Parawing – Early 2026

Introduction

"The aim of downwind Parawing is not the momentary discharge of an adrenaline secretion, but the patient construction, over the span of an entire lifetime, of a state of calm and wonder." Inspired by a quote from Glenn Gould, Canadian pianist.

Parawing is the revolution that makes it possible to surf completely freely a breaking wave, a ground swell or a wind swell—without a motor. Parawing is defined by how simple it is to use: no inflation, very compact and light, instantly deployable and, above all, packable (folding or stowing your parawing so you can surf with your hands free). It also means crossing the shorebreak with no exposed wing that might get damaged (no fragile inflated leading edge): the wing is folded in its pocket. It also widens your field of vision and enables one-handed control. The difference in free-fly glide between a packed parawing and holding a wing in your hands is phenomenal. We underestimate the drag of a wing... This explains why we can surf swell "infinitely" with a parawing, and not with a wing.

Parawing is a fourth paradigm in autonomous wind-powered board sports. The first is **windsurfing:** the first concept of using wind to ride and surf a wave. **Kitesurfing:** the second paradigm is the kite controlled by long lines of around twenty meters. You can surf-kite waves with a surfboard. Then **wingfoiling**: the foil is its revolution, allowing navigation with very low resistance in the water. The wing allows you to neutralize the sail while surfing—free-fly. **Parawing:** the fourth and latest paradigm. Its development comes from SUP-foil downwind, a complex and elitist discipline consisting of paddling into takeoff on long boards to surf open-ocean swells. Parawing makes up for the complexity of paddle takeoffs. Parawing will certainly mark the history of board sports, and we are only at the very beginning of its development.

Equipment

High-performance gear is needed to be performant: you need finesse to fly for a long time or to carve.

- **Parawing:** Mini-paraglider, little wear. Narrow wind range, so you need several sizes. **Life-changing tip with the Frigate:** Connect the four fronts with a small tap at the base. This makes it much easier to get a grip.
- **Board:** a long and narrow board for maximum glide, light and stiff for efficient pumping. Choosing volume: volume ≈ your weight (e.g. 75 kg ≈ ~75 L). Windy spot: your weight −20%. My quiver with two boards: Rocket Free Surf Carbon 5'8 for 59 liters and 6'5 for 79 liters.
- **Foils:** High aspect ratio for downwind. If the wave pushes well, an SK8 can work. The higher the aspect ratio, the more the foil glides. You gain glide and you lose carve. You lose carve

because high-aspect foils have a huge wingspan. They are thin, therefore flexible, and lose rigidity. They are perfect for long diagonal surfs across the fall line. Low-aspect foils are ideal for carving. My favorites: for carving, the SK8 750; for glide, the Eagle X 800.

- **Stabilizer:** Aspect ratio theory also applies to stabilizers. The only function of a stabilizer is to stabilize the whole system. Proof: we can ride while removing the stabilizer. You can recommend a larger stabilizer surface to a beginner: they will gain pitch stability. For everything else, favor the smallest stabilizer possible while still keeping the stability you can manage. In waves, we want a snowboard feeling to carve confidently without continuously controlling pitch. So you need either a long fuselage or a certain amount of stabilizer area to get that serenity in the carve. The 140 XS Carving is perfect for carving. The 135 DW is perfect for DW. It glides more.

Foil	Ratio	Surface	Envergure (cm)
SK8	8	850	82.5
Eagle V2	9.6	890	92.5
Eagle X	12	800	98
Momentum	16.5	816	115
Seven Seas	8.2	1100	94

Accessories

- **Packing bag:** Kangaroo pocket (Ozone), vest with pocket (Ion), or a Pocket Wing-type harness (Manera)
  - Criterion number 1: ease of packing. This operation is essential to prevent lines from tangling when you deploy. The reverse is also true: an emergency redeployment must also be easy.
  - It's better to have two separate pockets—one for the wing and one for the bar—to avoid tangles.
- **Harness**: essential in parawing as soon as you go back upwind. Arm pull is higher than with a wing.
  - It can be a harness separate from the pocket, or a pocket-harness with a hook (Ozone).
  - Wing-to-harness connection: I strongly prefer a loop on the bar. You can hook in and unhook with two hands on the bar. Reverse systems with a hook that you manually bring to the bar force you to hold the bar with one hand.
  - My downwind solution: Ozone pocket with a Manera hook. Loop on the bar.
  - My surf-foil navigation solution: Ozone pocket (front) and Manera harness for comfortable upwind.

- **Backup parawing:** Offshore Vest: a Manera backpack you don't feel. Ideal for attaching the backup parawing. Backup parawing one size up—or two sizes up if conditions are very variable. Waterproof compressible pouch with a decompression valve to store the backup parawing in the bag. If using a 2.5 m, take two backup parawings: a 3 and a 4.
- **Board leash:** long and in Dyneema for safety. This prevents boards snapping back. It must be quick-release and it must include an elastic section to limit loads. Risk of ripping out the plug on the board in a fall with a leash that has no stretch. Nothing on the market meets these three parameters. You have to DIY with a Kaohi or combine a WIP with a "leash dampener".
- **Safety:** Garmin InReach, 5-meter rope with stainless carabiner for all eventualities including towing, waterproof phone pouch. Roll of tape in a waterproof bag for major bleeding from a foil cut. Line cutter, mirror, whistle.
- **Protection:** Sunscreen, clothing: for Brazil, a lycra-type top with hood (wetshirt sunshell hood long sleeve), leggings, light-tint sunglasses (cat 2).

Riding technique

- **Starting in parawing:** It is recommended to have solid wing skills: takeoff, flight, transitions. The main difference will be the more technical takeoff in parawing, because it's impossible to pump a parawing as efficiently as a wing. At first, you can compensate with a longer board, a bigger foil and a larger sail area. Start training on the beach: inflation, handling, folding, etc. On the water, choose a strong and steady wind and take a slightly over-powered parawing. Choose a spot where you can drift without danger. Then let the learning feeling do its work… Live that learning not as an end goal but enjoy every step of the path. Personally, I swallowed wing learning like a race: only the final objective mattered—become performant, land such maneuvers, ride with that small foil, surf that wave, etc. At one point I almost wished for a brain reset so I could relive that learning differently, with more contemplation, appreciating the road more than the summit. Parawing gave me that opportunity, and I'm enjoying that learning in the present moment. And what a joy to be able to choose, depending on conditions, between these two toys: wing and parawing!
- **Getting in the water:** Launching is easier. The wing folded in its pocket leaves your hands free to paddle through serious shorebreaks.
- **Standing up:** Instead of lying flat on the water like a wing, the parawing is inflated and immediately provides support in the wind. My goofy technique: wing in the right hand placed near the nose, left hand free placed toward the pad. Push with both arms to place the left foot on the board. The right leg acts as a counterbalance. Switch the parawing to the left hand and extend the arm. Weight on the left leg and right hand to lift the right leg. Stand up and balance, take the bar with both hands… Works perfectly with a sinker board. Knees don't touch the board.
- **Takeoff:** Find the right moment—gust and chop pushing. Above all, let the board glide and accelerate on the water, pump the wing with maximum arm amplitude, load and unload the board until takeoff.
- **Riding:** Riding is already very enjoyable. Harness is essential, ride like with a wing, with the pleasure of a wider field of vision.
- **Changing tack:** Gybe made easier by pulling one of the inside brakes; packed gybe (simplifies avoiding line slack on a deep downwind phase), Heineken gybe, tack, tack handle-pass…
- **Packing the wing:** A whole art and a lot of meticulousness. Everyone has their technique, worth training on land at first. If on starboard tack, take the four front lines in the right hand, ride long enough to find the bump that will give you time to pack without focusing too much on the surf. Bear off into the bump to loosen the lines. Bring the wing down against you; it becomes easy to slide your hand up to the leading edge. Grab a bit of fabric. The bar stays in the left hand. Transfer the bundle from the right hand into the left hand. Try to integrate the lines into the fabric; slide your right hand to compress the fabric toward the trailing edge. Fold into 3 or 4 sections, integrating a half-turn into the bundle. Insert the wing into the pocket, place the bar on top. Take everything out again in the same order. Do not throw the bundle without first unfolding the wing by holding it by the leading edge. Bar in the left hand. Wing in the right, check for knots. Only then throw the canopy. Line tangles: master them on the beach. At sea, sit on your

board and untangle calmly. Try never to let go of the front hand holding the bar. As long as that contact exists, there cannot be major knots.

- Swell surfing: The whole meaning of this DW practice lies in the surf that lets you stay in "infinite" flight as if by miracle. The whole art is learning to decode and read the matrix. The matrix is the set of all parameters governing how the swells unfold—in other words, the key to understanding how swells work (read the next point on swells to understand). Each spot has a different matrix to decode. Depending on the day's conditions, the matrix will be different. When you can read the matrix, you enter a state of intense serenity: an ability to position yourself in the right place and anticipate every movement of the swell. When that happens, you can't be wrong, and you feel a close connection with nature. Broadly, you try to position yourself where the wave pushes the most. You accelerate to get ahead of the wave, or you wait for the next one by slowing down. Unusually for a sport, it is not necessary to look far ahead. You pay attention to what happens under your foil and on the swell just in front. The rule is: what will form under your feet is what you see on the swell just ahead. When surfing down the fall line, you very often end up going too fast and getting stuck on the back of the wave ahead. Favor carving to slow down and stay in phase with the wave, or surf across the wave. This lets you cover large lateral distances to join a friend or to stay parallel to the coast if the swell is pushing toward shore.
  - Carving: the ultimate sensation. The summit is being able to carve without stopping and without pumping. Each carve costs a bit of altitude; you must compensate with the wave's push.
  - Pumping to accelerate : allows you to cross sections without swell or accelerate to get ahead of a wave.
  - Varying mast height to accelerate or slow down: try to be as high as possible to reduce drag. You can also deliberately drop down to slow yourself or pitch the foil back to slow down while waiting for the next wave! You must anticipate its arrival with a new acceleration, so you don't miss it.
- Surfing waves (breaking waves): This approaches surf-foil. The parawing brings us back to the peak. We choose a wave and keep it. We work it by staying in the pocket (the power zone) and try to carve as much as possible. We relaunch the parawing to go back to the peak upwind. We perform a rotation that does not lose ground. My favorite practice...

Riding conditions

- Swells: the primary source of propulsion, complementary to the wind. The Matrix.
  - Ground swell: Ground swells are often bigger and faster. These swells come from distant storms.
  - Wind swell: Wind swells are often small and steep. They can form within a few hours, especially on lakes. They are easier to ride. You can often compensate mistakes by pumping.
  - Mixed swells: mix of ground swell and wind swell. They are often crossed, making reading and riding more complex.
  - Swell size: Paradoxically, the bigger the swells, the more technical they are. They are fast and you can easily get trapped on the back of a swell.
- Wind
  - Windy spots help a lot (perfect with 30 knots; the wind pushes us). Around 25 knots, the sensation is perfect. You fly at the same speed as the wind and have the magnificent feeling of being in empty space...

  - Swells and wind: Conditions are exceptional when ground swell and wind swell run in the same direction and the wind blows perpendicular to those swells.
- **Spots:** a wonderful rediscovery of new spots…
  - Northeastern Brazil is exceptional for Parawing and for downwind. I was able to ride downwind from Cumbuco to Curimãs (~330 km in stages). My longest parawing run: 120 km. My longest full-pack downwind: 70 km (5 relaunches). Top conditions with regular 30-knot side-on winds. Hundreds of kilometers of beach. The Holy Grail remains the Guajiru to Emboaca stretch.
- **Cape** Town: a wonderful community with Adrian and his shuttles from Big Bay to Lagoon Beach. (@DownWind Tribe Shuttle). 40 knots from behind helps!
- **Fuerteventura**: the east coast is more than promising.
- **Switzerland:** Lake Leman, Lake Neuchâtel: no need to go farther as soon as it blows.

Downwind organization

Downwind is an adventure. You can be very far from shore, end up alone, and you can have difficulty relaunching. It is the thousands of kilometers traveled that allow you to reach an economical level. With a good reading of the swells, you can surf without pumping for long minutes. Experience and safety are acquired with practice and humility.

Safety is elementary. You must be able to return to shore autonomously, have a means of communication, and carry survival equipment (knife, mirror, whistle, etc.). This point will be addressed in a sequel.

Conclusion

Wing: For sure, I will continue to ride with a wing in certain conditions—playful small waves with wing maneuvers, flat water with gusty wind, big waves in light wind (Peru). My sizes: Swing 3, 4 and 5 with boom.

Parawing: The activity remains highly technical, and it is frustrating when something disrupts the smooth functioning of the ride—crashing due to a bad deployment, not being able to take off, or being over-powered while riding. Downwind is not turnkey… There is only one rule for it: experiment and experiment again—test new tricks, find your own system: leash, backpack, harness, pocket, etc. Not to mention the basics: what is the best board for my practice, the best foil, the parawing model, its sizes… This is my specialty; I'm available to advise you!

Seventh heaven: Paradoxically, the destiny of a parawing is to disappear—once folded… Glide becomes meditative, and every swell forming in front of us is experienced as a blessing and a gift from the sky.

At your disposal: Thank you for reading all the way to the conclusion. I'm listening to your remarks about this text. I'm entirely at your disposal for advice on choosing equipment, testing gear, coaching, or travel advice…