

Pothecary Corner—Alan Pothecary

The Emissary



Yes - I do like bigger, slower kites. I gave this one to both novice and some very masterful trick flyers and they liked it too! I just wish that it *looked* better – that's all...! At around £160.00 it's at the beginning of kites more in the upper level of performance and price, so, if aesthetics are important, you could be tempted to spend just a little more on a Deep Space, a Fury or something else from across the Channel. However, it does perform very nicely. HQ claim that it masters the high winds although having flown it in 25 to 30 mph one mid-summer's day down on Southsea common I can't say that I would entirely agree.

In more normal conditions you will find that tricks are easily achievable with a smoothness which is quite addictive. The yoyo stopper pegs come separately so if line wraps annoy you and you don't want to do yoyos, then don't clip them on! This would be OK for Marilyn and I in the demonstration arena as we don't use those tricks in our ballets (certainly not with tails) but it is big, slow and precise enough to fly as a team or pairs kite and the 'easy adjust' leach line which is so popular these days gives it that extra versatility. You will find weights in the bag which will alter the flying characteristics and allow you to trim the kite to your own preference (pretty much a must for the wrap up - yoyo I found!).

The 'slowness' of the kite is great for when you are learning tricks because you get more time to see what the kite is doing and more time to react. The Light Ventex sails of the Emissary incorporate Mylar® with Skyshark rods in the leading edges and Dynamic 18 in the spreaders. I have said this before but we should all start haranguing our favourite traders because I have not yet seen any on the stalls – I did manage to break a bottom spreader being utterly over aggressive when the kite wasn't in the position I thought it was but HQ, knowing me as they do, had already sent me a couple of spares. I'll have to check out The Highwaymen, who are usually pretty good for spares - although Kiteworld are our

main sponsors for kites and accessories - Shirley Turpin has always been very good to us when we have needed those odd bits that other traders don't have in their range. I haven't seen the Emissary around the shops but I know that they are quickly available on order. We have one in the bag, so come over and have a look-see and fly.

The Transfer XT.s by Atelier

The Transfer XT.s is the full size version of the Transfer XT,r, a bit like the Fury and the Fury 85, only the manufacturers, Atelier, did it the other way round and released the smaller one first.

The first thing I have to say about it is that I like this kite better than any other kite I have flown. Perhaps that's because it suits my style and what I want to do in pairs flying and also allows me to move on to other things without having to change kites. Perhaps that it is what I have found to be the most manageable kite within such a large wind range and allows me to keep on flying without having to worry about adding brakes or changing bridles – I am completely comfortable from three and a half, right up to sixteen miles per hour and only then do I start to think about slowing it down with some sort of brake. But I suppose that is because I have been so used to thinking about how much pull Marilyn can take before she goes flat on her face when we are flying pairs.

The Transfer superseded the Lithiums we flew before and Marilyn was coping very well in 20mph on a standard XT.s with a small nappy, where as before she would have been finding it very difficult with a vented. We would like to have the vented versions which are now available but Atelier haven't had the same foresight and generosity toward us as some of the other main kite manufacturers so you probably won't see much of them flown in the UK at all as not too many flyers are likely spend that sort of money without getting the opportunity to try it first. The design of this kite makes it look much wider than it is and of course the flying characteristics are much different than we were used to but once the technique to hit that stall in the middle of the window was mastered we were away!

At first it does start to move very rapidly when it gets wind back in the sail but you can counter this once you are used to it. I have learned quite a lot from the XT's, one thing in particular is that a kite of this quality has to be bedded in. The development process has gone on for hundreds of hours and toward the end, fine tuning of the bridle added to it. Now, when the bridle is finally right and all the measurements are taken for future builds the sail of the kite has gained a certain amount of stretch (a bit like me in my old age I suppose), Therefore, when the new sail receives a bridle with the 'worn in' measurements it obviously flies a little differently to begin with.

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The precision of this kite I found to be excellent straight out of the bag. The factory settings are in the middle so that you get the best of both worlds. Adjustments are made to the third, short leg of the bridle by the bottom spreaders to improve the precision but we left that alone, leaving it a bit on the tricky side to help with those flatter axles.

You can get a wobble after a sharp turn – to cure that, you should lock your hands together after the move, otherwise the weight of the kite pulls back on the line causing your hand to move and, hence, the kite will wobble. This is true of most kites – come over if you see me and I'll show you what I mean. I found that the XT.s loved to lay on it's back (the start point for so many tricks these days) so much so in fact that when I did the first fade launch, I pulled to bring it around straight and it went right on in to back spins. Flying in virtually no wind you may get a problem of the line catching the wing tip in a flat spin but you soon learn to get past this and it's even easier in a breeze.

You have probably never seen such wide bridle settings but that doesn't mean that the movements are necessarily big (not like a Matrix for instance) although, if you are used to a smaller kite you will find this one quite slow and graceful - and you get the time to appreciate what the manoeuvre is about. Because of the 7pt rods used you might think weight would be a problem but there is a lot of sail area also which helps because the base of the spine comes already weighted too!

Overall the build quality is very good (as you would expect for a kite over £240.00) – Atelier have come on in leaps and bounds in that area over the last few years and don't worry about it coming from abroad – via email or telephone I have found the language barrier doesn't exist and the after sales is absolutely first class with guys like the designer Ramlal willing to advise all you want. We also have a pair of "unleaded" (Ultralight) Transfers. These are not as light as I would like them to be and we had to go back to our Lithiums occasionally in competitions as they were more reliable in very low winds. Tricks I also found quite difficult with the unleaded – you have to be very methodical or they either just won't perform - or break. Precision though, is spot on with a bit of a breeze as are stalls and landings. I can't

comment on the vented because I have never flown one but you get what you pay for with the standard - the unleaded? - I do like it but I am 50/50 about VFM – it depends on what you are looking for.

Do you know who the mystery flyer is with the XT's? There's no prize this time but I'll tell you if anyone can name him. Enter your answer on our web-site www.closeencounters.co.uk

Win a Kite..!!!

From now until the closing date of midnight 28th August 2007, sponsored by www.kiteworld.co.uk Close Encounters will be hosting a fun competition. The prize will be a Prism Mirage (soon to be renamed the Hypnotist) a two line delta sport kite. In the bag with this kite, are flying lines and the superb, "Freestyle Pilot" Prism DVD - with some fantastic filming of tricks and instruction on how to do them.

All you have to do is submit a photograph of Close Encounters - it can be flying, setting up or posed – what ever! Send your entry to their web-site at www.closeencounterskites.co.uk with your contact details, include your name, home town and how you would like to be contacted if you win. On decision day Allan and Marilyn will give their favourite photos to a representative of Kiteworld.co.uk to choose the winner. No correspondence over the final decision will be entered in to.



Please note that any photos submitted may be used at some time for publicity purposes or on their web-site but no fee is payable for this. The winner's name and home town will be published. The winning photo will be announced at the Bristol Kite Festival over the weekend of 1st and 2nd September 2007 and after that on the Close Encounters and Kiteworld web sites. Close Encounters have a Mirage of their own you can try and a review will follow.