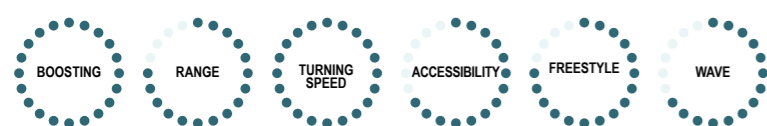


## Ocean Rodeo Rise A-Series

### ALL-ROUNDER TEST



After many years out of the lineup, the Rise has returned to the OR stable and has been given the ALUULA treatment... With the recent acquisition of Giel Vlugt to the Ocean Rodeo team, and his high-level riding at recent Big Air events that set the world stage for technical 'high' riding, Ocean Rodeo have designed a kite that now not only needs to boost and float, but also needs to loop with vigor and consistency to enable those exceptionally high-risk and technical moves to rack up the KOTA points.

With Ocean Rodeo's close partnership with the latest lightweight frame material ALUULA, this was a logical platform to build from, and required a lot of changes with seaming and manufacturing, so the development period when applying this to an all-new and boundary-pushing kite has been lengthy and thorough. Shape-wise, we're looking at a daringly high-aspect shape with quite a complete C-shaped arc and a swept wingtip, reminiscent of a modern freestyle kite which has had the aspect ratio knob turned up to 11. Although a five-strut kite, the ALUULA airframe means it still weighs in rather comfortably under most three-strut kites, meaning you get all the benefits in stability a five-strut kite provides with none of the weight gain drawbacks. The bridling is low drag and minimal, and one pulley sits high near the leading edge on the outside of the bridle on each side.

Unusually for such a high-aspect design, the bar feeling is fairly light and the kite has a massive amount of agility considering its mighty span; it spins around its wingtip in a nimble and entertaining fashion. When you do throw the kite around though, you know about it. Power delivery is unapologetically formidable, and it's a kite that needs flying; it's a far cry from a lazy man's park-and-pull freeride kite and is all the more engaging and exciting to ride as a result.

The Rise, even in a 10m, is impressively agile and does not feel at



all sketchy when we looped it, which can be the case in other Big Air focused kites when you get above the 9m mark... It whipped round the loops with an aggressive and smooth forward pull, but the most striking feature is how consistent the catch and climb is, which gives you confidence to go deeper and flatter into your loops. For us it is here that the Rise sets itself apart from the pack.

To get your initial height, the Rise is not a simple sheet and lift number. It requires speed, edging, aggressive redirection and timing. When it comes together you're rewarded with a monumental amount of lift, height and float, far more than you expect in most cases. Helicopter looping out of your tricks, again the agility and lighter handling really shines, and it gives an impressive amount of second lift to make for some soft landings.

Materials-wise, the diameter of the leading edge and struts in a kite this shape, if you attempted to manufacture it from Dacron, would barely support itself. This is a prime example of how these new materials can achieve extreme performance kite designs which were previously unattainable with standard materials.

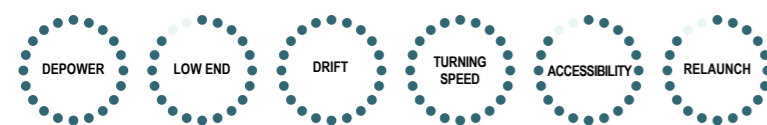
The Rise A-Series has a very clear design objective, and has been built with what feels like absolutely no compromise in both materials and shape. It's lean, mean and commands respect, requiring a switched on and high-level rider who isn't afraid to chuck a kite (as well as themselves) around.

has been in control of the build and detailing.

In terms of user feel, F-ONE have produced a characterfully turning and simple to use wave kite, with a massive top end. Power delivery is smooth, progressive and most importantly it pulses exactly when you expect it to. Carving your bottom turn, it provides the perfect pivotal whip to get you round in a tight radius as well as maintaining speed in both kite and board. It allows you to really find your flow and rhythm when on the wave, without having to compromise your position to maintain line tension. In all wave scenarios you are likely to encounter, regardless of wind angle, the S3 handles it with style. The super eager climbing tendency combined with the light overall kite weight absolutely shines. Weight is an important factor in the wave sector, and its distribution across the kite (as well as total weight of course) can have a dramatic effect when it comes to drift and balance. A mid-weight cloth from Teijin, which sits somewhere in between Dacron and Ripstop cloth, replaces a lot of the intermediate sections where Dacron is usually utilized, building to an overall kite weight that's competitive with other brands' light

## F-ONE BANDIT S3

### WAVE KITE



The wave-specific BANDIT S now enters its third version from the French watersports megabrand. We're presented with a familiar three-strut platform from the previous generation crafted from long proven Teijin materials for both the D2 ripstop and Dacron. Build-wise, this year's main revisions are with leading edge segmentation, which now sits at the pleasantly round number of 24, providing a smoother more tailored profile. The leading edge diameter has also been fettled to further improve maneuverability. The trailing edge design has been developed further from the S2 with a second band of ripstop paneling oriented intelligently across the direction of load, to minimize deformation. Beautifully crafted new stainless pulleys have been implemented with a low friction slider, eliminating the moving parts and potential long-term wear on the bridle which can occur with a standard pulley in sandy environments, and as a further example of the level of detail applied to the kite, the splice of the pigtail integrates cleanly into the top. This is a far cry from a kite that's been pumped out of CAD and manufactured; you can tell it's been hand fettled with many prototypes and a keen eye

## Prolimit Vapor Steamer Free-X 6/4 Thermal Rebound – FTM

Anyone that's visited the coast of the Netherlands through the winter months knows to wrap up warm, particularly when that biting northerly airflow heads down from Scandinavia. Prolimit's Dutch HQ is the perfect proving ground for the more extreme end of cold-water wetsuits, which is where this 6/4mm Vapor comes into its own.

Externally, the suit is stealthy in appearance and doesn't appear like the suit of armor as some 6mm suits style themselves. There's a light tweedy texture to the outer neoprene, which enhances its aesthetic and gives it a premium appearance. Entry and exit are a simple and dignified process due to the high level of flexibility in the suit. The entry collar isn't massive to help prevent flushing, but you can slip both in and out with ease, and a cleverly angled YKK chest zip seals things off neatly. There's a small drawstring to lock down the shoulder section, which is a neat little detail.

The thermal fleece-lined 6mm material is intelligently placed from mid rib cage chest panel all the way down to just above the knee and matches at your back. This is a massive area of the plush V4X Limestone-based neoprene, which does an excellent job of bouncing your body heat right back at you. This includes a layer similar to a thermal survival blanket sandwiched behind the fleece. The 4mm material is primarily in the arms to free up movement across the shoulders for paddling, and where material is doubled up around the zip and entry system. Sturdy liquid seams prevent water ingress but don't seem to hinder the high levels of flex provided by the neoprene, and the internal seams are blind stitched, leaving a very smooth feeling against your skin. You can't feel any internal junctions where the panels begin and end.

We took some serious kickings in the waves and had zero flushing through the neck seal, which sits relatively low. The ankles have optional Velcro cuffs to prevent the dreaded elephant leg syndrome, and drain holes if water does manage to get up there. The knee areas have a suitable level of reinforcement from a material similar to Kevlar, and a cheeky key pocket is included in the shin of the right leg. For a



suit with this level of thermal protection, the Vapor remains extremely flexible. At no point do you feel over rubbered, you just feel extremely warm and well protected from the elements.

This is a tour de force of a full-featured winter suit. Where some may have avoided this thickness of wetsuit due to it feeling a little clunky, this 6/4mm is so light and flexible there are absolutely no negatives on taking the range topper, just pure luxurious heat which is going to extend your sessions and make winter a far more tolerable experience. And in these uncertain times where foreign travel to warmer climates might be limited, it could be a very shrewd investment.

kite' specific models.

Crossing over into strapless freestyle, the S3 has a decent amount of lift on sheet and it's a simple procedure to develop pop, particularly when the kite is pushed into its top end, which this year remains increasingly composed and usable, even when depowered. In lower winds, freeride hydrofoil use is another obvious application for a kite that's this exceptionally mobile, and has a playful whip through the turn to pull you out of transitions beautifully. The decent bar presence and feedback in its low end is particularly noticeable when sheeted out resulting in the telepathic level handling that's the hallmark of an exceptional wave kite. The latest Linx bar has had quite a makeover at the business end, with a square polished aperture and PU coated depower line, which also now houses and protects the safety flag-out line from friction. It's a cleanly designed tangle-free update which unspins itself easily, and importantly the bar aperture remains almost frictionless against the PU, where other systems of similar design can sometimes snag a little on aggressive turning.

Third time is definitely a charm for the BANDIT S3, and it's great to see this dedicated wave product range mature after its segregation from the Bandit range a few years ago. It was a good move from F-ONE and has distilled its product development as a model. This is everything a front running wave kite should be – sprightly, highly mobile, smooth and versatile. It enables the user a huge level of control and confidence in all situations, and feels immediately natural to wave enthusiasts from a multitude of riding backgrounds.

