

Pothecary Corner

I have known Ron Despojado, the US number one four line kite flyer, for many years now. A friend of mine was asking me which would be the best Revolution to go for and why so I thought I had better ask the governor. Some of the information (about handles for instance) may not be spot on with some of the kites imported to the UK and Ron told me a couple of weeks ago that he was asked to try out a new variation of the 1.5 but was not sure whether or not it was meant for production. I wouldn't think that Joe Hadsuki would be messing with new ideas if he didn't have something up his sleeve.....?

There may be a John Barressi signature kite out soon – I guess they're saving the big one to name after Ron!



For the longest time I was recommending the Rev 1.5 SLE. It has always been a toss-up between the 1.5 and the EXP. Both are the exact same size and pretty much can have equal performance. The items that differentiate the two models are as follows:

The 1.5 SLE has the fatter leading edge (SLE= Super Leading Edge). This is their standard "off the shelf" configuration. The EXP has the skinnier rods in the leading edge, identical with the vertical rods in both models. The advantage to the fatter leading edge is that it is EVEN MORE responsive to pilot control. I compare it to having rack-and-pinion steering in a sports car. However, more response equals less forgiving and therefore it takes just a little more attention / control on the pilot's part. Also, the SLE is a little heavier and therefore is not as easy to fly in lighter (less than 5 mph) winds.

The EXP was introduced to be the more economical level of quadline flying. However if you compared the two standard off the shelf packages by flying them, everyone likes the 1.5 SLE almost every time.

The EXP comes equipped with softer, smaller foam grips on the control handles. This is recommended for smaller hands, which would not suit most adults. The standard handles furnished with the 1.5 SLE have the stiffer foam and again the stiffness gives the pilot more control & response. The smaller / softer foam handles will tend to make your hands tire more easily.

The EXP "ready to fly" package (kite, handles, line, video) has a more economical (cheaper) lineset which had a bit more stretch to it. Again, less response is the result of the cheaper lineset.

As far as the sail material goes, the EXP again has the economical material. The 1.5 SLE these days

has a mylar panel within its sail configuration. The characteristics of mylar in the sail makes flying it a bit too bumpy- think again of that sports car, this time with stiffer shocks- one will feel the wind more.

For a beginner, do not even consider the Shock-wave, Supersonic, or any Blast model. These models definitely have their unique characteristics which a beginner may not appreciate.

As a solo competitor I flew the 1.5 SLE with the stiffer leading edge. But as a member of Team Too Much Fun, we fly the 1.5 using the "Ultra Light" 3-wrap rods.

RODS: There are three types of rods available for the 1.5 / EXP models. The fatter rod or SLE rod is about 7/16" in diameter. It is only used in the leading edge. This has a sticker on it that says "Revolution Equipped". The skinnier rods are about 1/4" diameter and will have a sticker that says "Ultra-Light". This rod is three layers of graphite. There is an even lighter rod for very light winds. It is also about 1/4" diameter but is 2 layers of graphite and will say "Professional Use Only". Actually there is one more rod but it is very uncommon. Again it is about 1/4" diameter but is 4 layers and the sticker will say "Revolution Equipped" just like the SLE rod.

The 1.5 SLE comes standard with the SLE on the leading edge and "Ultra-Light" rods on the verticals. The EXP will come equipped with "Ultra-Light" all throughout. The "Professional" rods and 4-wrap "Rev Equipped" rods are not furnished with any "off the shelf" configuration.

So... bottom line- get the 1.5 SLE package. In a healthy wind (say 8- 14 mph) it is heaven. It is not much more that the EXP package. However, the EXP would be your choice if price is a strong issue. It is also more suited for a younger flier (the smaller handles). Many EXP owners graduate to the 1.5 SLE and often, their EXP will be an introductory kite, on loan for a new quadline flier.

RON

XT.z by Atelier

The joke goes that the definition of mixed feelings is watching your mother-in-law accidentally reverse your brand new car over a cliff when you just remembered you hadn't insured it!

What category do I put a kite in that looks great in the sky, flies



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extremely well yet close up doesn't give the feeling of money well spent.

To me it looks as though the kite was put together not to fall apart rather than well made. The softer, nylon, silver coloured Chikara used in the front panel to give more billow and take out the wind gusts, tends to make the sewing look imperfect when you are close up – a case of sacrificing aesthetics for performance methinks! Rather annoyingly, there were no instructions with my kites but perhaps they were trying to rush out the early ones before the printing was done. I do like to read what the manufacturer was trying to do and why and how, rather than just "our new kite is wonderful" – it gives you more the feeling of money well spent.



They shouldn't leave to plebs like me to try and work it out – you could say that's just poor marketing.

It's not the sort of kite that anyone less than experienced is likely to start off with so the new owner should be able to fathom it out.

The ring is made from Avia 3mm carbon and is just waiting to pierce the sail during setting up or breaking down in a good wind if you are not very careful.

I have heard the word flimsy used to describe the ring but I have not managed to break mine yet. The French makers may not have heard the name but I am sure a certain Heath Robinson would have been pleased to see the way this part of the kite has been designed.

Use of the new Skyshark rods, Black Diamond Nitro which has been shortened somewhat from the tapered, small end, give good rigidity and strength in the spine and allow the bottom spreaders to be positioned higher. This alters the overall dynamics of the kite and allows it to go easier on to its back. I have had the kite for several weeks at the time of writing and, between bouts of renovating the kitchen, the weather has not been kind enough for me to spend much time with it but I will be out there with it soon and hope to have some video on our site.

Unusual for a freestyle kite the XT.z is surprisingly easy to two point land anywhere in the window but that is because it lays back well when you push forward and again, because of its design it is easy to keep stalled in the middle of the window.

In a high wind the kite does tend to make very rapid movements ground-wards if it does sneak out of the stall so close attention is required here - but that's

pretty much the same with any kite really.

An extra weight is supplied with the kite and some will find that it is easier to keep the kite on its back, nose pointing toward you (a "Fade") if it is added to the tail.

The hoops/rings do help to stop the sail from bunching when you wrap up the kite and this helps to perform other tricks whilst the lines are still wrapped. The hoops, the wide bridle and the secondary, lower bridle fixing to the leading edge all help for the line to slip around and not get caught up in the "Helicopter".

A kiting buddy asked what tricks he couldn't do with this kite that he couldn't do with any of the kites he owns already. Well – that is a good point, an intermediate or even novice flyer will be able to feel a certain amount of difference from their other kites and definitely see how much easier than many others it is to get on its back and then possibly release one hand and pull the other to execute a "Lazy Susan" but only the more experienced and skilled flyers will appreciate the more subtle differences.

The XT.z is of a similar size and quick glance look, to that of the Benson "Deep Space" but has a different feel, which at the moment is bereft of an appropriate adjective. So do I like it? – Well yes I think so - I need more time on my own with it. Do I think it's worth a price tag of around two hundred quid? – I'll let you know later!

Eola Sport

Two new kites from Eola Sport for 2007 are the Genesis (for beginners) yes I know that's cheesy but it wasn't my idea! – and the Neox.



To start - in the beginning (OK I'll stop it now) with The Genesis, a low cost kite where the novice can learn to fly then, with care move on to tricks. How is this possible? Well, unusually for this end of the market, Eola have put some thought into this and produced a model which has the option of weights in the bottom of the spine. There are in fact two weights so that it can be adjusted for different styles and conditions. You must be very careful not to lose the weights on this kite because the method of holding them in is not very well done at all. My advice would be to put some tape around this part before you launch. Strictly speaking – I don't believe that you should have to do something like this with a new kite.

Once you are up, lots Jacob's ladder type tricks are

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achievable, as is evident from the video on their web site but more easily done by an experienced flyer with a delicate hand in a light wind, than a novice trying to learn - if you see what I mean?



Quite a pretty kite, it comes complete with a set of cheap lines and handles in a nice bag and a good book of instructions of how to fly and do tricks, all at around £40.00.

The Neox is a much more substantial kite but this one will cost around the £100.00 mark. A bit of an unusual shape in that the wing tips seem to have been cut off, thus like having a large kite but with short leading edges. I thought at first that this might be a bit of a revelation – I have seen similar before on some prototypes by “Dutchkites” but I was reminded of a conversation with Mark Reed from Prism when after testing some of their kites in a wind tunnel they noted that a lot goes on with the passage of air around the area at the tips of the wings.

After the Genesis, the Neox felt a lot more solid, surprisingly slow for its size and quite easy to manoeuvre. Tricks would be easier for the novice to learn on this one and the experienced flyer would be able to do much more with it too.

The choice of weights on the Neox are easier to change and harder to lose because they fit up inside the bottom of the spine held in by the Velcro safety release as seen on the bottom of the spine of the majority of sport kites. You should like the Neox if you are moving up from a smaller, cheap end kite but maybe not so much if you are moving down from a high end, expensive kite. Come over and try one and tell me what *you* think.

The Hypnotist

When this kite was first launched it was called The Mirage. Apparently some one complained to Prism that they already had a kite by that name and Mark Reed had to change it rather than face the possibility of going to court. So why couldn't he have just added the word Prism and called it the “Prism Mirage”?

I hate to tell you this Mark but guess what my first four-line foil was called made for me by Paul Morgan.

I notice that HQ Invento have a new one out this year called “The Tango” – Didn't they visit our web-site, where we gave the thumbs up to the very nice model from Eola of the same name? OK so who

would like the headache of running a world-wide registry of kite names then?

However I digress - I wanted to talk about the Hypnotist – I rather like it –that's why, sponsored by Kiteworld.co.uk, we are giving a new one away at the end of the season in our competition!



In the same way as the smaller, “Quantum” and “Jazz” Prism kites, the Hypnotist folds easily away into a small bag making it a very suitable travel kite. Unlike the Quantum though, you *have* to break it down each time you take it home because the bag doesn't extend like that of it's smaller sister – a good point missed here by the maker. You get a decent line set with it (I use it on my other kites too!) but you do have to remember to put a peg in the bag as well if you prefer to set up in the old fashioned way like me.

Also with this kite you get the superb “Freestyle Pilot” DVD with that amazing shot of a kite lifting out from under water, shaking off in a flat axel and flying away. Lots of other tricks and some great flying is on this disc too. Although it is not far away from needing an upgrade to some of the latest tricks it is plenty good enough for the beginner and intermediate flyer. (I have to say here that still prefer the Benson influenced, “Trick or Treat” DVD).

As normal with this range of kites there are easy adjustments to keep you flying in a wide wind range and, in high winds, the pull is unbelievably light. Precision is outstandingly good and the kite is big and slow enough to use as a pairs kite on 100 foot lines if you didn't want to spend too much money to have a lot of fun down that route. No, this isn't the best trick kite you can buy, but you can put it through a fair few without getting too frustrated and it's a nice kite just to go out and fly around without feeling you have to do too much – It looks great in the sky.

A quick reminder here that to win a Hypnotist you have to take a photo of Marilyn and me – “Close Encounters” and have it chosen as the best by one of the Kiteworld team at the Bristol festival in September. Full details are on our web-site www.closeencounterskites.co.uk . If you are not on the web, then you need to send your photo to Kiteworld.

You can find us at many of the festivals throughout the summer including Weymouth, Rougham and Basingstoke – Your last chance will be at Portsmouth. Come and have a go with a Hypnotist or one of the many other kites we carry with us. Remember- we fly single lines and quads too and have

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many of those you can try as well.

EO 10 from Prism



The single line that I will probably flying most this summer will be the EO 10 by Prism – Why..? Well the main reason, apart from I like it, is that it is so

easy to put up. Honestly, never have I seen, nor am I likely to see such a complex kite be erected so easily and quickly. You just take off the carry clasp and it pops into shape – that’s it!

I wasn’t there at the time but I think I am right in saying that designer Phil McConnachie’s original took the best kite award at The Bristol Festival last year – I’m not surprised – no wonder Prism wanted to be associated with it!

I found it great fun to fly. It launches with tremendous speed with only a gentle tug on the line reminiscent of some sort of alien ship lifting straight up into the sky.

I only had a short time to play before rushing back to make the deadline for this article and the wind on top of the hill near Marlborough golf course was pretty choppy. The kite is very sensitive and reacts quickly to fluctuations in the wind or, when it’s



steady, to pulls on the line. I have not learned to do some of the tricks on purpose yet, but with a mixture of the conditions and me pulling and moving, the EO 10 was doing the sorts of things you see the experts doing with two line deltas – roll-ups, axles, fades – it even folded flat in the air and popped out again – Amazing! – I can’t wait to get out there again, hopefully next time in a more constant wind.

Points I didn’t like were (1) When it landed, it always went in to the dead position and could only sometimes be manoeuvred by the pilot in to a re-launch, (2) If you keep the supplied line and winder

in the mesh bag which is part of the retaining/ carrying clasp – you are going to lose it because it doesn’t close all the way across the top and (3) It does demand rather a lot of sky from side to side on a choppy day.

Nevertheless I would heartily recommend this robust and colourful kite as extremely good VFM at just under £60.00. I just hope that once Prism have read this they send me two more so that we can put on a really good show with them in the festival main arenas this year.

If your budget doesn’t go that far, instead of this version, which has the 10 intersecting, elliptical planes, you could go for the EO6 at around £33.00 which, odd as it may seem has six intersecting elliptical planes but will still give you the same soaring and tumbling excitement as its bigger brother (or sister - to be PC).

Hopefully, in the next issue, I will be reporting on some other great single line kites new out from HQ Invento.

No-one has guessed who the mystery flyer with the Transfer was in the last issue of The Kiteflier so - mystery man he shall remain!

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