

rebel₂₀₁₀ vs rebel₂₀₁₁

KEN WINNER, NORTH DESIGNER REBEL VS REBEL

Think about two slightly different surfboards; both the same size, same shape, same rails, same fin configuration, yet subtly different in rocker or outline or fin angle. From just looking at them not one person in 100 could tell which is going to ride better. Yet after riding both you might easily determine that one is clearly superior.

Now think about the 2010 Rebel and the 2011 Rebel. To even the trained eye they look almost exactly the same. Not one in 100 people could tell by looking at them what the differences are. Yet still, when we handed a 2011 Rebel 6 proto to one of our long-time Rebel customers for a test run, he thought it was a big step better than the older model. That's where kite design has arrived lately. You just can't tell much by looking.

WHAT'S THE SAME AND WHY:

5 LINES

The Rebel remains a 5-line kite, of course, all for all the usual reasons:

- 1.) Short depower stroke and crisp feel. In sizes 9 meters and over. Anyone who rides wave or has short arms or just likes a responsive kite can appreciate the importance of achieving full depower with a minimal movement of the control bar.
- 2.) Super stability. If it weren't so easy to keep in the air you'd be forgiven for thinking it's made of rock.
- 3.) Easy relaunch in light winds. Even riders who like four-line kites often add a fifth line to make relaunch possible in super-light wind.
- 4.) Safety. When you need to get total, complete and perfect depower in half a second, nothing else works as well as a 5th line.

SIZE-SPECIFIC TUNING:

- 1.) Sizes 10 to 14 have been tuned for short bar stroke and a maximally crisp feel.
- 2.) Sizes 5 to 8, which naturally tend to be a bit too crisp and responsive, have been tuned for a crispness and responsiveness that's just right. Not soft and slow; not uncomfortably harsh and fast.
- 3.) 9-meter kites can go either way, a bit slow and soft or a bit fast and harsh. We spent some time tuning this one for what we think is just the right feel in a wave and all-around kite.

TOLERANT OF SUB-SPEC INFLATION

The 2010 and 2011 Rebels work best when inflated to 6psi, but they still work fine at 5 or 4psi. By contrast, many kites on the market these days need 8 or 10 psi to fly correctly.

ARC, SEGMENTATION, STRUT CONFIGURATION

The overall geometry remains the same because the Rebel's unique combination of arc, segmentation and strut configuration gives good stability, power, depower and flutter resistance. Multiple segments through the center of the canopy give good profile fidelity, while one straight segment on each side gives a flat profile where it can do the most good in resisting unwanted luffing and flutter. Five struts give needed structure while allowing for good performance at low inflation pressures.





WHAT'S DIFFERENT AND WHY

POWER VS. DEPOWER

The 2010 Rebel has a lot of power. Probably no kite has more. For 2011 we refined canopy profiles and angle of attack to boost depower without hurting power.

BAR PRESSURE & TURN INITIATION

A kite with low bar pressure often seems to require very little pressure for turn initiation. A kite with high bar pressure is the opposite. The 2011 Rebel has slightly lower bar pressure than the 2010, and slightly easier turn initiation. This is something we didn't want to overdo because then the kite would fail to deliver good bar feedback.

We achieved this improvement through a subtle change in overall kite geometry.

TURNING SPEED

Sizes 10 and up in the 2011 Rebel turn a bit easier, faster and more smoothly than the 2010. Sizes 9 and down have slightly easier turn initiation and are smoother while turning, but overall turning speed is about the same.

SPEED

Though the Rebel won the 2010 Kiteboard Race World Championship, it really is just a wave and all-around kite and pretty much none of the testing for the 2011 model involved race boards. That said, the 2011 Rebel is a bit faster than the 2010. This improvement comes from refinements in profile depth, angle of attack and tip shape.

BOTTOM LINE

Not one in 100 kiteboarders could spot the differences in geometry and shape between the 2010 Rebel and the 2011, but not one in 100 could fail to miss the improvements in feel.