

SUMMER 2025

Issue 24 of Tonic Mag has landed—and it's packed with stories, gear, and the people who make foiling so addictive! Rou Chater dives deep into the buzz around parawings in Are Parawings A Thing? Sensi Graves shares how she balances waves and motherhood in La Ventana, and Gwen Le Tutour takes us inside the AFS Foils factory

in France. Jen Tyler sits down with Harlem's Victor Looijestijn, and we discover the secret wingfoil spots of Sri Lanka with Joachim and Therese. Ranja Schlotte brings the stoke in our Waterwoman feature, and we've got tech breakdowns on the new AER Wing and Dryrobe® Advance, plus fresh gear tests, new techniques, movies, and much more!

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- ARE PARAWINGS A THING? -

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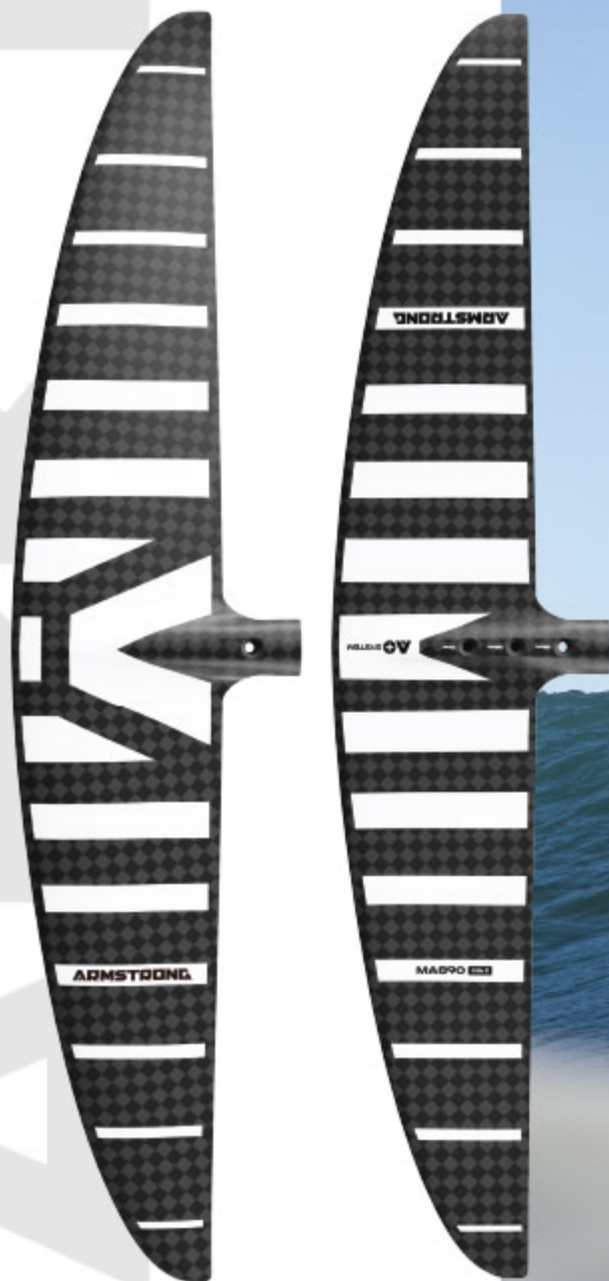
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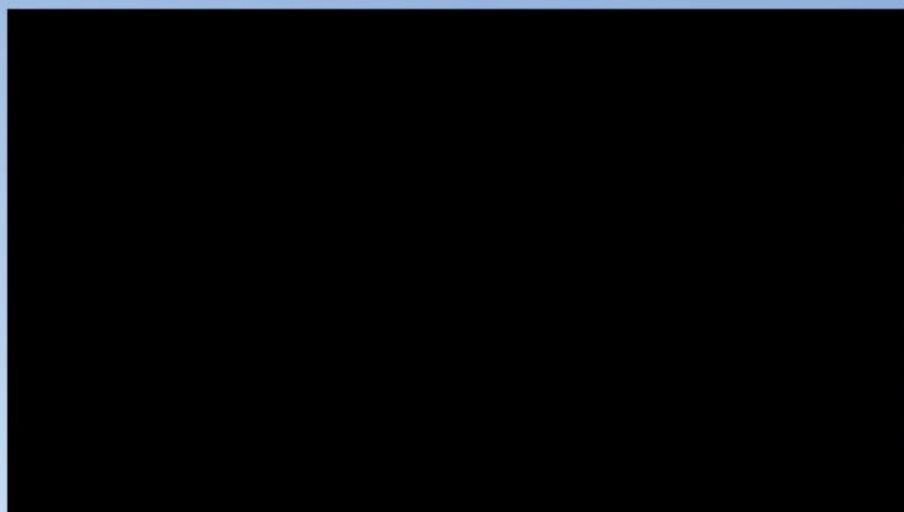


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COMPETITION



IS THE PARAWING
A THING?



LA VENTANA: SENSI
GRAVES ON WINGS
& LITTLE THINGS



AFS FACTORY TOUR



THE INTERVIEW -
VICTOR LOOIJESTIJN



UNLOCKING SRI LANKA'S
WINGFOIL SECRETS



WATERWOMAN -
RANJA SCHLOTTE



FRONT COVER RIDER KAI LENNY PHOTO FRANCK BERTHUOT

TECHNIQUE



TECH FOCUS: AER WING



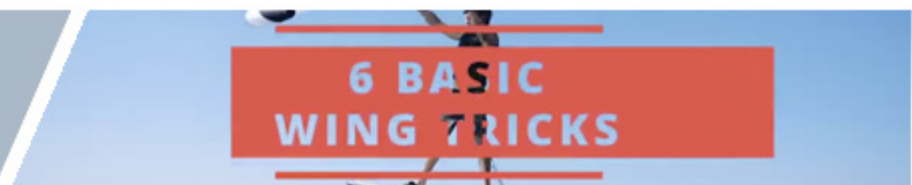
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TESTS



MOVIE NIGHT



6 BASIC
WING TRICKS

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contents

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RIDER SIMON NICOLAS
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ISSUE 24

EDITORIAL

Don't Forget The Wing

It's safe to say that over the last 5-7 years, we've seen what can only be described as a foiling explosion.

I remember watching Robby Naish's video about the 4-meter Wing Surfer well; I couldn't wait to try it! And look how far we've come, foiling progression started in winging and has spread to many disciplines. You can now prone foil, dock start, tow foil, downwind SUP, parawing, flat water paddle up, and to coin the Generic Foil Pod term, 'finger blast'! However, I believe it's super important that we don't forget our roots!

Wing foiling is, without a doubt, the most accessible and growth-ready discipline. It's where the majority of people enter the sport. Anyone with a SUP can pick up a wing and learn the basics after a lesson from their local school. It's one of the reasons the sport has grown so quickly. It's safer than kitesurfing and

easier to learn than windsurfing. I see that as a big win.

Winging also has a clear advantage location-wise. You don't need a huge beach like you do when launching a kite, and gusty inland waters are no problem. It gives the sport a much more global appeal. As I've alluded to before, the other reason is that growth has been so quick due to social media and how eye-grabbing foiling is, which was especially the case in the early days.

So, are we as an industry, media, or retail space giving too much weight to niche disciplines over mass participation? And what's the economic reality—which disciplines are sustainable markets versus passion projects?

If a newbie watersports enthusiast scrolls through their social media, they're likelier to see highly talented individuals downwind SUP foiling huge ocean bumps

or prone foiling critical waves. Don't get me wrong, it's wild to watch, but it doesn't have much real-world accessibility. Is it likely to inspire people, or make them feel as though it's unachievable?

What has amazed me is how slow, compared to surfing, growth is in prone foiling. Two to three years ago, I used to be protective of our local prone foiling spots, thinking they would get busy in no time. However, I still ride them with the same crew of five prone foilers as back then. I'm starting to think it's simply too difficult or too out there for the masses.

It's no secret that the industry is in a tricky place. Arguably, we're still recovering from the stockpiling in Covid, the Brexit disaster (in the UK), and now America's tariffs are causing havoc. We need a dual vision; brands should continue innovating on the fringe while nurturing the base. We can't only produce and



promote high-end race or downwind foils; there should still be a big focus on producing beginner/intermediate gear and content.

Evidence of success is in our 'how-to' videos with Christian & Karine. Their most basic 'getting on foil' or 'learning to gybe' edits have hundreds of thousands of views. With that in mind, we should push for continued support in coaching, education, and beginner-friendly schemes such as equipment hire.

The hottest topic right now is parawing. After my first go a few weeks back, it wasn't nearly as easy as I expected. Don't get me wrong, I had an awesome time, but when comparing it to winging, there's no doubt it is at least 2 or 3 times harder to learn. And if you want to start packing the wing up and go downwind, you're going to need to be very good at downwinding already. We might have another discipline that just isn't suitable for everyone. There's no problem with that; who doesn't love a challenge? But I feel like 80% of marketing on social media right now is parawing footage – whereas real-world participation is probably at 5%.

Here at Tonic Mag, while we love progression and showcasing innovation, we will never forget where we've come in wing foiling. It's the glue holding the community and industry together. It's vital to us that foiling doesn't become an unachievable, unaffordable sport. Growth is great for all, schools, shops, and brands, leading to a future in our sport that will hopefully go on for decades. Who knows what that will look like, but I'm willing to bet winging will still be a big part of it.

Jack Galloway,
Editor

RIDER JESSE RICHMAN
PHOTO FRANCK BERTHUOT



WORDS ROU CHATER

You've probably heard the buzz about parawings and their growing role in wingfoiling, especially for downwind missions. But what exactly are they, do you really need one, and how do they compare to traditional wings? In this feature, Rou Chater breaks down the tech, pros and cons of these lightweight, single-skin wings. Whether you're downwind curious or just want to understand what all the hype is about, we've got you covered!

ARE PARAWINGS A THING?

“A SINGLE-SKIN “WING” THAT USES BRIDLES TO CONTROL THE SHAPE AND A BAR TO CONTROL IT, RATHER THAN AN INFLATABLE FRAME THAT YOU HOLD ONTO.”

Unless you’ve been living under a rock, you’ll be fully aware of the Parawings’ arrival and impact on our sport. You may well be wondering if you should buy one, if you even need one, and what all the fuss is about. Hopefully, by the end of this article, you’ll have all the answers you need and a better understanding of where our sport is headed.

WHAT IS IT?

It’s a single-skin “wing” that uses bridles to control the shape and a bar to control it, rather than an inflatable frame that you hold onto. There have been many comments about it being very similar to a kite, and those conclusions are valid. In kiting, we have had single-skin kites for decades, with bridles and a bar. The only real difference seems to be the orientation of the bar and the lack of lines.

It might be wise to look at kites for a moment to understand the basic principles of the concept, we have LEI (leading edge inflatable kites) which use the same construction as a wing, then we have RAM air inflatable kites, these are twin skin designs where air is forced in to inflate the two skins, hence the name RAM air, the shape is controlled by a network of bridles that can be incredibly complex. Lastly, there are single-skin kites, which fill with air as the wind hits them and the shape is controlled by a bridle.

There are advantages and disadvantages to all of these designs, but most notably, the single-skin kites are exceedingly light and pack away incredibly small.



RIDER CYNTHIA BROWN
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“THE ADVANTAGES THAT THE PARAWING OFFERS FOR DOWNWIND ARE HUGE; THE HARDEST THING TO LEARN IS THE PADDLE UP AND THE BALANCE.”

We also see this single-skin technology in paragliding, where weight and size when packed are crucial when climbing mountains to a take-off spot. Single-skin designs are inherently less stable, however, which we will get onto in a bit.

WHAT ARE PARAWINGS FOR?

Here is the rub: Parawings are not designed to replace wings, so don't think you need to sell your quiver and buy a whole new range of parawings if you want to go wingfoiling. This would be about the worst decision you could make. Parawings are a tool to get you on foil, so you can then pack them away and foil downwind. We all know how popular the sport of downwind has become in foiling. However, Jack mentioned in his editorial that there is often a media bias towards it over the actual participation numbers.

The advantages that the parawing offers for downwind are huge; the hardest thing to learn is the paddle up and the balance. A parawing negates all of the paddle-up skill and some of the balance issues. You can then pack the parawing away, either bunch it up and hold it in your hand, or stuff it in a rash vest or use a specially designed belt such as the Parawing Stash belt from Ozone. This features not only a parawing pocket but also doubles up as a harness too, and features a safety knife. A well-designed bit of kit that is essential for anyone taking their winging in a downwind direction.



RIDER KAI LENNY
PHOTO FRANCK BERTHUOT

“ THE PARAWING OFFERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO LAUNCH AT THE SPOT AND RIDE UPWIND FOR AS LONG AS YOU LIKE ”

Downwinders can sometimes be logistical nightmares, but finding friends, taking the time, and getting access points both into and out of the water can be a real headache. The parawing offers the opportunity to launch at the spot and ride upwind for as long as you like, so you can send it downwind without needing a shuttle. This is the real key to these new products: the ability to turn every session into a downwinder.

If you are reading this and thinking this doesn't sound like you, or how you want to ride, then worry not, the wing in your hands has way more development time under its belt and is far more efficient and far easier to ride than the latest parawings. If you want to just cruise and ride some waves, there is no need to change. However, adding one to your quiver is essential if you are downwind curious.

ADVANTAGES:

Lightweight. It's quite stunning just how little these things weigh. This is great for getting them flying in lighter winds and travelling.

Packability. If you are doing an upwind downwinder, you won't ever be able to stow your wing in a bag or on your back like you can pack a parawing.

Easy to Deploy: If you are upwind and downwinding, you'll have a small pump to inflate your wing if you can't paddle up; re-deploying a wing takes time and is a hassle, especially in a big sea.

“ JUST THROW IT IN THE AIR, AND IT WILL CATCH AND GIVE YOU NEAR-INSTANTANEOUS POWER. ”

The parawing can be deployed in an instant. Just throw it in the air, and it will catch and give you near-instantaneous power.

Easier Downwinding: There is no such thing as easy downwinding, but this does negate the need to learn SUP and paddle skills and instead transfer your winging skills.

DISADVANTAGES:

Harder To Use: Despite all the media hype, these are much harder to use than a traditional wing; the power is very on/off, making it hard to balance, especially in marginal conditions. They are also harder to steer and fly, especially if you don't have any kite experience.

Narrow Range: They have a slimmer range in which they will work; they need more wind to get going and quickly become overpowered, so you may need more of them to cover all the wind conditions if you live in a spot that experiences variable conditions.

Specific Use Case: While we see lots of pro riders getting freaky with the freestyle, this likely isn't on your radar. To that end, it's really a tool for upwind/downwind runs rather than something to replace your wing.

Set Up Can Be Daunting: Bridles were always the most off-putting thing for kites, and a reason the LEI design took hold and became dominant. The parawing will always use bridles, which can be off-putting if you haven't experienced them before.

PHOTO FRANCK BERTHUOT





RIDER CYNTHIA BROWN
PHOTO DAN TAYLOR

“EVEN MORE SO IF YOU HAVE EVER KITESURFED OR KITEFOILED, THESE ARE SKILLS THAT WILL GIVE YOU AN ADVANTAGE.”

However, they are not as scary as they look, and on most parawings, they are pretty simple. Maintenance just takes a bit of time and patience, should you ever need to do it. Hopefully, by getting this far, you will better understand what the Parwing is, how it

works, and who it's for. As a team here at Tonic, we've spent a few months flying them, testing different models and figuring them out. The first thing to say is that they are not all created equal; some are definitely better than others. While they all work, some are just easier to use; notably, the Ozone Pocket Rocket seems to be the clear winner.

Ozone has invested a lot of time and effort into single skin kites and paragliders, and that knowledge transfer is obvious when you fly the Pocket Rocket. The main advantages

you will notice are with gust handling and steering. The Ozone is more forgiving in gusty conditions and allows you to sheet the power in and out to a point, certainly more than some other wings.

It's also much easier to steer and feels more intuitive to fly. We have experienced some of the parawings having a mind of their own and crashing without any real input from the rider, but the Pocket Rocket never did this. It certainly gets the biggest thumbs up from the team here at the mag.

So, how was the experience of learning? More complicated than we thought, and this is the running theme, not just from our team, but from all the people we spoke to as well. It's a little like learning a new sport all over again. The positives are that if you have good wing skills, these are largely transferable and will help. Even more so if you have ever kitesurfed or kitefoiled, these are skills that will give you an advantage.

Get the conditions right. The range of these wings is much smaller than that of a traditional wing, so make sure you have plenty of power for the size of wing you have. This will make the learning process much easier and enjoyable. We would also recommend learning on a bigger board and foil; this is essential. The hardest thing to master with the parawing is the on-off nature of the power delivery, especially if it is gusty.

This means when you are learning, you are getting pulled forward when it powers up and then dropped back in the drink when the power goes. With a traditional wing, you can pump it and use it to counterbalance; you can't do this with the parawing,



“ IF YOU WANT TO DO MORE DOWNWINDING THAN YOU EVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE, THIS IS A FANTASTIC TOOL IN YOUR ARSENAL.”

so you'll struggle if you are riding your usual sinker board, for instance, unless it is nuking. A larger board with positive buoyancy will make learning much easier. A bigger foil will also allow you to get up on foil faster. Once you are foiling, the stability increases; the initial phase is the hardest.

We'll dive more deeply into the technique in an upcoming issue; we wanted this to be an overview to ease the inquiring mind. If you want to do more downwinding than you ever thought possible, this is a fantastic tool in your arsenal. A parawing can turn any launch site and location into a downwind run, negating the need for any logistics, shuttles, or access. As long as you can launch, the only restriction to your downwind run is how far upwind you want to go...

When Sensi Graves first considered starting a family, she fully understood how it might change the adventurous, wind-driven lifestyle she loved. But being fully committed to life outdoors, Sensi has proven it's possible to chase wind, waves, and parenthood all at once. In this feature, she shares her experiences of spending two months in La Ventana with Brandon Scheid, their son, Flint, and her brand new Armstrong gear, offering an honest look at what it's like to blend family life with watersports in one of the world's premier wind destinations!

LA VENTANA: SENSI GRAVES ON WINGS & LITTLE THINGS

"I WRESTLED WITH THE DECISION TO HAVE KIDS, BUT ONCE I BECAME PREGNANT, I WAS THRILLED WITH THE NEW EXPERIENCES THIS BRAND-NEW LIFE WOULD BRING."



One of my hesitations with having kids was the abrupt lifestyle change it would cause. We are here, working tirelessly to establish some semblance of freedom. We enjoy travelling, and as windsports people, we prioritise the shred. Big questions arise when you consider upending your life as you know it and launching into the unknown. I wrestled with the decision to have kids, but once I became pregnant, I was thrilled with the new experiences this brand-new life would bring. And I was also strategic in my planning to support my mental health.

I knew that coming into motherhood, I wanted to keep getting on the water as much as possible and continue prioritising a life lived outside. Last year, while 3 months pregnant, I ventured to La Ventana, Mexico, the premier winter windsports destination for the West coast of the United States, to run my women's kite and wing camps. After having the baby, I knew I would want to spend even more time on the beach in Baja California, Mexico. Therefore last April, while my husband and professional kiteboarder Brandon Scheid was still in his mania phase (for readers who don't know, Brandon experienced a traumatic brain injury at the end of 2023 and the 15 months following have been a roller coaster of mania, depression, and barely keeping our heads above water). Moving forward, I wanted to prioritise getting sunshine in during the winter months for our mental health. Plus, I thought it would be much easier to have a baby on the beach than in the snow (turns out I was right).



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“THE BREEZE BLOWS CONSISTENTLY FROM ABOUT NOVEMBER THROUGH APRIL, MAKING THIS WARM, DESERT LOCATION IDEAL FOR WINDSPORTERS LOOKING TO ESCAPE WINTER UP NORTH.”

PHOTO PAUL PORTER

Therefore, I found and booked a house for us to stay in for two months in La Ventana, Mexico, and as I write this piece, Brandon and I are just about to head back to Hood River, our home. After a winter abroad, I'm thrilled that our experiment succeeded. La Ventana is a wonderful location for windsports families looking to prioritise their water time, connect with like-minded families, and continue their professional working lives.

La Ventana is a staple location for any West Coast kiteboarder, wing foiler or windsurfer. The breeze blows consistently from about November through April, making this warm, desert location ideal for windsporters looking to escape winter up north. Brandon and I have made La Ventana a part of our yearly schedule for the past decade, coming down for photoshoots, women's camps, and gear testing. Baja, one of our top winter destinations, represents much of the industry.

Reaching La Ventana is relatively easy from the West Coast, with direct flights from major US cities that land in San Jose del Cabo (a 2-hour drive from La Ventana) and select flights to La Paz (approximately 45 minutes away). Many rental car companies exist (I recommend All in Car Rental), just watch out for the insurance upcharges upon arrival. We brought our car seat, so we didn't evaluate rental options. However, travelling with our car seat was a breeze – car seats, breast milk, and strollers do not count towards your bag fees on major US airlines.





"I'VE BEEN COMING TO THIS BEAUTIFUL PARADISE FOR 9 YEARS AND NOTICED HOW POPULAR IT HAS BECOME FOR FAMILIES"

Despite being known for its access to extreme sports, La Ventana is becoming increasingly family-friendly. As Kristy Leon, the founder of Paxia Kids Camp, says, "Every time I arrive in La Ventana, it feels like a great adventure, and I am always amazed at how the number of foreign children here continues to grow. I've been coming to this beautiful paradise for 9 years and noticed

how popular it has become for families to visit La Ventana." Three things make La Ventana, Mexico, an ideal destination for windsports families: the conditions, the community and the childcare. Join me as we adventure South for the season!

THE CONDITIONS:

With thermal winds created by hot air rising in the desert, combined with Northerly conditions that arise when weather patterns set up over the four corners of the US, La Ventana experiences plenty of wind, rolling swell, and "bump and jump" conditions. The local wind machine is cranked on from

November through April, and it's common to have 4-5 out of 7 days be blowing in any given week.

The shape of the area known as La Ventana is beginner-friendly, offering conditions suitable for both novice and more advanced riders. The wind blows side shore, from North to South, down the coastline with the land curving around at the bottom of the bay to create a "catcher's mitt". It's nearly impossible to get swept out to sea, as the wind will eventually push you into the catcher's mitt at the bay's South end. A long, beautiful, uninhabited island named Cerralvo sits about 18 miles off the coast, adjacent to La Ventana, which creates a protected bay and evokes feelings of safety for watersports athletes.



There are tons of locations to launch all up and down El Sargento and La Ventana (two of the three villages that make up this area, the third being El Teso), which makes it easier for families with small children to find parking, shade, and other things to entertain kids who don't wind sport (yet).

The water is chilly during winter, and the air temperature drops at night. We rode in 4/3's and 3/2's for most of our sessions.

"THERE ARE TONS OF LOCATIONS TO LAUNCH ALL UP AND DOWN EL SARGENTO AND LA VENTANA"



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"DURING THE TIMES WHEN FRIENDS AND FAMILY WOULD VOLUNTEER TO WATCH THE BABY, WE COULD GET A RARE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEND TIME TOGETHER ON THE WATER."



I think having two wetsuits is necessary so that you can have a dry one for your second session. The daytime air temperature ranges from 65°F to 80°F, with a water temperature of 60-65°F. This made it a bit too cold for our 6-month-old son, Flint, to enjoy the ocean; therefore, during session trade-offs, one of us would be walking the beach with Flint in the carrier or hanging out on a blanket by the car.

MAKING IT WORK AS A FAMILY:

Rising child care costs are one of the biggest concerns for new couples. Families looking to visit La Ventana can take advantage of more affordable services, with nannies running from 130 to 150 pesos (approximately \$8) per hour. Beyond babysitting groups, La Ventana offers a Montessori school with an afternoon daycare program. The program's price varies depending on the duration and frequency of attendance, but it is comparable to the cost of a nanny.

Brandon and I never utilised a childcare service; we rented a big enough house to visit various family members during our two months in Mexico. During the times when friends and family would volunteer to watch the baby, we could get a rare opportunity to spend time together on the water. Otherwise, trading off worked well for us. Some of the common beaches that we posted up at were: Fig Tree, an excellent smaller beach access with a few palm frond shade structures and an easy in and out; Baja Joes,

"A NORTHERN BEACH WITH A SUPER WIDE OPEN LAUNCH, A RESTAURANT AND ICE CREAM SHOP, SHADE STRUCTURES AND THE PERFECT STARTING POINT FOR A DOWNWINDER."

a much busier launch but the bar, coffee shop and restaurant on location provide shade, snacks and a friendly environment and La Tuna, a northern beach with a super wide open launch, a restaurant and ice cream shop, shade structures and the perfect starting point for a downwinder.

BEYOND THE WIND:

All in all, the beach is an excellent place to entertain a baby. Our beach equipment included a portable sunshade, a carrier, UV-protective shirts, and a bucket hat with straps to keep it from blowing off our baby's head. But beyond that, we weren't too concerned with sun exposure (vitamin D is good!) and zero issues at the beach. It's the perfect place to play with your kids!

Beyond the beach, La Ventana offers a range of great family-friendly activities—one standout is the Paxia Kids Camp, run by Kristy Leon. After years as a children's guide at summer camps, Kristy brought her passion to La Ventana, where the 2024/2025 winter marked her second season leading Paxia Kids.

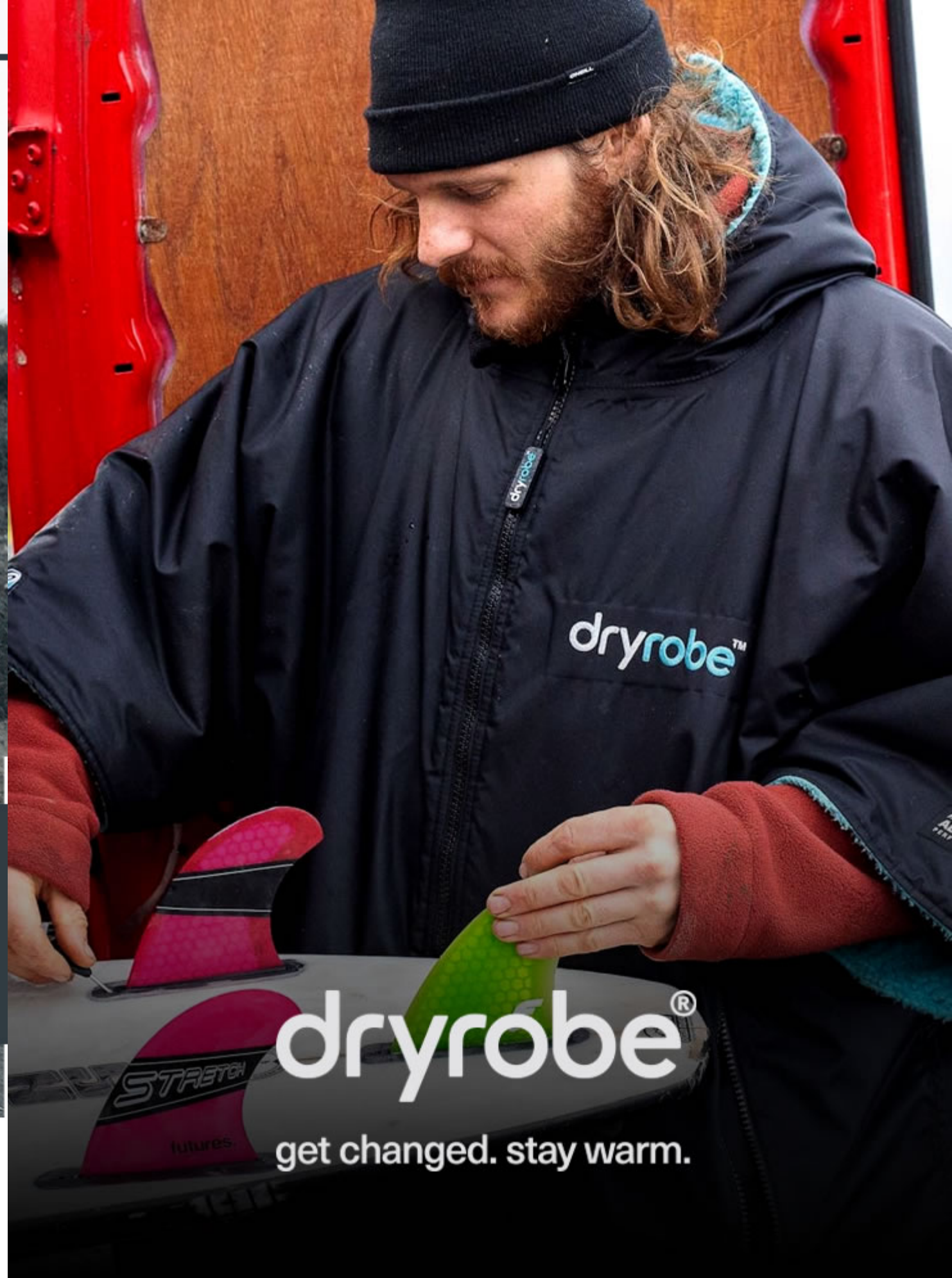
"I'm Kristy Leon, and I've been working with kids in summer camps since I was 16. I'm also a certified kids' yoga and mindfulness teacher, which helps me connect with children on a deeper level. These experiences have taken me worldwide—from Canada and Spain to Panama and France—through au pair and babysitting programs.





Paxia Kids Camp is one of the most fun and enriching ways for kids in La Ventana to learn, play, and connect with nature. We offer yoga, mindfulness, macramé, painting, stand-up paddleboarding (SUP), and snorkelling. One of the most beautiful things is watching kids from different cultures bond—language barriers simply disappear. I'm always inspired by the courage of children trying to connect, whether it's a foreign child learning a few Spanish words or a local child discovering new cultures and languages."

"ONE OF THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL THINGS
IS WATCHING KIDS
FROM DIFFERENT
CULTURES BOND"



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"WE SPEND A LOT OF TIME ON THE BEACH, SWIMMING IN THE WARMER MONTHS, AND WALKING AROUND THE ARROYOS IN THE COOLER MONTHS."



Additionally, local Dad and avid kiteboarder and surfer Luke Gandy had this to say about what kid-friendly activities La Ventana allows for: "There are a couple of parks, one in La Ventana and one in El Sargento. We spend a lot of time on the beach, swimming in the warmer months, and walking around the arroyos in the cooler months. Pitaya is great for kids because of all the animals it has. Baja Joe's happy hour usually has a few kids hanging around then. There are organised kids nights at Playa Central or Baja Joe's once or twice a month."

Other great kid-friendly activities include: bike rides through Los Cardones (the cactus forest), playing in the courtyard at Baja Joe's, a Wing Foil Kids Camp, the bouncy house on Wednesdays at Playa Central, ballet, crafts and music organised by Mi Casa es Tu Casa, and "Seafari" boat tours out into the Sea of Cortez.

THE GEAR AND OTHER TIPS

In November of last year, I signed on to become an ambassador for Armstrong Foils. Subsequently, Brandon left his job at the end of 2024; therefore, we could ride my equipment, making packing slightly easier. Nonetheless, packing for two months in Mexico with kite gear, wing gear, and baby equipment was no small feat.

Here's the shortlist of key items we brought. We sent one 100-pound gear bag down with a friend (many people drive from Hood River to La Ventana), and we brought one gear bag, two checked bags,



"WE FEEL VERY BLESSED THAT WE HAVE NOT HAD TO GIVE UP OUR PASSIONS, AND WE CONTINUE BUILDING OUR LIVES AROUND THIS SPORT AND COMMUNITY THAT WE LOVE SO MUCH."

and two carry-on suitcases. Our equipment included some kite gear, but this trip was primarily focused on winging, as we find that much easier to trade off with, and the rolling swell in LV makes it super fun. We brought two wing boards, one quiver of XPS wings (2.6, 3, 3.5, 4 and 4.6—if you're going for two

months, you should have all your sizes), and two foil setups. I have been riding and loving the Armstrong HA780 and HA680 front wings paired with the speed tail, carbon fuselage and 795cm performance mast. This set-up was dreamy. The HA line allows for a ton of speed, glide and manoeuvrability and Brandon and I both felt like we progressed our winging during our time in Mexico.

As for baby equipment, we kept it as minimal as possible: a sunshade, a car seat and a few toys were priorities. We also brought Flint a beach blanket, a few different layers, and hats. Upon arrival, we contacted our good friend Luke Gandy, who lent us a play mat—a key for the hard concrete floors typical in most houses—and toys and books. We use cloth diapers, so we also brought our supply of diapers and some natural wipes. This made it relatively easy since we didn't have to track down sanitary supplies; however, a few stores in town stock them, including the local grocery stores: Star Market, Oscarito's, and La Pescaderia.

I see so many young families taking to the beaches in La Ventana. As the community grows, so does the opportunity for watersports families to build a life around the wind and water. We feel very blessed that we have not had to give up our passions, and we continue building our lives around this sport and community that we love so much. Despite the challenges of balancing parenthood and watersports, La Ventana offers the rare gift of a community that seamlessly embraces both worlds. Our journey here has shown us that with creativity and determination, you can introduce your children to the magic of a wind-powered lifestyle from their earliest days, creating a legacy of adventure that will shape your family for generations.

AFS FOILS FACTORY

We caught up with Gwen Le Tuteur fresh off a visit to the AFS Foils factory in Brittany, France. Gwen shares his first-hand impressions of AFS's rider-driven approach to innovation, sustainability, and craftsmanship. From a factory that feels more like a community hub to prototypes developed in just 48 hours, Gwen offers an inside look at what makes AFS unique—and why he continues to ride their gear by choice, not contract!



" EVERYONE WAS SUPER NICE AND FRIENDLY,
CHATting ABOUT THE LATEST SESSION THEY
SCORED TOGETHER "



Hi Gwen, it's great to have you here, and we can't wait to hear about your recent visit to the AFS Foils factory! What was your first impression when you arrived and had Tanguy le Bihan show you around?

Last year, while I was in Crozon for the Crozon Foil Festival DW race in France, AFS invited me to visit their factory, which is only 30 minutes away from Crozon. Since I grew up in Brittany, it's especially cool that AFS manufactures their foils and boards in the region. When I arrived at the factory, Tanguy greeted me warmly. I appreciate how approachable and passionate he is, and he's also quite funny. I've spent some time with him in Hood River during AWSI, and whenever you're with him, you know you'll have a great time!

AFS is known for producing everything in-house. What was it like to see the full process, from design to final product, all under one roof?

The factory is impressive, super clean, and well-organised. The ceiling has many windows, making the space bright and spacious, which is not what I expected from a factory. The entire crew working there are all riders themselves. As soon as you enter the parking lot, you see tons of wetsuits drying on people's cars, which shows the team's passion for riding! In one area, you can meet the company's owner and the workers who are sanding foils. Everyone eats lunch at the same table, creating a big family atmosphere. The vibe during lunch was very French, haha!

Everyone was super nice and friendly, chatting about the latest session they scored together or about family, etc.... it was a place I feel I would enjoy working at myself. The vibe during lunch was very French, haha!



"THIS PASSION BEHIND THE BRAND
INSTILLS TRUST IN THE PRODUCTS
THEY DESIGN."

How difficult was it for the team to set up the factory in France? Was it an expansion of AHD or a new building and project?

I'm not entirely sure, but Tanguy emphasised that setting up the factory in Brittany was very important to him. He mentioned several reasons for this decision, including the need for control over production, maintaining quality and standards, minimising the environmental impact of production in Asia and the shipping process, and providing local jobs.

How important is it for a brand to have full control over production?

Obviously, the control of quality and standards is a big thing. But also the reactivity to demand. When producing overseas, you often have to produce in bulk. AFS is able to adapt the manufacturing volume to the demand and not overproduce, flooding the market with products people don't want.

Did you get a sneak peek at any new prototypes?

I noticed a few things that looked very interesting, but they weren't ready to share any information yet!

Would you like to share any interesting conversations with the engineers, designers, or riders?

I admire how Tanguy and the design team focus on creating products they genuinely want to use themselves, rather than just aiming for increased sales. This passion behind the brand instills trust in the products they design.



" THEIR DESIGNERS ARE REALLY GOOD RIDERS, SO THEY CAN TEST PROTOTYPES THEMSELVES. "



For example, monobloc foils, like silk and pure foil, prioritise performance without compromising.

What surprised you the most about how AFS approaches product development and testing?

One, their designers are really good riders, so they can test prototypes themselves. Two, they have the factory right there, so they can literally go from idea to working prototype in 48 hours -that is crazy!

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You've ridden a lot of gear—how does the AFS product range compare in terms of performance and feel?

I am neither an ambassador nor a sponsored rider, so I have no obligation to ride AFS and no special incentives; I pay for my gear. For downwinding, I've primarily been using the 800 Pure. It remains one of my favourite foils of all time due to its thin profile, which provides an unparalleled glide experience. For winging, my go-to has been the 700 Enduro, which offers a fantastic combination of carving, speed, and glide.

Additionally, I've spent considerable time on the Blackbird V2 and V3 downwind boards. They are fast and incredibly fun!

Hand finishing the products requires very skilled and time-consuming work. Will there always be a need to hand-finish the foils?

I think machines will be able to handle a big part of the finishing stage in the future. I believe AFS is working on an alternative solution to hand finish, which could potentially increase production capacity while maintaining their high standard.

Can you say something that most people wouldn't expect about the AFS factory?

The AFS factory is very different from what most people imagine when they think of a factory. With its solar panels, skylights, and cheerful employees, it feels more like a place where you would want to hang out with your foiling friends!



"WITH ITS SOLAR PANELS, SKYLIGHTS, AND CHEERFUL EMPLOYEES, IT FEELS MORE LIKE A PLACE WHERE YOU WOULD WANT TO HANG OUT WITH YOUR FOILING FRIENDS!"

" I APPRECIATE AFS'S COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY, WHICH IS VERY IMPORTANT TO ME BEYOND JUST OUR SPORT. "



How has this visit shaped your perspective or deepened your connection with the AFS brand?

I feel a strong alignment with AFS on many levels. First and foremost, the quality and performance of their products make every session incredibly enjoyable. Beyond that, I appreciate AFS's commitment to sustainability, which is very important to me beyond just our sport. Additionally, my personal connection with the people and the location of AFS truly seals the deal. I am a huge fan of AFS, so thank you for being such a fantastic brand!

Thanks Gwen!

Thanks, Jen!



THE INTERVIEW

As an original member of Harlem Kitesurfing, Victor has worn many hats: rider, team manager, and creative mind behind the lens. In this interview, Jen Tyler sits down with Victor to explore how his passion has helped define Harlem's spirit, his journey through the world of kitesurfing and wingfoiling, and what it takes to grow a strong, connected community around the sport. Dive in!





“ I BECAME A KITESURFING INSTRUCTOR DURING THE SUMMER AND A SKI AND SNOWBOARD INSTRUCTOR IN THE WINTER. ”

Victor! Great to finally meet you. You’ve been with Harlem Kitesurfing from the start, and we thought it was time to learn more about you! You’ve worked across a wide range of snow and surf schools —how did kitesurfing come into your life?

Hi Jen, thanks for having me! I’ve been passionate about action sports since I was young. When the opportunity arose to turn that passion into a career, I became a kitesurfing instructor during the summer and a ski and snowboard instructor in the winter. Eventually, I decided to embrace the endless summer and fully commit to kitesurfing. This was also when Harlem Kitesurfing came into my life; they were looking for someone to take the plunge!

Can you tell us a little about your job role at Harlem Kitesurfing? How did you transition from being an instructor to a team manager?

I kicked things off as an ambassador for them, creating content. I liked it, but I also mentioned that I wanted to do more to help build a community. So, the next step was becoming a team manager as more people joined the family. This all happened from 2018 to 2020.

Then I moved to the Netherlands, which gave me the chance to help out even more wherever I could.

PHOTO YANNICK SCHWATZ



We also spent time on research and development until the team expanded, and that's when I took on my role as team manager in full.

What does a typical day look like for you as a team manager and rider?

Being the team manager at Harlem isn't my only role—I'm someone who can handle it all! One of my primary tasks each day is to check in with all the riders every week and see how they're doing. I'm here to help with whatever they need. Additionally, I serve as a liaison between the riders and the company, as they often have a lot on their plates and may just need a gentle reminder to keep moving forward!

" WE REMAIN ONE FAMILY, UNITED IN OUR MISSION TO CREATE THE BEST GEAR POSSIBLE "

What about Harlem Kitesurfing stands out to you in today's kite and wing industry?

We remain one family, united in our mission to create the best gear possible and be the brand that everyone wants to be part of. What truly stands out is our gear and our riders, who are pushing the sport to new heights!

You're also a photographer—how did that side of your work develop, and what drew you to it?

Like I mentioned before, I've got many mini-talents! I picked them up over the years. If you want to be a great brand ambassador, you've got to create tons of content to show what you can do and keep building your connection with the brand. Even though I can't pull off the craziest tricks anymore, I still love capturing those moments!



Do you find your rider experience influences how you shoot, and vice versa?

100%. I can tell what the riders do and when they go for it, as you can see in their speed and takeoff.

What kind of photography excites you most—lifestyle, action, or behind-the-scenes?

To be completely honest, my favourite type of photography is animal photography. I enjoy the element of surprise, and capturing images of animals, whether small or large, can be pretty challenging.

When it comes to kites, I particularly love taking super close-up shots during action or product shoots.

“ I PARTICULARLY LOVE TAKING SUPER CLOSE-UP SHOTS DURING ACTION OR PRODUCT SHOTS. ”

Women's Kite and Wing Adventure Retreats

JOIN STRUT KITE & WING AND GROW YOUR CONFIDENCE ON THE WATER

If you have the opportunity to join Sensi and Nadja on one of their camps, I highly recommend joining! I hope to be an annual guest, and have so much to learn from these two amazing, confident, intelligent and inspiring women!"

-Beth



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- Grow your confidence
- Learn to wing
- Transform how you ride AND how you see yourself



Join our 5-★ camps: "This is not your typical women's camp! I was inspired, encouraged, motivated & supported on all things wing foil, and also in life! Sensi and Nadja create such an inclusive, FUN, and open environment. This felt so genuine and different!"



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- BRAZIL ADVENTURES (Nov 8-15 & 23-30) - Level up in consistent wind paradise



Can you share your favourite photo you've taken and the story behind it?

In Picture 1, you can see Lorenzo, captured while I stood in the water where the waves occasionally crashed against me. It was extremely challenging to keep the lens clean and maintain a sharp image, but we managed to get quite close without using a water housing.

Picture 2 was taken by Stig Hoefnagel before the Force was in its final design. I love doing short line shoots because the photos turn out exceptionally cool! This was also the last time I was one of the top riders in Harlem. After this, I was joined by a fantastic team of top 10 riders who could perform even better. This memory holds a special place in my heart.

What exciting things are on the horizon for you and Harlem Kitesurfing?

This is tough because there are so many exciting things happening! However, I have to hold off on sharing everything for now. What I'm looking forward to is showing that sustainability and performance can totally work together in our industry. I'm hoping that in a couple of years, we'll be able to fully recycle a kite to help keep our world in great shape!

"THE KEY TO JOINING THE FAMILY IS TO CONTRIBUTE SOMETHING UNIQUE TO IT."

As a team manager, what do you look for when it comes to team riders and ambassadors, and what makes them stand out?

The key to joining the family is to contribute something unique to it. This could be something small, like acting as an ambassador in a local area, sharing our amazing products with riders who aim to set World Records and become champions.





It's also essential to ensure that we don't have too many people with the same goal, but rather that we diversify across many locations.

What's the hardest part of the role?

Keep all the riders happy while also satisfying the marketing and sales teams. Remember, it's not just about enjoying the kite sessions!

Sometimes, one of the hardest parts is having to tell amazing riders that they can't join us, whether because the timing isn't right or the team is already at capacity. We believe that keeping the team at the right size is essential to providing the best support, opportunities, and attention that every rider deserves.

What do you enjoy the most about working for a brand like Harlem?

I am most passionate about joining a company that supports my vision and collaborates with me to reach new heights, rather than just working for financial gain.

" WHEN YOU PURSUE WHAT YOU LOVE, THE MONEY WILL FOLLOW, AS HARD WORK TRULY PAYS OFF. "

When you pursue what you love, the money will follow, as hard work truly pays off. While we may never become millionaires in this industry, living a good, simple life with purpose and earning respect for our work is what makes this industry so rewarding.

Amazing, thank you, Victor!

Thanks Jen!

Just imagine empty line-ups, 1–2 metre waves rolling in, and a light, consistent breeze—perfect for a 5m² wing. Sounds like a dream? That's the daily rhythm Joachim Bertelsen and Therese Taabbel scored on Sri Lanka's south coast! What started as a quick trip turned into five weeks of wingfoiling bliss, great food, and laid-back vibes. Sri Lanka, you've got their hearts!

UNLOCKING SRI LANKA'S WINGFOIL SECRETS



“ KALPITIYA IS FAMOUS FOR ITS BIG LAGOON, WHICH IS PERFECT FOR BEGINNER WINGFOILERS THANKS TO ITS RELIABLE WINDS, GENTLE ROLLERS, AND FLAT-WATER SECTIONS. ”

Empty line-ups, 1–2 metre waves rolling in, and a light, consistent breeze—perfect for a 5m² wing. Sounds like a dream? Welcome to the south coast of Sri Lanka. Specifically, the town of Ahangama has become a haven for surfers seeking a balance between adventure and tranquillity, with its mix of reef and point breaks offering clean waves for all levels. But for wingfoilers, it remains a largely untapped paradise.

At the beginning of February, we boarded a 15-hour flight from Denmark, with a stopover in Doha, to Sri Lanka’s capital, Colombo. Our adventure began further north in Kalpitiya—a well-known kitesurfing destination. Kalpitiya is famous for its big lagoon, which is perfect for beginner wingfoilers thanks to its reliable winds, gentle rollers, and flat-water sections. While the waves here are smaller, it’s an excellent spot for learning and progression. As Therese is a professional kitesurfer and Kalpitiya has ideal freestyle conditions, we spent three weeks training there. But we knew the real waves were waiting further south.

After Kalpitiya, we packed up a van and drove to our favourite surf town—Ahangama. We had scoured Google Maps and heard whispers about afternoon winds, though Windguru made us doubt we’d get much wind at all. We were wrong. What was meant to be a brief visit turned into a five-week stay. We found it: perfect waves and wind.

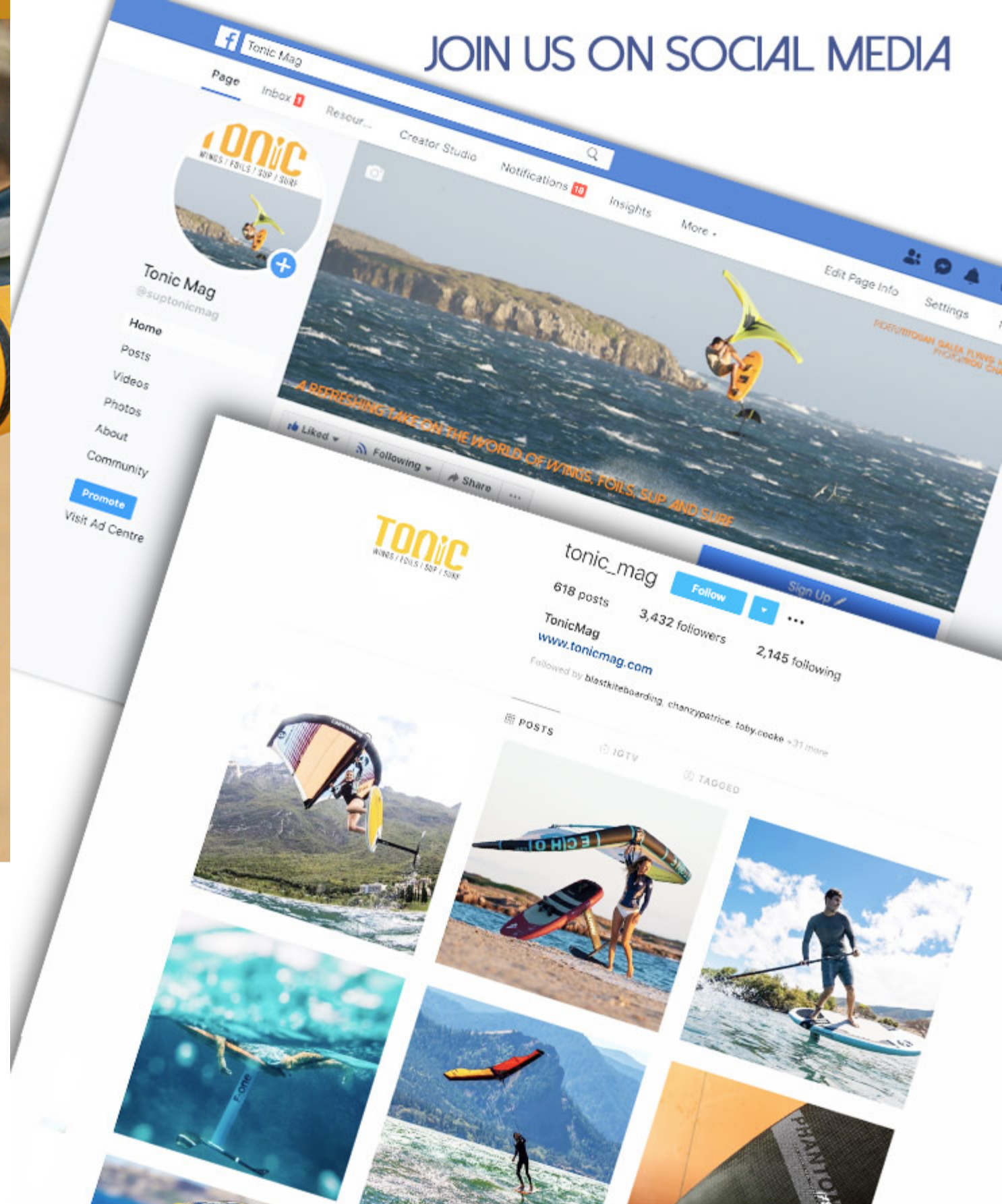




Our daily routine quickly fell into place. Mornings started calmly, with clean waves ideal for surfing. By noon, the breeze would begin to build, reaching solid wingfoiling conditions by 1 p.m. and holding until around 4 p.m. Most days followed this pattern thanks to reliable thermal winds. While Windguru often underforecasted wind strength, it was great for predicting direction, which helped confirm whether the thermal would kick in.

“THE BREEZE WOULD BEGIN TO BUILD, REACHING SOLID WINGFOILING CONDITIONS BY 1 P.M.”

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“MORNINGS WERE CROWDED WITH SURFERS, BUT AS THE WIND PICKED UP, THEY CLEARED OUT, LEAVING US WITH EMPTY PERFECTION. THE WIND DIRECTION—ALWAYS SIDE-SHORE—WAS IDEAL.”

We mostly rode two main spots: Marshmallow and Lazy Right. Marshmallow is one of the more popular surf spots in the south, but when the wind picks up, surfers clear out, and you get the place to yourself. Entry is easy from the beach in front of Popeye Beach Café, and within 2–3 metres,

the water is deep enough to foil. The waves range from mellow and manageable to bigger sets with closing sections, but in between, we scored long, clean A-frames. Crashes weren't stressful, either; you're only 50–100 metres from shore and still in deep water. Best of all, it works in both east and west winds.

Lazy Right, located in Midigama, features a bay with both left- and right-handers. The right side is slightly deeper and more open to the wind. To access it, you head to the far right of the bay where the sand ends.

There's no heavy shore break, and the water is deep enough to foil within a few metres. This spot also works for both east and west winds.

On bigger swell days, Marshmallow is easier to access and less intimidating. Both spots offer deep-water entries and A-frame waves ideal for foiling. The water is crystal clear, dotted with coral and turtles, adding a magical touch to every session! Most afternoons, we used our 5m² or 6m² wings, which gave us all the power we needed. Mornings were crowded with surfers, but as the wind picked up, they cleared out, leaving us with empty perfection. The wind direction—always side-shore—was ideal.



“ AHANGAMA OFFERS MORE THAN JUST OCEAN ACTION. THE TOWN BLENDS LAID-BACK SURF ENERGY WITH LOCAL CULTURE AND HOLISTIC WELLNESS. ”

Getting around required some navigation. Traffic in Sri Lanka is famously chaotic, so we rented a scooter for approximately €130 per month. It gave us the freedom to spot-check locations depending on the day's forecast. For those less confident on two wheels, tuk-tuks are readily available and make a great option after the session. It's easy to get around quickly and affordably.

The food scene in Ahangama is as rich as its landscapes! Local cuisine in the south features fresh seafood, rice, and intensely flavourful curries. We loved Mermaid, Sunils, and Town House for their authentic rice and curry, served at around €5 per plate. If, like us, you also appreciate a good cup of coffee and a slice of cake, you'll find plenty of hip cafes. Our favourite was Kaffi—a Scandinavian-owned spot with great vibes.

Ahangama offers more than just ocean action. The town blends laid-back surf energy with local culture and holistic wellness. There are yoga shalas, such as Amber and Ice, as well as saunas and ice baths, live music nights, skate sessions, and even running clubs. There's a warm and welcoming vibe that makes it easy to settle in. "You feel at home here really quickly," we agreed.

Despite promising ourselves a day off regularly, we kept going out. "Almost every day we said, 'Tomorrow we rest,'" Joachim laughs. "But then the conditions looked even better, and we couldn't resist. We ended up going to bed at 8 p.m., starfished and exhausted."

“THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO CHECK SAFETY, ESPECIALLY DEPTH, AND TALK TO LOCALS. EVEN SURFERS CAN GIVE GREAT INSIGHT INTO CURRENTS AND HAZARDS.”

Looking back, we'd skip packing 3m² and 4m² wings next time. The wind is generally light, so sticking with larger wings makes more sense. While Sri Lanka may not become a mainstream wingfoil destination due to unpredictable forecasts, the experience is unbeatable. There's so much to do on non-windy days that you'll never feel like you're missing out.

And if you're thinking about heading somewhere new for a wingfoil adventure, Joachim has some advice: “The most important thing is to check safety, especially depth, and talk to locals. Even surfers can give great insight into currents and hazards. We didn't see other foilers out, but locals helped us find the perfect spots.”

From surf culture and local flavour to tropical solitude and foil-perfect afternoons, the south coast of Sri Lanka is the next dream destination for adventurous riders. Just be ready—you might not want to leave!



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- Sukie R



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PHOTO MAX GIFTED

WATERWOMEN

QUESTIONS JEN TYLER

RANJA SCHLOTTE

Growing up between the North Sea and the Alps, Ranja Schlotte's love for nature led her from slopestyle skiing to kitesurfing and now, wingsurfing. Passionate, honest, and always up for a challenge, Ranja shares her journey, her favourite Ride Engine gear, and how staying grounded in fun helps her rise above it all. Jen Tyler dives in for a chat with one of wingsurfing's most inspiring women!



" I LATER EMBRACED A MORE VERSATILE APPROACH. I NOW TRULY ENJOY WAVE RIDING, WHETHER WITH THE KITE OR WING "

Ranja! We're excited to feature you as our Waterwoman in this issue! Tell us a little about yourself: where are you from, and what was it like growing up there?

Hi Jen! I am honoured to be featured in this issue! I am from Germany and grew up in the western part, close to the Dutch border,

with some time spent in southern Germany. As a result, I'm situated not too far from the North Sea on one side and the Alps on the other.

It's no secret that you're passionate about the outdoors—what draws you to adventure sports like skiing, kitesurfing and winging?

My passion for adventure sports such as skiing, kitesurfing, and winging comes from my deep connection to nature, the thrill of

mastering various conditions, and the freedom these activities provide. I began my journey into adventure sports with skiing, where I competed at a high level in Slopestyle before transitioning to freeride skiing. This change allowed me to explore the mountains in a more adventurous manner. I initially focused on freestyle, big air, and some wakestyle in kitesurfing, but I later embraced a more versatile approach. I now truly enjoy wave riding, whether with the kite or wing, as each session can offer a unique experience.



PHOTO MAX GIFTED

“ THIS TRAINING IS ESSENTIAL TO ME AND TAKES UP A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF MY TIME ALL YEAR ROUND ”

How has your background in skiing and kiteboarding influenced your style and approach in wingfoiling? Did you find learning it easy, or was it a struggle?

Sports or doing lots of different sports generally helps you learn new sports, giving you a basic set of coordination skills. It's difficult to say how much skiing and kitesurfing have helped with learning to wing. I think what really makes things a lot easier is if you are already practising other foil sports, such as prone foiling, pump foiling or kite foiling. For me, it was kite foiling, so I could no longer focus on the board when learning, but only on the wing.

How do you find the time for such a wide range of activities?!

In our community, everyone lives for a form of sports! Growing up in those sports from a very young age, I trained myself to take a strategic approach to time management and live a flexible lifestyle with a deep passion for these activities. My commitment to my sports is also reflected in my disciplined training schedules and efficient use of time.

You often mentioned strength, cardio, and yoga—how do those help your water performance?

This training is essential to me and takes up a significant amount of my time all year round, usually several days a week. It helps me avoid injuries and gives me the strength to ride at this level. Plus, it keeps me flexible, which enhances my range of motion.

"I DON'T EVEN HAVE ONE SETUP, AS NEW FRONT WINGS AND STABILISERS ARE CONSTANTLY COMING ONTO THE MARKET"

What's a typical "day off" look like for you? Or do you ever really take one?!

Haha! Probably a chilled run in the park or a ride on the bike, a little chilled yoga session, hanging out with friends, or reading a book for the rest of the day.

What first got you hooked on wingsurfing?

I saw the developer of a company trying the first wings in waves. That made me very curious.

I had watched the developers at Ozone using it. Wingfoiling didn't even exist then. Riding back and forth on the flat seemed dull, but wingfoiling in the waves was interesting and made me curious. I liked going into the waves with the kite foil when the conditions weren't excellent. But it's always uncomfortable to steer the kite all the time (compared to winging).

What's your current go-to wing setup—and why?

I love the Slingshot One Lock system. The setup is super quick. Also, the new Flow Craft is a game-changer board.

Do you prefer high-aspect foils for longer glides or mid-aspect foils for tighter turns? What's your current foil setup?

It's hard to say; it depends on the spot and the conditions. I tend to favour high-aspect foils. But I don't even have one setup, as new front wings and stabilisers are constantly coming onto the market,





" EVERY TIME YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT IT, THERE ARE NEW ADVANCES IN DEVELOPMENT. "

and you're constantly trying out and testing the perfect setup. Every time you think you've got it, there are new advances in development. I think we will see many exciting things in the next few years.

How has Ride Engine gear supported your progress in wingsurfing?

I am glad to be protected with the wetsuits and their selection of helmets and impact vests.

When choosing impact protection, what features do you look for?

Definitely mobility and paddling. But it also fits well from top to bottom, which means that it's not too long or too short, the holes in the shoulders aren't too wide or too small, and the vest doesn't move or push up in your face while you're swimming.

Do you have a favourite piece of Ride Engine equipment that you always bring with you?

I love the women's spring suits, and the World Tour Surf Coffin always travels with me.

What conditions challenge you the most when wingfoiling, and how do you adapt?

I can list a whole range!

On the beach break, it's the shore break and the challenge of getting over it into deeper water and getting off quickly. I've lost a lot of nerve there and been washed back onto the beach countless times. I prefer a slightly shorter mast (82 instead of 92) and a smaller board (max 55 litres) that is more elongated and not too wide. This doubles the chances of making it out.

Then, if the wind suddenly stops when you're far out, you have to swim/paddle a long way back. I've had a few borderline experiences because if the current is strong, you can run out of time to paddle back to the beach in the right place. I almost drifted into the biggest harbour in Europe once. So now I always leave a lot of space in those places to ensure I can paddle back to the beach in time.

And then there are the currents in general, especially at point breaks: sometimes they pull the foil down so hard (usually the bigger the waves, the stronger the current) that you have trouble starting again because the foil has hardly had a chance to come up.

Oh, and then I remember something else: Being washed with all the wing stuff in waves that push forward! You have to hold your breath for quite a while... and of course, hope not to get hit by the foil!

What's one piece of advice you'd give to women starting in wingsurfing?

Continue to practice until you keep on flying for the first 100m for the first time. Don't give up. You will be hooked as soon as you get this feeling of flow.



Do you ever feel pressure in male-dominated sports, or has that changed over time?

Oh yes, 100 %. Women need to perform a lot better to be recognised. Similar or only a bit better is not enough. Also, if a woman makes a little mistake when she arrives, e.g., for the first time at a new spot, she will not be taken seriously anymore, and it might happen that guys drop into her waves.

Can you share a specific moment or experience where you felt that kind of pressure or judgment most strongly?

If you're not acknowledged or greeted on the beach, if people take the right of way from the start, or if they ignore your analysis of the conditions, it's frustrating. When someone tells you directly, "It's not for beginners today," it feels polite to say they think a woman should stay in the sun instead.

How do you personally handle those situations? Do you speak up, push harder, or let your riding do the talking?!

In the past, things like this would get me down, and I would push myself harder, as if I were competing in the GKA final, hoping that these critics would finally quiet down. However, I've realised that I can't change the world, and it's exhausting to feel like I'm riding my own GKA final every day. Now, I take it easy and focus on having fun on the water, which is usually enough to satisfy the critics. It's probably just a normal reaction—people often have their prejudices!

What's always in your gear bag—on land or water?

My sunglasses and my suncream.

Thanks Ranja!

Thanks, Jen!

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RIDER ALBY RONDINA
PHOTO LACI KOBULSKY



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Just when you thought your trick list was looking solid—gybes, tacks, maybe even a bit of ducking—C&K are here to shake things up! In this issue, we dive into the heel-to-toe tack, a stylish and super practical move to help you hold your ground and keep the flow.

Ready? Let's jump in!

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HOW TO WINGFOIL #16 – THE HEEL TO TOE TACK

Just when you thought you could relax and possibly rest on your laurels. Content in the knowledge that you have built up quite a box of tricks, bursting with gybes, a cheeky tack, pumping and ducking. Well, we're going to burst that rightfully smug bubble and set you yet another challenge.

Not quite the Crypton Factor, but the heel-to-toe tack is yet another wing foiling treat. Yes, it is admirably stylish, and you know what's coming, it's also hugely practical. Just as the toe to heel, it's a tack so that you won't lose any ground in your transition. What's even better is that not all of us can ride toe side in both directions. If this is you, then you'll find it a shed load simpler to learn this tack from your heels to your preferred toe side!

OK, sales job done. What about the practicalities? You still need one good toe side. If you're going to exit smoothly, get the power back on and stay up on the foil, you need a solid toe side. Assuming you do, there are four interlocking phases to get dialled to make this bad boy yours: wing lift, carve, timing for hand swap, and exit. We'll have a look at these as we go through the move. And just before we do, it's worth noting that although the set-up and wing lift are similar, albeit in a different stance, to the toe-to-heel tack, the carve and timing are very different.

APPROACH – MOMENTUM PIC A

During a tack, you're turning upwind, which is only possible if you get rid of power. For this reason, as you can't use the wing to drive you upwind, you will need some board speed, giving you enough momentum and glide to carry you through until you can get the power back on. This is also connected to how you'll carve, so you'll have the following check:

1. Direction of Travel. You should be winging upwind but not too close to the wind. This way, you can keep speed and build momentum. Keep the wing low and sheeted in for maximum drive, while trying to support yourself on your legs. This will get you ready for the wing lift, balanced on the board.
2. Weight-centred. Make sure you're standing equally on both feet, so the foil is trimmed from nose to tail. This way, you can keep your balance when you depower the wing and keep the foil trimmed as you carve. This is particularly important when carving up heel side as you'll naturally tend to favour driving off the back foot.
3. Dynamic Offset Stance. Think about how you'd like to exit into your default toe-side stance. Placing your back foot a tad further across and pointing slightly forward will help when you exit, and having your front foot slightly outboard will help you carve off both feet. Last but not least, you can move your back foot forward slightly. This will compensate for too much back foot pressure during the carve and will help you trim the board and foil once you exit.
4. Hand position. This will vary from wing to wing and also depend on wind strength. However, you need room to swap hands, and you will be exiting the toe side. This is not a must, but if you can leave space behind your front hand, you can swap into a more wing forward toe side hand position.



WING LIFT PIC B

The way you lift your wing will have a massive influence on your success rate. You'll carve upwind, so you cannot afford to hold any opposing, downwind pull. This means lifting the wing around the side of its window, rather than steering it straight up. This will take longer, so give yourself time. You want to sheet out gently so that the wing can fly forward as you guide it up.

Looking at Karine in the mini-sequence, riding from right to left, you can see how

she gently sheets the wing out, turning her shoulders as she does so, while steering the wing gradually up, tracing the edge of the window. This enables her to stay balanced on her feet and allows her to drop her weight and carve into the wind as there is no downwind pull from the wing.

CARVE PIC C

As the wing climbs, you need to get your carve on. To do so, flex your knees and drop your weight onto your heel, hinged at the hips to keep your upper body and head upright, keeping you balanced. You're not looking for radical tip free spray, but a constant, controlled



banking. As you drop, extend your arms to keep the wing high. Even with no power, you will have some support from the wing. The tricky bit here is to keep enough weight on the front foot so that the board stays trimmed and the nose doesn't lift. You can see that Karine's wing is high and away from her. She's dropped her weight and her hips are centred, meaning both feet are weighted and carving the board together.

KEEP CARVING PIC D

Where are you going? The answer is further than you think. You're trying to get the nose of the board through the eye of the wind before worrying about anything else.



If you stay in your carving position, the board and the wing will at the very least make it into the wind. The point here is that the further you go, the better your chances. The reason for this lies in the picture. With the wing above Karine, she still has support. The wing won't drop her if she keeps her upper body upright. The combination of carving, which generates lift and drive from your foil, and the support of your floating wing will keep you on the board. This is why you must not release your wing too early. Should you completely dump power, you'll struggle to stay balanced.

RELEASE AND TWIST PIC E

Ignoring your intuition and being patient should get you through the wind. Now it's time to put the Leo Sayer on and get moving. Your objective is to get the wing across above your head. You need to release your back hand to do this, freeing both you and the wing. When your hand is off, you can twist your head, shoulders and torso to look forward. This will enable you to pull the wing over your head with your leading arm while encouraging the board to carry on carving. Make sure to keep the wing forward as you bring it across, as this will keep your weight centred and your nose down. Place the handle in a better position for the next step! You can see that now that Karine has

released her rear hand, she can twist her upper body and pull the wing over and across towards its new side.

HAND SWAP PIC F

We discussed this briefly earlier; you need space to grab the handle. Looking at Karine, she's deliberately left herself space behind her front hand. As soon as the wing comes across, she's reaching up and across with her free hand. This hand swap can at first feel a bit slow and cumbersome. The key is to twist your upper body and look for the handle so that you can grab it. If you reach without twisting, it'll feel out of reach. As alluded to in the previous photo, Karine has kept her wing forward, which makes for an easier swap.



BACK HANDLE PIC G

Now with your new front hand on, and the wing on the downwind side of the board, it's all about getting power back on. Your first port of call is grabbing the rear handle. Dare we say it, if the front handle felt far away, the rear handle can seem unreachable. You need to bring it within reach. To do this, bring your front hand and the wing down, moving it a little forward, positioning the rear handle a bit closer. You're already twisted around, and it'll be exceptionally tempting to look back and reach backwards for it. If you do, you'll stall your foil; concentrate on using your front arm to bring the wing into position.



Karine's wing is low; she pulled it down and forward with her front hand to bring the rear handle near enough to grab without leaning back. Her board and foil are still trimmed and happy, and she's still gliding.

POWER ON PIC H

You'll be pleased to know that we're now approaching familiar territory:) If you can exit a gybe toe side, you should be well-versed in getting the power back on. Before sheeting in, you must get the wing down and point the arrow forward. You'll want to sheet in as soon as you grab the rear handle, but make sure it's pointing in the right direction first. Now, if you take a moment to look at Karine's board in the photo, you can see that it's still leaning over as her weight is still on her heels. For the moment, this is



not a concern. You will likely exit across the wind or slightly broad. This is a good thing as it is the simplest way to quickly gain some speed and stay up on the foil.

FINISH THE JOB PIC I

We say it's not a problem having weight on your heels, but you want to go back upwind, whether to continue toeside or to switch your feet, in preference to carving off downwind. To get back on the board so you can get weight onto the balls of your feet, allow the board to bear away. As the board turns away from the wind, it will turn under you, and you'll end up over it. From here, you can follow your usual protocol to choose your direction. This may seem counter-productive, but with some practice, it will become a fast and efficient transition from heels to toes!



TOP TIPS

This tack can feel overwhelming at first. Carving up into the wind whilst staying over the board will feel very alien. Practice raising the wing so you can stay over the board and carve without feeling like falling to the inside.

Your second challenge will be keeping the board and foil trimmed while carving.

In an ideal world, your board would stay level throughout, but at first, it's better to drop the nose slightly as you carve rather than lift it.

Patience is a virtue. Waiting until you carve through the wind will prevent you from wearing the wing and allow the board to turn away from the wind under you so that you can get back overboard.

Practice your hand swap on dry land. Twisting, swapping, and grabbing the rear handle will take

some getting used to. The more polished your action, the smoother your tack.

Right, have a look at the sequence for a step-by-step visual, and stay tuned for the upcoming video on the Tonic channel.

Happy tacking, C&K

QUESTIONS JEN TYLER
WORDS JAMES BOULDING

CABRINHA AER WING

Cabrinha's new AER Wing is built to raise the bar for downwinding, surfing, freeriding, and more. In this Tech Focus, we catch up with Cabrinha's James Boulding to dive into the development process behind the AER, from cutting-edge material choices to clever design tweaks that deliver serious weight savings, improved control, and ultimate packability. Whether you're a seasoned winger or just building your quiver, here's everything you need to know about this exciting new addition!





"THE INCLUSION OF FEATHER WEIGHT HANDLES NOT ONLY REDUCES WEIGHT BUT ALSO FACILITATES AN EASIER PACK DOWN"

What was the original goal behind the development of the AER Wing? And what materials and design choices helped achieve that?

The AER Wing was developed to create an exceptionally lightweight, high-performance wing suitable for various disciplines, including downwinding (wing up, foil downwind), surfing, and general freeride. It is also available in smaller sizes, which will open up options for kids and smaller riders. Don't get me wrong, though; this is not a toy wing. It's made with many of the durable features found on the Mantis and Vision wings. The featherweight strut and LE handles help reduce weight alongside featherlite bladders. Another area of weight savings was achieved through the use of handle inserts, while minor adjustments were also made to areas of the wing where reinforcements were less critical.

You mention the AER being great for downwinding—how does it pack down in comparison to other wings in the Cabrinha lineup?

The inclusion of Feather Weight Handles not only reduces weight but also facilitates an easier pack down, allowing the wing to be more compact when deflated compared to other models in Cabrinha's lineup. It also goes upwind like a rocket and is super stable due to the extra dihedral, so you can afford to ride a relatively small wing for the wind strength. The two inflate valves also make for a simple and quick deflation, something you can do easily while out on the water.



"THEY FEEL RIGID TO GRIP, WHICH HELPS WHEN CONTROLLING THE WING, BUT WITH ALL THE ADDED WEIGHT SAVINGS."

What's the weight difference between this and the Mantis, for instance?

A 5m AER weighs 2.16kg, compared to a Mantis 5m of 2.5kg. That's approximately 350g of weight savings. For some, that 350g makes all the difference. The AER is lighter than most Aluula wings on the market, and you can notice this difference in the bigger sizes. When you're surfing a wave, it floats

behind you, and that weight reduction changes the swing of the wing when controlled by the leading edge handle.

Did you do anything to the handles to make them better than the first soft handles that appeared on wings back at the sport's inception?

We've taken everything we learnt throughout the wing development program around handles and tried to implement as many of the control elements as possible into the handles. They feel rigid to grip, which helps when controlling the wing, but with all the added weight savings.

They're also very user-friendly for kids, who tend to have smaller hands, and are softer than our fully rigid handles used on the Mantis and Vision, which makes them a bit safer. Another purposely designed feature of the AER handles is that they allow you to hold the paddle and handle simultaneously, making for a simple upwind journey with a paddle in tow.

The AER Wing has new window layouts—how does this enhance safety and visibility during sessions?

We've always been a strong advocate for windows, so people have complete visibility on the water. The AER retains this safety feature without compromising on weight.

"THE FEEDBACK HAS BEEN OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE, ESPECIALLY FROM OUR PRO RIDERS WHO USED IT AT THE PHOTOSHOOT."

What feedback have you received from the riders so far?

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, especially from our pro riders who used it at the photoshoot. It was a hit straight away in the waves and on light wind days, where the guys managed to head out to some mellow off-shore waves and make the most of things. Titouan was the one who was the most surprised, and who ended up racking up the most hours on it.

For someone completely new to winging, how would the AER support their learning and progression?

For beginners, we recommend the Vision wing due to its rigid handles and dihedral, which make it the easiest wing to ride in this range. The rigid handles will also help in control and facilitate quick learning. The AER's benefits are particularly noticeable to intermediates or those focusing on waves who want the lightest possible setup.

How did you test the AER Wing across different conditions and rider styles to ensure its adaptability?

The AER has been a side project in the making for some time, I think partly because so many of Cabrinha's staff have kids who are at the age where they are giving winging a try. There just weren't specifically designed wings that were small enough.





"IT'S THIS VERSATILITY AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL IN THE SMALL SIZES THAT MAKE THE WING SO ADAPTABLE AND A GREAT OPTION TO HAVE IN YOUR WING QUIVER."

The smaller 1, 1.3, and 1.6 prototype wings were perfect, enabling younger kids to hold onto and control them, allowing them to learn and have a really positive experience. Then you have the big kids in the brand like Jon Modica, who regularly used the 2m in the gorge for downwinding. It's this versatility and attention to detail in the small sizes that make the wing so adaptable and a great option to have in your wing quiver.

Thanks James!

Thanks, Jen!



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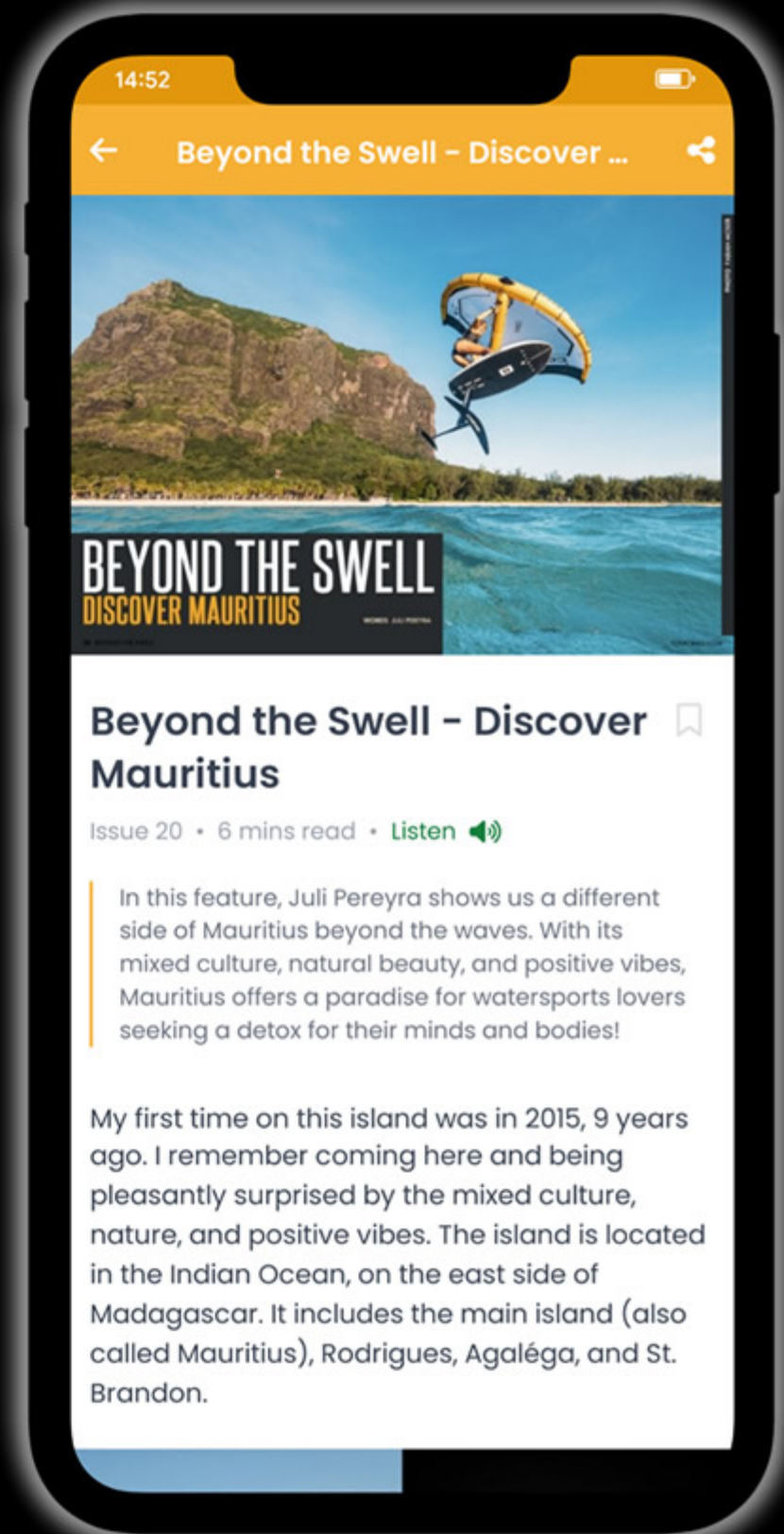
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QUESTIONS JEN TYLER

DRYROBE®

ADVANCE ADULTS LONG SLEEVE CHANGING ROBE

Designed for cold-water sessions and wild weather days, the Dryrobe® Advance keeps you warm, dry, and ready for anything! With a waterproof outer, super-soft fleece lining, and smart features for easy changing and storage, it's the go-to gear for riders all over!



“THE TAILORED LONG SLEEVES OFFER EXTRA WARMTH WITHOUT RESTRICTING MOVEMENT, MAKING IT IDEAL FOR COLDER CLIMATES OR EXTENDED TIME SPENT OUTDOORS”

When it comes to getting changed outdoors, staying warm, and protecting yourself from the elements, a Dryrobe sets the benchmark! Initially designed for riders and cold-water adventurers, this long-sleeved version of the world's first outdoor changing robe has earned its reputation as a must-have kit for wingfoilers, kiteboarders, swimmers, campers, dog walkers, you name it!

The magic of the Dryrobe® Advance lies in its iconic design. A weatherproof outer made from 100% recycled nylon protects against wind and rain, while a super-soft inner fleece lining (crafted from 100% recycled polyester) helps preserve your core temperature. The tailored long sleeves offer extra warmth without restricting movement, making it ideal for colder climates or extended time spent outdoors.

But this is far more than just a glorified waterproof coat. The robe is generously sized, giving you the freedom to change comfortably inside it, with room to move and privacy guaranteed. No more awkward towel dances in the car park—just zip up and get on with your day.

The Dryrobe® Advance has features designed to make life easier for active people in unpredictable conditions. Its full-length 2-way reversible YKK® zip allows you to get in and out effortlessly, whether you're using it as a post-session warmer or pre-competition shield.





“THE INNER FLEECE USES BACK2SKIN™ FAST-DRYING TECHNOLOGY TO WICK MOISTURE AWAY FROM THE BODY AND INTO THE PILE OF THE FABRIC.”

Thoughtful storage details include fleece-lined external zip pockets to keep hands toasty, a waterproof internal pocket for valuables like your phone or wallet, and a roomy A4-sized inner “poacher” pocket for stashing dry clothes, snacks, or gear.

The robe’s construction also features minimal sealed seams to enhance its weatherproof qualities. Its lightweight profile is approximately 1.3kg (depending on size), making it easy to throw in the back of your car and even easier to make part of your daily routine.

What really sets the Dryrobe® Advance apart is its high-performance materials and construction. The inner fleece uses back2skin™ fast-drying technology to wick moisture away from the body and into the pile of the fabric.

This means you can wear it over wet kit multiple times a day without it ever feeling soggy or cold, bonus! Unlike many alternatives, the Dryrobe® Advance doesn’t need drying between uses. That makes it perfect for multi-session training days, open-water events, or beach holidays where drying time is a luxury. The outer layer is waterproof to 10,000mm and breathable to 3000 g/m²/d, offering an ideal balance between protection and airflow. Your body heat stays in, but sweat and excess moisture are wicked out—helping you recover faster and feel more comfortable post-activity.



"EACH ROBE IN THE ABSTRACT RANGE IS CUT FROM A UNIQUE SECTION OF FABRIC, MEANING NO TWO ARE EXACTLY THE SAME."

In addition to delivering serious performance, the Dryrobe® Advance has been engineered with sustainability at its core. Alongside its high-performance design, the Dryrobe® Advance is built with sustainability in mind. The super-warm fleece lining is made from 100% recycled materials and certified by both the Global Recycle Standard and OEKO-TEX Standard 100, while the durable outer layer is also GRS certified. The robe is also finished with BIONIC-FINISH® ECO, a PFC-free water-repellent treatment derived from renewable, plant-based raw materials. This keeps you dry and helps reduce the release of harmful chemicals into the environment.

With 21 colourways available, including the striking Abstract Special Edition, the Dryrobe® Advance offers a personal touch for every style. Each robe in the Abstract range is cut from a unique section of fabric, meaning no two are exactly the same.

From early surf sessions and icy swims to hiking trails and sporting sidelines, the Dryrobe® Advance is more than just a changing robe—it's an everyday essential for anyone who refuses to be held back by the weather. Once you start using it, you'll wonder how you ever got by without one.

It's no surprise this robe has become a firm favourite among outdoor and beach goers around the globe. With its smart design, technical performance, and eco-conscious construction, the Dryrobe® Advance is the perfect companion for getting out there, whatever the weather!

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TRIED & TESTED

As the days get longer and the sessions get sunnier, our UK-based Tonic Mag test team has been out chasing every breeze to put the latest gear through its paces. In this issue, we're bringing you fresh reviews to fuel your best season yet. Here's what's inside:

- Cabrinha - Mantis
- Ozone Flux V2 Ultra
- Armstrong Downwind Ocean 7'8



WORDS AND PHOTOS THE TONIC MAG TEST TEAM -
JACK GALLOWAY, LIAM PROCTOR & ROU CHATER

TONICMAG.COM

BRAND CABRINHA

MODEL MANTIS

SIZE 3.5M

YEAR 2025

"IT'S FAST, EASY
TO HANDLE,
AND FLUTTER
IS MINIMAL;
IT'S A BIG STEP
FORWARD"

TO VISIT THEIR
WEBSITE, CLICK HERE



AT A GLANCE

The Mantis is Cabrinha's all-around freeride, wave and big air wing. It's undergone quite a lot of upgrades over the last year's model and looks set to be the wing of choice for those riders who aren't into freestyle but love everything else winging offers. In addition to a new profile and shape, there are also some new materials and features that bring the wing bang up to date and help make it one of the better wings on the market today.

The wing's draft has been moved forward, which helps increase the power and balance of the wing, equalising the pressure on the arms. The new wing tips also feature a progressive twist, helping with power delivery when sheeting in. Teijin D2 Ripstop Canopy material is now being used on the Mantis; it is industry-leading and proven, reducing the wing's stretch and improving its responsiveness.

There is also a new lightweight graduated trailing edge distribution panel and carbon composite battens, both of which combine to improve performance and air flow and reduce flutter. High-tenacity Dacron is used for the leading edge and strut,

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)



BRAND OZONE

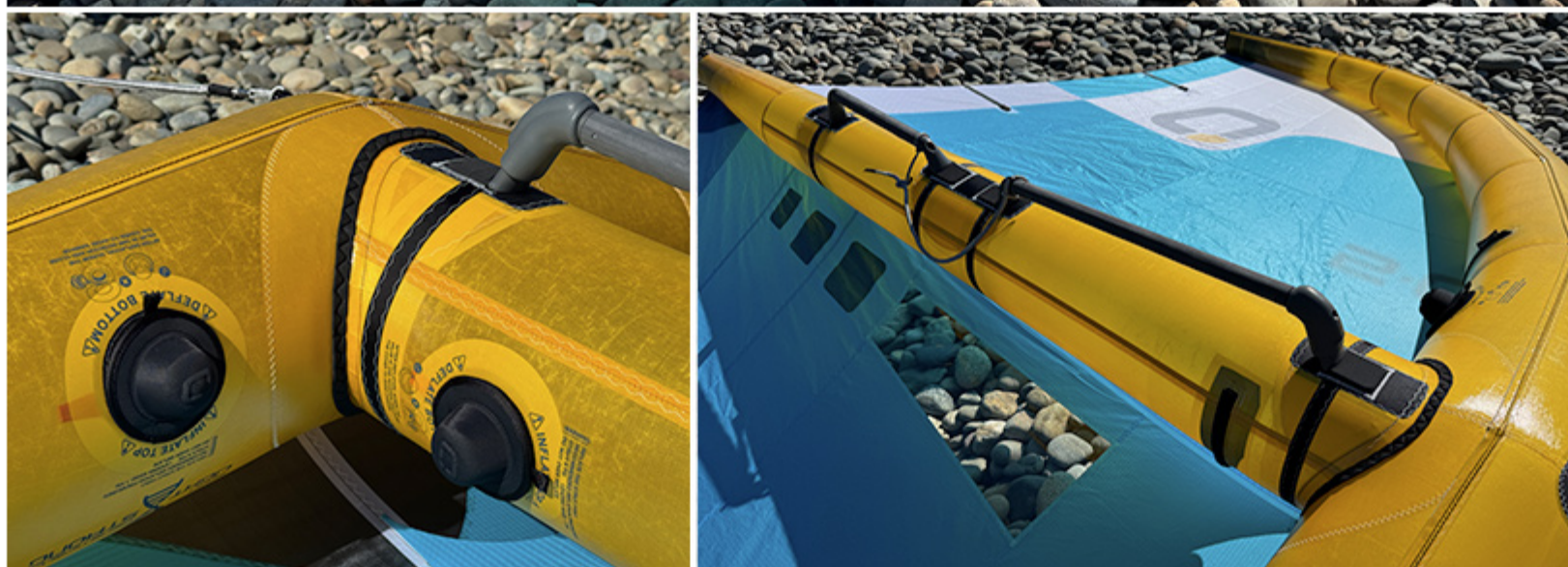
MODEL FLUX V2 ULTRA X

SIZE 5M

YEAR 2025

" AS A VERSATILE,
HIGH-
PERFORMANCE
OPTION THAT IS
INCREDIBLY
EASY TO USE "

TO VISIT THEIR
WEBSITE, CLICK HERE



AT A GLANCE

The Flux V2 Ultra-X wing by Ozone is a big update on the hugely popular Flux wing, which was launched in 2023. The wing boasts an impressive balance of power, control, and manoeuvrability. Designed for intermediate to pro-level riders, this wing showcases an ultra-light and ultra-responsive design that elevates the riding experience across various styles, including freeride, waves, big air, and freestyle.

ULTRA-X is the moniker given to all Ozone products that feature Aluula, a lighter and stiffer composite material compared to standard Dacron. This is a significant upgrade in the wing's construction, reducing weight by about 20% over the previous model and massively increasing the frame's stiffness. Bringing big enhancements in handling, performance, and overall responsiveness. The wing's design includes a thinner leading edge and strut, thanks to the stiffer properties of Aluula, optimising aerodynamic efficiency.

The Flux V2 Ultra X build quality is stunning; it's one of the better-looking Aluula wings in terms of the neatness of the seams and overall construction.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)



BRAND ARMSTRONG

MODEL DOWNWIND OCEAN 7'8

YEAR 2025

"THE OCEAN
OFFERS HIGH-
PERFORMANCE
DOWNWIND
FOILING WITH
ZERO EXCESS"

TO VISIT THEIR
WEBSITE, CLICK HERE



AT A GLANCE

Armstrong's new Downwind Ocean range aims to refine everything riders loved about the original Downwind Performance series and package it into a sleeker, snappier, more agile board. I was pleased to be sent the smallest board in the line-up—7'8" (95L). It is 3 litres smaller and 6 inches shorter than its predecessor, the Performance 8'2.

Where the Performance board relied on length for glide, the Ocean aims to achieve it through hydrodynamics. Armstrong has designed a displacement hull—they claim it will slice cleanly through water, offering noticeable gains in paddle speed, efficiency, and tracking. How should that translate? Earlier lift, less fatigue, and more runs where you make the bump you thought you'd miss.

They've also updated the outline and created fuller rails, which should lead to better stability and paddle power. Subtle volume distribution, a flatter deck, and more rounded rails should also allow you to move your feet and lean into turns more confidently, which is essential when flying downwind at speed.

CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE



READERS GALLERY

Here's your chance to be featured in Tonic Mag, have the right to brag about being famous, and win a Tonic Mag T-shirt!

Congratulations to Mickie Williams for securing our Readers Gallery spot in this issue!

Summer through to early winter is a magical time to surf in New Zealand—it gets ridiculously good. Most coastal regions on the North Island are experiencing a marine heatwave, with water temperatures around 3 degrees above normal, making the ocean feel incredible.

I moved to New Zealand in December 2024, settling in a little coastal slice of paradise called Waihi Beach, in the Bay of Plenty on the North Island.

This photo was taken during a SUP weekend event I hosted in March. My home beach offers an amazing SUP wave, perfect for foiling, and we've got two great wing foiling spots in the local harbour.

These days, my favourite thing to do in the ocean is SUP longboarding. No matter the conditions, there's never a dull moment out there.

**CLICK HERE FOR A CHANCE TO WIN
NEXT ISSUE!**



It's Movie Night: The Awards Edition! In this special edition of Movie Night, we're featuring the best of the best videos released in 2024, as voted on by YOU in the Tonic Mag Readers Awards! The competition was fierce, no doubt! All creators and riders deserve credit for providing top-notch content for the winging and foiling community. Still, the creative geniuses and talented athletes behind these top four videos stood out. So grab a beer; this is the ultimate movie night!

MOVIE NIGHT

#1

EASY WINGFOILING TRICKS YOU CAN MASTER QUICKLY!

Alby breaks down six easy tricks that'll instantly level up your wingfoiling. From smooth transitions to playful moves, he walks you through each one with step-by-step tips. Perfect for all levels.

1,179 votes


[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#2

3 DRILLS TO LEARN THE TACK:

Gwen shares three simple, effective drills to help you master the wing foil tack. Whether you're just starting or struggling with transitions, these tips are game-changers. Get confident, get consistent—check it out!

523 votes


[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#3

HUGE AIRS ON FOIL. HOW IS THIS ALREADY HAPPENING??!!!! NOAH FLEGEL

Haha ok: Big airs, wild spins, and next-level foil style—Noah Flegel brings heat in this mind-blowing session. Foil Films captures Noah launching with insane height and control!

441 votes


[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#4

THE BEST WING FOIL SESSION EVER? I LOST MY WING!!!

Tom Court scores an epic UK wing foil session with perfect waves and rare wind—until it all unravels with a snapped leash! From pure shredding to total chaos, this is wing foiling at its most fun, wild, and real.

276 votes


[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

PHOTO FRANCK BERTHUOT

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