

# REVIEWS

## THE INTERNET VS REAL LIFE

Photos: Si Mitchell  
Riding/Crashing: Dom Moore

### Kites:

- AIR EVOLUTION Z-AIRBOX 10m
- OZONE FRENZY FYX 9m
- LIBRE VAMPIR II 4m
- OZONE ACCESS XC 09 8m

### Buggies:

- LIBRE V-MAX II



**If you've been dipping into forum land of late, you'll notice the multi-headed Hydra that is the 'foils Vs. LEI' debate has sprung up again in several long burning threads. Every couple of years this debate comes back to distract us from our work and get us all wound up about nothing, for much of the loudest opinions this time – as always – seems to be from those with what might be known as cognitive dissonance. This is the phenomenon whereby one purchases an item, and invests a lot emotional currency in said item and thus needs to persuade their self by way of persuading others, that they, and only they, have made and are capable of making the right choice when it comes to buying kites.**

It's a tricky thing isn't it? That whole telling someone what they need to make their kiting better, over the internet, when you have never met them, and are basing your judgement on a few hastily typed lines of text. If nothing else though, logging on to a forum and bashing away at the keyboard can actually be quite a laugh, and so as long as nobody gets hurt, let the opinions rain down like stair rods.

What made me read so much of these foils Vs. LEIs threads was the experience we'd had on a couple of the kites on test this issue. With each generation of kites, be they foils or pump ups, the tweaks and changes are often quite tangible, but while we were perhaps expectant of a bit more turning speed here, a bit more polish there, we totally weren't prepared for the actual feel of the kites in the hands. The feel is very hard to quantify, because it's that situation where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. It's that point where the kite stops being just a bundle of bridles and cloth and actually seems to breathe and come alive.

All kites turn 'on' like an engine or a machine does, but whether they all strike a chord with the kiter and come alive is not so certain. One thing we've learned over the years of flying anything from the smallest two liners through to the most aggressive wakestyle devices is that it doesn't matter what 'category' or pigeonhole a kite fits into when it comes to 'feel'. Like many areas in life where the liberated view sees beyond the category – be that people, countries, music, whatever – when you put the blinkers on and tar all similar things with the same brush, you're suddenly limiting yourself to the richness of experience available to you.

Debate is healthy and necessary, and new kites coming up should be full of questions: asking if a certain type of kite is obsolete now, or if another type will allow more aggressive riding, asking why one pro rides one type and not the other. But sometimes you cannot help get the feeling that some of what is written is hearsay based upon hearsay, and some poor sucker at the end is buying it. Alongside any further foils Vs. LEI debates, I'd like to see a thread running where the debate is: what's better, two hours a night posting black and white opinions online, or two hours a weekend flying the kites you're not sure about instead?

## KITES

## OZONE FRENZY FYX 9M

£520 kite only, £215 Megatron control system [www.flyozone.com](http://www.flyozone.com)**ABOUT THE FRENZY FYX**

The FYX is the 7<sup>th</sup> (!) generation of the Frenzy, and you'd think by now that designer Rob Whittall would have run out of ways to keep improving the design. But apparently, he hasn't because the FYX features an improved bar, safety system and what felt to us like improved flying characteristics.

**RIDING WITH THE FYX**

The first outing we had was in a marginal 8knots; hardly inspiring conditions. However, the FYX started to show us its potential the minute we launched it. It flies very purposefully straight to the zenith, and parks there, poised, bristling with energy as if to say, "Come on, let's ROCK!!". Straight away the tight, rapid turning impressed us and the feedback from the kite – even in light winds – was fantastic. In these fluffy light winds, the FYX was solid enough to get us trucking around and flinging into a few unhooked moves. Two hours later we were grinning and just knew we had to try this kite in some proper winds. I found an inland terrain site with banks to carve around and put the FYX up in around 15knots. The bar pressure in good winds felt perfectly springy with a lovely 'biting' point at which the FYX delivered a sweet burst of power. Throwing a loop on this thing is exhilarating: it's a fast foil and powers round tight and fast – but not in the gutless stall turn way. If you loop the FYX when it is powered up, it pulls harder. Loop it depowered, it loops slower and with less grunt. The way it should be. Carving into the banks with the kite fully depowered switches off a good amount of pull which meant I could keep to my intended line, but the FYX is not a total depower kite. That said, it still turns well even with the bar right out – it's a terrain rider's dream.

OK some stuff about the bar: The same three line set up as last year, the Megatron bar is a nifty bit of kit and you can leash it suicide style (for unhooked antics), leashless (but still with the leashless safety – clutter free for light winds) or with a leash running to the landing line (best for maximum safety in big winds). It's compact, the chicken loop is great for hooking in and out of quickly, and the leashing options cover every type of riding. The trim strap is also better; never snags, never tangles, very smooth to operate – even in sketchy conditions.

**CONCLUSION**

We're running out of space but the 9m FYX has a feel all in a class of its own: smooth, quick, responsive, great feedback, superb unhooked, top safety systems. But most of all it is downright fun, and flies great over a massive wind range. The FYX has a magic quality that makes it addictive and it's the sort of kite you want to fly again and again. I'm sending an email NOW to Ozone to ask if I can hang on to this one for a bit longer...It's not a kite, it's a companion.

**UPPERS**

This 9m is fast, lively, safe and we loved the bar. Has that special ingredient that makes you want to just ride anywhere, anytime.

**DOWNERS**

On leashless safety systems, just remember to take care if you tug the centre lines to make the kite climb in light winds as you may accidentally trigger the primary safety.

