

S2 Maui Alchemy 5,3

by Stefan

Tuesday 28th of Aug was possibly the last warm and windy day for many surfers here in the northern scandinavian latitudes. It was also an extension of the time-honored 'Venetian' tradition (Venetsialaiset) of closing the summer cottage season, a celebration of water, fire and light. We surfers modify it to mean water, wind and light. Now from here on, it starts to get colder day by day, eventually much colder. This is not a bad thing, because then big winds and waves arrive with greater regularity. Too bad the days get shorter quickly. Yesterday was also a marathon day of windsurfing, starting just after midday and ending after 21:30 at night, with over 7 hours of water time. At over 61° N latitude, the days are still long, with nautical twilight extending past 22:00.

S2 Maui Alchemy 5,3 2017 sail

After riding the Chameleon 101 for some time, the wind started to pick up and come down to the water surface better, although still patchy and gusty. It was time to try the Alchemy on the Chameleon 93 (tri-fin configuration). The Alchemy was rigged to specification according to downhaul and boom length, and outhaul tension was rigged to around +1 cm from neutral. I take neutral as being the point where the sag of the sail from its own weight is compensated. I do this by taking the downhaul line between thumb and forefinger (so I can't squeeze too tightly) and pulling and releasing a little, the point where 'hard' tension starts is the neutral point. I also check particularly how the second batten from the bottom (the main batten) rides against the mast. There was enough batten overlap past the mast to know the Alchemy was rigged with enough power. The leech on the Alchemy does rig a little differently than some other sails, not showing very much looseness in the leech.

On the water, I was immediately more than comfortable with the sail. The previous hours of time on the water suddenly disappeared since the sail was very light to manage. **The Alchemy develops power in such a refined manner, generating usable drive very precisely, so it feels light** and effortless. The Alchemy is not a springy sail by any means, the power delivery is just so smooth. It does need more time to build power and plane the board compared to the Attitude Rebel, so the Rebel packs more 'punch' in patchy conditions where the gusts are shorter.



Pollari is actually good for testing how a sail behaves in gusts, since the horseshoe-shaped bay has points of land at its opening. These points of land generate well-defined wind acceleration avenues near the edges of the bay. In the first run out, I headed for the stronger gusts peeling off of Karhuluoto point. **The Alchemy shrugged the strong gust zone off like it was not even there**, swallowing up what was useful and **transferring it almost unnoticeably into useful drive**. The entire sail material and layout seems to be working in sync with the wind pressure to transfer power smoothly, not so much relying on the leech twisting off the gusts. When I initiated the board into the first powered bottom turn, I immediately realised that **I was working with a premium wavesailing engine. The control, precision and lightness of the sail was transformative: it immediately improved my wavesailing**. On the wave, you always feel what the sail is doing in a gentle, well-balanced way. It goes neutral beautifully when required, it drives the board efficiently in the bottom turn, and is easy to handle to either keep power or release power on the top turn. The sail feels almost invisible, **allowing you to forget about the sail and enjoy the wave**, regardless of the conditions. I am not saying this for marketing hype, this is what you really will experience with this sail. **This is a top wavesail without a doubt.**