



Stunning seascape and sailing images are a visual escape evoking a longing for the sea. But there is no substitute for the feeling of really being on the water. I take the time to marvel at the tranquil beauty of St. Georges Beach, Western Australia in early November 2019.



The beach is in the Northern part of Geraldton just past the big, clear sphere that seems to turn the world upside down. Looking out at the landmark I can see waves of up to 2m coming in like clockwork. I take my Blade 4.5 and using the new Cyclops extension I try out the "rapid loop' n go rigging". Indeed, it's fast and comfortable. Regarding my board the suspense is killing me. Mark Stone has encouraged me to ride Jaeger's 72l Kode from 2018 - with a fixed setup of foot straps for a very wide stance. Awesome. I hesitate to step into the champion's foot straps but the board picks up speed straightaway and breaks through the surf easily. Great! I enjoy 'flying out' and riding back in playfully. But I also wonder why the board keeps spinning round so quickly while gybing. . .





In the following days I exchange the original MFC 180 centre fin for a MFC 170 and then for a more flexible 170mm fin made by Mark Stone for smooth riding. When I'm all set to go by mid-November bushfires - already raging in the Eastern and Southern states - hit the outskirts of Geraldton. It is hot. There's a complete drop of wind, the sky is grey all day long.



After a week the winds come back and it's 'Stay & Play' at Coronation Beach: Getting there early around noon I rig my Blade 5.0, change to the 4.5 or 4.0 later in the afternoon and keep watching the locals going out after work when the winds are usually strongest. Handling my incredibly light sails is pure joy and going out through the south swell on my 3.7 in gusty, choppy conditions on Nov.28 is a day to remember: Got some waves (and had a short swim).



Then there is another stretch of low-wind days. Sailors are hanging around on the beach or looking after their gear in the car park. Only the little kids and dogs are having fun. And, of course, this amazing youngster starting clue first and practicing his freestyle moves over and over again. Looks like he's living out his true potential!





Searching for the spirit of wave sailing you are likely to find it on one of these rare days at Coronation. Like Lena Erpenstein who catches waves also in light winds. I've come to love my board - it's highly responsive, turns well and gives me a cool feeling of control on the waves.



Four ways of waiting: Looking at smooth seas stretching from horizon to horizon. Proudly flashing your injuries. Enjoying as many icy cold drinks as you want. Cheering up everybody with a bright smile like Justyna Sniady who was finally granted the Australian citizenship.



As soon as the winds start picking up again these powerful, lightweight ladies from Germany, Switzerland and Australia go out and enjoy gybing in clear blue waters - it's all theirs!



Taking a stroll in the car park after sailing you might catch a glimpse of hidden treasures like Lena's (G423) new wave gear or the freestyle kit she uses in her training sessions. Next to a big, black SSD number plate I discover Jaeger's new 72l Kode - just test run by its shaper Mark Stone. But what about this strange looking single fin board, has it been out yet?

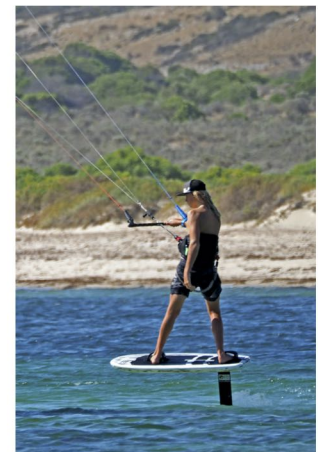




No wind in the first week of December. Time to discover the reconstructed GHOST OFFICE as well as exotic reindeers in ROCKS LANEWAY and explore the underwater life along the coast.



For some reason there are a few days at St.Georges with a small window of sideshore wind around noon and a perfect little wave coming in. It's when I feel completely at ease changing from rail to rail till the wave loses momentum and I start breathing again. What a thrill!



With so many low-wind days in December Coronation becomes a huge playground for all sorts of new toys. But when the sea breeze does come in I'm out on my 4.0 and 4.5 chasing waves. Spotting a big, well-shaped, smooth, glassy-green wave rolling towards me I'm so stunned by its incredible beauty that I let it slip by . . . Will I find another one like it? Next summer?

*'I love a sunburnt country . . . I love her jewel-sea . . . (Dorothea Mackellar, My Country, 1908)*

