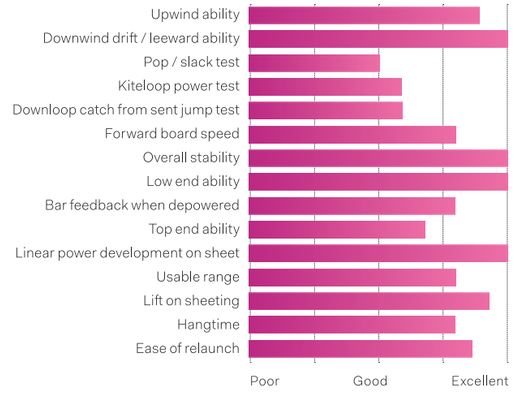
It is no secret Tony Logosz is a man that loves foiling, and last year Slingshot released their first single-strut foiling-specific kite in the form of the Ghost, to complement their huge range of kite foils. The UFO builds (or rather reduces) from that platform, losing the middle strut to become completely strutless. It is available in four sizes ranging from a tiny 3m to a 9m. The UFO feels completely designed around freeride foiling, developed with Fred Hope, whose freakishly high skill level is pushing boundaries.
Build-wise, weight loss has clearly been a high priority in the design process. We seem to see that across all manufacturers currently, but the UFO is very much on the extreme end of the spectrum. Single-core D1 Teijin ripstop is utilized for maximum weight saving. The only Dacron present other than the front tube is a tiny quadrant on the steering hang points. These are placed right at the back of the wingtip to spread decent leech tension into the back of the sail, and maximize turning speed. The elasticated IRS bridle carries over from other models, and removes slack from the lines, improving the kite's overall response. The pack-down size is tiny, perhaps a third of the size of an average three strut kite, making it a serious option for traveling. As you would expect it is light, very light in fact at 2.02kg.. In the air, the first thing you notice is the lack of flapping, which is the usual Achilles heel of this design. The canopy looks very well-tailored, and tension seems maintained in all positions. It is a work of ripstop art, and provides a clean riding experience. Turning is very snappy and pivotal, and you can feel that IRS bridle bungee evening things out and keeping power delivery smooth and progressive as the kite shoots across the window. When it comes to early starting, the grunty low-aspect shape and fast turning speed pops you up onto the foil immediately. That pleasant power on demand seems to time well with when you most need it as you lay down tacks and transitions. Other kites in this sector will fly out across the window and drop you off the foil. The UFO likes to sit high in the window in lighter airs and hangs in the sky like an obedient hawk.
The slimline build gives the wing shape an unearthly efficiency which affects two factors noticeably. Firstly, the upwind ability for a low-aspect design is surprisingly good – the leading edge diameter isn't huge, and secondly the wind range is definitely extended at both the low and top end. When drifting the kite upwards for a foot swap, the weightless point is predictable and extended, giving you more time and a better success rate, making it ideal for the intermediate hydrofoiler.
Relaunch can often be the worry with a strutless kite, but there is very little suction on the leading edge as the center section isn't in contact with the water when nose down. In some scenarios it is marginally more technical to relaunch than a strutted kite, but certainly nothing that should dissuade you.
There is really not much to dislike about the UFO. Some people are going to be quizzical and perhaps scratch their heads about a 9m being the largest available, but the evidence is compelling. The 9m got us going in sub ten knots at 90kgs with a 1000cm2 freeride hydrofoil, and what is more it was both an entertaining and a reliable experience. Although small in weight and stature, the UFO is without doubt a formidable player, and enhances the whole experience of freeride foiling over a strutted kite – I daresay it could be a 'gamechanger'.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	2.03
Weight per m²	0.23
Pulleys per side	none
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	1
Struts	0
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	27
Diameter When Inflated	17.19
Recommended Pressure	8
Battens	4 plastic
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin Single Core
Trailing Edge Material	Mark Cloth And Leech Line
Bridle Material	Braided Polyester And Bungee
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay And Single Stitch
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Single Stitch, Double Stitch Segments
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	10 Kevlar
Overall Buildscore	9
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	No
Line Attachment	Front Knots - Steering Loops
Maintenance	10
Valve Protection	Neoprene Hat
Tuning points	0
Valve type	Bayonet
Notes	Wide One Pump Hoses

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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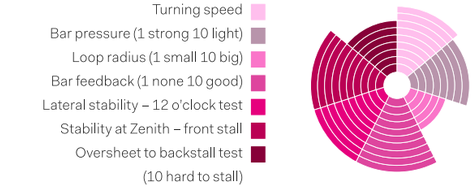


CORE XLITE

With the popularity of hydrofoiling literally soaring, the mono-strut concept continues to spread through the kite industry like wildfire, and the X Lite from Fehrman Island's most famous kite brand is a solid debut. It's a kite dedicated to freeride hydrofoil use, which let's face it, is most of the feed in for the kite foil market. It is for those who have no intention of racing and don't want the hassle of a foil kite, but want a great deal of the benefits of a lightweight kite – early flying, light handling and stability when drifting are the order of the day. Foil wings are getting larger, kites are getting smaller, and the light kite revolution is well and truly upon us.

Presented in the traditional CORE kite colors, you'd be forgiven for mistaking this kite as a Nexus or Section from their product range, and the profile and span shape certainly look like a mixture between the two, however it is clearly missing a couple of struts. Weight reduction has been a clear design focus with the X Lite. The usual CoreTex three core rip stop canopy is in place and implemented almost everywhere but the inflatable sections of the kite. Where the kite has been on an obvious diet is evident in the Dacron used for the leading edge and struts. This is a special lightweight version of the ExoTex fabric used in their standard models, but still seems to remain extremely stiff. The bridle system is also slimmed down a touch to minimize drag and weight. The result is a well-built 9m kite weighing in at 2.14 kg on our scales, which is very comparable to other mono struts on the market.

In the air the X Lite feels perky and nimble, but the turning speed is predictable and not twitchy. It flies very early and is exceptionally stable and it is difficult to make it in any way flustered. It is definitely not too grunty, which would be slightly pointless for a kite dedicated to freeride foiling. The CIT modes allow for a bit of trimming on the leading edge and we tested mainly in 'Allround' and 'Wave' mode, the latter giving a little more turning speed and depower, but the differences were quite subtle. One of the highlights in the X Lite's handling is how much lift you can achieve on such a short bar stroke. This is extremely helpful when tacking and jibing on the wing, giving you that all-important weightless few seconds extremely smoothly and progressively. This is most likely down to the double pulley bridle enabling a large controlled angle of attack change. The turning speed and power delivery in the turns matches well with the rhythm of turning a larger freeride foil wing. The radius of the kite and foil link seamlessly.

The almost inherent mono-strut trailing edge flap syndrome is present, but very minimal on sheeting out as the airframe shifts forward. The kite seems to be more comfortable flying with mid sheet anyway so unless you get overpowered and really dump the bar out it's unlikely to be irritating or even that noticeable.

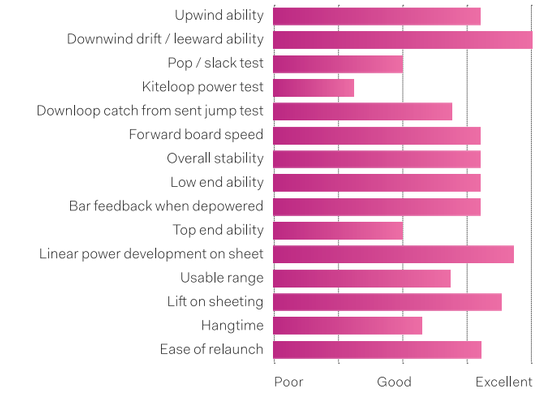
So for dedicated freeride foilers who also want to potentially take their foiling into waves the X lite is a powerful tool. It could also be really good for lighter riders as it flies really early and doesn't have a huge amount of ground pull, and also has some straight wave riding crossover potential due to its drift characteristics. Overall it's quite a focused and honed product and is aimed very directly at a sector of the market that's growing. Clearly a lot of thought and care has gone into the development of the X Lite by people who know their discipline and the result is something very special to fly. For any discerning freeride foiler you could definitely justify a couple of these in your quiver.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	2.14
Weight per m^2	0.24
Pulleys per side	2 Pulleys - 1 Slider
Leading Edge Hang Points	8.00
Steering Hang Points per side	1.00
Struts	1.00
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	23.20
Diameter When Inflated	14.77
Recommended Pressure	7.00
Battens	2 Rigid + 4 Soft Battens
Construction	
Canopy Material	CoreTex triple ripstop
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layers Ripstop + Mark Cloth
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema / 3mm Polyester
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Single Stitch Double Stitch on Segments
Strut / Leading Edge Material	ExoTex light
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All
Overall Buildscore	9.50
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes (wing tip small)
Line Attachment	Front Loops - Steering Knots
Maintenance	8.00
Valve Protection	Large Plastic Cap
Tuning points	3.00
Valve type	Core Speed Valve

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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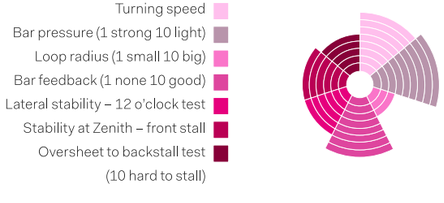
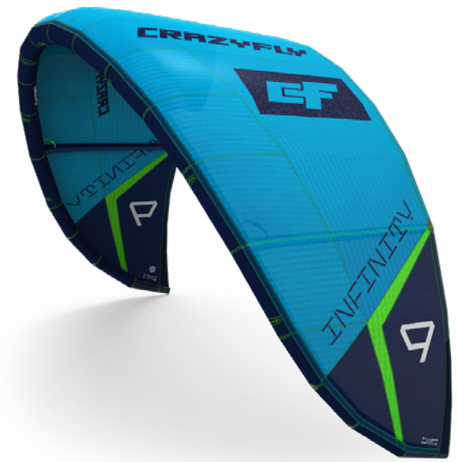


CRAZYFLY INFINITY 2021



Long established Slovakian kite brand CrazyFly have had the Infinity range in the brand for a few years now, and build the kites in their very own on-site production facility. It sports the lightest weight per size in the CrazyFly range, and the emphasis is on light wind and low end, and has applications across various riding styles and boards.

As usual with CrazyFly, they are not afraid to push out on a design tangent, and it is the highest aspect bow-shaped low-wind specific kite we've seen and looks like it may have inherited some DNA from the Hyper. The twin strut design is an interesting concept that you don't see that often, leaving a large clean and useful area in the middle of the canopy with two small struts tucked just on the inside of the wingtips to firm things up in the canopy. The bridle and arc design means the air frame really does not move much and there is zero flapping. The eye on weight saving compared to the other models is evident, with smaller Arptex patches across the leading edge segments and a bare minimum of Dacron in the tips. Most of the kite is made up of Triplex rip stop, which seems to have a really decent coating and there is a pronounced load seam running across the front third of the canopy linking the smaller profiles section immediately behind the leading edge. On the larger two kites in the range there is an optional fifth line to aid relaunch and further support the wide span in the center. The ruthlessly effortless Airlock valve may well be familiar to any iSUP owners out there and provides the easiest inflate and deflate on the market.

The Infinity is an exceptionally efficient feeling kite in the air with light bar pressure. After a minimal power stroke it picks up your speed rapidly. With a foil, that high-aspect design flies a long way forward and you can achieve some frankly ridiculous upwind angles. Swapping feet around the corners is as simple as it gets, as there is great power on sheet to give you those all-important few seconds of weightlessness. It is a soft and consistent power delivery ideal for freeriding.

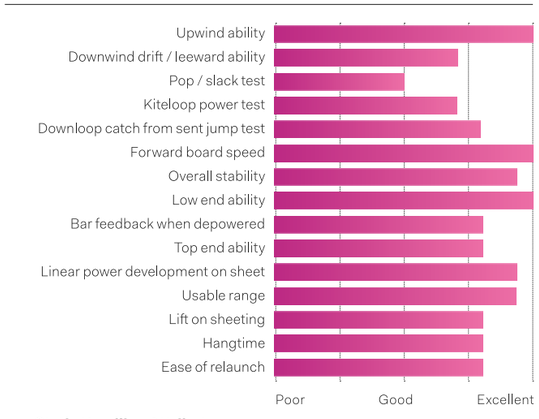
Handling-wise, the Infinity provides a steady turning response, and the lack of twist in the airframe means that it pivots around the wingtip rather than the center of the kite and provides a smooth drawn out power response. With a twintip, you have access to nice floaty jumps and the tight airframe. As you would expect the Infinity is a kite that thrives in its low end – we were beetling around comfortably on the 9m and twintip in 12 knots. It is an undisputable freeride weapon in the low end and will worry race kites upwind on a foil.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	2.56
Weight per m^2	0.28
Pulleys per side	None
Leading Edge Hang Points	10
Steering Hang Points per side	2
Struts	2
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	23
Diameter When Inflated	14.64
Recommended Pressure	7
Battens	none
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D3
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layers Ripstop + Mark Cloth
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Single Stitch Double Stitch On Segments - Twist
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	6
Overall Buildscore	10
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes
Line Attachment	Front Loops - Rear Knots
Maintenance	10
Valve Protection	None
Tuning points	None
Valve type	iSUP
Notes	Kevlar Strut Tips - Dacron Wing Tips

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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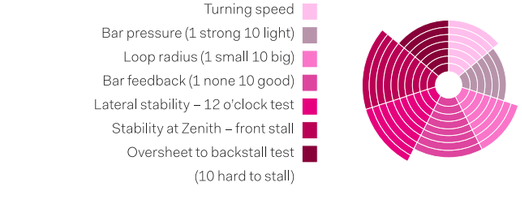


RRD EMOTION

RRD have dabbled with strutless and single-strut kites for several years in the Emotion model, and have produced some classics along the way. The Emotion has now settled on a single-strut design and is pitched as a more versatile option with more of a cross-discipline application than simply being foiling-specific.

The build is the RRD exclusive couture we're all used to, and many of the luxurious touches you find across the rest of the RRD kite range are present. There is perhaps more of a focus on weight saving on the Emotion, which is important in a single-strut kite. Neat silicon one-pump hoses and custom moldings are present across the board. Steering line bungees whittle the slack out of the rear lines when depowered. The bag is very neat, lightweight and compact, and sports an excellent Velcro pump attachment.

In the air the Emotion feels immediately solid for a smaller kite. At the edge of the wind window, you can try and trip it over by sheeting out and making it overfly, but there is a built-in leeward tendency which keeps it parked slightly in the power. On the water this translates to a firm feeling of security that is sometimes lacking in smaller mono-struts. When used with a foil, this background pull provides a great steady platform and enables some super easy foot switches for learning your tacks and jibes. The turning speed is fairly mellow for a 7m and it generates a steady power stroke through the turn and isn't too pivotal; this further reinforces the predictable nature of the Emotion and really shines in a smooth, no surprises power delivery. It is a very solid airframe for a single-strut kite, which perhaps extends its wind range further than you would expect, and comfortably into the realms of wave riding. The balanced position and composure that the Emotion holds in the wind window translates to an

excellent drift capability. Combining this with decent power on the upstroke makes for an entertaining wave kite.

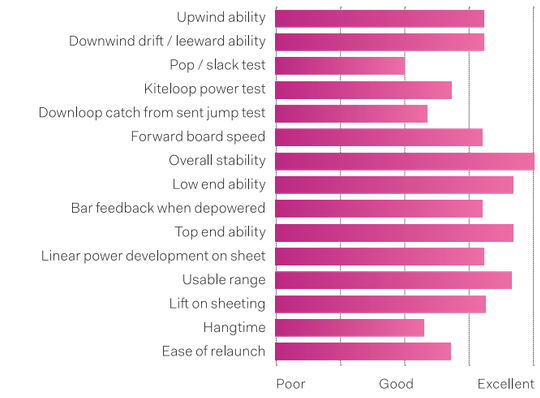
The Emotion is ideal for the progressive freeride foiler who doesn't want something too snatchy with regards to power delivery. It retains a much broader spectrum of use in terms of both wind range and discipline than most mono-struts, performs well as a wave kite, and is solid enough to load up with a twintip. It harbors all the early flying advantages of most single strutters with a more robust feel and will make for a compact and versatile travel companion.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	7
Kite Weight (kg)	2.07
Weight per m²	0.30
Pulleys per side	1
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	1
Struts	1
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	20.8
Diameter When Inflated	13.24
Recommended Pressure	Not Specified
Battens	None
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D2
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layer Ripstop + Leech Line
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema + 3mm Dyneema
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded Double Stitched
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All - Kevlar
Overall Buildscore	9
Line Deflectors	Yes - Rigid
Self Rescue Handles	Yes
Line Attachment	Front Knot - Steering Loops
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Eva Hat
Tuning points	None
Valve type	Bayonet
Notes	Elasticed Rear Pigtails

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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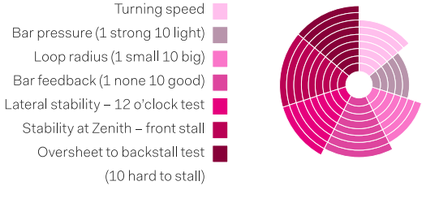


DUOTONE NEO SLS

The Neo has been an industry benchmark wave kite with a solid competition history in both pure wave and strapless freestyle, as well as some big names free surfing on Maui. It is definitely a well-documented benchmark product, but with this year's introduction of the SLS range from Duotone, we were eager to see how this already well-renowned kite could be improved with the all-new updated materials.

The Penta TX material replaces the standard Dacron used on most kites over all inflatable sections of the kites as well as all of the reinforcements into the canopy around the struts and into the wingtips. A thin high strength bridle made from premium Dyneema slices through the wind with a minimum of drag. To balance the ultra-rigid airframe that the Penta TX achieves, Duotone have implemented all new lower diameter Flex Struts, also found in the new Evo SLS. These free a little twist into the canopy and make for some very precise and intuitive steering. Small rigid wingtip battens help eliminate any vibration under aggressive turning.

The Neo has always been a kite that felt torquey for its size and this phenomenon remains true. It is a true ride-a-size-down affair and even heavy riders shouldn't be afraid of the smaller sizes. What you immediately feel has changed most from the non SLS Neo is in the handling. Things are far more perky and crisp around the corners; the SLS material has made the Neo feel far more agile in the hands. The weight saving that comes with the SLS material definitely extends the low end of the Neo. In most situations, you always want to be on as small a wave kite as possible, and particularly if it's gusty and offshore, the combination of a lighter kite and a more rigid airframe lets you punch through any lulls more effectively and there is less chance of the kite dropping out on you, which is always the wave scenario nightmare. The Neo has really simple and precise power delivery, and is smooth to fade the grunt on and off. On full depower the Neo retains the ability to lurk in the air with

very little fuss. Your ability to control the Neo effectively one-handed has also increased, allowing you to open your body up to the wave more.

Out of a pure wave context and overpowered the Neo does a great job of loading up for strapless freestyle, with excellent predictable float and a fairly grunty kite loop. Sheet out and it climbs rapidly, helping you spot your landing which is more often than not wonderfully soft.

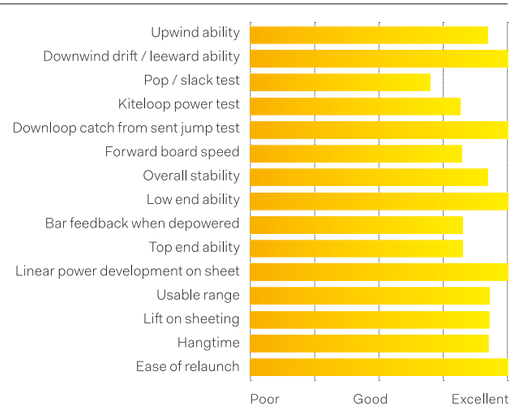
The weight saving in the Neo SLS ekes out even more low-end and early flying, and stability in lighter airs translates well for hydrofoil use. It packs a little smaller than the standard Neo, and also handles like a far smaller kite than previously. It is still an easy kite to position and ignore to ride the wave, but now in more technical onshore conditions the handling improvement really improves its agility and range of application. The pre SLS Neo perhaps used to rely on its excellent park and drift characteristics rather than super snappy handling. It now does both, which is a killer combination.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	8
Kite Weight (kg)	2.5
Weight per m²	0.31
Pulleys per side	1 Slider
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	2
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	24
Diameter When Inflated	15.28
Recommended Pressure	7
Battens	4 Rigid
Construction	
Canopy Material	Trinity Tx
Trailing Edge Material	Mark Cloth 160g Intermediate
Bridle Material	1.6mm Kevlar
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded Single Step
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Penta Tx
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All
Overall Buildscore	9
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes
Line Attachment	Front Knots Rear Loops
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Plastic Cap
Tuning points	0
Valve type	Airport Valve
Notes	4/5 Line Convertable

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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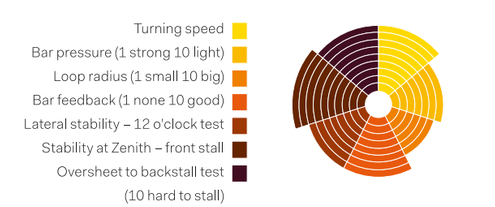


SLINGSHOT SST V5

The SST has been a feature of the Slingshot range for several years now and the 2020 sees the fifth incarnation of this benchmark wave kite. Aimed fairly squarely at wave riding, with a decent application for foiling, the SST has always had wide application of use, stretching into freeride.

The main change this year is the implementation of some 4x4 ripstop material from Teijin, stiffening and making an already solid kite even sturdier, and increasing the kite's lifespan. This extra stiffness in the canopy seems to have perked up the steering, and the mini-bridle translates bar inputs well.

The SST retains the pleasant ability to initiate a turn in the kite really easily without having to put in huge bar inputs. A delicate flick of the wrist is enough to initiate the kite for your bottom turn and the response from the kite is instant. The SST dumps power effectively with no flapping across the window, and although the overall weight of the kite is probably slightly increased with the new cloth, the excellent drift characteristics remain unchanged, which is a testament to a good fundamental shape.

The low-end grunt of the kite, a long established Slingshot trademark, is pretty surprising. You will find yourself creeping upwind adequately in far less wind than expected, which lends itself well to wave-led side-shore conditions.

Where the compromise lies with the SST when compared to a few other top tier wave kites is in the high end of the wind range, where things can start to wobble and top out, particularly with a heavier rider. As long as you're aware of this, and tailor your quiver accordingly this shouldn't be too big a problem, but it's not as extended as some. The bar feeling this year feels far more linear than previous models, with a less on/off power delivery and slightly smoother approach letting you feather your power nicely resulting in less fatigue.

The Compstick bar remains a familiar interface, if a little complex compared to some, with three lines running through the bar and a bungee on the safety to keep things neat. The 7m supplied went well on the shorter 20m lines,

keeping the kite nicely planted deep in the wind window, accentuating the drift ability and not compromising the upwind performance drastically.

For foiling, the SST is a little peach. That deep window position and very comfortable handling in low end combined with the decent power dump, means you can concentrate on your board skills and largely ignore the kite. It is extremely stable and obedient, and produces a nice bit of power in the turn and loop to pull you reliably out of maneuvers with a bit of zest.

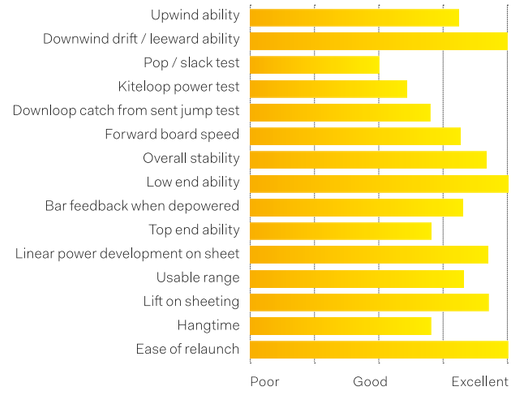
The SST is a classic, dependable shape now made even more robust than previously with the new cloth, and the depower is far more progressive. For the diehard fan, of which there are many, it is worth the upgrade for these reasons alone.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	3.01
Weight per m^2	0.33
Pulleys per side	None
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	24
Diameter When Inflated	15.28
Recommended Pressure	8
Battens	None
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D4
Trailing Edge Material	Ripstop And Mark Cloth And Leech Line
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema With Irs Bungee
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Folded Plus Single Stitch
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Single Stitch, Double Stitch Segments
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All - Kevlar
Overall Buildscore	8
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes
Line Attachment	Steering Knots Front Loops
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Neoprene Hat
Tuning points	None
Valve type	Bayonet

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



Static Handling Attributes

NAISH SLASH S25

Naish are a brand synonymous with wave riding with a rich Hawaiian heritage stretching back to the very inception of kiting, and have always been eager to push the wave riding side of the sport. The Slash has done at least five years as a model and for S25 Naish have applied much of the new tech implemented in the rest of the range.

The usual quality Teijin Quadtex material is implemented, making for a kite with longevity in its shape and excellent wear properties. The one-pump system has now gone external with large diameter tubes to make inflation and maintenance as easy as possible. The load seams run from the center across the canopy to the wingtips, which helps transfer steering forces across the kite with more effect. The wingtips are a little more clipped and squared off than the Pivot and have a pronounced sweep backwards with a tear drop shape. This moves the balance point of the kite backwards and makes it more composed in a down-the-line drift scenario.

We found dropping the line lengths a little to 22m beneficial for this smaller 7m kite, particularly in higher wind strengths, as with the full 24m lines on it felt a little far away and remote. This is easy to achieve by whipping off the extensions and didn't hamper our upwind progress noticeably.

For anyone familiar with the Pivot, the Slash feels like a slightly down-tuned and less aggressive version with a predictable design focus shift towards drift and down-the-line riding and requiring far less kite movement to keep position on the wave. Round your bottom turn, the Slash provides power surge, making it easy to time your carve, and it climbs particularly fast as soon as you release the bar. Its reliability in leeward terms is superb and the Slash feels exceptionally balanced. The kite will follow you downwind obediently with a minimum of bar input. The Slash matches the longer bar stroke on the Naish system well, as you can change angle of attack to dump power aggressively

without the fear of the kite overflying. In other good news, it retains the truly enormous wind range of the Pivot.

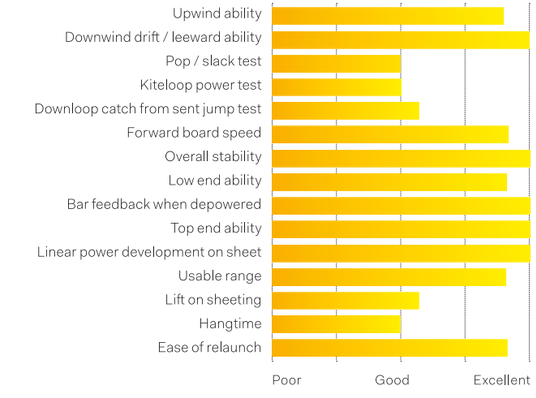
For the more wave-focused rider, the Slash is an excellent choice, providing a far more relaxed experience than the Pivot particularly if you are lucky enough to have decent down-the-line wave conditions. It is a kite with excellent manners that enables your complete freedom on the wave with no surprises. As wave kites go, it is a sedate and calculated experience.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	7
Kite Weight (kg)	2.54
Weight per m^2	0.36
Pulleys per side	1 Slider
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	21
Diameter When Inflated	13.37
Recommended Pressure	7 - 9
Battens	None
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin Quad-Tex
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layer Ripstop + Leech Line
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema
Canopy Sewing	Folded 3 Step Overlay + Single Step
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded Double Stitch
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All - Kevlar
Overall Buildscore	10
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	None
Line Attachment	Front Knots - Steering Loops
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	EVA Hat
Tuning points	None
Valve type	iSUP
Notes	Load Distribution Seam

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



Static Handling Attributes

F-ONE BANDIT S2

F-ONE made a great decision when they split their long-established Bandit range by discipline and developed last year's surf-specific Bandit S. It produced a more focused product that has been well received by wave purists and strapless freestylers alike. F-ONE have never a brand to stand still with regards to their product development; the next generation Bandit S2 has received the usual subtle but numerous tweaks which aggregate into quite a dramatically improved kite.

Technically speaking, we are presented with a completely revised panel layout and intelligent canopy seaming to distribute the loading in the most stable direction of the ripstop. It is a technique F-ONE have employed in this year's Bandit 21 and their new Strike wing with great effect. This relatively subtle change in cloth alignment keeps the canopy tighter, less stretchy, and results in improved response from the kite. The trailing edge has also had a major makeover, and they have utilized an intermediate 135g material that feels halfway between ripstop and Dacron. This controls the trailing edge more effectively and drops a few grams from the overall weight.

In the air, what is most noticeable is a slight drop in bar pressure, which perks up the handling without losing that all-important instinctive ability to know where the kite is without having to look at it. The bar feeling is firm enough not to be too remote and twitchy, but at the same time isn't going to give you raging tennis elbow. The other impressive improvement is how far up the depower travel you can push the bar and still retain a good response from the turning. You can winch in all the depower the cleat has to offer, and it still turns with no vibration. Overall the kite feels very taut, smooth and solid. Its agile performance in onshore conditions is a testament to its good design, and there isn't a ridiculous power spike or vibration if you throw the kite across the window depowered. It's a smooth controlled experience with power on tap as and when you require it. This obviously translates well into hydrofoil use where the drifty nimble nature makes for a playful light wind experience.

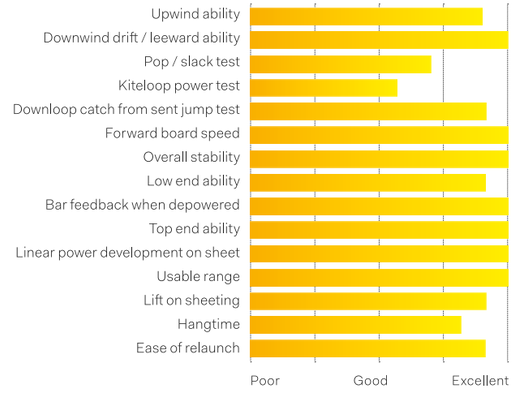
The revised model retains all the positive points of the existing Bandit S and makes it even more composed, particularly at each end of the wind range, easily squeezing a few more knots of usability at both ends. A good measure of success of a wave kite is how much you don't have to think about it. Particularly in bigger and more critical conditions, a wave kite should be as passive as possible. You want to be concentrating on your position on the wave, rather than worrying about where the kite is. If you can ignore the kite almost completely and concentrate on your turns, then you have found a successful design, and that is certainly where the Bandit S2 is pitched. It makes for a very free and easy experience, and its passive and instinctive nature is a virtue

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	2.68
Weight per m^2	0.30
Pulleys per side	2 Pulleys
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	2
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	23.2
Diameter When Inflated	14.77
Recommended Pressure	9
Battens	8 Soft
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D2
Trailing Edge Material	160g Folded Sewn
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema + 3mm Braded Polyester
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded Double Stitched Throughout
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	15
Overall Buildscore	9
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes
Line Attachment	Front Knots Steering Balls
Maintenance	9
Valve Protection	Neoprene Hat
LE Tuning points	0
Valve type	ISUP

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



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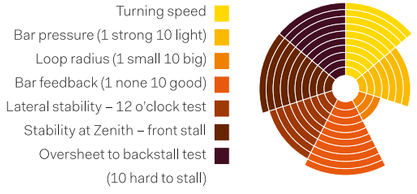
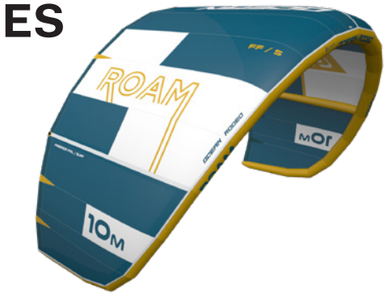


OCEAN RODEO ROAM A-SERIES



Canada's favorite kite brand have been not so quietly developing the new ALUULA airframe material for a while now, and we have been eager to get our hands on it. The A-Series kites are offered as a premium option over the existing models in the Ocean Rodeo range, and in this case the already solid performing Roam wave kite.

The first thing you notice, even when the kite is in the bag, is how light the kite is, weighing in at 2.08kg.. To put it in context, this is 500g less than a comparable lightweight three-strut wave kite, and for a flying structure which has to support its own weight, that's a whole heap of difference.

If you love gold, you are in for a treat as the first thing you notice getting it out of the bag is the extremely crisp and shiny new material which makes up the leading edge and struts of the kite. Pump the kite up to the recommended 9 PSI and you are presented with an extremely stiff airframe that comes from a combination of the properties of new material and high pressures. When handling on the beach, bending the struts and leading edge is far more difficult than a standard Dacron kite, even though the tube diameters on the Roam are noticeably low.

The build and seaming on the inflatable sections of the kite have been completely reworked, which could explain the long gestation period for the A-Series. The weight saving extends to the bridling which is narrow diameter, and all the other fixtures and fittings are similarly minimal, with a bare minimum of screen print on the canopy. One surprising thing we discovered: ALUULA is very slippery when wet, so bare that in mind when handling the kite!

In the air, the rapid turning and predictable power response when you throw it across the window provides exactly what you need from a wave kite. We don't use this phrase lightly, but the lightness and stiffness make the 10m kite feel far smaller and more responsive than anything else we have tested to this point. Having a 10m test kite was a blessing, as this is the largest size most will use for a wave kite, and it is a crisp and precise user experience that extends the low-end stability and drift beyond the realm of what's expected of a 10m, highlighting how simple weight saving and the in-built stiffness directly affect performance. The Roam A-Series slices efficiently through light airs, and you can effortlessly throw the kite around when you need it, which is very noticeable in bigger onshore conditions, letting you get to parts of the wave previously inaccessible in that little wind.

So in real world conditions what does it give you over the standard Roam? It certainly provides an extra few seconds of drift and a definite increase in turning response. Initiating a turn is instant and natural, and progress across the window is smooth and not going to pull you off your board. Earlier flying gives it a really good cross over application for hydrofoil use. It is also worth noting that the concrete solid airframe and lightness extend the wind range of the kite at both ends. A 10m kite at 2kg kite is on par with most mono-strut or strutless kites so you enjoy a few knots extra there; the airframe stability means that at the top end where kites start to deform, the Roam doesn't.

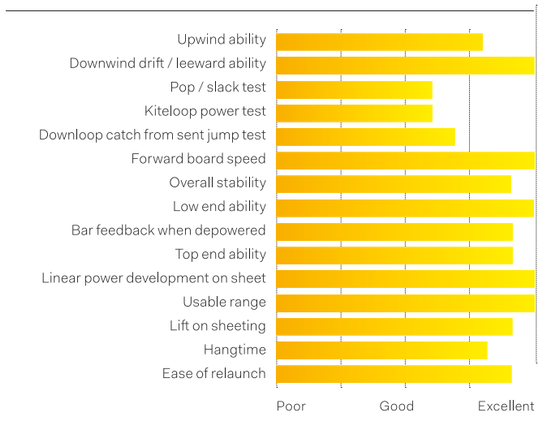
There are a lot of claims from manufacturers about weight saving this year with various methods and outcomes, but even the most hardened cynics among us can't deny Ocean Rodeo have come up with something remarkable here that will go on to change the performance of modern inflatable kites.

TECHNICAL DATA

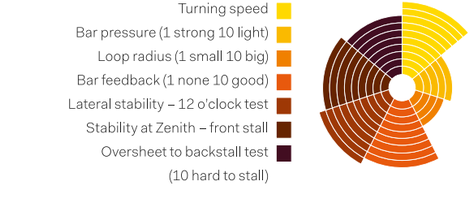
Physical Attributes	
Size tested	10
Kite Weight (kg)	2.16
Weight per m^2	0.216
Pulleys per side	2
Leading Edge Hang Points	10
Steering Hang Points per side	1
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	20.5
Diameter When Inflated	13.05
Recommended Pressure	9
Battens	6 soft
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D2
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layers Ripstop + Leechline
Bridle Material	1.8 Mm Dyneema + 2mm Braided Polyester
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Triple Folded Triple Stitched Ridge Seam
Strut / Leading Edge Material	ALUULA
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	3
Overall Buildscore	8
Line Deflectors	Yes Elasticated
Self Rescue Handles	Yes (Small Wing Tip)
Line Attachment	Front Loops - Steering Knots
Maintenance	6 (No Zip)
Valve Protection	Yes Neoprene Cap
Tuning points	Zero
Valve type	Bayonet
Notes	Low Strut Diameter + Silicone Clip Covers

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



Static Handling Attributes



NORTH CARVE

New Zealand currently seems like a development hotbed for all things wind-related and North Kiteboarding's product development is firmly rooted over there with a plethora of excellent wave conditions on offer. This is the wave-specific North Carve's second incarnation, but don't look at it as anything close to a difficult second album, as Pat Goodman has almost twenty years of kite design experience behind him.

It is a familiar looking three-strut mid-aspect platform like the previous model, and the main technical differences this year manifest themselves in the trailing edge and canopy framing. The heavy Dacron load frame from last year has been replaced with a much lighter weight and clean trailing edge from mark cloth. The deep canopy profile is still present, but we think maybe there has been a little trim in the leading edge diameters. A simple and lean pulley-free bridle has been modified to enhance the top-end control, and four solid battens stiffen up the canopy.

In the air, compared to last year you are going to notice a definite level up in regard to turning speed. It feels far more dynamic and pivotal in its turning than previously, which lends itself to more practical kite-led onshore wave riding. If you rush it across the window, there's no major power spike pulling you off your board when you're strapless. The grunt and ground pull is still present, and you will definitely not want to rig too big, but the low end is excellent.

The upwind ability is still excellent, and you are going to make it back to the peak without having to put much effort in. Simply sheet in, turn on the power tap, and it has that mystical ability to clamber upwind very effectively. When you send the kite into a climb for a bottom turn, it pushes up the window far more agreeably than last year's model. The good news is it has retained the park-and-slash down-the-line ability as well, for when the conditions line up for more down-the-line conditions. For strapless freestyle aficionados, we think there is more access to lift on sheet than previously and it seems easy to load up for a punt, with adequate float and control for a more gentle return to the water.

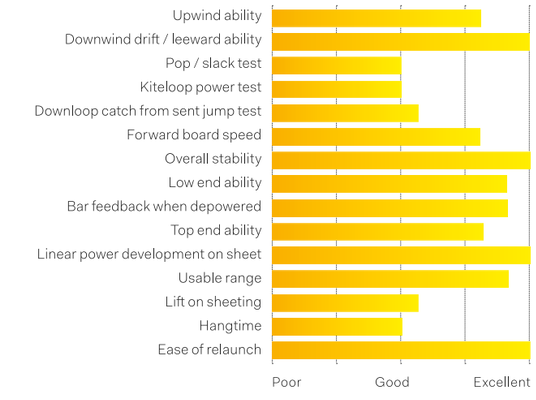
Watching Jesse Richman tow into Jaws with the Carve, you really can't argue the Carve's provenance, and the updated kite certainly feels tighter, lighter and far more reactive than the previous model. It has become a far more rounded wave kite and will be more suitable in less favorable onshore conditions, and it deals with wind variance far more tolerably in the top end of the wind range.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	9
Kite Weight (kg)	2.98
Weight per m²	0.33
Pulleys per side	None
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	24.5
Diameter When Inflated	15.60
Recommended Pressure	7
Battens	4 Rigid
Construction	
Canopy Material	Teijin D2
Trailing Edge Material	Single Layer + Mark Cloth
Bridle Material	1.8mm Flying Line
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Folded Single Stitch
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Teijin Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All
Overall Buildscore	7
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes
Line Attachment	Front Loops - Steering Knots
Maintenance	9
Valve Protection	Neoprene Hat
Tuning points	None
Valve type	Hyperflow Bayonet

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



Static Handling Attributes

CORE SECTION 3

This is the third iteration of the CORE Section from the German brand, and they've really built some pedigree into the latest model. The Section fits into their discipline-specific range, and is aimed as a pure wave kite.

This year the bridle has had a good trim down and is now very compact. The major upgrade comes with the addition of the CIT modes. These are some nifty bridle trim knots on the leading edge to allow changes to help the kite in onshore and offshore conditions. We had a good play with these and although the adjustments appear quite minute on the leading edge and bridle, it has quite an effect on where the kite wants to sit in the window and how it handles. If you like to trim your kites this is brilliant as you will glean some positive performance using these; conversely if you like your kite to just work without tinkering simply leave it in the 'Allround' central setting and the kite will perform well in all situations. Three steering speed settings are built into the wingtips for the usual adjustments there.

We had the opportunity to take the kite out in a whole host of conditions from heavy double overhead side off and slightly onshore UK conditions to give it a very real world test, as well as a smidgen of foiling for good measure. From a practical perspective, the kite drives upwind well, is rapid to reverse launch in a hurry, and the top end on our 8m test kite extended further than most, and felt reassuringly obedient when it should have been way out of its comfort zone. Handling-wise the Section feels instantly perky and alert, and probably sits smack in the middle of wave kite turning speeds across the major brands. It's quick enough without being twitchy, and the feedback, universal across the CORE brand, is pleasantly smooth. Unlike some faster turning wave kites, it doesn't fly out of the window and front stall; it seems to sit in a very comfortable 'happy place' position in the window. The airframe is rock solid and handles gusts with poise and no hint of deform, where other models are hopping about. When it's onshore and you need to throw the Section around, there is a noticeably reliable climb without too much power when you sheet out after a bottom turn, and there is no unmanageable power spike whipping across the window, even when slightly overpowered. In onshore conditions when the kite does luff on slack lines, it does so predictably, remaining balanced, and point blank refuses to tip out on you.

When the conditions line up, and things go clean and side shore, the drift attributes really shine. The Section has excellent balanced drift and remains steerable on slack lines. It seems to hold good tension in steering lines enabling pivotal and fast turns with a solid feeling. This allows you to position yourself freely on the wave. It has enough power dump and gust absorption to deal with some inconsistent European wind conditions. The Section feels light, athletic and reassuring. The power development on the bar sheet is impressive and can dig you out of trouble instead of leaving you engulfed and flailing in a wall of white water. If you need to make a hasty exit in sketchy wind, it performs.

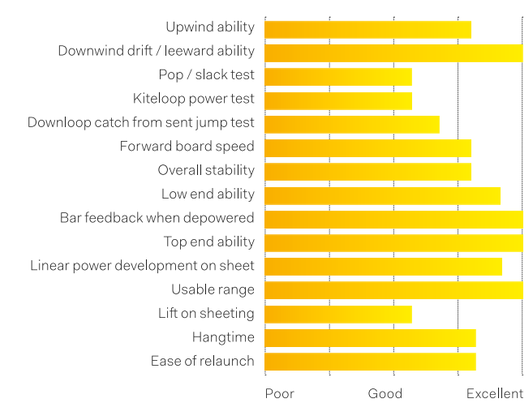
What's most evident with the Section 3 is the consistent and smooth power delivery, and highly accurate and easy to get to know sheeting response on the bar. It's an exercise in temperament and an exceptional, focused product for hooked-in wave attack.

TECHNICAL DATA

Physical Attributes	
Size tested	8
Kite Weight (kg)	2.79
Weight per m²	0.31
Pulleys per side	2 pulleys - 1 slider
Leading Edge Hang Points	8
Steering Hang Points per side	3
Struts	3
Flat Leading Edge Diameter at Widest Point (cm)	20.5
Diameter When Inflated	13.05
Recommended Pressure	8
Battens	2 rigid 2 soft
Construction	
Canopy Material	Coretex Triple Ripstop
Trailing Edge Material	2 Layers Ripstop + Mark Cloth
Bridle Material	2mm Sheathed Dyneema / 3mm Polyester
Canopy Sewing	3 Step Overlay
Leading Edge Closing Seam	Single Stitch Double Stitch On Segments
Strut / Leading Edge Material	Exotex Dacron
Leading Edge Segment Bump Stops	All
Overall Buildscore	9.5
Line Deflectors	Yes
Self Rescue Handles	Yes (Wing Tip Small)
Line Attachment	Front Loops - Steering Knots
Maintenance	8
Valve Protection	Large Plastic Cap
Tuning points	3
Valve type	Core Speed Valve
Notes	Bridle Storage Velcro

SUBJECTIVE TEAM FEEDBACK

Dynamic Handling Attributes



Static Handling Attributes

THE ULTIMATE TEST GUIDE #3

CATEGORY WINNERS: KITES

ALL ROUND FREERIDE

DUOTONE EVO SLS
The most significant rework the Evo has had in a while. The new SLS material makes it crisp, playful and more performant than ever.

CORE NEXUS 2
A superb update of the German workhorse, extending its wind range and widening its luxurious application cross disciplines.

CABRINHA MOTO
The smooth operator from Maui returns but with a vast improvement in the low end for foiling, and that friendly chuck-it-around-anywhere ability.

PERFORMANCE FREERIDE

NAISH PIVOT
The Pivot absolutely shines in its top end, retains its almost telepathic handling, and has even more scope with a simple pigtail tweak.

F-ONE BANDIT 21
A definite perk up in handling this year and an exquisite build makes for a kite that is perfectly focused on twintip riding, and packs a boost and loop to behold.

NORTH REACH
Sliding into this sector with a minimum of fuss, the Reach is an extremely capable freeride kite with smooth and friendly characteristics.

FREESTYLE

SLINGSHOT RPX
The RPX is now crisp, dynamic and an excellent platform to unhook with, yielding loads of travel downwind and decent slack for proper competition freestyle.

CORE GTS6
With an aggressive pop-and-go attitude, the GTS6 is engaging and powerful. Its clever tuning points mean it can be tuned down to be an absolute wake tractor with slack aplenty.

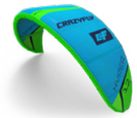
NAISH DASH
The Dash has lively, well-balanced handling and always feels poised for action. It doesn't require much trimming when you unhook, which results in super consistent power delivery for hardcore freestyle.

BOOSTING

AIRUSH LIFT
The Lift has a very pure design direction and an intricate build. Few kites give this much consistency as well as raw height, and simultaneously combine it with such high agility for a five-strut kite.

CRAZYFLY HYPER
Some intelligent build tweaks, and an eye on lightening, make the Hyper an absolute standout when it comes to straight boosting and daft levels of glide.

CORE XR6
The WOO scores speak for themselves – there are few kites which have as much raw lift and levels of control in the bitter top end as the XR6.



WAVE

F-ONE BANDIT S2
The second iteration of the Bandit S makes an already lightweight and refined wave kite even smoother, and performs consistently at the absolute top of its game, regardless of wind and wave direction.

DUOTONE NEO SLS
The SLS material works wonders on the range of use and application for the Neo, particularly when it comes to handling drift and balance.

OCEAN RODEO ROAM A-SERIES
Producing a wave kite this light, stiff and efficient really lets you drift and access parts of the wave and angles you didn't think possible. It makes the perfect argument for the ALUULA material.

LIGHTWEIGHTS

SLINGSHOT UFO
Slingshot took the zero strut concept and made it work for the mass market with almost no drawbacks. Insane drift and agility make it the freeride foiler's dream.

F-ONE BREEZE V3
Third time round for the Breeze has enabled it to evolve into an incredibly smooth, efficient and easy-to-handle mono strut.

CABRINHA CONTRA
Turning the smaller kites in the range into single struts was a genius move. It retains the efficiency of the Contra product line with super early flying and the usual creamy handling response.

LIGHTWIND

The KITE mag. GOLD

DUOTONE JUICE
An exceptionally well-conceived lightwind kite that very much has its own flying character and wide spectrum of potential use.

The KITE mag. SILVER

OCEAN RODEO FLITE A-SERIES
The ALUULA material enables one of the most nimble lightwind kites we've tested, with an enormous wind range and solid performance at all extremities.

The KITE mag. BRONZE

NORTH REACH LW
A great example of how to match the power advantage of a large surface area kite into your existing quiver without losing the feeling of the smaller sizes.

INNOVATION

The KITE mag. GOLD

OCEAN RODEO ROAM A-SERIES
The statistics don't lie – a 2kg three-strut wave kite really makes a superb showcase for this new material and the real-world benefits are undeniable.

The KITE mag. SILVER

SLINGSHOT UFO
The shaping and bridle configuration that has gone into the UFO is a work of pure genius – it allows super early flying, excellent bar response and even decent relaunch without a strut in sight.

The KITE mag. BRONZE

DUOTONE EVO SLS
A showcase example of new SLS material transforming a kite's characteristics and giving it an instantly improved bar feeling and overall performance.

CURVEBALL

NOBILE THE ONE
A stripped down and highly reactive mono strut which is incredibly entertaining to fly. One of the fastest turning kites we've ever used.

BOARD TEST CRITERIA

CARVING ABILITY
How well the board carves through heel to toe and toe to heel transitions. Judgements are made on the smoothness of rail to rail transfer, tightness of the turning radius and the grip achieved in the carve, awarding a strong performance with a high score.

SPRAY
A judgement of how much spray is being deflected towards the rider from the tips of the board. A board which causes lots of spray, particularly towards the face, will score low. So '10' means that you should be spray free....

DIRECTIONAL STABILITY
The board's ability to track inline with the riders intended direction of travel when disturbed by factors such as oncoming chop or a trick landing. For a high score, the board should have little disruption/pivot off course and should quickly re-track. A board which is overly loose and pivotal would receive a low score.

RAIL GRIP
The efficiency and effectiveness of the board's grip on the surface of the water. A strong rail grip enables lateral drive for upwind performance and the ability to drive against the kite to load and pop. The more effective the rail grip, the higher the score. A board that slips its rail easily will receive a low score.

PLANING SPEED/LIGHT WIND ABILITY
A judgement of the planing efficiency of the board based upon light wind capability and ability to accelerate with power. A board that planes early and accelerates well will receive a high score. A board which is heavily dependent on technique and power to maximize performance will score low.

UPWIND ABILITY
The ease of upwind travel in powered and low powered conditions. A board that drives upwind easily will receive a high score. A board which is heavily dependent on advanced technique and power to maximize performance will receive a low score.

POP
A judgement of the board's capacity to build and store energy throughout the load phase of a trick before expelling the energy in the pop. A board which is progressive in its load and explosive in its pop will score high. Ine!ciencies in the load and pop will receive a lower score.

SMOOTHNESS OF LANDINGS
How well the board reduces the impact and shock of a heavy landing. If a board displaces water well and facilitates a controlled landing it will score high. A board which gives a heavy landing with less control will receive a lower score.

CUTTING THROUGH CHOP
The control and comfort perceived by the rider when riding through increasing amounts of chop. A board which smooths the feel of the ride over choppy water will score higher than a board which gives a bumpy or jarring feel to the ride.

***TESTER'S NOTE*:**
We tested all boards against all of these criteria. Clearly some boards will get low scores in some categories as this is not what they are designed for (a board targeted at beginners will not be designed to have good pop for example). Please consider this when checking data. When assessing the "Winners" for each category, we looked very specifically at the criteria that you would expect from a kite in that category

ELEVEIGHT PROCESS 139

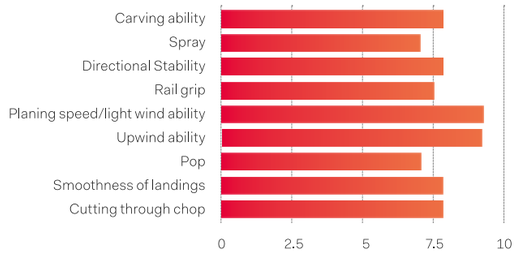
The Eleveight Process is the definition of a freeride progression board. This is the board that we all know we should get to improve our riding, but we often skip because we aspire to ride what our idols have strapped to their feet. The Process will have you up and riding quickly, and will help you learn to get upwind, control the board, and just go, so you can work on some of the other aspects of your riding without the board being a distraction.

Although there are double step channels and a mono-concave, the bottom feels very flat, and as a result if you push the speeds and attack the chop, it will not be as stable as some of the higher performance boards. But what you sacrifice in high-end performance you gain in accessibility, comfort and control for the riding you are likely to be doing if you choose the Process. You might expect more spray than a deep channeled board as is often the case with the flatter profiles, but we were satisfied that spray was directed away from the rider, although at speeds in the flat it was noticeable on the back of the trailing lower leg, but no higher than the knee.

The size range varies from a 132x39.5 to 144x44 so all riders are accounted for, and the straps are just as wide ranging, something that was a pleasant surprise as we like to make sure the bindings work well for the smallest and largest of feet. The Elevate AirGo straps were incredibly easy to mount with a number of positioning options for the straps and most importantly, they allowed a tight snug fit with the double straps.

Overall the Process impressed the test team – it's an 'accessible' board that doesn't patronize the rider: there is a lot of thought that has gone into this board and if everyone was completely honest about their abilities it is probably the right kind of board for about 90% of twintip riders!

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.58
Rocker	3 stage medium
Rail Channels	Y
Tip channels	Y
Concave	Single
Rail shape	Straight
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	6
Construction	Wood core, carbon stringer, carbon & glass laminates
Mounting system	Angled M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	N
Slider Proof Base	N

FLYSURFER FLOW 137

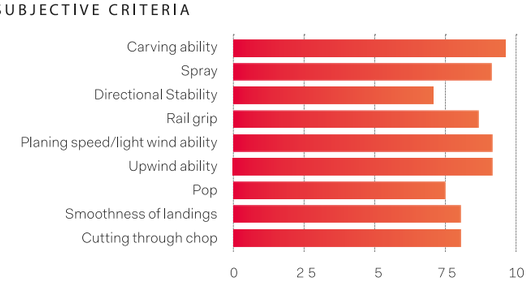
New to the line up, the FLOW is Flysurfer's entry freeride twintip. It is designed to cover a wide range of riding levels from total beginners to first unhooked freestyle moves. It features a low rocker, square rounded tips, parallel outline, and ultralight construction combined with a dynamic flex. It is fine-tuned and really comfortable to ride. It goes upwind effortlessly and provides tons of control at any speed.

The single concave bottom coupled with the low rocker line helps the board get to planing immediately and gradually accelerates. It works incredibly in the low wind range and will allow beginner riders to downsize their kite size. Edging the FLOW is really intuitive and it bites comfortably in the water with minimum bounce. We had the 137 which rode surprisingly well upwind considering the size of some of the test team. The 142 would be a great option for a board for the start of your kiting journey and would see you through into your intermediate level for sure, and the 148 would be a great option for complete beginners or schools.

You can load the FLOW with plenty of rail grip and it gives a balanced and progressive amount of power to send your jumps. Pivoting around on the FLOW is smooth and will allow intermediate riders to switch toeside and blind without catching the nose or rail. The smooth flex and increased surface area also makes the FLOW ultra-forgiving in those sketchy first landings, and the directional balance makes it a really comfortable board to ride especially in choppy conditions.

Overall we were impressed with the FLOW and felt that beginner to intermediate riders will love the board for its accessibility and comfort. It is also an extremely effective board for lighter conditions, and its upwind and speed abilities will allow riders to get on the water first and to progress quickly...

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	-
Rocker	Low
Rail Channels	N
Tip channels	N
Concave	Single
Rail shape	Stepped continuous
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	7
Construction	Wood core & glass laminate
Mounting system	Angled M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	N
Slider Proof Base	N

NAISH SWITCH 138 | 142

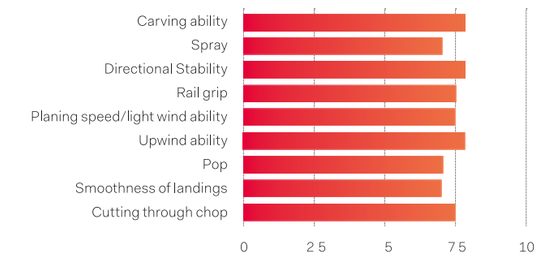
Now into its second year, the Switch is a highly versatile freeride board in Naish's exceptionally large twintip range. Great for those that share gear or want to be able to get out for both lightwind freeriding and some powered high-wind sessions. The Switch is basically two boards in one, featuring one long rail and one short rail, with straight-line inserts allowing you to swap your pads around and use the best board length for the conditions.

The Switch has borrowed a lot of its shape design from the Motion, with a freeride rocker, triple concave base and edges that are beveled – all giving the same great feeling of grip and connection with excellent speed and agility. If you like the Motion but want something with a much wider wind range, the Switch allows you to ride both those light and high-wind conditions.

Nothing else quite feels like the Switch with its asymmetric rail length. Setting up for the longer heel-side rail will give you excellent lightwind performance, and real smile inducing, heel-toe, carve ability thanks to the shorter toe-side rail, keeping those toe-side carves nice and tight. Carves are noticeably staggered from this and feel different to other asymmetrical boards with rounded tips, however there's no denying the effect of that shorter toe-side rail. When the wind picks up you simply swap to the shorter rail for heel-side, which is instantly noticeable with pronounced better edge control and agility give more excitement to the ride. Counter-intuitively, the longer toe-side rail of the Switch is balanced and easily slides from the short heel-side to the extended toe edge and you'll find yourself grinning hacking a heel-side carve into a wave. The only tiny compromise is felt when the water gets a bit rougher. Sometimes, the longer toe-side edge, which begins from the center line of the board, will slice the chop ahead of the heel-side edge producing some excess spray in the face.

The most obvious and unusual feeling about the Switch is when getting airborne. It's a great feeling to have the shorter heel-side edge to carve hard upwind before launching but getting the benefit of the larger base, due to the longer asymmetric rail, to soften those landings. This is even more pronounced when landing toe-side and when at speed. Once landed toe-side the short heel-side begs for a downloop carve which you can keep nice and tight due to that shorter heel edge keeping the speed and stoke well up. If you like mixing up your styles and the conditions you ride in, don't have the finance for multiple boards, or travel weight won't allow two boards, the Switch is the perfect solution to this dilemma.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	
Rocker	Medium
Rail Channels	Y
Tip channels	N
Concave	Triple
Rail shape	Bevelled
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	6
Construction	Wood core, glass laminate
Mounting system	Straight M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	N
Slider Proof Base	N

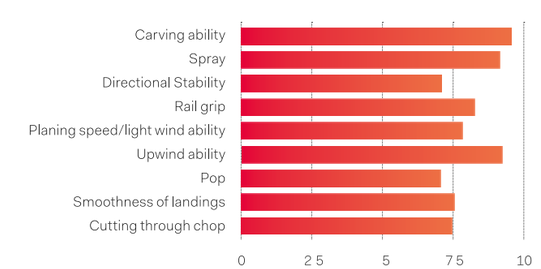
NORTH PRIME 138

Carrying the Prime through into their 2021 equipment line up, North Kiteboarding have maintained the easy riding, progression enhancing style that should rightfully make it a winner at the feet of any beginner to intermediate rider.

The classic freeride outline with low rocker, single concave and pulled in tips make the Prime immensely enjoyable as its easily accessible pace, ample grip and agile turn radius produce plenty of drive throughout a carve. With plenty of speed on tap, the Prime is early planing, carries the rider through lulls and drives upwind with ease.

Whether on butter flat or choppy water, the Prime's drive, flex and response were without flaw. The Prime rides comfortably in a broad power range and its responsive paulownia wood core and fiber glass laminate absorbs the chop create an effortless ride in all conditions. As an all-round progressive board, the Prime is an ideal shape to keep beginner to intermediate riders entertained, encouraged and progressing quickly. Moving outwards from the midstance to the tips, North have tapered the thickness of the Prime's wood core. This gradual taper enhances the flex at the tips; the feel is well tuned and suitably forgiving for a beginner rider to enjoy. As such, riders can dial into the Prime quickly; it's an ideal progression board thanks to its easily accessible grip, drive and easy and moderate flex response. Anyone taking their riding to new heights, may prefer the more reactive reflex of the Atmos. For riders looking for a long lasting board that will keep them entertained in a range of conditions, this is undoubtedly a Prime option...

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.55
Rocker	Low
Rail Channels	N
Tip channels	N
Concave	Single
Rail shape	Stepped continuous
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	7
Construction	Wood core & glass laminate
Mounting system	Angled M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	N
Slider Proof Base	N

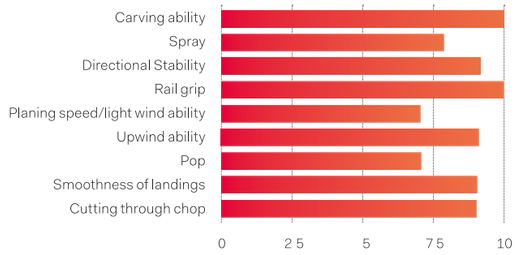
SLINGSHOT SUPER NATURAL V1 146

The mutant has been a board design that has phased in and out of favor several times over the course of kiting history. For those uninitiated it usually takes the form of a slightly longer than usual twintip board with a directional bias, so it has a longer nose like a surfboard. With the Super Natural, Slingshot have rebooted it once again with ultra-modern construction techniques and shaping.

First of all, let's talk fin configurations. It can take up to six fins and Slingshot claim you can even ride it finless, so there is definitely some scope for experimentation. We tested with the full six plus the obligatory handle for board offs. Construction-wise, the paulownia wood core based retro reboot is dressed as an all-American hot rod, with some appropriately placed flames at the rear. Slingshot have ported over a modified version of their parabolic Naca channels from their twintip range. The wide lighter channel in the nose condenses the flow into two more pronounced channels in the rear between those four rear bite fins. In practice it gives a decent speed boost and grip that increases as your speed picks up. The faster you go the more stable and loaded the board becomes. This obviously makes it ideal for committed powered boosting, which is the aim of the game. Traditionally, mutants have usually been a bit on the lumpy side weight-wise, but the Super Natural doesn't conform to this stereotype, and has a respectably low swing weight considering the extra fins and nose present. We found landing with downwind speed from a kiteloop, the Super Natural does an admirable job, as the extra nose and fairly generous rocker ploughed through chop so well.

The Super Natural makes a solid argument for a modern mutant for freeriding, board offs, Big Air and even hacking away at smaller waves. The amount you can load through four fins at the rear of a twintip on your biased tack is impressive. For anyone that hasn't tried a mutant before, the Super Natural is an excellent place to start, and for those of us that have been around the block a few times, it is going to provide big grins. If ZZ-Top produced kiteboards, this would be it.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.94
Rocker	Mid/high in nose
Rail Channels	N
Tip channels	Y
Concave	Single
Rail shape	Square
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	8
Construction	Wood/glass
Mounting system	Straight inserts
Boots Compatible	No
Slider Proof Base	Dura Light Base

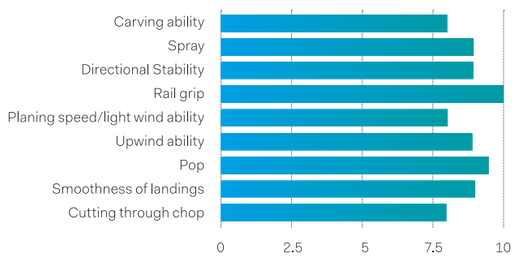
BRUNOTTI PRO X 138

The Brunotti Pro X was one board we wanted to keep a little longer as it would have been great to try it out in 30+ knots, dialing into a smaller kite, but alas the wind gods did not allow that. This is the accessible freestyle board from Brunotti, and whilst it shares a lot of features with the Youri Pro model, it is a little more accessible and therefore adaptable to more conditions to get the most progression out of your freestyle riding.

Quad channels on the tips make for some impressive grip as you load that edge as hard as you can, helped by the rail step, and then landings are smoothed by the 'Displacement Hull' which spreads the water on impact. You would struggle to find a board that makes stomping new tricks quite as enjoyable. The pop is better than ever as the diffusor controls and transitions the board's grip and contact through all phases of the load.

The Pro X's tough durable construction means this board can take a fair amount of punishment, but it does not feel heavy under the feet at all, which means it rides well in lighter wind ranges even with boots. We were slightly hampered by only having the 138x41 in lighter winds whereas the 142x42 would have further highlighted these attributes. If it is accessible performance freestyle you are after with a quality finish and a lighter board that will also perform when the wind is not hooning, then this is your board.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.65
Rocker	Medium
Rail Channels	Y
Tip channels	Quad
Concave	Double w/ Displacement hull
Rail shape	Chamfered w/ mid to tip taper
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	7
Construction	Wood core, carbon laminates
Mounting system	Straight M6 Inserts
Boots Compatible	Y
Slider Proof Base	N

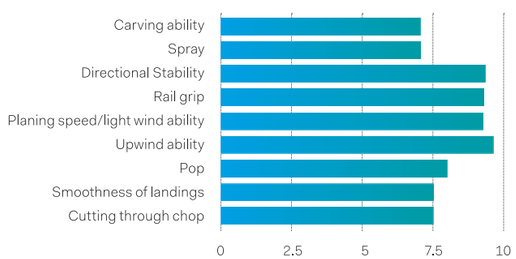
CRAZYFLY LEGEND 138

New in the twintip lineup for 2021, the CrazyFly Legend has replaced the Bulldozer as Posito Martinez's pro model board for freestyle and wakestyle riding. On first glance, the Legend's squared outline, rail channels and double concave at the tips make it clear that this board is truly focused towards a refined edge control and plenty of speed to ensure that the pop generated is large. A low rocker, less common in freestyle boards that often favor mid to high rocker, has been used and resultantly the access to speed when required is instant.

CNC-shaping of a Paulownia wood core sets the foundation of the Legend. CrazyFly's Edge Control Track, used throughout the length of the board, forms a stepped channel on the center of the board. This creates the Legend's superb upwind ability and directional stability as it tracks with minimal effort. Double concave at the tips locks in the flow of water over the fins and ensures that whether driving hard upwind or going for maximum pop, you've always got the grip you require as you load up the board.

A quad axial carbon laminate has been layered over the CNC'd wood core and the Legend is undoubtedly a stiff board because of it. The ride feels firm throughout, yet the response is dynamic and rewarding of any effort you drive into the board with an explosive release off the water. This is a board designed to be ridden with power and is best paired with boots to get the most of it. Precision comes naturally and you'll find that its easy tracking will take you cleanly into and out of any trick.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

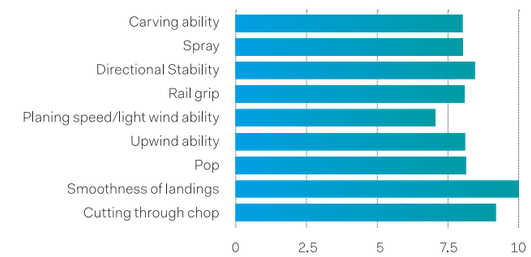
Blank Weight (kg)	2.52
Rocker	Low/Med
Rail Channels	Y
Tip channels	Double concave
Concave	N
Rail shape	Stepped with delayed tip taper
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	9
Construction	Wood core, Quadaxial carbon laminate
Mounting system	Straight / M6 Inserts
Boots Compatible	Y
Slider Proof Base	N

ELEVEIGHT MASTER V4 139

Aimed at the freestyle market, the Master V4 had the highest rocker out of the boards we received from Eleveight. Its construction, while solid, is lightweight and its flex is generous towards the tips. This is a board that works very well for lighter riders that may struggle to get a response out of the especially stiff boards out in the freestyle market. It is easy loading, but also reaps an unsparing pop from its very positive reflex. Beneath its aesthetically pleasing, UV protective top sheet, they have layered a spread tow carbon stringer and biax glass; this is then complimented by layers of biax glass laminates beneath the wood core for a torsionally controlled and strong reflex.

At its base, the Master V4 features ample base shaping to create a controlled and well-driven ride with great upwind ability. Its medium rocker is combined with a smooth double concave and channeling at the tips and rails. The Master V4 has a multi-stage rocker and this supports the smooth landings whilst making turns and carves very satisfying, allowing you to attack the chop without losing grip and being doused by spray. The ride is comfortable, neither lacking for grip nor latching itself down on the water surface.
Overall, the Eleveight Master V4 rides smooth, and is forgiving on the knees on hard landings. Don't mistake this for a calm cruiser, though; its well-defined double concave and rail channels fire the water flow into tip channeling for it to dose out controlled aggression aplenty as you hold the edge for a good strong pop. For anyone who likes rocker and the ability to edge and pop hard, without sacrificing comfort through the ride or landings, this board does just that.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.69
Rocker	Multi-stage medium
Rail Channels	Y
Tip channels	Y
Concave	Double
Rail shape	Bevelled
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	7
Construction	Wood core, carbon laminates, biax glass laminate
Mounting system	Angled M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	Y
Slider Proof Base	Y

F-ONE WTF!? 136

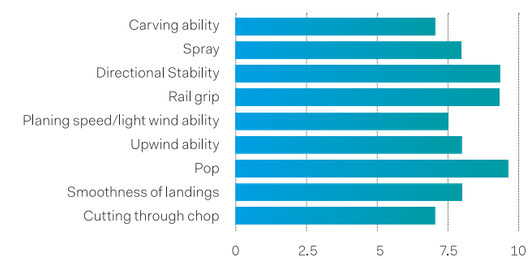
It is no secret that our test team have been fond of the WTF!? freestyle board, and this year is no different. Few performance boards are quite as forgiving, and its most redeeming aspect is that the confidence it inspires urges you to push your riding further knowing that it has your back. Despite its forgiving nature and reassuring ride, there is some power under the hood, raring to be unleashed.

At its base, the WTF!? features a double concave, tip channeling and a unique HRD-inspired rail design which combine brilliantly to create a ride that is locked in and assertive in its drive, with an early plane and easy to access acceleration. The WTF!? utilizes a staged medium rocker, elevating closer to the tips. Not only does this make it accelerate easily, it also allows it to lock its rail into the water firmly for a strong hold when edging. The staging of the rocker is smooth and the board still scoops well into the pop, which, thanks to the addition of carbon stringers, is very positive.

Underfoot, the board feels stiff, all benefitting the strong reflex it provides in the pop, however with landings, the impact that may be expected from a stiffer board isn't there. The HRD-inspired rail of the WTF!? does a superb job of displacing water on landings to cushion the impact and keep you riding longer.

For anyone looking to progress their freestyle riding, the WTF!? is comfortable at the feet of all freestylers, progressing or advanced. It will inspire confidence to push your riding harder and reward you when you do.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.96
Rocker	Med/High
Rail Channels	Y
Tip channels	Y
Concave	Double
Rail shape	Inverted bevel underfoot w/ tapered midstance & tips (Exaggerated HRD)
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	7
Construction	Wood core, glass laminate & carbon stringers
Mounting system	Angled M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	Y
Slider Proof Base	N

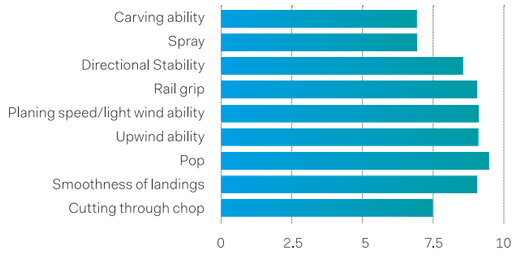
LIEUWE OCEANA 137

The Lieuwe Oceana is a true 'rider' board. For the Big Air riders and freestylers, this is a board that exceeds expectations across both disciplines, without compromise – truly a master of all trades that will surely put a smile on your face. Unlike Lieuwe's flagship board, the Shotgun, the Oceana adopts a squarer outline with minimal taper towards the tips. This allows it to hold more rail contact, the reasoning being that more rail contact means more load resistance which means more height.

The Oceana's broad outline is complimented by a medium rocker and a generous application of base contouring – all for the development of speed and grip for boosting. The CNC-shaped base features subtle rail channeling and a prominent double concave with a strong center spine. The rail channels add to the grip of the board while loading to take off and the double concave breaks the surface tension of the water on landing, keeping the impact of landing low as well as aligning the board to track perfectly on landing so you can stick them flawlessly every time.

For any rider wanting a do-it-all board, the Oceana applies itself effortlessly to freestyle riding thanks to a moderately stiff, yet smooth, consistent and easily accessible flex response. Its rapid pace takes you quickly into unhooked tricks, ensuring a quick and forceful drive into an explosive pop with generous height. For the rider who wants to ride hard and fast, this board will reward your efforts and see you smiling in all conditions...

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.89
Rocker	Medium/high
Rail Channels	Y
Tip channels	Y
Concave	Double
Rail shape	Stepped continuous
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	8
Construction	Paulownia wood core, glass laminate
Mounting system	Double angled M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	Y
Slider Proof Base	N

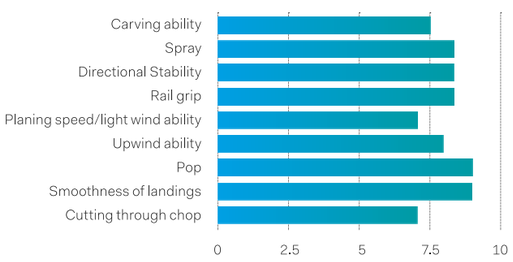
LIEUWE SAY NO MORE 136

Lieuwe have a wealth of experience building premium and custom kiteboards. After more than a decade of shaping they are truly masters of their craft and the Say No More is no exception to this. So few brands achieve the clean wood aesthetic that Lieuwe have achieved, and many opt to hide the air pockets and blemishes that can occur in the lamination process by using bold patterned graphics. The Say No More is naked and pure in both its aesthetic and form, and as an indicator of the board quality overall, it is a perfect factory finish. This is a true to form board for wakestyle and freestyle riders, with no holds barred during its build to ensure the optimum performance.

Compared with many wakestyle boards available this season, the outline of the Say No More is unusual as it has adopted a more rounded outline. The centerline of the board extends beyond the rail length, the tips tapering in along a continuous curve that arcs from tip to tip. The board is significantly wider at the mid stance than the tips and, for this shaping, the Say No More sits low in the water with great emphasis on locking the water flow along its impressive base contours to emphasize the board's potential for pop. An aggressive quad concave forms at the centerline between each of the tips and runs proudly through the length of the board while large channeling takes charge of the impressive rail grip and control the board exudes.

Within the Lieuwe line-up, the Say No More isn't the fastest or stiffest board, nor should it be. This is a board for kite low, unhooked action, with a raw and generous pop that needs no assistance from an upward flick of the kite. Despite the heavy contouring and strong centerline, the board's flex is dynamic and extremely easy to load as it locks perfectly into the water to surge the kite forward. A high continuous rocker ensures that the Say No More scoops perfectly upwind with a super clean break off the water and good height to invert, rotate or pass the bar. Landing with the Say No More is a very controlled experience. The v-like spine of the board's double concave punches the surface as you touch down, softening all impacts, and the combination of high rocker line and plenty of base shaping does a superb job of scrubbing speed when required. Overall, this is a super spritely and playful board for a broad range of riders.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.59
Rocker	High
Rail Channels	Y
Tip channels	Y
Concave	Rail shape
Rail shape	Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	8
Construction	Paulownia wood core, glass laminate
Mounting system	Double angled M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	Y
Slider Proof Base	Y

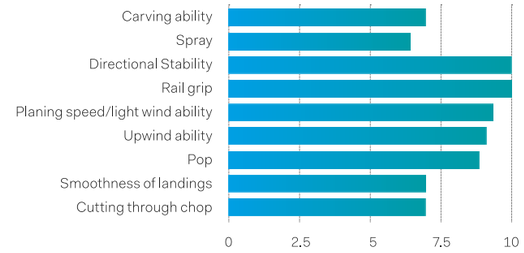
NAISH MONARCH 142

For 2021 the Monarch remains Naish's pro performance freestyle twintip. Standing true by the hearts of its followers, it has a new top shape that strengthens the board for harder landings and provides more consistency in its flex. The FTC 2.0 CNC'd shaping of its predecessor is gone and a thicker, stronger core remains. Not lost on the need for torsional control, Naish have CNC'd smaller, trapezoid cutouts from the thick deck. These sit at the midstance, parallel to each other and slightly inset from the heel and toeside rail. Not only do these allow for some necessary torsion in the board, they also double up as a perfect grab area for board offs.

The Monarch is definitely a high performance board needing a higher level of rider to appreciate it. Sub intermediate and lighter riders will prefer the more forgiving ride of the Drive or the Motion. Riders after less grip and more play to their ride will enjoy Naish's latest board, the Traverse. As ever, Naish have focused on the quality of the Monarch's construction which translates into performance, and the extensive base contouring of the Monarch unleashes a level of grip, control and access to speed that few other boards offer. With the ability to take off like a rocket, it is crucial to note the value of choosing the correct size in the Monarch. Its shape is so focused for speed that a lighter rider could quickly find edge control at speed a challenge. Our advice is one size smaller than your standard twintip. All of that speed on tap and biting grip make the Monarch a great boosting board. The ability to spot a kicker and accelerate at it feels sublime, and more consistent longitudinal flex pattern to this year's board makes it easy to take off with.

As with any other performance board, you should take the time to adapt your stance to get the most out of it. As soon as you tune it right to your preference, you will discover how responsive and playful this board can be. Charging with speed and carving aggressively into a wave face rarely feels more satisfying than what this twintip can achieve. Expect cornering like it is on rails, and an exhilarating amount of speed on exit. If your goal is to rule the Big Air leaderboard, you will love the Monarch. The stiff and explosively reactive, mid-rockered board with aggressive base shaping that we know and love to push to new heights is here to stay.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	3.53
Rocker	Med-High
Rail Channels	Y
Tip channels	Y
Concave	Quad concave
Rail shape	Stepped Continuous
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	8
Construction	Wood core, carbon & basalt laminates
Mounting system	Straight M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	Y
Slider Proof Base	N

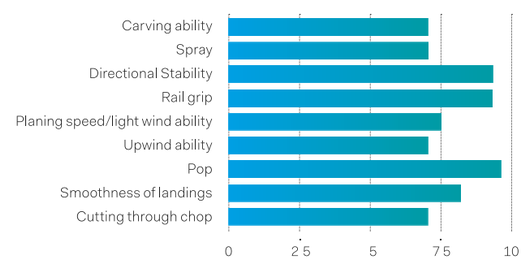
NOBILE GAMECHANGER 139

Fresh to the 2021 collection, the Nobile Gamechanger is a board dedicated to freestylers and wakestylers. Its sintered base makes it durable enough to handle sliders, and a wake-style rocker combined with deep channeling inset far from the rail to create large flat sections, makes the board ideal to be pressed flat for control on sliders.

To keep the mid-section grippy on the water, the Nobile has a subtle double concave which runs into multiple deep channels. This double concave runs tip-to-tip becoming more prominent as it extends away from the midline. This gives you a great deal of grip when loading to pop and ensures you can dial in your landings without any worry of skidding out, meaning no compromising on directional stability, speed and control on water. While the Gamechanger is not the fastest in Nobile's line-up, it is certainly not a slow cruiser. It develops pace easily and held ground well despite its rocker.

The continuous high rocker line eats chop, and the stiff flex, reinforced by carbon weave and triaxial glass laminates, returns a powerful pop. The easily accessible pace lends itself well to the board's pop, and with a quick pump downwind and an aggressive stomp of the back foot, it rewards you with a clean release off the water and good height into your trick. Compared to more intermediate boards in Nobile's line-up such as the NHP, it takes moderate effort to load the Gamechanger, but when done maximally, you get back what you put into it, giving you some impressive pop to do with as you please. When it came to 'big surprises' in the Ultimate Test #3, the Gamechanger was right up there!

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.75
Rocker	High
Rail Channels	Y
Tip channels	Y
Concave	Double at tips
Rail shape	Stepped continuous
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	8
Construction	Wood, Carbon, fibreglass
Mounting system	Straight M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	Y
Slider Proof Base	Y

AIRUSH APEX V7 139

The Apex v7 is a longstanding board in Airush's line up, and for 2021, at the hands of Dave Kay their twintip designer, it has had a rework. The ride has been restyled and a new outline and base shape provided, refreshing the feel of the board, and we have to say we're impressed at what a fun and versatile board it is. The Apex is a crossover board designed for second season riders and beyond. For a rider who wants to do a bit of everything, the Apex offers a playful and responsive ride, encouraging you into every carve, pop and boost you go for and even saving you with its cushioned and secure landings.

Starting with a vertically sandwiched paulownia wood that has been pressed to a low-medium rocker, the Apex is shaped with double concave. It is not as aggressive as some boards on test, but it is generous with a high center spine that runs the length of the board parting the water and breaking impact like a boat's hull. At either end of the board, this then forms into tip channeling for extra grip and control. Moving away from a standard fiberglass attire, the Apex is dressed in double basalt fiber laminates, making it stiffer and more responsive than its predecessors. The board loads and rebounds with a strong and snappy response providing exhilarating height. There is definitely scope for riders who unhook to enjoy the Apex's performance and it can be paired with either boots or straps.

The Apex is most at home when utilized for Big Air. It is a well-paced board with very accessible and controllable speed. The low to mid rocker dishes out plenty of speed as required, and the subtle yet effective double concave dishes out drive and directional stability throughout acceleration. While it's clear that the shaping is done to improve its speed, pop and landing for Big Air, it is also an extremely comfortable ride and it cruised through the lumps and bumps of our UK beaches making fun of the chop. Thanks to its freeride/freestyle crossover outline, it is also a delight to slice into the face of a wave. With each carve the rails bite superbly, giving a delectable spray, and the rapid drive on exit leaves you itching to hit the next section.

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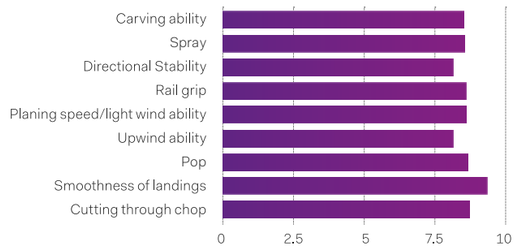

OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.7
Rocker	Low
Rail Channels	N
Tip channels	Y
Concave	Y
Rail shape	Straight
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	7
Construction	Wood core, basalt fibre laminate
Mounting system	Straight M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	Y
Slider Proof Base	N

F-ONE TRAX

The F-ONE Trax HRD Lite Tech is the ultimate all-rounder – from cruising to Big Air, this board has got you covered. Not only is it easy on the eyes with its translucent TPU, it also has a unique Helical Rail Design that has plenty to offer.

Unlike any other rail design available, the rail thickness varies throughout the length of the board starting with a section mid-stance that gives a strong bite to allow some impressive upwind ability. This then thickens underfoot into an inverted chamfered section, which allows you to smoothly carve through the water. In helical form, this then tapers again to the tips, improving the flex in this area to ensure consistent fin contact for plenty of grip and pop. The Trax holds its own when loaded up against the kite, thanks to its slightly stiffer flex, which allows you to generate a pleasing pop and plenty of hang time. The board does weigh in on the slightly heavier side in its class, but this is not overly apparent on the water.

The Trax has a single stepped concave through the base that allows it to accelerate and get planing fast. The board's directional stability is balanced beautifully with its scope to slide and skate if the rider wishes. The Helical Rail Design eliminates spray and takes on chop like a champ, making for a smooth and comfortable ride. One of the team's favorite attributes of this board was its ability to handle hard and fast landings, thanks to the wide Helical Rail Design and channeled base - instead of using rocker and flex this shape outwardly deflects water, making for very forgiving landings that are cushioned and controlled.

Overall, whether your passion lies in freeride, boosting or freestyle, F-ONE have developed a board that has plenty on offer to help you take your riding to the next level.

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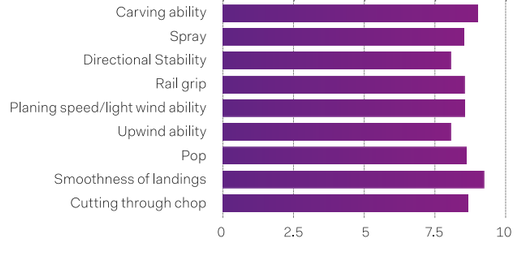


OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	3.24
Rocker	Medium
Rail Channels	Centre line channel
Tip channels	N
Concave	Single
Rail shape	HRD
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	7
Construction	Wood core, Lite Tech & glass laminates
Mounting system	Angled M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	Y
Slider Proof Base	N

BRUNOTTI DIMENSION 141

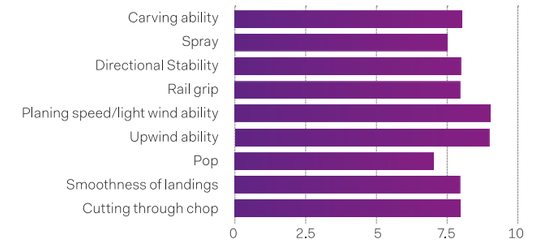
The Dimension is Brunotti's all-round board that will work for you in all conditions. It is comfortable to ride and gets going very easily especially if you opt for the larger 141x42 (or even the 145x43) models.

As soon as you get this, and indeed any of the 2021 Brunotti boards we reviewed, out of the box and onto your feet, you can feel the quality of the construction and materials. With the CNC-shaped wood core running through the board giving it an 'Active Backbone', you have an accessible combination of flex, comfort and control, making this one of the most rideable boards in Brunotti's 2021 range. It is a very rider friendly, yet progressive board that will have you up riding, blasting upwind, having fun and leveling up your riding in no time.

On the water the Dimension feels very light under your feet and as a result is manageable and quick for moving between the chop, accentuated by very comfortable straps keeping your feet firmly planted on the board. As you move through the edge, pop and takeoff it is predictable and grippy due to the step rail channels, and once off the water it is almost as if there is nothing on your feet, making grabs or board-offs super easy. You will come into a stable and comfortable landing and you can ride away and smile. Landings are smooth and stable as the flex tips and channeling ensure that grip is adequate to ride out controlled.

This is a genuinely confidence inspiring board for the progressing intermediate with a forgiving yet well-performing ride. The Dimension covers a wide user range and would not be outgrown by the majority of riders. This board is guaranteed to have you the leaving the water happy and will see you improving your riding game in no time.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.88
Rocker	Medium
Rail Channels	Y
Tip channels	Y
Concave	Double
Rail shape	Chamferred with mid-to-tip taper
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	6
Construction	Wood core, glass laminate, carbon stringers
Mounting system	Angled / M6 Inserts
Boots Compatible	N
Slider Proof Base	N

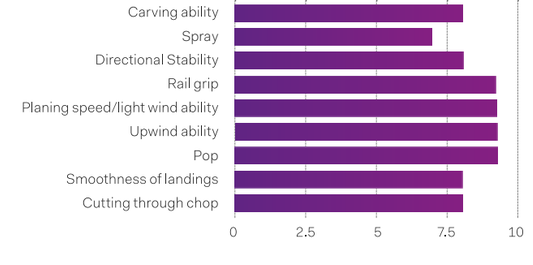
BRUNOTTI HAWK 141

Brunotti tell us that this is the Dimension on steroids, and whilst we do not advocate the use of performance-enhancing drugs, we certainly advocate performance-enhancing boards. The Hawk is essentially a performance enhanced Dimension in every way. The bright yellow accents are striking and you certainly won't lose it in the water. More importantly, as with every Brunotti board we've ridden, the quality of the finish and durability mean that you are taking on an ultra-long life board.

Using the same 'Active Backbone' and 'Torque Equalizer' of the more advanced boards in the Brunotti range in its CNC-shaped wood core, the Hawk is a lively board with a rewarding amount of pop and stable landings. Deeper channels, rails step and concave mean you can push this board that bit further as your abilities increase, and all it will give you back in return is a thank you for your troubles and a massive smile on your face. In combination with the double concave, responsive flex and tip channeling, the Hawk loads well, holding a strong rail bite, and breaks away cleanly off the water with a controlled release and plenty of height. Riders crossing over into freestyle will find this second season and beyond board to be the perfect tool for their progression.

Comparatively, the Hawk feels slightly surer under foot than the Dimension and demands to be dialed in and pushed around with greater assertion. That said, it is just as easy to get going and enjoy a smooth manageable ride as opposed to being permanently on the road to Valhalla.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.76
Rocker	Low to Medium
Rail Channels	Y
Tip channels	Double
Concave	Double
Rail shape	Chamferred with mid to tip taper
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	7
Construction	Wood core, glass laminate
Mounting system	Angled M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	Y
Slider Proof Base	N

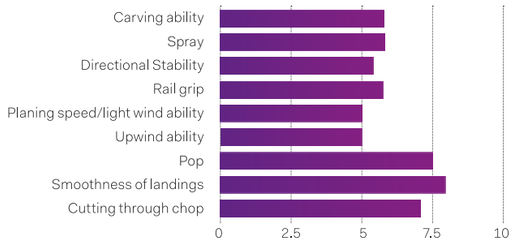
NAISH TRAVERSE 144

The Naish Traverse is a 'new school' all-rounder; crossing disciplines was the primary goal as Naish set out to design the Traverse with the help of Ewan Jaspan. It is designed to be a fun and playful ride that will allow you to mix up your riding style depending on the conditions and your preferred connection to the board. Swapping between boots and straps is a game changer for the ride.

Taking its influence from freeride, freestyle and park riding, the Traverse holds its own unique style within the Naish twin-tip lineup. The board's outline is long, yet relatively narrow. While this can often make a board feel quite cumbersome, Naish have applied a mid-high continuous rocker to the Traverse that makes its footprint feel significantly smaller than it really is. This lends itself wonderfully to being thrown around. It is remarkably easy loading and rewards you with an impressive pop. However, between tricks it is a little power demanding and requires you to be suitably powered with an efficient riding technique to return upwind to your starting point.

Locking and unlocking the edge comes easy thanks to a simple and shallow rail channel that runs the length of the toe and heel side edge. To describe the Traverse in one word, we would opt for 'playful'. It is insanely smooth to slide around; tail presses have never been easier and throughout the motion it feels very controlled. For a board that can do a bit of everything, it certainly pleases. For riders looking towards a more specific style of riding or more grip the Traverse isn't for them and they will likely still prefer the more heavily contoured bases of the Monarch for Big Air and freestyle, but for riders looking for accessible fun and the chance to really shred around, the Traverse is the future...

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	3.01
Rocker	Continuous mid-high
Rail Channels	Y
Tip channels	N
Concave	N
Rail shape	Straight
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	8
Construction	Wood core, fibreglass laminate
Mounting system	Straight M6 Inserts
Boots Compatible	Y
Slider Proof Base	Y

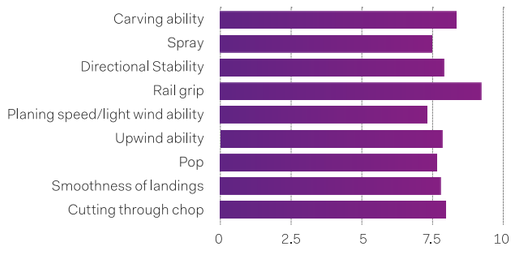
NAISH MOTION 138

Over the past few seasons Naish have made a number of great improvements to their premium crossover board, the Motion, giving a forgiving and more comfortable ride yet still allowing you to progress and develop your skills. To help create that smoother ride, you'll notice the translucent, chevron-esque cutouts in the tips of the Motion, which replace the stiffer wood core translating to more isolated flex in the tips. You will instantly feel this really helping to smooth out any choppy surface and forgive a little more on those landings.

Keeping the triple exponential concave and freeride rocker from previous years, the Motion keeps its excellent acceleration and responsive flex. The fatter outline shape in the corners helps you to load up more by keeping more contact with the water. To keep the fins engaged they sit on a reinforced angled platform giving you loads of grip. The Motion has a medium flex giving it great ability to suck up that choppy shudder, and it cuts through the water cleanly and efficiently; comfort wasn't compromised for the sake of performance when this board was made. Having an easy load-up and heaps of rail grip as you cleanly carve upwind before takeoff, means the lighter rider will really be able to take advantage of what the Motion has to offer. The Drive would be a better option for heavier or more aggressive riders with its stiffer flex giving you a more excitable performance and pop to utilize.

The Motion will give the intermediate rider the confidence to push further and progress, especially with the smooth ride and chop absorbing flex tips making it ever easier to catch those sketchy landings. If that wasn't enough it feels even easier to slash nice tight carves. Those flex tips coupled with beveled edging keep you locked in so you can ride and carve waves at speed, without feeling disconnected. Altogether, with visually nice looking design, the Motion gives great versatility for the lighter rider wanting to progress from freeride to freestyle but still allowing you to have great fun carving chop.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	3.24
Rocker	Med/High
Rail Channels	Y
Tip channels	Y
Concave	Triple
Rail shape	Stepped continuous
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	7
Construction	Wood core, glass laminate
Mounting system	Straight M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	N
Slider Proof Base	N

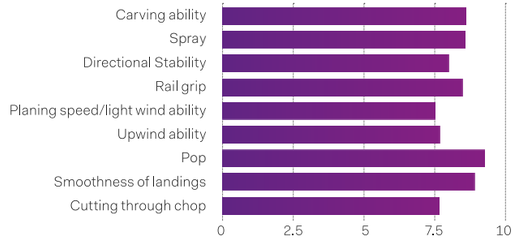
LIEUWE SHOTGUN 136

Lieuwe have crafted the Shotgun to be a sophisticated 'jack of all trades', performing well in freeride, Big Air and freestyle. This fast board has excellent stability and grip thanks to its single concave, 3D shaped paulownia wood core and deep channels in the tips. It also has a slim stepped rail that allows it to bite hard in the water for lots of rail grip. This step down is used to a greater extent in the tips to increase their flex, keeping the fins perfectly engaged and the ride effortless, controlled and playful, no matter the conditions. The Shotgun's rail is easy to release and engage for sliding around while also making delightfully smooth heel to toe-side carves on the water.

The Shotgun is a fast board thanks to its flexible and narrow outline, and its medium rocker and flex give it plenty of pop. Its grip allows for progressive loading of the board and a powerful release that will send you soaring. In the air, the lightweight nature of the board makes it easily maneuverable and on your return to earth the medium rocker will soften your landing, allowing for a smooth exit. Boosting is where this board really excels.

Overall, this is a rewarding board that is both fast and fun for freeride, as well as being able to perform in the freestyle category. If you are a rider who enjoys cruising, boosting and everything in-between, then the Shotgun is the ideal choice to take you to new heights.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.44
Rocker	Med/High
Rail Channels	N
Tip channels	Y
Concave	Single
Rail shape	Stepped continuous
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	6
Construction	Wood core & glass laminate
Mounting system	Double angled M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	Y
Slider Proof Base	N

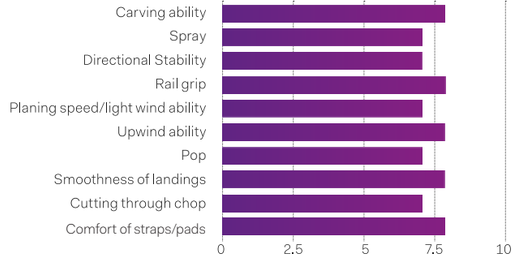
NOBILE NHP SPLIT 142

If you're an intermediate to advanced rider, crossing styles between freeride and freestyle, the Nobile NHP split is a board designed for you. Lovers of fast-paced riding with agile carves and a rapid exit will enjoy the unique shaping the NHP range offers. The board planes early and accelerates across the water thanks to its use of a hybrid concave – a pairing of a standard elliptical concave in the center of the board along with a tip-to-tip double concave.

The NHP has the ability to ride upwind with ease due to its hydrodynamic rocker line; in fact it drives so well upwind you'll need to adopt a more neutral stance, using less weight on your back foot to prevent stalling. The NHP Split is delightfully agile through carving turns; it feels reassuringly grippy whilst maintaining speed to whip you around toe to heel carves with ease of control thanks to its asymmetric rail.
Now in its sixth generation, they have managed to keep this board fairly light and smooth in feel but it does feel slightly more resistant on the water compared to the non-split NHP. However, if you weren't testing these back to back, you wouldn't notice.
Going into hooked or unhooked maneuvers, the board is very responsive, not needing a huge amount of effort to load into them. The board remained responsive and was able to flex well, giving a nice amount of height in the pop. Compared to the non-split version, it feels slightly staggered as the flex offsets from the join in the board. If you're a rider wanting to add some variety to your style then this board is a great versatile option. Nobile have managed to create a split board that retains the classic NHP feel. The most noticeable differences were in the flex of the board and the very minor induced drag caused by the two connecting joints resulting in a loss of speed.

For anyone wanting to travel, the NHP Split compromises very little on performance, retains its style, and saves the need for oversized baggage, making it a worthwhile travel companion.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA

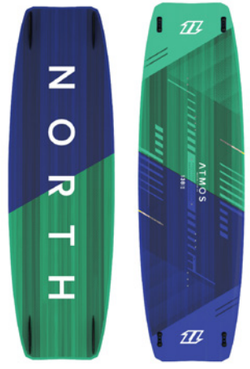


OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	3.45
Inserts	Angled
Rocker	High, hydrodynamic rocker
Rail Channels	N
Tip channels	Y
Concave	Double
Rail shape	Stepped Continuous
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	6
Construction	Fibre Glass
Mounting system	Inserts M6
Boots Compatible	Y
Slider Proof Base	Y

NORTH ATMOS HYBRID 138

The Atmos Hybrid continues its role as North's intermediate freeride and Big Air board. It has a parallel outline more usually used on freestyle boards, however to keep it loose and quick carving, it tapers at the tips which also helps to reduce spray as you charge at the next kicker shaped piece of chop.
The Atmos utilizes a thin rail and subtle single concave running tip-to-tip for a brilliant edge bite into the water. The excellent rail grip, which feels effortlessly connected, drives forward with ease and this translates into its great upwind ability too. When you are loading for pop you stay planted, with good feedback, thanks to the quad channels in the tips. The medium rocker, which runs the whole length of the board, allows effective load up and release. Part of what gives the Atmos a direct and positive feel when loading it up, is the combination of the regular E-glass layering and additional unidirectional carbon tape. This feature also reinforces its longitudinal flex pattern.
When not being loaded or on its edge, The Atmos has a playful and loose feel, making it easy to slide around. This can be good fun when you want it but can require more attention on position when touching down from any airborne fun. To best ride out cleanly, The Atmos needs pressure on the back foot and a downwind aimed landing. If you are after a low-speed unhooked pop board it would be better to check out something wider and more channeled and freestyle specialized. For freeride, Big Air and hooked-in tricks The Atmos would be the one, requiring some speed to make the best of its pop ability, which is perfect for its freeride position in the North Range. Overall a truly great board for anyone wanting to progress their freeriding or get into Big Air.



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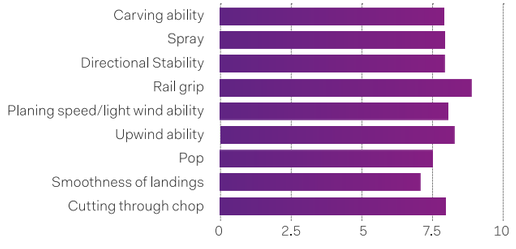


OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

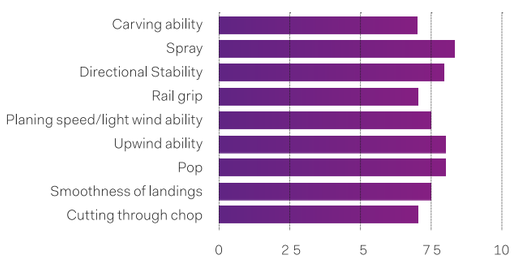
Blank Weight (kg)	2.66
Rocker	Medium
Rail Channels	N
Tip channels	Y
Concave	Single
Rail shape	Stepped with mid to tip taper
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	7
Construction	Wood core, carbon tape and glass laminate
Mounting system	Angled M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	N
Slider Proof Base	N

RRD POISON 137

The RRD Poison has been designed with Big Air at the top of its priority list. The board maintains impressive rail contact, thanks to its squarer outline with slight inwards tapering towards the tips. Its strong yet slim tapered rail bites into the water, allowing you to load up against the kite and hold down some impressive resistance, even when overpowered. This is coupled with its three staged medium rocker that allows you to power upwind and force your kite to the edge of the window on take-off. This all combines to give you the ability to load up hard, take off vertically and reach some impressive heights.
The Poison is CNC-shaped to progressively thin from the mid-stance towards the tips. It does this quite abruptly outside the foot stance in a staggered form. This, in combination with the staggered rocker and added carbon, all contribute towards the boosting goal. On return to earth, the moderate flex, created by the receding core at the tips, supports the landing and helps to smooth the ride through choppy conditions.
When playing on the water, the board has strong directional stability while still allowing some wider carving ability.

The base of the Poison has adopted a triple staggered channel through the central section of the board on each rail. This runs into concave-less platform throughout the rest of the board. This set-up makes the Poison a dream for holding an edge in overpowered conditions but makes the board trickier to perform tight carves and play on the water. When returning from a lofty jump the channels offer strong directional stability, which stops you from skipping out. However, you must be precise with your downwind landing direction to avoid getting too much feedback, as the channels will bite instantly into the water and lock in a heavy landing. If you're looking for a little more versatility and comfort, the Bliss may be the one for you.
Overall, the Poison has been designed to give astounding grip. It allows you to fully utilize your kite power by locking you in and gives you the confidence to send it. If boosting is your goal and you've locked in your landings, this board will not disappoint.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



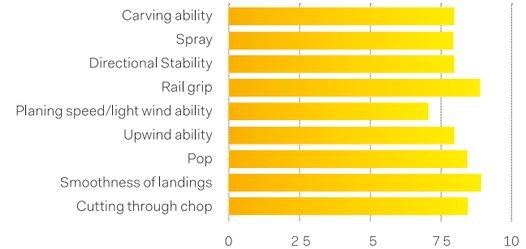
OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.41
Rocker	Medium
Rail Channels	Y
Tip channels	N
Concave	N
Rail shape	Light step with taper
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	8
Construction	Wood core, carbon stringers, carbon laminate
Mounting system	Angled M6 tracks
Boots Compatible	Y
Slider Proof Base	N

DUOTONE JAIME 139

It would be hard for any kiter to begin the testing process on the 2021 Jaime without any preconception. The Jaime has been a flagship Duotone twintip model seemingly since the beginning of mainstream kiting, and for good reason. The 2021 model could have been delivered without graphic or branding but its give-away features, that have evolved over years of development, make it recognizable in a second. It is therefore no surprise that the current model is a versatile twintip that excels in terms of both ride feel, ride comfort and performance.
The 2021 model feels lighter than ever before in the hand, and even more alive on the water. The Jaime trademark core shape, rocker line, outline, and quad channel influenced tip shape all work in conjunction with the well-balanced medium flex pattern (both longitudinal and torsional) resulting in a high performance but forgiving board. Beginners or those in the mood to cruise can mow the lawn comfortably and ride upwind without trouble on the Jaime, but it really comes alive and rewards you when you ride it a bit faster and push your limits. The rocker line allows it to carve hard into wind on takeoff, and the flex tips make for a clean water release resulting in explosive pop, hooked or unhooked. When you do make use of the pop, you can be safe in the knowledge that the double diffusor bottom shaping will soften the landing. The board is comfortable in chop and feels locked-in without any hint of jarring through the knees or ankles.
The Jaime is a board that inspires confidence in the hands of intermediates and still feels at home when landing powered handle passes. Select the Jaime and you'll likely lose one knot from your bottom end wind range compared to some other intermediate freeride boards, but you'll gain bags of performance in return and have a board that you're very unlikely to outgrow.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



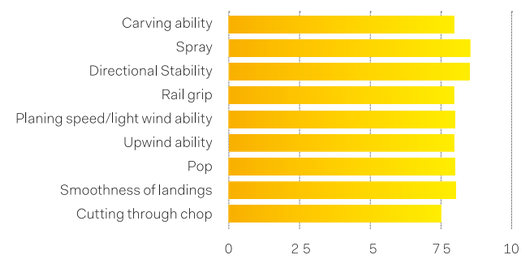
OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.63kg
Rocker	Med
Rail Channels	N
Tip channels	Y - quad
Concave	Double Diffusor
Rail shape	Progressive (adaptive flex tips)
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	6.5
Construction	Wood core/glass lam/carbon web
Mounting system	Track
Boots Compatible	N
Slider Proof Base	N

DUOTONE SELECT SLS 138

It would be hard for any kiter to begin the testing process on the 2021 Jaime without any preconception. The Jaime has been a flagship Duotone twintip model seemingly since the beginning of mainstream kiting, and for good reason. The 2021 model could have been delivered without graphic or branding but its give-away features, that have evolved over years of development, make it recognizable in a second. It is therefore no surprise that the current model is a versatile twintip that excels in terms of both ride feel, ride comfort and performance.
The 2021 model feels lighter than ever before in the hand, and even more alive on the water. The Jaime trademark core shape, rocker line, outline, and quad channel influenced tip shape all work in conjunction with the well-balanced medium flex pattern (both longitudinal and torsional) resulting in a high performance but forgiving board. Beginners or those in the mood to cruise can mow the lawn comfortably and ride upwind without trouble on the Jaime, but it really comes alive and rewards you when you ride it a bit faster and push your limits. The rocker line allows it to carve hard into wind on takeoff, and the flex tips make for a clean water release resulting in explosive pop, hooked or unhooked. When you do make use of the pop, you can be safe in the knowledge that the double diffusor bottom shaping will soften the landing. The board is comfortable in chop and feels locked-in without any hint of jarring through the knees or ankles.
The Jaime is a board that inspires confidence in the hands of intermediates and still feels at home when landing powered handle passes. Select the Jaime and you'll likely lose one knot from your bottom end wind range compared to some other intermediate freeride boards, but you'll gain bags of performance in return and have a board that you're very unlikely to outgrow.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.55kg
Rocker	Med
Rail Channels	N
Tip channels	Y
Concave	N/A
Rail shape	Progressive
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	6.5
Construction	Wood core/Textreme Innegra Carbon lam
Mounting system	Track
Boots Compatible	N
Slider Proof Base	N

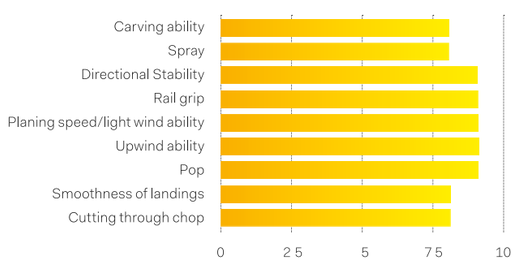
BRUNOTTI BLACKHAWK 141

If the Hawk is the 'Dimension on steroids' then the Blackhawk has just come back from a stint in prison, covered in tattoos, with a mean look in its eye. Adding to the defined contours of the Hawk, Brunotti have tuned the Blackhawk to go one step further with a 'Carbon Compression Core', deeper tail double concave, more defined rail step and everything you could wish for to ride harder and faster and launch yourself off the water.

Definitely the best looking board in our tests, Brunotti describe it as 'tense' which we think is an accurate appraisal of a board that just wants to perform. Orientated towards freestyle or advance freeride riders it is the best of the 'do everything well' boards that Brunotti have to offer, and it does not disappoint. Taking a more freestyle outline has given the Blackhawk a broad, stable platform to land on. Landings are smooth, with the channels taking the shock out of impacts and providing plenty of stability. The carbon stringers and laminates through this board enhance the landings by seeing away any negative flex. Torsionally the board feels more resilient than the Hawk; carbon supported 'Active Backbone' and 'Torque Equalizer' makes the board quicker to re-engage its heel side edge after landing when returning to a sharp drive upwind.

Heavier and more assertive riders crossing their style between freeride and freestyle will benefit most from this board. It gives back what you put into it and so it benefits from an aggressive and confident riding style. Not as accessible as the Hawk or the Dimension for lighter or gentler riders, but guaranteed to please if you're willing to push it...

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.78
Rocker	Medium
Rail Channels	Y
Tip channels	Double
Concave	Double
Rail shape	Chamfered w/ mid to tip taper
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	8
Construction	Wood core, carbon laminate
Mounting system	Angled M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	Y
Slider Proof Base	N

CRAZYFLY ELITE III 136

The CrazyFly Elite III is a high-end freeride board that radiates excellence and status. It is a masterpiece in extreme lightweight engineering, featuring the finest carbon fiber technology upon its ultra-light, double concaved, Paulownia and air core foundation. This board exudes luxury, arriving in a hard case, mounted and ready to go, allowing you to maximize your time on the water and minimize faff. Once on the water, you are in for a fast, agile and smooth ride.

This responsive board gives a load-and-pop that does not fail to disappoint. The lightweight locked-in feeling of the board underfoot allows for textbook inversions and seamless heel-to-toe carving transitions. You would be forgiven for assuming that this carving and popping dream compromises on comfort, but this board also cuts through chop impressively. Its double concave bottom delivers a comfortable ride not often achieved by high performance carbon boards. Its extreme lightweight nature makes for a fast, agile and playful ride. By using their patent pending Air Core Technology to hollow hexagonal sections out of the Paulownia wood core, the CrazyFly Elite III is not only unfathomably light but also has longitudinal and torsional flex that makes for smooth sailing.
This board has a premium application of carbon. Two layers of carbon are applied to the top and base of the board. The first layer, a 45 degree angled CompFlex 4T5, stiffens the torsional flex, keeping it sharp through heel-to-toe transitions. The second layer uses ultra-thin and very high tensile strength HMX-CF2 carbon for longitudinal strength and reflex. This combination of premium carbon laminates are applied pre-preg to ensure that only the optimum amount of resin is used to keep weight low and performance high. The result is a fine tuned, responsive and agile board. Whether you are heading out for a cruise, boosting high or pulling some freestyle maneuvers, this unique board will have you out there all day.

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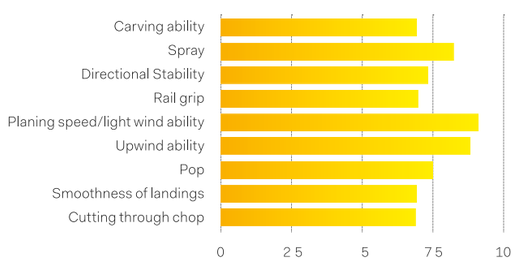


OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	1.93
Rocker	Low
Rail Channels	N
Tip channels	N
Concave	Double
Rail shape	Flat with mid to tip taper
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	6
Construction	Wood & air core, carbon laminate.
Mounting system	Angled M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	N
Slider Proof Base	N

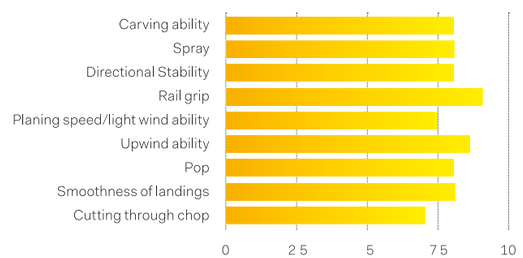
CRAZYFLY RAPTOR LTD 136

Could the Raptor LTD be a new definition for light boards? Quite possibly. This is CrazyFly's ultra-light full carbon board for freeriders and freestylers. CompFlex 4T5 is part of what makes The Raptor LTD so light, requiring less epoxy to layer the carbon, meaning less weight altogether than older models.

A low centered rocker and wide outline make The Raptor LTD fast. To help it give some good grip driving upwind and popping, it utilizes an elliptical double concave and double V tips. Holding its speed well when riding powered, The Raptor LTD is a lively board. Being so light it feels tiny on your feet, feeling ever more so when you're airborne, which is not difficult as the Raptor loves to boost, although with a low rocker, the Raptor LTD is less progressive in the pop and needs more of a spring to flick you up into the air. To smooth out the landings, the double concave base does a good job, but you can get some slap on landings unassisted by the kite. Riders used to more rocker in their boards will find this most noticeable, though a direct point downwind on landing should see you riding out of your jumps with style

The Raptor wants to spend most of your session in the air, and will have you craving to boost and fly, when you do come down though, you will be pleasantly surprised by the playful ride and carving capabilities of the Raptor too...

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.2
Rocker	Low/mediium
Rail Channels	N
Tip channels	N
Concave	Double
Rail shape	Stepped with mid to tip taper
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	8
Construction	Wood core, Carbon laminates
Mounting system	Angled M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	N
Slider Proof Base	N

F-ONE TRAX HRD CARBON 136

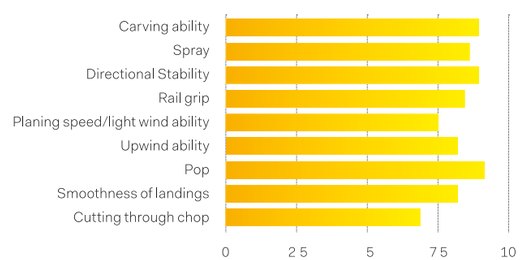
Deciding which F-ONE TRAX is for you can be determined by which aspect of your riding you wish to focus on. The TRAX HRD Carbon is the lighter version of the LT. Its construction is founded upon the same CNC-shaped wood core with Helical Rail Design, single stepped concave and flexible tips. However, its biaxial carbon full layer not only drops the weight a bit, but also gives the board extra strength, a stiffer ride and a more powerful flex response. The reduction in weight makes this board very responsive on the water and a dream in the air.

The Helical Rail Design, named for the pattern of its tapering and chamfering throughout the length of the rail, is unique. There is plenty of grip on the heel edge, thanks to the thin rail in the middle of the board. This allows you to motor upwind and load-up against the kite to boost. The rail is inverted and curved underfoot, making the board very adaptive to changing water conditions or increases in power, thanks to the lack of a sudden edge development. This gives the board a delightfully smooth carving ability, and while the board has excellent directional stability, thanks to its stepped-concave base, if you flatten off the edge, you will value the 'slidability' factor of this board.

If freestyle is more your thing, the flex of the TRAX HRD Carbon has been fine-tuned to deliver an impressive silky-smooth pop. The gradation from the thick midstance to thin flexible tips is tapered to control the flex of the board and the progressive load allows for a controlled energetic pop. Despite having a relatively flat midsection, landings are softened nicely by the wide outline and chamfering underfoot, which deflects water away. This cushions the landing and allows you to ride away with confidence and control.

Overall, this is a board that offers performance freestyle while providing freeride comfort. The stiff ride and explosive pop make the TRAX HRD Carbon well suited to the more freestyle-orientated rider, and if you are lucky enough to get it in some flat water, you are in for a treat.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.71
Rocker	Medium
Rail Channels	Centre line channel
Tip channels	N
Concave	Single
Rail shape	HRD
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	8
Construction	Wood core, carbon & glass laminates
Mounting system	Angled M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	Y
Slider Proof Base	N

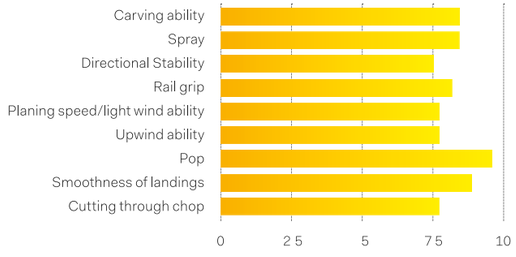
LIEUWE SHOTGUN CARBONARA 136

The Shotgun Carbonara is Lieuwe's carbon-coated, fast and direct freeride board. The increased stiffness of this board, thanks to its triaxial carbon layup, allows the board to grip hard as you lock in your edge and load against the kite without spilling energy out of the board. The takeoff is impressive as a smooth release sends you soaring towards the clouds and allows for some serious airtime. While you're up there, the low weight of this board allows for some dreamy inversions and tweaks to style out your boost time. On your return back to earth, the moderate rocker allows for a controlled, fast and satisfyingly slap-free landing that has little negative board flex.

While the Carbonara is faster and more agile underfoot than its sister, the Shotgun, the same outline is used and its tapered tips allow it to cut through chop easily. The effect is a silky smooth ride that allows you to maintain speed in comfort. It locks in beautifully as you carve around and has an abundance of grip, drive and flex, thanks to its single concave 3D shaped paulownia wood core with stepped rail that leads into flex tips topped with carbon. For those that like to boost high and dabble in some freestyle, the pop does not disappoint. You get a super clean and consistent release that is essential for those unhooked maneuvers.

While faster than most dedicated freestyle boards, the Carbonara is a great crossover thanks to its precise feedback, progressive load and smooth landings. Overall, the Carbonara remains a true all-rounder that is as much fun on the water as it is soaring through the air.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.42
Rocker	Med/High
Rail Channels	N
Tip channels	Y
Concave	Single
Rail shape	Stepped continuous
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	7
Construction	Wood core & carbon laminate
Mounting system	Double angled M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	Y
Slider Proof Base	N

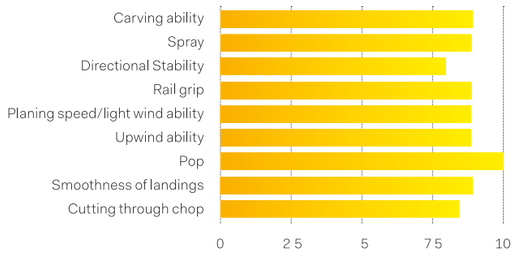
SLINGSHOT FORMULA V1 140

Slingshot have a reputation that proceeds them for sturdy kiteboards. The Formula is something completely different, with the focus on weight saving and snappy response. Everything is screaming high-end manufacturing on the Formula. Build-wise we're looking at a paulownia wood core with a high modulus carbon layup; a Textreme carbon stringer also runs the entire length of the board, which provides a definite feast for the eyes. Shape-wise, there is a gentle taper into the tips of the outline combined with a gentle rocker with an elegant continuous curve. A fairly deep double concave runs the entire length of the board with a subtle spine dividing the board across its width. The rails are manufactured in a single injection molded shot, rather than pieced out of ABS. The foot strap inserts even sit on high strength carbon load spreaders under the laminate.

In the water, the Formula feels immediately lively and responsive and builds speed fast. To say it is easy and predictable to load and pop against would be a huge understatement. You can literally set your watch by the pop response, which is generous. It stores power well through the tip. Swing weight is obviously featherlight for a 140, and your rotations may take a little retiming if you're used to a heavier board. That tapered outline carves an excellent high-speed corner. Landings are smoothed out very well, it is particularly noticeable in chop how little vibration occurs. The high amount of speed and grip available combined with the low deck weight lend itself well to Big Air.

The Formula is a triumph for Slingshot and combines their notable shaping lineage in a lightweight product far more in line with their European competitors. It feels like something high-end and perhaps even a little custom, and is a step in the right direction from a design perspective. For high power strapped freeriding and Big Air, it is an absolute weapon.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.05
Rocker	Mid/ light
Rail Channels	N
Tip channels	N
Concave	Full double
Rail shape	Straight
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	8
Construction	HM carbon/wood
Mounting system	Straight inserts
Boots Compatible	No
Slider Proof Base	Dura Light Base

NORTH ATMOS CARBON 138

The Atmos Carbon is North's premium standard intermediate twintip focusing on Big Air and freeride. Utilizing the same design as the Hybrid, but laminating it with carbon, gives the board more responsiveness and a higher performance focus.

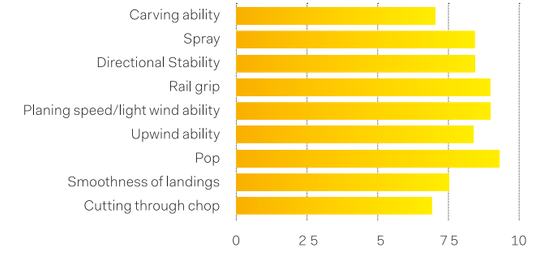
With a single mild concave running to the tips, giving you excellent rail grip, the Atmos Carbon feels connected and drives forward with ease. This translates to giving it great upwind ability and a fantastic ability to load up on power as you start sending the kite. When you are loading for pop you stay planted, with good feedback, thanks to the quad channels in the tips and the medium rocker, which runs the whole length of the board and allows effective load up and release.

Being the higher performance version of the Hybrid, the Carbon has swapped the E-glass layering for biaxial carbon fiber and keeps the unidirectional carbon reinforcements, combining to result in increased stiffness in both directions, longitudinally and torsionally, which gives it more response and a lively ride. Full carbon construction means the Atmos Carbon can be ridden with a lot of power but still be positive and connected with an extremely fast and hard pop.

The Atmos Carbon has a nice smoothness to its ride thanks to only a little concave on the base and subtle channeling in the tips. These make for a controlled and smooth landing when positioned properly downwind and pressured at the back to engage those channels. Those less technical in their landings can find that the loose feel midstance can lead to some skipping out if they touch down unbalanced and coordinated.

Hooked-in freestyle and Big Air is exactly what The Atmos Carbon was designed for and performs best at; if you are after a low-speed unhooked pop board it would be better to check out something wider and more channeled with full freestyle focus. The Atmos Carbon is perfect for intermediate riders looking to jump bigger and better and increase their skills, and its insane response and feedback also ensure that it will be a great choice for 'max power' riders too.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

Blank Weight (kg)	2.65
Rocker	Medium
Rail Channels	N
Tip channels	Y
Concave	Single
Rail shape	Stepped with mid to tip taper
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	7
Construction	Wood core, carbon tape and carbon laminate
Mounting system	Angled M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	N
Slider Proof Base	N

NOBILE NHP CARBON 139

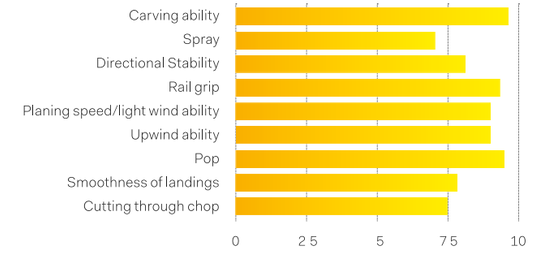
Nobile's premium asymmetric freeride/freestyle crossover board, the NHP Carbon, impressed us immediately with its exceptional drive and upwind reach. Utilizing its hydrodynamic rocker and hybrid concave shape which features a tip-to-tip double concave alongside an elliptical concave in the boards center, the NHP Pro is early planing with tons of speed on tap and effortless edging. Adopting the same outline as the rest of the NHP range, the pro has slim stepped continuous rails which wrap around the boards outline leading to heavily tapered tips on the toeside.

The design of this board allows it to roll from heel to toeside effortlessly, whilst keeping a great amount of grip; you'll find that the carbon version stiffens the flex, which makes holding toeside even easier. If riding strapless is a goal then you'll enjoy this board. It is as close to the surfboard feeling you'll get when whipping around with speed into tight turns, whilst giving you the grip needed to continue your ride. If you've tried a carbon board, you'll note the difference in stiffness when you ride, and this board is no different. The slim rails on the board do slide through the water well, but with all the energy loaded into this board you'll need to expect a little early feedback as you speed through chop – a small compromise!

Although the NHP's Carbon weight is only slightly lighter than the other boards in their range, it does feel lighter when in the air; however our favorite part of this board is its flex response. When loading into a jump, you can feel the power building and it holds it exceptionally well before rebounding you explosively off the water with a satisfyingly snappy pop; it's a lot of fun.

If fast pace and aggressive riding is your style then you'll really enjoy how the NHP Carbon compliments your ride, but if comfort and easy going riding is your preferred, choose the standard construction.

SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA



OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

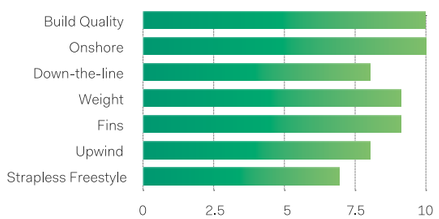
Blank Weight (kg)	2.61
Rocker	Med/High
Rail Channels	Y
Tip channels	Y
Concave	Double
Rail shape	Stepped Continuous
Flex score (1 soft, 10 stiff)	7
Construction	Wood & Airlite core, & carbon laminates
Mounting system	Angled M6 inserts
Boots Compatible	Y
Slider Proof Base	N

DUOTONE FISH SLS 5'5

The Fish arrived in the Duotone line up a couple of seasons back, and broke the mold of what we expect to see from a kite surfboard. Despite its shape it wasn't strapless freestyle focused; it had a full 'twin fin' style outline but had three fins, and – perhaps most importantly – it didn't take itself too seriously. For 2021 it has been given the full SLS treatment which, for boards, translates into more Innegra, more carbon, and a loss in weight of around 100g based on the previous Pro version (it also, of course, translates into a chunk more $ from your pocket). The other main changes that you are going to notice is the increased rocker and the pulled-in tail. Yes this is a 'small wave' board, but small waves don't have to be quite so small, and people love to throw it around – so it has taken an obvious step in the 'performance' direction.

Riding the Fish and you can see why it has very quickly become one of the biggest selling surfboards on the market. Whatever your level, the plan shape and volume ensure that you get up and riding easily. It drives through chop, has no problems getting upwind, and is a smooth ride (helped by the cork patches under your feet). You can ride a kite size smaller for sure, or you can keep your kite and really turn on the power. For smaller waves and chop, the Fish provides enough float to maintain plenty of momentum, which enables you to treat bumps like ramps, and not have to work about bogging down if you land heavily. You can express your inner Airton (or try to) and the Fish is a forgiving platform for this.

In respectable surf the Fish gives you confidence to commit to top to bottom riding – the fins engage and inspire confidence, and the narrower tail ensures that you can whip the Fish around more like a shortboard. The Fish SLS is not a shape that you will see in your local 'surf shop', it is a board that has been designed for kiting and is very well executed in this respect. We would say that for 90% of wave kiters, it would make you a smoother and better wave rider.



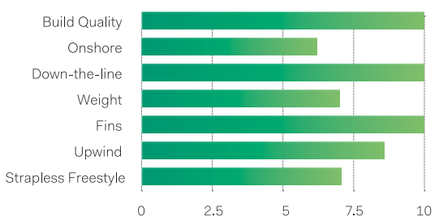
DUOTONE SESSION SLS 5'10

The Session is Duotone's big wave board. Sky Solbach has been hard at work developing it this year to widen its audience and application, to make it more suitable for average conditions but at the same time retain that giant slaying performance when the stars align.

The construction is absolutely exquisite and more than justifies the price tag with a lot of luxurious tech on full display. The board has a generous Innegra wrap and is tough as old boots to the usual transport knocks. For a high-end board, it is refreshing to have something you don't need to be too precious of. The deck has a cork layer to smooth out vibrations, which genuinely seems to deaden any jarring you may experience smashing through chop; combine this with a gentle double into single concave in the hull, and it equates to a very comfortable board to get around on. Fins wise, five boxes are present, allowing you to choose between a quad and thruster. A subtle recessed thumb grip in the deck runs down the rail which makes the board practical to carry, and if you did want to paddle the Session SLS, which is perfectly feasible in the right conditions, it would make duck diving that little bit easier.

The rounded pin tail makes a great job of control, and releases its fins predictably at speed on a big top turn. Outline wise it is definitely airing on the side of a mini gun with a relatively narrow mid-point and quite pronounced nose rocker. All the attributes point towards a board that is geared for larger wave conditions, and it performs even better than you would expect.

The Session holds speed exceptionally well through the bottom turn and can produce some serious G-force and ludicrous spray. You can load a lot of power into those fins, and it arcs around with more grip in far tighter radiuses than you would expect. For massive carving speed turns in conditions of consequence, the Session SLS seems steady footed and confidence inspiring.

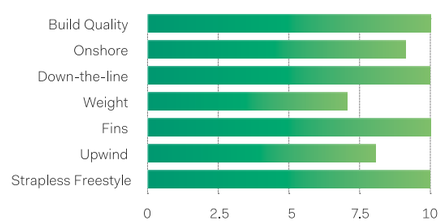


F-ONE MAGNET CARBON

The Magnet Carbon is F-ONE's extremely concise answer to the strapless freestyle discipline. It comes in two sizes of 4'11 and 5'1, with a rider weight of 80kgs as tipping point when choosing between the two. The construction is all-new, and unsurprisingly F-ONE aren't giving away a whole lot about the finer details, other than it involves carbon. The Corduroy EVA deck pad is suitably grippy and comfortable, and a front bump in the footpad ensures it is really easy to work out where your feet are and prevents doing the splits on a hard landing. The outline is derived from the popular Slice, but that's more or less where the similarities end. Immediately you see how slim and light the board is. A large double concave with a soft central V shape runs through the majority of the flatter section of the board, fading into a flatter section in the tip. A cheeky final flip in the nose will overcome a fast landing on chop well.

What immediately strikes you most about the Magnet is how light it feels both to handle and under foot. The thumb grip running along the rail makes it dead easy to carry one handed, but this obviously translates into an ultra-obvious grab area to aim for when airborne. The grip and power loading you can garner when riding powered is truly impressive. The combination of a stiff Futures fin system, ultra-thin rails, and boxy rear outline work together seamlessly. You can push a kite forward in the window as well as you can with a twintip, and you can feel the flex and response in the deck making the power release simple, consistent and predictable. This is where it runs rings around traditional surfboards. Once you're in the air, it's most definitely Magnet by name, Magnet by nature and the board naturally stays on your feet. The bottom shape of the board and flex combination disperses the water on impact admirably where you'd normally land with slap and bounce out. When riding the Magnet in a more traditional wave riding scenario, as long as you ride powered and kite led, you can achieve a decent and very grippy set of turns, throwing a rooster tail of consequence.

The Magnet will massively aid the initial stages of strapless freestyle with its ease of use, opening up a plethora of tricks, and anyone with superhuman abilities is going to trick even further than before.



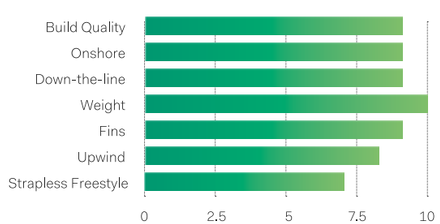
F-ONE MITU PRO CARBON 5'6

The Mitu board range from French ocean sports powerhouse F-ONE has been present in their range for a long while, and has seen gentle incremental evolution over that time. The 5'6 we tested sits exactly in the middle of the size range at 22.8l. The carbon construction version we tested has no inserts and a very stern 'not for jumping with' label printed on the base, reminding us in no uncertain terms that this is a pure strapless wave riding tool, and a lighter construction not designed for heavy landing freestyle work. On paper the board weighs in just over 3kgs and it feels as light in the hands as it does underfoot.

It is presented in an exclusive feeling brushed matt finish, and has a fairly rounded traditional surf rail up front, chiseled down to a very thin and quite aggressive rear end. The versatile micro fish tail that has always been Mitu's signature, continues to perform immaculately in a multitude of wind and wave angles, and always produces a satisfying response. The base sports a light single into double concave, and slices well through the full range of water states. A fair amount of the board's volume sits under the front foot and balances well. The EVA pad sits on top of the lightly convex traditional surf deck and runs down the entire rear three quarters of the board. A hump in the front of the pad helps place your front foot without having to glance down.

In the water, the board planes early for the size and volume. It lends itself to engaged flowing carves and snappy top turns and feels controlled. The bottom contours make for a smooth ability to smash through chop, but what's most notable is how much increased feedback you get through the carbon version when going rail to rail. The board feels energetic and snappy underfoot. It is definitely the most performant all-rounder for cross conditions within the F-ONE surf selection.

The Mitu Pro Carbon is a timeless and reliable shape now produced in an exquisite carbon build. It's as light, lively and electric feeling as you could hope for a modern kiteboard and more than does its namesake justice. Sometimes you pick up a surfboard, and the shape and proportions just look correct – the Mitu is one of these instances. The enhanced construction takes that classic shape and makes it ride with even more clarity and response.



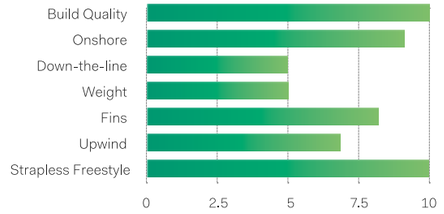
NORTH COMP 5'4

Ubiquitous in nearly every manufacturer's product range, North have developed a surfboard specific to strapless freestyle that crosses over well into average wave conditions. The Comp is an interesting board from a construction perspective and there's a decent mix of modern materials utilized. The layup is a visually impressive mixture of carbon weave and Innegra that North are calling their Futurelite Technology, which makes up a structural skeleton whilst retaining some decent flex characteristics, important for a board designed for harsh landings. The EVA pad is a fairly thick, extremely grippy corduroy affair and has a pronounced bump in the front to wedge your front foot against on water impact – there's very little chance of landing hard and doing the splits with the Comp. It is a familiar boxy outline, with relatively squared rails for building decent grip and loading the edge for easy release for strapless airs, and the formula works well. A considerable amount of shaping and sculpture has gone into the base of the board. The tail has a deep central concave channel and two smaller channels either side flanking it. They seem to produce that magic mixture of grip and bounce resistance that strapless freestyle requires.

Fin-wise, we're looking at a thruster setup, which is well placed around the channeling and has the well proven and sturdy FCSII boxes for easy clip-in fin swaps. The rear of the board around the fin box and kick pad has extra cross-aligned carbon mesh woven around it for even more impact resistance.

In the water, the Comp certainly ticks all the boxes for a load and punt perspective. It develops forward speed in an eager fashion, and it feels easy to release and get in the air with. What's very noticeable is what a pleasant board it is to land on – the bottom contours seem to disperse the water well. We had some pretty heavy landings on the Comp and it certainly seems to take it like a trooper. In mushy onshore swell, the Comp does a great job of giving a fun skateboard style top to bottom performance, and its tail slides out very predictably on a stalled top turn and definitely makes sub-par conditions very entertaining.

It's Comp by name and competition by nature. It is an excellent reaction to the focus and development of strapless freestyle, and is a great platform that will push your personal development from your first few strapless punts to as far as you can take it.

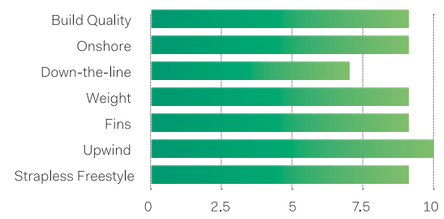


OCEAN RODEO JESTER 2.0

Never ones to stick to the usual mold when it comes to board design (with twintips like the Mako and Duke at the heart of the collection), this philosophy has been carried over into Ocean Rodeo's directional line up. Kind of. The Jester actually represents a board philosophy that has now been carried over into many brand's board line ups where it recognizes that kite surf boards are very different from regular surfboards and is designed accordingly... The plan shape is generally fuller to ensure early planing in all conditions and the ability to maintain speed when riding through flat sections or when landing from strapless freestyle moves. Volume, however, is kept low as we have kite, not 'arm' power! So the 5'1 comes in at a very slimline 17.6 liters.

Construction wise and Ocean Rodeo have succeeded in shaving 25% from the weight which is impressive... There is an EPS core and a bamboo layer to soften the flex and the landings, and the Jester has five fin boxes and ships with fine fins (very generous OR!) so you can choose between quad or thruster set ups.

On the water and the Jester is very quick to plane and maintains speed steadily, the concave gives it a lovely locked in feel and really drives upwind. We enjoyed it most as a quad and found that this gave heaps of grip so you could really load up the edge and get some impressive almost twintip style pop. This has been the board of choice for the OR wave team and they have been doing pretty well on it (with Carla Herrera world champ last time round). In the waves and the Jester is no slouch, particularly in onshore conditions where you can drive it into a crumble wave and come back off it with plenty of speed – and don't be deceived by the shape, in bigger waves or when generating more speed it does turn surprisingly snappily off the tail. For general 'real world' conditions the Jester is definitely a 'keeper' and will have you racing around with plenty of speed while the guys with pointier boards are working their kites and struggling to maintain any momentum...



CATEGORY WINNERS: BOARDS

FREERIDE

SLINGSHOT SUPER NATURAL
GOLD

Our team relished the quick-paced locked-in carves with rapid exits, making fun of even the smallest piece of chop. It is official: the Mutant is back.

NAISH SWITCH
SILVER

The asymmetric rail length of the Switch creates a feeling underfoot unlike any other board. If you're fond of mixing up your riding styles but don't want to have a boot full of boards then the Switch has stepped in to provide a solution at an impressive price point.

NORTH PRIME
BRONZE

The classic freeride outline with low rocker, single concave and pulled-in tips make the Prime immensely enjoyable. Its easily accessible pace, ample grip and agile turn radius produce plenty of drive and a fun and accessible riding experience.

CROSSOVER

AIRUSH APEX V7
GOLD

The test team loved the fresh look and ride of the latest generation of Apex. Basalt laminate and refined double concave gives it a supremely cruisy ride through chop, and rewarding pop and super smooth landings make it a top contender for freeride and budding freestyle riders.

F-ONE TRAX HRD LT
SILVER

A pretty much perfect twintip and, once again, we were most impressed by the landings on the F-ONE Trax, which can be attributed greatly to the Helical Rail Design making even hard and fast landings cushioned and easy on the knees.

NAISH MOTION
BRONZE

The playful and fun ride of the Motion is surely confidence-inspiring for a progressing intermediate rider. The flex tips combined with beveled edging keeps you feeling locked-in and confident, to power through carves with speed.

RRD POISON Y26
BRONZE

If you love to boost and need grip and directional stability that directs like you're on rails, the RRD Poison delivers. Triple staged channeling will keep you locked in to build maximum line tension for a big takeoff and landings come with a pre-set route map.

For the Ultimate Test #3 we have reduced the number of twintip categories so, in some categories, we have more than one award winner.

PREMIUM CROSSOVER

NORTH ATMOS CARBON
GOLD

The test team rated the Atmos Carbon for its very direct and positive load response with an abrupt and powerful pop. Perfectly pitched for intermediate to advanced riders looking to elevate their riding…

DUOTONE SELECT SLS
SILVER

After testing the Select, we can only assume that SLS means Smooth Like Silk. Taking all of the features we love from the Select, Duotone has wrapped it in carbon and Inegra for a more responsive yet silky smooth ride that cuts through the water like the proverbial hot knife through butter.

CRAZYFLY ELITE III
SILVER

The test team loved the speed, agility and highly responsive load and pop of the Elite III. It is extremely light and sporty in feel and exudes an energy that will have you charging around, carving and boosting all day.

BRUNOTTI BLACKHAWK
BRONZE

If the Hawk is the 'Dimension on steroids' then the Blackhawk has just come back from a stint in prison, covered in tattoos, with a mean look in its eye. It gives back what you put into it and so it benefits from an aggressive and confident riding style. Guaranteed to please if you're willing to push it…

FREESTYLE

LIEUWE OCEANA
GOLD

Playing well into the hands of Big Air riders and freestylers, the Oceana truly delivers in its key criteria: pop and landings. Expect a smooth, powerful release from the water and a super smooth and directionally stable touchdown.

ELEVEIGHT MASTER
SILVER

Perhaps the most pleasant surprise of the board test, the Master C+ loved aggressive riding in boots, but was still smooth through the water and kind to the knees on hard landings. Truly the best of both worlds with very respectable pop coupled with comfort.

F-ONE WTF!?
SILVER

The extremely playful WTF!? impressed the test team by making performance freestyle comfortable in all conditions. Expect excellent control at speed, an easy ride though chop, and excellent pop followed by easy-to-stick landings.

NOBILE GAMECHANGER
BRONZE

New to the Nobile line up, the Gamechanger's generous channeling creates substantial grip for loading up and the board's release is explosive. The pop this board can make with very little effort is nothing short of amazing.

FOIL TEST CRITERIA

USABLE SPEED RANGE
We used GPS to measure our speeds riding each board. The speed reflects the speeds at which the board was comfortable to the rider, so not necessarily the absolute top or bottom speed a foil is capable of.

TOP SPEED
Does the foil want to go fast and does it feel comfortable traveling at higher speeds? Obviously not all foils are designed for speed, but if they are then they should get a high score here.

PITCH STABILITY
How comfortable is the foil on its 'forward and backwards' axis? The higher the score here, the more stable it is when it lifts and the easier it is to keep perfectly on track when you are riding.

YAW STABILITY
How comfortable is the foil on its 'side to side' axis? The higher the score here, the more stable the foil is when riding at an angle or when moving through transitions.

CARVING
This score shows a foil that is comfortable moving into turns at slower speeds. So for switching from heel to toeside riding or for riding rolling swell.

OVERALL STABILITY
An overall judgement of how balanced and stable you feel riding the foil. A low score does not necessarily mean a bad foil (a race winning foil would probably get a 1), but a high score will be a better option if you are just starting out.

LOW SPEED TACK STABILITY
For foiling tacks, can you slow down to make the tack easier, or do you need to go into the tack at speed? A high score shows a foil that is more forgiving and lets you tack at slower speeds.

UPWIND
How good are the upwind angles on the foil? Clearly all foils will out-perform your twintip, but this score shows how tight the foil was happy to go to the wind while still maintaining speed.

TRACKING
An assessment of how easy and comfortable the foil was to set in a straight line and to hold that angle and increase speed. A high score shows a foil that you could comfortably lock in and put the pedal down.

NOISE/WHISTLE
Was there any whistling or humming in the foil set up or was it completely silent? A score of 10 indicates that there was no noise at all from the foil.

EASE OF ASSEMBLY
How easy was it to assemble the foil and attach it to the board? A high score shows that minimal tools were required and assembly was quick, easy and relatively obvious without referring closely to instructions…

CRAZYFLY CRUZ 1000 AND F-LITE

Let's start by saying that the Cruz 1000's full carbon front wing is a great thing to look at and is a tribute to CrazyFly's own Slovakian factory. The aesthetic of the carbon layup was faultless and finished to a high polish, which gives you confidence that the wing really is as "ultra-light, robust and durable" as they say it is. Carbon doesn't always have to be as delicate as some people think and I'd bet this isn't (though I couldn't quite bring myself to ride into a rock to test this for you!).

The setup is simple to assemble and features CrazyFly's 'clean connect' concept. They have forgone more complex interface options between the mast/fuselage and mast/top plate, and opted for a 'clean flat-to-flat surface connection'. The bottom of the mast is flat, as is the top of the fuselage, and the two surfaces are flush and simply bolted together. Presumably thanks to some of the longest M8 bolts I've used during a foil assembly, the simple connection felt stiff, though doing up the bolts top and bottom did add a couple of minutes to the setup time compared to other comparable foils. I'd be reaching for the power tools if I had to de-rig this one after every session.
On the water the Cruz 1000 combined with the F-Lite was a very user-friendly setup, but fast for a 1000cm2 wing. The setup was remarkably easy to board start and take off with, despite the board being a very light, fairly small twintip style construction board. The sealed mast traps air inside to increase buoyancy which definitely helps keep the foil up and the board on its side in a ready position when preparing to launch. This is particularly helpful when you are strapless or only using the front straps. Once up foiling, the Cruz picked up speed easily when you wanted it to and felt controlled at all speeds. The feeling through the feet was that of a direct connection to the foil which is one of the benefits of twintip construction foil boards, especially carbon fiber ones like this one. Even at high speed it felt stable in pitch and didn't require you to push yourself hard to the nose and move all your weight forward as is the case with some kite foils of this size.

The foil is marketed at intermediate to expert riders, but given this, I did find the foil perhaps overly stable in the roll axis and wanting to default to quite an upright position. This resulted in a less playful feeling and slower transition from toeside to heelside carve than I'd personally like, though I think the pitch and roll stability would be of great benefit to more beginner and intermediate riders and those yet to master their foiling foot change. I wouldn't feel bad giving this setup to someone that hadn't foiled before as it is very realistic that you could learn on this setup, leaving heaps of room to progress. Overall, a very light, nicely finished setup for those looking for a kite foil that can be pushed to a good speed but is still easy to ride and progress on.

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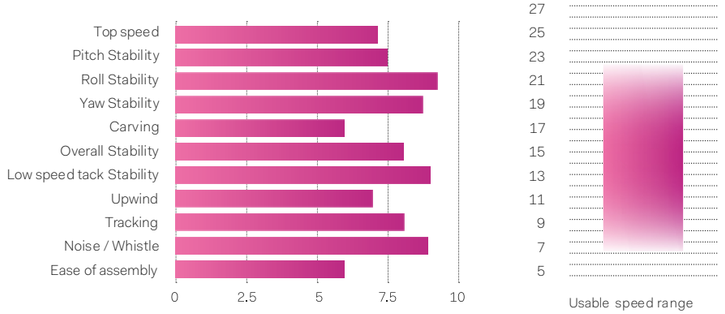

F-ONE MIRAGE CARBON 800 AND HM95CM MAST

The Mirage 800 front wing has a gentle gul wing sweep and delta design, and relatively gentle aspect ratio of 4.8. The modular technology from the F-ONE surf foil range now transfers down to their kite foils, and the front wing is beautifully hewn into a single piece of pre-preg carbon, which includes the front half of the fuselage. Avoiding the normal front wing to fuselage joint makes things exceptionally stiff. The fuselage tail locks on with two M6 bolts and locks in at 45 degrees. The C220 surf stabilizer is thin and fast with gently upturned winglets, and bolts on to the bottom of the Mirage-specific fuselage tail piece, which is relatively long as standard. This is a great move from F-ONE as it balances out the relatively small front wing's pitch stability characteristics. The tail allows for some free turning for a fast foil and allows for some fast banking turns.

We were lucky enough to test with the latest high modulus carbon mast from F-ONE which is a work of art. It is hollow in two chambers across its section and immediately feels significantly lighter and stiffer than the standard mast. In practice, every small steering and weight input is translated immaculately down through to the foil, which is important. When cranking upwind, you can feel the extra loading you can push through the deep chord and how stable it is even through choppier sea states.
For a small wing the Mirage 800 creeps up onto the foil impressively fast and isn't too choppy pre-foiling, even in lighter wind conditions. It accelerates up to cruising speed rapidly and heralds excellent pitch stability through a wide speed range. It is almost silent for the vast majority of its speed range, and in the top end the Mirage doesn't build drag or front foot pressure; it feels more like the kite is slowing you down rather than the foil, which still seems to remain very composed. Round the corners, you need to go in with some speed and commitment, and you can carve some very stable high speed turns.

The Mirage is a fantastic example of a free race foil, with blistering top speeds in a straight line and surprising accessibility; it took half an hour to dial into, and then we were making our usual repertoire of transitions easily. Towing into faster waves, there was no build of front foot pressure and you can instantly feel the foil's massive glide potential maintaining that momentum effortlessly and still remaining maneuverable even at warp speed. Particularly for the larger spans of mast, if you want the ultimate in stiffness and weight, high modulus (HM) should definitely be considered and builds the system into something quite special.

For those who have mastered freeride foiling on relatively large front wings and want to spice things up again, the Mirage 800 suits the bill perfectly. It's a great step up to performing all your transitions with a healthy dose more speed, as its innate stability reinforces your confidence that you'll make the tack or jibe without fuss.

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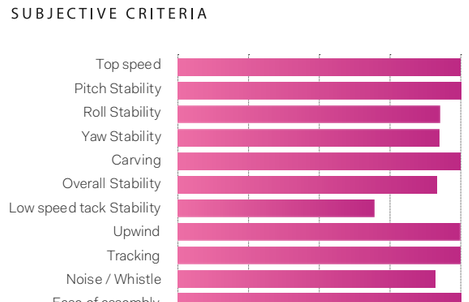

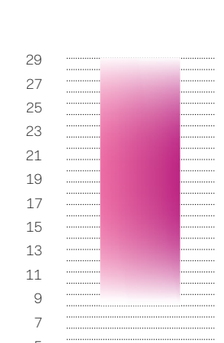

LEVITAZ CRUIZER PRO AND EXO POCKET

"With this configuration your Cruizer will react to the smallest input but still stays stable at high speeds." A statement from the Levitaz website that could be used to sum up the Cruizer Pro in one sentence! It really is 'super reactive'. As with many Levitaz products, the unboxing and setup gets you excited to get on the water before you've even got to the beach, thanks to the high-end feel of everything in the box.

On the water, the shortened fuselage and smaller bionic rear wing increase the pitch sensitivity compared to most foils, and allow for fast adjustments and sharp carving turns. It feels very comfortable at speed and encourages you to ride fast even when riding strapless. For those that have already learnt to swap feet without touching down on a steadier setup, it shouldn't take long to adjust to the Cruizer Pro by slowing down before committing to the turns, especially in flat-ish waters. The only time I found myself out of my comfort zone was in choppier tidal waters when the foil felt thrown around a little by below-the-surface water movements (more so than Levitaz's Shaka S for example which ploughed through the chop more confidently when tested back to back).

During testing the Cruizer Pro was bolted to the new Exo Pocket board, an even smaller version of the very popular Exo. The Exo Pocket really is standing room only. At only 96cm long and 44.5cm wide, you'll find your back foot slammed right up against the kickpad and your front foot not far from the nose! Don't get me wrong, this setup is not the perfect choice for a beginner kite foiler even with straps, but intermediates will love the feel of the compact shape once up foiling. Whilst the volume is carefully distributed, the small size results in a board that only feels comfortable performing touchdown foot changes in flat waters and with good board speed. On the plus side, once foiling, it feels like the Exo pocket connects you so directly to the foil below and you can feel exactly what's going on. The standing area underfoot is just enough to not leave you wishing for more when performing foiling footwork and the whole deck pad with integrated kickpad is one of nicest I've seen.

If you're an intermediate kite foiler who wants their foil to do exactly what they tell it to do, at the exact moment they shift their weight, this is definitely a contender!

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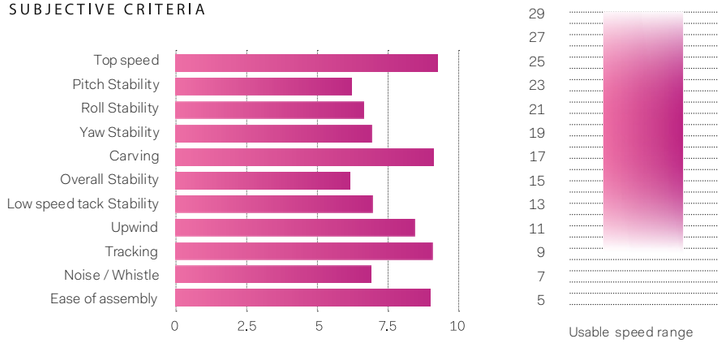

LEVITAZ SHAKA S AND EXO

Austrian foil specialists Levitaz developed the Shaka foil as their first hydrofoil aimed at the surf market. Originally available in the L and M sizes which were solely dedicated to wave and wing use, the S size comes in at 1200cm2 of surface area and can crossover into kite use.

As with all things Levitaz, the manufacturing is magnificent producing a natural looking shape. The connection system remains the same as previous years with a perfect tube-shaped milled stainless fuselage sliding through the mast foot and clamping the wing on firmly with four M6 bolts. Stainless bolts into a stainless fuse means there is no galvanic corrosion to worry about. The junctions of the components are elegantly sculpted and there are few drag points on the system, making it slice through that water all the more efficiently. We were provided with the 80cm hybrid mast, which even as the cheaper option from Levitaz, absolutely oozes quality of manufacturing. We were super impressed with the stiffness, particularly in the lack of deflection across the roll axis. It all comes packaged in a compact and high quality protective carry bag for luxury transportation.

In the water the Shaka boots you up onto the foil instantly and provides great support around your transitions even at low speed. The surf style anhedral stabilizer promotes agility in the yaw axis and allows you to change direction confidently with predictable results, without feeling too skatey. The Shaka S is going to suit a complete beginner through to a capable freeride foiler. The foil section seems to remain relatively thin, and we were impressed with the top end which doesn't seem to require too much front foot pressure. In a wave scenario, the easy pitch adjustment over a broad speed range seems to prevent breaching for what is a relatively high surface area kite wing. The Shaka S is a genre spanning organic masterpiece of carbon that feels very much at home under a kite for a freeride foiler dabbling in waves. The crossover potential into prone and wing foiling is also an inevitable possibility, which will be very convenient for the growing numbers of multi-discipline foil riders.

The Exo board comes in at 18 liters and is probably the most universal kite foil board in the Levitaz range. There is a carbon and fiberglass layup with wood stringers and a resilient gloss coat. Foot strap inserts are available in two and three strap Y configurations for every occasion. The deck has a completely flat work area and fairly aggressive EVA grip. We found when paired with the relatively high lift Shaka S, the foil wanted to run towards the back of the dual futures track boxes. The 125cm is a pleasant size, giving enough volume and float for a very low wind water start, and is light and agile enough to throw around unhindered.

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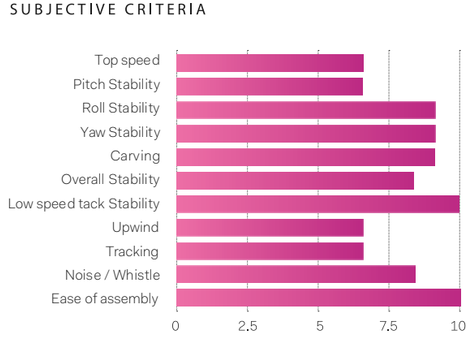

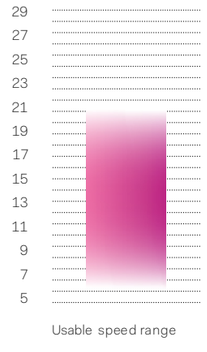

NOBILE ZEN CARBON SURF FOIL 1000 AND POCKET SKIM FOIL

Nobile have always had a fondness for compact travel focused products with their successful range of split boards. In a move of pure genius, this design direction has now progressed into their hydrofoil range. With some (if not most) hydrofoils being notoriously awkward to transport this is a genius move. The board and foil comes cunningly encased in two slimline black travel bags, the maximum length being close to the mast and board length at around 90cm. It is genuinely hard to contemplate that there is a full hydrofoil setup in there. As you rummage through the various perfectly tailored pockets for the tools and components, you realize it is a work of art worthy of a severe case of OCD. The fixings are simple hex bolts and the connections delightfully simple, and before you know it, voila, you've built a full size freeride hydrofoil.

The Zen Carbon Surf 1000 wing set is instantly visually impressive and lightweight. The carbon work shows high levels of attention to detail in the manufacturing, and the mid-aspect shape with generous profile has all the hints for a playful surf foil. It is complemented with a racey looking stabilizer with dihedral winglets, and the fuselage length is relatively short. Underfoot, the lift is very instant and it is playful in the turns. The foil seems to find its speed range pretty quickly and maintains great pitch stability and plenty of support around the corners. In the yaw axis, the minimal stabilizer comes into play, and it's loose and entertaining to ride. It is an interesting mixture of high lift and high maneuverability, particularly at lower speed, that makes it very suitable for towing into some waves with and staying in the power and not outrunning them. There is some definite surf foil DNA in this kite foil. Combining a relatively large and lifty front wing with a lean stabilizer and short fuselage length, makes for a really engaging and playful riding experience.

The Pocket Skim board is a minimalist and lightweight foiling solution. At 90cm long, for a big unit 187cm tall test pilot, it's just comfortably over my normal foiling stance. To maintain a little float and planing area, it has been kept fairly wide particularly at the front of the board, with a gentle upward scoop rocker in the nose. Paired with the 1000 foil, being so tiny, it does take a little juice and technique for lower wind water starts. It might be a little challenging for a first time foiler, but for anyone intermediate level and above the low swing weight and travel benefits make for a convenient and entertaining to ride package. As the nose of the board isn't visible in your peripheral vision, it's as close as we'd come to flying on water sensation.

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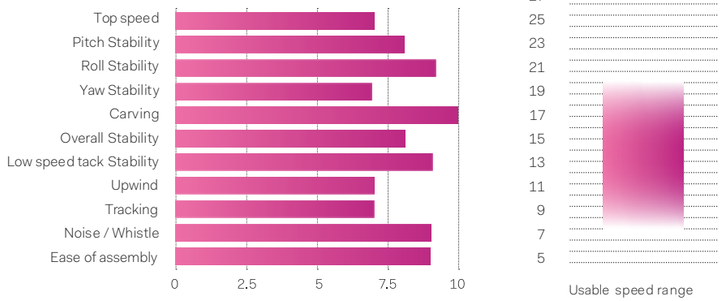

S:QUAD
5'7" / 5'9"

SPADE
5'3" / 5'7"

CUTLASS
5'2" / 5'5"

X:BREED
5'1" / 5'3" / 5'5"

SPADE PRO
5'3" / 5'7"

X:BREED PRO
5'1" / 5'3" / 5'5"

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