

WINDUK SURFING

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MAURITIUS DOUBLE TAP

with Danny Geereedhary
and Mike Wand-Tetley

VASS:

the early days with Tony Booth

BEHIND THE LENS

with Alex Irwin (Sportography)

GINA CHIPPINGTON'S

surf widow life

KEITH ATKINSON

hot seat Q&A

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with Simon Bassett

RYA

Team15

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CLARE ELLIOTT AND
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TECHNIQUE:

SIMON BORNHOFT WINDWISE &
SIMON WINKLEY FUNDAMENTALS

REVIEWS:

ESSENTIAL GEAR TESTS AND MORE!



SIMON SAYS . . .

SIMON BASSETT IS THE EVER FAMILIAR FACE OF 2XS CLUB, SCHOOL AND SHOP AT ONE OF THE SOUTH COAST'S BEST LOVED WINDSURFING SPOTS: WEST WITTING, WEST SUSSEX. INVOLVED WITH WINDSURFING SINCE THE VERY START WE SAT DOWN FOR A NATTER WITH SB TO FIND OUT MORE. Tell us when you first discovered windsurfing and stepped on a board. What made you decide to get involved and what kit were you using?

I was dinghy sailing as a kid on lakes in the Cotswolds. My dad bought an original Windsurfer in the south of France (1974) on holiday and that was my first introduction to the sport. It was a heavy board; big sail with no window and a solid teak wooden boom and mast foot that pushed into the deck of the board.

Where was the location of your first windy steps?

When we got back from France we would windsurf on the local lakes in south Cerney and Somerford Keynes. My dad set up a windsurf school and club in 1976 which was in a perfect location at Cotswold Water Park - I could cycle from home and windsurf as much as I wanted. It was the start of my addiction to windsurfing!

What was the hook that drew you in and kept you wanting more?

The lakes where we originally windsurfed on would not allow windsurfing above force 4 - for me this was when windsurfing came alive. We learnt to jump 12ft boards without straps, cut the boards down in size and chopped fins to get more speed or air. In the winter months we attached an angle iron so we could ice windsurf! Kit choice was very limited.

Did you compete back in the day? If so, what are your best result results and memories from that period?

Yes I competed in lots of events and classes - course racing, speed, wave and slalom - at the time it was very exciting. You needed so much gear! I was at the Weymouth Speed Trials when Fred Haywood broke the world speed record at 30 knots. I remember being hit by lightning with 300 others competitors at Grahham Water and have an unofficial 30 knot World Production Record with Klepper at a speed event in Halifax.



Simon Bassett





Talk us through your discovery of West Wittering and what makes it such a special place for windsurfing.

I first discovered West Wittering on a trip with Martin West when I worked in Staines as a windsurf instructor. It's a beautiful, rural beach that the locals purchased to stop a Butlin's development in the 50s. The windsurfing conditions change each season due to the sand bars that move. You have waves at high tide and flat water at low tide. It couldn't be better!

How was it back in the day? Has much changed about the spot?

Since I've been here we have more sand. The beach was pebbles back in the day. Now that it's sandy we have much better surf and longer to walk at low tide with your kit.

When did you decide to set up a windsurfing centre and how difficult was it to get things going?

We set up 2XS® in 1989. We were a shop in West Wittering selling windsurfing gear, mountain bikes, power kiting equipment and then snowboards.

To start with it was super hard. Interest rates were 15%, we had no money but we won a competition and got some loot and support from the Princes Youth Business Trust. We were a finalist in a UK PYBT competition and received an award from Prince Charles.

We took over the beach site in 1991 when the land owners wanted to ban windsurfing. We drew up a safety plan and beach management system to keep windsurfing there, and keep it safe for other beach users.

What are your fondest memories of running 2XS?

There are lots of highs and a few lows but a big one was when Walmart tried to take our name 2XS® and trade mark. James Mellor, a windsurfing buddy, saved our bacon and we won our two year dispute with them.

Tell us how things are for 2XS these days? What's different to then vs now?

Well, we had a shop and in 2005 we sold the land for development and took it all online. It was a big risk. The internet back then was just starting, suppliers weren't too keen. Now we have a demo centre, school, club, hire and an online shop, so you can try before you buy – we have some great suppliers which makes it much better.

How often were you sailing then? Is it the same now?

Lots back then, every spare moment. For me now after 41 years windsurfing I pick my moments. I always go windsurfing or SUP surfing on holiday and my kit is right on the beach at West Wittering so I can go when it looks good.

What kit couldn't you be without?

My Goya custom made quad and my Ezzy Taka 4.

How has that changed over the years?

Gear has got lighter and stronger and has a much bigger wind range. It's just so much easier to windsurf now. You need a lot less equipment, which is great.

What piece of windsurfing equipment really gets your juices flowing?

I have a big windsurf toy box so lots of choice depending on the day. A perfect session would be on a 5.3m Ezzy Taka, Streamlined carbon boom with 14 knots of wind and

my Slingshot windfoil board. Then when the wind and waves pick up at high tide a 4.7m Ezzy and Quatro Super Mini 85l.

When did windsurfing turn into a performance sport for you?

Windsurfing has always been about performance since I was about 11 but it also has been about simply being on the water and in the ocean. It's all about that magic feeling you get after a decent session.

Was your sailing about moves or speed?

Originally it was a voyage of discovery, not many moves to start with. I remember watching Jurgen Honscheid doing a planning carve gybe on Grandstand. It was inspiring so we tried it at speed along with many other moves.

And now?

Now it's more about waves, fun, not getting injured and riding with friends.





If you could start again what would you do differently, if anything?

Probably not much. Maybe keep a few more original custom boards I had and, as always, only sell what you believe in.

As a concept 2XS is quite unique, resembling more an overseas centre than UK based windsurfing club. How much do you think this has played in the success of 2XS?

Well why not? The UK is a great destination and West Wittering beach is amazing. We just wanted to provide the best option for windsurfing – the 2XS club, school, hire and demo centre – and have the best choice of kit.

Where's windsurfing sit for you in 2018?

For us it's a 110% priority. We're teaching 5 year olds to sail, we're selling the latest kit, we're learning new stuff on the water and we are generally on it!

What would you change about the sport, if anything?

The weather! If we had more consistent wind we wouldn't need to go abroad windsurfing. It would be kicking here in the UK.

How do you see windsurfing moving forwards? Is foiling the future?

I really like light wind foiling. I think it is epic gliding across the water in low wind with small sails. I would like to see freestyle grow in the UK. I think it should be part of basic windsurf lessons. It is the basis of rig and board control. You can do freestyle in lakes, flat water and at the coast in waves.

What are your plans windsurfing wise for the rest of the year? Got any overseas trips planned, if so where?

Tenerife in a few weeks then Club Vass in the summer.

Tell us about your fave global windsurfing destination and why you love it.

It has to be Maui – that is THE place – Pa'ia, North Shore. Windsurfing with our friends the Mckirgans, riding and flying over the reef at Camp One, Spartans Reef with Whitey, Fred Haywood, Dave Ewer and Nicky Boy back in the day are amazing experiences. As was going to the Quatro/Goya custom house and getting a new board. Maui is the full windsurfing experience, and then some!

You have three women in your life (two daughters and a wife) who seem to be into watersports. Is this more luck or pure judgement?

Jane (wife) likes the beach and sometimes windsurfs or SUPs. Holly and Daisy (daughters) both love the ocean and windsurf, SUP and surf. We had a brief moment with horses but warm beach holidays sealed the deal!

Do you think it's harder for women in windsurfing than men?

No I don't. I think if you want to succeed it's the inner beast that drives your determination and you need lots! You do need access to decent kit, coaching and a support network for windsurfing, that's what makes it hard for people to learn. The lack of those things that is.

Any final thoughts?

Yes! Go windsurfing! Buy some new windsurf toys and take a windsurfing holiday – you won't regret it.