

WINDUK SURFING

Issue 10 March 2019

ADAM SIMS

As far as he can

BOUKE BECKER

Sail design

BUSIN'

with Toby Edmunds

MARIA ANDRES

in focus

RICHARD ATTREE

author profile

WAVE SAILING SUCKS!

COOKIE'S VASS

WAVES ON A BUDGET

+

TECHNIQUE:

SIMON BORNHOFT WINDWISE &
SIMON WINKLEY FUNDAMENTALS

TESTED:

MISTRAL QUIKSLIDE BOARD COMPARISON

SLINGSHOT WIZARD 125L

PATRIK QT-WAVE 103L

TABOU 3S+ 96L

SEVERNE NANO 93L

S2 MAUI ALCHEMY 5.7M

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Sitting here beside my daughter's hospital bed I'm reflecting on these last few weeks. Molly rests as I write. It's early and she's still in recovery mode. This will be ongoing for a while. Having had an auxiliary liver transplant – with mum being the donor – we have everything crossed for a swift return to normality.

Just a few days before Molly was admitted to hospital she learned to ride her 'big girl bike' properly and swim without flotation. Shortly after, having endured another bout of sickness, I noticed a subtle yellowing of the eyes.

Everything then moved fast. Admittance to Portsmouth QA revealed she was indeed jaundice – the cause, at that point however, was undiagnosed. As Molly turned more yellowed the decision was made to blue light her to King's College Hospital, London: THE leading medical facility for liver disease.

Molly deteriorated further. With her liver failing and escalating ammonia levels, causing encephalopathic episodes (seizures), Molly was sedated, to keep her safe, and put on the super urgent transplant waiting list. We were heart broken – I have tears in my eyes now as I think back.

Not hanging around mum put herself forward to be living donor. (We also had willing family and friends step up – something that completely blows me away).

Surgery took place, the operation being a success. With Fi's being described as a beautiful liver (something that astounded all of us when you consider our previous life as windsurfing instructor seasonaires) it was a perfect fit.

Seven days post-op we're now monitoring Molly closely. Mum has already been discharged, although it'll take time for her to fully heal. All through this I've felt helpless, which is a horrible thing. Not being able to do anything for your offspring is awful.

As you can imagine windsurfing hasn't been a priority. Yet once we're back home there's no doubt we'll be back on it as a family. In fact, writing this I'm determined we'll get back to normal. There's nothing more pleasurable than watching my one-year old son (who we've not seen for nearly four weeks!) and Molly playing at the beach, splashing in the shallows and enjoying a very coastal upbringing.

I'd like to thank all the medical professionals that have helped Molly so far. And the support from family and friends has been astounding. I can't convey just how much thanks I/we want to give. We love you all.

Hopefully you'll enjoy the first Windsurfing UK of 2019. And fingers crossed it's a good year, radar blips aside...

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NEW KIT REVIEWS

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Richard Attree



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HOW TO STAY PLANING FOR ALL LEVELS

WORDS: SIMON BORNHOFT **SAVE TIME, ENERGY,
MONEY AND BEING**

PICS: WINDWISE, KATE OCEAN AND **LEFT BEHIND!
HOW TO PLANE
EARLIER**
JONNY CLOTHIER

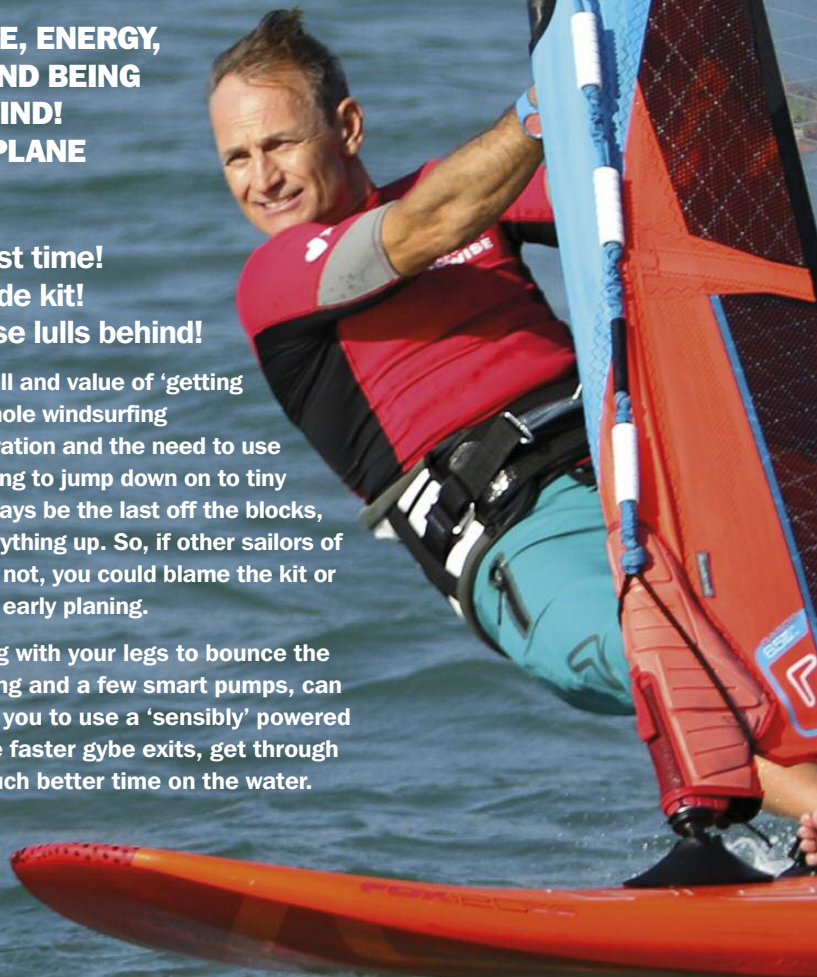
BEGINNERS: get that planing buzz for the first time!

INTERMEDIATES: get more out of your freeride kit!

ADVANCED-PROs: wave, freestyle leave those lulls behind!

No matter your level, board volume or size of sail, the skill and value of 'getting planing early' makes a phenomenal difference to your whole windsurfing experience. Good technique saves energy, reduces frustration and the need to use or buy oversized sails and boards. I'm not advocating trying to jump down on to tiny kit, you just don't want to be sailing over-powered, or always be the last off the blocks, bogging along needing a double digit sail size to fire everything up. So, if other sailors of similar stature, board and sail size are 'going' and you're not, you could blame the kit or Windguru, but the chances are it's time to work on YOUR early planing.

You don't need burn off downwind pumping and thrusting with your legs to bounce the board onto the plane. Simple, wise, efficient early planing and a few smart pumps, can transform how quickly you plane, stay upwind and allow you to use a 'sensibly' powered sail. Plus, those who improve early planing always make faster gybe exits, get through waves and shore break quicker and generally have a much better time on the water.





10 COACHING WINDWISE TECHNIQUE



Early planing is much harder when you 'move down to smaller boards' (often too soon) or simply the wind drops more than you'd like. However, even on exactly the right size board and sail, you'll get 'slow starters' with tails sinking, boards luffing, decks submerging and seemingly stuck to the water. Most people struggle to 'get going' because their board is NOT flat and the rig is too SHEETED OUT, and the back leg is over-weighted. All of this is due to destroying that Windwise '7' shape stance by over flexing the mast arm and front leg. All of which kills your early planing potential.

How you actually learn to plane early...

These 'wise' words and core skills are applicable to any early planing situation, be that beginner, expert, eight-metre 140L+ on a lake, six-metre first time planing on a 100L or four-metre on a wave board if the wind drops! So enough faffing, let's get going!

Windwise early planing principles

Vision: look forward, not at the kit. It's more important than you'll ever realise.....

Trim: flat is fast. Both feet MUST be forward!

Opposition: getting that rig forward enables you to angle the body back in a more dynamic position.

Stance: to create acceleration accentuate our Straight 7 – with a very tight torso! As the board accelerates sheet the rig in and back and lean forward.

Counter intuitive moment 1 – HEAD UPWIND...FIRST!

It is a bit of a fallacy that you must constantly or massively bear away to get going. Doing so often leads people to stand too far back on the board, sink the tail too much and sheet out.

Heading upwind allows you to bring both feet forward to help flatten the board and sheet the sail in. Also, if you look upwind you'll see the gust coming, so you can be proactive to drop, push and work that rig just as the gust hits, rather than feel the gust and be too slow to react.





STAGE 1: GETTING PLANING

Run through this sequence and exaggerate everything on the water...

Right skill right time

Photo 1 HEAD UPWIND 1st – FEET FORWARD

Start by coming forward on the board and dig the windward rail to help get upwind. LOOK, spot gusts, gain ground and crucially help sheet the rig in. This cunningly enables you to place the front foot next to mast base (pointing forward) without being pulled over the front. The rear foot lives right next to, or in super light winds. even in front of the front straps!

Photo 2 EXTEND and PUSH – RIG FORWARD BODY BACK

On the gust, extend from leg and mast arm and push the rig forward, forward, forward! Tighten your torso as if trying to do a plank. Straighten and drive through the front leg to drive the board forward. Flex the rear leg to reduce weight on the tail. Sheet in and down on the boom as you drive the board just off a beam reach. The moment the board planes, the common issue is to hunch too much, flex the arms, legs and weight the tail...slurp! Do all you can to hold that '7' stance.

Photo 3 LIFT and LOCK

Immediately the board starts to accelerate, hook in. But be warned, it's very common to hunch after hooking in, so accentuate that Straight 7 'lift and lock' style stance, really straighten and tighten the torso to transfer that precious power straight through the body to the board.

Photos 4 and 5 FRONT STRAP = RIG FORWARD/BODY BACK

The tail will always sink, but we must keep the rig forward, when going for the front strap! In super light winds, or if you're pumping, you can actually slip the front foot into the strap and then hook in. But either way, note how the feet are very close together, to help TRIM and avoid excessively sinking the tail. Once in the front strap, if there is sufficient wind, you can sink in that harness and blast away, but often the board stops and slows at this point, when going for the back strap.



STAGE 2: HOW TO STAYING PLANING!

Counter intuitive moment 2

RIG BACK BODY FORWARD (photos above)

In a decent breeze, you have time to sail for a bit, sink down in the harness, bear away and gain speed. But if you're only just planing, you need to act quickly and counter intuitively head slightly back upwind, yes upwind! So, as soon as the front foot is in the strap, rake that rig back and bring the hands forward, with a narrow superlight grip, rear hand touching that harness line to sheet in and throw the body forward. You do this to get the airflow working over the sail. If you bear away too much at this point you risk standing up and sheeting out, which acts like a massive brake! Purposely leaning forward makes it easier to sheet in and back with the rig. It also puts more of your weight onto the mast base (which helps trim) and makes un-weighting the back foot, to slip into the rear strap, easier = win, win! Note how my lean forward helps to push the nose down to encourage acceleration.

Q. What do i do if that doesn't work?

A1 Firstly, check you're on the right board volume, sail and fin size compared to others of similar stature who are planing. If not, pump up the volume, sail size and fin size.

A2 Learn to pump...efficiently.

We're not passengers and the wind required to get going if we just sit in the harness requires about 4-5 knots MORE wind than if you give the rig a few pumps. Being too static, sheeted out and heavy on the back foot is the non-planing virus of the world. Sometimes YOU HAVE TO WORK IT!

Poor pumping

Pumping doesn't have to be an excessively physical action or burn the calories of a Tour de France cyclist. It's common to see bodies and legs 'thrusting' away using loads of effort but with little reward.



Low calorie pumping

All it should take if 6-7-8-9-10 finger-light micro pumps to get a board planing. This can be done in the harness- 'lock the torso' in that exaggerated Straight 7, using 'three fingers' on the clew hand to do 5-6-7-8-9-10 light micro pumps to create the drive. "The secret to energy efficient pumping is to keep that torso as locked and straight as possible and just pump on the back hand." If you pull on the mast arm or hunch too much that instantly sheets the sail out and loses the value of the pump.



Pumping sequence

Right time right skill

- To create the 'pump', pull in and down with the clew hand to bring the clew towards the centre line.
- As the sail resists, lock an extended front leg to drive the board forward.
- As the clew comes in, it's imperative to force the mast forward in a scooping action ready for the next pump.
- Throughout, 'try' to keep the hips high, body locked tight and still!
- Once planing, immediately adopt a Straight 7 'lift & lock stance'!
- If it is windy enough you can sink down hard in the harness to increase mast foot pressure.
- But more often than not, rig back, body forward is the secret recipe too getting going quickly.



Strong wind early planing!

This might sound like a contradiction in terms, but actually it's just as important. In strong winds, you still want to get going early, but you want control, so sink into that Sunken 7 'Drop & Push' style stance. Body back, rig forward to get low and drive that board flat and forward and marginally downwind! As the board pops on to the plane, lock into the harness, into the straps, rig back, body forward.



Strong wind pumping

If you're lucky enough to be nicely powered up, then drop lower than your low calorie pumping position and whip that clew hand IN as you force the mast hand FORWARD. Once the board accelerates 'sink down and OUT in the harness and push the board away from you with the front leg to get outboard. If it stalls, get that look and lean going.



Gybe exits

The moment after switching the feet and releasing the rig is when 'non planers' stand up. If you want more control and even the slightest hope of exiting with speed, work on that low 'Sunken 7' stance to help get that board to accelerate.

14 COACHING WINDWISE TECHNIQUE



WISEWORDS

Front foot roll!

Rolling onto the front side of your front foot, allows you to lean forward, without over flexing the front leg. In extreme situations you can adopt a 'Warrior stance, by looking and leaning over a front knee, but that should be the last resort.

Hips not hands

It's very common to 'over pull' on the arms. It's not a pull up! So try a few hooked in pumping runs where you lightly hold the boom with only three fingers on each hand. It helps to prevent a gorilla power-sapping grip! It makes a massive difference! Also practice adopting a narrow arm spread as it enables you to lean forward with more meaning!

Loving lulls

In zephyr like winds there often isn't enough wind to support you in an outboard position. But we still have counter balance forwards and backwards. It is amazing how much you can use the rig as a counter balance and stay hooked in and planing by leaning forward MASSIVELY. On the water, it's this 'opposing' the rig action that gives you the greatest chance of staying planing. Narrow grip and front foot roll, really helps here.

Common Mistakes

Q. I've heard you can pump through the legs to un-stick the board?

A. You'll see elite level racers on large finned boards, 'pushing' through the legs. However, unless your rig pumping technique is timed to perfection, pumping through the legs or bouncing the board usually ends up with people over weighting the tail, stalling and killing any benefit.

Q. Why does the board stall when I try to get planing?

A. Too sheeted out, back foot too far back or over weighted. It's quite common to stand too far back on the board and try to bear away to get going. A 'flat' board sailing across the wind with feet forward will get planing quicker than a sunken tailed board heading downwind.

Q. Why does the board come off the plane after getting into the harness or straps?

A. This is usually down to flexing the front leg and mast arm way too much. Pulling on the arms excessively and very often not opposing the rig with the body so the tail sinks. Try to adopt a stance like the photo in Loving Lulls!



Simon says

Early planing and pumping does require effort, the problem is that it's often misdirected. Your summer will seem windier if you follow the wise words and photos we've highlighted here.

Simple summary

Vision: Look forward.

Trim: Feet forward and remember your opposition mantra.

Opposition: Rig forward body back to get planing. Rig back body forward after hooking and getting in front straps to keep planing.

Stance: Tighten that torso for early planing acceleration with a super light narrow grip on the boom.

Kit Wise

Is it you or your gear?

1. Flat rockered and or wide boards help early planing, which is why you'll see freestylers whip a 100L board along on a 4.7m when others are on 6m 120L Freewave boards.
2. Is your fin big enough? If the board is slow to go, finning up slightly could make the difference.
3. Set a slightly higher boom to unweight the feet and promote early planing.
4. Correctly placed harness lines! So make sure you can touch your rear harness line with your rear hand.
5. Is your sail too flat? Excessive downhaul and especially outhaul hinders early planing.

We'd love to help you with your early planing and every other aspect of your windsurfing. Check out our 2019 UK tune-ups and overseas Windwise experiences. As ever if you have any technique requests, questions or suggestion please send to info@windwise.net

Make your move in 2019 www.windwise.net



SIMON BØRNHOFT
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NORTHERN LIGHTS: THE STORY OF 'AS FAR AS WE CAN'

WORDS: ADAM SIMS

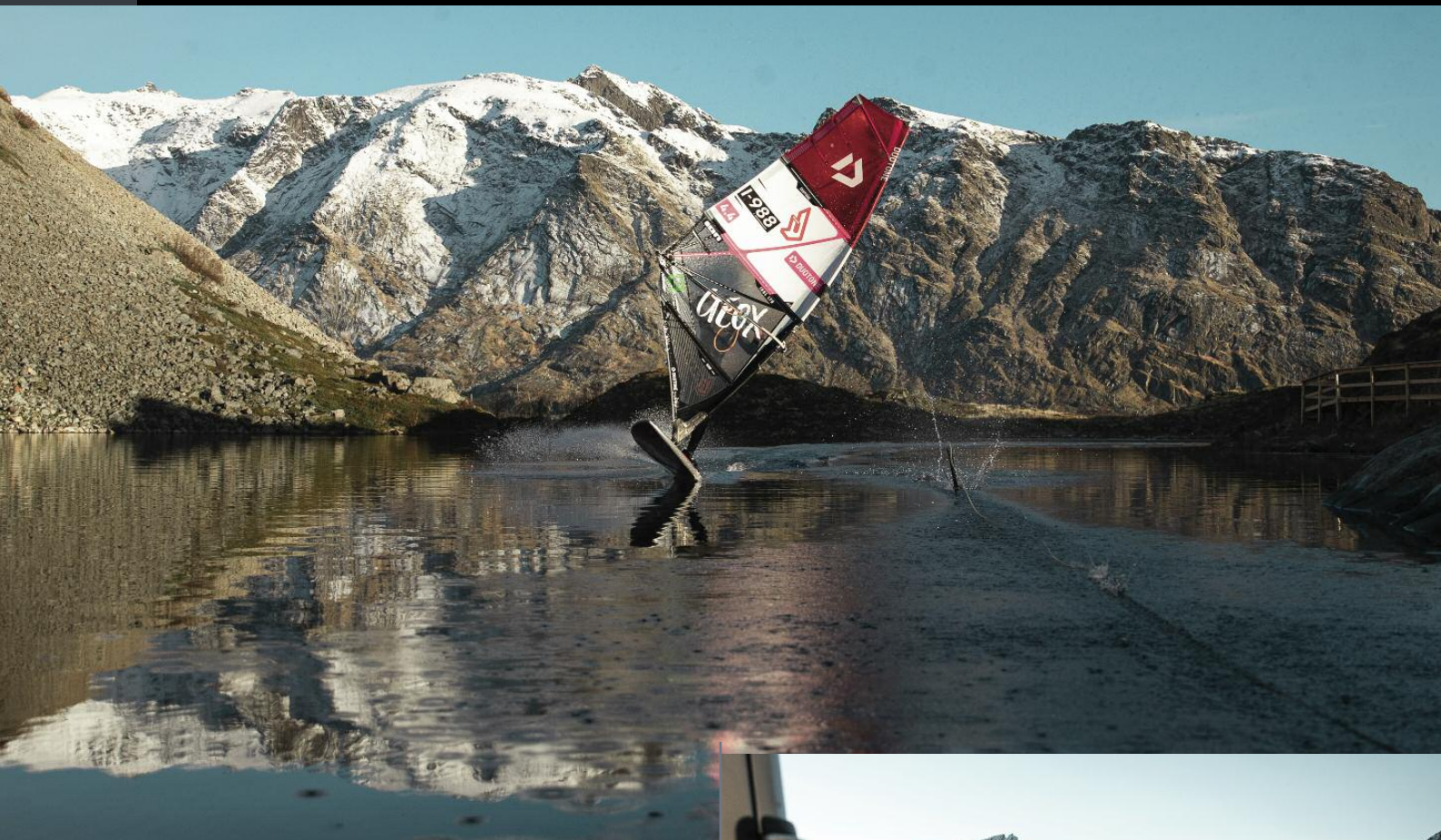
PICS: MATT SIMS, ALINA SHALIN, ADAM SIMS AND
RICCARDO MARCA

IT'S 9AM, STILL DARK, THE VAN IS FROZEN OVER AND SHAKING LIKE HELL FROM THE WIND HITTING IT. WE ARRIVED WELL AFTER DARK, SOME FERRY WE HAD LUCKED IN ON, SHOWED UP LITERALLY AS WE PULLED UP TO THE PORT AND TOOK US BY NIGHT TO THIS SMALL ISLAND FAR OUT FROM THE NORWEGIAN MAINLAND. We had been led there by an ambitious social media audience who voted on our stories for what we should do next, the options were to drive an overnighter as far north as we could, or take a detour along the coastal 'road'.

The uncertainty, the extreme weather and total lack of research into where we had ended up, was the exact reason I woke up in the back of the van with a huge grin on my face. To me, this was what I live for, the discovery of unriden spots far from any crowds. Ok, there was a moment's hesitation as I opened the door and got smacked in the face with what felt like an iceberg, but a second later, I was facing something that was beyond our imaginations.

I was there with fellow freestyler Riccardo Marca, we'd decided to head north just a few months before when we sat down over a pizza and beer at the B-Side restaurant in Fuerteventura. "I wanna go somewhere different, like not the usual places," Riki had said to me. I thought for a moment and remembered my short trip to Lofoten the year before, "Let's go north, after PWA Sylt and EFPT Holland are over," I answered – and that was the start of it.





A few months later and here we were, the island of Gladstad, off route from where we had originally planned to go and only our third day into a three-week trip. Our first scheduled stop was up in the ferry port of Bodø, where we would take the four-hour trip across the treacherous Vestfjorden to Lofoten. Then it was two weeks exploring a previously scouted Lofoten, the long drive back and with quite a few added kilometres for Riki who would have to make his way all the way to Italy.

Windsurfer's paradise

Back to Gladstad, we'd woken up, the spot looked like this awesome place in Naxos, Greece, but quadruple plus-sized with the extra sides. Kickers, waves, flat spots, it was all there – a windsurfer's paradise, all with a sandy bottom, a few seals kicking around and scenery that's out of this world. And did I mention already, this was just the third day!

We'd scored from the get go, as we were just a two-man team for now, Riki got going first whilst I setup the cameras, and even the drone, the wind strength was strong, unbeknown to me and to my drone, we didn't quite realise how strong, it was very nearly a case of weather 1, drone 0. Fortunately, whilst the drone was drifting away immediately after launching (in sport mode, that's a flight speed of 44mph), I remembered the time I flew it in Tarifa's famous Levante wind. So I brought the drone super-low to level of the bushes and rocks, which slowly it returned to me and eventually further up and out over the water to a very fast rigged and riding Riki.

Usually you really take half an hour or so to become comfortable at a new spot, you sail different, it's kind of a mindset you have to get in to. Here we had to be 110% from



the get go, the drone had very limited battery life in this wind, there were few gaps between the rain clouds and damn it was cold to be the one doing the filming. The session was on, air-kabis, double moves, triple combos, then some ramps for jumping. Suddenly this came to halt, I smacked my boom across my head right on my left eye socket, that was painful, seconds later my vision was turning orange!

I came straight off the water, blood was streaming into my eye and Riki was like, "Man, you might need stitches." We were on an island, nowhere, did they even have any kind of shop here, let alone a hospital or medical facility. I decided to become my own surgeon, taking the edges of plasters as steri-strips and a bandage, I was fit for halloween but keen to get back on the water.



The following day the swelling came up and stuck with me for another further week, in the meantime we missed the ferry we needed to get off the island. We'd let our guard down, being so lucky on the way here, we figured that's how it works here, ferries run like buses, except this bus wasn't coming to the island again for another two and half days.

Bodø

We had to be in Bodø the next day to meet my girlfriend, Alina, who was flying in to join us, as well as my parents who decided to drive up and meet us along the way. We back tracked, took three other ferries and finally arrived in time to watch Alina landing.

Taking the next ferry to Lofoten, we arrived in the early hours drove down to Å, the most southern town in the Lofoten Islands peninsula (<https://goo.gl/maps/LWBZ8hZaWyT2>). It's a beautiful place, as impressively scenic as the rest but with little opportunity to hit the water we moved on up to Reine, the most iconic town in the region. It sits across a handful of small islands, interconnected with very modern bridges, whilst wrapped in snow capped mountains that plunge vertically hundreds of metres straight into the ocean.

Whilst being totally overwhelmed and consumed by the scenery, we quickly began to realise that huge mountains and windsurfing rarely go hand in hand. Fortunately, we were here for more than just one reason. Windsurfing and

kitesurfing (Alina is kiting), were certainly a priority, but if conditions were on the edge or worse we had a plan B, C, D, E and so on. Mainly, I'd organised a winch, we drove this petrol smelling machine all the way up here and we were ready to use it.

Tow-in has never really been a discipline I was especially fixated on, but when you inadvertently do well, you take interest in it. Clocking up some unexpected titles over previous years in the international scene I decided it was

time to actually do a trip where tow-in would be a part of it. Hence, the exact reason we were able to access and shoot at some of the sickest, most scenic spots I've ever been lucky enough to lay down windsurf moves. As a result, we quickly clocked up a selection of epic shoots, it's just each time we would shoot, the sun would shift behind another mountain or an unanticipated rain cloud would suddenly appear overhead. The weather and daylight, were the two most stressful factors, even with the ability to shoot anywhere, anytime thanks to the winch, we were still caught out more often than not.



An endless battle

All the while, between the winch shoots we kept our eyes focused on the forecasts, trying to score sessions where the wind perhaps funnelled between the two mountains, or some pressure on the lake that was a bit higher up, or maybe waves wrapping around the corner to meet wind dropping down the mountain. It was an endless battle of extreme localised weather versus my experience. I'd say it was about 50/50, but again if a spot wasn't working, then nearby or even at the same spot we could get the winch out.

As the days passed we found that the surrounding areas of Reine and Flakstad were really the most impressive places. There were plenty of different angles between the mountains and we managed to mix up a couple of windsurf and kite sessions with quite a few winch sessions.

A swell came in and we scored the locally famed spot of Unstad for surfing. Unfortunately to get wind with the waves is almost unheard of there, so despite having such awesome waves, it was out of the question for a session with the windsurf/kite gear. This was a futile hunt that had us consumed day in day out, just one session with wind and waves, we wanted to jump, to ride.

With no luck and time running out, there was one option, we took the winch



and found a spot, small waves, good kickers and it was on. It took us back to the occasional event where a boat would offer up a wave for us during competition, it was pretty fun to fly high at last, to really get some bigger freestyle moves in the bag.

Looking back, I'd personally say that Lofoten is one of the most stunning places I have visited, I will go back again in the future, the surf there is incredible as well, and it's totally worth visiting. From a windsurfer's perspective, we found much better conditions further down the west coast, within the islands there.

With so much unexplored, uncharted terrain on the windsurfers map, you can be sure there are spots along this coastline that are world-class – be that for freestylers, freeriders or wave sailors. You just have to go in blind at some locations with faith in your knowledge and experience of weather, the ocean and the forecasts. Ultimately you've got to be prepared for the true spirit of adventure to take over, to go as far as you can.

Between the winch shoots we kept our eyes
focused on the forecasts, trying to score
sessions where the wind perhaps funnelled
between the two mountains



Thanks

I'd just like to say a special thanks to our crew who all went above and beyond in these conditions to shoot and capture what we were able to show now. For us we hope it is the start of something much bigger, so watch this space, in the meantime feel free to check out the free movie on YouTube, 'As Far As We Can' and to follow and subscribe to our channels to help support and push projects like this further.

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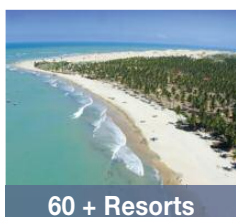
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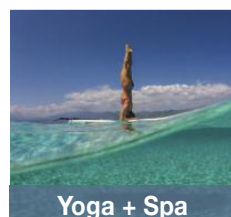
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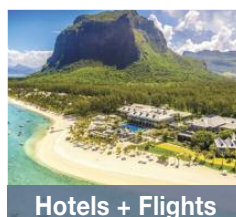
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Blasting in the footstraps in
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KIT SETUP AND TUNING FUNDAMENTALS

PART 2: FOOTSTRAPS

WORDS: SIMON WINKLEY

PHOTOS: MIKAEL LINDER (INTO FIRE AND WATER), ALEX IRWIN (SPORTOGRAPHY.TV) AND SIMON WINKLEY

BACK IN THE DAY I WORKED AS AN INSTRUCTOR AT MOON BEACH IN EGYPT – A MAGICAL YET BLEAK PLACE WITH STRONGER AND MORE CONSISTENT WINDS THAN I HAVE EVER FOUND SINCE. The magazine of the day, *Boards*, used Moon Beach as a test centre and it was at this point that, as a fascinated and inquisitive observer of the testing, I really started to get a feel for kit setup. The testers – typically using new kit they had not used before - would pay more attention to their rigging and tuning than the regulars who sailed at the spot. Not only that, they tended to do a few runs before returning to the beach to tweak the settings a little until they found something that felt just right. This was a level of connection to the kit that I had not really noticed before and, speaking to the testers, I could tell that it paid back in terms of a better session afloat.



In the last article we looked at the importance of setting up our kit correctly to include sail/mast/extension, boom length, mastfoot position, boom height, outhaul and harness lines. I continue now with the all-important subject of footstrap setup and, with the exception of a few comparative references to other kit, I will be keeping it true to freeride basics. I hope to communicate some useful ideas and to encourage you look at your footstrap setup to see if there's anything you can do to tweak it for the better and, perhaps, to try some new things.

The importance of footstraps

Getting into footstraps at planing speed is the gateway to becoming a true windsurfer. As the direct connection for the only part of our body actually touching the board – our trusty feet – footstraps could not be more important. They provide a level of traction and grip that would not be possible by just using friction to stand on the board.

They have an adjustable nylon webbing/Velcro construction with integrated covers made from a range of materials to include neoprene, fabric made from recycled PET bottles, minimalistic lightweight racing materials and the latest neoprene-free Yulex. Yulex is new to Starboard for 2019 and this is the first time footstraps covers have been made from a material based upon natural rubber. One exception to the Velcro type of strap is the dual windsurf/kitesurf DaKine X-Lace Wave footstrap which has an external lacing system which is pulled until the right fit is achieved.





Replace long before the footstrap degrades into more layers than a Viennetta!

Struggling to get into the straps because they are wonky, have been trodden flat, are neither positioned nor sized correctly, slip open, are split apart or are generally turning to dust will make controlling a planing board harder which will cause frustration, slow progression, waste time and make any session less fun.

Footstrap size

Imagine wearing shoes that are too big or too small. Walking around would be weird and running would be rubbish. Like a dancing shoe on foot that can't stay still, footstraps need to

be just right - even when you are using rental equipment that perhaps lures you into a quick grab and dash for the water.

The size for freeride should be adjusted to be neither too small nor too large. If you have big feet, for example, and you get on a friend-with-small-feet's board then you will experience the mild panic that comes with trying to tiptoe into footstraps that are too small for you...no one wants to carry a polo stick with them to smack their foot into the straps on the go. Too large and - imagine if you slipped and your whole leg went though up to your knee - erm, no.

The perfect sizing should be one that is comfortable yet not tight and so you can see all of your toes through the strap. If you fall off then your feet should easily come out but you do not want your feet to slip out as you are blasting along. I like my straps to be a little loose whereas a freestyler who needs a guaranteed emergency exit for an aerial bailout will have them much looser and twist their feet to get a good connection to the board when they need to.

Think about the season: most of us wear boots all winter for cold UK conditions and then, when we go back to bare feet in the summer, we have to make the straps a little smaller or they would be way too loose now that the boots are off. Then when it gets cold again and the boots go back on we need to open the straps up a little or we run the risk of getting our feet stuck in them. If you are working on your carve gybes there is nothing that will ruin the latter part of the carve more than having your old front foot jammed so hard into the strap that you are unable to release it smoothly when the critical time comes. So if your carves are smooth only up to the

**Can't see all the toes?
Too tight**



**All of the toes through and comfortable yet not too tight?
Just right!**



**Lots of foot protruding?
Too slack**



Big gap above foot? Not as efficient for lifting toes to dig heels in to flatten board when overpowered



Heel too far inboard to control lift from fin? Too slack



Small or no gap above foot? Good for lifting toes to dig heels in to flatten board when overpowered





The stages of connecting all the parts of the footstraps



point that the old front foot has to twist out of the strap to come across the board then loosen them up a bit and see what happens!

If you're lucky your footstraps will have strap-size indicators printed on the inside. If so, then once you have set one footstrap up perfectly (ideally with a fin-less board flat on a mat on the ground to avoid damaging the board/fin) then remember which number you lined up when connecting the first parts of the Velcro. Then repeat that on the other straps and there will be no need to use your foot again to measure them. After setting the size of all of them, quickly pop your foot in each one as a final check to make sure they are ok before you head out.

Footstrap position

A taller person will need a wider spread between the front and back footstraps to provide a stable base for their height whereas a smaller person requires a narrower spread. Measurements are typically taken from the rear screw on the front strap to the front screw on the rear strap (on the same side of the board of course). The measurement will be taken using the centre of the screw heads and, for general freeride kit, is likely to be between 38cm for a smaller person and 44cm for a taller person. I am 5'8" (173cm) and use a measurement of 40.5cm, with 0.5cm to 1.0cm less on smaller freewave boards.



Measure the spread between the back screw of the front strap and the front screw of the back strap on the same side

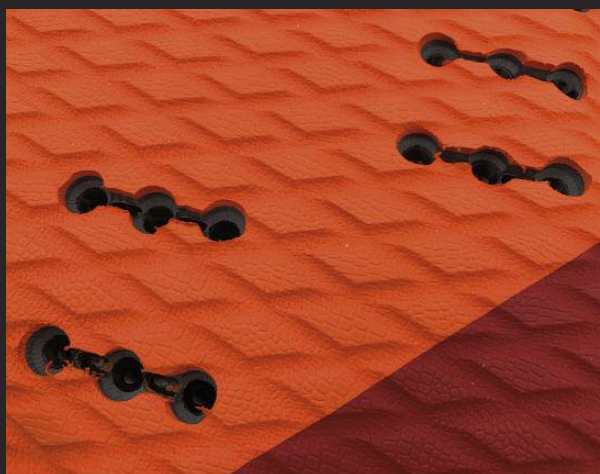


The range should be 38-44cm. For me it's 40.5cm on a freemove board

A freewave board of approximately 100 litres is designed to have either:

- a) four straps outboard (for powered-up blasting) or
- b) two straps inboard on the front with a single back strap (for waves or easy carving)

The strap-free photos below allow you to see the positioning options clearly



Most boards will have 3-5 holes per insert. It is not necessarily the case that you will use, say, the front hole of the set for the front of the strap and the front hole of the set for the rear of the same strap. The width of your foot (in or out of a boot) and the spread should dictate which holes you use. Trial and error can be a good thing here until you find something that feels right for you.

Inboard or outboard?

The front and back straps can be positioned further in towards the centreline or further out towards the rail of the board. Generally speaking it's better to have the straps more inboard when learning to use them (whilst going at gentler planing speeds) and more outboard when you're ready to go faster. Inboard straps are easier to get into yet make flattening a well-powered board much harder. Outboard straps are harder to get into yet are better at keeping a board flat at speed as weight is positioned on the rail for maximum leverage against the lift from the fin.

On the other hand you might consider inboard straps for easier control of the board when carving. Using a short, wide, carve-oriented freemove board or a smaller, lively freewave board with inboard front straps makes it way easier to carve smoothly into a gybe than a board that has footstraps pinned to the rail. Yet, as already mentioned, having the straps inboard for easy carving means less control when full-power blasting at speed. So there's a compromise to be struck here depending on what your priorities are. You can always slide your heel out of an inboard strap towards the rail a little if you need more leverage at speed to keep your board flat. If the straps are outboard, however, you probably won't be able to slide your foot further in for smoother carving.

Sometimes people learning to get into the back strap might have outboard straps on the front (to keep the board flat in stronger winds) and inboard straps – or a single centre strap – on the back (to make getting in easier). This can work for those who need the experience of using the back strap to be as easy as possible yet caution is needed. When the front foot is on the edge of the board yet the back foot is inboard on or towards the centreline, this will direct the rear shoulder inboard resulting in the back arm sheeting out which can cause a loss of power. Once confidence has been gained (assuming that the best place for the front strap is still outboard) then the rear strap should be moved to the outboard position as well. This will enable the body to face the sail, allowing the back arm to pull the sail in properly.

A very wide slalom board will have only one option of a very outboard setting. This is to allow all the body weight to be positioned right out on the rail to lever the board flat against the maximum lift created by a longer-than-normal fin powered by a larger-than-normal sail. Getting into the footstraps and carving this type of board, however, is not easy.

On some very wide, high-volume beginner boards that double-up as entry-level intermediate boards you might see a



A 91cm wide iSonic 147 slalom board with very outboard footstraps

rather confusing array of sets of screw holes in odd places. Some of these can be really far forward next to the mast and/or on the centreline. I have even seen them in front of the mast! These 'placebo positions' are not entirely helpful as they encourage the feet to be in the wrong place and cannot possibly control any lift from the fin. They do not help the board to be sailed well and users of them might feel that they have 'nailed the footstraps' when actually they haven't really started. Avoid using those positions unless you simply like the look of footstraps on your feet when you glance down – and in that case you could always glue some straps to your feet to give the appearance of being in them wherever you stand – including walking back up the beach or hanging out later in the bar...

If you're not sure how the inboard versus outboard thing feels then I really encourage you to mix it up a bit and to give some different settings a go – both in straight line and carving mode.

Three straps or four?

For freeride boards above 100-110 litres with a wider tail (especially modern shorter/wider freemove boards) you should be using two rear straps to control the lift from the fin as you flatten the board. As you step down to a freewave board around 100-110 litres then you have a choice of either single or double rear straps. Much less than that and it will be just a single back strap as the tails get narrower. A wave-oriented board with a narrower tail will have a loose





Blasting with control is only possible through the use of footstraps – often locking the heels down by lifting the toes to flatten the board

single back strap to enable the board to be carved either way using full toe or heel pressure with the foot remaining in the strap. You don't want to be taking your back foot out to carve a turn on a wave! Whatever your choice of back strap you will always need two front straps of course!

Footstrap screws

A windsurf-specific stainless screw is needed with a very deep thread - so raiding your neighbour's shed for a random screw is unlikely to achieve much. To move the position of the footstraps (or to put them onto a new board) then you must have the right screwdriver. Avoid using a power drill/driver at all costs. Whilst some busy rental-centre-ninjas know the exact torque of a footstrap screw and use such power tools with finesse, the risk of over-tightening and ripping a hole in your board far outweighs the time or energy saved compared to using a manual screwdriver. Stubby screwdrivers can blister your hands as they make it hard to tighten the screw properly so you need a long one for plenty of torque.

Incorrectly sized or tipped screwdrivers can shred the head of the screw causing 12 levels of pain later when the head is too damaged to enable the screw to be removed. The vast majority of footstrap screws require a size three Philips screwdriver. That's a large, plain crosshead, not a Pozidriv one (with four extra points on the tip) and not the smaller size two version more common in toolkits and DIY stores.





Special long, course-threaded screws and spiky inserts are needed to keep the strap secure and to prevent twist



I see screws being damaged all over the place by badly-fitting screwdrivers. A damaged screw with sharp burrs can also cut through the neoprene flap which is supposed to be covering the screw to provide comfort as you step on it.

Footstrap washers

Unless you have the less common footstrap with a double screw at either end (sometimes used on a wave board for the back strap), footstraps come with a single screw either end with some sort of anti-twist washer which locates in one of the other holes and grips the bottom of the footstrap as the screws are tightened. If you have problems with your footstraps twisting into unusable shapes then incorporating a set of these should help to keep them from twisting around. A stainless washer is also required on the top between the screw and the strap. This stops the screw head cutting through the webbing material of the strap and some also have 'teeth' on the bottom to provide further anti-twist assistance.

When you get your kit out next time why not unscrew your straps and check that they are in good condition and that the screws and washers are all present and correct? A trip down to your local windsurfing shop to get some friendly advice will enable you to replenish any of the items that are missing or damaged. Carrying a couple of spare screws and washers is a good idea in case you move a strap and something falls off into the sand. You might also be able to bail a fellow windsurfer out if they have hardware issues in a remote place.

A final tip is to consider storing and transporting your board using tennis balls or a piece of swimming noodle/woggle to hold the natural arch shape of the footstrap. This will stop them getting squashed flat over time and keep them perky so that your feet can slide in and out of them like a dream...



Seven similar screwdrivers but only the middle one is good for most footstraps

So there's plenty of info there to be getting on with. Remember to try some new things if you can to become a fluid and informed user of the footstraps.

Next time, to complete the kit setup, it's all about fins: how they work, fin boxes, sizes, types, materials, how many you need, care of them, etc. Subscribe today to avoid missing out!

Simon Winkley is a RYA Advanced Windsurfing Instructor and a RYA Windsurfing Trainer.

Sponsors: Starboard, Seve, K4 Fins, Flymount, Bray Lake Watersports & Spinlock.

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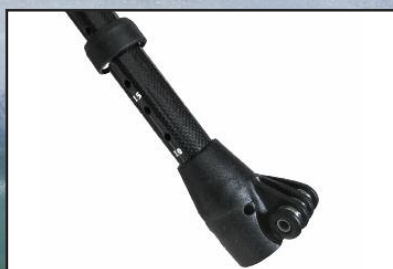
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34 FEATURE WAVE SAILING



COST EFFECTIVE UPHITZ WAVE SAILING ON THE CHEAP

WORDS: WSUK

PICS: JAMES JAGGER

WHICHEVER WAY YOU LOOK AT IT, BRAND NEW WINDSURFING GEAR IS A SIGNIFICANT CHUNK OF CASH TO PART WITH. SOME ARE IN A POSITION TO COUGH UP THE READIES WHEREAS MANY AREN'T, INSTEAD RELYING ON THE SECOND-HAND MARKET TO OBTAIN EQUIPMENT.

Windy gear has come on leaps and bounds since the 80s, 90s and early noughties. Equipment is now lighter, more robust and boasts so much more user-friendly performance than yesteryear. Therefore anyone in the market for used kit is going to find something applicable from the last few years. To test this theory further we got involved to see what's out there and investigate wave sailing on a budget.



The real world

When we talk about wave sailing there are generally two types, as most will probably be aware. There's the idyllic down the line, groomed corduroy wave sailing scenario that you tend to find at Cornish breaks like Gwithian, or further afield in spots like Tiree. Then there's the more usual and real world type of wave sailing that you come across at most other beaches, featuring smaller less powerful waves, usually onshore to cross on and most likely with blowier weather in the mix.

For this article it's those real world conditions we're sticking with, utilising breaks around the UK's south coast, for our investigation. To some degree this will dictate the type of kit we use and how it performs on the water.

Choosing kit

Whether you're looking at new or used gear, you'll need to base your choice of kit on where you think you're most likely going to be doing the majority of your sailing. It's no good going for a 'surf' orientated windy board if you're local haunt is the south east for instance. Same with sails. Rigs billed as 'pure' (or words to that affect) may work but you'll probably do better with something described as 'power wave' or 'onshore wave'.

Brands use a whole variety of colourful jargon when naming equipment which can make it confusing. If you're looking at a particular piece of gear and can't decide if it's right for you then stop and consider the name. It may be you're none the wiser, in which case some research will need to be undertaken.



It's no surprise that the most popular equipment choices in the UK fall under the freestyle wave banner. FSW boards and sails are generally 'do it all' tools that will cover many varied scenarios. Even though there's a myriad of performance differences within this genre, FSW should be versatile and deliver a fulfilling experience, whichever brand you choose.

Our choice

The locations for our wave sailing sessions generally mean windy conditions, with quite a bit of chop and current running with small to medium sized waves that jack up quickly as the pulse in question hits shallow water. Waves are quite 'bowly' as opposed to 'set orientated'. As such we need a board that's early planing, fast on the straight, good for jumping (as

this is often a requirement in real world conditions) but can still turn tightly and fit into small wave pockets.

Our sail choice also needs to be reflective of the board we're using and give good low end early planing power, yet be manoeuvrable and adaptable for both jumping and riding. Twin fins, although now not as common, do offer loose and manoeuvrable carving agility that allows riders to change direction super quick. As we're talking about windy conditions something around 80L (for our 85kg rider) gives just enough float but plenty of control. This combined with a 4.2 four batten freestyle wave sail, which has plenty of low end grunt and whip for moves such as loops, is a great set up for the style of windsurfing in question. This generally means full power planing straight off the beach, rocket airs, forward loops, backies and pushies. Our rider doesn't tend to gybe that much out back instead preferring fast tacks to keep upwind and stay close to the peak which peels right. (This is where a relatively stable board comes into play). It's then full power back towards the beach, dropping into a wave to complete two to three turns, the final hit ending on a close out in the shallows.

The cost

Scouring the used gear pages of the internet will yield plenty of equipment available for a good price. A 2010 board, such as the RRD Wave Twin 82 used for this article, will set you back around £300ish. We swapped out the stock fins for a pair of K4s, of which prices are on that brand's website. Although Tushingham Sails are now defunct you can get hold of their rigs easily via second hand market places. In this instance we're using a Tushy Edge 4.2m that was priced £150. Boom is a Severne Metal and the mast a Tushy 400. The kit in question totals under £800 all in.

Now we appreciate that riders will want/need a quiver of sails, in which case you may be able to find a set of the same type for a steal – especially if you go a few years older like the one featured in this article. All in you could be on the water for under a grand. Add in a bigger board for more versatility (or actually choose a large one board only quiver) and you can see you could end up with a complete quiver for less than a brand new windsurfing board on its own.



Buying second hand isn't for everyone, and we appreciate that new gear offers benefits above used kit. If you can stump up for new then we'd recommend it. If you can't however, and want to tackle a bit of swell action then it can be done cheaper than you might think.



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EAT, SLEEP AND DREAM WINDSURFING in SAL



**WORDS & PICS:**

PLANET WINDSURF HOLIDAYS

WHEN THE DARK, COLD AND WINTERY MONTHS START IN NOVEMBER, WE DON'T BLAME YOU FOR SPENDING HOURS AT THE DESK DREAMING OF SUN-SOAKED BEACHES AND ISLAND LOCATIONS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DEEP BLUE SEA. Combine this day-dreaming with thoughts of barrelling down clean waves on a windsurfer, and we're hooked.

However, during those wintery months in the Northern Hemisphere, very few destinations offer that elusive combination of daily sunshine and clean, consistent, reliable winds that blow every day. In the far reaches of the world, in South America and South Africa, you may get your fix, but if you don't have the time or budget for an epic break of those proportions, then there is really only one place to go...



And that is the island of Sal. Planet Windsurf Holidays has the scoop:

As one of ten islands that make up the archipelago of Cape Verde, or Cabo Verde, Sal is a dreamy destination for sun seekers and windsurfing fanatics. Located off the coast of north-west Africa and south of the famed Canary Islands, Cape Verde offers a unique holiday destination in the northern hemisphere winter months. Situated only a five-hour flight from the United Kingdom, Cape Verde is the only super-reliable short hall destination for a windsurfing holiday during winter.

The windsurfing

Sal's position within the winter trade-wind belt supplies steady windsurfing conditions from November until May. It is a fantastic destination for intermediate to advanced windsurfers looking for a great wave spot where you can build on your skills and practice your gibes and tricks. When it comes to the windsurfing in Sal there are three main spots; the main bay of Santa Maria where the accommodation is, Ponta Leme which is great for blasting and offers some of the best all round windsurfing on the island, and of course Ponta Preta for down the line wave riding. Sal is not ideal for learning to windsurf, and is best suited to water start level, although a full range of courses are available for those who are up for the challenge.

On the main Santa Maria beach, the cross-offshore or side-shore wind from the left enables effortless upwind sailing to various sections of the beach. Here you will find some small easy waves for those that want to gibe and windsurf in a safe spot. The centre here also has some big beginner boards for those renting or just starting out. This four kilometre stretch of sandy beach is also ideal for lazy days spent simply soaking up the sun. For intermediate and experienced windsurfers and enthusiastic wave novices, Ponta Leme is perfect. Here you will find a large blasting area with an easy, rolling swell that results in clean, unbreaking waves up to two metres. It truly is



a windsurfer's paradise. Guests who need smaller windsurfing boards (e.g. anything below a smaller Fanatic Gecko 133) can rent suitable equipment here. A shuttle service is offered between these two centres free of charge.

For those looking for waves of epic proportions, the most famous and photographed wave spot on Sal is at Ponta Preta. Here you will find an extraordinary three to six-metre wave peeling just 50 metres from the shoreline. This is only for advanced windsurfers as there is cross off-shore wind (perfect wave sailing direction) with no safety cover.

Where to stay

Accommodation in Sal is limited, although the island is becoming increasingly commercialised. If you are looking for a homely, character-full accommodation that still exudes the culture the island is famous for, you can't go wrong when you book a stay at the Morabeza Hotel. A holiday here is an experience to remember. This family-run establishment is located right on the beachfront on an enviable position at one of the most beautiful beaches on the island, while still being an easy 10-minute walk into town.





The hotel started life as a private family home, and this welcoming friendly atmosphere can still be felt in the hotel today. Staying here is like visiting a small village quarter, full of trees and flowers. Offering a fantastic quality of accommodation, combined with amazing restaurants and bars, it is great for windsurfers and non-windsurfing partners and families alike. Sea view terraces, a laid-back surf vibe, a beach restaurant, three swimming pools, and three bars, all add to the fun at the Morabeza. The Morabeza Hotel is also located just a three minute walk from the windsurf centre on Santa Maria beach, or 15 minutes to Ponta Leme.

For those looking for other things to do in Sal, the main activity, aside from windsurfing, is scuba diving. The dive centres have an excellent set-up and offer a full range of courses. The waters off Sal are a diver's paradise with wrecks, rich tropical underwater flora and a massive array of fish while a unique volcanic topography with rocky ridges, pinnacles, boulders, arches and caves, adds to the experience. From February to June whales are often seen and you can see plenty of turtles from June to September.

For those looking for a relaxing break, filled with food, fun and sun, then Santa Maria is it. The town centre has a few clubs with regular live music, restaurants and bars with a friendly buzzing atmosphere.

Ready to start planning your next windsurfing holiday to Sal?

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MIXING IT UP: THE COOKIE INTERVIEW

WORDS: SIMON WINKLEY

PICS: WWW.PROTOGRAPHYOFFICIAL.COM

WHILST ON HOLIDAY IN VASSILIKI, GREECE LAST YEAR IN EARLY SEPTEMBER I HEADED TO THE COSMOS HOTEL TO GRAB A COFFEE WITH COOKIE (SIMON) FROM NEILSON, A LONG-STANDING, PROFESSIONAL SEASONAIRE. I wanted to find out about his windsurfing journey and the eye-catching stunts that I had seen filtering through the social media channels all season. The temperatures were lovely, beginners were progressing in the early morning light onshore winds and the week had delivered reasonably strong cross-shore winds every afternoon, filling the bay with good energy.

Hey Cookie, thanks very much for agreeing to the interview. To start – how long have you been into windsurfing and what got you involved in the first place?

A pleasure. It's been about 15 years. I started dinghy sailing on the South Coast when I was at college. I then went to work for Sunsail at Club Vounaki (now Neilson) in the Kirki Bar in the evenings. I worked late, slept in, windsurfed then worked late again. That gave me loads of on-water time. I just loved windsurfing and I've done it ever since.

Do you do much in the UK now?

No I'm overseas all the time – visiting the UK for a week at the most between seasons. I can't even remember the last time I windsurfed in the UK actually. I don't even own a wetsuit!

That's awesome. So when you're out here in Vass what's the main style of windsurfing that you're into.

You know I'd love to say it's freestyle but it's not actually been regularly windy this year, as in really windy. It's been more like steady 6.5, 7.5 weather so we've been doing big sail blasting/freeride things and the old school stuff has come back in. I'm loving back-winded gybes, donkey gybes, Essex ducks, all the stuff that you can do happily on a 6.5-8.0m sail and a big board. People are looking and going, "Wow that's cool." It feels great and the guests can relate to it.



WIND
SURFING

Perfect – we could almost see resurgence in that kind of stuff. Tell me about your role as Resort Manager with Neilson.

My job is to make sure that everything runs as smooth as possible. Everything from transferring and rooming the guests to equipment, structure of sessions, safety and instruction. Developing my team is key. I take great pride in helping them to get better at their personal stuff and that reflects directly into their teaching and customer service.

That sounds like a dream role for someone who has a passion for running a hotel whilst still being able to get out on the water loads.

Yeah we work right alongside the hotelier Stelios who takes care of hospitality, housekeeping, kitchen and bar. We sort the operational side of things and there's 16-22 of us depending on the time of season.

Your journey with Neilson, what year did you start and how did you get to the position that you're in right now?

I started with Neilson in 2006 in Lemnos. I arrived with the incoming guests on the opening day of the season – and was ushered down to the bar, told to quickly put on my uniform and stand next to a wall. I was instructed to smile, welcome the guests and ask them to keep walking. I later found out that the wall I was standing in front of had got wet paint on it! I loved that season and I kept switching between beach,

But once you've got a nice picture of you blasting along, dragging a hand, sticking your tongue out, etc, you start thinking about what else you can do.





bikes, kids club, tennis, waterski and doing random stuff. I used to think, “*You want me to do what? Cool – I can do that, let’s give that a go,*” – and it was great. I did the same thing for the next five or six years – officially a beach member but happy to do anything. Through this I became experienced and multi-qualified and the knowledge grew as I trained. Ultimately, after about five or six years, it made sense to move me into a beach manager role.

I think that a lot of people aim for that a bit earlier don’t they, so they maybe don’t explore all those roles that you’ve done?

Yeah, a lot of people get involved and aim immediately to become a manager. I had no aspirations to do that when I started as I was just enjoying training with people that were more experienced than with and having a management team that I could look up. So when I actually stepped into the role

I was fully ready for it. I did a couple of years as a beach manager in a range of resorts across Greece and Turkey as well as Dahab. Then I spent five years as an activity manager in both smaller and larger resorts. Coming to the Cosmos Hotel in Vass this year has been a case of taking everything I’ve known from the larger centres and just making it more personal – perfect for getting to know the guests really well.

Now, a while ago I started to see some spectacular photos of you doing stuff on the water that was pretty different so let’s talk about that.

Indeed! Almost every day when it’s windy we have the Protography guys out on the water snapping away. But once you’ve got a nice picture of you blasting along, dragging a hand, sticking your tongue out, etc, you start thinking about what else you can do. So we just started trying to make some silly pictures for a bit of fun. From body drags to sitting



on a board fully planing and that's how it started. One day I wondered if we could get a photo of me reading a book. So we grabbed a novel from the book-swap rack which happened to be a classic: *Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austen. It stayed in the photographer's bag for two weeks until we decided to go for it. I've never had so many people giving me strange looks on the water blasting up and down trying to hold this book! Blasting was fine but trying to tack or gybe using two fingers without dropping it was interesting. I've never read the book yet I have read one particular sentence 10 times at least.

Yep I love that photo and the pondering-beard-stroking-thing you've got going on. What else have you done?

We took a kids buggy out on a Gemini Tandem with a member of staff. I originally strapped a doll into it to see if it

would work and to wind up the kids club manager to make it look like I had taken a baby windsurfing (she went a bit mental!) Another time I was teaching some kids and it got too windy for them to hold on. I wanted to give them, one at a time, a full-speed experience so we tied a rope to the front with a wake boarding handle and I stuck a big sail on the back. It was pretty exhausting and really hard work to control it but great fun – the kids were buzzing as we were overtaking so many people. On the Gemini our yoga instructor did a headstand and a wheel at full speed!

I saw a recent photo in a suit!

That was supposed to be a James Bond thing and I had a Martini glass in one hand. It was working well and I was approaching the camera boat at full speed holding the empty glass. Then, suddenly, I thought that it would look much



I've never had so many people giving me strange looks on the water blasting up and down trying to hold this book!

better if the glass had something in it. Honestly I don't know what I was thinking as I went to dunk the glass in the water at 20 knots and of course the glass just got ripped out of my hand. So in the photo I looked more like a random guy in a suit than James Bond. Actually, if you look closely you might see that my tie is made from a cut-up Severne sail bag!

Future stunts?

I wanna get someone on my shoulders - one of the smaller female members of the beach team to see if that would work. It's gonna be hard to hold on - she's gonna need some abs and to hook her feet under my armpits...

That would be amazing. It's almost like going back to the days when people were rail riding, doing the splits and smashing out body rolls inside the boom. But that was at slower speeds. Putting the fun back into it is what I can see happening here.

Absolutely. I can do a lot of carving stuff in windsurfing so I thought about how I can make it entertaining for me and break the cycle of just doing the same gybe over and over. This was my way of making it fun, making it silly.

Is that the secret to keep people engaged with windsurfing so they're not going off and finding other things to do...just keep pushing?

Yeah. It doesn't need to be specifically pushing the limits though, rather doing different things. I teach skiing a lot in the winter and it's the same thing - how can you break the cycle of doing the same old routine? How can you make it fun? Let's do something a little bit different. I'm not taking about windsurfing in a 3.0m storm or skiing off a cliff but just breaking the habit, breaking the cycle. I get my team to think about how they can keep their seasons fun and interesting. Maybe they can start getting into biking, fitness, something different so it's not the exact same thing over and over again.

And that keeps the connection to the sport I guess, helping us to stay focused...

...and fresh and new and interesting, not getting stale doing the same thing.

I like that. Last question. In just one word, what's the secret for longevity in the windsurfing business?

(a pause, a smile) Variety.





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A PASSION FOR THE **OCEAN**

INTERVIEW: IÑAKI LOPEZ ESPARZA

PICS: JOHN CARTER, SI CROWTHER,
ALEX HASCH AND KLAAS VOET

MARIA WAS BORN IN THE SOUTH OF SPAIN. AFTER STARTING WINDSURFING AGED EIGHT, SHE HONED HER ABILITIES ON THE CADIZIAN COAST. SHE HAS BEEN HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL IN ALL WINDSURFING DISCIPLINES AND HAS ALSO BEEN PART OF THE

SPANISH OLYMPIC TEAM. Her career took a new turn when she discovered the world of waves and it was this and her passion for the ocean that took her to some of the most beautiful beaches in the world in search of the best waves and wind in order to prepare for the competition season and to push her own limits.

One of Maria's goals has always been sharing her experiences through articles or videos, being nowadays a content creator for travel and sport magazines and editor of SUPING Magazine.

The world needs to know how amazing these watersports are and how healthy its lifestyle is, says Maria.

How did you get into windsurfing?

Before I was born, my dad and brothers were already windsurfing. I grew up watching them sailing, at a time when windsurfing was very popular. I remember messing around at the beach between hundreds of colourful windsurfing sails when my brothers were competing... The beaches were crowded and everything was painted with flashy colours, a very appealing scene for a kid! Sometimes my brothers took me on their boards and I started learning windsurfing when my brothers settled the first windsurfing Club in my beach, in the Bay of Cadiz, I was eight, so it was a perfect age to start. I was always around, so when a beginner couldn't make their way back upwind, that was my time to sneak a board for a few minutes to sail back to the school area so they could start practicing again. They were the best five minutes of the afternoon!

How did you discover waves?

Even though I have windsurfed and competed since I was eight, I only started to try to surf a wave on a windsurf board at the age of 21. I had stopped competing in Olympic Class and I heard that Morocco was wavy during these months... I took the ferry with my sister and drove to Essaouira. At this time I really had no clue about how to surf a wave but little by little I started wave riding... getting many wipeouts, swimming so much, losing a sail and making my sister worried. I knew how to sail and being in the ocean didn't scared me, but I was really not familiarized to wave riding. I tried to learn all at once, which wasn't the best way, but it is how it happened! After a few weeks, I was riding some waves!

Since discovering wave sailing I had the intuition that my life was going to be pointing in a different direction. At that point I was studying psychology but during that trip to Morocco, I stopped studying, I knew that was not me and that wasn't my life. Now my life revolves around surfing.

I started spending more time in places where I could windsurf waves. My van found her spot in Moulay and Fuerteventura a few months every year, then Portugal, France and the next step was travelling further afield and getting to surf some of the best spots in the world, like Maui or Tahiti... Since then I am living a little of a modern nomad life.







You started competing very early...

I only sailed during the summer up to the age of 11. Then I joined a kid's school/team in the Andalusian Federation – it was awesome! There so many kids sailing, training, competing and travelling together every weekend – I learnt so much during those years! I started in Aloha Class, then Mistral and finally Olympic class. Not much later, when I was 15, I was already part of the Olympic team, training super hard and travelling and competing all over the world. It was a great experience. Meanwhile, I used to also sail in Formula Windsurfing. After stopping competing in Olympic class I started to be more interested about wave sailing.

What are your best results in competition?

In Olympic Class, I won a couple of Spanish Championships and the National Cup, I also finished second in the Raceboard World Championship when I was only 15! I won the Formula Windsurfing Nationals seven times and finished third in the Europeans.

In 2010 I had a very bad injury to my foot and the doctors told me I should forget about any sport. After a long recovery I started doing some cruising around, just straight lines, I couldn't even think of wave sailing again. The feeling of gliding and speed was so unreal and I re-started windsurfing with more motivation than ever! Since I couldn't wave sail, I started doing a lot of slalom and freeriding. This took me a few months later to compete in the nationals and to the beginning of six years of slalom adventures around the world! In slalom I won the Nationals five times and finished fourth overall in the PWA World Tour of 2014 and second in the 2016 IFCA Slalom Worlds.

Despite what doctors said, my foot was feeling strong, so I started wave sailing again! I had a great result in the PWA Aloha Classic in Hawaii in 2014, finishing in sixth place, I was so happy about that! The level of competition was very high and all the local girls were there! In Peru, I also finished second in the Pacasmayo Classic! During 2018, I had my best wave sailing results so far, finishing fifth at the PWA in Morocco, winning Chile and Baja IWT, fifth at the Aloha Classic and finishing second overall at the IWT.

When did you decide to make it your way of life?

When I was around 12 our school teacher 'Pepi' asked my class what we wanted to be when we grow up. I remember

to my surprise when everyone answered, "I want to have a house and a family" and they thought I was joking when I answered, "I want to live on a remote island with palm trees and windsurf." I wasn't!

I can say I knew from a very young age the lifestyle I wanted to live. Since I started competing around the world when I was 14, I understood the opportunity to have goals, fight for them, trying to do better every day, whilst I was seeing amazing places and meeting extraordinary people... it was making me who I am. I was receiving lessons and values that a 'normal' life wasn't going to experience. I was feeling grateful and knew the direction I wanted to go. Best of all, I could live this through windsurfing!

Windsurfing is a very complex and technique sport, which can be extreme giving you an adrenaline rush! The complexity of the sport is so limitless that you can windsurf all your life and always keep learning – this is what makes it so addictive. Being an outdoor sport where you see life from a different perspective (the ocean) is another of its qualities and on top of it, it is also beautiful and attractive to watch! So yes, I knew that I wanted to make windsurf my way of life.

How did you make it happen?

When I was competing in Olympic class it was easy and organized with budgets from the federation or government to cover the costs of the trips, etc.

When I moved away from Olympic windsurfing, it was harder to find support. I was winning all the nationals in formula, which helped me to get some boards (Starboard), but that didn't last long. Then Renato Morlotti offered me a place in the Gun Sails team. I couldn't believe it! After 11 years competing with their support, with the help of Wet Tarifa I had the chance to move to Fanatic boards. That changed everything. I am in the SUP and Windsurfing Fanatic International teams and besides results in competitions, they also like my articles about trips and want me to do more – it is a dream come true – surfing and creating travel articles! After another year, I also moved to North Sails, now DUOTONE, the sponsor of my brothers when I was a kid... I feel blessed to have the chance to use the best gear and be part of such a great team, I am super proud of all my team mates!





How is travelling the world by yourself with so much equipment?

Hahaha, it can be tough sometimes to travel with so many boards and sails! You need to love what you do, if you don't, forget about it! It gets too complicated, especially when planes – and specifically some airlines are involved where you learn to fly only with the surf friendly airlines. A few nights before travelling I start to get nervous, because you never know what mood the person at the check in will be... but this is just the beginning... you need to get to the spot... you need a taxi that will accept all your board bags (forget about it in Europe or USA), or leave everything while you go pick a rental van in town. At the end, it always get solved and it ends up being part of the trip! Most important is to keep calm and in a good mood, you are on a surf trip!

In the windsurfing world we all have lived through this and we try to help each other as much as we can, like a big family. I've helped people coming to my area in Spain and I have been helped so much in all of my trips! Without this support

from so many people, I would have never being able to do as many amazing trips I have done! I can't write all the names here, but THANK YOU so much to all those friends that have helped me during my trips!

I have travelled alone quite a lot, which is so much fun! You have totally freedom to schedule your activities and you get to know all the local people, something that isn't easy when you travel with a big group.

How is the atmosphere in women's windsurfing?

The women fleet is like a family. We spend very long periods living together, travelling and sharing – we care about each other. Despite what some people might think, even though we compete, we also motivate, push and support each other to improve and get to be a better sailor. Most of the year we stay in touch and organise trips or projects and we always work together on trying to make the women windsurfing scene bigger and motivating new girls to join.



During 2017 we have produced a few videos of 'Windsurfgirls' showing our sport, what we can do and how our lifestyle and community can be also attractive to people who never experienced watersports before. We want people to know our sport and try it and we want to share the stoke, to motivate more girls to join us! Windsurfing seems to be finally becoming more equal in opportunities to both genders, since now the prize money is equal for men and women in the IWT and maybe the PWA will start soon doing the same, as the Gran Canaria event already did last year.

Your favourite conditions

I love pure surfing conditions... three-metre glassy peeling waves, light winds, not too powerful, not too mellow, like a medium day in Middles in Ho'okipa or a good day in Pacasmayo... I guess everyone likes it like this! I am more used to sailing starboard tack but I am goofy, so I find it more natural and read the wave better in port tack. When it is big I love the feeling, but when it is smaller I like it better because I feel more confident to go harder and push to improve!

Your favourite spots

I really like Moulay in Morocco, Jericoacoara in Brazil, Fuerteventura, Pacasmayo in Peru and Maui. Tenia Wave in the outer reefs of New Caledonia was like a dream... but that trip is complicated, so I just feel super lucky to have had the chance to try it a few times! There are also some amazing spots at home in Cadiz, glassy long wave with Poniente in Caños, Perfect side off Levante in Cortadura for wave riding, the unbelievable flat waters in Sancti Petri working with different wind directions... and many more spots... Cadiz is such a great place to windsurf and also to surf!

But there are so many places I still want to go.

The best about surfers

Their vision of life, to live and understand the world. Somehow surfers have understood time, nature, life, joy... about being right in the moment they are living, about having preferences and deciding to have less but being better and happier.



The swell is formed days ago, somewhere very far away off the coasts during a storm, then it travels thousands of miles until it touches the coast to become a wave. Surfers are floating on their little boards waiting to slide over these natural formations. They surf it all along reading every variation and adapting their moves and lines to every different wave... This connection with nature is very unique.

Something you don't like about surfers?

I don't like the bad attitude, "These are all my waves so I don't leave any for the others" or "I am more local than you because I have lived here one year longer" or "my type of board is better so you get out of here" mentality. Fortunately, they not the majority and there are still plenty of places where people enjoy the waves and share their passion! Sometimes I'd like to tell those people, "Hey, look around! You can enjoy it and let us do it as well?" The funniest and luckiest part is that these unhealthy behaviours can be found more often in really bad spots – not the good ones!

You are dreaming about going to...

I am dreaming about going to Baja California again – Mexico and also discovering the west coast of Australia. Those desert landscapes, the road trip to get there, chasing good conditions, camping for weeks far from the city life, being away from phones and distractions, and surfing those infamous never-ending waves, I am sure that I will experience a very enriching inner journey that will surely change some of my views.

The best moment in the water?

There are three special moments that come to my head. One of them was five years ago, the first time I windsurfed again at home with my brothers, after my ankle injury (that I was told I wasn't going to be able to recover from). 'Happiness' does not describe it enough.

Other memorable moments are during those beautiful sunny days out in Ho'okipa, with a perfect swell hitting the coast and I stop surfing to look around me. I become aware of where I am, what I am doing, the stunning landscape surrounding me, the great windsurf action happening in front of my eyes, the slope of the volcano taking height to overcome the clouds, the rainbow framing the scene, the spray of the waves flying back. Turtles, palm trees and all those colourful windsurf sails moving around handled by smiling friends and at that moment, you just feel grateful and realise once again how lucky you are to be part of that moment and that place. To stop for a second to contemplate in Ho'okipa is unique.

The third best moment was when just a few friends and I camped on a tiny island emerging from a remote outer reef in New Caledonia, far from mainland. We were surfing and windsurfing amazing beautiful perfect peeling waves... the water was so clean and clear that it felt like we were flying over corals and colourful fishes! It was definitely magic... and I really hope to go back there again.





Future projects or targets?

I will be competing on the IWT Tour and also in the PWA Aloha Classic. I am trying to do my best in competition and improve my surf style every year. Wave riding is extremely complicated, every wave and every spot is different and there is so much to learn... it is never-ending and very exciting.

Besides competition, I do a few big trips a year to write articles and stories about the places and produce a video about each trip. I want to share my experiences with other watersport lovers and people just interested in travelling. Maybe through these clips some people can discover our sport and join. From 2017 I wrote articles and produced clips about Croatia and Peru. From 2018, my SUP articles are about El Salvador and my windsurf articles about road trips along the Pacific and Atlantic Ocean coasts.

I am also very motivated about organizing windsurf and SUP camps where I can teach others, improve their skills or strength, how to make it part of their training or how to train for it, how to discover nature through sport and make it a way to travel. We do meditations to disconnect from city life and to connect with the environment and the ocean and feel part of it.

Any advice for a girl that wants to start?

be patient, ask people, listen and follow the advice of friends and watch many videos. Buy beginner equipment – new or second-hand – but not too small! You'll improve way faster! Be respectful of the conditions, always sail with other people and ask and listen about security. Don't be shy – talk to the other girls! We love sharing with new girls! More Girl Power in the line up!

More info:

- Born in Cádiz in the south of Spain.
- Living where the wind and waves are.
- Formed Graphic Designer.
- Co-director and co-editor at SUPING Magazine.
- Supported by Fanatic Boards, Duotone and Satorisan Sneakers.
- Content creator for International watersports magazine.
- Speaks Spanish, English and French.
- Hobbies: SUP, travelling, playing guitar or ukulele, singing, painting.



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BOUKE BECKER

(WITCHCRAFT) ON WINDSURF DESIGN: PART TWO #SAILS

WORDS: WSUK **PICS:** LUCAS RUGIRELLO, RUSSELL GROVES, BOUKE BECKER
WHEN IT COMES TO DESIGN OF WINDSURFING EQUIPMENT, BOUKE BECKER – HAVING BEEN INVOLVED IN WINDSURFING SINCE THE EARLY DAYS – HAS SEEN IT ALL, DABBLED WITH IT ALL AND HAD A HAND IN (LITERALLY) SHAPING THINGS TO COME AND HOW THINGS ARE NOW. Whether it be hard wearing windsurf boards or more recently sails and rig accessories, Bouke knows a thing or two about creating windsurf products. In part two of this double feature we catch up with Mr Becker about sail design.

Why did you decide to design a Witchcraft range of sails?

During the first eight years on Fuerte I had started making my own sails in our sail loft and sometimes a few for customers. Then later on I got too busy with making boards and family and I could not get the Canarian distribution for a sail brand, which at the time were the sails that were closest to my ideas and were the most durable for our conditions. But of course I kept an interest in sail design and followed what other brands were doing as well and how they were achieving this with the sails in our repair loft. Over the years I also had lots of discussions on sail design with the designer of the brand I was distributing and my Witchcraft dealer in the UK, John Blackwell of Sailrepair.co.uk. John also had some interesting ideas and has plenty of experience. John made me some proto sails as he had been saying for a while that if I wanted to start making Witchcraft sails, he could help designing the sails how I wanted them to be. So in the end we did it.

Where do you start with a new sail shape?

In the 90s, not knowing anything about sail design, I had designed sails from scratch, draw the sails directly on the sail table starting with the luff curve. That was great fun and sometimes could not stop to get some sleep. As you do not have to wait for resin to cure, it is quite fast to make changes but you only see the result when you rig the sail. So we'd sometimes spend the whole night through modifying and rigging till a sail looked right if it was windy the next day. Learned a lot from that. Sails were not designed around RDM masts back then but since I had already completely switched to RDM masts, we did design them on RDM masts. But now we already had various different prototypes, we did not have to start from scratch but you take an existing design to use as a guide and tweak it from there.





What key points did you want to address and why?

As I had been on one brand for +10 years, I had become to appreciate their wind range. These sails have a lot of seam shaping without batten rotation. This gives a lot of grunt in super light winds and a stable shape in high winds. But you can't make the shape disappear, so on the wave it can't depower, it gives more drag and the rotation is quite hard. Most other wave sails are pretty flat without wind and getting their shape only from batten rotation, so you need more wind to bend the battens to get shape. If you set a flat sail really full (like in the photo above) the battens need to rotate a long way around the mast, making it harder to flip the sail and the sail becomes unstable. As a flat sail only gets its shape stability from the batten profiling, they are overpowered sooner as well. There was nothing in between really that uses both seam shaping and batten rotation. Some brands do have some seam shaping but only around 20% I was used to, so there still is a surprisingly big gap in between.

So I was willing to sacrifice some of the wind range in favour of handling and wave riding and we started reducing the amount of seam shaping bit by bit. Going along I was expecting to lose some low-end grunt but funny enough it did not – on the contrary it was getting even a little better, which I could not place at first. During the testing I was also videoing the sails behaviour on the water from both sides to watch it back in slow motion. It was when comparing with pictures of my previous sails that I noticed that sails with a lot of seam shaping do not have a smooth profile on the leeward side of the sail, where the mast sleeve is attached to the sail – there is a kink. The leeward side generates two thirds of a foil.

To increase the wind range even more, the seam shaping we use is S-curved, locking the shape forward and we used less outhaul tension to make the sail twist off more harmonically, like most brands do.

The outline also became something in between, the foot and clew cut up higher to have more clearance like various known wave sails but with the slightly higher aspect ratio of my previous brand. Wave sailing is not about top end speed but to have the best combination between enough power to be planing and a very good handling – for which a higher aspect ratio is better. A sail gives lift by bending air and the amount of air (luff length) that gets bend is more important than for how long (boom length). Or in other words: You get two thirds of the power from the first third of the sail so a

longer boom is proportionally inefficient if you are looking at power plus manoeuvrability rather than power for a given leverage the sailor can hold. With a lower aspect ratio you can physically hold more power but we don't need to go full tilt on a wave board and you need proportionally more area. With an higher aspect sail your stance is more upright in a manoeuvre ready position and when you use the sail to help manoeuvring, it has more effect as well. This is why the Slayer has a higher centre of effort and the Karma has it lower.

How long was it before you reached the end point and a sail design you were happy with?

About three years and 30 prototype sails before we went to the first production. More if you count the three batten proto sails we made as well. They were working very well but simply not as all round and durable as the four batten Slayer.

And in terms of hours testing; can you put a number on that?

Hardly, no idea really, we just go sailing and don't really see that as 'work'. Two years of testing between 5-7 people would make like 2000+ hours?

How do WC sails differ from others?

As explained, for the amount of seam shape we are half-way between my former brand and other brands. But from testing the smaller sizes in Pozo and Sotavento, we found we did not want too much power in the small sizes and having to rig even smaller. Sail sizes can get too small too, you want to have some size in your hands to work with, so we made the smaller sizes increasingly less powerful and the 3.7 and 3.3 are getting pretty flat with more batten rotation. In the end the biggest size has about 60% of the seam shape of my previous brand and the 3.7 and 3.3 just 25%. The amount of seam shaping morphs through the range so to speak and basically gives a bigger range than the numbers indicate.

Using both seam shaping and batten rotation gives the best of both worlds, a big wind range, both natural and tuneable still with a very smooth handling and rotation. It is easy to find the right angle of attack and, as battens themselves want to become straight, it is still easy to depower or rotate the sail. You see some brands moving also into this direction, which in a way is reassuring.

Any plans to tweak Karma or Slayer design? If so, how?

At the moment we have been concentrating on reducing weight whilst keeping durability. We were already using symmetrical batten pockets and a kevlar reinforced frame layout. By using very strong seam tapes we could now get rid of the dacron seam reinforcement tapes and actually end up stronger with greatly reduced seam creep. The top two battens on all sails are now narrower to reduce weight at the top, the Karma has a slightly thinner scrim in the leach, and the Slayer now has a full 100% Dyneema mast sleeve, which is not only three times as strong but also 40% lighter. The sails are not the lightest out there but not the heaviest either and for sure the most durable.

68 INTERVIEW BOUKE BECKER



in CAD files to send to the factory. When the prototypes got better and we had more prototypes, we gave them to more guys and girls to test. Even if the sails are not the lightest, girls seem to love them as well.

How was it as far as prototyping went? WC can bosh out board concepts super quick but what about sails?

At first we made the prototypes here on Fuerte, it takes about one week to make a sail. I had prototypes made by different factories in China to see which to choose. This takes longer depending on the time of the year. Now I have the prototypes made in China and we do the modifications here. It saves me a lot of time, so I can work on other things as we know the factory has the designs correct. Since production is outsourced and we have to adapt to the production schedule of the factory, we can't put innovations through as fast as with the boards, which in the end doesn't matter. Also we take our time with the boards and a shape can remain unchanged for many years.

Why two different lines? What does the Karma do differently to the Slayer?

Wind range and manoeuvrability. Construction-wise, the Karma has one more batten and doesn't have a PVC or dacron luff panel to give a more stable profile. Shape-wise the centre of effort is lower, the bottom batten a bit longer, a bit more loose leach. That all adds to the wind range and ease of sailing in a straight line but reduces handling and depowering on a wave a little. The Karma is the best choice when you need more power and stability, like onshore wave sailing, sailing in currents, B&J, flat water sailing or foiling. The Slayer has a more flexible construction, a higher cut clew and a higher centre of effort to improve its handling and wave riding, so the best choice for all types of wave riding. The Slayer also has a PVC window for lasting vision through the window, essential for front side wave riding.

What about adding further ranges to WC's sail line up?

Working on a range of camberless freerace sails with the working name Elixir and a range of three kids sails called Witchy.

If you were going to sum up WC's sail line in one sentence what would that be?

The most heard words in feedback is "smooth" and "power," so I'd say: smooth reliable power?

Any general thoughts on windsurfing sail?

Designing sails is great fun.

Thanks and praise?

There are many but special praise goes to my love Peggy for supporting me in my pursuit of my dreams, John for his endless knowledge, Will and Yannick for pushing the limits of the gear on the water.

Riders: Bouke Becker, Tim Orchard, Will Ward, Yannick Anton.

Sail shape wise, we have reworked the luff curve a bit and reduced the seam shape in the foot of the bigger Slayers to reduce drag on the wave in light winds. You can always change something to make it better but you are bound to lose something somewhere else. Of course different people like different things and some have said they prefer more direct sails but most reactions we hear is that they love the smoothness. In motocross they have also moved from the lighter, direct and nervous two stroke engines to the smoother four stroke engines, even if heavier. Maybe for a skilled sailor in a contest who has just a limited time to pack a lot of action in, a direct sail is better. However, for non-contest sailing, something more reliable/predictable is better.

Any additional input from others during the design process?

Yes, John had a lot of input of course. Will Ward and Yannick Anton also had input along with Nestor and Jorge in Pozo. I had student engineer interns who helped putting the designs

WAVE SAILING SUCKS!

(OR: THE MERITS OF ALTERNATIVE WINDSURFING KIT)

WORDS: TEZ PLA VENIEKS

PICS: TEZ PLA VENIEKS, JAMES JAGGER, DAVE LIBBY

THAT TITLE PROBABLY GRABBED YOUR ATTENTION! READ ON TO FIND OUT IF THE SENTIMENT RINGS TRUE AS TEZ PLA VENIEKS TALKS ABOUT INCREASING YOUR CHANCES OF SCORING FULFILLING WINDY SESSIONS.

Before we get stuck into this let's just set the record straight: wave sailing doesn't suck, but it's a bloody frustrating part of windsurfing that many riders are in the habit of chasing, in many cases to fruitless ends too often. Especially when other forms of windsurfing would fit the bill so much better. Or in the face of decent waves and no wind using an alternative form of surf craft altogether.





Unfortunately as windsurfing's matured, and become ever more performance orientated, equipment has opened up a whole new bunch of possibilities and the lure of wind AND waves has become too much. As such, even during marginal blows and flat seas sailors are still stuck in a wave mind set – I see it all the while here at WSUK HQ. Of course what one determines to be a wave is another sailor's ripple, but you get where I'm coming from.

At the merest sniff of a gnat's fart, the windy vehicle procession to the beach, laden with all manner of manoeuvre oriented gear begins. Before long the car park's full – mainly of forlorn looking faces gazing out to sea as yet another predicted bout of windsurfing weather fails to materialise. For those with responsibilities – work, family and stuff – it's infuriating. That 80L wave shredder hasn't been used in months whilst the 100L trick stick has only had a few runs out. And let's not mention that spangly new 3.7m you convinced the other half you definitely needed for all those storm force days! Sod it! You may as well bite the bullet and buy a kayak.

I'm sure many reading this will sympathise and recognise the above situ. But how did we end up here?

Paradisial overseas location

Take subject A who learns to windsurf on in a paradisial overseas location with steady Trade Winds and barely ruffled waters, the surrounding reef protecting an inviting lagoon with water so blue it resembles a swimming pool. Before long, with such pro tuition and high end kit on tap, their windsurfing skills have progressed and he/she is now belting along hooked in with feet edging ever nearer those elusive footstraps. A few more goes, pep talks and some further guidance has more blatting like a good 'un.

Fast forward and he/she has now dropped a board size to something livelier and they're making frequent sojourns to the coast. It isn't quite the Tropics but there's wind and he/she is well on the way to nailing those corners. During one particular fulfilling session, the decision is made to try something new and air time is achieved. The lightbulb goes off and armed with a mile wide smile, it's to the local windsurfing emporium with fistfuls of readies. The result is more curves on that new board than a banana. He/she is soon the proud owner of a super manoeuvrable windy sled and associated sails. Unfortunately that bigger gear had to be sacrificed and sold to pay for new, a decision now being regretted as a sunny 15 knots puffs sideshore across the beach.

With the best will in the world we'd all be smashing out our smallest gear and getting amongst the flotsam every session. For most to accomplish this a serious amount of mileage and driving to those conditions would be required. With life constraints already mentioned, most sailors head to their tried and tested spot as it's a safe bet and reachable with enough time to get back home before the kids are in bed.







'The dream'

Reading through many windsurf mags, not unlike this one, and seeing what ends up online will have you thinking every other sailor (apart from you) is up and down the length of the country, scouring for conditions, daily. This just isn't true, however. What you're seeing is 'the dream' being sold by marketing gurus and pro riders whose job it is to get you frothing. 90% of all windsurfers are simply in no position to do this kind of thing. Most windsurfers will do what's already been explained: hit their local on a predicted forecast, hoping for some classic conditions.

Now don't get me wrong. Skunkings are par for the course when talking about any kind of sport relying on Mother Nature's moods, not least windsurfing. Yet with a better choice of quiver, the majority of windsurfers would up their water time no end. Things are changing, slowly, but there's still a way to go and more open minds needed.

It's all very well suggesting blasting back and forth is boring, which I've heard a lot. I totally get wielding a 9.6m isn't for everyone. Yet most don't need to go this big. Even plugging a



6.5m into a 122L board will see more sessions scored. And owning this type of gear doesn't need to break the bank. You don't have to go all out and buy new, there are plenty of bargains to be had if you look in the right places and are prepared to 'move' when a deal pops up. And to be honest, if you think skimming back and forth atop the brine, absorbing some much needed Vit D, whilst experiencing and appreciating your natural surroundings is dull, then you're a lost cause. After all these are the feelings that drew you to the sport initially.



You don't have to go all out and buy new, there are plenty of bargains to be had if you look in the right places and are prepared to 'move' when a deal pops up.

Windsurfing roots

Of course when your number comes up that magic chart will deliver and you'll enjoy some awesome windsurfing, possibly off a wave flavour. In the meantime maybe it's time to re-visit your windsurfing roots and get hold of some appropriate tools for the job.


As an example I've used a beaten old BIC Techno for many seasons. Some may guffaw but as a big board it offers everything I need. I'm not into slalom racing and I'm not really after coastal cruising – if I were I'd stump up for slalom gear or a longboard. For me the Techno offers super early planing on marginal days and easy riding. I'm just happy to be afloat when many others are sitting on the beach. (This is why we're re-visiting the Techno concept in our test section for a future mag – look out for that.)

I'm not suggesting everyone go and purchase a Techno. There are other sleds that'll do the same thing and allow that magic more TOTW. With time being so precious in everyone's life this is just one thing you can do to make sure you get a decent sesh under belt. You'll have to change your thinking, however, but I guarantee if you do then you'll be loving it and you're overall windsurfing will improve also.



The ULTIMATE WINDSURFING VAN (or the ultimate van is different for each person)

WORDS & PICS: TOBY EDMUNDS



I STARTED MY VAN JOURNEY AT 19 YEARS OLD WHEN I BOUGHT AN OLD VW T4, VERY MUCH AGAINST MY PARENT'S ADVICE. THE FACT IT HAD NO ENGINE WHEN I BOUGHT IT DIDN'T DISSUADE ME FROM TURNING IT INTO WHAT WAS THE ULTIMATE VAN, AFFECTIONATELY KNOWN AS 'THE BIG RED BRICK'. The big red brick died a few years later on its way to catch a flight abroad resulting in a frantic mission to Gatwick. A failure in longevity, it did however teach me some lessons on how to make my kit fit and what layout may be best for future vans.

Thirteen years later, four vans bought, converted and sold, I am sitting in the back of a newly acquired VW T6. This is its first holiday and I can safely say I have for the moment achieved my ultimate van, although I am sure this will change as my needs change. 'Twig' as it has been dubbed (not sure where the name came from), has had a professional conversion done by the lads at SimplySurfBus, a new experience for me having previously done my own conversions.







Both the experience of doing my last conversion and the lack of free time due to work convinced me it was a good idea to pay for a professional conversion. However, as I am sure many windsurfers have found out, explaining how to convert a van for windsurfing is a challenge and finding someone who is able to take your ideas and design something bespoke is rare. When it works the results can be fantastic. This is where I get to say the lads at SimplySurfBus did an astounding job because aside from the general outline they created something that genuinely is cool to drive around in.

So here is a recipe for creating your ultimate van, be it for windsurfing, kitesurfing or any other sport.

1. How much kit do you want to take all at once on a single trip?

For me this was a quiver of sails, two windsurf boards, my wife's kitesurfing kit, two surf boards, two stand up paddle boards, two mountain bikes and all the associated bits and pieces. Remembering not to forget clothes, food and camping cookware.

2. Do you need a vehicle that is driveable on a day to day basis?

If the answer is no, then your options suddenly become easy. If I didn't need to drive my van in the city I would have bought a VW Crafter or equivalent. Kit storage and living would have been easy. The reality is that these vehicles are big and have a variety of limitations. The difference between short and long wheel base vans in terms of space is massive so try some out to get an idea of what will work best. Remember: the bigger the vehicle the more it will cost on ferries, the more difficulty with height restrictions and the more fuel hungry. Personally, I also don't like driving a Crafter size vehicle on long trips as they feel very much like a van and aren't nearly as comfortable.

3. How many people do you need to carry?

Often a limiting factor for many vehicles. My previous van had two captain seats and that meant that any trips where I wanted to pile mates in to come meant a second vehicle. This may seem a small concern but planning for this aspect will ensure your vehicle remains future proof and not limited.

4. What's the budget?

The reality is vehicles are increasingly expensive to buy and run. Budgets can be small or large but the age and quality of what you buy will be affected. I have had vans both on low budget and on large ones, the simple fact is that you have to compromise somewhere. We chose to buy a good quality base vehicle and then convert because longevity and resale value are hugely improved.

5. Is it a camper or a day van?

The final question is important as it will affect your layout drastically. If you plan to live in your van you might want a fridge or cooker, the DVLA has a list of specifics that allow a van to be converted into a camper. We stay in Scotland a lot of the year so an essential was a night heater. This affects speed limits in the UK and should act as guide for any conversion. More importantly where and how are you going to sleep; tent outside, pop roof, rock and roll bed, etc, again will limit function of the van. Also, worth considering what to do if you wild-camp and how to be completely self-contained.

6. Why bother?

I live in Scotland, we have access to some of the best beaches in the UK but they are all a drive. Having a camper that allows me to get to them but also stay near them means I get to go out in some of the best conditions in the UK. I have also travelled and am a bit over the kit rental or taking kit through the airport issues. In recent years this is because most trips abroad involve two or more airports to get to the destination, my own fault for living in Aberdeen. The UK has some incredible beaches and world-class conditions, for all types of watersports. Being mobile has the benefit of moving to the conditions but also lets me enjoy other sports if the water conditions don't show up. Driving to Europe is still an option if Brexit doesn't mess it up!

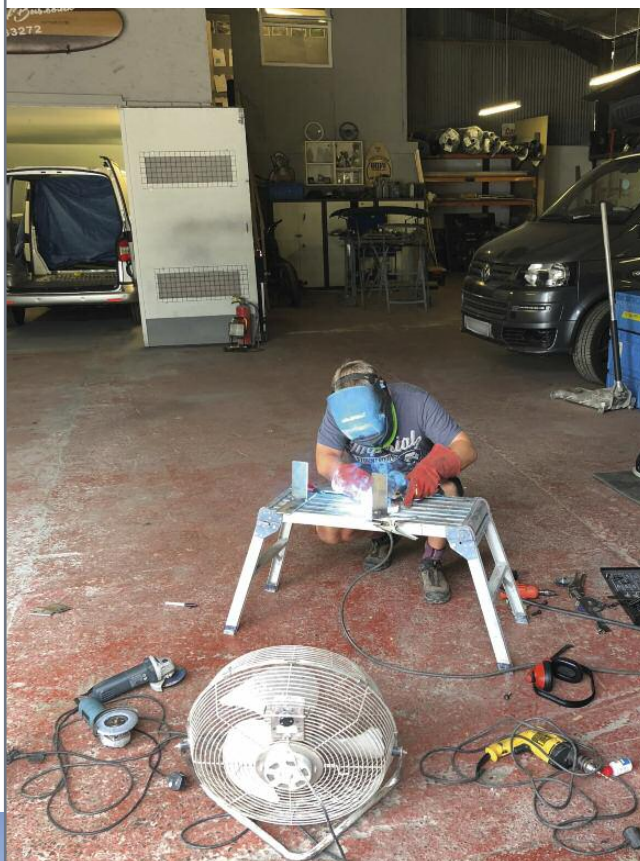
Our results:

Twig is a VW Transporter T6, long wheel base. He is capable of carrying five people and sleeping four with kit stored inside. Bought from and created by SimplySurfBus, he started life as a plain panel van. Not new when we purchased him but less than 20,000 miles on the clock is as close as we could afford. He carries enough kit to allow both my wife and myself to make use of any conditions. The pop top is a HiLo giving ample living space with a removable kitchen pod (fridge freezer built in) so you can cook and store food as if you're at home. An awning rail allows expansion when needed and gives even more living space. The electric hook up provides power if we are at a campsite and the leisure battery does the work when we are not. A ScorpionRack for our mountain bikes, which is simple and quick to load and a RoadShower for cleaning kit off, are additional extras that really allow us to take everything.

What did it cost?

Well, all in slightly less than a new family SUV. It could have cost less but we really wanted a pop top...

Huge thanks to SimplySurfBus Ltd, Wild Diamond Watersports, O'Shea Surf and Loco Surfing for helping make our adventures amazing with the right toys for the job.





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SHARING THE STROKE

WORDS: WSUK **PHOTOS:** BARTEK JANKOWSKI AND NIKKI ATTREE

RICHARD HAS BEEN A WINDSURFER FOR MOST OF HIS LIFE. SINCE DISCOVERING IT WITH HIS WIFE, NIKKI, IN THE MID-1980S, IT'S BEEN AN OBSESSION THAT HAS TAKEN THEM AROUND THE WORLD SEARCHING FOR WIND, WAVES, AND ADVENTURE. Like Nick (the main character in his book 'Too Close to the Wind'), he sometimes jokes that it's his 'religion'. A primary motivation for writing 'Too Close to the Wind' was to 'share the stoke' (as Nick might say) with both his fellow surfaholics and a wider audience. Richard now lives in Tenerife.

What made you relocate to Tenerife?

It was more of a 'downshift' than a relocate. Our house in Shoreham-by-Sea had doubled in value from 2002 to 2007 (along with much of the UK) and when we compared it to the house prices in Tenerife, we realised that we could sell up and live a lot more cheaply, in a smaller house, with fewer possessions, less overheads, but more freedom.

I was in a bit of a rut, dissatisfied with the treadmill that my freelance career had become. Downshifting would free up time to pursue the things that we loved, explore fresh creative projects, windsurf all year round and simply enjoy life a bit more. We wouldn't need to spend money on travel anymore because we'd already be in 'paradise'... permanently!

So we sold the house, along with most of our possessions and uprooted ourselves from the shingly beaches and rolling green countryside of the south coast of England to a dusty, volcanic rock stuck out in the Atlantic Ocean somewhere off the coast of Africa. It was quite scary at the time, but 12 years have shot by... it's been an adventure, we're happy here and we have no regrets.

Where was your local spot prior?

We were lucky to live right next to the beach in Shoreham (just along the road from Surfladle shop), so it was our local spot. Before moving there we sailed most of the locations on the south coast: Wittering, Pagham, Hayling, Hillhead, Lepe, Avon, Weymouth, etc.

What does Tenerife offer that home doesn't?

Well, I don't really think of the UK as 'home' any more. El Médano es nuestro hogar ahora—El Médano is our home now. Comparing them... the most obvious difference is, of course, the weather. One of the reasons the Canary Islands are called 'Las Afortunadas' (the Fortunate Islands) is because they have a near perfect climate: all-year-round sunshine, mild winters, and the trade winds keep the temperature pleasant in the summer. It changes your outlook on life when you can pretty much rely on waking up to sunshine and you can plan outdoor activities in advance. We take it for granted now and I have to keep reminding myself how lucky we are.

But apart from the weather, Tenerife is an amazing island. I thought of the downshift as moving to El Médano rather than to Tenerife, but the whole island has surprised us with its diversity and unexpected possibilities: spectacular rugged scenery, the highest mountain in Spain, incredible lunar landscapes, forests, a variety of micro-climates... When it's not windy (which isn't very often) we go mountain biking up in the forest.

Apart from the outdoor/sporting opportunities there's a vibrant capital city (Santa Cruz, population roughly 500,000) with a rich maritime/colonial history, thriving cultural scene, fanatically supported football team (sadly no longer playing in La Liga, so not-so-thriving), a university, a carnival that's only rivalled by Rio... To be honest, we don't miss much about the UK ... OK, maybe British humour, the English language, and the rolling green countryside.

The main issue, living here, is the language. Our Spanish is still fairly basic – enough to get by, but not to go into conversational subtleties, tell a joke, that kind of thing. It can be tricky getting things delivered – even from mainland Spain. And then there's the mess that is Brexit – but you better not get me started on that!

Has moving meant more time on the water?

It certainly has! Being self-employed, living next to the beach in Shoreham, I was fortunate to get plenty of TOW, but El Médano is just phenomenally consistent. The waves may not be world-class, but the wind statistics certainly are. You can get around 150 days in an average year and you can wear a shortie most of the time.

These days I'm more into quality than quantity. My sessions are shorter and I'm more choosy about what conditions will motivate me to stop writing and go windsurfing.

What type of windsurfing do you mainly indulge in?

I'd call myself a wave sailor. I'm not into speed, racing, or freestyle tricks – just riding waves, however small and mushy they are. My narrator, Nick, puts it like this, *"Once I experienced waves, windsurfing without them became two dimensional. Waves add the Z axis to the X and Y. They're the contours, hills, mountains, in an otherwise flat, featureless landscape."*

I also enjoy the occasional jump... but not loops – at 65, I have to look after my ageing body. The warm water helps:-)

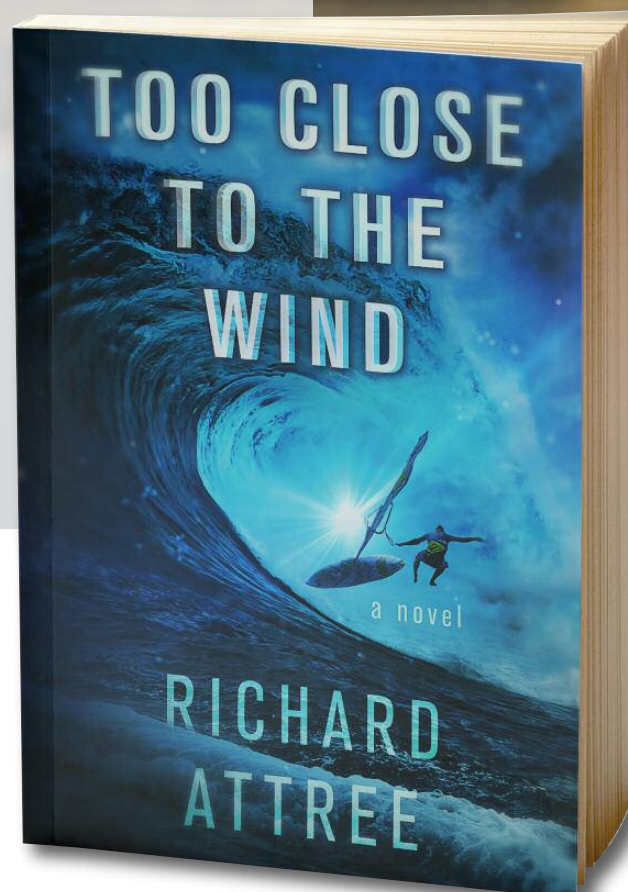
Tell us about your writing background

I've always loved books and I wanted to be a writer, but I got diverted into writing music rather than words. In my twenties I was playing keyboards in jazz, rock, and soul bands and then I made my living as a composer of music for TV, working at the BBC's renowned Radiophonic Workshop, before going freelance.

When we downshifted to Tenerife I retired from the media music business and it gave me the opportunity to get to grips with writing. I wrote a series of articles for 'Boards'

I'm very fortunate to 'live my dream' (to use the jargon of reality TV), here in El Médano.

Now I'm a writer – it's who I am! Stories, characters, ideas, words are my obsession (along with windsurfing, of course)



magazine: 'Life on the Reef' about life as an ex-pat windsurfer. It was the first time I had anything published and I just knew that I was finally doing what I loved best. Music was only ever a job – a rewarding, well paid job, but never my first love.

Since then I've published two books, co-authored with my wife, Nikki: 'Nobody's Poodle' (2013), a short novel written from the perspective of our rescue dog, and 'Somebody's



Doodle' (2016), a fast moving, heady mix of crime, humour, romance and a few more dogs. 'Too Close to the Wind' (publication date: February 2019) is my debut solo novel. It's a journey of self discovery narrated by a young Australian windsurfer and dogs don't feature in it :-)

I'm very fortunate to 'live my dream' (to use the jargon of reality TV), here in El Médano. Now I'm a writer – it's who I am! Stories, characters, ideas, words are my obsession (along with windsurfing, of course)... and my motto is: 'Keep Scribbling!' (at least, when it's not windy :-)

When did you decide you wanted to become a novelist?

Probably when I was 15 and I read Hemingway's 'The Old Man and the Sea' for my English literature O level. It made a huge impression on me – as have so many novels since then. In this era of instant visual communication the written word still has the power to move mountains of ideas and emotions. Novels will never go out of fashion – just be reinvented.

The best books live with you long after you first experience them. I re-read Hemingway's heroic story of survival at sea 50 years later, while writing chapter two of 'Too Close to the Wind' (in which Nick, my narrator, is drifting helplessly out into the Atlantic) and I readily acknowledge his influence.

Where did you start with your book Too Close to the Wind?

Plenty of water had flowed under the bridge before I sat down to write my first novel—a lifetime of material, in fact. So it wasn't easy deciding what should be in it. The usual advice is: write about what you know and are passionate about. I asked myself what that might be, and I came up with these three ideas:

- My life story.
- A novel about a musician.
- A novel about a windsurfer.

Obviously I knew a bit about the first of these, and it seemed the most straightforward to write, so I started working on an

autobiography, with the title: 'The Wind of Change – memoirs of a Windsurfing Baby Boomer'. However, Nikki, persuaded me to shelve it. She pointed out that nobody would be interested in the true (but arguably mundane) story of an unknown composer and average windsurfer. She suggested that I should write a novel.

When it comes to these sorts of decisions I trust Nikki 100% (even though I thought she was a bit harsh re 'nobody', 'mundane', 'unknown', and 'average' :-)) so I put the autobiography in the 'Future Projects' folder and started thinking about the other two ideas.

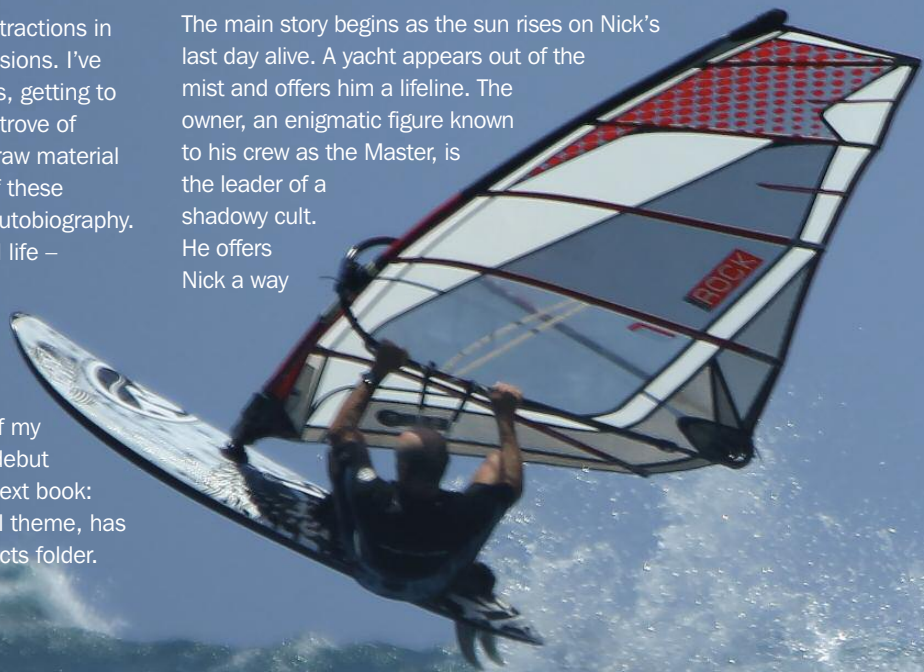
Music and windsurfing have been the major distractions in my life – simultaneous, but very different obsessions. I've spent half my life exploring these parallel worlds, getting to know the people in them, amassing a treasure trove of experiences, adventures, anecdotes ... so the raw material was already in place. A story based on either of these themes could be a fictionalised version of my autobiography. That was Nikki's point: fiction is sexier than real life – especially when it's the real life of a nobody! 'The Wind of Change' would have to wait until I was a somebody (and the jury's still out on when that might be).

The other two ideas competed to make it out of my brain into my word processor and become my debut novel. Windsurfing won, but an outline for my next book: 'The Rhythm of Time', with music as the central theme, has joined 'The Wind of Change' in the Future Projects folder.

Any particular inspiration for the characters and plot?

When I started plotting the story arc for 'Too Close to the Wind' I knew I wanted to begin the book with Nick's survival story. In the 12 years I've lived here, there have been several cases of windsurfers going missing. Some were rescued, some drowned. A few just disappeared and their bodies were never found. I imagined myself in Nick's situation, drifting for hours on his board, and I asked myself how I'd cope. Would I have the strength of will to survive? How long would hope remain?

The main story begins as the sun rises on Nick's last day alive. A yacht appears out of the mist and offers him a lifeline. The owner, an enigmatic figure known to his crew as the Master, is the leader of a shadowy cult. He offers Nick a way



out of his stalled life – a series of missions that lead him around the world on a journey of self discovery – first to the Dominican Republic, then back home to confront his past in Australia, and finally to Ireland. Along the way he earns the right to sail some of the planet's most extreme spots.

These locations are all places Nikki and I have visited in our own search for wind and waves. The descriptions, texture, and some of the local incidents are often fictionalised extrapolations from my autobiography. Apart from travel and windsurfing, there are a few other themes...

I studied philosophy for my undergraduate degree and I wanted to weave philosophical threads into the story. My main character, Nick, talks about playing "philosophical chess" with the Master – moving ideas around like chess pieces to see how they might impact on each other.

Another theme that interested me was psychoactive/mind-altering substances. As a Baby Boomer coming of age in the 1960s, a student in the early 1970s, and then playing in rock bands, I did my fair share of experimenting with psychedelic drugs. They were part of my (arguably misspent) youth, along with long hair, electric guitars, and open-air rock festivals.

On balance, weighing up the dangers and benefits, I'm glad that I had these experiences, and relieved that I survived them. There's an element of 'whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger' in this, but I am glad to have experienced these unusual mental states. It gives you a different perspective on 'normality' as just one of the many threads in life's rich tapestry.

I imagined myself in Nick's situation, drifting for hours on his board, and I asked myself how I'd cope. Would I have the strength of will to survive? How long would hope remain?

Who will the book appeal to do you think?

Initially, my fellow tribe of English speaking windsurfers – not exactly a mass market, more of a niche, but equally there's not much competition. I jokingly describe my book as the world's first windsurfing novel. There are a few, non-fiction windsurfing books (technique manuals, memoirs, location guides, for example), and no doubt windsurfing makes an appearance in other fiction, but I've yet to come across a book that you might call a proper windsurfing novel (if you know of any please let me know).

There are far more books that feature surfing, and even a few authors writing surf fiction (notably Kem Nunn, credited with inventing the surf-noir genre). So, although windsurfing is a smaller niche than surfing, there is a gap in that market. There may be fewer windsurfers than surfers (especially if we include the wannabes, hangers-on, followers of surf fashion, etc, who like to call themselves 'surfers' without necessarily going near a proper wave), but there's no reason why the search for wind should not be as authentically chronicled as the search for the perfect wave.

However, I'd like to think 'Too Close to the Wind' also has cross-over, mainstream appeal and that my windsurfing readers will share it with their non-'windie' friends. If they do, then perhaps their friends might understand our obsession with surfing the wind and waves. Word-of-mouth and personal recommendations are the best way for an author to build a readership, so of course I'm also hoping that another reason to recommend my novel to a non-windsurfing reader is that it's simply a good read.

It's hard to convey windsurfing in words – especially to non-sailors. How have you approached this?

Actually the windsurfing passages were some of the easiest to write. Whenever I'm on the water I find words, images and ideas floating around my brain. So all I had to do was imagine myself windsurfing and the words flowed.

A big plus was imagining being able to windsurf as well as my narrator, Nick, who's something of a hotshot. So although I don't loop, or sail massive waves like he does, it was a lot of fun doing these things vicariously, through his eyes.

I don't know how well I've succeeded in conveying the windsurfing experience to non-sailors (perhaps they'll tell me in their reviews)... I just tried my best to make it vivid and real.



If you want people to actually read what you write, you have to connect with them. I have the luxury of writing for love, rather than for money.

How long did the book take to complete?

Well, as I say, I've had a long time to think about this book. Arguably, it's been rattling around my brain for 50 years – ever since I was 15! I began actually writing the first draft in October 2016 and finished it a year later. But re-writing, editing, formatting, cover design, setting up the marketing etc took a further year before I was ready to publish it.

And what about marketing? Is this proving trick or easy?

I've never really enjoyed marketing (it's one reason I got fed up with being a freelance media composer), but I realise it's a necessary part of being a writer. If you want people to actually read what you write, you have to connect with them. I have the luxury of writing for love, rather than for money. I'm not aiming to be a best selling commercially successful author, but I would like as many readers as possible to enjoy my books.



At least I already share a connection with my target readers, the tribe of English speaking windsurfers. So marketing the world's first windsurfing novel to them is less daunting.

Where is your book being sold and/or how can people get hold of it?

You can get it as a paperback, or download it as an Ebook, from Amazon: www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B07MY6LZ99

Has the experience spurred you on to follow up and write more? Teaser details?

Absolutely. I have plenty of ideas in the 'Future Projects' folder. The problem is finding enough time to do them all justice.

I've been planning my next novel for a while now. 'The Rhythm of Time' is about three musicians who live in the same city, London, in three different centuries (17th, 21st, and 24th). Their lives are so interlinked that it's as if they

share one life. What links them is the 'reincarnation of ideas'. The novel explores the magical, mysterious phenomenon of music, and the soul of that labyrinthine city – how they can both change through the centuries, and yet stay the same. It will combine three genres in one book: historical fiction, contemporary fiction and science fiction.

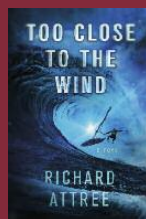
Then I have an idea for a novel about two brothers escaping the horrors of war in Syria (working title: 'The Road to Hell'). They travel to Libya, experience the people-trafficking mafia, survive crossing the Mediterranean (nearly drowning), and arrive in Europe as illegal migrants. There they have opposite experiences: one is assimilated and becomes successful, but the other is alienated, radicalised, and becomes a terrorist. The research for this book worries me.

Nikki and I are planning a collection of short stories: 'I Woof Therefore I Am – Gizmo's Shaggy Dog Stories' and I'm working on my own collection: 'Tales from the www Web'.

I've written all I want to write about windsurfing – for the moment... but I could be persuaded to revisit Nick and write a sequel to 'Too Close to the Wind' if it sells well and enough people convince me that it's worth doing... and as I mentioned, I'm working on my autobiography: 'The Wind of Change – memoirs of a Windsurfing Baby Boomer'.

Plenty to be getting on with... watch this space:
www.RichardAttree.com

'Too Close to the Wind'



Nick has always been an outsider. Half Aboriginal, half Irish, he escaped from an impoverished fishing town in Western Australia. Now he's running from a drug deal gone wrong, living like a ghost in the Canary Islands and his only friends are the wind and waves.

Windsurfing is his obsession, his escape from self-loathing. But when his rig falls apart, like his life, he finds himself drifting alone in the Atlantic.

As the sun rises on his last day alive, a yacht appears and offers him a lifeline. But there's a price to pay...

The owner, an enigmatic figure known to his crew as the Master, is the leader of a shadowy cult. He offers Nick a way out of his stalled life – a series of missions: to the haunted Haitian rainforest, the remote Australian outback, and the wild west coast of Ireland.

The puppet master pulls the strings – Nick's quest is to discover why. Too Close to the Wind is an incredible story of survival, an epic travel adventure, a dark journey into the unknown, and a celebration of wind, surf, and the human spirit.



Photo: Russell Groves - Rider: Tim Orchard



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Three of a kind

Mistral Quikslide 100L, 110L, 120L freeride windsurf board comparison test

Info: www.mistral.com/windsurfing-boards/

WORDS: WINDSURFING UK **PICS:** JAMES JAGGER
YOU'D BE FORGIVEN FOR THINKING MISTRAL PARKED THEIR INVOLVEMENT WITH WINDSURFING A WHILE BACK. YET THE RECOGNISABLE RED DOT BRAND HAS ALWAYS REMAINED, JUST BUBBLING UNDER THE SURFACE THESE LAST FEW SEASONS. TOWARDS THE END OF 2018 MISTRAL ANNOUNCED THEY WERE FULLY BACK IN THE GAME WITH INTRODUCTION OF THEIR LINE OF QUIKSLIDE FREERIDE WINDSURF BOARDS AND ZONDA SAILS (MORE ON THOSE NEXT ISSUE).

For this test WSUK was delivered the whole shebang of three board sizes - 100L, 110L and 120L to compare. There's also a 130L in the pipeline but at time of writing this wasn't available.

By Mistral's own admission they're not looking to reinvent the wheel, merely deliver access to the recreational side of windsurfing and keep things as simple as possible. With the co-operation of Simmer Windsurfing, the new Quikslide windsurf sleds sit firmly in the new school freeride arena. Utilising thin rail/tail, wide egg shape concepts, what you get is a large platform that belies its quoted litreage. As any seasoned windsurfer will know trying to determine a board's performance by litres alone is folly.

With ample sail carrying capacity, each size of Quikslide ekes out the lighter end of its wind band thereby delivering maximum range of use. For instance, the 100L would be perfectly fine with a larger rig yet equally at home with a 5m. Likewise Mistral's larger 120L Quikslide can happily take an 8M+.



Quikslide 100L

The first QS we stepped aboard was the smallest of the lot. During initial forays conditions were moderately breezy with pulses of swell rolling through.

Powering up from the get-go the 100L is a nimble and engaging platform that loves to blast full pelt in either direction. Those thin rails bite round corners, slicing through chop to allow super smooth gybing. Even with a double back strap set up, it loved being chunked into a lip and rewards sailors with decent aerial boosts. We flung ourselves over the handlebars a few





times (why not?) to see how it fared with manoeuvre orientated riding in mind. And the result? No probs!

For those with aspirations of wave sailing, Mistral's Quikslide 100L can be tuned by shifting straps inboard. Even though its primary focus is freeride there's no issue practising those surf sailing fundamentals – another point which highlights the 100L's versatility.

Quikslide 110L

For our money, this was the sweetest size out of all Mistral's Quikslide boards. For sure, there's nowt wrong with any but the 110L offered the most balanced, user-friendliness, performance and all-round appeal for moderate wind strengths (based on the size/preferences of our tester) with 6-7m sails.

Straight out of the starting blocks and the 110L is quick! With blowy weather in the mix, it zooms across the straights with purpose, all the time keeping composure in the face of choppy seas.

Should a bump materialise then it's quite happy to get airborne and if riders should land a little flat then due to its top-shelf construction and ability to 'breathe' (flex) – a common trait amongst all Quikslides – hard touchdowns are absorbed without fuss. Round corners those thin (for size of board) rails slice and keep traction forgiving the clumsiest of footwork – as a gybe tutor the 110L is a good choice.

Full power back to the beach and riders can pin the Quikslide down thereby taking full advantage of additional puffs. Driving all that oomph into momentum is what engages and will keep windsurfers coming back for more.

Quikslide 120L

Even though this is only 120L it appears much bigger – more like a 150L in fact. There's certainly no shortage of sail

carrying capacity and it could easily accommodate a rider's largest rig.

For those bigger boned individuals, or riders wanting a super light air planing vehicle, then this would be the Quikslide to look at. That said, such are the board's good manners, blowier weather is also applicable.

As with its smaller siblings, speed is right up there. We actually went head to head on a few occasions with the local slalom crew and can happily report the 120L holds its own. Efficiently pinned down, and riding over chop thereby ironing out the ride, Mistral's 120L Quikslide feels alive and much more dynamic than its width and plan shape would suggest. Again, as with the 100L and 110L we couldn't resist seeing if it handled a bit of air time – after all, given the opportunity, other sailors will no doubt try the same. The result? It pops with ease (relative to its dimensions) and allows low altitude flying that'll put a mile-wide smile on all faces.

Conclusion

It's great to see such an iconic brand fully back in the windsurfing mix. Those of us who often nostalgically look back to windsurfing's past will recall Mistral's pedigree within the sport. From ever recognisable images of Robby Naish ripping on early designs to IMCO Olympic sailing and right up to more present-day Mistral



boards, slaying some of the world's best wave sailing venues, the red dot brand have been there – something which as of 2019 continues.

With eyes firmly focused on the freeride, recreational fun end of the spectrum (plus light wind cruising, as can be demonstrated with Mistral's Freebird and Albatross longboard style sleds (stay tuned for review of those), the big M is setting out its windsurfing stall for the future and recognising that most riders want simple, fun, yet engaging products to make use of real-world windsurfing conditions and get them afloat. Each Quikslide delivers on this front, offering performance across a wide range of spectrums. All you have to do is pick your applicable size (or go all three!). Top drawer manufacturing, fixtures and fittings, round off three products that are worthy of your attention if windsurfing fun is what you're after.





A balanced difference



Witchcraft Karma 4.2m windsurf sail

Info: <https://witchcraft.nu/sails/karma/> **Price:** €696

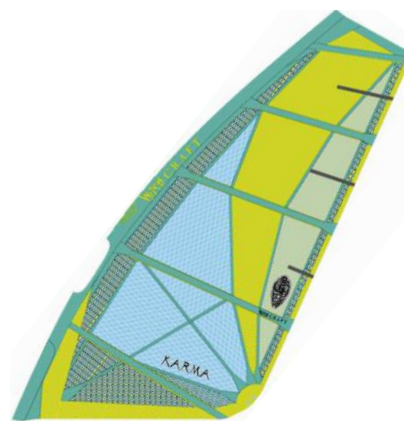
WORDS: WINDSURFING UK **PICS:** JAMES JAGGER
WE'VE BEEN FORTUNATE TO USE NEARLY ALL OF WITCHCRAFT'S KARMA RANGE OF SAILS. THE BRAND'S 4.2M BEING A CASE IN POINT. AS A FIVE BATTEN TYPE IT HAS MORE TRADITIONAL LEANINGS, IN TERMS OF DESIGN, YET THERE'S PLENTY GOING ON THAT'LL GIVE APPEAL TO SAILORS NOW.

First up is the sail's bomb-proof construction. Hailing from the northern shores of rocky Fuerteventura you'd expect windsurf gear made for this environment to be so. The great thing is

that this knocks on to all sailing locations and gives top notch durability.

In use and WC's 4.2 Karma, just as with other sizes in the range, has proper low end grunt – in some ways more like a low aspect sail. This allows riders to switch down sizes quickly. Yet even with this early planing capability it's a well balanced machine at the top end.

On waves or through moves, WC's Karma 4.2m is dependable. It holds its shape well if big gusts hit, yet won't bend riders into awkward positions. Through bottom and top turns it's quite surfy, able to exhaust power when needed yet ramp back up as sailors require. As much as the Karma range is aimed at real world, onshore sailing, it suits pure wave sailing conditions as well. It's also a good choice for coastal bump and jump sessions as well as beginners finding favour here.



Conclusion

Having thrown Witchcraft's Karma 4.2m at all manner of windsurfing conditions – from onshore waves, to offshore blasting and even windfoiling – we're confident riders who sail at varied spots, and therefore needing tools to handle all manner of conditions, will find favour. Super tough, balanced smooth handling, with plenty of real world performance on tap, if you like high wind windsurfing the Karma 4.2m is certainly one to consider. Plus, it's a bit different, which is no bad thing either.



Easy hardcore

Severne Nano 93L 2019 wave board



Info: www.severnesails.com/wave-sails/severne-nano Price: £1,799

WORDS: WINDSURFING UK **PICS:** JAMES JAGGER
HAVING TESTED SEVERNE'S DYNO 105 PARALLEL CONCEPT FREESTYLE WAVE BOARD IN 2018 IT MADE SENSE TO SHIFT FOCUS TO THE BRAND'S MORE hardcore PARALLEL RAIL BOARD: THE NANO. IN THIS INSTANCE THE 93L VERSION.

As with the Dyno we doff our caps to Severne's construction techniques which sees the Nano 93L being a robust and durable wave sled - exactly what's needed for surf sailing. Another tick in the box is the ability to swap out fins and tune to your desired feel. For our money, however, it's thruster mode that makes most sense for the conditions we normally encounter.

For many, 93L may be edging towards the smaller end of the wave board scale. The Nano's plan shape also appears narrow and gunny - even though it's actually not that long (217). Parallel rail designs often give this impression yet once riders are aboard things become clearer...

...and it's no different with the Nano 93L. Featuring much more float than you'd believe it supports bigger boned riders in moderately blowy weather and gets planing with the merest sniff of

breeze. If you're a back foot heavy sailor then you'll find additional favour with Severne's Nano 93L due to being able to push slightly harder against the central fin.

We were super impressed by the Nano's speed. One thing all wave heads need is a decent level of vroom. It's no good trying to stomp high boosts without and you'll certainly require it for outrunning pitching sections or even picking up swells. So in your face is the Nano's speed that at times it felt more slalom-esque. Yet in all situations, backing off is easy to achieve when required.

Through rotations, such as forwards and backies, the Nano's compact design allows for whippy transitions. Whilst on a wave it bites through the bottom turn efficiently. Having connected with the lip riders are free to bust out the fins or keep in contact by engaging the Nano's grip. Being able to switch between

different styles or wave riding, determined by how the wave actually is breaking, will ensure the Nano finds favour with many.

We also should comment on the Nano's backside riding capabilities which is one of the best we've encountered. For a lot of riders backside isn't their flavour yet the Nano delivers superior surfing prowess enhancing this experience no end. Skyscape 7m as your engine.

Conclusion

Severne's Nano 93L isn't what it first appears. Its compact nature belies how balanced a board it is and how easily/early it gets planing. Once up to speed there's manoeuvrability on tap with sailors being able to milk conditions for all their worth. Construction is bomb proof as well as aesthetics being easy on the eye. Our lightweight rider commented how nimble it is - considering this would be their bigger board - while our heavier rider appreciated the Nano's early planing, upwind and efficient backside wave riding characteristics.



GET some!

Patrik qt-wave 103 GET 2019 wave board



Info: <http://patrik-windsurf.com/qt-wave/> Price: £1,689

WORDS: WINDSURFING UK **PICS:** JAMES JAGGER
WAVE BOARDS THESE DAYS DON'T HAVE TO BE SMALL SUB-100L STICKS. AS WINDSURFING HAS EVOLVED BRANDS HAVE MADE A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO CATER FOR A WIDER RANGE OF CONDITIONS – I.E LIGHTER WINDS – AND/OR BIGGER BONED RIDERS. SAILORS ARE NOW WELL CATERED FOR WITH APPLICABLE TOOLS SUCH AS THE PATRIK QT-WAVE 103.

For this test it's Patrik's GET construction under the spotlight, which gives a slightly softer more forgiving ride due to the board flexing a tad more. For anyone with a surfing background board flex will be familiar. Allowing the shape to mould to a wave's shape, as well as giving a more absorbed ride, it's a lay up that should benefit real world windsurfers who tackle a varied range of scenarios.

From the off there's no lacking in early planing performance. Patrik shapes tend to be a tad longer thereby offering increased glide. This can increase early planing potential.

The qt-wave has five fin boxes allowing sailors to tune accordingly. For our money it's thruster mode that works best, holding grip during powered up runs and allowing windsurfers to push

upwind. Engaging the windward rail also helps drag the board into breeze and get into position for swell take offs.

Once at the 'bus stop' there's enough float for hanging around waiting for your set or simply power into the first critical drop you can find. Smoothly accelerating down the wave face the qt-wave cuts deep as it rounds off the bottom. Ironing out any wave face chop it's a fast climb to the lip. Once there we were blown away by the board's ability to hold through each turn and deliver riders to clean landings. Whether it be gouging off the tops or late smacks there's plenty of performance to cover many different styles of riding or approaches to the wave in question. It's also sweet for aeriels.

For move orientated riders up and overs are efficient with the 103 offering enough



pop to sling yourself over the handlebars. It's actually rewarding for jumping moves even when underpowered and on bigger sails, such as a 5.7m.

Conclusion

Patrik's qt-wave 103 has a plethora of tuning options, via fins and foot strap position, that sailors would be worth investigating. We preferred a tri-fin set up that handles powered up windsurfing yet gives a degree of versatility across different wind strengths. For a bigger wave sled it rides sweetly and smoothly with that GET construction helping iron out the bumps. It's also fun to wang down a few jumping moves, even if a little underpowered. As such the 102 suits real world windsurfing and riders wanting to maximise their time on water.



Pure chemistry

S2 Maui Alchemy 5.7m



Info: www.s2maui.com/alchemy-2019/ Price: £689

WORDS: WINDSURFING UK **PICS:** JAMES JAGGER
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WE'VE TESTED AN S2 MAUI SAIL BUT WITH BARRY SPANIER'S LEGENDARY NAME IN THE MIX (S2 MAUI'S HEAD DESIGNER AND LONG TIME SAIL MAKING GENIUS) WE WERE PRETTY CONFIDENT THE ALCHEMY 5.7M WOULD BE WINNER WINNER CHICKEN DINNER.

Pics never do products justice and it's no different here. S2 Maui's attention to detail, with elements such as seams and stitching, is top drawer. Combined with the Alchemy's eye catching livery and light weight it's a tough sail but one that's sure to turn heads

Billed as a blasting wave sail the Alchemy is suited to a variety of windsurfing scenarios. Whether confronted by light wind float and ride conditions, powered up surf sailing environments or classic bump and jump weather the Alchemy slots efficiently in. Also, being a five batten sail it's got a decent top end that's therefore good for powered to overpowered runs. It won't bend riders out of shape, even if the wind's cranking.

For many 5.7m may be perceived as a big rig – perhaps too big, especially when talking moves. Yet chucking the

Alchemy into a few under powered forwards proved rewarding. The sail gives efficient lift for airborne shenanigans. It actually doesn't feel its size going handle bars over and hard landings are softly absorbed.

Another area the S2 Maui Alchemy 5.7m suits is windfoiling. In fact, it's arguably a level pegging forte of the sail despite it not being specifically designed for flight school. Effortless to pump in this guise with a progressive lift it's a good choice for anyone looking for a new foiling tool.

Conclusion

S2 Maui's Alchemy 5.7m is a great example of a plug 'n' play windsurfing sail that's fit for multiple purposes. Applicable to proper wave riding environments but also suited to real world windsurfing



conditions – waves or no – any sailor owning their own would be happily content. Foilers also feel free to apply here. Tough, aesthetically pleasing and with oodles of design pedigree the Alchemy 5.7m is a smile inducing windy engine any sailor can appreciate.



Wave heads apply here



Tabou 3S+ 96L 2019

Buy from: <https://tabou-boards.com> Price: LTD version: £1,999; CED version: £1,759

WORDS: WINDSURFING UK **PICS:** JAMES JAGGER

WE'RE NO STRANGERS TO THE 3S CONCEPT HAVING USED A BUNCH OF DIFFERENT TYPES OVER THE YEARS. IN FACT, WSUK'S VERY OWN TEST EDITOR'S WIFE USED TO OWN ONE. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WE'VE ACTUALLY TESTED A TABOU OFFERING FOR WSUK THOUGH – IN THIS INSTANCE IT'S THE SUPER CHARGED TABOU 3S+ 96L WE'RE PUTTING UNDER THE MICROSCOPE.

Whereas the original 3S is more of an all round freestyle wave, bump and jump board 2019's 3S+ is a turbo'd wave sled that's more in line with surf sailing environments. Although we should add Tabou state it can still be used on flat water.

Out of the box and we have to say that construction looks stunning. The Tabou's lines are extremely pleasing with its vivid red livery ensuring it stands out at the beach. Diamond winger tail, 2+1 thruster fin config and domed deck with top drawer pads/straps complete this very refined design.

On the water the 3S+ feels compact and a tad smaller than its 96L volume would suggest. That said it responds instantly to gusts and takes off with ease. Riding in a very cushioned fashion across chop the word that

springs to mind is 'smooth'. For real world coastal sailors this'll be a welcome trait as many spots can suffer chop at times.

From the straps the 3S+ 96L is fast. It has a decent amount of nose rocker which combined with its speed makes for fun jumping. Connect with steep lips for efficient boosting and you have a fulfilling 'send it' sled that suits aerial antics. It's good for backies in particular allowing proper height for reverse apex rotations.

On a wave the 96L grips like stink, being much more drivey than its standard 3S sibling. Biting hard off the bottom, whether sailors are going front side or back side you're all set for flat chat lip belts, fins out action, re-entry fulfilment or aerial launches.



Conclusion

As a new concept for 2019 Tabou's 3S+ 96 delivers for wave heads/coastal sailors on many fronts. Efficiently booting around the break it's a smooth riding sled that eats choppy conditions for breakfast. Its real magic is jumping and actual riding whereby it delivers a level of prowess that'd put many pure wave boards to shame. In fact, with versatile and user friendly wave toys like this riders won't need to look anywhere else for a surf sailing tool that copes with both onshore and side shore wave sailing scenarios.



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The progression project

SLINGSHOT

Slingshot Wizard 125 2019 windfoil board

Buy from: <http://jp-australia.com/2018/products/boards/magic-ride/> Price: £1,599

WORDS: WINDSURFING UK **PICS:** JAMES JAGGER
MOVING ON FROM LAST ISSUE'S TEST OF SLINGSHOT'S LEVITATOR 150 2019 TEST WE LOOK AT THE BRAND'S ADVANCE FLIGHT PLATFORM – THE WIZARD 125. AS WINDFOILING GAINS TRACTION IT'S SLINGSHOT AND THEIR RANGE OF PRODUCTS THAT'S PRICKING INTERESTS FOR THOSE NOT WANTING TO FOLLOW THE RACE/SLALOM PATH.

We covered SS's Hoverglide foil system in the Levitator review, the only difference here being we're using the more versatile 90cm mast and standard deep Tuttle box head. Flying an increased length mast actually increases early take offs and once you are up it provides more room to correct your flight height before accidentally touching down or over foiling.

As with the Levitator, SS's Wizard is a super compact board. The short nose drastically reduces swing weight and provides a more direct foil control feeling while reducing the effect of wind gusts pushing the nose around. It's actually a lot lighter as well, being constructed with higher grade materials – carbon being a case in point. As with all carbon boards, care should be taken to keep them in optimum condition.

Once on the water, the Wizard's short length becomes apparent. Stand off the sweet spot and it WILL nose dive. This requires riders performing off foil moves – such as tacks – to slightly tweak their technique. It's the same when attempting to taxi and take off. Trusting in the Wizard's design and the width underfoot at the back of the board is best course of action.

Having gotten airborne the benefits of such a nimble sled become apparent. Footstrap positions, the board's thick and wide tail plus the illusion of almost being 'nose free' above the brine all combine to deliver a unique feel. And it's this experience that becomes addictive. Obviously the act of windfoiling itself is one that keeps riders coming back but it's the optimised performance of the Wizard 125 that'll keep you hooked.



Additionally there's then the progressive nature of the Wizard 125. Whilst flying back and forth – mowing the lawn – is perfectly applicable once you fancy (or if) you're poised for all manner of foiling transitions, jumps and general flight tomfoolery that you've possibly seen some riders indulging in.

Conclusion

Slingshot are by far streets ahead with their progressive shapes and windfoiling wisdom. Aiming firmly at the freeride market, with a gentle shove towards the progressive end of the spectrum having learnt those foiling fundamentals, SS's Wizard 125 covers the bases and takes you there with style. Riders will need a period of familiarisation but once this has been completed who knows where the Wizard 125 will take you.

SUPM

Stand Up Paddle Mag UK

SUP Mag UK's October issue is now alive, kicking and ready to order in print...



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