



RRD HAVE THE BIGGEST RANGE OF SURFBOARDS ON THE MARKET, AND THEY ARE ALL AVAILABLE IN THREE SEPARATE CONSTRUCTIONS... THIS DEFINITELY ISN'T THE EASIEST WAY OF DOING THINGS. ROBERTO RICCI GIVES US HIS THOUGHTS ON THE WAVERIDING SIDE OF THE SPORT AND HOW THIS IS REFLECTED IN THE RRD SURFBOARD LINE UP.

WHAT WOULD YOU SUGGEST TO SOMEONE JUST STARTING IN WAVES WHEN THEY ARE CHOOSING THEIR QUIVER?

If you want to do waves, there are many different choices. It depends on your level, and the place you live, and actually what your desire is... Generally, you can start with just one board depending on your weight, anywhere from a 5'8" to a 6'0". And I always suggest having a board between 18.5 - 20" wide, a wide-ish type of board. The bigger you are, the more flotation you need to get you going. And that's pretty much the board you need. You don't need to have anything else to start with. And then a couple of kites, 7 and 9, or 8 and 10 are the two kites generally. Two kites, one board, and off you go. I would use straps to begin with, unless you're a youngster and you have experience with skateboarding or surfing, then you can jump on the board without straps and you will be totally comfortable! If you come from snowboarding, or windsurfing, or you're a little bit older, and you want to try and get into the waves for the first time, I really suggest you start riding waves with straps and then eventually take the straps out if that is how you want to ride. Learning how to bottom turn and learning how to maneuver your kite is definitely a lot easier with straps.



RRD OFFER SOME DIFFERENT BOARD CONSTRUCTIONS NOW – WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THERE?

We basically use three different types of technologies for our kitesurf board range. The first entry level board is our Wood layup. It is a really solid board, built with a bamboo veneer on the top and bottom, with an EPS core and full epoxy laminate. This board is pretty lightweight and really strong, which is really what matters for beginners and those that want to ride for the first time. You can really give it some beatings. It's going to be solid, and if you fall on the board with your harness you're not going to break it. We suggest this layup to our schools, and for rentals.

Then we have the Classic surfboard technology, with classic PU polyester. A PU core is basically the old platform, a lot of people from the past remember this. It's open cell foam which means if you punch a hole through the bottom or the deck you're going to let water in to the core, which is a disadvantage. But what this brings is the real surf feeling; it's the softest type of board to ride waves, so it's really kind of forgiving, it doesn't hurt your knees at all when you ride in chop. Most of the time when you're kiteboarding, we always have chop in front of waves because unless you're really good and always in the pocket, we tend to ride waves a little distance from the wave itself, just because we use the power of the kite most of the time before really learning how to ride the wave properly. The polyester resin and classic surfboard technology is by far the best technology we've found so far for wave riding, it's the favorite for all our team riders and our professional riders, if you want a really forgiving ride and the classic surf feel, this is still the one.

Finally we have the LTD. This is a unique technology which uses a lightweight EPS foam (closed cell, which doesn't let water in) without any stringer to try and replicate the flex of a classic surfboard. We just have a uni-directional carbon stringer, a carbon net over the top, bamboo under the heels and epoxy lamination. It's a very light technology. All the boards are 2.8kg - 3.2kg, so it's really light, and the boards are more buoyant than the classic boards because they have more air inside. These are recommended for people who really want to ride strapless and maximize airtime, and combine some freestyle with their wave riding. It's the favorite board for people who want something high performance or for conditions where wind is marginal and you need to maximize flotation and maneuverability. These three technologies cover the whole range of our collection at the moment.



WHY SO MANY SHAPES AND VERSIONS?

I believe in custom made boards, and I've always been a custom board shaper from 1986! I believe that once you design a collection of boards, you want to be able to provide a wide range to provide that custom feel. I love kitesurfing in waves, that's what I love to do every day, so I also believe that my potential customer will be people that are really finding the right board for them. And not only the right outline, but the right size, thickness, tail width, nose width etc, which normally you can only find in a custom shop. We are the only ones in the market providing that kind of option in our collection, rather than stock boards which are meant to work for everybody. We have by far the biggest stock boards collection in the world and that is the reason. It's also because the behavior of the board changes depending on the technology you are using, so when you buy a board in wood you get a certain response, certain feel on the water, but if you buy the same board in the classic tech it has a different feeling, and LTD different again. I believe that with such an offering in the range we are able to target a large variety of potential customers and we are happy to offer such a large variety of choices.

HOW DOES THE ROCKER DIFFER ACROSS THE RANGE OF BOARDS?

Well it goes together with the outline of the board. Of course, a flatter rocker will plane faster, be more appropriate for sloppier waves, for lighter wind, or for strapless freestyle. More rocker means more ability to turn, more possibility to ride with ease at high speed. When the wave is pushing with speed and power, you generally want to ride with more rocker on the board. There's no board that excels in all conditions, there are more boards that are designed for different conditions. Our Salerosa 5'10" or our Maquina 5'9" and 5'11" are kind of 'close your eyes and go', if you want to wave ride, but then of course we have the Pop 5'2" which is phenomenal for light wind or a cruise board for free riding, for example. We have a standard board for every condition, but then if you dig deep into the line you can find your exact desired rocker and technology, which is quite important. ►



STRAPS VS STRAPLESS? LEASH OR NO LEASH?

Well, I always ride straps because I'm a windsurfer by heart and I've been windsurfing all my life – I'm not a good skater or a good surfer, so when I go out there I really have a hard time taking my straps out because I'm so used to bottom turning and coming off the top with straps. I sometimes ride strapless when the conditions are really mellow, light offshore and clean waves, nothing to jump, no white water, not tough conditions. I normally ride straps without a leash when the waves are up to double overhead. If it's bigger than that and the conditions are really tricky, offshore and very gusty, I normally wear a leash as well because there are rock points and you don't want to lose your board out there.

WHAT ABOUT FIN SELECTION?

All the fins that we produce nowadays are made of polyester resin with RTM processing. There is glass fiber compressed into a mold and then there is polyester molded with resin transfer which makes the fin very durable and not too brittle, so it's basically an epoxy fin feeling. Most of the surfboard fins on the market are built like that. Pretty much a standard fin that is designed for light weight and flexibility. They have carbon on the base to be super stiff and super strong, and the rest is pretty much polyester and glass fibers.

We have four main sizes for the thrusters. We have small, medium, medium large and large. It depends on your weight, and the wave size and the board size. Lighter riders should use smaller fins, but also the same type of riders should use smaller fins if they want to do some freestyle or ride small waves, or go to the larger if they want to ride much bigger surf.

WHY FUTURE FINS?

The Future box is solid, it's proven to be a very strong box, and it's probably just a personal thing but we never break Future boxes. The worst thing that happens with fins is you snap/crack the box around it if you hit sand or a rock, but for kitesurfing specifically you need a long box which is all contained within the board. It's different to surfing because you're going at 15/20 knots at all times, for several hours, with a lot of force into the fins as you try to edge upwind. It's a lot of pressure on your fin boxes. A surfer only rides maybe 20 waves a session, and most of the time is floating or swimming at low speeds, so what works for surfing is not necessarily what works for kiteboarding.

THRUSTER VS QUAD...

I personally like to ride both. I don't prefer one set up, except for when it's really nice and clean and you're lit then I like to ride a thruster. With a quad you can stay upwind easier, you can ride sloppier waves with a bit more speed, I tend to ride quads mostly when it's not quite so good conditions, and when it's classic I prefer to use thrusters. Unless it's a really wide board, you ride quad on the Pop for example, or on the Salerosa which has a wider tail than the Maquina, but besides that there's not such a huge difference. It really makes the most difference using quads on a wider board, because you always have two fins in the water for stability, so if you want to bottom turn at high speed, one half of the board will be out of the water. But it's very personal. For me, big waves, clean waves, fast waves: it's a thruster.



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FROM 1986!

