

SUPM

Stand Up Paddle Mag UK

FLORIDIAN

SUP fun

RETURN TO

Vietnam



BRYCE DYER'S

race training primer

AIRTON COZZOLINO

in profile

TONY BAIN

SUP knowledge

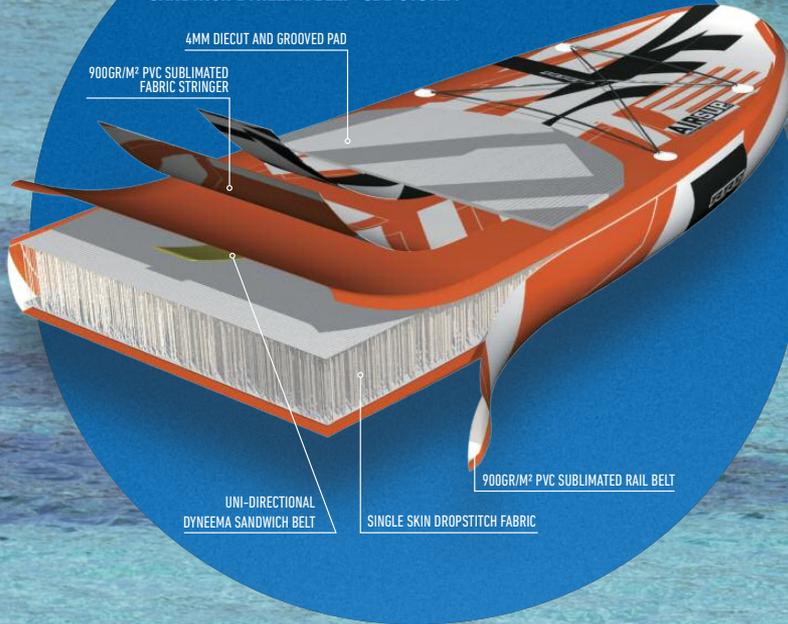
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Stepping into summer SUP mode with Loco's new range of inflatables. Pic: Joe Thwaites



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2b Graphic Design
www.2bgraphicdesign.co.uk

Print

Manson Printers

Thanks to the following people who helped make this issue possible: Richard Heathcote, Stephane Lefevre, Dave White, Gareth Stephenson, Fran Blake, Active 360, Chris Jones, Meghan Roberts, Bryce Dyer, Dave Adams, Flag Beach Watersports, Tony Bain, Joan McFadden, Svein Rasmussen, Axel Reece, Mark Rose, Emma Wall, RRD International, Richard Webb, Funky Seal Wetsuits, Nick Kingston, Farrel O'Shea, Andy Biggs Watersports, Starboard SUP UK, Andy McConky, Joe Thwaites, Neilson Holidays, Charlie Cripwell, Sealblades and Rory Merry.

SUPM's test team is: Richard Heathcote, Stephane Lefevre and Tez Plavenieks.

Cover: Photo: RRD

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Not all contributors are professional writers and photographers, so don't be put off writing because you have no experience! **Next issue is August 2017 with a deadline of submissions on June 17th.** Technical Information: Contributions preferably as a Microsoft Word file with 800-1200 words, emailed to tez@supmaguk.co.uk. Images should be hi-resolution and emailed with the Word file or if preferred, a Dropbox folder will be created for you. SUP Mag UK encourages contributions of any nature but reserves the right to edit to the space available. Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the publishing parent company, 2b Graphic Design. The publishing of an advertisement in SUP Mag UK does not necessarily mean that the parent company, 2b Graphic Design, endorse the company, item or service advertised. All material in SUP Mag UK is strictly copyright and all rights are reserved. Reproduction without prior permission from the editor is forbidden.



SUP: not just fair weather

Now that warmer weather is here (as I write the forecast suggests up to 25C by the end of the week!) you'll no doubt be busting out your SUP gear in anticipation of some watery action, if you haven't done so already. And while that's all good it's worth bearing in mind the water (ocean side at least) ain't exactly tropical. If you're planning on hitting the surf, other areas where you may take a dunking or still building confidence then you'll need adequate protection. But hang on, this isn't a safety brief, this is a bunch of waffle asking you why not paddle all year?

Summer's summer, yes, but the end of the year is when you find water temps at their warmest and up until November is there's still chance of mild air. In fact, we'd go so far as to say that only having passed into the festive months does it get proper chilly. And even then wetsuit/drysuit technology is such that you'll be toasty warm when out on the brine if you purchase a good one.

With all the stresses and strains of modern living being able to put afloat, sweep off to the horizon and unplug is one sure fire way to find release – at least temporarily. And we as humans need that release, otherwise we'd explode like a bottle of pop!

Now don't get me wrong I appreciate that newbies to SUP may show signs of anxiety when considering out of summer SUPping. Skills may not be honed yet. But fear not! You've a good few months to consolidate what you already know and be ready for the off season. We'd also suggest getting some coaching a good course of action to further improve and be truly prepared. So as you step aboard for the first time this summer maybe have the goal of all year paddling in your mind's eye. Trust us when we say you'll be all the more fulfilled if you do opt in.

A year to the day

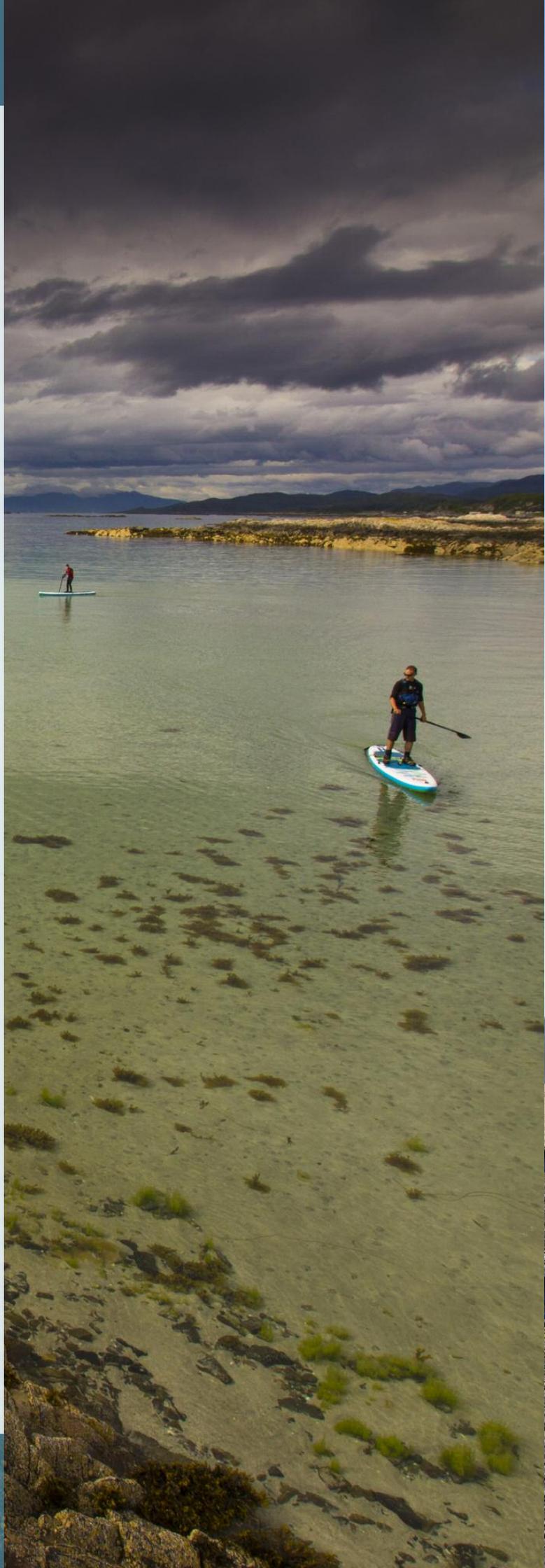
Round about this time 12 months ago we put out a shout for stand up paddle board equipment testers needed. The flood of responses was significant. Long story short and we recruited two very able and experienced hands to help push SUPM's SUP tests forward.

Stephane and Rich have been invaluable. We're now able to tick gear off more efficiently and have a fully rounded view on what does what with three of us in the mix. As far as we're concerned SUPM's equipment tests are unparalleled. There's much that goes on behind the scenes but you can be safe in the knowledge that each piece of gear gets a thorough going over across multiple paddling scenarios.

So to Steph and Rich it's a huge thanks for being part of the team and making SUP Mag UK all the better. We look forward to many more on water sessions with moving forwards. Stay tuned to SUPM for a catch up with the boys as we uncover what it's really like to be a tester.

Enjoy the latest issue!

Tez Plavenieks, June 2017
tez@supmaguk.co.uk
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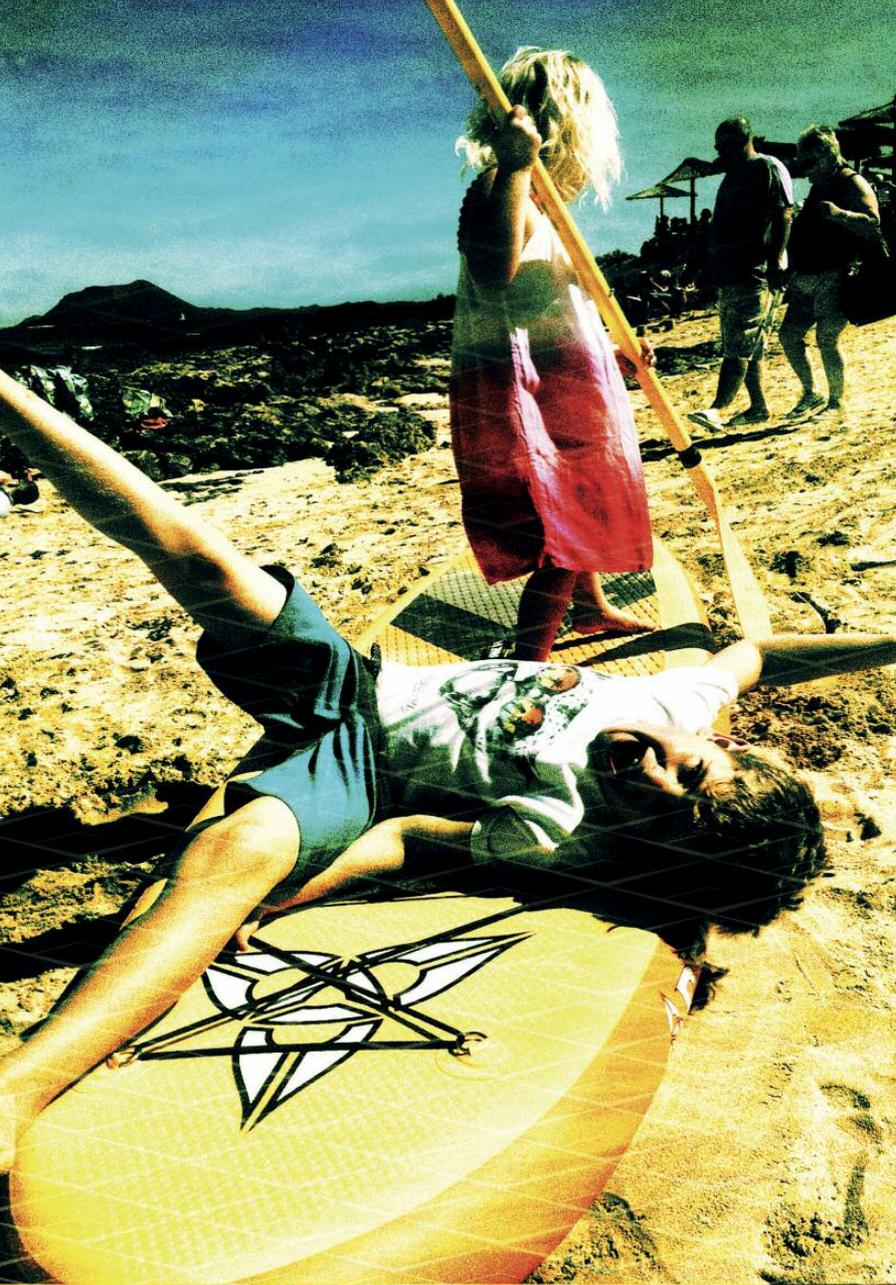
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**THE WORLD'S
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South of

Paddling to the bottom of the world

Words: Meghan Roberts

Pics: Abbey Weisbrot, Eric Barnes (@globalfotog) and Raefe Kirk-Lauritsen

Early January, 2016, the Ocean Endeavour, a 137-metre expedition ship, crawls at a sluggish two knots pushing its way through heavy sea ice. Looking in every direction there is the same view; flat white ice, with dark jagged cracks of sea separating thousands of vast fragments.

The sea ice floats around in level pieces ranging from four to twenty metres across. The ship meanders through it, parting the patches, trying to find an open area. After several hours of this, my mind goes to early explorers like Shackleton and Carl Anton Larsen, with their ships stuck and crushed by the weight of the drifting sea ice. For twelve hours the captain moved the vessel methodically and deliberately through the maze until we hit open water once again, with a sigh of relief. This was my first experience attempting to cross the Antarctic Circle, roughly at 66°33.44 S. This particular trip we only reached about 64°50 S before we had to turn the ship around.



the Circle



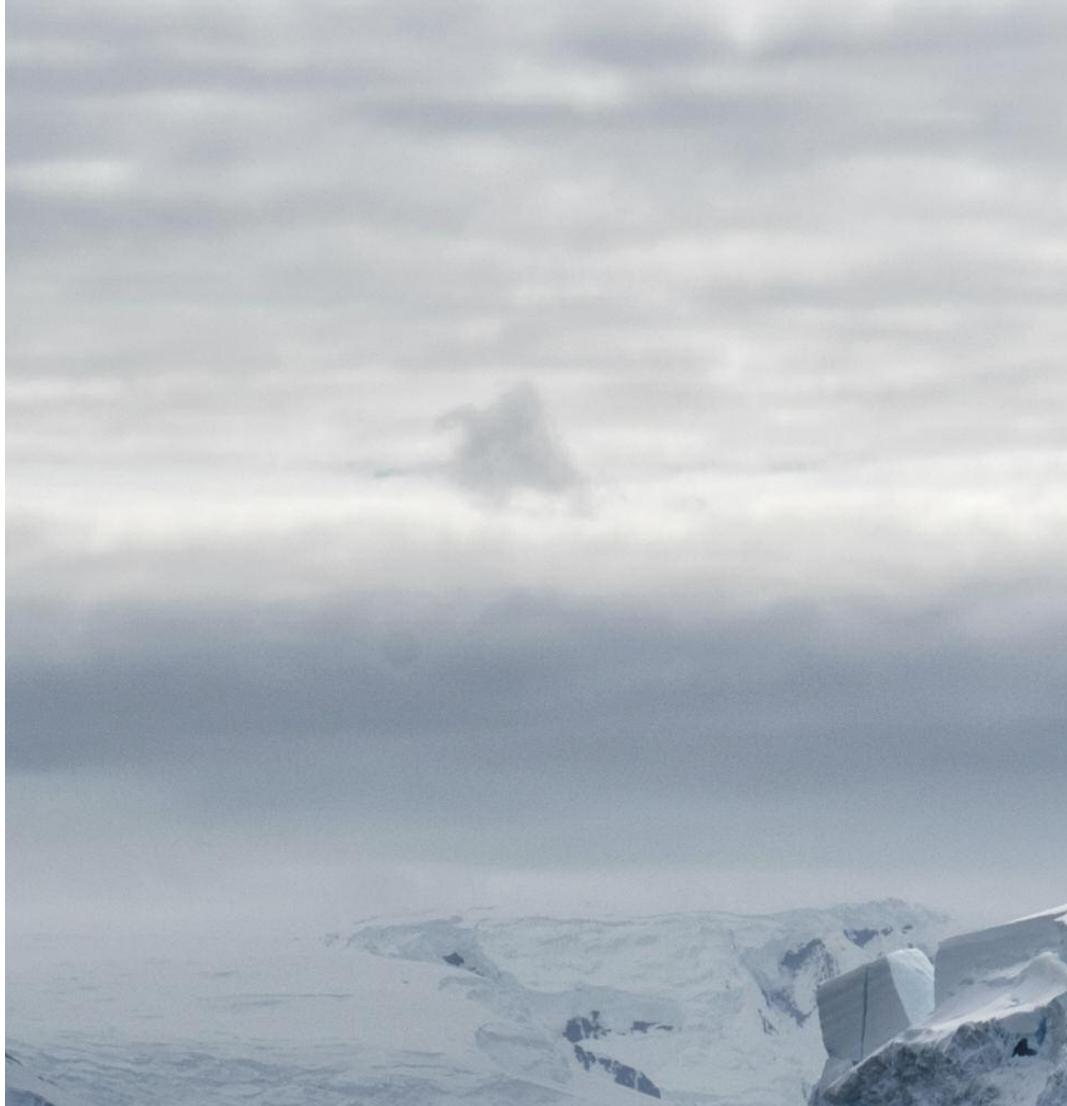
January 21, 2017, 7:30am

There are a crowd of passengers and staff on the bow of the Ocean Endeavour as the ship moves across the imaginary boundary of the Antarctic Circle. Earnest words are read aloud as we hold our drinks to toast the heroic and courageous pioneers who have risked or gave their lives to Antarctic exploration.

Adventures are their own reward in that they let you access parts of your heart and mind, which sleep when you are safe and comfortable at home. For comfort can sap vitality and it can be easy to forget from whence your happiness flows when life's tides slop lazily about your feet. But when the wind whips every inch of your body and you are helming the boat into the frigid unknown you can feel like you are truly riding the world.

Excerpt from the Crossing the Circle speech by, Colin Souness, Glaciologist:

“Adventures are their own reward in that they let you access parts of your heart and mind which sleep when you are safe and comfortable at home. For comfort can sap vitality, and it can be easy to forget from whence your happiness flows when life's tides slop lazily about your feet. But when the wind whips every inch of your body and



The base is not only still there, but was left as if the scientists just popped out for a quick hike.



you are helming the boat into the frigid unknown you can feel like you are truly riding the world..."

Detaille Island is our landing south of the Antarctic Circle at 66°52'S, 66°48'W. Detaille is the site of the British base, Base W, built in 1956. It was only in operation for a few years due to how difficult it is to access, even during the summer, due to sea ice and weather. The base is not only still there, but was left as if the scientists just popped out for a quick hike.

Pots, pans, and canned food line the shelves in the kitchen, tools hang on the wall of the work area, and notes are scattered across a desk with a lantern near by to illuminate the room in the rare summer moments there is darkness. I am here with an adventurous group of seven passengers kitted out in drysuits, booties, and PFDs. After we explore Base W, we are going paddle boarding!

I typically write off any days we spend below the Circle for paddling. The ice is thick



and the winds are typically strong. Many times the weather's so rough and ice so thick that we can't even drop zodiacs to cruise or land below the Circle. This particular day, is a good one, and the first that with suitable conditions for SUP below the circle. The sky is overcast, allowing the oversized white icebergs to dramatically stand out against the grey background. The sea is littered with pieces of sea ice and small 'bergy bits. The light breeze reminds us of how dynamic the seemingly stable masses of ice are as they drift around the surface.

Safety briefing

In the zodiac with the other paddle boarders, I give an introduction to SUP and a safety briefing. In the short time it takes to do this, the breeze and currents have enclosed our zodiac with small chunks of sea ice. Before we can unload our boards we have to turn on the engine to clear an area for launching. We laugh as I begin shoving ice away with my paddle.

Paddling here makes you feel tiny. The large, dark, jagged peaks of the surrounding lands tower around us as the icy white glaciers spill down their valleys. Icebergs the size of castles bob around the sea reminding you of how large those glaciers in the distance really are. Ice isn't the only allure of the paddle; Adelie Penguins waddle clumsily along the rocks of Detaille Island as we float by. They cautiously approach the sea edge and peer into the water





Meghan Roberts has a passion for board sports and water, spending much of her life snowboarding, SUP boarding, river surfing and white water rafting. She currently is a year-round SUP instructor, working winter seasons running a SUP program on an expedition ship in Antarctica and summers running a SUP business in Fayetteville, West Virginia, USA. Meghan's SUP business, Mountain Surf Paddle Sports, offers profession instruction on river trips and lakes. Check out: www.mtnsurfps.com, @mtn_surf_ps

determining if it's safe to plunge in. Once in the water, they dart around beneath the surface, seemingly flying underwater.

No matter how many times I paddle in Antarctica, it never gets old, for no two paddle experiences are ever the same. One paddle we'll get the chance to see a giant glacier calve off huge chunks of ice into the ocean with a thunderous roar that vibrates deep in your chest; another day an enormous lethargic Leopard Seal rests on an ice flow as we paddle by admiring its beauty; the next, a humpback whale will show some interest in us, approach and

make eye contact as it peacefully and elegantly swims by. Even without any of these spectacular events occurring, the scenery and experience is enough to satisfy even the most adventurous souls.

Being on a paddle board is unlike anything else you can do in Antarctica. The peaceful, tranquil, and solitude experience from a board allows you to blend in and be apart of the environment; It allows you to sit in silence and take in all the natural sounds of the polar region; It allows you to fully appreciate the untouched, uncontaminated, and uninhabited nature that surrounds us.





Be safe

belt up



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Strike a pose

SUP Yoga for all the family!

Words: Emma Wall – Ocean Flow Fitness

Pics: David Robertson – Azura Photography

Get fit out in the fresh air with this accessible activity that the whole family can benefit from and enjoy together. SUP Yoga isn't just for advanced practitioners or paddle boarders, this fun combination of healthy pastimes can be practiced on one level or another no matter what your age, flexibility or fitness level. You've just got to be prepared to let go of your ego; as we say in yoga: to get down with nature, and of course, to get wet!

What are the benefits of practicing Yoga on a SUP?

Apart from the usual benefits of flexibility and strength building that Yoga brings you, the addition of a not so stable base means that you really have to engage your core muscles in order to prevent yourself from abandoning ship in a lot of the poses. Added to this you have the more spiritual dimension of SUP Yoga, which allows you to feel more connected to the elements.

One of those rare times that we can detox from our digitally saturated modern lives and feel at one with nature. From the sound of the water and birds overhead and the smell of salty sea air, to the feel of the sun or breeze on your skin and the sight of the expansive blue sky or sea in front of you; you really couldn't get more in the midst of nature than when out on your paddle board practicing Yoga.

What safety precautions should we take as a family when practicing SUP yoga?

It's best to find somewhere sheltered in which to practice SUP Yoga: lagoons, lakes and bays are favourable, or at the very least the open sea at low tide. Be conscious of the tides and be sure not to practice anywhere where there are dangerous currents. When you start to practice Yoga you might be so in 'the zone' or indeed laughing so much, that you begin to drift away from each other without realising. One way to safeguard against this is to use anchors. You can buy SUP and kayaking anchors online, or simply make your own filling an old plastic bottle attached to a long length of rope with sand or stones. This can be kept on top of your board until you find your spot. You may even want to use long bungee to attach one board to another in a triangular or star shape formation so that you're never further than a 'man over board' away from each other.

Eight SUP yoga poses to try with the whole family...



1 DOWNWARD FACING DOG

This classic Yoga pose will really begin to fire up your core and is a wonderful way to start exploring the space around you, connect with the natural movement of the water beneath and the gentle lapping of the water against your paddle board.

Really root down through each of the four points of contact with the board; keeping your fingers spread wide, your arms engaged, your collarbone wide, and your hips shooting up towards that sky above you. Don't worry if you need to bend your knees or if your heels don't reach the board. Just focus on lengthening your back and making your arms and legs as firm as possible. Now breathe deep, pulling your stomach up and in and feel the power in your core as you connect with the calming sounds of nature around you.



2 LUNGE

From downward facing dog step one foot through to the front of the board between your hands, allowing the back leg knee to drop and the foot to extend away from you.

This pose is great for opening up your hip flexors as well as for strengthening legs and core.

Once in the pose keep high on your fingertips with an open chest so that you can look into the horizon and enjoy the beautiful landscape in front of your eyes.



3 TWISTED LUNGE

From lunge bring the opposite hand to the bent knee down next to the bent knee foot and then raise the other hand up into the air into a twist. This is where things start to get interesting, as you really challenge your balance by twisting over towards your bent knee and looking over that shoulder.

For an extra challenge look up towards the sky. And if the sun is shining close your eyes and just enjoy the feeling of those rays on your face and the breeze on your skin as you bob about in the water.

Gently come back to lunge and then step it back to downward dog and repeat on the other side.



4 BOAT POSE OR DOUBLE BOAT

Give your core a real blast with this aptly named Yoga pose. Leaning back with a straight spine to the point where you feel like your toes want to leave the board and your lower back wants to round. Bring your hands out parallel in front of you and then come onto your tiptoes or raise your legs completely off the board with knees either bent or straight.

Kids will love the partner Yoga version of this where you sit facing each other on the same board, holding each other's wrists, and then come into boat pose by raising your feet together with the soles of your feet touching, using each other's weight as a counter lever.



5 WHEEL POSE

Another sure fire favourite for the kids, as it's prone to get everyone falling off their board. They'll probably recognise this pose by the name crab, which seems more fitting to the water surrounding anyway!

If pushing up into this deep backbend is just a step too far for you; then why not give the younger more agile members of the family a mini victory and stick with the entry level version – the bridge pose.

For both poses remember that your thighs and abs should be doing the work here not in actual fact your back.



6 FORWARD FOLD

After all the excitement of the previous couple of poses it's time to wind it down and bring the practice into a quieter space again. Forward folds are perfect for this as we once again connect with our board and evert our vision away from the expansiveness of the surroundings and down to the ripples of the water beneath us.

Remember to keep on extending up and out through your spine whilst rooting down through your sit bones. And make sure that you're hinging at the hips as opposed to just rounding forward through the spine. It may even feel nice to hold the side of the board instead of your legs or feet here to feel the water run past your fingers.



7 CHILD'S POSE

Finish your fun practice off with some breaths in child's pose. Sitting back on your heels and allowing your lower back to release. You can stretch your arms out in front down the length of the board and then walk them to one side of the board and then the other to get a nice lateral stretch.



8 SAVASANA

Lie back on your board with your eyes closed and for just a few more moments take in the sensations of nature all around you as your breath intertwines with the breeze and everything settles into a natural rhythm. Dropping of hands and feet into the water here is positively encouraged.



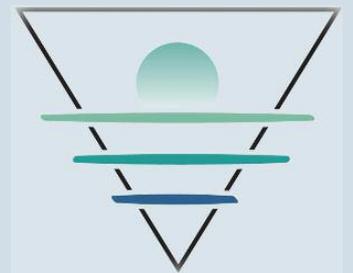
Emma Wall is the founder of Ocean Flow Fitness, offering Yoga and wellbeing and SUP and surf fitness on the south coast of England. If you want to try out SUP Yoga this summer then the Ocean Flow SUP Yoga board is being released this June in cooperation with Fatstick paddle boards.

Emma is happy to take you and your family out for a free demo session to introduce you to this fun practice. Fancy taking it to somewhere where you can really connect with nature?

Ocean Flow Fitness has teamed up with mountain specialists Alpine Action Adventures and Fatstick paddleboards to offer four exciting summer retreats in Morzine in the French Alps during June, where you can combine Yoga, trekking and of course SUP Yoga in a beautiful Alpine setting.

For more info contact Emma at oceanflowfitness@gmail.com

<http://www.oceanflowfitness.com>



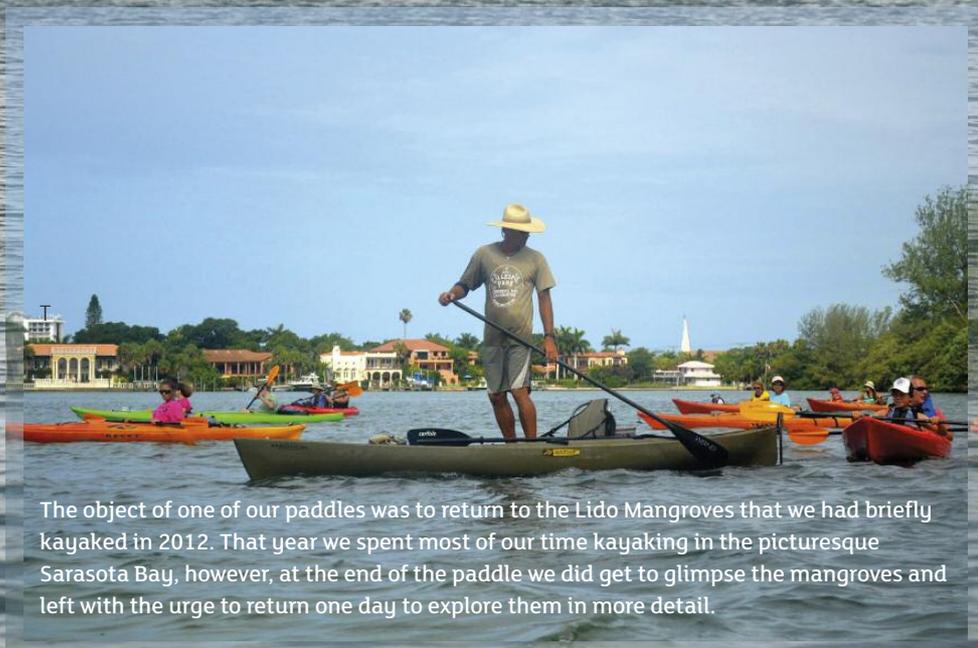


Florida In the fall

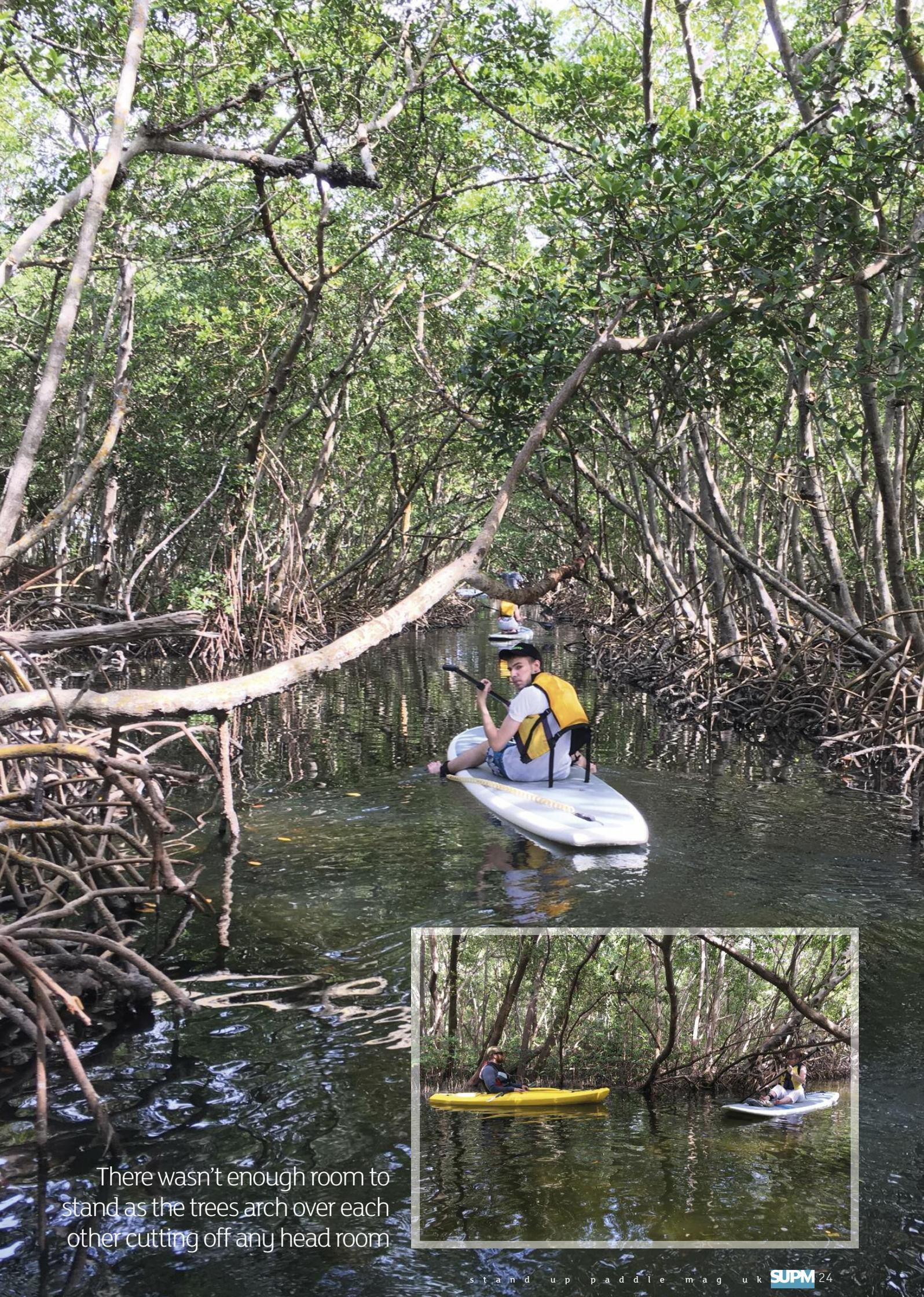
Words: Peter Tranter
Pics: Peter Tranter and
Aidan Egan Tranter

Rightly or wrongly, Florida is one of those US states that people perhaps think they know even if they haven't visited, namely, steaming temperatures, theme parks, alligators, retired people and gaudy amounts of wealth. Of course all these things exist and in big volumes but there is a quieter and cooler side to Florida and it all depends on where and what time of the year. We've been lucky enough to visit Florida several times and always in the autumn, or fall as the Americans prefer and the west coast of Florida, perhaps better known as the Gulf Coast as it lies on the Gulf of Mexico.

So rewind to October 2016 and we're bound once again for the Gulf Coast of Florida – where better to contrast the grey drizzle cold of the UK? The trip was in part a celebration of our son's 18th birthday but also a long deep seated need to return to a coastline that impressed so much on our previous visits, the latest of which was in 2012. That year we stayed in Siesta Key – this year – Longboat Key, Sarasota, which is 10 miles north but has the very same world-class white powder beaches that make this coastline so desirable, as the many mansions stand witness to. Many people are familiar with Sarasota because of those beautiful white sandy beaches. However, there are many other reasons to love the area with its exquisite blue waters, warm temperatures and abundant wildlife.



The object of one of our paddles was to return to the Lido Mangroves that we had briefly kayaked in 2012. That year we spent most of our time kayaking in the picturesque Sarasota Bay, however, at the end of the paddle we did get to glimpse the mangroves and left with the urge to return one day to explore them in more detail.



There wasn't enough room to stand as the trees arch over each other cutting off any head room



We contacted the Sarasota Paddleboard Company, who we had seen in some hotel literature and a few hours later on a warm but windy day, we made our way down. The car park and the get in was only two miles from the hotel and easy to find. Bob the owner was waiting for us and promptly gave us a comprehensive 15-minute tutorial on the area and what to look out for. He was a little concerned about the high winds but looking at the forecast, it was decided it was not going to get any worse and to make a start.

We entered the water through a small gap in the bushes that opens into Sarasota Bay, the strong wind immediately pushing us westwards but towards the Lido Mangroves. The further we entered the mangroves, the less the wind had an effect until the islands and trees created a total wind break. Before I describe the paddle through the mangroves, it's probably useful to know just what they are, why they are protected and what lives within them.

Mangroves are tropical plants that have adapted to the loose, wet soils of the Florida coastline, as well as the salt water and tides that are typical of Sarasota Bay. The mangroves and tunnels are very important to Florida by preventing coastal erosion and providing an aquatic ecosystem vital to the conservation of the coastline. For marine life, the mangroves are a home and nursery for young fish, crustaceans and shellfish, plus an overall protective blanket from the elements and large predators. The canopied tunnels provide a cool and shady environment from the sun and a break from storm winds, waves, and floods. The branches of mangroves also serve as nesting areas for coastal and wading birds.

Bob guided us to the first tunnel describing all that surrounded us and took us through to a small bay. From there Bob left and gave us the instructions on how to see more of the mangroves, which have a numbered tunnel system that's easy to follow. In the open water we took half an hour just to have a mess around and a bit of fun pushing each other off the boards into the warm water, splashing each other, etc. All around us fish were jumping wildly from the water, beautiful birds such as herons and pelicans looked on and there was a great sense of isolation as we were the only paddlers on this open stretch of water.

Eventually we moved on and entered back into the tunnels. Once inside the canopies again and everything goes eerily quiet as you paddle into the shade. Stand up paddling becomes sit down paddling however, as for us the tide is in, which

Herons looking out for...



...flying fish



Time for a little larking about



Black Mangrove Crabs





Sunset and sunrise

meant there wasn't enough room to stand as the trees arch over each other cutting off any head room. That's not a problem though as it's possibly the best place to be as you watch the many shoals of fish swimming beneath the board. By getting down, you also have the best angle in which to see the thousands of small Black Mangrove Crabs that are everywhere scuttling along the branches just above the water surface – fascinating creatures.

The tunnels again led to a sheltered bay with a small beach 500 metres away with a few fishermen and dog walkers. As we paddled towards the beach, the occupants left, which again left us as the only people there. This is obviously due to the time of the year. If you want to go to a tropical location such as Florida, then one of the best times to go is November, when there are few tourists with the added bonus that most flights and accommodation being cheaper too. The 2012 trip took place in June and was much busier in the bay than what we were seeing in late October.

We headed for the beach, however, it was obvious now that we were losing the shelter of the mangroves as we came to the outer edge and the wind started to have an effect on our paddling. Getting onto the beach gave us a full view of view of the bay and its beautiful waterfront houses, condos and mansions. It also gave us a chance to wade into the water and to take a look at the slow moving marine life just below the surface such as the star fish, sea urchins and giant water snails.

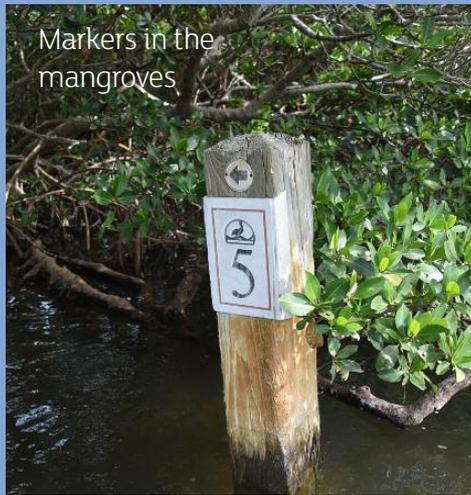
By this time we had been out for nearly three hours and knew we had to get back so the Sarasota Paddleboard Company guys could pack up and go home this being a Saturday, plus it being the closest

Saturday to Halloween - an American obsession – though they do take it to very entertaining levels. The other situation we had to factor in were the high winds. We could go for the slower paddle back through the mangroves, or skirt round the outer edge but be exposed to the high winds with the possibility of being blown into the bushes. In the end we went for the dash and avoided the bushes by sitting down and reducing the body mass for the winds to aim for. We were still pushed around but made it back in a quicker time than going back through the mangroves.

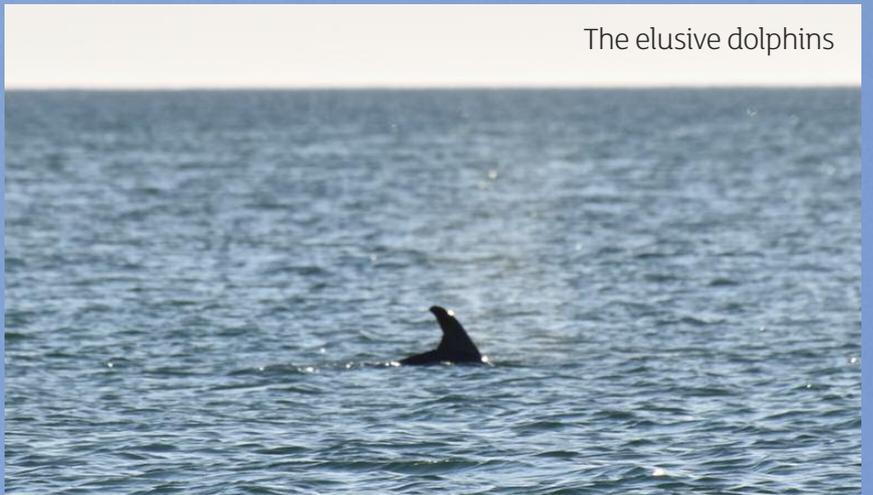
After landing we had a further chat with Bob and his son Bobby, plus Colin who joined us after five minutes. What Colin doesn't know about classic British sports cars isn't worth knowing. A great team, hugely knowledgeable on their area of expertise and nice guys to boot. In fact they couldn't get rid of us as we bumped into them all again at the huge Halloween festival at Armand Circle two nights later.

We were also fortunate that the hotel where we stayed, the Resort at Longboat Key Club, also provided SUP boards. A very different picture to the shaded mangroves, here you are on the glassy Gulf of Mexico, with a view of extremely expensive mansions and glamorous hotels on one side and the wide open sea of the Gulf on the other, with a stunning array of bird and marine life. In our time at the mangroves we didn't catch sight of any dolphins but here was different story as the pods sweep in and out of Sarasota Bay





Markers in the mangroves



The elusive dolphins



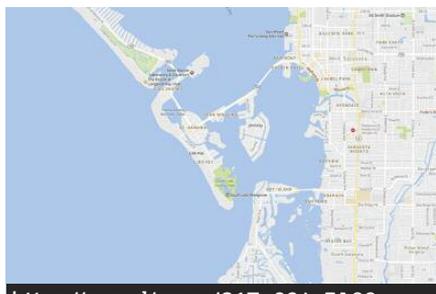
Beach Crabs



Your heart will jump at the stunning contrast of emerald-green, shimmering blue water and the dazzling white sand



Myself and Aidan at the get-in



<https://goo.gl/maps/G1Tn224p7A82>

via the narrow channel that passed by the hotel. My only disappointment was not being fast or close enough with the camera - a familiar story!

The beach itself seemed like a living entity with just so many crabs and differing species of birds and your heart will jump at the stunning contrast of emerald-green, shimmering blue water and the dazzling white sand. A walk on the white sands quickly reveals why these are rated not only the finest beaches in the United States but the world. You'll notice a faint squeak and a slight sink with every step and that's because the granules are very fine and nearly round in shape, composed of almost 100 percent quartz. If you pick up a few

grains you'll notice they are not really white but almost clear, feels more like a powder and they reflect and sparkle in the rays of the sun. There's a miniature world out there in the tiny grains of sand that is so small we hardly take notice but if you stay still for long enough you will see the crabs emerge and the birds picking around at the smaller crustaceans they are lucky to find.

We only scratched the surface as far as SUP goes in Florida as there are so many possibilities in a part of the world that seems to have far more water than land. Find the right place and time of the year, basically out of the hot and sticky summer months and Florida is a paradise.



Bobby, Colin and Bob

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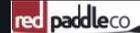
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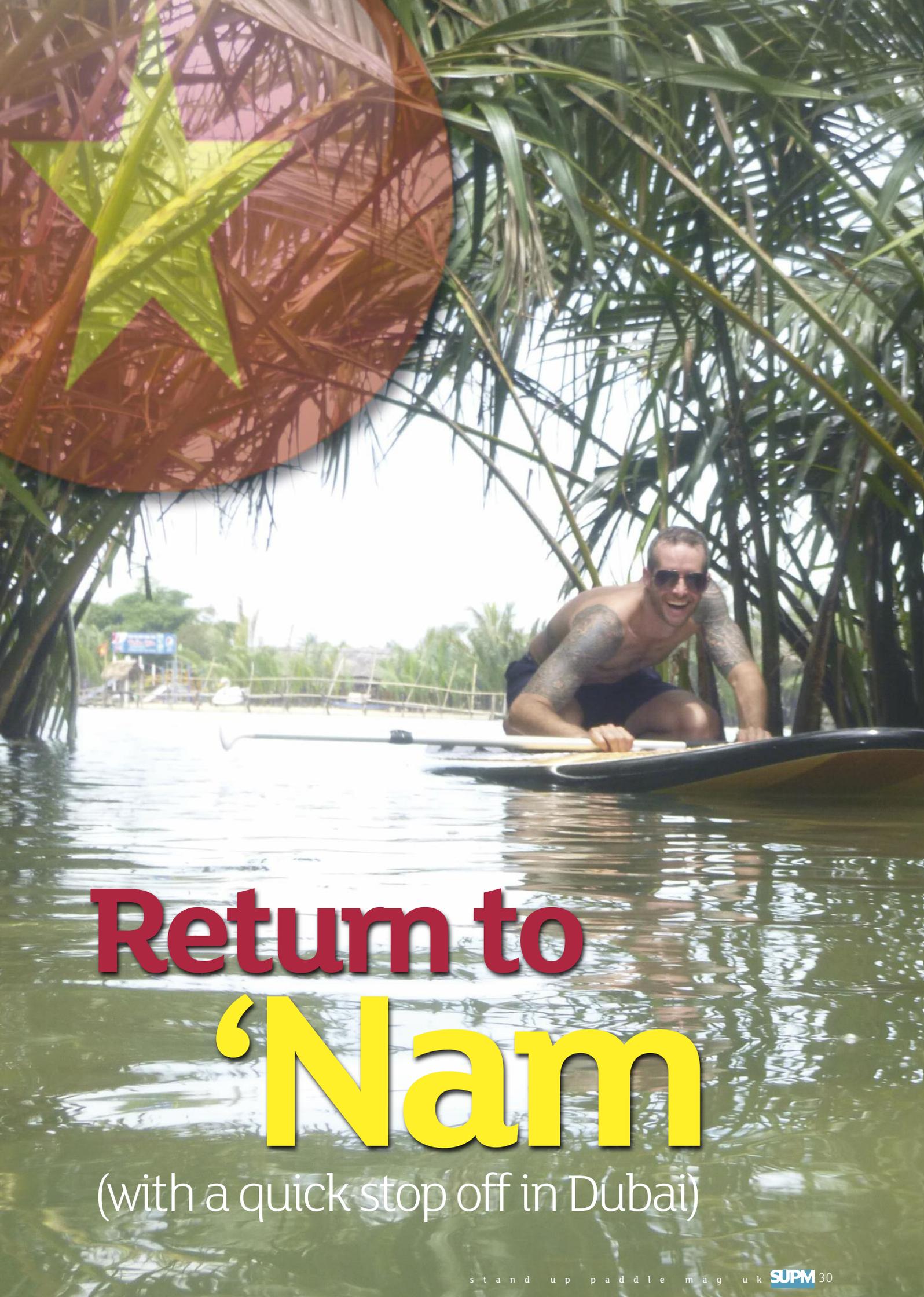
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Return to 'Nam

(with a quick stop off in Dubai)

Mark Rose first ventured to Vietnam for a spot of stand up paddling two years ago. There he discovered a flat water SUP paradise that was totally unique. Yearning for more of the same Mark and wife Chris decided to hop back on plane and head here again. Chuck in a quick paddling stop off via Dubai during the return journey and you have all the makings of a classic trip. Over to Mark for more...

Words and pics: Mark Rose

Planning a SUP adventure to the Far East or Middle East? Do you love coffee?

If yes to the latter then the even bigger question is Vietnamese coffee or Arabian coffee?

Travelling with Emirates Airlines via Dubai to Vietnam you can have all of the above, what are you waiting for?

Hoi An in Vietnam is a beautiful 13th century trading port, a UNESCO world heritage site, no cars or motor bikes are allowed in the old town. From a SUPers view Hoi An is surrounded by mile upon mile of unexplored SUP waterways. This is the second time we've visited and it still amazes.

For first time SUPers I would recommend SUP Monkey Hoi An, who run SUP tours early morning off An Bang Beach, or their river tours to wonderful places such as the Coconut Village and beyond. Down at 250 Cua Dai Road, is the Vietnam Backpackers' Hostel, a new accommodation built for those on a budget, where \$12 gets you a room for the night. This is no ordinary hostel though. It boasts a swimming pool – complete with bar – and SUPs racked up next to reception. They have a nice selection of hard boards from Aallokko and the usual inflatables.

For everyone else, who is not a backpacker, there is the charming Victoria Hoi An Beach Resort and Spa, which is perfectly positioned between the sea on one side, with views out to the Cham Islands and the river on the other. The Victoria Hotel just oozes Vietnamese charm and caters for everyone. Free bikes are on offer, plus windsurfing, kayaks, catamaran sailing and two Starboard Astro Tourer inflatables

for rental. The Victoria and the Vietnam Backpackers hostel are only separated by a five-minute taxi ride so you can have the best of both worlds for starting points and choices of equipment.

Trip one, starting point

The Vietnam Backpackers Hostel. Max, the owner of the hostel, laid on Jono and Shane to help out with local paddling knowledge and the rental of brand new gear. Straight out front it's barefoot across the road and down the bank and into the river – less than two minutes and we are paddling!

Our route for the day, left downstream, meandering with the river towards the Coconut Village and the estuary beyond. Soon our first hurdle loomed up before us – it was a dam.

The Vietnamese have built the dam to carry a small road across the river. We drifted up to it, to look for a good exit point. The sides were steep and covered in overgrown vegetation. Jono suggested it's best to use the paddle as a beater to scare off any unwanted Vietnamese wildlife, use your imagination for that one, mine was already in overdrive!

We climbed up the bank and tried to negotiate the road with our boards which seemed full of motorbikes and the odd lorry for added excitement. Did you know a 12-foot paddle board on the top of an overgrown slope sticks out over six feet into a narrow road. So be careful you don't get spun around or you might end up on one of the many TV programmes like 'World's Worst Road Accidents' or 'Deadly Snake Bites' Vietnam edition

Coconut Village

Back on the water we soon passed the Victoria Hotel, then further downstream exchanged greetings with local fishermen in their thung chai's (basket boats). After an hour of cruising we entered the Coconut Village area with great swathes of palms growing right out of the water. Vietnamese ladies were fishing for crabs from their basket boats. There was no real conversation just lots of smiles exchanged between our two different worlds. This area is a little tropical oasis. In some places the palms crossed the water so low it's down on your knees to get through nature's green arches.

A quick rehydration break, then a high speed paddle back to the dam with tide and wind pushing us homeward. We did manage a quick iced coffee stop at 'Riverfront' next to the Cua Dai Bridge. After three hours of paddling we were back at the hostel for a couple of well-earned ice cold beers.

Trip two, from the Victoria. I used one of the hotel's Starboard Astro Tourer's. Due to the distance and the heat my plan was to meet my wife Chris at Cafe 96, a bar on the waterfront, four hours after my departure. If things went wrong on route I would either hail a local water taxi and use some US dollars to get a lift back or come ashore somewhere and get a taxi of the land based variety. Always have a backup plan in 'Nam!

Setting off from the Victoria's small jetty, with a good local map of the waterways I caught the last hour of ebbing tide which helped take me towards Coconut Village. After about 50 minutes I arrived surrounded by 20 basket boats filled with tourists on an eco-

tour. The tide was turning so no time to waste. A quick water stop, then just grind it out until you see the lighthouse on your left. Cutting the corner of the river, turning right to get into the estuary, it all suddenly came good, going with the wind and tide. There are lots of Vietnamese boats to see which all have one thing in common: two large eyes on the bows. The white of the eye signifies hope and the black of the eye signifies death. They are meant to protect the fishermen from river monsters and serpents. Starboard and Red Paddle take note, an upgrade for the 2018 range?

There are lots of Vietnamese boats to see which all have one thing in common: two large eyes on the bows

In the distance was the next landmark and what a landmark it is! The new Cua Dai Bridge has a span of 1.48km across the river costing 3,452 trillion Vietnamese dong – that's a lot of dong!

Coffee

Next stop after the bridge was Cam Nam Island at the coffee shop that Craig from SUP Monkey took me to, two years ago. I use the term coffee shop loosely. It's an old building on the canal where some of the best original Vietnamese coffee is served. As the harbour wall on the island appeared on my left I turned inland, the cutting rapidly narrowing down from 30m to 5m.

Due to the tide being higher than last time it was going to be a horizontal squeeze under the bridge, immediately on my left and then the long awaited coffee stop! The two plank jetty looked even more rickety than last time. With my SUP tied up I was greeted by a local man in a hammock offering to look after my carbon paddle. As we are not at Starbucks the magic words you need are 'ca phe sua da.'

Proper Vietnamese coffee is served jet black with a splash of condensed milk and loads of ice, it is heaven on earth and a truly amazing taste/hit!

Following a few photos opportunities, more coffee, and saying my goodbyes it was time to pick up my paddle from the man now sleeping in the hammock and hit the water.

Zooming down between the mainland and Cam Nam Island the Cam Island Bridge was in sight which meant I was almost there. Gliding past the fish market – you do not need a map to know you are there – the air is thick with smells of the day's catch. As the waterfront beckoned I slowly counted down the minutes to Cafe 96, journey's end and dry land. Beer and spring rolls ordered I watched the world go by on the quay. It doesn't get much better than this but eventually it was time to go again. With the SUP rolled under my arm we hailed a taxi back to the Victoria. All in it was a perfect paddle. Total time afloat was three and a half hours, with lots to see, nice people to meet, fabulous coffee and ice cold beer to finish.





Dubai

Two flights later and we found ourselves in Dubai for a quick stopover. Dubai has hundreds of hotels to suit all budgets. The price also depends on the time of year. If you go in the low season it's cheap because the weather's (apparently) bad – 50 degrees Celsius bad! We stayed at the Centro in the Al Barsha district, a great hotel approx £60-£100 per night for two with breakfast and a free shuttle bus to the beach where you'll find stand up paddle boarding.

My main contact in Dubai for SUP rental was DUKITE at Umm Sequim Fishing Harbour. The main man was Nic Muhl who operates from the public beach in front of Jumeriah Tent Restaurant.

Rental is very reasonable all top quality boards, from wide beginner boards, right up to the latest Starboard Allstar 24" wide high performance SUP. Nic is a great chap who will either let you SUP off the beach solo or can take you on organised tours (for example) towards the Burj Hotel. The beach where Nic operates from is very clean, offers wonderfully clear water, plus the odd sting ray to keep you amused and a great bar for your Arabian coffee with cardamom. It's taste is very unusual but worth a try.

On the map, 12,264 miles does look a long way, that's because IT IS! But if you want a totally different experience then it's worth the jet lag and the long flights. Vietnam is an assault on the senses, an amazing adventure – not least from a SUPers point of view. So show up, blow up and keep up.

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Lest we forget – throwing it back to the 80s

Words: Sylvain Demercastel

Pics: RRD



I came into watersports by coincidence in the mid-80s. It was a time of experimentation, progress and we felt like pioneers. We didn't need a specific reason, nor a detailed weather forecast to get on our boards. If there was no wind, then we would do 'Planche à voile' on floaty windsurfer kit and the triangular sails. We would imagine games or races, bring a picnic, explore the coast, learn some new freestyle tricks, improve our balance and play.

Then came the time of 'Funboard' and performance and we all wanted to be heroes. We cut off the roots and some people did not even know how to lift a sail from the water in any other way than a waterstart. Somehow, that's about when it kind of started to get difficult. The equipment was expensive and you would wait so long before the right conditions came along – you sometimes forgot why you were into watersports.



Some people felt pushed away from the community because they could not afford to move and follow the wind. Others felt left behind and even betrayed. The industry would push the limits and sometimes went in wrong direction but that is also how you learn. The price to pay was the lost art of the 'fun and family' spirit. By wanting more wind and more waves, more radical boards spent more time stored inside the garage than they would be in the water. Many people lost their passion and they simply gave up.

How come we could have fun in a no wind day in Corsica during the summer of 1987 and yet become bored of the very same place 10 years afterwards. That's exactly when I decided to stop windsurfing for a while.

Well, after chasing waves all around the world for surfing and having gone back to windsurfing around 2005 I might have learned a few things. One of them is that

being outside and going in the water is a pleasure by itself – even if the conditions are not the ones that you've been waiting for. Today, we are blessed with the ability to move to places that we only saw in magazines 20 years ago. Even if travelling is expensive, it is possible to find information on various destinations that are sometimes not too far.

And we are able to enjoy a new way to get on the water with stand up paddling. This has changed the deal. Of course waves are the Holy Grail for many but there is also a lot of fun to be had when you discover a new place and decide to put a sail on your SUP when the light wind comes in. It tastes like the good old days when you learned how to windsurf and guess what? I like it a lot. Playing with the gentle wind on a blue water, whilst enjoying the landscape. It is not a big deal if

the waves are not here today, as long as I can do something to keep up with my passion – it always feels good to stand on a board, with a paddle or sail.

A few days later, the waves always come back and the action gets more radical, however, the pleasure is the same. Those 'toys' make us forget for a little while about our problems in life it is something we all know. This feeling of wellness is why we should always feel lucky and that's exactly what windsurfing, surfing, SUPing or windsuping bring. Let's just not forget.



We are blessed with the ability to move
to places that we only saw in
magazines 20 years ago







BRIGANTINE COMPANION

Lady of Avenel SUP adventures

During winter 2016/17 Stefan Fritz called to see if we (Active 360) could work together on setting up stand up paddle boarding trips using his tall ship as a platform and launch. The plan was to use the ship as transport and a paddling pontoon for reaching remote places where we could SUP. I headed off to see his ship berthed in Essex and was immediately sold on the idea. We would get the chance to sail this amazing tall ship, paddle in beautiful blue seas, catch fish to eat and climb the odd mountain when it eventually reached Scotland. **Words and pics:** Paul Hyman (Active360)





“Taking a range of air boards from different brands we could try different types in a variety of sheltered and open sea conditions.”



Lady of Avenel is a semi-square-rigged 100-foot brigantine with a historic link to the Cutty Sark. She is spacious and comfortable. At deck level, there is the main saloon with seating and dining area, an ideal chill out space after a paddle. The separate galley offers space for cooking the many fish you catch in these clear Scottish waters. Below deck level is the accommodation, with a range of cosy cabins and bathrooms. The ship can accommodate up to 12, with lots of gear and there is plenty of space to store paddleboards.

We planned our first trip in September and set off for Oban in the Western Highlands where the Lady had moored after weeks of sailing around the British Isles.

She looked magnificent and after some discussion of possible routes we settled on the Inner Hebrides. The wind was force 5 and we decided that the Outer Hebrides would be a bit too breezy and exposed for SUP. The inner islands are more sheltered. As the whole of the Hebridean area offers spectacular coastline, wildlife, clear waters and mountains we were happy to leave the more remote outcrops for the next trip and focus on this stunning group of islands steeped in history.

First night

We headed towards the Sound of Mull. As we settled into a routine there was a cry from the skipper to set the sails, and we quickly established a working rhythm, peacefully sailing on into Loch Aline. Weighing anchor for our first night at sea, we watched the sunset and planned our next move. This trip had no set itinerary and each evening we would look at the best options given wind speed and direction. We aimed to be under sail as much as possible and to paddle at least once a day for several hours with some longer sessions.

Taking a range of air boards from different brands we could try different types in a variety of sheltered and open sea conditions – very different to the tidal Thames which are our home waters. We swapped boards daily so we could all compare different kit. It was an educational experience.

In the clear waters of Scotland you get to see a surprising amount of wildlife. There are regular close encounters of the every kind but also seal pups basking on rocks, who were unfazed by our presence, and a school of dolphins playing around and under the ship's hull while sailing.

There were many highlights of this trip. Climbing Ben More, stopping off at the historic island of Iona, paddling through sea lochs beneath dark menacing mountains and feasting on mackerel and mussels caught just hours earlier. But two I particularly enjoyed.

Paddling into Fingals' Cave, Staffa (named after the legendary Irish hero Fionn mac Cumhaill) was one. Staffa is about seven miles off the west coast of Mull, and about six miles from Iona. The entrance of Fingal's Cave is wide with views of the hexagonal basalt columns from the depths to the roof of the cave. We followed this with an exploration of nearby smaller caves including one with a sump which we found we could swim through to reach the other side of the small island.





Active 360 and the Lady of Avenel are running the next SUP and sail trip on the west coast of Scotland leaving from Oban on 2nd July 2017. Prices including all equipment and meals on board are £1295.00 for six nights, seven days with a book early discount available and a further reduction if you bring your own equipment. The trip is suitable for most levels of SUP ability.



Paddling the atmospheric Gulf of Corryreckan was another. This is an infamous narrow strait between the islands of Scarba and Jura. It is one of the most notorious stretches of water in the British Isles with at times currents of up to 8.5 knots, turbulence, eddies and whirlpools which have the potential to sink boats. George Orwell nearly drowned here when his dinghy capsized in a whirlpool shortly before completing 1984.

Luckily for us our skipper, Stefan, did have good local knowledge but even so the Corryreckan didn't disappoint. Catching the right conditions at slack water takes a good deal of experience and timing. A smooth entry and confidence are key. This was a spectacular paddle and a most atmospheric place. It was really paddling on the edge with the exhilaration and excitement of the swirling whirlpools as we crossed over the gulf.

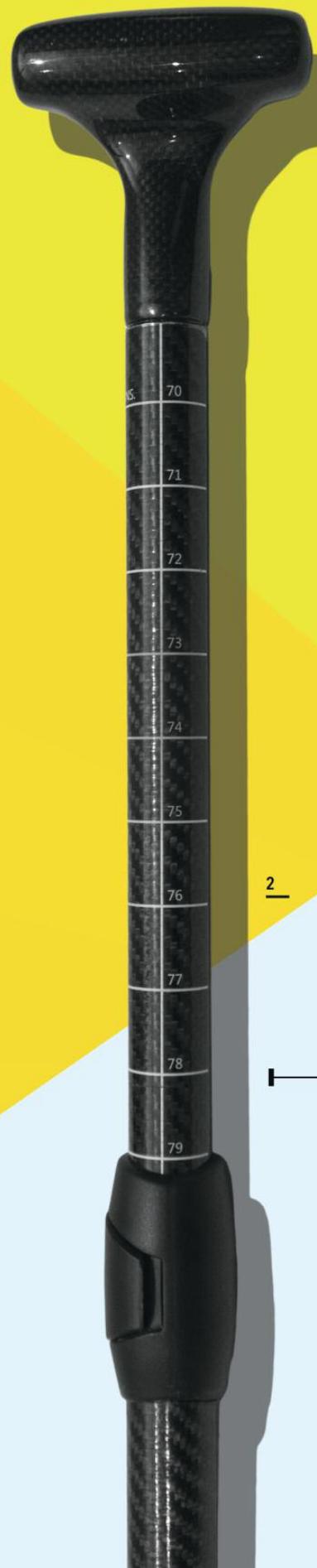
The Lady of Avenel provided us backup in tricky areas like the Corryreckan and also a warm dry place to shelter in places with no accommodation. We learned something of how a tall ship works and had daily opportunities to help crew and steer. Also the rigging was a great place to hang out while under sail. Harnessed on under sail with a commanding view and surrounded by spectacular scenery was very relaxing.

On our last day we sailed and paddled back to Oban with the wind behind us. We were all sad to leave, tired from hours of paddling every day but very relaxed. On board it was easy to escape daily life and the usual demands on our time. We all felt sorry to be at the end of our voyage and one of our group considered it life changing. He promptly went back and resigned from a stressful and demanding job, took life in a new direction and has never looked back!

For bookings and further information see www.active360.co.uk and www.ladyofavenel.com

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Giving it

Airton Cozzolino profile

Words: Laurent Nevarez

Photos: Fanatic/John Carter

With his rasta haircut, a permanent smile and his surrounding energy, Airton Cozzolino is undoubtedly one of the most recognizable and charismatic riders you can meet. Apart from being among the best kitesurfers in the world, the Cape Verdean prodigy is also a very talented stand up paddle rider with a radical and committed approach to waves. At 22, the showman of Ponta Preta, is more impressive than ever and brings fun and creativity to the sport.

Laurent Nevarez caught up with AC to see what makes him tick.

Age: 22

Size: 1.68m

Weight: 70 kg

Born in: Cabo Verde

Lives in: Ponta Preta, Sal, Cape Verde (winter) and Capo Mannu, Sardinia, Italy (summer)

Stance: Goofy

Sponsors: Fanatic, Ion, Redbull, North Kiteboarding

Results SUP:

5th SUWT La Torche Pro 2014

13th SUWT Tahiti 2015

Results Kite :

World Champion Kite Surf KSP 2011

3rd KSP 2012

4th KSP 2013

1st Tarifa Strapless 2015

100%



Could you tell me little more about your background and journey so far?

I was born on Sal, Cape Verde, and I grew up spending most of my time surfing. I come from a pretty poor background and I found through this passion a lot of joy and a way to live a better life. One day, I met an Italian kitesurfer named Libero Cozzolino, who took me under his wing and then adopted me when I was 12 years old. He really introduced me to kitesurf and gave me this passion that would change my life. I went to his home in Sardinia and he trained me to compete and then one day in 2011, I won the world title in waves. Since then positive things keep coming and I have had the chance for several years to do it as a job – it's an unbelievable journey.

When did you discover SUP?

I think it was in 2011. I tried one day when the waves were small and I was immediately hooked! This new way to approach waves really brought me something different. I then asked Fanatic if it was possible to get a SUP board and I started to ride it and train. I got better so they integrated me into the international team. SUP was firstly an extra sport for fun, but for the last couple of years, it's really become my second discipline. I really want to progress to the highest level. I want to be one of the top riders and maybe a world champion. This is one of my dreams.



Push the limits and have fun launching big air, shove its, 360s and so on – the sensations are crazy

We have seen you in some big SUP events, do you manage to compete all year against the other top guys?

I would love but it is not easy to deal with kitesurf trips and a dual contest schedule. It's really tricky. I have competed in a couple SUWT events and have learned a lot every time, it was really intense. I was riding boards with too much volume and not surfing 100%. In October 2014 I competed at La Torche in Brittany and finished fifth. This result gave me confidence and proved that I can have my place on the tour. With hard training and even better boards I could probably do something more.



Are you interested and involved in the development of boards with your sponsor?

I work on boards with Fanatic and their great shaper Sebastian Wenzel. We have tested different prototypes and made adjustments as needed. I really love the new boards this season, I feel super good on them. They're fast and precise. For everyday wave conditions I have a Prowave 7'6 x 27.5 (80L) and I also use a custom 7'4 for certain conditions and contests. I also use a Carbon 100 Paddle which is really great.

How would you describe your approach and the way you ride?

SUP is still a very young sport and I try to have a modern and radical approach, I like to push to the maximum, try new tricks, sometimes go a bit crazy and complete hard lip hits. Every time I go in the water I try to enjoy myself, push the limits and have fun launching big air, shove its, 360s and so on – the sensations are crazy. I have also worked hard on my backside riding because I feel I can get more power in manoeuvres at the top of the wave. Stand up paddle really offers a lot of possibilities, whatever the conditions, and I never get tired of it.



Does this pretty radical approach have something to do with your kitesurfing background?

All I do in SUP comes from surfing, which gave me good base for stand up. Both sports have the same roots and work the same way, except the paddling part.

Do you continue to surf?

Yes, I try to keep surfing often at home when it is good, it gives me a different feeling from kite or SUP, which I ride a with a more professional approach. Surfing, for me, is just for fun – pure personal stoke. I also do a little windsurfing. It's nice and I have a lot to learn, I really like it. When there is a lot of wind and I can borrow a board and sail from a friend I don't hesitate.

Arthur Arutkin told me that you are a super active and always doing something the whole day and spending a lot of time in the water. Would you agree this statement?

Yes, I think it's probably true! I love being in the water, I feel so comfortable in it. It's my natural element. I really think my life is in the water. If I stay too long out of the water I start to get a little crazy. It's not a joke! Even when there is no wind and no waves I paddle my SUP race board. I like to go for miles and miles. I love the feeling. I would probably never be a real SUP-racer myself, but I use it for cardio training – it's better than being locked in a gym, don't you think.

I would probably never be a real SUP-racer myself, but I use it for cardio training

What does a typical day look like when you're at home?

In Cape Verde, my normal day begins very early in the morning. I try to go for a shortboard session at dawn and then I go back in SUPing for another two hours. When the wind increases I go kitesurfing and then go back to SUP when the wind drops in the evening. I don't really have a lot of time to get bored with all these different sports.

You seem to have pretty much the same approach as Kai Lenny. Is he the kind of athlete that inspires you?

How can anyone not be inspired by such a complete and talented rider? We did a lot of SUP together in Hawaii a few years ago. He is really impressive in big waves and has a crazy style. I learned a lot with him. There is also another Hawaiian rider who inspires me. Zane Schweitzer has a really new school approach and does a lot of tricks. I like the way he surfs, it's very progressive and radical.

When you go in the water do you think about training and focus on specific technical aspects?

It depends but I generally try to work on something.

How would you describe the potential of Cape Verde and more precisely your island of Sal, for SUP riding?

This place is famous in windsurf and kitesurf circles but not so well known for surfing and even more so for SUP. Only a few guys practice it regularly. There are different reef breaks and we often have some great wave conditions, especially in the morning. It's important for me to represent my island, I'm proud of my origins and I love bringing other SUP riders to discover it. Zane (Schweitzer) sent me a message the other day and seems really motivated to come here – it could be fun.



Is there a young generation of local riders coming up?

A few kids are ripping and getting better. I really try to encourage them, give them advice and I hope to be a good influence on them. I have a nephew who is 14 and wants to be exactly like me. He spends a lot of time in the water and trains super hard, he's going to be very good I think. I really hope to see more guys coming through but in Cape Verde it's not always easy.

How can you describe what travelling brings to your approach?

Kitesurf and SUP allows me to meet many different people and to go to many different places, it is impressive when I think about it. I feel all these travels teach me a lot and help me to grow as a man, becoming more and more aware.

What are your favourite destinations you've travelled to?

I love Bali and Indonesia, it's really magical out there and the waves are so perfect! Another place is Mauritius. I go there every year and I think I will never get tired of it. The landscapes are beautiful, the people are so friendly and kite or SUP conditions are always amazing. One Eye, on the Le Morne peninsula, is certainly one of my favourite waves. It's perfect and so intense.

What about Hawaii, is that a standout for you?

I have been to Oahu. It is very special and the atmosphere is unique – the mecca for surfing. Last time I went it was good but really big. It's intense but a little bit frustrating when you cannot do any manoeuvres. You make big drops on huge walls and try to keep control and have the right line at full speed. I was the only rider with a small board (8'0) while everyone else had semi guns around 9'0 or 10'0. I also love Maui. I find the potential for SUP there is even bigger because there are fewer people. There is an incredible level out there, the world's best SUP riders live on the island. It's always good to surf in Maui.

Do you often think about future? How do you imagine your life in 10 years?

I hope to be in Sal with a wife and children playing. I could have stopped doing the competitions but I would love to keep being a free-rider, do some trips, and make videos... I also wish I could travel with my family, show them the world while sharing unforgettable experiences together. That would be nice.

What are your goals this season? Do you any new plans?

I really want to become kitesurf world champion again. In SUP I want to compete in more big international events and do my best to get on the podium! One thing is sure: I will always give it 100% because I don't know any other way.

Tony Bain



SUP knowledge –

Pretty Darn Funny (PFD use in SUP)

I'm an instructor of SUP. I don't really have a choice: I have to lead by example. That is what I have been taught to teach. To put in front of others information so that they may soak it up correctly, assimilate it, take it on board and add it to their own knowledge and fit it to their own technique.

As I prepare to take my groups for SUP instruction I always ask people if they can swim. Why? So I know if they can't. I need to know this as a precaution so I can identify those who might have problems if they end up in the water. This is, after all, a watersport.

It is a standard requirement of the learning session that my insurance company asks me to limit the risk of drowning by providing PFDs for my activity participants. Usually there is someone in the group that asks: "What does PDF stand for?" I typically reply: "Pretty Darn Fun" and smile. "Did you mean to say PFD?" I guess it is my sense of humour (the abbreviation stands for Personal Floatation Device – just to clarify!).

Whenever I take a group out for a lesson I give my students a Personal Floatation Device. Yep, a float coat, buoyancy aid or whatever else you want to call it. A lot of paddle boarders don't wear them, don't like them and won't wear them. Some say they can't get back on their board with one on while others think they look uncool.

Most SUP paddlers think they are on surfboards and they don't need extra float. There are real reasons why surfers and SUP surfers don't wear PFDs in waves (not being able to dive beneath swell for instance). When it comes to flat water paddling, general safety comes into play. Better to be safe than sorry and all that. When you get in a car everyone buckles up with seat belts – same deal in an aeroplane. Why's that? Maybe you're going to be sucked out a window or thrown from your seat in turbulence. You don't have a choice on a plane, it's the airline's policy so we all comply.

What I'm getting at, is that in main facets of our day to day lives, safety is built in. We're



required to do something limiting harm that may come to us. Seat belts in cars, on planes, some trains and buses. Traffic and pedestrian lights on roads telling us when it's safe to proceed is another example. Why is it then when we go SUP paddling on our local canal, river or lake and we ignore common sense by not wearing a PFD?

The lake where I operate from is part of a national park and they have in place a risk assessment and to limit the number of water incidents that may occur. This risk assessment requires a PFD is to be worn while on or near the water. They have signs on all the public access beaches to tell people of this requirement. This is a common trend across the country; all centres that offer water activities require participants wear a PFD. Most major water estate managers and owners insist. Not just to protect themselves from any legal action, but also to show duty of care towards their customers.

So why do we really wear PFDs? All anyone wants is for you to stay afloat, enjoy your experience at each location and ensure you want to come back again to do the same thing next time. A PFD stops your head from going under water.



Tony Bain is owner and operator of Green Dragon Activities. A qualified SUP instructor Tony is also the Fastest Local Bog snorkeller (20 secs off the world record) and the holder of the World Bathtubbing record for 100 metres in a time of 1 min 26.41 secs. Find out more at www.greendragonactivities.co.uk

Some people use the term BA (Buoyancy Aid). Technically this is correct. Other people use the term life jacket. However, a life jacket won't save your life. It will help you float, aid your buoyancy and is a device that improves floatation, but it will not save your life.

So why do people question wearing a PFD when they go on the water? That's an interesting one. We see amazing pictures of people on boards in the middle of an ocean or a mountain lake at gorgeous water locations around the world. The various brands are trying to promote a world of wellness, fitness, freedom and a healthier lifestyle. I'm up for that for sure. But at what cost?

As the numbers of people grow that are trying out SUP and other water activities so the number of opportunities arises of educated people getting into trouble. It doesn't happen to everyone, and it may never to some. A lot of people are taking lessons with an instructor and then given a Ready to Ride certificate. Some SUP Schools say you can get your certificate in two hours and you're good to go. Many don't even bother with a school; they just go online and buy a board after seeing an advertisement for SUP in a magazine.

Thinking that it's just so cool, standing on a board in the middle of a lake in a gorgeous location – that's got to be a great way of tapping into a healthier lifestyle? Guys in boardshorts and cute ladies in bikinis. It's a sunny day and the water is crystal clear – so clear you can see the fish and gorgeous white sandy bottom a

few metres below – you all know the type of image I'm speaking of.

Our online purchaser lives in the UK, his paddle locations aren't as warm or sunny. Deep, cold lakes with murky water, where seeing the bottom is a real treat. Shallow rocky, cold, mountain fed rivers and windswept coastlines. (We all experience sublime days paddling but there are plenty of SUP sessions with less than idyllic conditions). He picks up his paddle and board and heads for the lake. No leash, no PFD and no adequate protection for when the weather turns – basically no idea.

I'm not sure why people want to tell me of their near misses that have occurred but they do – most completely avoidable. SUP isn't a classified craft or vessel in the UK (yet), however, the USA, NZ and a few other countries have already done this. This law and local bylaws requires an approved personal buoyancy aid or PFD is either attached to the vessel/craft or worn by the operator of the vessel/craft.

Your board is not a personal floatation device. It is a floatation device but as it's not attached to your personal body it therefore won't keep your head and body above the water. It can't help you float if you were to fall into the water and become separated from it.

What a PFD does do is keep you floating on or near the surface, so that someone else can see you, move in to help and remove you from a life threatening situation as quickly and efficiently as possible. Food for thought...





DEEPEST. DARKEST. DORSET.



Training for SUP:



A primer

Words: Bryce Dyer

Photos: Dave White



According to ancient Greek legend, sometime back in the 6th century, a wrestler named Milos of Croton arguably created one of the very first training programmes for sport. Milos trained by carrying a newborn calf on his back every day until it was fully-grown. By the end of it, the calf was apparently a cow and Milos (if he was still able to even stand) was a much stronger man for it. Whilst carrying livestock around may not be particularly sensible, what this legend tells us is that you can improve your physical abilities by structuring your training. However, even if showering in champagne and climbing podium steps to rapturous applause is not your thing, training programmes are ultimately intended to make your paddling swifter, easier and hopefully with a greater chance of success



So let's say you want to train for a SUP event – how can we do this?

I like to look at an athlete's best chances of success as the foundation of a building built upon five strong pillars. Without these pillars, the building is unsteady and you'll either fall apart, break down or just fail to go any higher. These five basic pillars of training are:

- Specificity
- Overload
- Recovery
- Progression
- Consistency

In layman's terms, specificity means that your training should be specific to the needs of the event you're training for. When you watch a film like 'Rocky IV' (with Stallone carrying trees and jogging through knee-high snow), it wasn't because he had aspirations of being world winter sports tree carrying champion. It was because he'd felt that those particular exercises would maximise the functional strength and endurance needed in his boxing. In addition, an Olympic track cyclist (who may only race for just 3-4 minutes) will still often train for four hours or more – just to develop their aerobic engine as much as possible. In other words, you identify what you need and then design a programme to provide it.

Overload means that you subject your body to a little more physical stimulus than it is used to. This might mean a paddling session is a little longer or harder or it might mean that the training you've done over the last few weeks is a little harder or greater than what you were doing before. It ultimately means that the training session should provide some form of controlled physical stress.

Recovery though, is the key bit. Contrary to what you might think, you don't get fitter or faster by training. Instead, you actually get the gains when you're not really doing very much (i.e. sleeping and resting). Put simply, you push your body's engine or muscles and they come back stronger or become more efficient. This is known as 'supercompensation'. If you ditch your recovery or rest days, all you're going to do is to get tired or injured. I often see athletes enter a downward spiral whereby they don't improve so they feel the best resolution is to train even harder until eventually (depressed and despondent), they give up or (or for the more stubborn), consistently underperform. The reality is often that all they needed was a little more rest.

The next pillar is that any training plan requires progression. Your body will get used to what you're throwing at it so if you don't keep applying some form of change to your plan, you're going to get used to it and the improvements will stop. I often find people have a favourite session that they like to do every week but the reality is that its gains will typically stagnate in around six weeks if you don't change things. How do we do this? To progress your workouts, you do have some options. These are:

- Increasing your effort
- Reducing any interval recovery
- Lengthening the interval/session duration
(but not all of these at once!).

The final important bit is consistency. It's no good putting in a bar bragging six-hour paddle if you don't keep the training going. You need your sessions to be backed up week after week. Continually skipping or being erratic with your training will ultimately block your potential.

There is one final aspect (that is more of a piece of advice than an essential component of training) and it is one surrounding the act of patience. Six months before both the 2012 and the 2016 Olympic Games, GB's cyclists was getting consistently well beaten in the velodrome. On the big day though, they nailed it and won gold having seemed pretty average a few months prior. In other words, keep your training discipline in place, stick to the sessions you had planned and don't let your ego get in the driving seat ahead of your goal. Give the plan time to take effect and don't panic.

So let's say, you've decided to train for a SUP distance race, how do we do this? To support this we need the use of metrics and measures to help tell us how hard we are working. There are several ways to measure your paddling workout intensity. These are:

- Heart Rate
- Perceived exertion
- Stroke rate
- Time/Speed

Commercial heart rate monitors have been around since the early 1990s. They are now relatively inexpensive and once you have conducted some testing, you can define a series of training zones to help prescribe your training. It's generally accurate enough but it can be significantly influenced by your level of hydration and quality of nutrition on any given day, your mental state or by changing your equipment or paddling technique.





Borg's 'rate of perceived exertion'

- 0 Nothing at all (you're still in bed aren't you?)
- 1 Very weak
- 2 Weak
- 3 Moderate
- 4 Somewhat strong
- 5 Strong
- 6
- 7 Very strong
- 8
- 9
- 10 Extremely strong (you're about to self-destruct)



In addition, the calculation of training zones can be contentious (with '220 minus your age' being a popular, if not inaccurate means of doing so). Alternatively you can determine your lactate threshold heart rate (LTHR) to set your zones. To find your LTHR, I recommend using a test proposed by well-known endurance coach Joe Friel who advocates a 30-minute time trial on your own. This test should be as hard as you can sustainably go for its full duration. However, 10 minutes into the test, click the 'lap' button on your heart rate monitor. When you're done, look to see what your average heart rate was for the last 20 minutes. That number is a rough approximation of your LTHR and we can set training intensities based upon that. I often use short races to double for the test.

Alternatively, perceived exertion relies more on your subjective ability to gauge how hard (or not) you are working. The most well-known of these is what is known as Borg's 'rate of perceived exertion' (RPE). Borg's RPE is a 1-10 scale (with '1' being little more than corpse up to '10' being that of you resembling the Incredible Hulk in full rampage mode). *Reproduced on the left.*

In rowing or kayaking circles, it's not unusual to also use stroke rate as a training metric. Published research tells us that in a variety of paddle sports, as we increase our speed, we also have a tendency to increase our stroke rate. As a result, we can prescribe training sessions based upon this. The risk is that a tiring paddler may start to employ an inefficient paddling style – just to maintain the targeted stroke rate (and this is

increasingly likely in longer paddles). For new or developing paddlers (whose technique is still improving), I wouldn't recommend its use. For those with a few seasons under their belt though, it's a viable gauge but I recommend you correlate your stroke rate against another metrics (like your heart rate) to set any zones initially.

Finally, we have use of the good old clock. Average speed or time is the backbone of many sports. These don't work for SUP so well though as water flow or weather can change hourly and really affect our performance. As a result, keeping an eye on speed is useful but having collated 3 years of my own data, I can honestly tell you that changes in weather will often swamp any improvements you may think you are making. By the way, on this subject I generally prescribe the total duration of my training session by time, not by distance for the same reasons. The weather and waterstate can really affect your speed so prescribing, say a 10km paddle could see a difference in time of 15 minutes if things aren't going your way. That extra 15 minutes could cook you and destabilise your training for the rest of the week.

So with all of this in mind, let's show an example of a programme for an event that is typical of distance racing (i.e. an event of 60-90 minutes in duration) and held on flattish water. This is a 12-week plan that you can start a few months out from your chosen event. This plan is suited to an intermediate paddler who is likely to have raced before, can paddle three times a week but hasn't used any formal structure.



	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	Rest	45 mins @ 70% LTHR (RPE 3) with 10 secs @ Max (RPE 8+) every 5 mins	Rest	3x 10 mins @ 90-94% LTHR (RPE 3-4). 5 min rest between each interval	Rest	60 mins @ 80% LTHR (RPE 3-4)	Rest
2	Rest	50 mins @ 70% LTHR (RPE 3) with 10 secs @ Max (RPE 8+) every 5 mins	Rest	3x 10 mins @ 90-94% LTHR (RPE 3-4). 5 min rest between each interval	Rest	70 mins @ 80% LTHR (RPE 3-4)	Rest
3	Rest	55 mins @ 70% LTHR (RPE 3) with 15 secs @ Max (RPE 8+) every 5 mins	Rest	2x 15 mins @ 90-94% LTHR (RPE 3-4). 5 min rest between each interval	Rest	70 mins @ 80% LTHR (RPE 3-4)	Rest
4	Rest	60 mins @ 70% LTHR (RPE 3) with 15 secs @ Max (RPE 8+) every 5 mins	Rest	2x 20 mins @ 90-94% LTHR (RPE 3-4). 5 min rest between each interval	Rest	70 mins @ 80% LTHR (RPE 3-4)	Rest
5	Rest	60 mins @ 70% LTHR (RPE 3) with 20 secs @ Max (RPE 8+) every 5 mins	Rest	2x 20 mins @ 90-94% LTHR (RPE 3-4). 5 min rest between each interval	Rest	80 mins @ 80% LTHR (RPE 3-4)	Rest
6	Rest	Retest LTHR. 15 minute warm up then the 30 minute maximal paddle time trial. Adjust training zones based on results.	Rest	8x1 min@105% LTHR (RPE 7) with 1 min rest	Rest	70 mins @ 80% LTHR (RPE 3-4)	Rest
7	Rest	10x1 min@105% LTHR (RPE 7) with 1 min rest	Rest	3x10 mins @ 100% LTHR (RPE 4-5). 5 min rest between each interval	Rest	80 mins @ 80% LTHR (RPE 3-4)	Rest
8	Rest	12x1 min@105% LTHR (RPE 7) with 1 min rest	Rest	3x13 mins @ 100% LTHR (RPE 4-5). 5 min rest between each interval	Rest	80 mins @ 80% LTHR (RPE 3-4)	Rest
9	Rest	4x20 sec sprints with 5 min rest between each one then 7x2 min@105% LTHR (RPE 7) with 2 min rest	Rest	2x20 mins @ 100% LTHR (RPE 4-5). 5 min rest between each interval	Rest	85 mins @ 80% LTHR (RPE 3-4)	Rest
10	Rest	4x30 sec sprints with 5 min rest between each one then 8x2 min@105% LTHR (RPE 7) with 2 min rest	Rest	2x20 mins @ 100% LTHR (RPE 4-5). 5 min rest between each interval	Rest	90 mins @ 80% LTHR (RPE 3-4)	Rest
11	Rest	4x30 sec sprints with 5 min rest between each one then 8x2 min@105% LTHR (RPE 7) with 2 min rest	Rest	2x20 mins @ 100% LTHR (RPE 4-5). 5 min rest between each interval	Rest	90 mins @ 80% LTHR (RPE 3-4)	Rest
12	Rest	4x30 sec sprints with 5 min rest between each one then 10x1 minute @ max (RPE 7+) with 1 min rest	Rest	3x10 mins @ 100% LTHR (RPE 4-5). 5 min rest between each interval	Check all gear	Race	Race



Disclosures. Always consult with your doctor/physician/significant other before you ever start any kind of a training plan. Secondly, listen to your body. I use detailed software that tells me exactly what physical shape I'm in but the reality is that it's all too easy to lose sight of the most powerful and intuitive computer system you already own – i.e. your head. Don't disconnect from it. Finally, any plan is no substitute for good coaching. A good coach is someone who can create a tailored plan for you personally but crucially is able to respond when things aren't going so well and can work with you directly to get the best out of you overall. Many can throw a plan together but good coaching is a real skill. Finally - don't wear a calf on your back. It won't make you a better paddler.

Dr Bryce Dyer has a PhD in Sports Technology, was truly awful at most sports at school (aside from a single freak discus throw at aged 15 that he referred to as a 'hand of god' moment) and has since placed nationally in his age group in 6 completely different sports. He is now a team paddler for Naish UK.

It works off the assumption that you can paddle a couple of times in the week for an hour and then a longer paddle at the weekend. Just to clarify how to read it – if the schedule says '30 mins @ 90-94% LTHR (RPE 3-4)', this means that you do 30 minutes in at 90-94% of your lactate threshold heart rate value. If you do not use a heart rate monitor, this is also equivalent to a Borg scale 3-4 effort.

Some key points for you:

- Always have a warm up and cool down before every session. A very easy 10-15 mins paddling before you start will get your body primed and up to temperature.
- The order of these sessions is intentional. The higher intensity session takes place first in your week. Don't mix this order up as you won't get the best out of it.
- The first few weeks have an emphasis on increasing your raw abilities you'll need but the emphasis shifts in the last few weeks towards a greater level of event specificity.
- If for any reason you feel tired or you can't hit the intensity in a session, cut it short and go home (or make it an easy paddle).
- If illness or life gets in the way, take the time out and just pick the plan up from where you left it once you are well. Don't jump ahead or try to play catch up with what you missed.



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Moroccan vibes — Dave Adams'

Morocco has traditionally, and still remains, a hangout for wave riders wanting a more relaxed and hippy-esque trip. Not to say that modern luxuries can't be found – they can, in fact.

But the Moroccan surf experience is extremely chilled out and harks back to a time when anything goes in pursuit of legging burning long point break rides. Dave Adams is no stranger to SUPM. When he recently took yet another trip to Morocco, doing things in his own quirky way (as is usual for anyone who knows Dave), we were intrigued to hear his colourful tales. Read on to learn more about Dave's right hand wave paradise – made all the more unique by his choice of piloting an inflatable touring SUP..



It's no secret that Morocco is an amazing surf location with incredible right hand point breaks all along its coast. It's a surf nirvana to say the least, which keeps drawing me back year after year. But it's not just the surf though! Morocco has something that other holiday destinations just don't possess. A sort of non-stop festival atmosphere permeates – one that seeps into your blood and is hard to resist. Almost as if Michael Eavis took the idea of Morocco and started Glastonbury Festival off the back of it).

Of course, unless you mingle with the locals and do things the Moroccan way, you just may miss it. The long drum sessions that beat in time with the pounding sea, as you breathe in the Moroccan smells and taste

the distinct flavours, make it such a unique destination. There is a familiar maritime feel to the whole area, not too different to the west coast of the UK. You see the same friendly faces year after year, welcoming you back into their houses for a Tajine or inviting you out for the evening surf session, where you can benefit from local knowledge and get the best waves.

Anchor and Killer Point

The coast is huge so it's worth deciding exactly which part of the country you're going to which will also determine how you're travel arrangements will be. Most people fly but of course there are always a few vans pottering around, most of them getting to Morocco via ferry from Spain.

miles of glides



Easiest option is to plane it to Agadir and hit the world famous breaks of Anchor and Killer Point. I usually fly to Marrakech and spend a day or two there to get into the swing of things. It takes a while before you're properly into the flow.

From Marrakech the closest bit of coast, and one of the loveliest places in Morocco, is Essaouira. Essaouira is also a windsurfer's paradise with a perfect crescent shaped bay and almost constant cross shore F3-4. The Island of Mogador shelters the beach so not much swell gets in to the northern end – perfect for flat water paddling. There is a classic sand bottom point break off the southern tip which is hidden from the northerly winds, surfed by only a few, myself included.

Imsouane

For more consistent waves it's best to head south. I usually stay at Imsouane. The spot has an amazingly long right hander that can be ridden for well over half a mile and is sheltered from the prevailing northerly. It does have huge rips though especially on big spring tides, which can make the whole spot unmanageable for the less experienced. So as usual, worth getting a bit of local knowledge from the super friendly local crew. There is also a typical beach break on the other side of the village but it's the right that's the real draw.

A classic reeling point locally known as The Bay and is best (in my opinion) ridden on a longboard or bigger! My weapon of choice is a 14-foot Starboard Astro inflatable. For

Words and pics:

Dave Adams and Wendy Queralt



somebody my size and weight, 6'3" and 15-stone, the 14-footer is ideal and it even enables me to take my own gear without added baggage charges. Everything I need for the day, out in overhead chunky waves. No need to leave your towel and sandals on the beach, just take them with you!

To get a 14-foot cruising SUP into a vertical overhead drop, you really need to paddle hard down the face to get the board to release. It took a few waves to remember that! I got thrown over the falls on the first couple of attempts and then it all came back to me. Paddle like a Kahuna on the drop and you'll make it, by the seat of your pants, but you'll come charging down the line after a sketchy take off just holding your edge through bottom turn. Epic fun! After that you can start lining yourself up for almost endless sections, sometimes hollower and bigger as it breaks further inside the bay.

On the other side of the village is the beach which will usually be about twice the size of the point and is far more suited to smaller gear. A nice right breaks in the northern corner called Cathedral Point and does see some shelter from northerlies too, especially at higher tide.

Amazing food

When I was not getting half mile long rides in the bay I would just hang out all day in between surfs at my favourite café. The whole place is set up for surf/cafe culture. I would meet Hassim at 7:30am in the morning and he would look after my belongings, serve coffee with amazing food – breakfast lunch and dinner – all for around twelve quid per day. Wow! I gave the guy a twenty pound tip at the end of the week, which when you add it all up is still amazing value. £20 is about two day's wages so he was made up.

If you want a hassle free paddle surf trip with culture, amazing food and music plus a happy vibe in warm sunshine all within a three hour flight, Morocco is hard to beat. I will keep returning year after year. It's got something for everyone. Even if you're not into the glide and don't even get wet, you'll still be mesmerised by the colours and smells and the friendly atmosphere. Add a few waves of perfection into the mix and you've got the perfect surf holiday destination.

Thanks to Nick Watt at the SUP Store for supplying the Astro 14.

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BLUE ASPIRATION

Behind the brand Starboard's Svein Rasmussen

Words: Svein Rasmussen

Pics: Starboard

There's a perception that big company heads aren't always willing to put themselves 'out there'. And while in some cases this is correct it's not the case here. In SUPM's latest behind the brand article, we go straight to the horse's mouth of stand up paddle board (and windsurf) equipment manufacturing giant Starboard's Svein Rasmussen.

One day in 1976 I saw a pic of Matt Schweitzer (SUP surf World Champ Zane Schweitzer's father) in a National Geo mag. He was windsurfing on a beautiful lake with a gorgeous girl. That pic changed my life and I dreamed about windsurfing over the next two years while saving cash for a board by delivering the local Norwegian newspaper Agderposten.

I went to the LA Olympics in 1984 and won a few world titles over a 15-year backpacking journey around the world. Suddenly in 1994 I was the oldest person on the windsurf pro tour and my friend Tor Bakke hinted that it was time to become more serious, so I moved to Thailand with my savings of US\$ 10,000 and set up Starboard, which seven years later became a world leader in windsurfing.

In 1999 my father started to paddle with a long canoe paddle on a windsurf board at our little lake in Thailand. I asked him what he was doing and why? He said that he paddled around looking at nature and spotting fish. Six years later during a trip to Maui I saw paddle boarding (proper) developing as a pioneering activity on the island. This was the second big 'glimpse' of 'something' in my life. I loved paddle boarding from the start and simply could not stop thinking about it – just as with windsurfing.

I always liked to improve my gear while on the pro windsurf tour. I used this knowledge to develop Starboard's windsurf range. With SUP we could do it all again. And with all that accumulated knowledge of shapes and technology I was like a kid in a candy store – everything was possible and we created stuff that today is mainstream. But those days were total breakthroughs in terms of technology and shapes.



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The 21st Century

SUP heroes

Every day is my best SUP memory – endless sunsets and sunrises, downwinders and at times catching a few waves when the possibility is there. My SUP heroes are my father, Connor Baxter and Zane Schweitzer – they keep me inspired and wanting to paddle more.

My idea of fun is to come up with a concept as part of the team, build it in the workshop and test it a few days later, combining some amazing conditions with new gear experiences. We sort of have Christmas Eve every week here. Ideas come from everywhere – a beginner at the beach, a shop employee, a pro rider or a designer. Then the task is to refine those ideas and make sure that it one day is totally polished and ready for production.



In the early days few people expected that SUP would become the next big thing, but as soon as we got those sceptics out for a sunset paddle, they realised the powerful combination of nature, the sport element and on water sensation is what makes SUP special. It's a wonderful merge of meditation, activity, technology, technique and amazing natural exploration all at once.

During the early days it was fun to bring the sport to lots of countries. We even introduced SUP to already well versed watersports territories like Western Australia. Our friend at Red Paddle Co, John Hibbard, pretty much introduced Starboard and paddle boarding to the UK when he was on our international team – great memories.

Chief innovator

My title is Chief Innovator, and my life is drilling into every little part of our organisation, trying to make it better. Starboard is a product driven company so I spend most of my time driving the product development and environmental strategies together with our British product manager Ollie O'Reilly. We have been ahead of the curve in terms of shapes and technology and often create what we call 100% market share, meaning the first year there simply is no similar product in the market. Marketing and sales often suffer at the hands of our product driven philosophy but hopefully long term we see a great product outweighing a smart sales and marketing campaign.

Inflatables are popular due to transport and storage, but even more so as it's been a well marketed concept. There are now lots of people who walk into stores of retailers offering only inflatable boards in the entry level segment. For shops it's easy to store inflatable boards, so somehow this technology receives more market share than it deserves at the current development stage in terms of durability and performance. So far it has not been possible to shape any rail or bottom



contours, so paddlers ride boards that are wider, slower and curvier than they need. They're also tippier than necessary which reduces the positive aspects of paddling. We are working on ways to improve the basic concepts and will for 2018 introduce new technologies, but for now boards like the new GO is an exciting step up for paddlers that have enough storage space and are looking for a better experience.

Carbon footprint

Moving forward we have one goal: to help lead the watersports industry towards being 'less bad and more good'. How can we reduce our carbon footprint, motivate people to pick up trash and invest into re-forestation? We are a small company and this enables us to make radical changes within and set exciting goals for immediate execution. As a premium brand in windsurfing and paddle boarding we want to share and promote the view that: 'purpose is the new luxury'.

We want to build lighter, stronger and more durable gear from recycled and bio-materials, showcasing that there is more intelligence ahead and future generations really can prosper through up-cycling. We invite people to live a Deep Blue Life, something you can read more about on [Star-board.blue](#), our environmental site. On that site we also share our board and company carbon footprint.

In the UK the carbon footprint per capita used to be 11.2 ton in back in 1960. That's been reduced to 7.1 ton. This is a very significant improvement but can we go

further? When we sell a board we plant a Mangrove tree, which over 20 years absorbs up to one ton of CO2, so by voting with your wallet you can help set a trend of re-foresting the planet.

Mangrove Coin

These days forests are still losing, our planet is still losing, so it's important that each of us make small changes and contributions to create a shift towards seeing the planet winning. We are looking at supporting the Mangrove Coin introduction. A new currency backed by a natural blockchain. How would it be to trade knowing that for each coin coming into circulation there is a mangrove tree planted?

We paddle boarders who really appreciate and understand the value of nature can support movements like this. Who would not rather buy a board with Mangrove coins than US\$ transactions? It's a matter of how we vote with our wallet and which systems we endorse. We live in a society where the consumer has more power than ever, so let's use our votes consciously every day we go shopping.

Our most popular gear are touring and all round boards, while our largest market share is within the wave and race boards market. We are in the premium segment and we often talk about 100% market share. This phenomenon appears each time we introduce a new niche to paddle boarding or a new technology. It's these breakthroughs that moves the brand forward. We are not a good marketing or sales arm. Our interest lies in making really good gear and seeing it available years ahead of the competition.





Thanks

Thanks to Ollie O'Reilly for driving our awesome eco board projects and our partners Parley, SUP Kids, Sustainable Surf, Watertrek and Arne Fjoertoft at the Thor Heyerdahl Mangrove Park.

Last year we spent half of our net income on environmental causes, so this is obviously where our other interest is cemented.

For 2018 we are introducing a lot of new exciting shapes, technologies and concepts. It's too early to release this info now but we can say that the patented Airline technology we introduce in our inflatable offering will mean the boards flex about 50% less and rotate the perception of inflatables – let's leave all the other 2018 stuff until release in Sept this year.

Most weekends we will test race boards at our test centre at Wongamat Beach, Thailand. It's brilliant for downwinders. Half the weekend is SUP with the other half being windsurfing. I easily get 4-5 water hours a day to check out prototype shapes and technologies.

Our home is at Taco Lake close to Bangkok. This is also where we also have our office so I will paddle to work on one of the new GO boards. They're the most stable/fast hard boards in our 2018 lineup. Once in a while I will join Ollie O'Reilly for a trip to test wave boards in Bali or Maui, but he gets most of that fun.

Inflatable boards and their evolution is very interesting so I'm also paddling new types that are simply much faster than any other in our range. These will be released in August. Long slender waterlines are preferred for less friction.

Exciting changes

SUP gear in general has a very long way to go. Kit needs to become lighter, more durable and shapes need to improve drastically. We are still vaguely uneducated and over the next 10 years we may see some real exciting changes. I had the same discussion with my Norwegian friends in 1980 when we asked ourselves if windsurf boards could get any better.

Most of all, we need to reduce the carbon footprint and find ways to recycle boards and bring down the price. A new 2017 Volvo costs the same as the 2001 model Volvo I drive today, whereas board prices have escalated quite a bit, so yes, we need to figure out ways to become more efficient.

My dream destination is Dawei, Myanmar. There is no accommodation available other than tents and fishermen's shacks so you will not meet many Earthlings there. All waves can be shared with friends and flat water areas have wonderful lagoons to explore. Paddling through the mangrove forest is magical and seeing 10,000 crabs crawling on the beach is quite something. When it comes to new locations in the early days I tried to be the first person to paddle board in various countries – that was a fun challenge.

My burning ambition, while living the most amazing life any person can imagine, is to make Starboard a truly useful company where short term profit comes second to creating a better tomorrow for all of us.





WIDE POINT



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Our partners for a deep-blue, sustainable future:



Wild education —



SUP curriculum with the School of Adventure Studies

Words: Joan McFadden

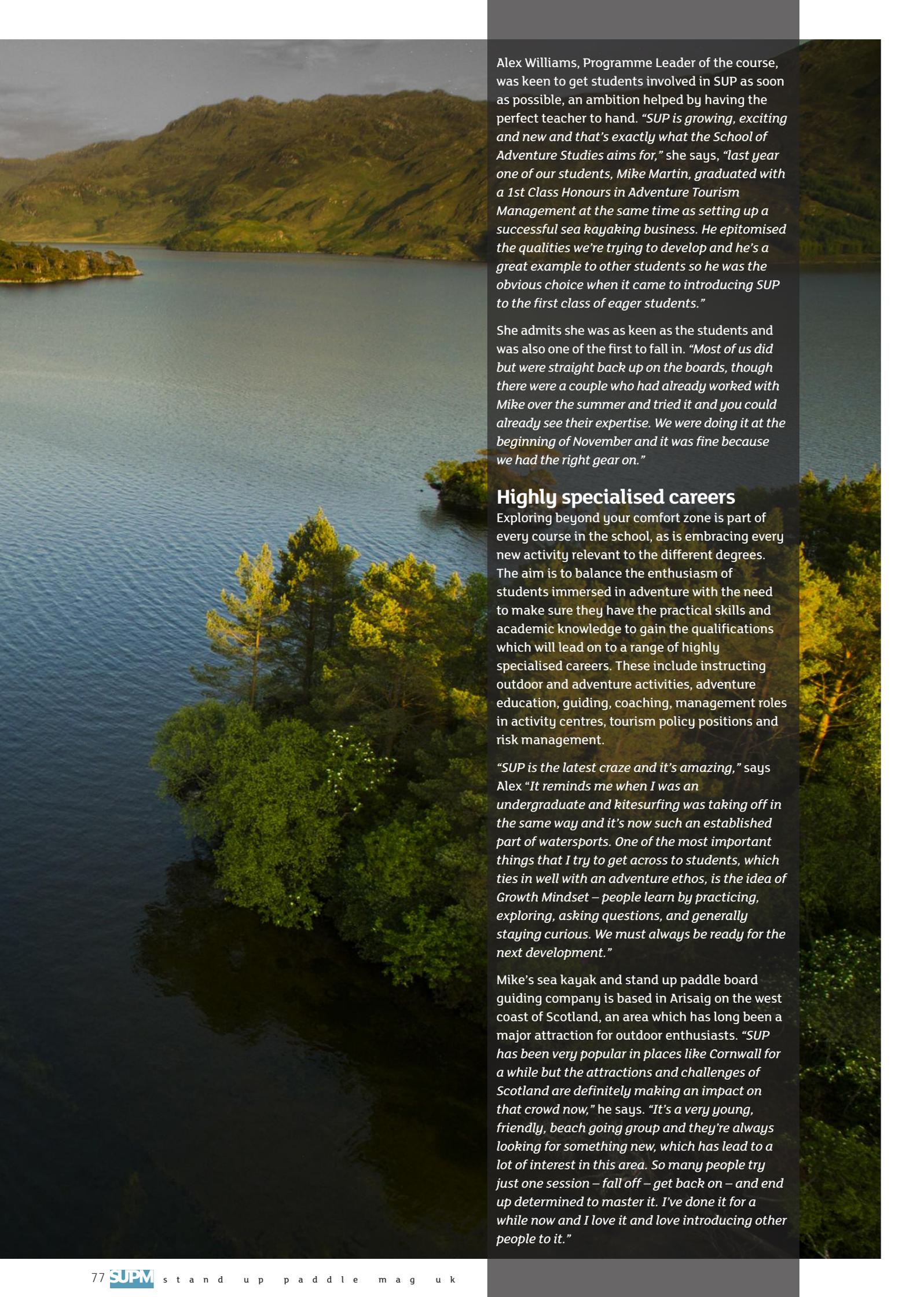
Pics: Arisaig Sea Kayak Centre

It's the 21st Century equivalent of taking to the highways and byways with a kerchief crammed only with vital possessions tied to a stick, except the road here is water. SUP boarding is everything you want it to be, including surfing, racing, sightseeing, getting close to nature and occasionally fishing. There are no age limits – if you're old enough to stand you can board – few fitness restrictions and it's renowned for its addictive popularity

Little wonder that it's now part of the curriculum in the BA (Hons) Marine and Coastal Tourism degree course at The School of Adventure Studies in Skye and Fort William. The school is unique in the UK as the only adventure tourism course where the students can literally step outdoors into the relevant place of study. The West Coast and Highlands of Scotland are wild, challenging and beautiful and lend themselves perfectly to those wanting to follow careers on water and outdoors







Alex Williams, Programme Leader of the course, was keen to get students involved in SUP as soon as possible, an ambition helped by having the perfect teacher to hand. *“SUP is growing, exciting and new and that’s exactly what the School of Adventure Studies aims for,”* she says, *“last year one of our students, Mike Martin, graduated with a 1st Class Honours in Adventure Tourism Management at the same time as setting up a successful sea kayaking business. He epitomised the qualities we’re trying to develop and he’s a great example to other students so he was the obvious choice when it came to introducing SUP to the first class of eager students.”*

She admits she was as keen as the students and was also one of the first to fall in. *“Most of us did but were straight back up on the boards, though there were a couple who had already worked with Mike over the summer and tried it and you could already see their expertise. We were doing it at the beginning of November and it was fine because we had the right gear on.”*

Highly specialised careers

Exploring beyond your comfort zone is part of every course in the school, as is embracing every new activity relevant to the different degrees. The aim is to balance the enthusiasm of students immersed in adventure with the need to make sure they have the practical skills and academic knowledge to gain the qualifications which will lead on to a range of highly specialised careers. These include instructing outdoor and adventure activities, adventure education, guiding, coaching, management roles in activity centres, tourism policy positions and risk management.

“SUP is the latest craze and it’s amazing,” says Alex *“It reminds me when I was an undergraduate and kitesurfing was taking off in the same way and it’s now such an established part of watersports. One of the most important things that I try to get across to students, which ties in well with an adventure ethos, is the idea of Growth Mindset – people learn by practicing, exploring, asking questions, and generally staying curious. We must always be ready for the next development.”*

Mike’s sea kayak and stand up paddle board guiding company is based in Arisaig on the west coast of Scotland, an area which has long been a major attraction for outdoor enthusiasts. *“SUP has been very popular in places like Cornwall for a while but the attractions and challenges of Scotland are definitely making an impact on that crowd now,”* he says. *“It’s a very young, friendly, beach going group and they’re always looking for something new, which has led to a lot of interest in this area. So many people try just one session – fall off – get back on – and end up determined to master it. I’ve done it for a while now and I love it and love introducing other people to it.”*



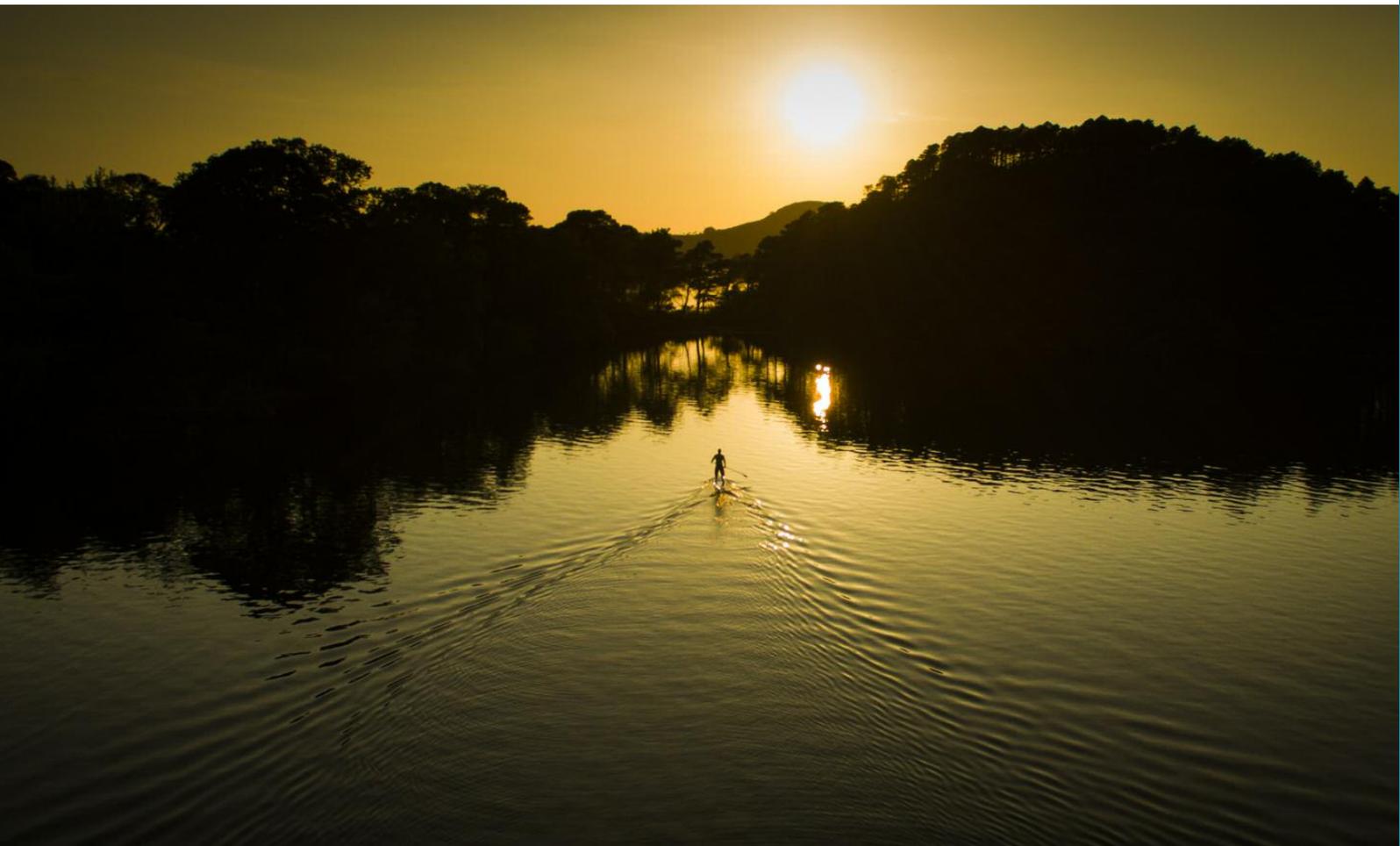
with the students from the school – but there's also the chance to just chill on your own. Around Arisaig there's a real mix of coasts and therefore an equal mix of experiences and when I'm doing it on my own it's completely different – very peaceful and special."

He paints a serene scene of slipping silently amongst seals and other wildlife, drifting effortlessly with the tide into sandy lagoons and alongside rocky outcrops, becoming one with nature. Moments later and he's all practicality, extolling the virtues of SUP as an unusual commuting mode which another School of Adventure Studies' lecturer, Carl Halberg, has down to a fine art.

Carl, in turn, makes it sound easy. "I SUP to work when it's calm. I used to live in Corpach, where I would walk down with my board from my house and put in at Corpach Basin and then paddle past Coul, over the river Lochy and into the college. The distance is about 2km. Now I live in Banavie, so I put my board in at the bottom of Neptune Staircase in the Caledonian Canal, paddle down the Canal to Corpach, nip over the bank onto the loch and repeat as before. There's something special about cruising towards Ben Nevis on your board early in the morning, sets you up nicely for the day." SUP is indeed exactly what you want it to be.

A whole new angle

He offers day and camping SUP trips and says it's a completely enchanting way of journeying around Scotland and discovering so many hidden inlets and deserted tiny coves. "Places like Tiree and Fife have a long reputation of offering that beach and surf combination, with amazing journeys between some breathtaking destinations," he says. "SUP gives you a whole new angle, a great platform for a really chilled out journey across the sea. You can have a laugh with your friends – and we had a ball



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The success pathway

becoming a SUP pro with Vinni Martins

Words and pics: Axel Reese

In this day and age there are plenty of SUP professionals and even more who aspire to become one. When stand up paddling first appeared in modern form (2005) there wasn't such a thing. Times change, however, as sports like SUP get bigger. Roving reporter Axel Reese caught up with one of JP Australia's team riders to discover what it takes to be a sponsored paddler.

Vinni Martins consistently places in the top group of SUP various races. He is part of team JP-Australia and participates in the whole Stand Up World Series (now part of the APP Tour).

Tell us a little about yourself.

I'm 20 years old, addicted to water sports, was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and have grown up on a peninsula close to Rio called Búzios – a paradise perfect for windsurfing, surfing, diving and fishing and one of the places where stand up paddle started in Brazil.

And then you just started competing on the SUP world tour?

Yes. I'd previously done one or two events, but never all of them. In 2016 I did the complete tour for the first time!



How do stand up paddlers attract sponsors?

It's a hard question! Finding sponsors is tricky – even more so in Brazil. Mainly because the SUP industry is not that big. There's a lot of talent out there it's just a case of searching. In my case I started travelling with some money I'd saved from races I'd won in Brazil. After nailing some good results in the USA the JP dealer from Florida started helping me. Afterwards I approached the international team and got super lucky.





You participate on the whole tour. Is that because of your sponsor JP that now gives you the opportunity?

Yes! Not only the world tour but most of the big races around the world. I also work with JP in the development of the boards. It's pretty cool to be part of because I learn a lot working with guys like Peter Bartl and JP's shaper Werner Gnigler.

We also see you riding waves. Is this your balance to racing?

Yes, I always go surfing when I can, and it for sure helps on the racing part, together with windsurfing and surfing.

How many hours per day do you put in on a SUP race board?

It depends on when and what my next race will be. If it's a regular 15km race or sprints I spend around two hours training, but when preparing for Molokai 2 Oahu, and other long distance races, these sessions can be over four hours. You have to put the time in but any time spent training has to be efficient.



Do you have a clear direction for reaching your goals; a sure fire way of getting there exactly?

I wish it was that clear and I knew exactly what to do! It's a little hard sometimes but I have a lot of help from my coach Marcelo Borges. He trained some of the best Brazilian triathletes and is now helping me with SUP.

Is it easier being a racer if you want to turn SUP pro?

For sure it's much easier to be a SUP professional if you are racing than if you are SUP surfing. But I was always more interested in racing than surfing anyway – I just love to challenge myself and other paddlers to see who crosses the line first. I really enjoy SUP surfing but I don't really like competing in it as a discipline.

Do any other physical workouts that compliment SUP race training?

I do a lot of cycling and running. When I have to rest my arms mainly. But I still work on cardio. Usually I reach for my bike more often than not.

Is SUP racing the most obvious discipline to get spectators involved?

It's so hard to showcase what SUP is to the public all at once, because it can have a lot of different, interesting forms. Everything from river SUP to SUP surf or downwinding. They are all different sides of this amazing sport, but for sure racing is a good way to present it to the general public. They just have to know that 's not the only form it can take!



Vinni's vitals

Born

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
23/04/1996

Weight

65kg

Height

172cm

Marital Status

Single

Education

High School

SUP since

I don't remember!

JP since

2015

How much do you use social media to promote stand up and your sponsors?

I always try to post a bit of what I'm doing with SUP on social media. I think I should give it a bit more time than I do. For 2017 I'm planning on doing some videos showing different sides of SUP.

And how can we picture your year with events, training and so on?

2016 was for sure a really good one. I've been to a lot of new places and competed a lot, but with so many races I didn't have a lot of time to prepare myself properly and I'm working on giving myself more time to train in 2017!

What does it take to be fast on a SUP board?

It takes a lot of hours on the water training, with good equipment, and good technique. For me some down time is also really key – you need a period of recuperation. If not you burn out.

What do you define as good technique?

The most important part of the stroke is the catch. Put the whole blade in the water before pulling. After that propelling yourself forward using the bigger muscles of your upper body is next, remembering not to pull the paddle too far back. Recovering the paddle from the water cleanly follows, ready for the next stroke. These are all key elements.

So how will you reach number one?

A bit more experience and making less mistakes! Also I think that I was not believing in myself. But after some really good performances I realised that I should have more confidence. I see myself (hopefully) winning some big races soon!



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SURF WIDE

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Flying the flag (for SUP)

Flag Beach, Fuerte, paddling



Words: Tez Plavenieks

Pics: Tez Plavenieks, Fi Plavenieks,
Flag Beach Watersports

For decades Fuerteventura has been a winter haven for surfers, windsurfers and more recently kitesurfers. Of late, however, there's a new breed of watersports enthusiast hitting the island: stand up paddlers.

All the Canary Islands enjoy a rep for world class waves but in addition, and something often overlooked, are the abundance of flat water paddling spots. Add in a healthy amount of downwind runs and what you end up with is an all round destination for paddling fun with off season sun in the mix.

But where to base yourself? For us, during a recent late winter trip, that decision was easy. Flag Beach Watersports has been a focal point on the island since the mid-80s. Ben Thomas set up the as then beach shack having discovered Flag Beach's windsurfing benefits. These days all manner of water baby make the pilgrimage to Flag with SUP being added in the last few years.





Flag itself, when not breezy, offers picture postcard paddling atop bubble gum blue water. If there's a degree of swell then reefs to the left, and in the middle of the bay, offer doable non-life threatening waves to hone skills.

Head across to Lobos Island in the (short) distance and more in the way of idyllic lagoons are available to cruise and/or practice a bit of Yoga if needs arise. Flag Beach Watersports' crew run tours across the channel with instructors/guides to ensure you enjoy your time on Lobos.

For anyone visiting the island then we'd suggest staying in and around Corralejo to maximise your brine time at Flag. A short drive, ten minute cycle or slightly longer stroll will have you at Flag's launch, primed and ready to go. With a choice of Fanatic SUPs and paddles there's everything available to get you up and running – beginners also welcome.

Further afield

During our stay we had a real mix of conditions. As is usual in winter there was plenty of swell. Wind was also a feature at times. Fortunately Ben allowed us to take stand up paddle gear offsite to hit alternative spots.

Just along the coast, back towards the centre of Corralejo town, is Rocky Point. RP is a serious wave at size, with bombs swooping onto the reef ledge and unloading quite a way out. With a solid pulse in the mix, and light onshores at the beginning of our trip, this was an easy choice for some fun wave riding. Add the fact Waikiki beach is a sandy toddler friendly spot, with Rockies just a short paddle downwind, and you couldn't ask for better.

Leaving the fam to frolic in the calm waters of the harbour sweeping towards Rocky Point allows familiarisation. When a big set swings in you can spot it looming miles out and stand in awe as it jacks and unloads right out back. For those fortunate enough to be in prime position then a long walling right or left rifles down the point. The right is better (the clue's in the name) although lefts can also open up and be good.

Having assessed the situation getting to the take off is pretty easy. Even though it's a relatively deep water reef you can still see the bottom at Rockies. And take it from me, if a big one unloads on your swede, or you stack a take off, then it's Davey Jones' Locker hunting you go, touching the reef in the process. That said, while you still need to be careful, injury is rare and Rocky Point is a pretty none life threatening spot to paddle surf. In fact, the walling swell is ideal for sweeping action. (Note: you can also paddle to the take off from the residential area directly in front of Rockies avoiding any white water).

Big swell

During the first few days of our stay winds were light and the swell was solid. Having been to Fuerte in the past I hadn't considered that with big surf the reefs inside the harbour can come alive. As such you may strike it lucky and discover this for yourself.

Although the Waikiki reefs were smaller than Rocky Point there was a still a fun waist to chest high wave to be nabbed. And while busy (to be expected with such close proximity to Corralejo town) the vibe in the water was relaxed with the majority of riders being paddlers – sit downs and stand ups.





Heading across to the widely known (and infamous) northern track put ins the swell was even bigger. Unfortunately there was breeze in the mix and most spots didn't look favourable for paddle surfing. A few locations offer shelter in the form of tidal lagoons with reef protecting from the relentless pounding of the Atlantic, but still being breezy this idea was abandoned in favour of Corralejo's coast, once again, where it wasn't as blowy.

Wind and more wind

As time wore on the Passat (local name for the NE wind) continued to increase with gusts becoming ever fiercer.

For those who fancy a spot of downwind paddling action there's certainly the option on Fuerte. And on a few occasions a number of paddlers could be seen from land cruising bumps past the harbour down to Flag.

If you fancy a bit of this then riders will need to take their own gear as we didn't spot any outlet offering the right equipment. Of course, you can downwind on any SUP (in theory) but for the types of bump you'll encounter in the Canaries a proper SUP, built for the job in hand, would be better.

For us, increasing gusts signalled the time to switch sports and windsurfing was the order of the day, again, well catered for by the Flag Beach centre. Those initial few days of SUP action had been cracking, however, and Fuerte as a SUP destination is certainly worth a look. If, like us, you want to combine disciplines then Flag Beach Watersports will certainly be able to sort you out. And with the Canaries being super easy to get to from the UK it's worth a punt whatever the time of year.

Big thanks to Ben Thomas and the Flag Beach Watersports crew who helped out with this article. Also a mention to Toby at HandiWorld who provided the awesome inflatable HandiRacks we used for transporting kit during our stay. For more info hit up www.flagbeach.com and www.handiworld.com



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Info:

http://www.fanatic.com/product_categories/paddles/



No two (or should that be three) SUP paddles are ever the same. And neither are rider, paddling style, SUP location, weather conditions or a SUPer's mood on the day. Add to the fact brands produce kit in subtly different ways and you start to get the picture that choosing THE MOST IMPORTANT part of your stand up paddle boarding equipment is headache inducing. Yet riders don't really give it enough attention or due thought.

As an example it's taken one of SUPM's team years to understand what he needed from a paddle, get the chance to demo, compare and finally settle on a type that fits requirements. OK, we appreciate that a young industry is partly to blame here but nowadays a plethora of kit exists yet paddlers are still getting it wrong. We do sympathise as it's no easy task.

For this issue's comparison review we look at three of Fanatic's performance adjustable SUP paddle offerings in the hopes of discovering what's what. Under the microscope are the brand's Carbon Pro 100, Carbon 80 and Bamboo 50.

First looks

All paddles are tip top high end bits of kit. The finish is exemplary – almost too good to soak in saltwater. Across each design the brand's blaring red fade allows materials to shine through and give each that desirable aesthetic. And then there's the names/descriptions of each paddle. Rather than give each tool a funky name, which can be confusing to the consumer, the brand have christened each paddle according to its materials and construction, thereby making it simpler to identify which you need.

With these being adjustable, utilising snap lock collar systems that allow for incremental changes, it's nice to see additional attention to detail in the form of anti-twist shafts. We've never experienced anything less than efficiency from Fanatic gear but at least the brand's being proactive and making sure it can't happen. On the back part of the shaft a pronounced dihedral runs spine-like down into the blade itself. This adds strength as the paddle flexes away from the rider, during the catch and pull, delivering a more direct feel.

All three paddles are performance orientated, however, it's the Bamboo 50 which is classed as entry performance with the Carbon 80 ultimately leading on to the Pro 100. It's therefore quite ironic that the Bamboo 50 is the most aesthetically pleasing (in our opinion). Other SUPers commented as much. Not to take anything away from its siblings but still...

On the water

Note: Extensions were set at 85cm to keep parameters as similar as possible. We also used the same board whilst testing, again, to limit variables.



Carbon Pro 100

First up we hit the brine with the Pro 100. From the off it was full chat. The stiff shaft delivers rider feedback instantaneously which spurs paddlers on to dig deep, commit and get that speedometer up to redline levels. With its 7.25" width there's an almost shovel element to the paddle. This isn't a criticism, in fact it's the opposite. While still being a narrow enough scoop there's no doubt riders can dig large volumes of water at high cadence. Sustainability is only then the issue...

For some paddlers the above description is exactly how they want a paddle to perform. Whether racing or surfing shifting brine with maximum efficiency is the way forwards, literally.



Carbon 80

Onto the Carbon 80 and having pounded a few miles on the 100 the feel of jumping to something with a moderately stiff shaft wasn't immediately obvious. Keeping to a similar cadence the 80 was much easier going, we'll admit, but the big differences we assumed would hit straight away didn't. (To assess this further, and make sure it wasn't fatigue setting in, we plumped for the 80 first run out next session).

There's not quite as much feedback as with the 100. You only really start to notice the differences having spent time afloat. We'd go so far as to say that directly comparing within small time frames won't tell you much. You need some hours and miles under your belt to get a better understanding.

Bamboo 50

Where differences were evident, right from the off, were when using Fanatic's Bamboo 50. This paddle really breathes – you can see it doing so through each stroke. Its much softer flex properties make it a joy to use.

That said, we'd readily admit we'd be at a disadvantage if racing SUPers using one of the other sweepers. The Carbon 80 and 100 both deliver much more in terms of speed and SUP zoom. While you can, of course paddle faster if you're less worn out (such as with the Bamboo 50), you may be playing catch up the whole way round and ultimately be doing more work. Where the Bamboo 50 does fit well is in surf environments – its throw about nature make it perfect for rail to rail changes and fast wrap around carves.

What have we learnt?

The comments above won't come as a surprise to those who know our own preferences of paddle err towards softer flexing shafts with moderately sized blades. There's absolutely nothing wrong with any of the three Fanatic sweepers, they're all fit for various purposes and rider wants/needs.

Some will relish ultimate feedback while others will require a much less engaging experience from their choice of paddle. Correct technique also needs to be taken into account. It's no good plumping for a high end stiff stick if your understanding of paddle strokes are lacking. And then there's putting that knowledge into practice.

One thing that benefits EVERYONE, however, is having as light a paddle as you can get hold of. Wielding a heavy blade will do absolutely no favours...All three of the Fanatic's above fit this requirement.



Conclusion

There's a huge focus on boards within stand up paddling, which we get. As a newbie setting off on their SUP adventures it's an easy aspect to focus on. Yet, all paddlers would be wise to pay equal (if not more) attention to the piece of kit that's actually 'driving' them. Fanatic's Pro Carbon 100, Carbon 80 and Bamboo 50 are all performance sweepers that will fit a variety of uses. High end constructions with attention to small details, such as the anti-twist mechanism, ensure they're desirable and sought after.

For those with a real thirst for power and ultimate speed it's a tossup between the 100 and 80. The only differences being subtle levels of input over distance. With that in mind we'd suggest the 80 would be better suited to chewing up the miles, unless you're super fit and are willing to grit teeth and smash it! The 100 would be most efficient across shorter legs and be especially devastating (with equally as efficient board and rider) in SUP sprints. Meanwhile Fanatic's Bamboo 50 is a much easier going affair – the majority of paddlers looking for performance will benefit from this. It's also our choice for a spot of surf action.

Whichever you plump for you'll be guaranteed of getting a quality crafted product that will elevate your stand up paddling experience considerably. Try before you buy and discover what's what for yourself!

Gear shed

SUP Mag UK's test station. If you want your product reviewed and think it will be of interest to SUPers
Email: reviews@standuppaddlemag.co.uk

SUPM's test team is... Stephane Lefevre, Richard Heathcote and Tez Plavenieks

Mellow mover –

Hypr Nalu Ohana 11.2ft x 33" x 245L

Jumping from Hypr Nalu's performance longboard surfer we tested last issue (the Amakua) we check the brand's Ohana all round stand up paddle board – a much mellower affair – this time round. As per the Amakua it's an attractive looking SUP with wooden veneer poking through and distinctive pronounced double concaves. A desirable board that, as with the Amakua, pricked interests of other SUPers during testing.



Price:

£1350

Info:

<http://hyprnalu.co.uk/ohana.html>



Jumping aboard the Ohana and it's suitably stable, offering a comfortable ride, with no unruly behaviour. It's not the quickest machine but tracking and glide are efficient and it inspires confidence in those new to stand up or paddlers moving on up. Progressing intermediates will discover a good platform for practising moves, such as pivot turns, and possibly building up to a bit of paddle surfing action, which the Ohana is good for.

Out in waves and Hypr's Ohana picks up swells early. Riders need to give it a some beans to get the momentum going initially, so choices need to be



made well in advance of arriving surf. Once up to speed it's a progressive SUP to drop in with composure retained all the way through the bottom turn and set up phase. If conditions are a little bumpy the Ohana does it's best to smooth the ride and iron out those lumps. Carving is a progressive affair and while fulfilling top turns are achievable it's more cruisy than hack and whack. Smaller waves, therefore, are the Ohana's forte.

Back to the flat and sweeping along coasts, investigating nooks and crannies and general paddling fun can be had. If you're a family, looking for a hard shell SUP to cover multiple bases, then the Ohana is worth a look. The only thing to watch out for is bumping into rocks and such like – it will pick up knocks and scrapes so best avoid this kind of terrain.

CONCLUSION

Visually the Ohana is an attractive SUP that gets people talking. It's no slouch on the water either offering a decent level of wave performance, in smaller surf, whilst being an efficient flat water fun machine. Whether you fancy a bit of exploratory sweeping, family fun at the beach type SUPing or a whizz along some mellow liquid walls Hypr Nalu's Ohana is a ride that'll take you there in style. For ultimate paddle surfing performance we'd suggest swapping out the central US Box fin that the board comes with. For flat water cruising, however, the supplied are fine.



Plank walker –

JP Longboard AST 10.6ft x 30" x 160L

It's no secret we (SUPM) are fans of longboard style stand up paddle surfing (you only need read the feature from last issue to see this). One thing we will say, however, is longboarding shouldn't be misconstrued for 'easy'. If you want truly easy wave riding then stick with an all rounder. Longboard sliding may help increase your wave count but these boards are all different and display certain traits making them applicable to specific styles of riding.



Price:
£999

Info:
<http://jp-australia.com/2017/sup/products/hard-boards/longboard/>



JP Australia's Longboard 10.6ft is new for 2017 but shows commitment to the cause. Over recent months it's become apparent that not every wave head wants a short SUP so many brands have stepped up. The AST version is JP's durable construction which we can attest takes knocks and shakes them off easily. As a 2+1 thruster fin configuration there's opportunity for riders to whack in a big centre US Box skeg for ultimate nose riding performance or go down the performance route of smaller types – we tried both.

Paddling away from the beach the flat deck, into stepped rails, is super flat and therefore stability is good. A straighter profile delivers good tracking while the

flatter rockered nose helps with glide – gutless swells don't stand a chance! In the tail there's a decent amount of kick while a grippy deck pad helps keep riders in contact with their steed. The only thing we'd have liked is a kick block right on the tail, but this is only a minor point.

JP's Longboard 10.6ft is an easy vehicle to paddle. In no time at all riders will be at the peak ready for the off. Picking up swells early allows SUPers to set their rail. It's important not to over egg things here as the 10.6ft likes a drawn out bottom turn rather than a gouging carve. Speed down the line is admirable and allows setting up for a lip hit or walking the plank.

Toes over aficionados will get into position without too much drama. It's not the easiest nose rider we've used but it's certainly fine for aspiring stylists. If you're of a more performance surfing bent then getting right back onto the tail is how you'll punt some vertical hits. Too far forward and this won't happen although you can still carve up and down from this position. JP's Longboard is also a good SUP for tricksters who love fin first take offs and helicopters – riding backwards has never been so achievable!



CONCLUSION

JP Australia's 10.6ft Longboard is a worthy addition to anyone's quiver or a one board only for those who fancy a mix of classic and modern riding. A progressive carver, that loves an open face on a solid wall, its performance will appeal to anyone who can move back and forth along the board's deck, while retaining enough new school carving ability for those looking to bounce some lips. As with all JP products construction is top notch and SUPM salutes the brand for introducing this style of SUP to their 2017 line up.



Arrow precision –

SBS Long Bow 12.6ft x 25” x 245L

With introduction of performance surf SUP, the War Bird reviewed last issue, SBS signposted their intent. Already a good range of user friendly SUPs – many of which we’ve had a dig on (See SUPM website for write ups) – the brand’s Long Bow 12.6ft is another addition to a steadily increasing high performance range



Price:

£999

Info:

<http://www.sbsboards.com/product/2017-sup-long-bow-carbon/>



Billed as an open ocean speed machine the Long Bow features a pronounced concave running along its hull to an equally pronounced V. On the deck the LB’s nose is designed for water shedding with comfortable carry handles, positioned in all the right places. In full carbon form it’s an easy SUP to carry – its light weight ensuring a swift entry and exit from the brine.

Venturing into tidal waters first we hopping aboard, the LB’s sharp boxy rails make for a stable ride. There’s a good deal of secondary stability also enabling it to be railed onto an edge and reduce drag. Even at 25” (narrow for some) there’s more usability than you’d imagine and prospective riders – experienced bigger boned paddlers shouldn’t be put off.

Moving feet about the deck yields best trim for conditions. Up front to engage the nose and enhance knifing capabilities – although be aware there’s a tad more roll here. Further



back lifts the nose and allows efficient bump catching. While certainly not a specific downwind machine the Long Bow is an admirable lump runner. It also surfs proper waves without too much hassle.

Having checked out ocean water we headed to the flat for comparison. A complete revelation the Long Bow is quick on glassy water – much faster than we anticipated! Without chop and flotsam trimming the SBS results in efficient release through each stroke. Add in easy manoeuvring and you have a potentially lethal sprint racer with the right pilot.

CONCLUSION

Looking every bit the polished product it is the SBS Long Bow 12.6ft is a full power carbon speed needle that handles open water environments and sheltered stretches with suitable aplomb. Versatile enough for both racing and touring (with experienced paddlers atop) it’s a smooth transition from bumps to glassy conditions. Eye catching, performance orientated and cost effective – what’s not to like?



SUP IN STYLE

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WAR BIRD 7'11" - 8'8"
LONG BOW 12'6"



THE DON 12'6"
NAVIGATOR 10'6"
WIDOW MAKER 7'1" 8'3" 8'8" 9'1"



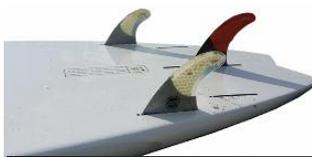
Something fishy... – Fatstick Fish 9.6ft x 33" x 150L

Having tested Fatstick's 8.6ft version of the Fish some time ago we were looking forward to checking out its bigger sibling. With an elongated profile, to accommodate the extra length, the FS Fish plays on design traits found in classic surfboard shapes of the same name. A pronounced swallow tail, five fin boxes and flat entry rocker suggest this is a SUP for less than perfect conditions but one that can be tuned for performance.



Price:
£849 (£699 in sale)

Info:
<https://fatstickboards.com/shop/bamboo-wave-fish/>



CONCLUSION

With impeccable manners, and real usability – across a whole plethora of wave environments – Fatstick's Fish 9.6ft is a versatile SUP that delivers enough performance to keep even hardened wave warriors happy. Nippy and able to squirt the tail, bang some foam or simply cruise about the break it's a SUP that'll put smiles on all faces. Tune as either a quad or thruster fin depending on preferences.

With knuckles snugly into the carry handle's recess it's a voluminous board that newbie paddle surfers will get to grips with quickly – the 33" worth of width only accentuating this. Yet, as we're always banging on about, numbers/dimensions don't give the full picture. Experienced paddlers may scoff at what they consider to be a sizeable SUP yet all isn't as it seems.

Sweeping away from the beach and the Fish's manners are impeccable. Even with an elevated ride its stability is great – something which should inspire confidence heading out to the peak. Heavier paddlers will appreciate its glide and tracking while lighter riders could use it as an all round paddling machine as well as wave vehicle.



Once on the peak positioning, and holding it, are easily achieved. It's then simply a case of picking your wave. Putting the hammer fully down yields best results and once up to speed the Fish keeps its momentum. Dropping in riders can either stay further forwards, and enjoy a few mellow curves, or get over the tail to discover what this board's really about.

Above the fins paddlers may get a surprise at just how manoeuvrable this SUP really is. As mentioned dimensions tell you nothing about performance with the 9.6ft easily slamming into lips and re-directing with the best of 'em. That momentum generated on take off keeps you flying and it's then simply a case of picking a move you fancy or the wave dictates. While certainly not a new school aerial machine Fatstick's Fish 9.6ft will deliver the kind of performance most paddle surfers are looking for.





Sam Robinson
Plymouth to Bude paddle
for The Wave Project charity



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Green meany! –

JOBE Duna 11.6ft x 31” x 324L

Looking every bit the expedition inflatable SUP JOBE bill it as the Duna 11.6ft is another quality offering that'll take riders from lake to coast and back without skipping a beat. One of the niftiest things with the Duna is the bag – more on that in a mo, from Rich who takes a closer look at the 11.6ft.



Price:

£799

Info:

Info:

www.jobesports.com/jobe-duna-11-6-inflatable-paddle-board-package-486417034/

Purchase from

www.getonthewater.co.uk/jobe-isup-duna-11.6



After last issue's review of JOBE's Vizela it was going to be interesting getting hold of the brand's inflatable Duna. It's immediately striking in its livery, adopting the same vibrant green that's evident on the Vizela we tested earlier this year. Green elastics adorn both ends, for storage of essentials, are secure with no loose bits showing. I mention this as sometimes it's an overlooked small detail. The deck grip is very comfortable and it's easy to find your balance and move around freely. Another seemingly minor point is the included green (green is everywhere!) coiled leash which is high quality and not a low end product as you sometimes find.

JOBE's Duna bag is rather different from other manufacturers. Still a rucksack design but no wheels. The

material, however, is strong waterproof plastic with a Velcro sealed end allowing it to roll up like a drybag. This is great and allows dual usage, both on and off the water. It's something that would be welcome as an industry standard from my point of view.

On the water the board paddled with admirable tracking. Stability at 32" wide will allow all manner of SUPers to hop around without issue. Even in windy conditions it's a fun iSUP to pilot and picks up a few downwind ripples when opportunity arises. There was a smug element during testing as I watched friends struggling on raceboards in the conditions. I had no issues whatsoever!

Glide isn't quite as efficient as we'd hoped. The board pushed some water from the nose but it still went into wind effectively. This would be a fantastic board for coastal touring, laden with kit for a day journey and probably overnighting as well. You could easily fish off it and I'm sure in small waves huge fun could be had. Overall it's a good looking inflatable, well-constructed and designed with easy access paddling across a variety of conditions in mind.



CONCLUSION

Superb attention to detail and a whole heap of performance JOBE's Duna 11.6ft is a well thought out and desirable iSUP. We don't bang on about bags that much, as most top shelf brands offer functional and practical options. JOBE do something different here, however. With the option of turning into a dry bag you can now cart essentials while afloat – our caps are certainly doffed. The Duna itself is functional across a whole host of SUP environments. In particular it copes well with coastal flotsam and chop, providing a stable and dependable platform that inspires confidence.



Airffordable riding – Riber 330 11ft x 31 x 6’

This is the second Riber inflatable we’ve tested here at SUPM – the first being the brand’s smaller 9.6ft reviewed last issue. For those not aware Riber offer low cost, high quality iSUPs with no frills – hence the price tag. SUPM test team member Steph checks out the 11ft this time around.



Price:

£499

Info:

<https://www.riberproducts.com/1026-riber-inflatable-sup-deluxe>

Low cost crossed my mind when I first laid eyes on the bag, which is simple, no frills yet still functional enough. The package itself, including the fin and included paddle look basic, but it does the job that boards more expensive will do at a fraction of the cost. On first glance Riber’s 330 11ft is a good entry level set up if you don’t want to break the bank.

The board itself is manufactured to high spec and looks nice with a bold graphic. There are plenty of anchor points for lashing gear to the deck and a net at the back. Personally I would have preferred it at the front as it is a little in the way when you step back to pivot turn, but it’s still a nice touch if you want to carry things around. The pad is very grippy which is not always the case with budget boards so a big tick in the box from me here!

I didn’t find the board super stable considering the size, but keep in mind during testing it was choppy and windy – far from ideal when paddling this kind of SUP.

Considering conditions it performed adeptly and once I stepped back a little it settled down nicely proving that experimenting with foot placement is always worthwhile, with any SUP.

Being a thicker board (6’) means you stand elevated which does give an enhanced periphery as you paddle along. The downside is chop and waves can buffet more than an iSUP that sits lower.

There’s a good deal of nose rocker which helps when paddling across chop and rougher water. Some see upturned noses as a sign of poorly manufactured inflatables. This shouldn’t put anyone off the Riber, however. Curve here is progressive throughout the whole board so some degree of ‘kick’ is to be expected.

Rigidity is good but it’s important to inflate to the stated 18PSI. 15 to 18 is recommended and it’s easily achieved with the included pump. Plenty of instructions are printed on the board, which is a nice touch. This might not be graphically sexy but it is underneath, slightly hidden, and will give guidelines essential for entry level paddlers. Personally I think this should be a standard on all iSUPs aimed at beginners. Overall it’s a good inflatable for anyone on a budget or for families looking to discover stand up paddling for the first time.



CONCLUSION

By removing certain elements Riber have managed to come up with a cost effective inflatable stand up paddle board that still performs. The board itself is manufactured to high spec and offers versatile performance. The included pump is also efficient and allows paddlers to ram in the recommended PSI. Everything else, such as bag, is adequate. Riber’s 330 11ft would be a good choice for many paddlers simply looking to out and SUP this summer.



Comfort and composure – O’Shea 9.8ft x 32” x 200L 2017 Premium Fusion Lite edition

O’Shea continue to push forwards with their inflatable SUP range, 2017’s 9.8ft being given their Premium Fusion Lite treatment. And light it most certainly is! Once inflated there’s no issue with carting to and fro – it’s a joy back and forth to the put in. Over to Steph for the rest of the low down.



Price:

£779

Info:

www.osheasurf.com/isupboards.html



The 9.8ft is a quality looking, brightly coloured board that immediately stands out. Premium Fusion Lite technology certainly shines through yet attention to detail across the whole design is cracking also. Its deck pad is very grippy with other fixtures and fittings being safe and secure. One thing I noticed is when deflated it’s very soft and flexible so rolls nice and tight. There’s nothing worse (IMO) than inflatables being a struggle to furl away. A solid fin box rounds off things and delivers the option of swapping out skegs if needs be.

Considering the choppy/windy testing conditions O’Shea’s 9.8ft



was super stable. Having stepped from a similar size board, which wasn’t anywhere near as balanced, it was a quite a revelation. Boards can REALLY be worlds apart when on paper you’d be forgiven for thinking they’re similar. The O’Shea’s thinner rails deliver a lower riding position which has a lot to do with its impeccable manners no doubt. Rigidity was also good and the ride was one of comfort and composure.

Glide is efficient and the 9.8ft feels reactive to paddler input. It also fairs well in small amounts of swell, even with froth and foam in the mix. A smaller board, but without the loss of stability, bigger riders can pilot while less burly beginners will find it good for learning, progressing and playing around.

CONCLUSION

O’Shea continue to deliver the goods with their inflatable SUPs – the brand’s new Premium Fusion Lite technology being particularly popular with us here at SUPM. At 9.8ft this is a smaller looking SUP designed with lesser of stature riders in mind. Yet due to its unique shape there’s no issue with bigger boned individuals enjoying some 9.8ft fun as stability and efficiency on the brine remain intact, even when confronted by less than idyllic conditions. A good board for general paddling shenanigans whilst also being applicable for small wave action.



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Eye on adventure – Freshwater Bay Paddleboard Co iVenture 11.5ft x 32” x 330L

FWBPC's iVenture 11.5ft is the second inflatable we've tested from the Isle Of Wight based brand. With distinctive livery intact – a familiar trait across the whole range – it looks top drawer and ready to get wet from the off.

Freshwater Bay PADDLEBOARD CO*

Price:

£825

Info:

<http://freshwaterbaypaddleboards.co.uk/product/115-x-32-iventure-inflatable-sup/>



Manufactured from PVC Polymer Fusion construction is high end. A nice touch is having the option of attaching a GoPro (or similar) to the nose via a RAM mount. Grab handles, fore and aft, are also welcome additions which make entering and exiting the water a smoother process – especially if any high tide wave lumps are in the mix.

Having inflated easily riders will notice the shape is more drawn out as you head towards the nose but not so much that it's truly arrow like. The majority of the iVenture's width is compacted into the tail where you stand. This makes for a stable platform and no having to shuffle feet forwards, as with some SUPs, to find the optimum paddling position – simply hop on and go!

Sweeping forwards the nose lifts ever so slightly allowing small chop and

flotsam to be navigated and not impede progress. If the breeze picks up then engaging the nose, by shifting weight forward, is an efficient way to overcome this minor hurdle.

With the majority of volume towards the tail moves such as pivot turns are easily accomplished with the iVenture inspiring confidence in all paddlers. For newbies or anxious intermediates skills can be progressed without too much fear of falling. If you're someone who loves off the beaten track touring, with water states fluctuating, then the iVenture's impeccable manners will scoot you through rough patches without too much hassle, even with gear essentials strapped to the front.

As with many touring boards playing about in small swells is certainly doable, FWBPC's iVenture 11.5ft being no different. Of course, an inflatable such as this won't deliver performance surfing but it's fun to mess about none the less and proves its versatility.



CONCLUSION

Freshwater Bay Paddleboard Co, considering they're a new brand on the block, continue to deliver high quality products that won't break the bank. Their new iVenture 11.5ft touring iSUP is robust, versatile and would fit the wants and needs of all manner of paddlers. Recreational sweepers, full on touring addicts and even frolicking surf funsters are catered for with the iVenture.





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All access – Starboard Wide Point inflatable 10.5ft x 32” x 235L

The beady eyed will have noticed we featured this very same board in last issue, only the hard version. And as anyone with experience of SUP will tell you no two boards are the same, especially when comparing inflatable versions to their harder siblings.



Price:

££799 including

alloy 3pc paddle

Info:

<http://star-board-sup.com/2017/board/10-5-x-32-widepoint-inflatable/>



Starboard’s Wide Point 10.5ft looks a lot different than its hard shell equivalent. For a start electro green colour coded, moulded fins will determine a very different feel once afloat. Add to the mix a tweaked rockerline and you get the idea this a different kind of beast.

As a stand alone product the WP is a great looking air board. A lot of time and effort has been spent creating a user friendly SUP but with bags of performance still intact. Construction techniques are suitably high end and the board’s weight ensures comfortable transport. Embedding their own rail stiffening system Starboard have made a good move, as such rigidity is exemplary. Inflating is super easy (and quick) with a grippy but comfortable deck pad rounding off proceedings.



On the water the WP 10.5ft sure has its own personality. It feels much more compact than dimensions would lead you to believe. Yet with 32” worth of width there are no stability issues – even when confronted by choppy water states. Glide and tracking are great with paddlers able to operate on auto pilot during flat water cruises – where the Wide Point is very at home.

Manoeuvres, such as pivot turns from the tail, are rewarding with enough room to allow error/improvement yet challenging enough to engage the user. Starboard’s hard shell Wide Point 10.5ft is a great wave rider (see review last issue for more on this) so how does the inflatable version compare? Pretty good was the overriding opinion. iSUPs, while getting ever closer to hard SUPs in terms of performance, aren’t quite there yet. That said the 10.5ft is fun to chuck about in the froth and it’s a board everyone from fair weather paddlers to seasoned pros will have a ball with.

CONCLUSION

It’s no surprise that Starboard have crafted a cracking inflatable with the Starboard Wide Point 10.5ft. Fun for all the family yet with enough performance to keep seasoned SUPers interested the 10.5ft is effortless to cruise atop or take for a spin in wavier conditions. High end construction with a top drawer finish it’s a desirable SUP toy to own and play with, whatever your level.



Orange goblin attack! –

Aztec Air 7.7ft x 30” x 5’

It's no secret we've used a plethora of SUP kit in our time. And among full production equipment the SUPM test team have also been given opportunity to try, and communicate findings, based on prototypes. Having reviewed Loco's Motion Air last issue we were excited to get our mitts on the brand's inflatable surf series – the Aztec Air. While not strictly a prototype Loco head Joe Thwaites did inform us the Aztec Air was still a work in progress, so approach accordingly.



Price:

£699-£899

Info:

<http://locosurfing.com/product/2017-loco-aztec-air-77-x-30-x-5-isup/>



Out of the box it's an eye catching design. Attention to detail is right up there with the Aztec Air looking polished. Utilising a hard release edge in the aft two thirds of the board's hull tracking should be straight and true. Offering five fin boxes, and therefore ability to tune to conditions, is also another tick in the box. Although fins were supplied we opted to fit our own performance set.

The shape of the Aztec Air is taken directly from the hard SUP range of the same name. Most of the volume/thickness is to be found up front with parallel rails tapering down to the tail. At 7.7ft it's one of the shortest air boards we've tried although with 30" width it's packing a decent

amount of girth (relative to overall length).

For those not accustomed to riding inflatables they generally sit on top of the water as opposed to in it. This can deliver a lively sensation, something very much at play with the Aztec. Its short length, and design, make for a very loose sensation but we're pleased to report the hard release rail does its job and keeps the 7.7ft pointing fairly efficiently.

Upon arrival at waves riders will need to choose their take off well in advance to be in with a chance of getting onto an open face. Shorter SUPs require slightly more revving up, or paddlers sitting in a more critical take off zone. That said it's still an efficient process dropping in and there's a decent amount of speed through the bottom turn. Inflatables don't quite surf the same as hard boards but that hard release rail does bite. Top turns, when ridden off the tail, are fun. If feet are forward then a shallower carve will be the result.



CONCLUSION

Loco's Aztec Air 7.7ft is a super short inflatable SUP that aims to utilise new technology for benefit of all paddlers. For many it'll possibly be too short and too lively on the water – in this instance riders should look at bigger sizes. For experienced SUPers the ride is engaging and while not a direct replacement for your hard board it does serve a purpose, especially if travelling overseas. Approaching with an open mind and being prepared to ride differently to usual is how to get the most from the Aztec Air. Attention to detail and the overall refined finish gives it a premium look but without the price tag to boot. For added versatility there's also a windsurfing rig attachment option ala windSUP.



Boxed up fun – Redwood Paddle Funbox R 10.3ft x 33” x 240L

The second Redwood Paddle iSUP we've tested (the first being the brand's Funbox Pro 12.6ft that you can find on SUPM's website) RWP's all round 10.3ft inflatable was put to the test by SUPM's Stephane. Here's what he had to say.



Price:

€479

Info:

<http://redwoodpaddle.com/gb/air-sup/232-funbox-10-3-classic-redwoodpaddle.html>



Straight out of the wrapping and it was the pump that we got to grips with first, which is double action and super easy to use. I didn't have to force the issue when inflating to 19psi. I'm sure I could have got it up to up to 21 with no sweat. It's by far the easiest iSUP I have inflated so big thumbs up for the pump.

The board is rigid and solid when filled with correct amounts of air. Redwood recommend 16PSI but I added a little more due to being heavier and wanting maximum stiffness. It's an iSUP manufactured using quality materials and the latest techniques. Its middle 'beam' (or stringer) gives further stiffness through the board's whole length. Interesting that Redwood have chosen to stick with double layered Dropstitch, which bucks the current industry trend, yet if anything, keeps it super robust.



Although not premium the fin is fit for purpose and does suit the job of all round paddling. This isn't a surf SUP specifically but I did get involved with some swell action to see how it performed. On steep waves, even though there is a good amount of nose rocker, it does stick a little, but that's something common with all iSUPs. Once on a wave it turns fine and does engage its rail, making it a good choice for anyone looking to progress within this area.

Back on the flat, however, and it's a nice board to pilot around and have some fun. Stability is good and it's a comfortable ride. There's also the option of paddling with some essentials lashed to the deck, via the bungee up front, so touring sojourns are doable. It certainly holds its own as a product when compared to other air filled boards of similar ilk.

CONCLUSION

Redwood Paddle's Funbox R 10.3ft is a fun inflatable SUP that's both versatile and affordable. A no frills platform the Funbox is well made and offers decent levels of usability for a variety of different paddling moods. Although the conditions we tested it on aren't optimum the 10.3ft copes well with surf but it's really at home on flat water. Take it to the river or use at the coast, whatever your tastes and however you enjoy SUP Redwood's Funbox R 10.3ft will put a smile on your face



Everyday ridin' –

Red Paddle Co Ride 10.8ft x 34" x 296L

Red Paddle Co's Ride range is probably the most popular inflatable SUP on the market. With premium build quality – utilising the brand's now synonymous and patented MSL Fusion manufacturing technique – and incorporating a polished aesthetic, but with plenty of performance embedded for every day paddlers, it's no wonder.



Price:
 £899 with an alloy paddle and leash

Info:
<https://redpaddleco.com/board/108-ride/>



At 34" width Red's 10.8ft Ride is a stable platform – especially when you push in some extra PSI (don't worry, this iSUP can sure take it). There's plenty of room for more than one paddler so a spot of tandem riding is doable and it's also great if you've got young kids and want to introduce them to the sport too!

Even though the Ride is a rounded nose affair there's good glide and efficient tracking to be had. We took the 10.8ft off on a four mile jaunt, out and back, with some chop and wind in the mix and found it held its own against more touring inspired shapes. OK, it's not quite as fast but it's no slouch either.

The colour coded red moulded fins protruding from the Ride's hull are surprisingly efficient. Personal

preferences do lean towards hard types but you can't deny Red's style do work for the type of SUPing most people enjoy and will be practicing with this inflatable.

Manoeuvres are fun and it's a good board to practice and get to grips with pivot turns and moving feet about the deck – these skills knocking on to your onwards progression. And when introduced to a few small wavelets the Ride delivered some giggle inducing experiences which only elevated its likeability.



CONCLUSION

There's no denying Red Paddle Co. are right on their game when it comes to inflatable stand up paddle boards – we've mentioned this before. We'd go so far as to say the brand have it nailed in terms of SUP across the board (pun intended!). Red's Ride 10.8ft fits what most people want (and need) within stand up. A non-specialist tool, manufactured to high spec, that gives access to all areas of the sport it'll find favour with all kinds of different riders – young to old, newbie to experienced and so on. Use as a family fun toy for days at the beach or take 'off piste' for slightly more serious paddling exploits. Red's bag and Titan pump only add to the appeal. Also available in 10.6ft, 9.8ft and WindSUP versions (which we reviewed last issue).



Do it all performer – McConks 10.6ft x 32” x 4.75’ Go Anywhere

We tested the McConks’ 10.6ft right at the start of the brand’s journey a few years ago. Here see what’s what with the 10.6ft version. SUPM’s test team member Rich got to grips with it across flat water and surf. Here’s what he thought.



Price:

£595

Info:

www.mcconks.com/product/mcconks-go-anywhere-108-inflatable-sup/



The McConks's 10.6ft is a go anywhere/do anything (hence the name) SUP that’s a really good piece of kit. It is styled like an oversize long board with a big bulbous nose and a drawn in rounded pintail. Well manufactured, using the latest iSUP construction techniques, it felt quite stiff at 15 PSI and is guaranteed to 27PSI. Its deck grip is effective and comfortable and the deck also has carry straps with three blue strips of nonslip material to stop anything moving around, which is a nice touch. (I should add when surfing I did remove the elastic).

If you’re keen for some selfie action the interesting looking screw thread addition (RAM mount) will accommodate your GoPro or other action cam of type. The McConks features eye catching blue and white livery with three different shades accenting the white. It stands out on the water and on the beach, although the white will eventually pick up dirt.

Coming as a 2+1 set up (thruster) the fins are really easy to attach and the

fittings are well made. We all agree that proper fins on iSUPs is where it’s at and this seems to be becoming standard for many of the brands. The side fins have an interesting fitting system called Kumano, which worked well and very quick to assemble, although they could be a little stiffer (*having checked with McConks themselves this is purposeful). It’s good to see a US box in the center spot so you can swap and tune if needs be.

Out on the water the McConks 10.6ft is super easy and comfortable to paddle, holding a straight line quite effectively. Glide is also pretty good for this size and style of iSUP a few strokes delivering decent momentum. I enjoyed piloting around on flat water but was keen to see how it fared when thrown at some swell.

In the surf it was great fun and I really enjoyed dropping into waves. The nose is a little bouncy but the rounded pintail made turning very easy. If you position your foot above the fins, on the tail, it’s actually quite maneuverable. OK, an inflatable doesn’t quite have the same characteristics as a hard board in waves but I had a really great time surfing the McConks with lots of fun and big smiles – what more could you ask for?



CONCLUSION

McConks have certainly been pushing hard the last few years and are now making headway. The 10.6ft is a refined and polished iSUP fit for purpose in a wide range of environments. As a flat water cruiser it delivers whilst also remaining fun and functional should riders fancy a bit of surf action. The bag and paddle are also well thought out. Quality manufacturing, with particular attention paid to fin systems, the McConks 10.6ft will fit the wants/needs of many different styles of paddler.



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Fusion StereoActive

www.fusionentertainment.com

By Peter Tranter

Backed by parent company Garmin, the StereoActive is an impressive floating music machine with built-in Bluetooth streaming, USB audio playback and AM/FM radio. The StereoActive's excellent directional speakers ensure the sound is pin-pointed towards the paddler.

It isn't a device that's just for use on the water but camping, boating, sailing, barbecuing, in fact anywhere where you need a rugged device, which, can also be used everyday in the home. It is so versatile and in our case is now the office sound system!

It's solid, rugged and built to take what the outdoors can throw at it. The outside of the unit is protected by a UV resistant rubber surround giving strength and protection.

The high visibility controls have been purposefully designed to be operated by the blade of a paddle, so you do not need to be within touching distance of the unit. All you have to do is give them a touch with the paddle edge and your command will be followed, you can't miss! A flat mounting surface has been designed on the top to allow for the mounting of a camera just behind the controls.

Before switching on, the unit requires its batteries to be powered up. This takes three hours but in the meantime do download the FUSION-Link app to your phone or your Garmin smart watch if you have one.

Push the on/off button for a second or so and the built-in voice prompt will let you know the unit is active. The Bluetooth button next door toggles between AM/FM and Bluetooth, which by the way is a doddle to setup. The rest of the buttons are relatively straightforward and standard including playlist shuffle and two radio presets.

Once paired with your phone, the StereoActive can stream anything whether it is your playlist, Spotify, or one of your favourite online radio stations. You can also listen to MP3 music tracks via a USB port next to the charging connector made waterproof by a screw cap.

The StereoActive attaches to your board by way of a flexible slide operated locking puck mounting system. Once attached then believe me, it is locked tight! The puck itself is attached to the surface via an extremely strong adhesive – this is definitely not one of your cheap suction cup jobs but a system into which

a lot of thought has gone into. Add to this that the optional Fusion RAM and Railblaza pucks, which are also designed to integrate the StereoActive with their families of mounting solutions and you have the full house of attachments.

The IPX7 rated waterproof design combined with the ability to float in water is the obvious benefit to taking the StereoActive out into its natural habitat. I've used many similar, cheaper water-resistant Bluetooth speakers but the sound is no comparison to the StereoActive. The Class-D amplifier, speaker drivers, internal volume and passive radiator system delivers, crisp, quality music reproduction. The genuine 20-hour battery life allows an all day performance.

Fusion ActiveSafe



The ActiveSafe can be used as a standalone waterproof safe for your valuables or can attach to your StereoActive via Fusion's puck system.

The ActiveSafe has the same IPX7 rated waterproof design combined with the ability to float in water. It's large enough to hold the largest of smartphones, keys, credit cards, etc.

The obvious benefit is the ability to lock your phone away, keeping it safe, whilst streaming your favourite music via the Bluetooth connection – makes perfect sense.

CONCLUSION

All in all the StereoActive has already provided many hours of entertainment and been in use every day since arriving. It can be a little heavy but then again it is so well made and rugged, you will soon forgive that. The unit is so easy to use and with summer arriving, we will take the StereoActive out more into its more natural environment of the outdoors and on the water. The huge bonus is afterwards it will be sat in the office knocking out great tracks. Perfect!

StereoActive: £294

ActiveSafe: £79

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Colourfully toasty – Funky Seal 3mm wetsuit

www.funkysealwetsuits.com



Wetsuit manufacturers in recent years have woken up to the fact black rubber, while being no less protective, isn't exactly the way to make a statement. Some of us prefer a bit of colour in life, without sacrificing functionality. Funky Seal Wetsuits are one such peddler of neoprene that play on this point. The brand's whole range is both bold yet practical.

Utilising two unique technologies – Selurflex and Coloursoft Tech – there's more than just funky patterns going on here. Selurflex is material woven into the neoprene which helps when getting the suit on and off. We're sure most of you have had snags when struggling to don your rubber, well, suffer no more. Coloursoft technology, meanwhile, ensures you're getting a comfortable and durable fit.

The Denim/Baseball wetty we plumped for is possibly the most knocked back looking suit Funky Seal supply. It was nice to see all seams are stitched and glued accordingly. And even with this only being a 3mm suit it's super warm and perfect for SUP (trust us when we say this as testing started way back in Feb – not exactly a time of year known for shedding the neoprene). Yet stand up paddle boarding being what it is means dunkings are (hopefully) less frequent so getting away with less rubber is doable on certain days – even in winter.

The suit is snug yet flexible and never once did it impede stroking. And, again, we emphasise just how warm it is – especially when full steam ahead with your paddle hammer down. On a few occasions we were sweating and had to dunk ourselves in the brine to cool off!

CONCLUSION

Funky Seal Wetsuits are bold yet functional. Offering superb levels of comfort and warmth (for a 3mm) it's a wetty that's found favour with us here at SUPM for all manner of stand up paddling scenarios (windsurfing also). As we move into warmer months this could be your go to suit that'll ensure standing out from the crowd is par for the course. Check out the brand's website for more designs. Women's and kid's specific wetsuits also available.

Price: £120

Info: www.funkysealwetsuits.com

Go with the flow –

RRD Flow three piece adjustable SUP paddle

www.robertoriccidesigns.com

Paddles come in many forms, constructions and different uses in mind. Here RRD's Flow three piece adjustable paddle is manufactured in fibreglass construction and features three different ways to lock off the shaft (normally three piece paddles offer just two).

Utilising a clasp mechanism, which lockable arm, adjustments to length are incremental which allows the right size to be achieved hassle free. Having the same mechanism in tandem with a press stud lock gives infinite security when all parts are joined up.

Many may be wondering about the use of fibreglass, having probably heard that carbon is best when talking paddles. As we've made reference to in the past carbon is a high end material and top shelf paddles are usually constructed from it. That said, there's more than one way to skin a cat and some fibreglass sweepers are equally top notch.

While performance of the Flow is good it's certainly not aimed at those wanting the ultimate paddle. Instead the RRD is great for anyone travelling off to far flung locations and needs to stow their SUP 'engine' discreetly. Equally it can be broken down and lashed to the deck of your SUP as a back up in case your normal paddle malfunctions.

The Flow's shaft flex is soft and therefore easy on joints/muscles. Unfortunately stiffer than stiff paddles can damage bodies – especially if correct technique isn't adhered to. That risk is lessened with the Flow and as such it's a joy to use. Its blade is moderately sized at 29mm and delivers a decent amount of thrust. A fairly flat blade face does require users to catch and pull in the correct way for avoidance of flutter but its efficiency across a plethora of environments can't be sniffed at.

CONCLUSION

As usual RRD's level of attention to detail can be seen instantly with the Flow. Even though it's manufactured from fibreglass there's no denying the performance aspects. Progressive power comes into play through each stroke while its soft flexing shaft will be welcomed by those who like an easier going ride. As a three piece all joints are secure making the Flow a good choice for travelling SUPers or those needing an efficient back up engine.

Price: Check with your local RRD dealer

Info: <http://www.robertoriccidesigns.com/equipment/shop/flow-paddle-glass-3pcs-adj/>





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Bionic butterfly wings – Sealblades retractable hand paddles

<https://sealblades.com>



Looking more like something you'd find in a Batman film Sealblades' unique body mounted hand paddles are an innovative new product born out of needing more power when prone. As an obvious use they'd fit surfing environments, with riders able to propel themselves into waves at a higher rate of knots (double the power according to the brand's website). But what about SUP?

Upon arrival a note of which way round you need to wear them should be taken – placing upside down is an easy mistake to make. Once fixed into correct position, via Velcro strap lashing an extended neoprene cover to forearms, it's time to play.

The retractable blade operates via coiled bungee. Bring blade into paddling position, extending your palm to take hold of handle, and you're ready to go. Release and the blade snaps back out of the way. A number of tuning options are available to get the desired fit. For us, however, it was straight out of the box and onto the brine.

Paddling prone, with either butterfly stroke or front crawl methods, are both doable. Our optimum position was kneeling whilst paddling butterfly. Being so close to the water offers a different perspective, which is refreshing. After an initial few 'getting going' strokes you're up to full power. A regular rhythm ensures decent headway can be made – powerful they certainly are (more than you'd initially think).

Some onlookers raised concerns about rotator cuff injuries. From our experience the prone paddling experience, with Sealblades for added propulsion, doesn't take as much toll on bodies as typical SUP paddling. We're not saying it couldn't happen but the SB's didn't affect us adversely. Sceptics may mock but this style of stroking but it's a way to enjoy respite from stand up and get another method for enjoying the ocean.

CONCLUSION

So where do Sealblades fit your everyday SUP routine? Well, due to the retractable blade they can be worn whatever type of stand up paddling you're into. Therefore as a backup/safety device – in the event of paddle failure – Sealblades fit the bill. If conditions turn unfavourable, with perhaps an increasing breeze, then again Sealblades offer an alternative way of getting back to shore. Simply scooch down and reduce wind resistance. And if you fancy a spot of prone paddling sans SUP paddle then get involved. Traditionalists may see it as cheating but it's a way to test the water and see if prone is your thing. Available in two sizes – large and small.

Price: Sealblades large – £49.95, Sealblades Rush – £34.9

Info: <https://sealblades.com/>

Conveniently confident – HandiWorld HandiRack inflatable roof bars

www.handiworld.com

HandiWorld's inflatable HandiRack roof bar system isn't a new product. Here at SUPM we've been using them for years, most recently during a trip to Fuerteventura. But many paddlers still ask what's available when considering SUP transportation, either domestically or abroad.

Coming as a neat and compact package, with all the bits you need, the HandiRack system is discreet enough to be packaged up in your regular luggage if you're heading off on overseas SUP adventures. Two durable, double bladder racks, affixed to hard wearing webbing, with robust D-Rings and a secure clamping system make up the racks themselves. Then you have an additional hand pump, with a variety of nozzles that makes inflation both quick and easy. We were also sent a non-slip mat this time around which is a nice touch as some cars do have smooth shiny roofs which can cause the bars to move slightly – although we've never experienced this.

In terms of set up it couldn't be easier. Simply inflate the bladders, place atop your vehicle and run the webbing strap through inside your ride. Pop the straps through the heavy duty clamp and pull tight. A few half hitches then tidies away excess webbing that dangles down.

We transported two stand up paddle boards with no issue during our trip. With a decent set of (lockable) straps to tie the board down there's very little movement with the HandiRacks themselves. Their unique design means that with SUPs lashed down the air inside each bladder is compacted making them rock solid. Confidence in your carrying method is therefore standard.

CONCLUSION

HandiRack is a very simply yet effective system and way of transporting your SUP ride. Easy to assemble and confidence inspiring they're a good choice for any travelling paddler who takes their own gear. If hiring on the ground a set of HandiRacks are worth having just in case you can take equipment off site. Back home and they also make a good choice for domestic touring – especially if you're not keen on the idea of hard roof bars. A great product that suits a whole plethora of requirements. Designed to fit almost any car.

Price: £65

Info: www.handiworld.com/handirack-194/handirack.html



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A message from Managing Director Byron Baker-Brown

Nearly everybody that I have met over the years has sadly been touched by Cancer in some way or another... Myself included. Because of this, I cannot think of a more worthy cause to raise money for in the fight against this terrible disease.

In 2016 I held the first K4C two day event at Wimbleball Lake where an amazing group of paddlers raised a phenomenal £12,000 for Cancer Research. This figure was also bolstered by a small but equally amazing team who paddled the same distance but along the Thames.

Still working with Cancer Research UK and with your participation and support I aim to smash that figure this year.

Wimbleball Lake is a freshwater reservoir owned by South west Lakes Trust, which is in itself a charity. It is approximately 9.3 miles in circumference and is surrounded by hills, woodlands and fields, giving you an ever changing landscape to admire as you paddle over two days in one of the UK's most beautiful settings. You will see wildlife in abundance both in the air, on land and indeed in the water, especially in the form of the beautiful Rainbow Trout as they rise to feed off of the water surface.

Your goal for the 2017 fund raiser is to paddle two laps per day of the lake, totalling approximately 37 miles. You can do this either individually or as a team with the knowledge that every stroke will be supporting Cancer Research UK in their fight to save your families and friends, as well as mine.

On behalf of all of those ever affected by Cancer, I thank you for your support and look forward to welcoming you to Wimbleball Lake this June.

Join us at Kayaking **4** Cancer

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