

OZONE INSTINCT SPORT+ 3 9M



THE HYPE:

For 2009 the Instinct line up features three models to satisfy all levels and riding requirements. A new tip profile appears after the design team worked on giving the rider more feeling through the bar. The new control bar is clean and very tidy with an ultra-smooth, incredibly easy-to-use trimming system. A new through-the-bar flag out safety system has been introduced, which combined with Ozone's excellent moulded chicken-loop, gives the rider an unmatched control system. The Sport bridges the gap between flat kites and the classic C shape kites, offering a more 'grunty' feel whilst having heaps of de-power and amazing water re-launch characteristics.

Unhooked riding is made simple due to the direct handling and easy pop. Hooked-in the kite gives you that blast-off feeling as you bury the edge of your board and hang on as it rockets you skyward. A true freeride kite for the progressive rider.

TEST TEAM NOTES:

Again, you're reassured that you're getting a quality product early on, this time before you even get the kite out of the bag. The Ozone bags are worth having just on their own with all sorts of useful clips and robust pockets – you could travel with this bag. There is also a second, quick drying kite bag for everyday use as well as a special repair kit that comes in its own bag, rather than just a plastic bag from the factory. As you can tell, lots of attention to detail that doesn't stop there. The canopy is meticulously stitched together, it's seriously solid with no flapping.

The bar is clean, clear and functional and does its job well, and this is the motto for the kite as a whole really. The safety system is excellent and one of the kite's top aspects is the tuning cleat. Like last year, it's so smooth. There isn't loads of movement available on the depower line, but for a small movement you get loads of depower. A lot of kites completely change characteristics when depowered, this doesn't. The ease of tuning and the way it behaves afterwards is one of the biggest plus points. The bobbles on the depower strap are really easy to grab with no fuss and the whole system is well thought out and put together. The chicken-loop line is plastic coated for longer life – it's never going to wear out and slides beautifully. There are line adjusters on the sides, lots of chicken-loop safety options, a mini-fifth line safety as well as 'suicide' option, nice one pump on the kite; you name it, it's on here, and all very neat.

We tested the Sport over a couple of days during a period of gusty easterlies, blowing in between force five and seven, so we were testing the kite at the mid to top-end of its range.

Again, you notice that you don't quite get 100% depower, but still a respectable amount, and like the Airush, the Sport delivers the power very well in a modern and progressive manner. As soon as you put the kite up with that super-clean, simple bar in your hands you're just over-joyed by how easy it all is to use, taking any complication out of kiting. The relaunch is really simple; no issues, although riding on suicide there's a bit of pull in the kite

while it's down, but it rolls over easily and quickly, so not a problem, just something to be aware of. Also, the four line simplicity of the set up meant that if the kite rolled through itself when we were relaunching in the waves it was really easy to pass the bar back through itself and relaunch in an instant without having to head back in.

The Sport has really quick flying characteristics through the air – you can absolutely zoom along on this kite. And that speed translates into a good, boosty quality. The jumps are high with good hang-time and you get brought down nice and smoothly, too. Riding upwind is effortless as the kite flies off the front lines quite a lot, making the steering nice and light, but the kite did have a tendency to rock onto its front lines if you over shot it while it was overhead or you left the kite too close to the edge of the window on transitions for example, taking a little while for the kite to drift back and allow the back lines to take steering effect again, but it was very forgiving.

The steering is more pivotally orientated than powered, making it a good early kite looper's kite. Your technique doesn't have to be quite so good as the loops are quick and more forgiving than some freestyle kites. Unhooked, the kite was also a joy and would be fun for a lot of people. Requiring just a little adjustment on the bar (although any kite would have done in the strong, gusty winds of today, though) what made it so good was that the kite didn't change character unhooked or when depowered. It behaved the same; no reversing or forward flying, just lovely bar pressure and the kite maintained its responsive nature. Someone used to flying hybrid kites rather than high-performance freestyle kites will find this a good step up.

And responsive it is! This kite is really fast and with good boosty jumps it instils confidence because it's also forgiving. Possibly not for really early intermediates as the kite does maintain some power rather than depowering the full 100%, but that is the nature of good freestyle kites.

SUMMARY:

Beautifully poised, quick, agile and with good boost under its bonnet, the Sport is a very polished article. From the bag, to the spare bag and from the chicken-loop all the way up to the kite the care and attention administered in the design process of this kite is evident. A nice, clean, easy-to-use product that will go well in most hands.

KW LIKED: The speed as well as its super jumpy nature and great hang-time. The Ozone is just so much fun. Aerodynamically sound, locked and rigid, even in these pretty gusty conditions.

KW WOULD CHANGE: Out and out kite loop addicts might like a little more oomph in the turn.

SIZES: 15, 13, 11, 9, 7 and 5m

www.flyozone.com