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Issue 3 May 17

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WINDuk SURFING

TAKE A FRESH LOOK – alternative ways to enjoy your windsurfing this season

There's more than one way to skin a cat – so the old saying goes. Sure, you have standard windsurfing disciplines – wave sailing, slalom, course racing (race board), formula, freestyle and freeride – but these days there's so much more available and ways to get your fix. Time and again we hear how people have left the sport, finding equipment too

cumbersome or planing conditions never lining up as often as liked. Yet, with the advent of foils, windSUP, inflatable performance boards and compact rigs there's never been easier ways to access windsurfing and all its benefits – wherever you're based. As Arnaud de Rosnay once said (Google him if you're not familiar): "All you need is water and a little wind."

I acknowledge for some it'll always be high winds and waves that really get the juices flowing. But most of us appreciate this type of scenario is usually fewer and farther between during summer in the UK. And in many cases travelling will be required. Sometimes, as much as you yearn for something, the harder it is to come by.

When I was younger I would regularly feel frustration creep in due to the lack of full power wind. My backyard can be as fun as anywhere (IMO) when the stars align. But we do get extended periods of drought. Finding other interests – such as SUP – have helped alleviate the strain between 20+ knot sessions. Trips to warm and breezy climes also help. The biggest thing, however, is to embrace the lighter blow side of the sport and these new concepts we have available that make this possible.

Learning to foil (see AHD article last issue – and stay tuned for foiling part two) has helped me look at certain conditions in a different way while getting to test the new crop of hard rail, performance blow up windy boards has added another dimension. And I'm perfectly fine with floating around ala windSUP style, just enjoying being out on the water. I'm even contemplating getting a long/race board for some coastal cruising – why we riders don't do more of this I'm not sure?

TEZ PLAVENIEKS
MAY 2017



Mark Kay, UK race
board champion

The benefits of light wind sailing have been promoted until the cows come home and I get it's a hard sell for those who just want a blasting fix. Maybe it's age but you can't make it windy, so therefore take what's on offer – the biggest surprise maybe how much you enjoy sub-10 knot sessions.

Also try the new breed of windy kit – foils and inflatables. Plenty of brands selling their wares are keen to get riders on board. Hit up one of the many demo days around the UK and have a go for yourself. Even if these offshoots aren't for you there'll be other kit to dabble with – some of which may provide the solution you've been looking for.

Giving credit

Before we crack on with the rest of this issue of Windsurfing UK we need to give credit where credit's due. In our previous mag we ran an article about fin tuning for wave boards, courtesy of Black Project's Chris Freeman. Unfortunately the opening shot failed to acknowledge Dayanidhi Das, owner of www.1morephotography.com, for the sick pic of Chris projecting skywards off a Ho'okipa lip. You can rest assured those responsible have been cast into the dungeon far below WSUK Towers and forced to contemplate their actions, fed only on bread and water. Just joking! To see more of Dayanidhi's awesome images hit up his website. If that doesn't inspire you then we don't know what to say...

Enjoy this issue, love your time on the water – especially now the weather's improving – and who knows, we may see you out there. As always WSUK's doors are open for article suggestions so feel free to give me a holla with any ideas – tez@windsurfingukmag.co.uk. OK, on with the show!

RRD



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KUROSH KIANI
RUSSELL GROVES
MARK DOWSON
ANDY CHAMBERS
PETE DAVIS
AXEL RESE
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JANE FAUGHMAN
TOM PIDDEN
SIMON WINKLEY
SIMON BORNHOFT
and everyone else
who submitted
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DESIGN: 2b Graphic Design

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WindsurfingUK magazine is all about sailor to sailor dialogue: a sailor's magazine written by sailors. Next issue is August 2017 with a deadline of submissions on June 20th. Technical Information: Contributions as a Microsoft Word file emailed to Tez@windsurfingukmag.co.uk, images should be hi-resolution. WindsurfingUK magazine encourages contributions of any nature but reserves the right to edit to the space available. Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the publishing parent company, 2b Graphic Design Limited. The publishing of an advertisement in WindsurfingUK magazine does not necessarily mean that the parent company, 2b Graphic Design Limited, endorse the company, item or service advertised. All material in WindsurfingUK magazine is strictly copyright and all rights are reserved. Reproduction without prior permission from the editor is forbidden.

WORDS: SANDY CLUNAS

PICS: HEIDI JABBARI, CHRISTIE BUSHNELL AND KITTY GREGORELLI

WHERE DO YOU HEAD IF YOU'VE SPENT THE WHOLE SUMMER UNDER A SCORCHIO GREEK SUN, WHERE WIND IS SERVED DAILY (WELL, MOST AFTERNOON'S AT LEAST) AND YOU NEED YOUR ENDLESS WINDSURFING SUMMER OF FUN TO CONTINUE? THE ANSWER? CAPE TOWN, SA, OF COURSE! SANDY CLUNAS SPILLS THE BEANS.

Winter can be a daunting time for us windsurfers. Sure the wind picks up, but it gets colder, darker and everything just becomes a bit greyer and more miserable. For myself and the rest of us that choose to spend our summer's sunning ourselves and sailing in the clear waters of the Ionian Sea it's even more daunting. So, there is only one real place that offers everything a windsurfer could want during the darkest months of the northern hemisphere. And that place is Cape Town my friends.

I migrated south for 12 weeks from the 6th of December '16 till the 1st of March '17. It's the perfect amount of time to really enjoy everything Cape Town has to offer, and it gets you away from the worst months on the UK calendar.



CAPE TOWN

WINTER SUN
WINDSURFING
FUN

IN THE UK'S OFF SEASON



About 24 hours, four films and two cardboard meals later I arrived at Cape Town International Airport. From there it's a short half hour drive to the guest house we were staying at in Table View, an area right by most of the main beaches for wave sailing and 'the lake' for freestyle is a mere two minutes down the road. In order for all these spots to work though you need the legendary wind, affectionately known as the Cape Doctor, to blow through in the correct south-easterly direction.

As we all woke up on our first proper day we were greeted with cloudy, showery weather with a north-westerly wind direction. To the uninitiated this would seem a bad thing, however, due to local knowledge we knew of a spot about an hour and 20 minutes inland called Brandvlei. It's a large lake formed by a dam in the middle of the mountains and with this direction you get consistent strong winds which combine with knee to waist high chop making it a great place to bang out some moves. If there was ever a place to get some airtime on the shakas, it's here.



Our first road trip took us there and we scored it! It was perfect 4.4m, 4.0m full power freestyle. After taking the scenic drive back we landed at a bar on the seafront by our house to watch the legendary Cape Town sunset. A perfect way to welcome us to the mother city and really set the standard for what would be an incredible trip.

From day two the 'Doctor' returned in full force, and pretty much stuck around for the next 82 days! The first port of call each morning was the lake or 'the vlei' as it is the first place to get windy. It's a great spot with a grassy rigging area, shower facilities and a cafe. The conditions are quite similar to Vassiliki only a wee bit choppier and gustier! I guess this is what makes it such a cracking training ground for so many of the PWA freestylers that come here – it's not an easy place to sail. We used to say: 'if you can do it here then you can do it anywhere.' Despite this though, sailing in my boardies with all my best mates and the sun on my face makes it very hard to complain, as you can imagine. As the day wears on the wind just gets more and more powerful and around 2pm the lake becomes nearly unsailable. I weigh nearly 90kg and I can barely hold onto my 4.0m by this time!

"If there was ever a place to get some airtime on the shakas, it's here"





“From ripped sails, cracked boards and snapped masts all our gear took a bit of a beating.”



After a pit stop at home (or Burger King!) to get some lunch, it was time to swap out our freestyle gear for the wave stuff. What's odd is that I'd spend all morning sailing in my boardies, absolutely fine, before donning the rubber. The cold Atlantic takes no prisoners. In fact, I wear the same wetsuit in Cape Town as I do at home in Scotland! It's a strange feeling rigging up in the car park in 30 degrees only to sweat your way into a 5/3 steamer and get down to the sea as fast as possible to cool down.

My personal favourite of these wave spots is Big Bay. This legendary location feels like the centre of windsurfing in Cape Town. The car park is always rammed with small VW Golf's crumbling under the weight of kit.

The bay itself is enclosed by rocks so the surf is usually a bit cleaner. When the waves were small this was the best spot for busting out some freestyle on the sea, my favourite kind of windsurfing. I had a couple of really memorable sessions at sunset or 'golden hour' throwing air flakas, big shakas and trying paskos with all the boys. It was the most fun I've ever had windsurfing and was perfectly followed up by a couple of sundowners in one of the great bars overlooking the bay.

When the waves were a bit bigger though it was all about riding and jumping. This year all of us in the Club Vass crew sailed out the front of a restaurant called Doodles. It tended to be quite messy and isn't great for riding but you could get some great ramps for jumping, which is what most of us all prefer anyway. There were a few sick sessions with everyone going for pushies and backies. It's a lot of fun seeing all your mates flying through the air and whether they stomped the move or crashed it, it was always entertaining.

With these crashes however, there are always casualties. Some people, like myself, ended up with a trip to hospital and a bad concussion. Some others just ended up with a lot of broken kit! From ripped sails, cracked boards and snapped masts all our gear took a bit of a beating. I think at one point we had the 'hybrid' mast in play – half Tushingham 400 and half Gaastra 370 I believe! Poor Bruce sailed on that thing for the last week of the trip. Any notion of being upset about kit being broken swiftly disappeared after the afternoon session though as thoughts turned to empty stomachs and dry mouths.

Once we'd picked up a crate or two of Castle Light and a couple of kg's worth of steak it was back to the house to be met with the smoky aroma of the Braai being lit. Braai is the South African word for BBQ which they take very, very seriously. It always involved a lot of food, beers and most importantly, banter about the best crashes, stacks and fails of the day.



We did have a small period of no wind in the middle of the trip – about 10 days of on and off sailing. Not that we complained. It gave us a chance to recuperate, rest and explore the amazing city. There's just so much to see and do. These days usually started with a surf at one of the beaches. My personal favourite was Derdesteen which was five mins drive up the coast. As an exceptionally average surfer I really enjoyed the chilled out beach breaks. If anything my surfing improved more than my windsurfing this trip!

South Africa is famous for wine, and wine tasting in the vineyards surrounding Cape Town is a must. One day we had a tour of a crocodile farm which yes, is as scary and amazing as it sounds, before heading to a vineyard and gorging on cheap vino and cheese, before ending with yet another Braai at a friend's villa in the middle of one said vineyard. Not a bad day all in.

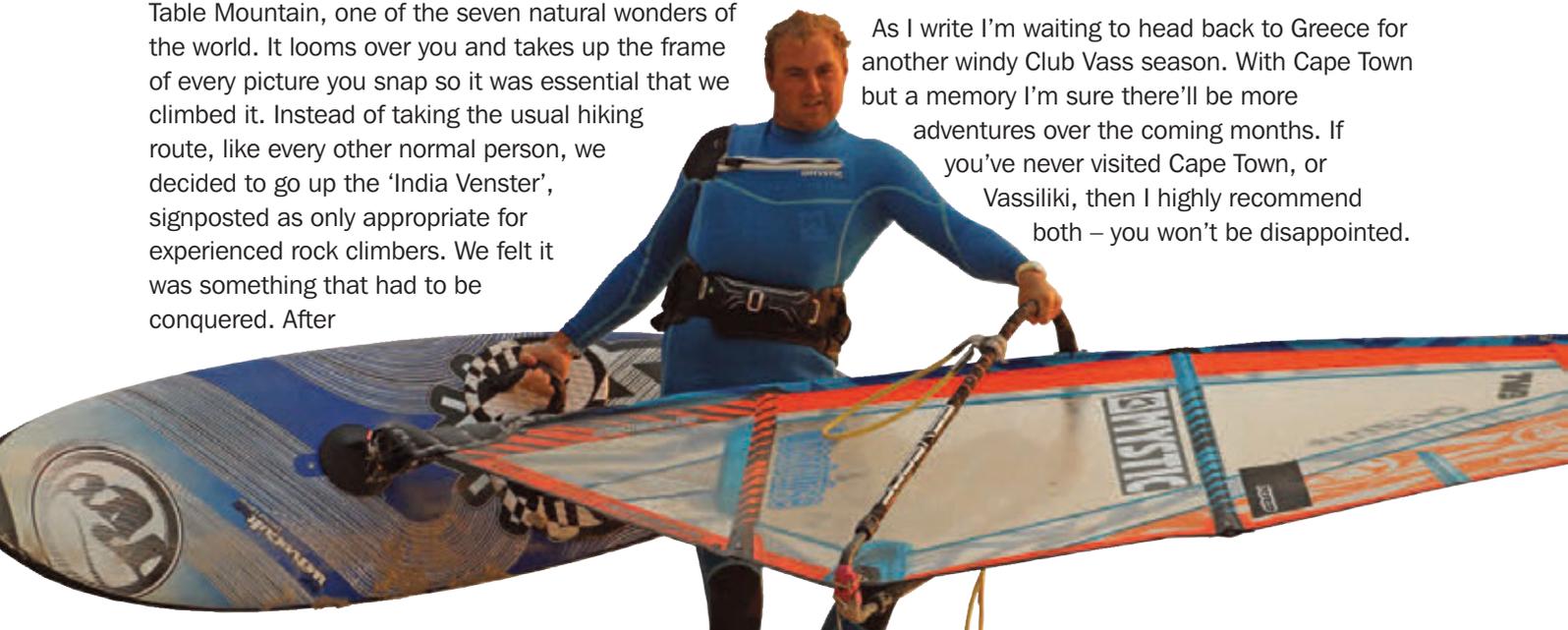
Wherever you are in Cape Town you can always see Table Mountain, one of the seven natural wonders of the world. It looms over you and takes up the frame of every picture you snap so it was essential that we climbed it. Instead of taking the usual hiking route, like every other normal person, we decided to go up the 'India Venster', signposted as only appropriate for experienced rock climbers. We felt it was something that had to be conquered. After

three hours clambering up sheer rock faces, using chains and metal rungs in the midday sun, we were greeted by flat plains of the summit. The view was definitely worth the blood, sweat and tears and the rotating cable car on the way down was sick! It sure beat walking down in the dark like the previous year.

It wouldn't be a Club Vass trip without a few parties and Cape Town really delivered. We had a couple of sick nights at Shimmy's Beach Club which is a massive outdoor club on the waterfront showcasing live DJs with a sand dancefloor. These always ended with a fair amount of chaos, the less said about this the better!

It was always typical the days after these nights were the windiest and whoever managed to make it out would always return home giving it the big one about how epic it was and how we had missed out. But it didn't matter, because we knew that the mother city would deliver something just as epic the following day.

As I write I'm waiting to head back to Greece for another windy Club Vass season. With Cape Town but a memory I'm sure there'll be more adventures over the coming months. If you've never visited Cape Town, or Vassiliki, then I highly recommend both – you won't be disappointed.



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Photo: John Carter

16 PROFILE PETE DAVIS



THE OTHER HALF PETE DAVIS

WORDS: PETE DAVIS

PICS: PETE DAVIS, DAVE WHITE, BARRY RIVETT

MANY WILL BE FAMILIAR WITH PETE DAVIS – OTHER HALF OF WORLD CHAMP SPEED SAILOR ZARA (WHO WE PROFILED IN OUR VERY FIRST ISSUE), ACTIVE UKWA BOARD MEMBER AND ORGANISER OF WEYMOUTH SPEED WEEK. He also has a spot on the World Speed Sailing Record Council (The WSSRC). But there's more to Pete than simply being part of Zara's entourage. Pete is a long time windsurfer himself, who's had significant success over the years. No slouch across all areas of sailing we thought it high time the spotlight was shined on the man himself – over to Pete...





“I am still officially the 6th fastest man in the UK and up until 2015 I was 28th in the world over 500m.”

Olympian David Bedford

I was introduced to windsurfing in 1985 by an old mate of mine, David Bedford, who is a retired Olympic runner. He bought a board on a whim and we both learned together. Not sure if he is still windsurfing, I doubt it! But I really got the bug when I joined Brogborough Windsurfing Club in Bedford where I honed my windsurfing skills. It's miles from the sea but one of the most active clubs in the country.

I still love the sport with a passion, but not so much the competition side now. In the past I have competed at National level in slalom and raceboard. But speed is what I was good at – competing in the ISWC World Championships (and tour) from 2005-2011. I am still officially the 6th fastest man in the UK and up until 2015 I was 28th in the world over 500m. I am a rubbish wave sailor but it's the wave board that I choose to be on most of the time now.



Moving to the West Country to marry Zara in '96 we live in Clevedon on the Bristol Channel. We can windsurf from the house but conditions are much better a few mins away at Weston-Super-Mare and Burnham-on-Sea. If you ignore the brown colour of the water both are great bump and jump wave spots. Downside is the massive tide. We only get a few hours either side of high and it doesn't work that well with the wind from a SE direction.

The years have been kind and I am very lucky to have windsurfed in many amazing places around the world from South Africa to Australia. But number one has to be Maui. For its beauty and the wind/wave conditions it is still the mecca of windsurfing.

Back in the day (early 90s) I spent a lot of time training in Lanzarote. We were slalom sailing with local hotshots Bernardo and Nino Navaro at Costa Tequise when we were joined by the newly formed PWA racers all arriving for an upcoming race. It was like a who's who of windsurfing. Anders Bringdal and Bjorn Dunkerbeck were blasting around, showing off, and having a great day. The bonus came later that evening when we were in a local bar. Up on the big screen they had been filming us all and there I was, with my hero's, laying down gybes and grinning from ear to ear.

"The best part was just being out there with mates pushing the limits and having fun."

El Medano

I have just come back from El Medano in Tenerife where we spend our winters. Whitey, Jamie Dodds and Colin Dixon were all staying with us and John Skye popped over for the day from his home in Gran Canaria. We all had a great wave session up at 'the wall'. It was some of the best swells we have had for a while and we made the most of it. But the best part was just being out there with mates pushing the limits and having fun.

Without sounding smug winters over the last few years in Medano have been awesome. In 2016 we admittedly had wave kit from 3.4m to slalom 8.6m, which meant we sailed every day, bar six days in the three months we were there. Can't ask for better than that!

It is a truly amazing place to windsurf and very close for UK sailors with cheap flights a plenty. You have three areas to choose from in Medano, south bay, which is where most of the schools are and where the world's best slalom sailors come to train over the winter with TWS. The wall, which is up-wind of south bay, is the best for wave riding and super safe. Then there is Cabezo where we have a house. This is the location for the PWA Wave Championships. Great surf and good for jumping but not for the faint hearted. It has a nasty rock called Godzilla that has eaten more fins and boards than you can shake a stick at. We love it. There is always something to do with good surf/SUPing, cycling and mountain biking. In addition our dog, Ziggy, loves being a Spanish perros!

Really looking forward to this season. Zara has a lot planned which I will be helping with. She is currently taking part in the La Palme WSSRC Speed World Record attempt in the south of France. We did two weeks there on our drive home from Tenerife to the UK. The wind angle was not the best so all the competitors were well off their best but the wind can get strong. The jury is out and we are on standby until the end of April so let's see what we get.

World Speed Championships

With my ISWC president's hat on, we have the World Speed Championships in Fuerteventura, June, which is always an exciting event with a good showing of Brits. It's also great to have Luderitz back on the calendar in October. Closer to home, I am an instructor and race coach for my local T15 squad – the Axbridge Animals – and we are hoping to repeat the success of last year where we won the National T15 Club Championships. No pressure then!

I have been a board member of the UKWA since 2005 and my main involvement is speed sailing. I have been organising the UKWA Speed Championships since 2006 which is part of Weymouth Speed Week. More recently I have been involved in the BSA Slalom Series – doing the marketing and PR for them. Producing a promo video for each event is a big job, but it's been worth it, swelling the numbers to almost twice we had a few years ago. It's also a much better return for sponsors who bank roll events. Lastly, the part I really enjoy, is organising the annual UKWA Windsurfer of the Year Awards where a nominee is picked from five disciplines before a winner is voted on. This has been a great success and highlighted the fantastic work done by the UKWA and also the talent we have here in the UK.

Numbers on the water are holding well and as I said before slalom sailing is definitely on the up. The sad part is they are the same people that have been windsurfing for a long time and we are all getting older. I would encourage all experienced windsurfers to get involved with their local T15 club – if there isn't one, start one! The satisfaction I get from working with kids and seeing them progress is fantastic – they are the future of our sport!

Encouraging youths to take up the sport is a good start. But we all know someone who used to windsurf and has given it up. Get in touch and get them to come and have a go again. The kit from all manufactures has gotten so much better in recent years. It's easy to use, lighter and faster. Better still, bring them along to a UKWA comp or events like the NWF and get them to join in.



I personally have not tried foiling but my mate Farrell O'Shea has a couple and encouraged me to have a go, which I will do soon. They will become more mainstream with racers and organisers keen to use them in lighter winds. The big benefit is lower wind speeds you can use them in. But with the skills needed I personally don't think it's going to tempt new people into the sport. It will help the profile of windsurfing though as they are definitely attention grabbing.

Encouraging new people

I'm a BIG, BIG fan of windSUP. I have an O'Shea inflatable and it's great to get out in light winds and improve your rig and board handling skills. If you want to encourage new people into our sport these are just the ticket. They don't take up much space, being the size of a big rucksack, so people can chuck it in the boot of their car with no need for a roof rack or a big van.

Simmer Style sails have supported me for about 10 years now and I really rate them. The Icons are perfect for me – loads of low down power for my large frame but still controllable and light on the wave. Zara has a set of speed and slalom Simmer race sails, which I nick occasionally. They are super-fast and rock solid, especially when you combine them with her RRD X-Fire boards. I am sure she has an unfair advantage with them. We both use RRD race and wave boards with my favourite being the RRD Freestyle Wave 104L which makes me look OK – no mean feat. It has plenty of volume but turns like an 80L – I love it!

“I’m a BIG, BIG fan of windSUP. I have an O’Shea inflatable and it’s great to get out in light winds and improve your rig and board handling skills.”



22 PROFILE PETE DAVIS

My fave old bit of windsurfing kit is the Arrows extension. We have had a set for almost 20 years now and they're still going strong. I wish they still made them! New gear has to be my AL360 wave booms. They're soooo strong and light and if you haven't tried the new smaller diameter tear drop shape you are missing out. They are so easy on the hands and I couldn't imagine going back to a standard style boom.

I am semi-retired now (old). We still have a small property development company that keeps me honest. But it gives me a lot of freedom to travel and do the odd bit of windsurfing.

We windsurfers are always trying not to commit too much just in case it's windy. The 'law of sod' always makes it blowy when you can't get out of a work commitment or on a Saturday when it's your best friend's wedding. My mate Paul Burgess, in West Kirby, has the best job for windsurfing. He is a tree surgeon and if it's windy he has no choice but to ring the customer, explain it's too dangerous to go up a tree in such winds, and then head straight to the beach! But we can't all be tree surgeons so try and find the best work balance you can. Remember, you will never see on any tombstone: 'I wish I had spent more time in the office'.

Windsurfing is a fun sport so don't make it a chore. Secondly go on a windsurfing holiday somewhere warm and breezy – ideally with a good coach to hand. This will turbo boost your learning and improve skills. Finally, when buying your own kit purchase the best and lightest gear you can afford. It will make such a difference to your progression.



I'm still learning! That is one of the beauties of our sport – you never stop learning. But the best advice I had was the 'head leads the way'. When gybing look out of the turn – it still holds true!

Windsurfing is fantastic. It has taken me all over the world and I've made some great friends from all corners of the globe. Learning to windsurf is not easy. When you see a windsurfer out there gybing and blasting about you know that has taken them a good deal of time and effort to get there. That for me makes windsurfers special.

Thanks so much to the people and sponsors that have supported me over the last 30 plus years. Special thanks must go to Farrel O'Shea, (Dave) Whitey, Graeme Fuller, Ceri Williams, Anders Bringdal, Allan Cross and of course my lovely wife Zara – your counsel has been invaluable. Thanks must also go to the windsurfing industry that has given so much to the events and projects that I have been involved in to make the sport we love better. As well as the aforementioned I must add Nik Baker, Tushingam and Tris Best from The OTC have all been great supporters of what we do.



“The 'law of sod' always makes it blowy when you can't get out of a work commitment or on a Saturday when it's your best friend's wedding.”



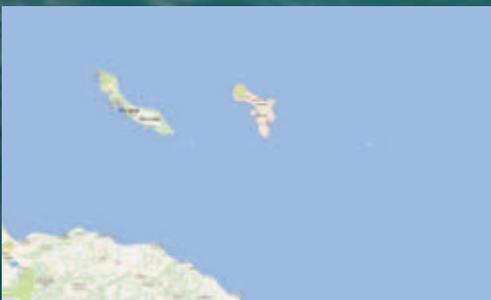
DEEPEST. DARKEST. DORSET.





BONAIRE

AN INSPIRATION



Bonaire, an island municipality of the Netherlands, lies off Venezuela's coast in the southern Caribbean. Its reef-lined coast is protected by Bonaire National Marine Park. Beyond its rich marine life, the island shelters lizards, donkeys and birds within its immense Washington Slagbaai National Park, marked by beaches, lagoons, caverns and desert-like hills.

<https://goo.gl/maps/BvfbPPmnfm22>

WORDS: DANIELLE LUCAS

PICS: GET WINDSURFING AND LACBAYVILLA.COM

WE WERE LOOKING FOR IDEAS FOR A NEW FLAT WATER LOCATION OVER THE WINTER PERIOD AND AFTER LOTS OF ENCOURAGEMENT, WE FINALLY TOOK THE ADVICE OF THE HIBDIGE FAMILY (WHO KINDLY LET US STAY IN THEIR STUNNING VILLA, LACBAYVILLA.COM, OVERLOOKING BEAUTIFUL LAC BAY) AND BOOKED OUR FLIGHTS FOR A FIVE-WEEK TRIP TO BONAIRE OVER WINTER 2014/15. Little did we know how special it would turn out to be, and that we would spend the next couple of winters in Bonaire, extending our trip a little longer each time. We are currently planning this year's trip as the desire to return only gets greater and greater.



New flat water winter locations

Until recent years, Bonaire, a small island in the Dutch Antilles, has attracted few UK windsurfers, perhaps due to our desire for direct flights and because we tend to choose the Caribbean Islands which have a history with the UK such as Barbados, Tobago, Trinidad and Jamaica. So, Bonaire has been off the radar, and the stunning blue water of Lac Bay, its consistent trade winds, which makes it an incredibly beautiful spot ideal for beginners and intermediates has been kept a secret.

Upon arriving we were not to be disappointed, winter in Bonaire means 28 degrees air and water temperature, steady trade winds every day and the stunning crystal clear shallow lagoon for everyone to enjoy, practising and improving their windsurfing skills in an incredibly safe, forgiving environment.

Aside from the fantastic conditions, which are just beckoning you to get out onto the water every day, whatever the wind strength, something which makes Bonaire even more of a unique spot is that it has an amazing mixture of windsurfers encouraging and helping each other to enjoy the best sport in the world.

You are probably thinking, I've heard this all before...

You are possibly in one of two camps; reminiscing about a past windsurfing life that you believe just isn't possible anymore, or a dedicated windsurfer pushing to improve and learn that next move. Testing your limits is part of what makes us human right? Well as we found out, the limits in Bonaire are really rather different.

Windsurfing has so much to offer: being at one with nature, a great challenge (varying conditions mean that what you can achieve one day might not be so easy as the wind or chop builds) as well as the obvious physical and health benefits. There's all the other stuff too, which can be really difficult to explain, which helps us all to connect and which keeps so many of us hooked. Despite all this windsurfing struggles to attract newcomers and it is even harder to encourage retirees and to convince them that getting out on the water is possible and really very good for you: fresh air, balance, dexterity, fitness, fun, etc.

Bonaire is a truly fabulous location and there are many people who have inspired us, opening our eyes to how much is really possible when you have the right conditions. Three people in particular come to mind:

So, there's an American guy, in his 60s, who last winter was cycling most days to the beach towing



“Testing your limits is part of what makes us human, right? Well, as we found out, the limits in Bonaire are really rather different.”

his trailer full of windsurfing equipment. He has something in it for most conditions, so he can maximise his time on the water, and often sails all day. That's dedication right? Now factor in that this guy has a prosthetic leg, one which he uses for walking, running and cycling (his 'everyday' leg), and another he brings to the beach in his backpack, his 'windsurfing leg' which he designed and made to work with the boards he's also adapted just to allow him to get out and enjoy the wind. He made quite a few prototypes before he came up with one that worked, but it really impressed us that he didn't give up and it doesn't stop him from going windsurfing.







Then there's Marianne, from Petersfield, who I had the pleasure of coaching over a 3 month period. I helped her use her harness confidently, progress to using the footstraps and enjoy planing with control. That might not sound so difficult, until I reveal that up until four years ago Marianne was unable to do any form of exercise due to illness. Now in her 50s and having only 50% of her lungs, she helped us take belief to the next level. After every run out and back she has to hug her board and catch her breath, before she can even listen to my feedback or next instructions, her lungs desperate for air. However, Marianne is keener than anyone to get on the water and progress, and Bonaire allows her to do this safely.

And finally there's Trevor, also in his 60s, who has been sailing in Bonaire for years, but with no meniscus in his knee (and unknowingly suffering a serious heart defect) he thought that his days on the water were limited. However, having had both his heart and knee fixed he knew that Bonaire was the perfect place to build up his



“Lac Bay provides an amazing training ground for professional windsurfers. It’s not uncommon to be sailing with slalom and freestyle world champions.”

strength and confidence to enjoy windsurfing once again and is now seen thundering across the Bay trying to beat his speed record.

Bonaire offers the opportunity for people of all ages to enjoy windsurfing: you will see young children learning to hook in and blast around on their own, local kids learning freestyle or taking up slalom on a mixture of incredibly dated, incredibly worn out equipment, and also holding down more modern, huge fully cammed sails. Then at the other end of the spectrum older sailors in their 70s and beyond are on the water every day loving it. You can frequently enjoy watching an



American couple, both in their 70s, enjoying sailing together across the bay, practising duck gybes, carving 360s and other graceful manoeuvres. You will also see the achievements of men and women of all ages who, maybe for confidence reasons or low personal strength and/or stamina, never imagined they would be able to learn our sport.

Then there are the pro's. Lac Bay provides an amazing training ground for professional Windsurfers. You will find yourself sailing with Slalom and Freestyle World Champions and often without knowing it people find themselves chatting to windsurf heroes on the beach, sharing the enjoyment of their sessions or excitement for the next one.

Bonaire's conditions make the impossible seem all that more possible, and it's wonderful people like these that are an inspiration to us and make our work so much fun.. However if this doesn't make you want to give it a go then seeing really is believing and hopefully we will see you out there.



We have now made many new friends on Bonaire, every year the windsurf family gets bigger and includes people of all ages and nationalities. Jibe City Windsurf centre not only provides great rental equipment, but a great place to socialise, meet other windsurfers and create friendships, share tales of success and to receive or provide encouragement and support when it becomes a struggle or frustration.

When looking for a winter destination we never dreamt we would find something so much more than just great winds and flat water. On Bonaire we found a stunning

location packed with wildlife, we found inspiration and we found encouragement. Windsurfing is a sport where we all need this so much and so this is perhaps one of the biggest reasons we will be returning to Bonaire in December again to continue to enjoy this special location and help others to enjoy it with us too.

Come and join us if you can. Find out more at www.getwindsurfing.com



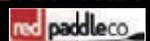
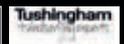


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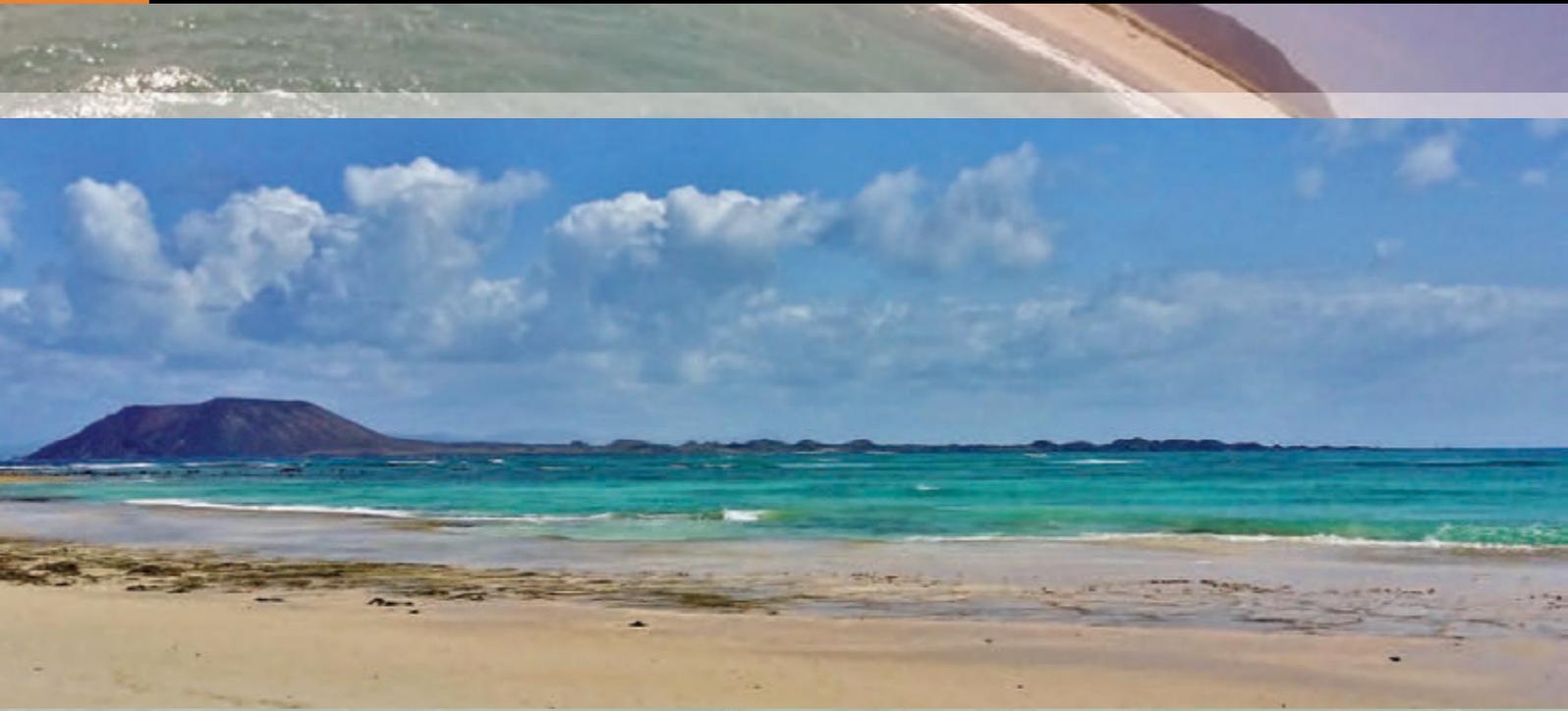
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32 FEATURE FLAG BEACH





ESCAPING WINTER TO OCEAN BLUES

WORDS AND PICS: WINDSURFING UK

WE'RE A FUNNY BUNCH US WINDSURFERS. FOR A SEEMINGLY OPEN MINDED TRIBE, FULL OF BRIMMING OPTIMISM (YOU KIND OF HAVE TO BE WHEN YOUR CHOSEN HOBBY REVOLVES AROUND MOTHER NATURE'S EVER CHANGING MOODS), CHOOSING WHERE TO SPEND OUR HARD EARNED FREE TIME CAN BE HEADACHE INDUCING. CHECKLIST AS FOLLOWS (FOR THE P FAMILY AT LEAST).

- A. WIND = ESSENTIAL.**
- B. WAVES = YES PLEASE (BUT FLAT WATER OK).**
- C. SUNSHINE AND WARMTH = BADLY NEEDED.**
- D. TODDLER BEACHES AND WARM WATER = DEFINITELY!**

Seasonality then comes into play - it's no good wanting a Greek wind odyssey when (in general) Med locations are summer destinations only. So, when the chance arises to escape the tail end of UK winter where do you head? For us it was an easy choice...

Tried and tested

The Canary Islands have been a winter windy bolthole for years. Many a wave warrior has seen fit to up sticks and bomb off to the island of 'Great Adventure' – Fuerteventura (literally translated from the corrupted French term). Fuerteventura can also be translated as 'Strong Wind' by some – we'll take the latter!

All the islands receive a healthy amount of juice during the off season - it's very rare for the Canaries to be flat at this time of year. Unfortunately most spots carry a health warning making them 'no go' for the majority. If it's not the risk of being pummelled by super hollow, cylindrical surf then there's real danger of being dragged unceremoniously across sharp lava reef – equally unappealing. For sure, there are a handful of 'beachies' available but even these can wallop given half the chance. With windy kit in the mix it becomes even less inviting, especially if you're a sailor still progressing through the ranks.



Possibly known more to kitesurfers these days Fuerteventura's east coast situated Flag Beach is still a great choice for a windsurf break mid-winter. Summertime does see the most consistent blow but it's the out of season months where riders will more than likely encounter challenging, but not life threatening, rippable waves. Add to the mix versatility - freeriders and freestylers will also find favour with Flag - fantastic water colour/clarity, stunningly unique scenery and you've potentially got yourself a great little tried and tested winter windsurf escape. It's also not extortionate so fairly friendly on your wallet.

Long standing

Ben Thomas (owner) and his Flag Beach brand have been in place since the 80s. Having discovered this windsurfing idyll he decided why not introduce the rest of the windy world to his vision of paradise.

It hasn't been all plain sailing (forgive the pun). Initially Corralejo was deemed too far flung a destination by critics but more recently pleasing the powers that be has been at the forefront of minds.

On more than one occasion the Flag Beach operation has been given little to short notice and had to be removed from the beach due to local authority rulings. But true grit always shines through. With a show must go on mentality toughing it out during these testing times has brought the Flag Beach centre to where it's at now – a fully functioning set up just a few short steps from the water's edge.

The sailing

But back to the sailing... After trudging 150m from roadside parking riders will get a clearer picture of conditions. Gazing seaward, over the brow of undulating sand dunes, turquoise blue water stretches off towards Lobos. If you've timed it correctly then wind

will be puffing left to right with flashes of sail and kit colour dancing in the sunlight.

Across the channel is Lobos island while in the distance Fuerte's sibling, Lanzarote, rises from the Atlantic. Breeze (the Passat) puffs between the gap created by Lobos and Fuerteventura. Upwind is reef and any swell unloads its juice directly onto the coral. There's an outside shelf that gets pretty big on solid days with the inside still holding some size. A small channel keyholes the reef next to shore and it's here you'll find the kitesurfing launch.

Downwind, and in front of the Flag Beach centre, is where windies dip a toe. At low tide you can walk right in, taking note of the shoreward reef plates jutting from the sand. These are pretty flat and don't have any sharp nasties lurking (urchins). That said you can still stub a toe and/or ding a fin/board if you clatter into it.

With a flooding tide the reef plates are covered. The launch is still the same but there's usually more shore dump in the mix. Any competent rider, however, will be able to navigate their way through the flotsam, beach start and blast straight out to sea.

Heading for the horizon you'll note a large lump of wave unloading roughly in the middle part of the bay. This is super fun to boost all manner of aerial antics off with little fear of too severe a pounding. If you stack it the wave backs off quickly as it hits deep water allowing sailors to compose themselves and waterstart. Out back the water gets lumpy as rolling ocean swell follows the coastline. It's fun to gybe onto a fat face, the wave blasting riders back down into the trough full power.

Cutting upwind you can ride some of the breaking waves closer to the reef. We'd err on the side of caution here and wait for higher water, otherwise lurking coral heads could potentially rip off your fin.

Heading towards the beach there's a beautiful flat zone that seems to benefit from funnelling breeze. For those into aerial contortionism (read freestyle) this is your spot. Alternatively crank a gybe and head back out for another run.

Lastly there's a downwind reef that isn't sailable. It's pretty obvious, with fangs of lava protruding skyward, so keep well clear as it takes no prisoners.

The kitesurfing element

Flag Beach is a place many visiting and local kitesurfers head for. As such you'll never be alone on the water. There was never any issue, however, as kites generally stay further upwind, and even if you fancy playing in Flag's waves then there's plenty of courtesy shown. As anyone will know when going afloat keeping eyes and ears open is a must – as long as this is adhered to then you'll have no problem.

Kit and other stuff

Flag Beach offer a variety of windsurfing equipment choices featuring bang up to date Fanatic boards and North rigs. As we were nearing the end of our trip the crew had started receiving shiny new 2017 kit with some of it straight out of the wrapper and onto the water – there's no messing about! For anyone needing to sort wetties and harnesses this can be arranged onsite with the FB team.

Should the wind not blow then fear not as there's plenty of other entertainment to keep you occupied. Centre side and guests will find catamarans, kayaks and snorkelling paraphernalia. Also, this being the Canaries, there's always the option for a little surf – be that trad style or with the aid of a paddle. We were kindly allowed to take away Fanatic SUPs which were put to good use in a variety of flat water and wave spots. Be aware, however, if you do the same then it's your responsibility to take care of equipment.

Corralejo

Staying in the north Corralejo is pretty much the main tourist hotspot on the island. It's a five minute drive (give or take) from town to Flag or roughly 20 mins walk. A whole plethora of accommodation types are available to suit all budgets. The Flag Beach guys have their own and can arrange this for your stay.

In terms of after hour's ents you'll find bars, restaurants – traditional and not so authentic – as well as obligatory clubs where you can rave it up until the wee hours (if you wish). There's also a water park (open in summer) and various play areas for kids.

Over the years Corralejo has become rather built up, but it doesn't take long to get away from the hubbub. Even with large volumes of tourists on the island we were able to find our own space. Numbers increase for high season, however, so keep this in mind.

Summing up

As a winter windsurfing bolt hole, with the added diversity of being able to offer other sports, Flag Beach, and Fuerte as a whole, is a good choice for many. For families who enjoy frolics in the ocean there's plenty to keep your little ones amused while mum and dad take turns going for a blast, paddle or surf. There may be more consistently windy spots available globally but for an easy to access location, that's generally hassle free, Flag will tick the boxes for many.

Big thanks to Ben and the Flag Beach team who helped out massively with this article. Also props to Toby at Handiworld who kindly provided the inflatable roof racks we used extensively during our stay. Check out www.flagbeach.com and www.handiworld.com for more.



36 FEATURE SELFIES



Of course you cannot beat having your mate take proper shots from the beach with a decent DSLR. This photograph of Steve Thorp was taken by Steve Laddiman on our recent day trip.

THE ULTIMATE WINDSURFING

SELFIE

SHOOT YOURSELF POV STYLE



WORDS: MARK DOWSON

PICS: MARK DOWSON,
STEVE THORP, STEVE LADDIMAN

THE WINDSURFING SELFIE SEEMS TO BE SYNONYMOUS WITH THE GOPRO ACTION CAM FISH-EYE TYPE SHOT AND IT IS PURE MARMITE, IN SO MUCH AS PEOPLE SEEM TO EITHER LOVE THEM OR HATE THEM (ESPECIALLY LONG, LONG VIDEOS). PERSONALLY, I'M FIRMLY IN THE 'LOVE 'EM' CAMP, AND THIS IS WHY...

It's a creative challenge to get that unusual or perfect shot, just like the windsurfing journey of gaining skills and experience. Changing the angles, camera resolutions, light conditions, different mounting points and systems. It's exciting when after many, many attempts you get something special. Something to use as your screen saver, or to simply post on Facebook and share a really special session with your mates. POV selfies also serve to record the sport you love for fireside reminiscing along with phrases such as, 'Eeeh when I were a lad..', or perhaps not. (POV cams have also revolutionised action sports media. They offer a great way to gain necessary on water shots during equipment testing. Here at Windsurfing UK, and over at our sister publication, SUP Mag UK, we use action cams extensively – ed).



During a recent trip we were lucky to score some sun, wind and waves this spring and the shots were taken at Redcar using the new K4 harness mount. Steve has used the clone tool in Photoshop to remove the carbon pole in some images which makes them look all the sweeter.



This was taken with the faithful old Flymount, which is easy to use and, for me at least, has provided the most useful 'technique footage.'

Secondly I have found it invaluable in analysing my own personal technique (or lack of), especially the 'frame by frame type'. Looking really carefully and considering body, hand and leg positions I have found myself understanding, and dare I say performance has been taken even further after looking through footage with a coach. I prefer to set the camera on video and then use the GoPro software to extract both the selfie shot and make smaller clips for movies and technique analysis.

Initially, when I first began, I focused mainly on jumping shots – back loop and forward loops. More recently I have started to obsess over getting better wave riding images. For me the challenge is still there, so typical with windsurfing, there's a lot of room for personal improvement and trying to get a decent top turn image with some spray or an aerial would be jolly nice.





Steve Thorp

One of the people who ‘snaps’ a consistently high quality ‘windsurfing selfie’ is K4 fins owner/Ezzy team rider Steve Thorp. His high level of sailing obviously helps here but he has also introduced an innovative new clip and harness mount, which I have been lucky enough to use recently. This nifty bit of kit attaches to any harness in seconds and removes the need for holes to be drilled as per the first type.

Another advantage to this update is the large back plate, which also makes the camera much steadier. A little more care does need to be taken whilst water starting for example, as the extension can catch on the mast, but otherwise it’s surprisingly easy to get used to wearing. I often wondered what people were looking at as I walked down the beach after returning from a



First wave of the day, with a camcorder hidden amongst the rocks.

session having forgotten I was wearing it. To the onlooker we appear to have a remote control aerial fitted to our behinds!

Another mount used often by us windsurfers is the Flymount – a heavy duty and quality made bit of kit that grips the mast like stink (or any cylindrical ‘pole’). The angle of the Flymount is usually looking straight down, it is easy to use and, for me at least, has provided the most useful technique footage. I know those who use them attached to stand up paddle shafts as well, which with a bit experimenting can also yield great shots – especially in surf (we concur – ed). FHot produce a really nice mast mount – perhaps on my next trip I’ll persuade Gump from Juice Boardsports to lend me his. You never know, I might just get that perfect shot!

So what other land-based selfie options are there? A low tech solution I learnt from Nejc, a Slovenian windsurfing friend of mine, is to hide a DSLR or camcorder either in the car (under a carefully draped towel) or even on the beach (hidden by a rock or two) to capture the action. Using this method we’ve gained some interesting shots over the years. The only downside is your valuable camera could be nabbed!

The emerging land-based high-tech solutions have given us the various incarnations of the Soloshot; a ‘robot’ mounted on a tripod. I have the first version but the tech didn’t quite deliver and I got better footage from simply focussing the camera on the wave section I knew I’d ride. I’m waiting to see how the third version performs...And they’re pricey!

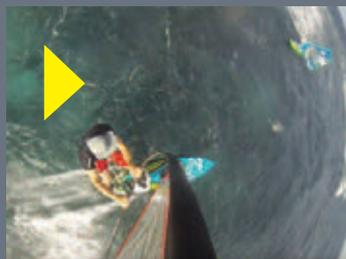
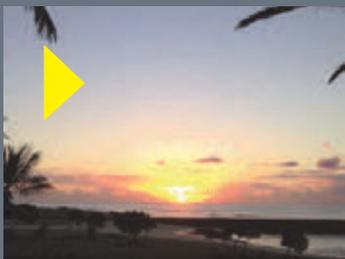
The future, however, looks exciting with ‘follow me’ drone technology maturing, but again I don’t intend to be an early adopter. I think I’ll stick with my proven and trusty GoPro for now. These kit mounted solutions have become part of my sailing routine and while some say they add unnecessary weight I find it’s easy to get used to.



Of course you cannot beat having your mate take proper shots from the beach with a decent DSLR. This long shot photos of Steve Thorp were taken by Steve Laddiman on our recent day trip and look cracking. But I'm still a fan of the up close and personal GoPro shot and in most instances will be the 'go to' choice for nearly everyone as hooking up with a good photographer, during a decent forecast, is pretty hard!

So good luck in nailing your own ultimate windsurfing selfies and I hope you get as much enjoyment out of them as I have.

See some of Mark's GoPro windsurfing video footage by hitting these links –
www.youtube.com/user/markdowson
<https://youtu.be/nzt3763nwgQ>



SELFIE GOPRO TIPS:

- Keep the lens clean! Dip in the water frequently to remove droplets, use saliva or a Rainex type product on the outside lens.
- Keep the inside lens housing clean! And be careful not to let any moisture get inside.
- Wait for the best light – sunshine and blue skies deliver better results.
- Enjoy experimenting with different mounts and camera angles.
- Always use some form of leash onto both the camera and mount.
- To get the ultimate shot you may find 'over riding' or accentuating your movements is a way to capture dynamic images. It'll also make you think about technique.
- If sailing in waves then be aware the wide angle lens of GoPro does tend to flatten conditions. Therefore choose the biggest set and go for it!
- Learn to edit your shots. You don't need high end software such as PhotoShop either. Simple editing software will do the job just fine.

Thanks to Juice Boardsports, Steve Thorp and K4 Fins, Steve Laddiman and Flymount.



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'MAKING IT' AS A
WINDSURFING PRO

KUROSH KIANI

WORDS: KUROSH KIANI

PICS: JOHN CARTER

KUROSH KIANI HAS BEEN A LONG-STANDING COMPETITOR ON THE PWA'S SLALOM CIRCUIT. KUROSH, HOWEVER, IS A REALISTIC RACER WHEN IT COMES TO LIFE AS A PRO. HE'S NOT ONE FOR PUTTING ALL EGGS IN ONE BASKET. GETTING STRAIGHT DOWN TO THE NITTY GRITTY WE CAUGHT UP WITH KK TO GET THE STORY ON HOW IT IS THESE DAYS TO BE A PWA PRO SLALOM RACER.



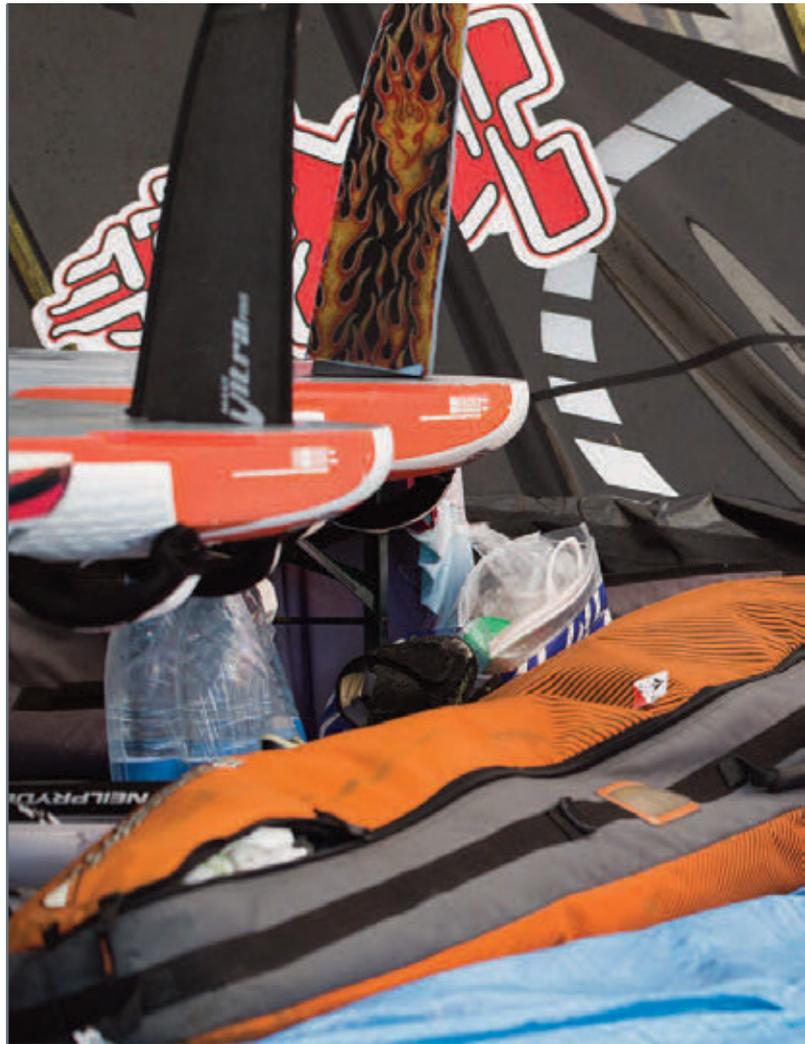
A lifestyle

A sport like windsurfing involves a lot of passion. To me, it's more of a lifestyle than a profession. It's a lifestyle we all love and live for. We daydream of fantastic trips or great sessions. The little support we get and hard work often is outweighed by those great experiences, friendships, successes, special moments and your own personal development.

The sacrifices are big, if you really want to be a player in today's windsurfing pro scene. It's something I only realised recently. When you are up-and-coming you will have to sacrifice the steady life and risk your income. Once established you realise friendships slowly fade away, and that you will have to work harder to maintain them. And in today's very competitive environment you will have to live and breathe the sport, which takes your time and focus away from many 'ordinary life' things.

I used to make a living from windsurfing 100%, and it was great for a few years. Then I shifted my approach. I made changes which allowed a step back from being 100% reliant on windsurfing. I built more diversity into my life with other projects. In the end I found out that having more than one thing to focus on was the way forward. This has had a positive impact on my performance.

Sponsorship and support comes from different corners of the world with great partners. But especially in the winter, where there isn't much going on, I now work as a freelance IT consultant. I've also had a hand setting



To set up contracts which solely focus on your performance, in my opinion, can impact mental health negatively

up scoring systems for all of the PWA's disciplines. I build websites, databases, provide technical web solutions, create banner ads, design cartoons and videos – you name it, I can do it all. Furthermore, I've worked on personal projects using GPS tracking. I use my technical approach to improve training.

Exposure

None of my sponsorship contracts are based on podium results. Of course, if I can perform at podium level the support will be greater, but it's not what is expected. It's obviously what I strive and work for, but the focus is equally on how much I can help my sponsors with exposure. Be it through videos, magazine articles, events or competition results. To set up contracts which solely focus on your performance, in my opinion, can impact mental health negatively.

'Soul sailors' can be found within windsurfing. And it's not unheard of for soul windsurfers to be on better deals than competition riders. It's what you make it. If you only focus on results, your sponsorship deals will end up reflecting that. I would prefer a space in the middle.



It IS possible to find that middle ground between normal life and top level competition. It requires sacrifice, hard work and dedication, but it does work

Canary Islands

Being from Denmark I had to move around all of the time in the past to find optimum training grounds. It was very hard to make it work. Sometimes I didn't see friends or family for nearly a year! That's why, in the end, I decided to relocate somewhere I can focus, and be able to train daily, while still being involved in other things at the same time. It's not a must to live at a premium wind spot but it sure does help! Since moving to the Canary Islands I've had much less hassle having to travel and have a peace of mind. It's still hard being away from home sometimes but it's relatively easy to go back, and I'm finding a nice balance.

Missing out on birthdays, weddings, family events and so on is pretty hard. And it's now something I try to take more seriously. It IS possible to find that middle ground between normal life and top level competition. It requires sacrifice, hard work and dedication, but it does work. You definitely have to make a bigger effort for family and friends.

I focus mainly on long term relationships with sponsors. It's stressful changing equipment repeatedly, and in my opinion this is an indicator you are only focusing on short term goals. To me, it's important to build a relationship where both parties are benefitting, and strengthening over the years.

Opportunities

My current situation now allows me to focus on what is good for me. Over the years I have worked hard to please sponsors, and sometimes had my fingers burned. I concentrate now on my performance, and sharing my experience with others through my passions for writing, teaching and being on the beach in general. You never properly let off the gas, and will always keep an eye out for opportunities, and keep networking your way forward. Nevertheless, the consensus now, unfortunately is, that you can have cheap labour or advertising through riders, and I am not interested in following that trend.

The people I work with are great, and our understanding of each other is great. Moreover, if any new opportunities should come up, I will welcome them. In my opinion, it's great to be involved in R&D. It teaches you a lot about equipment. In addition, having equipment that suits you is very important in our sport.

The potential for windsurfing to reach a wider audience is there. The only thing I would recommend is to break the typical 80s windsurfer stereotype, and come up with more interesting angles. If you are serious about it. You should do some research. Have a look at your own personality, and what is different about you, and try to build a story around that. Stay open-minded and brainstorm every now and then. And improve your networking skills.

Now I am training daily. I am trying to improve my racing game, which has seen lots of weakness during the last few seasons. I am focusing solely on these points now, and eventually I will shift back to my gear, making sure I've got the board speed needed to be at a top level.

I wave sail when I can and I'm trying to improve my surfing, which I admit is not very good. Living in the Canary Islands I have the opportunity to get better at these things. I keep it all as fresh as possible!

I do a combination of rowing, biking, circuit training and weights. I would like to be strong enough to sail long days without my performance level suffering – it's not an easy task. I am not sure if I will reach my goal anytime soon but I will do my best.

Having strong legs and back definitely benefits my performance on the water in terms of speed. However, my endurance level is getting higher which I really enjoy. Being able to breathe and stay relaxed in racing is something that your fitness level truly helps with.

I started working on my diet a few years ago. For me, diet has been a life changer. I have introduced more greens and root vegetables. More fruits as well. In

general, I take greater care of what I put into my body. I found out that diet was affecting me in many ways, one of them being on the mental side. We are all different, but staying healthy has done wonders for me and thus helps me perform better in all aspects of life.

Pro athlete

Life as a pro athlete is hard regardless. Nevertheless, we are so lucky that once you have gone through all of these things, which might seem hard, you still get to plant your feet in the sand on tropical beaches many people only dream of visiting. You get to glide effortlessly over blue/green waters and enjoy endless Vitamin D. Sharing experiences with friends will create memories that last a lifetime. Living a healthy lifestyle, where you get to be close to nature, is fantastic. While there is hard work involved, the rewards are great.

I would categorise windsurfers as some of the best party people on the planet! Most of us do love to cut loose, and sure, in the older days, this was more acceptable – in some cases expected. It's part of our sport and lifestyle. Today it's on a more tempered level. We do smash it sometimes but we are at a place now where performance comes first with 'athletes' who are hard working and have specific goals.

I admit it's a bit boring at times, sure, but the focus is on the water now. The need for socialising is not what it was some years ago. I personally think there should be a solution somewhere in between. Windsurfing is a social activity after all. I am not saying we should party hard, but I think we shouldn't forget one of the pillars of windsurfing, which in my opinion, is the social aspect.





“Find your niche and remember, in the end, after all of this back and forth, it’s just windsurfing – enjoy it!”



I will take the freedom to say there is still a core group of (mainly) sailors from an older generation who have the balance just right. While they perform at the highest of levels, they combine it with attending the odd party. In fact, there is a saying: “If you re struggling on the race course a night out helps you.”

To ‘make it’ within windsurfing a smile, talent and the right attitude help. Talent only brings you to a certain point, and from there you will have to work. Some people work harder and some less. You will have to find a balance which is just right for you. Being a person, whom the brands see as an interesting profile, which ultimately helps them sell more products, is key. Stay positive, and keep your goals a priority. You could have a bad season sure, which is why you should have back-up plan. Have a look at where you are right now, and where you want to be. What is it going to take to get there? Plan it out, and remember, sometimes you

may feel you are going nowhere, but in fact you are. We keep learning session by session. Find your niche and remember, in the end, after all of this back and forth, it’s just windsurfing – enjoy it!

Shouts to my family, friends and sponsors who are all super important to me. They have believed in me through many difficulties. When I first started on the world tour the boys took me in, they loaned me gear, helped me get tuned up and introduced me to life on tour. Sailors such as Ross Williams, Ben Van Der Steen, Gonzalo Costa Hoewel and Arnon Dagan all gave me a hand, and I doubt I could have kept at it without their support. I have great gear from Point-7, Maui Ultra Fins and Starboard. Thank you!

To all of the people I have met around the world, I am thankful for great friendships over the years. I see great passion for our sport across the globe, and it always puts a smile on my face – wherever I end up.



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WORDS AND PICS: JANE FAUGHNAN, SPORTIF TRAVEL
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OVERSEAS WINDSURFING ADVENTURES. BUT
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SEASON? JANE FAUGHNAN FROM SPORTIF GIVES
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go at different times. It doesn’t matter if you’re
after flat water for freestyle/slalom or wave sailing
we’ll have something suitable.” And what about
activities that will keep non-windsurfing friends
and family happy while you are on the water? Read
on to find out more...”**

Sotavento, Fuerteventura, Canary Islands

For high wind Sotavento, on the south west coast of Fuerteventura, is a great choice. Playa Sotavento is set just south of the beach resort of Costa Calma, around one hour south of Rosaria Airport, set on a remote beach surrounded by sand dunes. The main wind season is from June to August and if you book early you can stay right on the lagoon and watch the best in the world compete during the World Cup at the end of July. Go outside of these months in May and September and you'll enjoy less strong conditions. The whole of the Sotavento lagoon is tidal so those wishing to sail in the lagoon will have two periods in the month with water in the lagoon and is ideal for beginners and practising your moves.

There is one 4* hotel on the spot with four swimming pools, kids club, spa, three restaurants plus adults only areas and a nightclub. There are further options of self-catering apartments, all-inclusive and luxury hotels in Costa Calma just 15-minute drive north. Here you can also find a range of restaurants, bars and shops and a sheltered beach, which is more suitable for beginners in the peak months of July and August. Further south on the lagoon is the third spot of Risco del Paso which is more protected and less busy. Other activities on offer include kitesurfing, stand up paddle boarding, land sailing, cycling and scuba diving. Sotavento offers over 500 of the latest boards from JP and Starboard with over 1000 rigs from Neil Pryde, all completely replaced every year as well as Fanatic and North equipment at Risco del Paso and Costa Calma beaches, available to pre-book at discounted prices through Sportif.

Safaga, Red Sea, Egypt

You can't beat the Red Sea for flat water and consistent wind. With dedicated windsurf centres right on the beach next to your hotel, Safaga is one of the most popular windsurf holiday destinations for all levels of windsurfers year round. Set on a crescent shaped sandy bay the azure water and year round sunshine is ideal. For those wishing to take a beginner's or improver's course the shallow, sheltered area is just by the centre. More advanced windsurfers will enjoy endless turquoise water lagoons and superb wind stats, averaging F4 Beaufort for over 75% of days and heading up to over 90% of days between August and October to give you the best chance of maximising your time on the water. Winds are cross shore with very little to no shore break. You can rent the latest Fanatic and North kit where you pre-book your board and are able to swap daily depending on local conditions. You can also windsurf to nearby Toubia Island just 3.5km away. The all-inclusive hotels offer the best value holidays around with warm water 25°C+ from May up to 28°C in August. Other sports and activities



Sotavento, Fuerteventura, Canary Islands



available including snorkelling, scuba diving, kitesurfing and stand up paddle boarding. From Safaga you can book quad bike, horse riding and cultural excursions to the Valley of the Kings, home of Tutankhamen's tomb or the ancient Egyptian temples at Luxor. There is a choice of 3*, 4* and 5* all-inclusive hotels with prices starting at £599pp including flights and transfers and regular special offers including hotel upgrades or early booking discounts with Sportif.

“The all-inclusive hotels offer the best value holidays around with warm water 25°C+ from May up to 28°C in August.”

Safaga, Red Sea, Egypt



Pidgeon Point,
Tobago, Caribbean



Pidgeon Point, Tobago, Caribbean

Tobago, in the southern Caribbean Sea, offers windsurfing holidays from November to July for all levels of windsurfer. The best wind is from December to June when the trade winds arrive from the Atlantic. The windsurfing takes place at the Bon Accord lagoon, located off the protected National Park at Pidgeon Point on the south west of the island. A vast lagoon sits inside Bucco Reef just off Pidgeon point with flat water

conditions and a good swell on the outside. Winds are cross shore from the right, sometimes switching on shore and average 17-20 knots depending on the month. Beginners and intermediates can get going with ease as there's plenty of room for slalom and freestyle sailing. The windsurf centre offers a range of JP and Fanatic board and over 90 rigs from Neil Pryde and North from 1-8.2m. The centre also offers kiteboarding, surfing, catamaran sailing, kayaking and you can rent stand up paddle boards, take some lessons and join an escorted tour. To explore the island book a jeep excursions to see the spectacular rainforest on the north coast. There are many local bars or restaurants in the area with a visit to the local 'jump up' weekly party a must. Tobago hosts regular festivals and the annual Mardi Gras Carnival with its competing steel bands and Calypso music heard through the night.

Direct weekly flights are via St Lucia and Antigua are just over nine hours and year round temps are 29°C. Tobago is one of the best value Caribbean islands and Sportif offer windsurfing clinics during February and March with Peter Hart and Jem Hall.

Le Morne, Mauritius, Indian Ocean

Mauritius has long been thought of as top of the wish list for many windsurfers. Picture postcard views of palm trees on beautiful sandy beaches, looking out on the widest range of conditions you will possibly find in one place. Flat water through gentle chop to fringing reefs with small to awesome waves. The main

windsurfing venue is at Le Morne on the south west of the island around one hour and 15 minutes from the airport and set below the imposing mountain of Le Morne Brabant.

The lagoon is shallow with a maximum depth of four metres, a sandy beach launch and easy access to waves with a range of conditions for slalom and freestylers. Aspiring wave sailors, depending on the time of year, can see the best in the world riding the 'professionals only' One Eye and build up their skills on the Little reef or Manawa reef with waves from less than 0.5m up to mast high on big days. Mauritius has two seasons: from November to March temperatures vary between 24-32°C. The best wind months are from May to December and Sportif pro coaching clinics take place between September and November with Peter Hart and Jem Hall.

There are 4* all-inclusive hotels suitable for families or adults only as well as 5* deluxe, exclusive beach resorts on the spot, minutes from the water's edge with fine dining restaurants, golf and tennis plus spas, kids clubs and range of other watersports including kitesurfing, SUP and surfing. Local excursions include trekking to the nearby Black River national park, boat and dolphin watching trips, snorkelling, scuba, fishing or historical tours and shopping trips to the port capital of St Louis. Sportif offers multi-sport discounted packages to Mauritius including rental and instruction for 1 week in windsurfing, kitesurfing, SUP and surfing from £305 per person in February and March.

Jericoacoara, Brazil

Jeri is located in the Brazilian state of Ceara, with almost mythical conditions, streets of sand and slow pace of life – except on the water! Originally a fishing village the last 20 years has seen an increase in windsurfing tourism but still retains its charm. The conditions here live up to its reputation with the best in the world training here. There are three main sailing areas, 'the Point' with smooth waves leading to flat water in

between allowing you to jump, tack, surf or freestyle. The area in front of the landmark 'Sunset Dune' – famed for the gathering crowds at the end of the day, has the largest flat water expanse for freestyle with gentle breaking waves near the shoreline. Malhada, for advanced sailors only, is upwind of 'the Point' has the best starboard jumping ramps, a favourite for freestyle champion, Marcilio 'Brawzinho' Browne.

Wave sizes in Jeri vary from waist to shoulder height in the main season, September to January. These peak months are busy and the best accommodation gets booked up six months in advance. You can walk from one side of the town to the other in 15 minutes and accommodation varies from budget pousadas to luxury 5* hotels with private pools and helicopter landing pads. Off the water activities include chilling waterside and watching the action or partying into the night. The area is now a National Park with protected mangroves, dunes and surrounding estuaries which you can explore by buggy or SUP boards. Sportif offer early season booking discounts with 10 days rental for the price of five in selected months and pro coaching wave clinics.

Peter Hart and Jem Hall head to Jericoacoara each year for wave sailing clinics in January and September.



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“Local excursions include trekking to the nearby Black River national park, boat and dolphin watching trips, snorkelling, scuba, fishing or historical tours and shopping trips to the port capital of St Louis.”

Le Morne, Mauritius, Indian Ocean



“The area in front of the landmark ‘Sunset Dune’ — famed for the gathering crowds at the end of the day, has the largest flat water expanse for freestyle with gentle breaking waves near the shoreline.”

Jericoacoara, Brazil





THE CHOOK JOURNAL

Capturing WA's special windsurfing moments

WORDS AND PICS: TOM AND OLLIE PIDDEN
FROM DECEMBER '16 - JANUARY '17 TOM
AND OLLIE PIDDEN LEFT THE UK AND
TRAVELLED TO MARGARET RIVER,
WESTERN AUSTRALIA. IT TURNED OUT TO
BE AN EPIC TRIP, IN A SEASON THAT WILL

BE REMEMBERED FOR EXCEPTIONAL CONDITIONS IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE. If you have seen it, you will know their video is not about crazy action, it's about what it was really like, with great cinematography and editing to capture what went down as it happened. Here is what they had to say about the trip and the video.

Rider in photo: Rick Vandertoorn

The trip started a few weeks before we left the UK when we travelled down to South Wales and collected some brand new kit from Jim at Puravida. He hooked us up with 2017 Simmer gear and O'Shea wetsuits. Steve from K4 also sent us some fins so we were all set. Travelling to Oz always feels like going home for us as our parents still own the house we grew up in as kids. We were lucky enough to be out there from mid-December until mid-January at which point we sadly had to return for school/uni. Whilst we were in Margies we wanted to make a little video about the trip and 'WA6285: Home of the Chook' is the finished result!

The logo and name of The Chook Journal, which is what we call ourselves, was inspired by the 'chook' (Australian slang for chicken) that is silhouetted in the sand dune opposite Rivermouth Beach, inside the main break, Margaret River. Rivermouth is the beach that we basically grew up on learning to take a pounding from the waves and is where we really first learned to surf as kids. Our Dad meanwhile would be sailing the main break and as we have gotten older naturally we progressed into sailing it with him! This trip was Ollie's first time out there and it's fair to say he was nervous while rigging up and navigating the keyhole. But he enjoyed it once he had a few waves under his belt.

We both learned to wave sail on the south coast of the UK when we moved there six years ago. I guess it's fair to say we sail with a slightly strange style. It is a little more old school with drawn out, wide arc bottom turns



with flowing top turns. As a result our videos are never the typical montage of epic moves. We try to capture the true essence of our trips. Not just the windsurfing either, the travel and time spent doing non-windsurf related activities finds its way into our edits because this is the full the story, which we want to represent.

Meaningful

We believe strongly in filming only what is really happening, we don't enjoy fabricating clips to make our trips or windsurfing look more impressive. We like to try and find different camera angles, film from different spots and then bring the footage home and turn it into a meaningful video. Each edit we try to up the level and with this latest one we felt we managed it. Neither of us have any cinematography nor editing qualifications. Everything we have learned is self-taught through trial and error. We are already looking forward to the next trip and trying to up the quality again.

When filming we don't exactly have the latest and greatest equipment. Instead we use budget video gear that we have purchased second hand over the last few



“We like to try and find different camera angles, film from different spots and then bring the footage home and turn it into a meaningful video.”

years. Little mirrorless camera bodies costing less than £100 each and basic cheap DSLR lenses. We actually broke our lens mount so the camera was stuck to the lens with epoxy quick dry putty and duct tape. The cheap tripod we got four years ago also broke for the umpteenth time so we fixed it with another layer of epoxy putty and cable ties! We try to make do with what we have and use our creativity to tell a story. Sharing our experiences with anyone watching is then the next step.

Inch deep reefs

Margaret River's main break is an intimidating spot, especially if you don't get to sail it that often. Even the launch is a little nerve racking if you haven't done it before. With inch deep reefs either side of a sandy channel only two board widths wide it looks gnarly. We both lost a fin or two this year. Once you're past the keyhole you have some more water to play with, but that does not mean the hard part is over. If the wind is blowing its regular south westerly direction then you will have enough wind in your sail to plane (or chug at

a reasonable rate if you chose a smaller size). But if it has swung south east then you're going to have very little wind to play with until you're at the main reef. It's important to stay on the board at this stage because if you find yourself in the water you may not get back up! The rip off the 'Surgeon's Table' will drag you towards the river and it could be a while until you can get going.

Once out back all you have to do is catch a wave! Again this isn't easy either. The waves in WA move very fast and because the water is deep up until the reef, the swell is only a fat lump but moving like a freight train. You might have to bare off to keep on the wave. This is OK because you can jam upwind when it jacks up. Be careful about going too far upwind if it's a small day. The reef is very shallow and you can end up grounding out in the bottom turn at low tide.

When we were there one of the locals landed an aerial into the flats, hit the slab and snapped his fins clean off! When the session comes to an end you can relax – only joking! Trying to get back to the keyhole in a south easterly is something that comes with practice. A decent wave is required and once you have passed the main reef you have to pull upwind, staying with the white water until you are through the keyhole. If you don't catch a wave you will most likely end up swimming in. Even local legend Scott McKercher was spotted swimming this trip!



Team rider

This was our first video since sailing with our new gear, and almost a year since the start of The Chook Journal project. It comes with a certain responsibility being a 'team rider'. You think that people are going to expect you to be better than them or throw big moves. Neither of us have big moves to throw and at the main break there is a huge amount of talent – especially within the local community.

Jim first approached us about riding for Puravida because of the Chook Journal project. We do offer something different as young team members because we are not only aspiring windsurfers we are aspiring storytellers. To hear that Simmer Style and O'Shea wanted us on their kit, with K4Fins offering continued support and Jim Brooks-Dowsett's enthusiasm for upcoming projects, really shows what we have achieved in a year. Stay tuned for more!

To see Tom and Ollie's Home of the Chook vid hit the link - <https://vimeo.com/204803624>



SMOOTH PERFORMERS

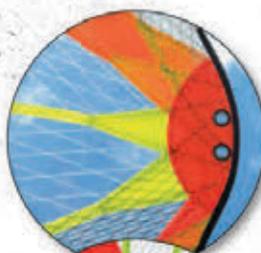


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WORDS: WSUK

PICS: JP/PRYDE/THORSTEN INDRA

AS INDIVIDUALS WE LOVE TO PIGEONHOLE STUFF, GIVE EVERYTHING A LABEL AND BOX IT ALL UP NEAT AND TIDY. WINDSURFING'S NO DIFFERENT. IN THE PAST TERMINOLOGY SUCH AS WAVE-SLALOM, CONVERTIBLE FREERIDE AND SO ON HAVE BEEN USED WHEN CATEGORISING KIT. THESE DAYS YOU'RE MORE LIKELY TO HEAR FREESTYLE WAVE OR SLALOM MUTTERED ON BEACHES. For some time, however, there was a distinct lack of description for the everyman's way of doing things. Or, to put it another way the type of sailing we all do. Nowadays you'll no doubt refer to it as freeride, but what is freeing your ride all about?

Well, it's just that...





“You too will have probably had that Eureka moment as a gust of wind billowed your sail and projected you forwards at an increased rate of knots.”

Rocking up at your chosen launch (forecast allowing of course), rigging accordingly and selecting the board of your choice. For some it could be their favourite 130L cruiser, for others it may be that trusty 100L (or so) blaster, as depicted in the accompanying images, while riders elsewhere may opt for something more sporty and manoeuvrable.

The fact is: we're all freeriders at heart. Whether you have a penchant for chucking the latest whirling and twirling move, busting loose through a contorted top turn, legging it round a race course or cruising the coast, chances are for the majority of the time on the water you'll be blasting, enjoying the ride and simply feeling the exhilaration as you skim across the water's surface. It's the reason we all got bitten by the windsurfing bug and still, to this day, pour over weather forecast data, tide charts and eye up windows of opportunity in diaries.

Cast your minds back to those first steps you took. At first the uniqueness of standing atop a board with a multi-rotational rig in your hands was interesting enough to keep your focus. During windsurfing's inception this was the sole hook. But in time the lightbulb went off and riders realised that more wind =

more speed. You too will have probably had that Eureka moment as a gust of wind billowed your sail and projected you forwards at an increased rate of knots. It may have resulted in a big splash, after a few short seconds, but the seed will have been sown.

Progressing, learning and nailing down windsurfing's fundamentals sailors will have begun to get even faster until one day, hooked in and happily cruising along, Mother Nature's blow sees fit to lift your kit, push the board past its bow wave and get you fully planing – yet another epiphany! OK, footstraps may seem like a long way back towards the tail but zooming along you can't help but grin and realise you've entered into a different windsurfing realm.

Next comes acceleration. With perseverance those far off straps are located and feet tentatively slotted into. Feeling yet another release your speed increases and you imagine yourself as Han Solo would've experiencing the Millennium Falcon's warp drive for the first time. A wave of euphoria washes over and although you're not strictly in control 100% (check behind and you'll see your instructor chasing you down as you fly off on a broad reach!) there's not a care in the world save for enjoying the moment.





Over time, as all windsurfers do, technique is consolidated and before long regular pilgrimages are being made to anywhere with water and wind. These days bigger, more powerful sails are used and turboing about your local stretch is par for the course. A thing called carve gybing (what?!) has entered your vocabulary and every now and again you experience the sensation of air and space between water and kit ala chop hops – a whole new ball game!

Does this all sound familiar? It should. As said at the start of this article it's the type of windsurfing we all love and do. With all the stresses modern life can throw at us there's simply nothing better than cutting loose and going for a blast. If you're not yet at this stage then have no fear. Keep going and you'll get to that magic planing stage quicker than you can blink – especially if you have a qualified instructor guiding you.

Sometimes it's easy to lose sight of the simple things windsurfing can bring. Open any magazine (ours included), hit up any windy website or check out the various (and many) online windsurf portals and images of big waves, gravity defying stunts, twisted moves and talk of performance will greet all. But dial it back and understand that this is just one part of windsurfing's broad palette. There's no pressure to go out and break yourself just because you spot some teenage trickster bending into impossible shapes. Of course, it's good to

not stand still, and the more we learn and improve the more we enjoy our sport, and the wider the plethora of conditions we can use opens up. But going for a simple blast is fine. You'd be surprised how many of the pros, without a lens trained on them, will do just that.

Whizzing back and forth, even on the greyest and dampest of days, will brighten your mood – there's no question. Freeriding is in us all as windsurfers and there's nothing better. After all, being a windsurfer is about having fun and leaving life's hassles on Terra Firma – at least for a short while.

So the next time a forecast pops up and comes good go for a blast. Hook yourself in, slot feet into straps and shoot for the horizon (obviously turning round at some point!). Enjoy the ride and love the fact you're a windsurfer, which is one of the best things in the world!

Big thanks to Andy 'Bubble' Chambers and JP Australia/Neil Pryde who helped out with this article. Also stay tuned for Windsurfing UK's kit review of JP Australia's Magic Ride 130 and Neil Pryde Ryde 7.5m – how much freeride goodness can you handle?

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Why spend a month training and tuning slalom kit somewhere warm and windy? Sounds like there's an obvious answer when you ask the question out loud but then not everything is black and white.

WORDS AND PICS: RUSSELL GROVES
SOMETIMES YOU THINK IT IS BETTER TO TRAIN ALONE IN SECRET, SO WHEN THE SEASON COMES, PEOPLE WILL GET A SURPRISE, YOU'LL HAVE THE SPEED AND BE SET FOR POLE POSITION. YOU HAVE YOUR GPS AND IT IS EASY TO LAY A BUOY FOR GYBE DRILLS AND

PRACTICING YOUR STARTS – TWO ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF RACING, WHATEVER YOUR LEVEL. But you have no way of knowing if you are better than anyone else. It's all very well nailing down the finer points but when it comes to measuring your speed – another key piece of the puzzle – having others to test your mettle against gives a bigger picture view.



SUNNY TIME TUNING SLALOM PRO TRAINING IN WARMER CLIMES





“You can have the best start in the world but if you cannot go around corners you are in trouble.”

Kurosh Kiani

The idea of slalom pro training came from Kurosh Kiani. We spend a lot of time together dissecting his sessions and his set up but is it faster? Was that gybe more efficient? Will it work in competition? How does performance compare to those being raced against? All valid questions needing answers.

The idea was for it to be just the top guys on the Black Team (Point 7) getting together to do some testing and kit development. So Andrea Cucchi (Mr Point 7) decided to come over with a full van of gear and make the most of it. Unsurprisingly the word got around and people started to ask if they could join in. OK game is on we thought!

‘Sparky’ (Mark Hosegood)

UK rider ‘Sparky’ (Mark Hosegood) made the effort to come over and run the water side and structure the training. After all, his experience as PWA judge, and as a sailor himself, meant he’d have valuable knowledge to impart and therefore all riders benefit. It was then Giuseppe Pugliese who would deliver the personal physical training side – another important aspect of conditioning for slalom.

Aloha Lanzarote provided a base, a focal point and place to stay for the organisation team and some of the riders. Calero Marinas provided the large rib and

Windsurfing Club Las Cucharas provided board storage and facilities for running repairs and modifications. Finally, Poco Loco were doling out those much needed refreshments, and providing a discussion point and chill out area. All in it was a completely 360 set up with various entities cooperating and making things work – as it should be.

In the end we had over 20 people on the water every training session, meaning a three heat starting sequence. Pro training is about simulating actual race conditions, so this worked out really well. There was time to get back up to the start, wait for your call and change heats depending on your position. This is slalom windsurf training simulating competition environments as much as possible without actually running an official event – gold!

Five start sequence

Racing is all about the start – nail it and you are almost guaranteed to go through to the next round. So yes, there were a lot of starts practiced. The crew worked on a five start sequence per session with up to three sessions a day. That works out as 15 starts per person per day – Sparky was doing a whopping 45! Add in ‘over the lines’ and the number rises even higher! Most definitely ‘all in a day’s work’ – the emphasis being on the word ‘work’ as that’s what it is.

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But getting across the line efficiently is one part of the puzzle. You can have the best start in the world but if you cannot go around corners you are in trouble. Well, if you are the first one to the mark you are gybing alone, with a very hungry pack on your tail. But for everyone else the pressure is on. In the huddle you have to find that gap – threading the eye of the needle so to speak. Without room for glides to pass through the no wind zone you stop. So there were lots of gybe exercises completed. You can see why numbers are needed. You need people for as realistic an experience as possible.

A hive of activity

Fine tuning equipment is also essential. Of course you can do this alone with your GPS but to have people you can go up against is far better. During water time rest periods it was a hive of activity from just changing combos to full rig tuning. Cutting battens, changing cambers and masts – it was all going on. For those on Point 7 sails having Andrea around to discuss tuning options was invaluable. He is fast on the water as well so having him as a bench mark was useful.

Personally it was great to watch and meet all the people and I look forward to following everyone this year racing. With hopefully more of these pro slalom training gatherings taking place the level of riding for anyone attending will hopefully improve massively.

Thanks must go out Philippe Chiappero for the use of the jet ski as well as Christophe Manegat for taking time out of his holiday to drive and Leo Skagerlind for filming. Plus all the other people that made the training happen, cheers!



The next windsurfing event in Costa Teguse is the pro/am event in July. Aloha Lanzarote Amateur Slalom 3-4 July and the EFPT Freestyle 5-8 July. Hopefully we'll see you there!





GUL RIVER SIMON BORNHOFT

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74 COACHING WINDWISE TECHNIQUE



WARRIOR



Words: Simon Bornhoft

Pics: Windwise

CONTENT:
DERIVED
FROM THE
RESULTS AND
FEEDBACK OF
THOUSANDS
OF CLIENTS
I'VE HAD THE
PRIVILEGE TO
COACH,
THANK YOU
ALL

In keeping with the Windwise ethos of breaking the sport down into the most important transferable and trainable skills, Simon Bornhoft illustrates the importance of a 'Warrior' stance which is dynamic action that is instrumental in pretty much every windsurfing turn, transition or aspirational move - be it basic tack, frustrating gybe, first time wave ride, turning a '350' into a 360, venturing into the waves or so many spiny freestyle moves. Regardless of your level and especially if you struggle with shorter board tacks, gybing or have any aspiration to do anything other than blast up and down - you need to understand the importance of the 'Warrior'.

Who's this feature for?

Beginner-Improvers:

Uphauling, tacking and your very first gybes!

Improver-Intermediate:

Fast tacking, making and planing out of gybes, plus turning on flat water or waves.

Intermediate-Advanced:

Wave sailing, Up/Downwind 360s, Helis and the majority of Freestyle.



WARRIOR... IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU!

When blasting along we generally adopt a '7' shaped stance, then, like changing gears on a bike to suit varying terrain, we either straighten (light winds) or sink (strong winds) our '7' to adjust to variations in the rig's power and board speed. Plus, when blasting along, we should be looking forward over an extended-straightened leg-knee. However, when it comes to turning, this is often reversed and we need to look (and often lean) over a flex leg-knee and this is where your 'Warrior' stance comes in!



Q. So what exactly is a Windwise 'Warrior' stance?

A. Look at the two photos on the opposite page and how they differ!

Pic Blasting '7' Stance

"Looking forward over an extended leg and straightened knee"

For early planing straighten the 7 by locking the hips and tightening the torso. In higher winds we sink the '7' more outboard by dropping the hips and digging the heels to control acceleration. In both situations we are 'looking forward over an extended front leg'.

Pic The Warrior

"look and lean over a heavily flexed leg and knee"

At Windwise we call this our 'Warrior' stance, which is really more of an action than a position. It is a profoundly important skill that is linked to so many successful transitions and moves. As ever, it is juxtaposed with another key Windwise principle 'Opposition' which means levering the, mast/rig in the opposite way to the body to create counter balance. So in the apex to end of this tack for example, I'm looking where I want to go and leaning over a heavily flexed leg-knee = WARRIOR.

Q. Why the name Warrior?

A. If anyone has done yoga they will know a similarly looking and named pose which creates a powerful, strong and dynamic stance – hence Warrior! In recent years we've been heavily emphasizing this Warrior concept at every level. We have always taught the 'warrior' mantra/position yet we feel it needs far more prominence and significance as we've had truly phenomenal success with our clients' speed of learning.

Blasting '7' Stance



The Warrior



WARRIOR IS EVERYWHERE!

Look closely at this montage of photos you'll see the **WARRIOR** proliferates throughout the sport.

Warrior Fast Tack



Warrior Mid Gybe



1. Looking (chin on or near shoulder) where you want to go and end up.
2. Leaning or tucked over a heavily flexed knee.
3. Mast/rig is raked the 'opposite' way to the look and lean.

Back Side Wave Ride



Front Side Wave Ride



Downwind 360



Warrior Lay Down Gybe



Warrior Duck Gybe Exit



NB. Quite often the arm nearest the head is flexed.

Warrior Loop



Freestyle



HOW TO TRAIN YOUR WARRIOR

No matter what your level or aspirations, here's how to start to get to grips with your inner warrior. Keep it simple, exaggerate and most importantly enjoy!



Windwise Warrior Key Points

Obviously you won't take one hand off during a move, but this shot fully exaggerates the concept. Try this on any board or rig to get the idea first.

1. Look in the direction you want to go + Windwise Touch Points = chin on or very close to shoulder.
2. Lean over a heavily flexed knee.
3. Lever the mast/rig the opposite way.

Warrior Skills Training

With the warrior concept in your mind, blend it into whatever transition you're trying to learn.



Warrior Uphaul

I've always suggested we need to change the way beginners are taught to uphaul (all over the world). Standing with your feet across the board, across the wind, with the rig elevated out of the water at 90 degrees to the board, might work on your first few days on the water but it is a disaster in stronger winds, rough water or smaller boards it is NOT a 'secure position'!!! From now on promise me you'll use your Warrior stance and, just as importantly turn the board much more into wind (never across the wind), so that the rig comes out of the water from the back to the front of the board.



Warrior Tack Exit 2

At the end of your tacks, don't rush to bring the rig forward, keep the sail towards the tail, and adopt a look, lean and lever Warrior stance/action to get stable first! (We will do a full feature on how to transform your tacks using Warrior shortly)

GybeWise

Check out the February issue of WindsurfingUK for the gybe entry and using touch points to help you sheet in properly. For the mid section of non-planing and full carve gybes, when stability and control are required for a swift foot change, look how the Warrior concept comes into play = LOOK, LEAN (over a flexed knee) LEVERING the rig the opposite way is central to a clean foot switch, which should always replace the carving foot right on the rail.



Windwise Gybing Touch Points

Clew hand well down the boom, pulling in and down on the boom heavily.

Rear foot toes on rail next to rear strap, try to replace carving back foot during switch. Before releasing rig, front hand slides towards the mast.

New front hand well down the boom.

Look (chin near or on shoulder)

Lean over a flexed knee

Lever the mast out of the turn as the rear placed clew hand pulls down HARD!

Q. When do I switch the feet?

A. Start dead downwind and keep in 'warrior' pulling in and down massively on the clew hand.

Q. When do I release the rig?

A. Rotate the sail just after passing dead downwind to exit on a broad reach. Keep looking forward and drop low over the newly placed rear foot.





Flat water wave riding

You can do this planing in the straps or in marginal winds on a WindSUP or large Freeride. In both situations use your warrior mantra when turning or carving up or downwind. This helps you understand the basics of bottom turning (like going through a gybe) and top turning like heading upwind for a tack).

Turning downwind (like a gybe or basic bottom turn on a wave) watch how the body looks and leans over a flexed knee. The body and rig then switch sides to transitions from the downwind position to the upwind position (like a top turn on a wave) by re-establishing the warrior mantra on the new side.



SIMON BORNHOFT
WINDWISE

OUR WINDWISE OFFER!

If you have read this and thought it all seems quite simple, I kind of knew/do this already, you're right, but what we are saying is put all your money on Warrior for your moves and turning a board. Massively accentuate it, enjoy it, focus on it and get amazing at it. In fact we believe in it so much, that if you come on a Windwise course and mention this Windsurfing UK feature and we can't improve your tacks, gybes and other moves using this Windwise Warrior concept, we'll give you your money back!

Next issue we will radically change your tacks and gybes using your Warrior Stance!

SEND SIMON...

a question or suggestion to info@windwise.net! If Windwise answer it in Windsurfing UK, you'll get a fab Windwise Rash Vest!



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**SIMON BORNHOFT
WINDWISE**

www.windwise.net

WINDSURFING 101

PLANING MADE SIMPLE

WORDS: SIMON WINKLEY

PHOTOS: JOHN HUMPHRIES

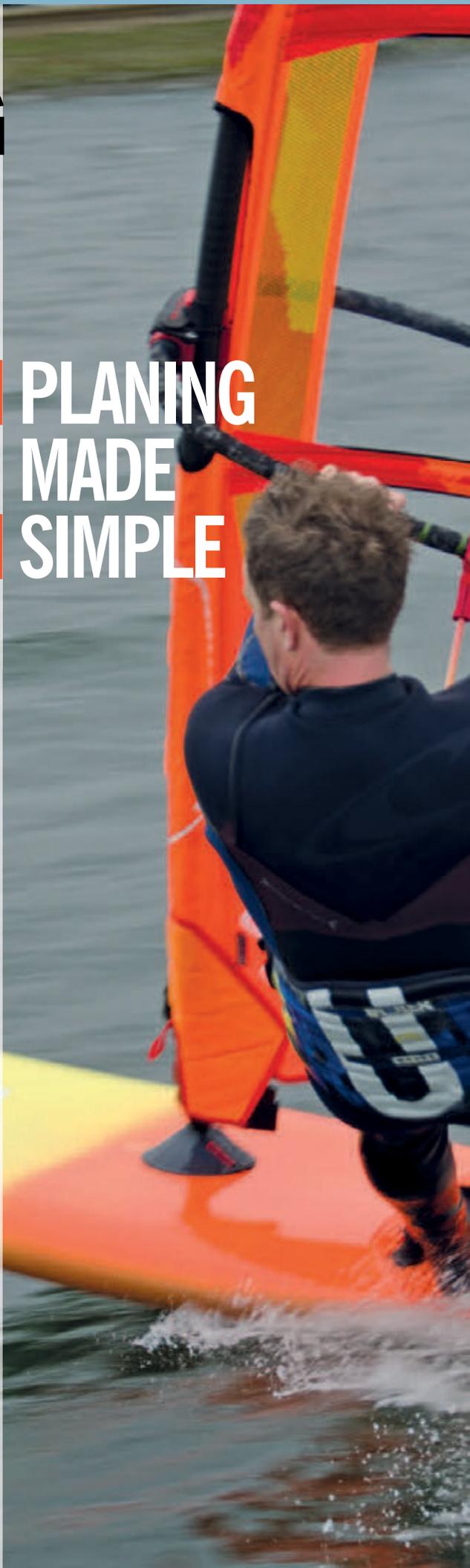
ILLUSTRATIONS: PETE GALVIN

A REMARKABLE ARRAY OF CHANGES OCCURS WHEN A WINDSURFER MAKES THE TRANSITION FROM NON-PLANING TO PLANING. WHEN THE BOARD DRAMATICALLY SLIPS INTO HYPER-DRIVE FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME THE FEELING FOR THE RIDER CAN BE BOTH EXHILARATING AND TERRIFYING IN EQUAL MEASURE. FOR ME THIS HAPPENED ON A SMALL GREEK ISLAND IN A HARBOUR RIDDLED WITH YACHTS LASHED TO MOORINGS. With no idea of how to handle the kit at such speed I simultaneously whooped/feared for my life as I blasted a sketchy line across the water whilst the menacing hulls flashed by. After slowing down again and dropping the rig I collapsed onto my board in a kind of trance having finally realised what windsurfing was all about.

So, in simple terms, what's happening when planing occurs and how on earth can a windsurf board travel at greater speeds than the wind? To get things started we need to go back a few years to understand what stops a board sinking in the first place.

The original 'Eureka' moment

Archimedes of Syracuse, whilst famously stepping into his bath over 2200 years ago, discovered that an object, wholly or partially immersed in a fluid, is buoyed-up (supported) by a force equal to the weight of the fluid displaced by the object. This principle explains how a buoyant force is exerted by a fluid on any object that is placed on or in it. Basically this is the only reason why a stationary board, rig and rider float either on the surface or slightly below it according to volume of board vs weight of rig and rider.





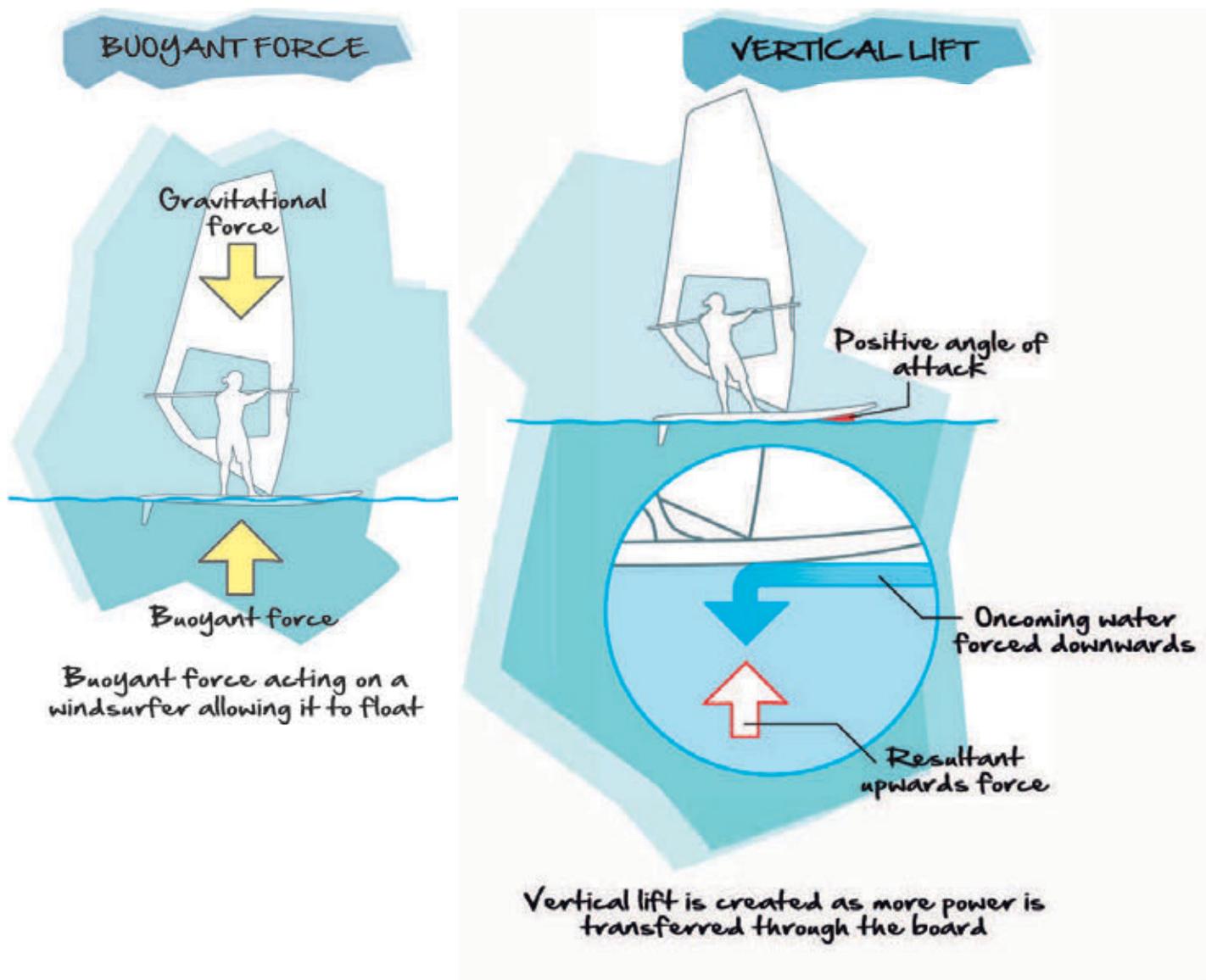
GETTING UP TO SPEED

As a windsurf board moves forwards more elements come into play. At low speed a board displaces water, pushing it out of the way and creating plenty of drag at the same time.

A factor that is significant in reducing drag is the forcing downwards of the oncoming water as it meets the underside of the board. The way the board presents itself to the oncoming water is described as its positive angle of attack. Too steep an angle means that the oncoming water will hit the underside of the board more head-on and prevent it reaching (or maintaining) greater speeds.

A board with a perfect shallow angle, however, will deflect the oncoming water downwards effectively, resulting in a (reactionary) vertical force upwards on the board.

As it moves along, a board sits in a wave of its own creation with a crest near the front and a crest just behind it. With too much weight on the back the board has a mountain to climb and will have low forward speed and high drag. A perfectly trimmed board, however, with plenty of power from the sail will allow the board to move forwards effectively and – as the speed increases and the drag decreases – the board will lift upwards out of the water enabling it to sit in front of its forward crest – often referred to as having ‘overtaken its own bow wave’. Now the board is planing, literally skimming across the water unfettered by the drag it previously experienced when in displacement mode



CAN A BOARD SAIL FASTER THAN THE WIND? APPARENTLY!

The forward speed that we create as we windsurf is called the induced wind (like the wind a cyclist feels in their face as they ride along on a windless day) and it hits the rig at exactly the same speed that the board is travelling in. This headwind (negligible at low speed yet of paramount importance at high speed) is added to the true wind with vector addition.

This increases the strength of the wind, as felt by the rig, which increases the power output of the sail, as well as changing the direction of the wind hitting the sail. This resulting apparent wind comes from further ahead than the true wind.

THE FUSION OF FORCES AND ACTIONS THAT ENABLE PLANING



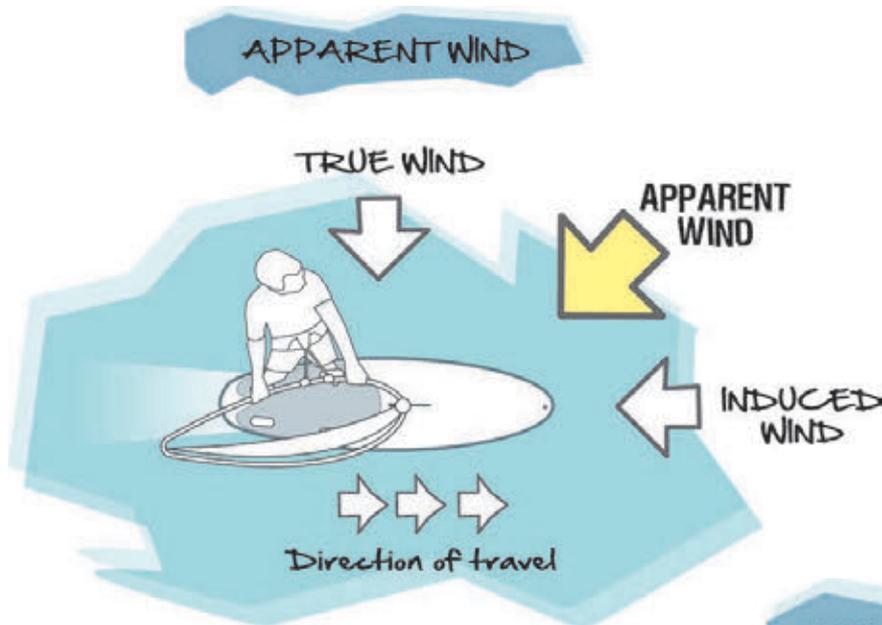
A planing board skims over the surface of the water, having reached a critical speed whereby vertical lift becomes the predominant upwards force

Things are being kept super-basic here. If you're not careful, a number of rather more academic factors can creep in such as wind shear, inverse cosines and quadrant ambiguity which are not generally at the forefront of people's minds when the sun is out and the wind is blowing!

What is important, however, is that the rider in the real world needs to pull the sail in closer to the centre line of the board as the speed increases and the wind is felt from further ahead.

Sailing on the apparent wind maintains the smooth flow of air over the sail, allows the board to be sailed faster than the wind and the world is a happy place.

The challenges come when we are windsurfing through the buffer zone between non-planing and planing as our equipment is fought over by the rival forces attempting to dominate it. What we do with our rig and with our weight on the board needs to change fluidly to meet the needs of these rules of physics at this time.

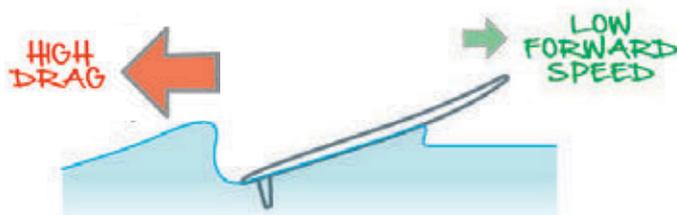


The sail is pulled in closer to the centreline as the speed increases and the apparent wind is felt from further ahead

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DRAG & FORWARD SPEED



A displacing board creates its own bow and stern waves and gets stuck between them



A poorly trimmed board will struggle to climb over its own bow wave



A perfectly trimmed, well-powered board is able to sit in front of its own bow wave and planing occurs

So there it is – a simplistic version of how a rider, successfully harnessing stronger winds, can enable planing by transferring the rig's energy through their body and board to reduce the board's drag in favour of vertical lift and, hence, greater forward speed. Once planing occurs and the fun intensifies, the only thing left to worry about is dodging those moored yachts - so join us next time for a 101 article on steering...

Simon Winkley is a RYA Advanced Windsurfing Instructor and a RYA Windsurfing Trainer running instructor courses across the UK and overseas. He is supported by Starboard, Severne and Bray Lake Watersports and provides windsurfing coaching holidays through Ocean Elements in Vassiliki

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Everyman engines 5m wave sails spotlight reviews

KARMA Info: <http://witchcraft.nu/sails/karma> **Price:** £561 **Offer:** buy two or more sails and get 20% off **FENIX Info:** www.avantisails.com/sails/fenix

WORDS AND PICS: WINDSURFING UK

WAVE SAILS. FOR SOME THE TERM IS OFF PUTTING. CONJURING UP IMAGES OF PRO RIDERS DROPPING BOMBS IN UNDISCLOSED TROPICAL LOCATIONS 'WAVE SAILS' AREN'T FOR THE EVERYMAN SAILOR...RIGHT? Upon closer inspection you'd therefore be surprised that once into 5m (ish) sail territory (and below) rider quivers are commonly inclusive of this very type of sail. Even if they'll never sniff a wave!

What makes a good wave sail – early planing, easy to depower, simple (enough) rigging and tuning and tough construction – are attractive properties for all types of high wind windsurfer, no matter where the put in. Also 5m is when things start to get a little more serious in terms of blow strength, but without being too hectic and needing to ride 'twitchy' kit, which is often the comment when some describe using smaller rigs.

Under the spotlight this issue we look at two head turning boutique brands. In focus is Avanti Sails' Fenix 5.2m (you can see the Fenix 4.8m write up online at windsurfingukmag.co.uk) and Witchcraft's Karma 5m. Both Dan Kaseler (Avanti) and Bouke Becker (Witchcraft) have a long history in windsurfing, as well as holding strong ideals about how equipment should be designed and produced.

A 5m sail is pretty much meat and potatoes for any type of windsurfer – right through the season. Surf heads will use this



Price: Fenix 5.2m €919; Spine 400 mast €619

“Launching for the first time it’s surprising just how much power the Karma has.”

size in fully powered planing conditions while many may utilise it as their biggest for float and ride. Beginners would do well using one while those fancying a bit of windSUP action are often out of 5m (or similar) rigs. And while not as efficient for freestyle and freeride they certainly work to an extent because of the traits already mentioned – read on for more.

Chameleon style – Witchcraft Karma 5m sail

Having recently visited Fuerte it’s not hard to appreciate when Witchcraft brand owner Bouke Becker says windsurfing equipment on the island has a hard life. Harsh UV rays from the sun, powerful, relentless Atlantic swell and in a lot of areas a sharp rocky/reefy coastline. As such any gear needs to be up for the job in hand. Those familiar with Witchcraft windsurf boards will know how durable they are, so it’s unsurprising WC’s sails are also built to last.

Witchcraft’s Karma 5m is exactly that – in the traditional sense of what a 5m looks like. Out of the box and it’s obvious it’s a sail built with the harshest environments in mind. There’s a lot of re-enforcement, across all panels, yet without too much weight added. It’s not the lightest 5m we’ve used but at 3.62kg it certainly ain’t bad either.

Two types of sail position themselves within Witchcraft’s range. The Slayer is a four batten affair, designed with quality, down the line waves in mind, whereas the Karma we tested is a more traditional looking five batten sail for conditions you’re most likely to encounter on a daily basis. Setting on a progressive bend mast (although we did try on a flexi top also, just to see the differences) it rigs easily and has an extensive tunable range.

Something we found was not whacking too much downhaul on is a good thing – particularly if it’s lighter, gustier or you’re a rider preferring grunt. Although it’s a five batten sail, rigging as you once did a few years ago is not the correct approach. Of course, as breeze strength increases you’re free to flatten the Karma off. But initially a fuller profile is best.

The Karma we tested came in bold white and orange livery – both colours are bright and shiny, although the white material does pick up muck and therefore needs washing off regularly (standard practice if you want to help the sail’s shelf life). Out on the water it certainly stands out – this was commented on a number of times.

On the water

Launching for the first time it’s surprising just how much power the Karma has. On a few occasions we enjoyed sessions with wind speeds right on the cusp of what we would consider to be fully lit conditions. In this instance a 5.3m would’ve been our choice but Witchcraft’s Karma held it’s own against bigger sails no problem. With a few pumps away you go, planing and up to speed quick smart.

Five batten sails are always slightly more balanced and composed in the hands than those with less. That said, the Karma has impeccable manners – ironing out gusts and watery wrinkles during each run back and forth. The bumpier and gustier the more this became apparent.

We had a few conversations with Bouke and his team who suggested more downhaul would see it slipping through the air with least resistance. Yet with minimal settings the same was also true. Witchcraft’s Karma is an efficient ‘engine’ for all your higher wind, manoeuvre orientated boards – not just wave sleds.

As mentioned in our intro many riders use 5m sails in cross over environments. While its wave pedigree is on view for all to see blasting back and forth atop freestyle/freestyle wave boards, chucking the odd manoeuvre, is perfectly applicable with the Karma. There’s also a good case for it being a beginner windsurfer’s first time sail. After all, the same bomb proof construction, making it applicable for all manner of surf environments, would see it coping well with first time falls and newbie progression.

Moves

For those into boosting moves Witchcraft’s Karma 5m has a degree of whip that makes it fun to power into all manner of tricks and spins. It’s not quite as compact as some but forwards and backies are no less rewarding – even off choppy lumps, as opposed to full on waves. Boosting from swell, however, is controlled without

being sedate. Anyone into high altitude contortionism will find the Karma an effortless yet dependable wing to get you soaring. If hiccups should occur, with riders landing hard, the Karma's construction comes to the fore and protects against damage.

When waves don't play ball Witchcraft's Karma 5m is a useful tool for budding freestylers. Coping well with sliding moves those impeccable manners ensure everything stays composed and efficient. It might not be the right choice for modern power moves, but if you've one eye on this side of windsurfing the Karma will allow sailors to develop the necessary skills to reach that level.



CONCLUSION

Witchcraft's Karma 5m is not what you'd think from first looks. If you believe you know five batten wave sails then think again. For starters the Karma takes durability and bomb proof construction to the nth degree – without sacrificing too much weight. For those after a sail ready to cope with pounding waves,

pumping shore dump or simply stand the test of time then the Karma could fit the bill nicely.

On the water it's a very well-mannered sail that laps up gnarly conditions – the gnarlier the better. Gruntier than you'd imagine in light airs riders can change down quickly and get the benefits of wielding a smaller sail sooner than others, potentially. When gusts increase tweak the settings and you have a wing that boosts you along in the most efficient manner. And its eye candy looks make it extremely desirable.

BOUKE'S COMMENTS:

I came in 1993 to Fuerteventura to work as a windsurf teacher at Flag beach. I had been making my own boards since 1983 in Holland and brought my tools with me to make a board in the storage room of the windsurf centre and started doing repairs. I then met Luca who I'd previously encountered in Barbados. We decided to team up and start a board and sail repair workshop in 1994. Luca then also showed me how to repair and make sails which can be quite addictive. I spent long nights in the loft. But over the years I was getting busier with shaping boards. In 2000 I got the distribution rights for Ezzy Sails in the Canary Islands and stopped making my own. Ezzy was the brand that most matched my philosophy. But of course I kept on having my own ideas on sail design which I often discussed with Witchcraft dealer John Blackwell, of sailrepair.co.uk, as well as David Ezzy himself. Over the years Ezzy's direction, both in terms of sail design and business, were diverting increasingly from my ideas. The desire to make sails again grew. John had often said we should make our own. Our ideas about sail design and construction are very similar and we did not see anything else that we really liked. Finally I teamed up with John to develop two lines of sails. Here on Fuerte, equipment has a hard life. We notice any flaws within six months – something that would take two years in Europe to become obvious. Sailing frequency, wave size, wear and UV radiation are far higher than you'd imagine.



Fenix rising – Avanti Sails Fenix 5.2m



Having interviewed Dan Kaseler (Avanti Sails head honch and designer – see website) prior to getting hold of the Fenix 5.2m we were intrigued by what we'd find. Coming in lime green livery the Fenix is certainly eye candy. Avanti's distinct branding also adds to the mix.

Avanti's method of laying up sails (membrane technology) is immediately obvious. There had been a lot made about the weight of the Fenix prior to laying hands on. Once sheathed (on Avanti's Spine 400 mast) lifting is a joy. OK, at this point no boom is attached, but 3.1g is impressive none-the-less. Avanti claim their sails are 15%-20% lighter than industry standards. While we didn't get chance to compare the Fenix is definitely lightweight. Having affixed a boom there wasn't much additional weight.

Unlike smaller size Fenix sails, which are four batten, Avanti's 5,2m is a x5 affair. That said it's still compact. There's a lot of clearance below the boom with it's cut in design. Added reinforcements – such as the Helix Leech Plys, a Teijin 8083 luff sleeve and anti-abrasion batten pockets – lend durability. Its Cobra Vision Window gives good visibility – even though it's smaller than many – without sacrificing integrity. All in, there's a huge amount of thought and technology running throughout Avanti's Fenix 5.2m – getting it afloat was a tantalising prospect.

On the water

Due to the Fenix's feather like nature you'd be forgiven for thinking there's no low end power. Yet during sessions when the wind was squiffy we'd only have to pump a few times to get up and planing. Our 85kg rider weight required a little less downhaul and outhaul in gusty winds and lighter airs. Even though it's five battens are plain to see the Fenix 5.2m does a good job of performing like a four batten. With increasing wind adding a touch of outhaul (firstly) flattened the profile but allowed what grunt there is to remain. Of course, sailors are free to add more tension but too much eradicates all rider feedback – some may like this, however.

A nice trait of the Fenix is it 'breathing' properly – riders can literally see this happening as the sail billows and flattens. Whether by design or accident the Fenix feels alive and subtle rider adjustments allows power to switch on and off at will. It has impressive range without becoming too much of a handful in blowy conditions. With stronger puff in the mix gusts do their best to pull riders off centre. The Fenix copes and remains composed – you can't fault its manners.

Moves

The Fenix is designed primarily with waves in mind. And yet, for any coastal sailor, who dabbles in waves, bump and jump and possibly freestyle, Avanti's Fenix 5.2m makes for a versatile 'engine', accommodating many different moods and scenarios.

If spinning into sliding freestyle moves the Fenix gives enough boost to pop but then depowers through the sail switch before powering back up (progressively) as riders require. The same performance benefits you'll find when wave riding make it applicable for vulcans, spocks, grubbies and such like. Obviously there are more specialist tools in Avanti's range for this discipline but it's nice to know the Fenix accommodates.

When boosting backies and forwards the compact nature of the Fenix allows quick but controllable transitions. Its whip (when forward looping for instance) is exactly what you need for stylish pole vaults – especially those with less height.

For wave riding it's a super-efficient sail. Probably at the top of purist wave sailor quivers, in terms of size, it's fitting for float and ride – there being enough power to pull riders along and get onto open faces – but remaining composed and throw around when breeze picks up. If you've ever aspired to fully laid down bottom turns, pro level style, the light weight of the Fenix allows a dynamic, forwards and full rail position. Surf orientated riders, who rely less on rig power, will love it.

CONCLUSION

As windsurfers – particularly in the UK with ever changing conditions – we need tools that can cope with a variety of scenarios. For some this size will fit many different requirements. Happily Avanti Sail's Fenix 5.2m is not only a bona fide wave rider/jumper, it's also applicable for sliding freestyle, carving moves and bump and jump. If the wind decides to go on hiatus then attaching it to a windSUP will also yield fun results. Manufactured in exemplary fashion, with a new take on construction, the Fenix 5.2m is an eye candy piece of kit that will win favour with a wide audience.

DAN KASLER COMMENTS:

My first job sail making was not glamorous. I basically swept up the floor and cut Dacron triangles for corner patches at the local Neil Pryde loft in Seattle, then later at the North and Shore lofts. I ended up eventually working for Rushwind and Hurricane. Nik Baker and Luke Hargreaves were the team riders and I had front row seats of Dave Russell and his team building extraordinary sails for the World Cup. In 2005 I moved over to Gaastra where I had a six year run as the head of the windsurf R&D. In boats I was competing on strung membranes and I became super interested in finding a way to port the technology over to windsurfing – essentially miniaturizing it and making it viable for mass production. It was super obvious that it was a superior approach to sail making. My first membrane was a one-off prototype for my home-made foiling Moth dinghy. It was so lightweight and durable, it was only a couple weeks later and I was straight into a 9.4m windsurf race sail. With Avanti all our sails are custom strung and laminated with CNC controlled gantry systems. The savings in weight and the ability to tailor stretch characteristics is a massive leap in material technology. Instead of cutting cloth off a roll we are literally custom making the skin of your sail to suit needs. For me this is night and day to the old paradigm.



PIERRE MORTEFON'S SLALOM WINDSURFING ACCESSORIES

NECESSITIES

1. Pierre Mortefon French World Cup slalom sailor PWA Slalom World Tour Title contender.

2. Board 'Falcon TE 138'

Pierre: "The Falcon TE 138 is one of three boards that I registered for the 2016 season. It's the biggest one. I use it for super light wind conditions from 7 to 16 knots with my 9.0m and 7.7m. Most events take place in really light winds – my 138L is the most important size of them all really."

3. Board 'Falcon TE 112'

Pierre: "The Falcon TE 112 is a true rocket! Perfect with any sail from 8.4m to 7.0m. When I race with the TE 112 it usually means that the wind is increasing and that it will be a super fast race."

4. North Sails 'Warp 9.0m'

Pierre: "The Warp 9.0m is very similar to last year's 9.0 LW. It was quite a revolution when we came up with that

design. There was suddenly no need for a 9.5m-9.8m any more, yet I still had the power to get planing and get out of the pack during racing. A smaller sail equals lighter weight and thus is easier to handle."

5. North Sails 'Warp 8.4m'

Pierre: "The 8.4m is one of my most important sails. This one and the 9.0m I use the most throughout the PWA season."

6. North Sails 'Warp 6.3m'

Pierre: "The 6.3m is my favourite sail. I'm from the South of France and the wind there usually is very strong. I like strong wind and I like small sails. The 6.3 is super fast and it has a huge wind range."

7. North Sails 'Warp 5.0m'

Pierre: "The 5.0m was my smallest sail. It's the one I use when the wind conditions turn nuclear. The design of it



WORDS AND PICS: AXEL REECE
PIERRE MORTEFON JOINED FANATIC AND NORTH SAILS SIX YEARS AGO. SINCE THEN, THE 2016 PWA SLALOM VICE WORLD CHAMP HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY INVOLVED IN PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT. HERE ARE PIERRE'S ESSENTIAL SLALOM WINDSURFING ACCESSORIES (OR SHOULD THAT BE NECESSITIES?)

was inspired by the 5.2m, which I used at the Defi Wind in Gruissan. Incidentally I won it for the second time.”

8. ION ‘Strike AMP Zipless 4/3mm’ wetsuit

Pierre: “The Strike AMP Zipless 4/3 features a clever, new zipless concept with Velcro at the back that makes it super easy to get in and out of. The wetsuit is truly amazing!”

9. ION ‘Onyx AMP Zipless 3/2mm’ wetsuit

Pierre: “The Onyx AMP Zipless 3/2mm is my competition wetsuit for cold event-locations. I always race in short sleeves and this is the best wettie I’ve ever had for when the conditions turn chilly.”

10. ION ‘Element Shorty 2.5mm LS’ wetsuit

Pierre: “I use the long sleeve shorty in warm conditions when I know I will be spending more or less the whole day on the water, like for example wave riding in Maui or testing slalom gear at home.”

11. ION ‘Cruiser Jacket’ (neoprene jacket)

Pierre: “The Cruiser Jacket is one of my ultimate cold conditions essentials. It’s in my bag as soon as there’s the slightest chance that temperatures might turn chilly.”

12. ION ‘Poncho’

Pierre: “You want to get changed and there are people everywhere? The poncho is the perfect solution.”

13. ION ‘Neo Beanie’

Pierre: “There’s always a neo beanie in the pocket of my neo jacket. Once your head gets cold, it’s all over.”

14. Three fins

Pierre: “Three fins, one for each board! These ones are ‘Chopper Fins’. They are handmade in southern Spain.”

15. ION harness ‘Radium’

Pierre: “For me, the Radium is the perfect harness. No matter if I want to sail slalom, in waves, or do some freestyle, I can always use the same harness, and that’s awesome!”

16. ION ‘Changing Mat’

Pierre: “This is a perfect accessory to protect your wetsuit and your car. Changing in a car park, the street or anywhere on hard ground can easily damage your wetsuit.”

17. ION ‘Boots’

Pierre: “I generally don’t like sailing with boots. Luckily at home in the South of France it’s not that cold so there’s no need to use boots. But for all the autumn and winter events, I travel with a pair of boots in my quiver.”

18. North Sail ‘Mast Extension’

Pierre: “For me the mast extension is one of the most important innovations in windsurfing in recent years. When I was a kid it was so difficult to downhaul the sail and I had to do it countless times for my sister as it was simply too hard for her! Besides making life much easier, it’s absolutely fantastic to now be able to tune my gear on the water.”

19. ION ‘Jacket’

Pierre: “This jacket is brand new. You could compare it to a sleeping bag really, although you obviously don’t sleep in it, then again, why not actually.”

20. North Sails ‘Carbon Boom’

Pierre: “North Sails booms are simply the best. Featuring state-of-the-art design, they are the most advanced booms in the industry. The North carbon boom is the lightest one across all disciplines wave, freeride and slalom.”

21. ION ‘Double Board Bag’

Pierre: “This board bag is one of my dearest travel companions. Super robust, it protects my racing babies perfectly. I often travel with five or six of these bags!”

MAKING THE MOST OF TASTER

DAYS

WORDS AND PICS: RYA

FOLLOWING THE OLYMPIC GAMES IN RIO LAST YEAR, 2017 PROVIDES THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO INSPIRE MORE PEOPLE THAN EVER TO GIVE WINDSURFING A GO. BUT HOW DO YOU TURN THIS OPPORTUNITY INTO ACTION AND RUN TASTERS AND OPEN DAYS THAT GIVE PEOPLE THE BEST EXPERIENCE TO KEEP THEM COMING BACK FOR MORE?



The nationwide RYA Push The Boat Out ‘have a go’ festival of sailing and windsurfing, will see hundreds of clubs and centres nationwide inviting people to get involved for free or low cost between 13-21 May.

Whether your club or centre takes part in this national focus event or you simply put on ‘try windsurfing’ events for your local community, the first impression can be the difference in someone just ‘having a go’ and signing up for more.

The Chase Sailing Club, near Walsall, and Hollingworth Lake Water Activity Centre, near Rochdale, are two organisations with great track records in converting ‘taster’ windsurfers into regulars. Mark Buckingham, The Chase SC Training Principal, and Alister Pittman, Duty Manager at Hollingworth Lake, help explain how to do it well.

1. Know your audience

Who you attract falls into a handful of groups – total newbies who have seen your event advertised, people who have windsurfed before and want to do it again and family and friends of windsurfers who want to have a go themselves.

Having kit available to suit all, adults and kids, is key.

Chase runs two-hour free windsurfing tasters as part of its club Open Day with around 50 people typically trying windsurfing over six hours, so Mark says kit variety is crucial.

“We’ll have Hifly Motions and Mambos and Starboards, with the full rig range from 2.5 up for people to try. We’re blessed as we have Boardwise right on our doorstep so they bring the latest kit for people who may already have had a bit of experience or are windsurfers, to trial too. This means there’s a real mix of abilities on the water at the same time, which is very aspirational for people having their first go.”

“The most popular rig for tasters tends to be 3.5, but it’s not uncommon to get some bigger men who insist they will need a bigger sail. It only takes one decent gust to convince them they actually don’t! You can tell pretty quickly if someone has tried windsurfing before so you can migrate them up a size easily.”

2. The value of a warm welcome

You never get a second chance to make a good first impression, so picking the right friendly face(s) to welcome people, and having good signage, that’s up early and shows you off to be a professional, well-prepared outfit, is so important.

Hollingworth Lake is one centre that hosted an RYA Push The Boat Out event last May, with pre-book £5 hour-long tasters on. But Alister believes as many people just drop in to have-a-go because they've seen what is going on, as actually book in advance, and Hollingworth is always ready to welcome both.

He said: "We find some people are more nervous about trying windsurfing than sailing as they don't want to embarrass themselves falling in. But when they see other people doing tasters it gives them confidence to try. We always keep slots available so people who may have come to try sailing but see windsurfing and want to try it, or those who might just be walking around the lake, can have a go too."

Social media, local media publicity, advertising, these are all important facets of raising event awareness, but word of mouth and drop-ins have proved to be the most critical things in getting numbers through the door time and time again.



3. Sense of achievement

Both Chase and Hollingworth have clear taster session plans. On arrival at Chase visitors are welcomed to the clubhouse where they are asked what they're interested in. Wannabe windsurfers are taken to a lifejacket station, they then get 10-15 minutes on a simulator before being issued with a wetsuit and then getting on the water with one of six RYA instructors or experienced windsurfers. The aim is to get them sailing in a straight line and not falling off.

It's a similar routine at Hollingworth, as Alister continues. "Tasters introduce the absolute basics. Using the simulator enables us to demonstrate board-balancing technique, what happens if you stand on the side and in the middle etc, and doing static turns. Once people are on the water we have a mark laid and the aim of the session is to get round the mark and get back."

4. Give people a pathway

You want to capture the immediate buzz that comes from achievement so use the post-taster time to let people know what they can do next, RYA courses and beyond.

Chase, for example, has Thursday night windsurfing with further informal tuition and intermediate clinic-



style sessions, while people who miss the Open Day and/or who would like to do a course but want to try it first are can go along for a pre-arranged taster session. The club's Friday night socials are also a big draw.

Hollingworth offer a 10% discount on RYA courses for people signing up at Push The Boat Out, while they run regular additional tasters every Sunday with pay-and-play kit is available for people with a bit more experience too. Meanwhile kids doing windsurfing as part of a five-day holidays multi-sports course package get £7 a week membership to Hollingworth's activity club, which includes Team15 and doing their RYA windsurfing Stage 3 and 4. Many of these go on to become instructors too.

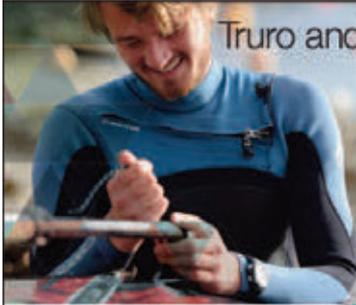
5. Whatever the weather

Everyone wants bright sunshine and perfect beginner breeze. But don't despair if it isn't like this. Clubs and centres that stay open even on 'bad' days often report they get better course and membership uptake, as these are the super keen bods.

You can still show off your facilities and give visitors a real feel for who you are and what you offer, including possibly getting them on the simulator. Plus it gives you another chance to invite them back!

Mark concludes: "Windsurfing runs all year round at Chase, but it's now we start seeing new faces. What we do works for us and we're looking forwards to the year ahead."

To find out more about Push the Boat Out visit – www.rya.org.uk/go/PTBO



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