



RRD RELIGION MK8 6 & 7M

TEST TEAM NOTES:

Eight versions into one of the most popular wave kites and once again RRD turn up the dial when it comes to making the most bomb-proof wave kite. They use the complex graphics as a structure for the Dacron reinforcements to give the kite an incredible rigidity. If you're planning on crashing your kite lots and rolling it in the surf, this is definitely the one to have!

The MK8 has had a more extensive re-design compared to previous models, particularly with a new longer leading edge shape for more twist that also incorporates shorter bridles and a higher-aspect-ratio; the aim of which is to further increase turning speed and drift.

This year RRD have upgraded their inflation valve so you now just need to attach the end of your pump hose to the kite valve without any need for a nozzle, so should fit every pump hose and attaches securely for a really quick and easy pump up.

The RRD Global V8 bar has seen the addition of a smooth and easy line unspinner just above the chicken-loop and otherwise this bar system continues as a no-fuss and strong design. One size bar fits every size of kite in the RRD range, so in the small sizes can feel like quite a big bar, but it keeps everything simple and with an even feel on every kite. Fairly thin in diameter for easy purchase, the grip is smooth, the trimming cleat is within easy reach and the chicken-loop is generously sized if you ever want to unhook. The centre line is plastic covered and you should note that RRD lines are incredibly strong and known for reduced stretch. The chicken-finger is quite long and pointy, but can be rotated to a fixed position outside of the chicken-loop, so everything's very functional on this bar once again.

The Religion has split the team in terms of where we position it in preference. Where we've usually felt at odds with the kite was in the amount of bar pressure and power it yielded when conditions got difficult. The Religion has long been a cult kite

when it comes to a fast, powered style of strapped riding as it also has a lot of lift for a wave kite, so boosts well. We did however feel it became more of a handful for smaller or pure strapless riders at the top of its range compared to the same size kites in competing wave kite models.

This year the Religion is lighter, smoother and quicker and, as a result, we really enjoyed it. Matt (90+ kilos) and Jim (barely 70) were the main testers of this kite and that's quite a spread of weight difference to be riding in similar conditions, so where Matt was riding the seven, Jim was on the six... and that is definitely still the key to this kite (and most wave kites for that matter). When it comes to pure wave riding, the Religion is at its best at its low end. The smoother, lighter handling this year really play well for generating power and it's always so much fun to be able to find power through sheeting and movement of the kite when you want it and shut-off when you don't want it. That said, the Religion also creates a lovely drive when you sheet in and is often enough to get you round another turn and into another hit without too much kite movement.

The Religion is super quick at delivering turning and sheeting power and also fast depower up to its mid-range. If you have to pull on more than half the trim, the response in the kite's steering reduces; and it's that quick control that you don't want to sacrifice in your wave kite.

At its best and without too much trim on, the Religion still has access to that grunt for riders that like to be pulled with power out of a turn if they steer it hard, but it's now more manageable for smaller riders and turns beautifully in terms of speed and precision. The throw is very intuitive and you should note that the Religion holds on to some power when fully sheeted out but that does mean that it's very stable and doesn't shoot forward too wildly. As you start getting more powered, there's

more grunt there though because of that and for strapless becomes more of a handful earlier than some other kites. This wave game is really a matter of taste though and there are so many riders that love to ride with power. If you don't, just size down and enjoy an even faster kite.

Another area that the Religion is really strong is when it comes to getting back upwind. You can chase waves all the way to the inside or to the end of the beach and within one good tack be back where you started. The balance it has for forward flight and sheeting power means that you can really maintain a fixed edge and the key to going upwind in lighter wind is that constant planing grip and efficiency. The Religion is really good at that for riders of all levels.

SUMMARY:

There are two sides to the Religion for different riders. Because the low end and power generation is good, lighter or strapless riders can enjoy getting on a small kite early while strapped or bigger riders can take advantage of the strong pull and power that the Religion is capable of at its top end. There are a lot of soft and / or super forward flying kites on the market. The Religion is still treading its own path, is incredibly strong and can pretty much be what you want it to be if you size it right.

KW LIKED:

Improved response, a lighter bar impulse and super-tough build quality.

KW WOULD CHANGE:

As the Religion powers up it feels stiffer and the feel of power at the bar increases its intensity more than other wave kites. Obviously good for some, but lighter riders should just be aware of that in heavy winds and to size down.

SIZES: 12, 10.5, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5 and 4m

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