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DUOTONE

# EMBRACING THE POWER OF UNITY

## FANATIC FOILING AND WINDSURFING JOIN DUOTONE.

The Boards & More Group is the global market leader in the water sports segments of Kiteboarding, Windsurfing and Wing Foiling. The Austrians already caused a stir in 2018 when they decided to distribute Kiteboarding products under the new brand name of Duotone.

Now Boards & More has announced to continue Fanatic products from the windsurfing and Wing Foiling sector under the Duotone name going forward. What is this all about? An interview with Till Eberle, CEO of Boards & More, Craig Gertenbach, previously Brand Manager at Fanatic, Raoul

Joa, Division Manager for Duotone Windsurf and Klaas Voget, Division Manager Product & Marketing in the Wing Foiling division.

### Till, is Boards & More discontinuing the Fanatic brand?

Till: "Since we founded the new Duotone brand for our Kiteboarding products in 2018, this brand achieved incredible strength, competence and acceptance among our customers. Duotone already covers a large part of the watersports world, from kites to sails, to wings for Wing Foiling. We bundle enormous know-how at Duotone. That's why we have decided that in the future we will offer the products from the performance area, those which were previously under the Fanatic name, to join the Duotone brand, so all windsurf boards, Wing Foiling boards and foils. In the commercial SUP (Stand Up Paddling) sector, the Fanatic brand name will remain."

### What can Duotone do that Fanatic can't?

Till: "A key strategy for the future of Boards & More is that we not only offer products but also

experiences that offer our customers real added value. Today, this already includes the Duotone Pro Centers, the Duotone Academy App, our Young Blood Camps and the Save our Playground sustainability initiative. In all these measures, we do not differentiate between the sports we own in the portfolio. And it doesn't make sense to differentiate between brands in the process. We can achieve much more here with a concentrated brand force. What's more, we're segmenting the products in the Windsurfing and Wing Foiling arena in a clearer way in terms of their fit, and everything comes from a single mould."

### Craig, you began Windsurfing World Cups on Fanatic boards, then became the product tester, Product Manager and Brand Manager for Fanatic. As "Mr Fanatic", how hard is this step for you?

Craig: "From the outside, it may look like a huge step, for us internally it's a very natural progression. For years now Fanatic and Duotone have shared team riders, held joint photo shoots, and launched products on

combined dates. Internally it's already one team and one brand, just with two different logos and that's inefficient for everyone. The development teams of windsurf boards and sails have been working closely together for years. Dani Aeberli for boards and Marco Lang for sails will take on more senior roles as Product Managers in the future. Raoul and I will accompany this with our experience."

Raoul: "The product lines are and will remain as you know them. That was true for the windsurfing sails that we have been carrying over from the launch of Duotone in 2018: A Warp or Super Hero was and always is the sail that everyone knows and loves and this is also true for the windsurf boards in 2023: A Skate, FreeWave or Falcon remains a Skate, FreeWave or Falcon, the only change is now it's known as a Duotone Skate, Duotone FreeWave and Duotone Falcon. The complete team remains the same, from product management, team riders and the design process with our lead designers, with Kai Hopf designing the windsurf sails and Sebastian Wenzel shaping the windsurf boards."

Till: "It simply brings customers better products when we create synergies and perfectly coordinate the development of boards and sails. In a sport as sophisticated as windsurfing, small things make a big difference. With a perfect match, you get even more performance out of the set-up."

### Synergy is always a nice buzzword. But how do you bring this to life at Boards & More and Duotone?

Till: "In development, we no longer work separating the individual sports, there are many crossovers. We were only able to establish Wing Foiling so successfully at Boards & More in such a short time because of the competent input that came from all our existing brand know-how. Ken Winner, Duotone Kite Designer, who by the way also used to be instrumental in the development of shortboards in Windsurfing, now develops the wings. Klaas, who tested the Windsurf wave boards, is now head of Wing Foil development. Our D/LAB and SLS series with the innovative materials from the Kite Division flow into wings and windsurf sails. Synergies in

the development of these different disciplines take our products a lot further for our customers. This brand family of sports is so strong because we have a common platform with the Boards & More Group. Developers, importers, dealers as well as employees in Molln and Oberhaching – decades of experience and continuity is the cornerstone for innovation, quality and service."

Raoul: "This is in addition to the fact that in Kite sports there is no separation of brands between boards and kites. In Windsurfing, on the other hand, there have traditionally always been separate board brands and sail brands, but that is outdated, it doesn't give an advantage to customers. Many of our customers practice windsurfing and wing foiling, or kiting and wing foiling. The mindset today is much more open."

### Craig, will you be taking on a new role with this brand transfer?

Craig: "Yes, my new role is Wing Foil Division Manager Sales. Klaas' new role is Wing Foil Division Manager Product & Marketing. I have worked with Klaas for over 20 years. Together we are now responsible for the Duotone Wing Foiling Division, i.e. wings, boards and foils."

### Klaas, as Division Product and Marketing Manager for Wing Foil, what synergies will result for you from the fact that Fanatic boards and foils will be under Duotone in the future?

Klaas: "In the Wing Foiling area, there have been many synergies between the two brands from the very beginning from our development teams that develop wings, boards and foils working together in parallel. If the speed of the wing matches that of the foil, it is simply more pleasant to ride. You only get the best results in a shared world. When we were developing the new generation of foils, Craig asked: 'Why do we have foils with different brand names for Kite, Wing and Windsurf? It doesn't make sense! We need to create compatibility, for all settings, for all three sports – with one logo. That's the only way we can be a strong foil brand.' The decision was then clear. The strongest brand currently at Boards & More is Duotone. From now on, Duotone will appear as the brand for

Kiteboarding, Windsurfing, Wing Foiling – and also for Foiling."

Till: "Wing Foiling has opened our eyes and torn down boundaries for us."

Klaas: "But the important question is: What is the clear customer advantage? The answer to this is that our product excellence is strengthened even more. Duotone stands for quality and innovation. Our customers no longer have to match two brands, which makes sense, they get everything from a single source. Keep it simple! And the foil range becomes compatible across all areas of application."

### Does that mean that in the future I will be able to wing foil, kite foil and Windsurf foil with a Duotone foil?

Klaas: "Yes, and also Prone Foiling, Wake Foiling, Downwind Foiling, Pump Foiling... The requirements for an excellent foil are basically the same in all foil disciplines. Starting in 2024, there will be mast-foil combinations that fit perfectly for Kiteboarding as well as for wingfoiling and Windsurfing – as well as for all the other disciplines mentioned. In addition, there will be specific front and back wings for different areas of sports and conditions but everything is compatible."

Till: "An overall Duotone brand brings so many advantages for our customers by bundling know-how and thus moving together much more strongly into the future. What belongs together, grows together."



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