

APPLETREE APPLE SKIPPER DW V2

As downwinding proliferates and cements itself as a discipline, equipment is rapidly refining itself and this completely revised board from Appletree is a prime example. The original Skipper DW took a lot of cues from kayak and race SUP design; it was long, narrow, pointy and purposeful with a rounded hull. Now that downwinding celebrates yet another birthday and the genesis of parawing is upon us, requirements are different for this style of board.

There's a decent range of sizes available with four stock sizes ranging from 94l at 7ft through to 118l at 8ft. Being a custom manufacturer, you can tailor your width for no extra charge from 17.5" for the more dedicated downwinder, through to 20" for someone seeing stability and perhaps more of a crossover into traditional SUP foil. Volumes in this case top out at 121l.

Appletree vacuum-infused construction got a little weighty on their higher volume models so some changes have been made in the laminate to strike the correct balance between mass and durability. This meant our Skipper DW V2 felt considerably lighter than the previous model in a similar volume, but perhaps give it a little more respect when throwing it in the back of your van.

Version 2 sees a massive departure in terms of hull shape. It's narrower and more pointed at both the tail and nose. Straight away you'll notice the hull shape is far more boxy, giving the board substantially improved stability in its roll axis and more purposeful tracking when paddling forward. The squarer hull also seems to release more cleanly. This is coupled with a far more pronounced two stage rocker in both the nose and the tail which means the standing area is deeper in the water. Again, this removes the corky feeling of standing and means when you're static everything is planted and stable. This rocker also means you've got far more control when pumping the board onto plane and you can get more pumping angle and effort into the foil in that all-important takeoff phase. The more pronounced rocker in the tail also means it's less likely to catch on the wave or bump. The sharp rails run all the way into the nose area which has a speedboat-like V where the board penetrates and parts the water ahead, channeling to the underside to create more lift. When you compare it side to side with the Mid Length from Appletree, some design influence has definitely been shared between the two boards.

In a sport where translating every joule of energy through to the foil is extremely important, the deck area is a massive consideration and there's plenty of subtle features hidden here. There's a light concave in the standing area and at the rear of the pad there's a little kick and some channels for the water to drain out. Some extra



hex glass is hidden in the laminate under here making it exceptionally stiff. The deckpad is a little smoother than the standard Appletree diamond pattern, which is a little more forgiving if you're potentially kneeling a lot. The majority of the volume is distributed under the standing area, which also makes a lot of sense.

The crossover into parawing and K-wing is perhaps an inevitable job for the Skipper DW, and its increased stability will massively help those formative sessions, or more challenging sea states before you want to step down to a mid-length.

The Skipper DW has had a massive overhaul, all of which in our opinion has been positive. The board is lighter, more stable and takes off more quickly and feels more comfortable under aggressive carving. Its directness underfoot and translation of the foil feel is best in class, and we think a lot of that magic comes from the deck construction.

APPLETREE APPLE SKIPPER DW V2

TAKE OFF	ROLL STABILITY
████████████████████	████████████████████
TOUCH DOWN	FORWARD/BACKWARD STABILITY
████████████████████	████████████████████
PUMPING	GENERAL STABILITY
████████████████████	████████████████████
SURFACE TRACKING	DECK COMFORT
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KT SUPER K V2 PRO CARBON

Keith Taboul's legendary shaper status precedes him, and with notable foil heroes like Kane de Wilde and Kai Lenny on the books, the Maui-based brand undeniably has something of a mythical status. Originally drawing from the Dragonfly concept, the downwind influenced mid-length shape has been further refined from the V1 Super K, and in the case of this board, an all-new Pro Carbon construction has been implemented shaving off 20% of the weight of the standard carbon version, and without too horrific a price increase.

The Super K V2 is a true multi-discipline targeting affair and is available in a comprehensive 12 sizes, starting off at 30L, and ranging up to a full bodied 120L. We tested the 80L as a 90kg rider across wing, parawing and foil assist. Build-wise, it's a lightweight EPS core with full carbon multi-layered shell including biaxial as well as uni-directional carbon. This full carbon sandwich results in an 80L board which sits at 4.4kg, including strap inserts, which is not to be sniffed at. The surface finish is quite unique with a marbly silver paint effect further enhancing its premium feel.

Shape-wise, it's a slender affair with smooth, gimmick-free lines and subtle, but useful features. The deck area has a gently concaved dip under the front foot to line up flat with the foil angle. The deckpad is a thinner, micro-corduroy pattern with the lines running fore to aft. This gives a great level of grip, ability to move your feet and all-important translation of board feeling. The nose has a slight dome in the front area to maintain a bit of volume. The hull shape has some relatively gentle chamfering at the rear section near the tail, but as this progresses to the front third of the nose section it's smoothed, meaning if you do catch the nose it'll glance off the water rather than grip like some of the harsher edged boards. A vent plug sits in the rear of the board, tucked behind the leash point, this will be useful for air travel or to get it to dry out if you do manage to breach the tough carbon shell. A longer-than-average 14" foil track is going to accommodate whatever system you decide to throw at it. We tested with the Armstrong MAV2 which sat three-quarters of the way forward, as well as the KT Nomad, which as you would expect sat more or less central. The box placement is relatively far forward for a mid-length, which made it fly balanced when unweighted, making for easy foot switches.

In practice, regardless of your discipline, this is an eager board to build speed. An efficient takeoff allows downsizing of foils and wings without feeling under gunned. Release is smooth and progressive, and with almost no surface suction the foil initiates fast, like a mini DW board. Once up its bullet-like shape pairs well with faster and more performant foils; it sheds wind like a ghost, particularly no-



ticeable with minimum drag when running into wind or in an offshore wave scenario. For learning to foil assist, the 80L board has some application, particularly if you're thinking of doing some more exposed downwinding, and want some safety volume or want to work your way down to smaller foils quickly. Signal is uninterrupted, as they've made the sensible step to integrate some fiberglass windows in. Parawinging a sub bodyweight board like this takes a little technique but was very achievable and again this quick tracking and early release worked well. The stiff carbon construction, balance and decent foil feeling meant that the board pumped extremely well through the sections when stowed, and without doubt an above-bodyweight version of the board would be fine to learn the art on, as the widths are relatively generous for their volumes, and yield a fair amount of roll stability. Outside the limits of our test board, the larger sizes could definitely be SUP foiled with ease.

2025 will definitely be known as the year of the mid-length, and with the general foiling populus ability level now aligning with a narrower board and all the benefits this brings in terms of foil size, power requirements are becoming irresistible to even the most staunch squarer board rider. The Super K V2 Carbon is a prime example of this, spanning the different genres of foiling effortlessly and offering a decent level of accessibility. Whether you're more discipline specific or just fancy a mid-size quiver killer you can chuck into most situations, it's dimensionally sensible and the perfect Swiss Army knife board.

KT SUPER K V2 PRO CARBON

TAKE OFF	ROLL STABILITY
████████████████████	████████████████████
TOUCH DOWN	FORWARD/BACKWARD STABILITY
████████████████████	████████████████████
PUMPING	GENERAL STABILITY
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SURFACE TRACKING	DECK COMFORT
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CORE HALO

With the release of last year's Halo Pro, CORE made a lightweight, stiff, high-end wing aimed for more advanced riders with a full Aluula airframe. In a move to make something both performant and more affordable, and in a trend we're seeing across the wing and kite market from various angles, existing models are being reverse engineered from an Aluula airframe, which has been a recent technical and marketing focus for many brands, back to more traditional Dacron. The Halo comes in a comprehensive range of seven sizes, from 2.4m all the way up to 6m, and it comes in a long, narrow storage bag with shoulder straps to house the boom. A waistbelt or wrist leash is available to purchase separately depending on how you like to roll.

So let's start with the revised materials which combine to form quite an intricate and sophisticated build. The airframe is made from three different grades of performance Dacron. The central strut joint section comprises of two layers of ExoTex 2 with radial stitching spreading load throughout this section. The span out to the wingtip is then an all-new ExoTex HD, which is stiffer, lighter and forms the majority of the tube until the last segments in the wingtip which reverts back to ExoTex 2 in a single layer. With this cunning fabric utilization, the

front tube diameter is only slightly increased over its Aluula sibling. The canopy comprises of a three-core CoreTex 2 ripstop with a radial cut and seaming channeling load evenly. Three batten pockets flank each side of the wing containing some short fiberless battens to control the trailing edge and further minimize vibration.

The Bionic boom is a unique design, with the majority of the booms on the market running straight and parallel with the strut. There's a kink in the boom for the front hand grip which orientates the grip towards you, increasing comfort and enabling the all-important pistol grip move, and also allowing one-handed control if you grip the boom around the mid-point. It's also extremely easy to hook up a harness loop to, if that's your jam. In a way, it's mimicking a twin-handle setup which often have an angled front grip but saving weight with only two attachment points. These two wide bases spread the load well onto the strut with barely any twisting, and the boom is permanently attached with security bolts, but in case of repair it can be removed with a special key from your CORE dealer.

Handling wise, it's a precise and comfortable affair, with the Halo pulling forward and upwind eagerly, and there's enough canopy

tension to minimize flapping. Compared to the Halo Pro, the ExoTex version is far more friendly in gusts as you would imagine, with more flex and response in the airframe and is less demanding on your upper body. What it doesn't do is deform under load and become inefficient; it's still a very crisp power delivery in standard Dacron, albeit with a little suspension when required. They've balanced these characteristics very well. The Bionic boom interface really shines, and is a highlight of the wing setting it apart from its peers. Ergonomically it's extremely functional, is a sensible diameter preventing any cramping and the EVA grip has a good level of texture and grip without feeling harsh. The front flag handle is adequately sized and stiff, with minimal oscillation when the wing is in neutral position. Bringing the wing to hip level allows you to pivot around the strut and trail the wing behind you relatively easily without it trying to trip you over.

As a freeride wing the Halo really excels, and is a more comfortable proposition to its Aluula brother without a huge amount of compromise in terms of performance, which surprised us. It's usable in a huge range of scenarios and disciplines, feels balanced and easy to use, and makes an excellent and strategic addition to the CORE wing lineup providing a well-priced premium freeride experience.



CORE HALO

POWER DEVELOPMENT	OVERALL STABILITY
████████████████████	████████████████████
DEPOWER ABILITY	UPWIND PERFORMANCE
████████████████████	████████████████████
RESTING STATE ABILITY	SETUP SPEED
████████████████████	████████████████████
AGILITY	DURABILITY
████████████████████	████████████████████