



Cabrinha pro Damien Leroy puts on a show for the Fantasy Campers.



An aerial view of the Coconut Bay Resort and its white sandy beaches.



Blurring the Lines of Fantasy and Reality

THE 2011 KITEBOARDING FANTASY CAMP. STORY AND PHOTOS BY RICHARD HALLMAN

As an artist and daydreamer, I often find myself occupying what one might call a fantasy world. But until I experienced one firsthand, I wasn't sure exactly what a kiteboarding fantasy camp would entail. Well, I found the experience offered more fun than I could have imagined and the incredible opportunity to meet and learn from some of the world's top kiteboarders. It was just what I've always dreamed

living out a fantasy would be like — and then some! Just over a year ago, I was fortunate enough to be a part of a press trip to the beautiful Caribbean island of St. Lucia. One of the lines from the story I wrote about that trip puts the whole fantasy concept into perfect context: "I soon found myself gearing up on the beach a mere 45 minutes after landing on the tarmac. All of my

worries and stress drained away the moment I hit the water, and I instantly knew I'd found nirvana." So before I even left for this year's trip, I was confident the Coconut Bay Resort on St. Lucia would be the ideal setting for *Kiteboarding's* Fantasy Camp. This year's campers were treated to expert instruction from 2Elements Kitesurf School teachers and Cabrinha pro riders Clarissa Hempel,

IT WAS COOL TO SEE THE CAMPERS VENTURE OUT OF THEIR COMFORT ZONES.

Andre Phillip and Damien Leroy, who sought to raise everyone's kite game to the next level while having as

beaches at our disposal, we had plenty of room to spread out so we could ride and learn from the pros. Chris Haysey, owner of 2Elements, and I were both amazed at all the kites on the water, yet it didn't feel crowded at all. I watched as campers learned everything from back rolls to down looping their kites. I even sought some help from Phillip on my own less-than-stellar back rolls. He was quickly able to point out a couple of critical errors in my technique I was totally unaware of. It seemed like the same could be said for most of the campers, who seemed to greatly benefit from the instruction and rise to the occasion. Outside of kiting the beaches near the resort, we also ventured upwind to a beautiful bay to make a five-mile downwinder. It was a lovely setting, with rolling swell and midsize surf scattered everywhere along the

lush coastline. The campers hit the water and sessioned the new spot with lots of enthusiasm. It was difficult to complete the downwinder since getting out of the huge bay in on-shore conditions was tough for the crew. Nonetheless, it was cool to see the campers venture out of their comfort zones, and they all seemed to have fun despite getting hammered



Stoked Fantasy Campers after five straight days of wind and instruction.



John Rost prepares for a one-on-one front roll lesson with Damien Leroy.



Brigitte Sales shows there's fun for everyone on St. Lucia as she gallops barefoot.

by a few waves. On the way back to the resort, the campers were in high spirits, laughing and telling stories.

At the end of each day, everyone tended to fall into a relaxing island trance as they kicked back on the beach while knocking back cold drinks and watching the pros put on a show. Witnessing the talented pros rip it up during these private expression sessions was itself worth the trip. I even overheard several campers talking about how their own riding and style had improved just by watching the pros and being able to dissect their techniques.

Overall, each camper came away from the experience with major improvements in their kiting abilities. Camper Jon Davies explains his own learning experience: "The highlight of the trip was finally nailing my back rolls,

which was real evidence that our coaches' teaching skills were rock-solid. I was always very relaxed and comfortable while getting instruction from the pros and the 2Elements crew. Plus, getting to kite a spot as picturesque as St. Lucia certainly didn't hurt!"

Mike and Janet Ramsey were equally stoked with the camp. "I definitely learned a lot and can't wait to get back on the water to show off my new moves," says Mike. "And to see the difference in Janet's confidence and ability is really amazing."

Rost summed up the "fantasy" aspect of the camp best. "My friends who don't kite couldn't understand why the camp was such a

PRO TIPS

♦ **CLARISSA HEMPEL** — "I was working with Jono [Rabley] on back rolls. My main advice was to first get a good pop so he would have enough height to do the rotation and land smoothly. But every attempt he would over-send his kite, making it hard to land the back roll. He had the pop down, now we needed to focus on getting his kite stationary while doing the back roll. So my tip was to take all the pressure off of his back hand on the bar — and boom! From there he was landing one back roll after another!"

♦ **ANDRE PHILLIP** — "I've seen many beginners go out in windy conditions and going faster and faster until everything explodes. The trick to riding in windy conditions is having a small kite but also being very conscious of your speed. You don't want to allow yourself to get going too fast. Get up to a comfortable speed, and if a gust hits you, then sheet your bar out to depower the kite a bit. You can also start to bring the kite up closer to neutral so that if you need to stop you can slowly swing it above your head. Another way to check your speed is by edging up into the wind. If all else fails, you can drag your butt, which tends to slow you down quickly."

♦ **DAMIEN LEROY** — "Before hitting the water, take a few minutes at home to look up an instructional move on the Internet or on a video. Then really understand where the kite is in the move and how the move is being done. Take a bar and go through the movements in your head before you head to the beach. You then will have a much better idea about what you are going to attempt. It also gives you some added excitement for your next session!"

big deal," Rost says. "Since they're big racing fans, I simply told them to picture themselves getting private driving lessons from Jeff Gordon on one of the world's premier racetracks. I mean, we got one-on-one time with big-name pros who showed

us how to do everything step by step. And the instruction wasn't just for an hour or two; it was an entire week! By the end of the trip, I was pulling back rolls, front rolls and boosting higher than ever."

In the end, the 2011 Kiteboarding Fantasy Camp left big smiles on everyone's faces, mine definitely included. Between the daily photo shoots, personal kite sessions, exploring the island and nightly entertainment at Coconut Bay Resort, the week just flew by. The camp offered so many amazing experiences; it was hard to pick just one highlight. Whether it was the personalized instruction, incredible Caribbean scenery,

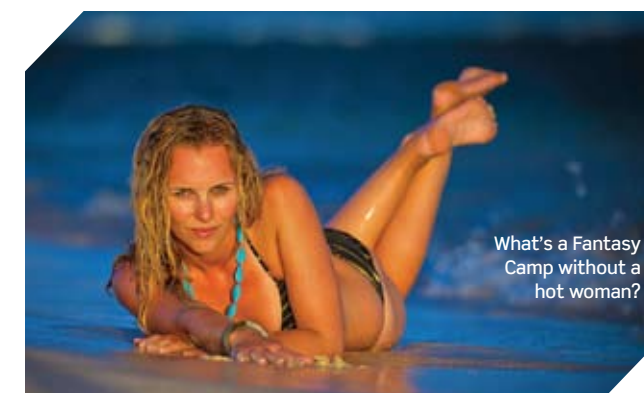


Jono Rabley during his "cover shoot" with a professional photographer.



Pro rider Clarissa Hempel cruises by in front of the 2Elements Kitesurf center.

WHETHER IT WAS THE PERSONALIZED INSTRUCTION, INCREDIBLE CARIBBEAN SCENERY, MAKING NEW FRIENDS OR HANGING OUT WITH WORLD-CLASS PROS, IT WAS ALL A DREAM COME TRUE.



What's a Fantasy Camp without a hot woman?

AXON KITEBOARDING

win free gear facebook US

140 x 43 ★
quad channel base ★
3d intellikore ★
shockproof topsheet ★

axonkiteboarding.com
bigwinds.com
elakurf.com
oceanextremesports.com
realwatersports.com
surfmaui.com
urbansurf.com

MAVA
BEELIE
rhythm
PULSE
Bomb
Bomb
The 'a' is for 'ahh', hermano.



Andre Phillip shows campers anything is possible.

CAMPER QUOTE

◆ **JOHN ROST** — “Top pros in kiteboarding were kiting 20 feet in front of me, executing moves and showing me step-by-step how to do them. I showed up at the camp determined to learn new tricks and take my riding to a new level. Having Damien [Leroy], Andre [Phillip] and Clarissa [Hempel] next to me on the water and then on the beach gave me the confidence to go for it. Of course, you wiped out a lot, but the pros could immediately talk about what went wrong to get you back on track. By the week’s end, I was completing back rolls, front rolls and boosting higher than last summer. Damien’s tip about rotating my chin in the direction of my back roll worked instantly. The front roll was especially challenging until Andre told me to pretend I was smelling my armpit to initiate the front roll, and it worked too.”

making new friends, hanging out with world-class pros or sampling the vast array of exceptional food, it was all a dream come true. I’m already really looking forward to next year’s Fantasy Camp — how about you?

◆ For details on next year’s Fantasy Camp, visit kiteboardingmag.com. For more info on the Coconut Bay Resort, visit coconutbayresortandspa.com and check out 2elements.co.uk for all of your St. Lucia kiteboarding needs.

COOK ISLANDS INTERNATIONAL KITESURFING COMPETITION

25 JUNE RAROTONGA EXHIBITION, 29 JUNE - 2 JULY 2011 AITUTAKI COMPETITION

Register at www.cookislandskitesurfing.com



PARTICIPANTS



JESSE RICHMAN



SUSI MAI



MOEHAU GOOLD

“Aitutaki has some of the best kiting I have ever seen. The people were friendly and the lagoon was amazing. The trade winds seem constant and it is very beautiful.”
CINDY MOSEY, FORMER WORLD KITING CHAMPION.

