SKY PARAGLIDERS

NEWS FROM THE SKY

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EN certification categories

"What do you fly?"
"New EN C by Sky Paragliders."

Have you already heard a conversation like that? Have you ever experienced the usual flame wars about the glide and speed; and mistake proof arguments when flying wing by wing; and the EN B performed better than the EN D? I guess yes, this is one of the most common small talks of paragliding world everywhere.
How do we, in SKY PARAGLIDERS, react to the usual peer pressure?

Safety

We strongly believe that the category is mostly used to define safety and that the safety is closely linked with the aspect ratio. The performance we try to introduce is not achieved by high aspect ratio machines that must be tamed later to pass category that should never shelter the "high aspect ratio wings".
We believe in the best balance, hight quality of the design that could be well reflected in the manufacturing quality. Our production team is trained to meet the demands of the Sky Paragliders designer, Alexandre Paux, who is already famous by making the corrections on the panels of 0,5 mm. Thus we create well balanced gliders and do not have to deploy high aspect ratio concepts in lower categories to achieve the performance needed.

Performance to compensate the pilot's limits?

It is the pilot who can make the best glider out of the worst. Hardly any glider by itself is able to bring the average pilot to the top. There are quite a few pilots who cannot take off at 1 PM because of strong thermals, some of them wait till the evening to glide down and enjoy the excellent glide and speed.
This is not the way we see and experience paragliding. All pilots should fly the wing which they can handle by 150%. Only then they use the real performance of the particular wing at the level of 100%.
Using 70% of a high performance wings means taking risks.

EN - what is good for?

Try to imagine that all the companies will have to stop declaring which category the wing was certified at. And now, take it one by one, two liners in EN D, 3 liners and plastic rod reinforcements in EN B. Can you profile the right pilot who should fly EN B wing? Can the pilot handle the 3 liner and plastic rods even though the wing is EN B certified?
We do not want to be part of the EN categories marketing and we will strongly support the move to cancel the categories as these should be used to qualify the safety level of the pilots. It should _not_ be used for marketing the designing skills of EN C/D gliders being pushed through EN B and marketed as a big success.
Hence, SKY PARAGLIDERS will always declare that the wing is best only when evaluated in the whole complex of values, not only speed and performance.

Summary

So, is there any summary? Well, yes, indeed. Please, do not push for downgrading the models into a different categories as this is something we do not support. Even if all the others do so, SKY PARAGLIDERS will remain on its own, even though off main stream.

Happy landings

SKY: „Alexandre, can you explain why higher aspect ratio make gliders less safe? more sensitive?"

Alexandre: „All manufacturers are using smaller aspect ratio more for school gliders than for competition gliders and the reason is : higher aspect ratio is more difficult, as cords are smaller and pilot looses homogenity. Imagine a square 1*1 and rectangle 0.5*2, rigidity will not be the same for both shapes."

SKY: „Alexandre, in terms of performance what could you expect by increasing aspect ratio from 6 to 7?"

Alexandre: „By increasing aspect ratio, you will minimize vortex effect and increase performance. This is a mathematics rule and could be applied to rigid wings. But unfortunately, soft materials and mathematics are not the best friends. Increasing aspect ratio, will as well increase troubles of rigidity, stability...and will affect performance. It is often case that compromise and performance don't make sense if you could not use it. For instance, in 2010 one competition glider was over all the other, and it was not due to the biggest aspect ratio."

SKY: „There are two terms, "layout aspect ratio" and "projected aspect ratio", which is the right value? Did each designer have the same way to define aspect ratio?"

Alexandre: „Layout aspect ratio, is the right one, and yes the way to define it is not always the same, and it is why aspect ratio could never be the right value to define performance."

What exactly makes ANTEA 2 better than ANTEA?

SKY: „What exactly makes Antea 2 better than Antea?"

Alexandre: „Well, don't expect me to provide the general public with the recipe. Generally speaking what brings the improvement is a different airfoil... and three more years of experience in exact balancing and tuning of the aerodynamical features. The result is stunning as it brings at the same time more performance, a safer behaviour & a nicer handling. Maximum speed has been improved by 10% and gliding ratio at half range of the speed system of Antea 2 (48 km/h) is more than one point better! Antea 2 does not only easily keep up with the best wings of the C category in maximum glide, it also outperforms them at maximum speed and outfoxes them through its agility in thermal climbs."

SKY: „What is the difference between Antea 2 and Atis 3?"

Alexandre: „There is not one difference, but a world of difference. Though Antea 2 is an easy going paraglider in the C category, it definitely requires more skills from the pilot than a B glider like Atis 3. The difference might not appear stunning on a smooth ridge soaring, but it will soon become obvious in rough thermal conditions. As for the advantage of Antea 2 compared to Atis 3, it is of course the performance and especially the speed range and the glide at high speed."

SKY: „What did you especially focus on in the process of ANTEA 2's development?"

Alexandre: „We focused on not being driven by trends and fashions, but by technically well-thought-out features and we focused on bringing performance which is not only pure performance (best glide, lowest sinkrate or highest speed), but optimized performance (excellent sinrate for thermaling from 30 km/h to 38 km/h and excellent glide from 38 km/h to 50 km/h)."

SKY: „Who is Antea 2 designed for?"

Alexandre: „Antea 2 has been designed for experienced pilots with very regular practise who are aiming for long distance flights. The airfoil used for Antea 2 is clearly oriented towards good performance at higher speed; it is therefore a nonsense to fly the Antea 2 on the brakes. We clearly advise to fly the Antea 2 with a harness setting corresponding to the one foreseen by the EN 926-1 certification standard (see detailed information in the owners manual); a stable setting of the harness is the key to a fine and precise handling that will allow the pilot to use the stunning potential of the Antea 2 at its best."

SKY: „What are the main advantages of Antea 2?"

Alexandre: „• Antea 2 performs at the best level in the C category; it glides at least as good as any three-liner on the market and outperforms competing models in maximum speed.
• Antea 2 is just a well born paraglider, it does not need rods to correct its nose and is not doped by huge aspect ratio. It performs in a quiet and safe way and remains as easy to pack as a paraglider should be.
• The spirit of lightness also makes the glider different. The Antea 2 is almost 15% lighter compared to most the C models available on the market. The Antea 2 is not only light to carry but also light during launching and light in handling."

SKY: „Is Sky planning to design another C glider?"

Alexandre: „Our decision will depend on the political decisions regarding competition gliders. The idea is more to work on a nice D class glider unless this category is completely spoilt with killer competition machines."

Stefranzie Book available

After almost one year of preparations, interviews, editing and designing, **STEFRANZIE ON TOUR** is out. It is available via **THERMIK** ordering system and also directly at Sky Paragliders headquarters.

The big thanks goes to Matthias Hauptman for how he managed to coordinate, edit, proofread and interview Stafanie and Franz, the main heros of the book. It is just mazing reading!

How the glider is born?

Bringing coal to Newcastle? Well, we hope not. Once again we shot a film about the Sky production and the way the gliders are born in Sky. Why don't you give it a look? **Check it out at** http://vimeo.com/30007084.

Wishing you cloudless skies and a lot of flying adventures.

Your SKY Team

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