



## 2011 Gaastra Sail & Tabou Board Review

By Kevin McGillivray

Since people have been asking.....After a week of play on new gear in PSC, here's my take on some of the new Gaastra/ Tabou line-up:

### 2011 Gaastra IQ

This is the new Gaastra model that is replacing the Echo line which was primarily a freestyle sail. Before I had seen it, I was assuming it would be a super-light and fragile sail along the lines of the Echo ( I completely trashed one before.) However, the IQ did not feel like it was a *freestyle only* sail to me and seemed tough enough to take a few punches. It actually took a pretty good one in the Chili Bowl one day...right in front of everyone....sheesh. From what I hear, the IQ was developed around Thomas Traversa and his "new school" waveriding (with freestyle mixed in.) So, *I'd* say it's more of a lightweight wave sail that can be used for freestyle, but that's just me.

I rode the 5.0 which is a four batten set up. If you move up to the 5.3 you get 5 battens. The sail design is a lower luff/ longer boom than the Manics I ride. But on the wave, I didn't really notice the longer boom and got used to it pretty quick. The 5.0 IQ felt nice and light. I felt pretty powered up when I thought it was actually lighter than 5.0 conditions. To compare, I got back on my 5.3 Manic (2010) one day. The Manic felt nice too! One difference that was very noticeable to me was the way the Manic accelerated. The IQ powered up fine and you just started planing without really thinking about it. With the Manic, I could **feel** the sail get power. You start *accelerating* and taking off like the feeling you get pressed against the seat in a high-performance sportscar when you test the 0-60mph. So.... I guess it's a little bit of a toss-up. I really liked the IQ and I really like the Manic. I think I'd go with Manics for strictly down-the-line, radical wavesailing or Jalama conditions. But, I'd have no problem using the IQ for C-St, Leo, County or if I wanted an all-around sail for both freeride when it's flat/ waves when they're there.

### 2011 Tabou Pocket Wave

This year's model has an "optional" tri-fin set up. The overall design hasn't changed other than the fins. You can run it as a tri-fin and use a smaller center fin (all come with the board) or take out the thrusters and throw your regular sized fin (not included) in there. I rode the 80L as a tri-fin since I'm already very familiar with the single set up. Last year's 80 was pretty much my favorite board that I've ever had.

The Pocket was its usual **very** comfortable board. It felt floaty for an 80L, but still very maneuverable. Easy when schlogging and planed quickly. I could feel a *slight* difference in speed when planing out with the tri set up being a hair slower. But it was *barely* noticeable and I didn't really feel it once on the wave. Turns were nice. It drove off the bottom turn like the single, quick turn off the top, too. With the thrusters, I could really feel it grip through the top turn a little better than the single. Felt like it would just keep turning if you wanted it to. I **really** like that board and I like the fact that it has options. You absolutely can't go wrong with the single set up which has already proven itself. I liked the way it felt with the thrusters, too! (continued on next page)

## 2011 Tabou Pocket Wave - cont'd

Because of all that and the fact that it is a great user friendly board, I'd HIGHLY recommend it to anyone. Knowing what the board can do, how comfortable and forgiving it is, and given most people's abilities....if I could, that is the board that I would stock Solosports with. By the way, this is the board I was riding in the video if you saw it. <http://www.vimeo.com/15909866>

## 2011 Da Curve Team Edition

The Team Edition has a quad set up (or twin if you want.) I first rode the 79L. For 2011, the design is pretty much the same except for some reason, they made the straps set at a super wide stance. When I first went out sailing and started planing, I needed a GPS to locate my back strap!! I just stuck with it for a while to see how the board felt. ....not really, it was just a super low tide and I was too lazy to walk all the way in just to change the straps. Board felt nice! I felt it was a little slower to plane than the single or Pocket and a little slower *while* planing, but again, I didn't really feel it on the wave, so who cares!

I eventually changed up the straps to a more normal stance. Now with a comfortable stance, I really started to get on it and see how it would respond. I was really curious how it would drive through the bottom turn since I like a good single fin feel. The twin I had used before was such a "different" ride than I was used to and I didn't think I'd be too impressed. To me, the twin felt like it was a little **too** quick of a turn and I'd seem to lose speed too fast. The quad felt very different from the twin and I felt like I could drive it more like the single out of the bottom turn. It still didn't feel exactly like a single, but it definitely had more drive than the twin. So...maybe an acceptable compromise- a little less drive off the bottom than a single/ a quick (but scaled back) turn like a twin. There were a few times when I really cranked it around thinking I'd be at the lip way too late and it still got me there in time with no loss of speed. That was nice!

Off the top, I could really feel the board grip through the top turn and I mean GRIP! Kinda like the thruster Pocket, it felt like it would just carry on through the turn if you wanted it to. The more I rode it, the more I liked it! I also took out the 85L to see how that felt. Matt had mentioned that to him, it felt tiny for an 85L. I didn't notice that as much and it felt plenty floaty to me. It did feel side to side wobbly to me, though- narrow tail. Not a big deal, just a little more work when schlogging.

Going into the trip, I had assumed I'd just replace my favorite Pocket from last year with another Pocket. At the end of the trip, I was **really** torn on which board. I really liked both the Pocket and the Da Curve almost equally. I ended up going with the 79 Da Curve quad. My decision was based mostly on the responsiveness that I felt with it and Matt's observations that I was riding it a little better than the Pocket. But I wouldn't necessarily recommend the Da Curve over the Pocket to everyone. There are trade-offs. So if someone asked me which board they should get, it would depend on the person asking's ability and what they were looking for- planing, comfort, radical turns, onshore v. sideshore, waves only or bump and jump, too, etc.

Hopefully we'll see ya at the beach soon and just ask if you want to try some of the new or even old gear. I have the 79 Da Curve and the 5.0 IQ. If you're a tech-spec type, everything can be found here:

<http://www.tabou-boards.com/boards/2011>

<http://www.gaastra.com/sails/>

### About the Author

Kevin conducts wave sailing clinics in Punta San Carlos twice a year with Matt Pritchard and is a sponsored team rider for:  
Tabou Boards, Gaastra Sails, Nolimitz Masts and Kaenon Polarized

