

Nicollo Porcella takes one last look at the beach.

# RETURN TO THE ZOO



Western Australia is one of our favourite places, and is about the most wonderful place a kiteboarder might find him or herself. With the north's reeling points and near-constant winds, and the south's powerful waves and rich variety, the only problem is deciding where to go. It was an obvious starting point for our film, *Lines*. The Indian Ocean produces some of the finest swells on the planet: long, groomed, orderly things, marching in step, smooth and straight down the line, finding every chance to be rideable. Any surf traveler who has been to Indonesia encounters these same lines, just a few days older, after they've passed Margaret River and the coast of Western Australia. The lines end their journeys here, just as neat and tidy. Waveriders dream of these long, perfect, reeling rides.

A long, dreamy ride is one thing—and then there's The Zoo.

It's not long, in fact it's tragically short—somewhat longer than the drop of a guillotine blade, and it always breaks just a few metres off the sand, no matter the size—not what you'd call a dream setup. It also has poor, if any shape, and seaweed so thick it has swallowed kites whole, never to be seen again. So why would anyone ride it at all?

"The only way you can get that close to that much power is with a kite," Davey Blair says, "You for sure couldn't ride out there any other way. You couldn't tow into it and you couldn't paddle out, but there are just so many possibilities with a kite. You start thinking, What if you *could* hit the lip? What if somebody does that?

It's the best medicine I can find..." He buzzed on the experience for days after riding it. And OK, there are five other spots that would be more fun to ride just minutes away, but no other spot is so much fun when you stop riding. Maybe that has something to do with it: it gives you an experience so intense it can't be appreciated properly until you depressurize later. Alexis and I have seen the twitchy glow in Davey's face, like Jeff and Ben after they had "posed" out there. There's no question that The Zoo may not be a normal wave for normal people, but it's good to examine other possibilities.

Armed with some nonsense like that, I lured some otherwise rational kites down to check it out one day—fairly smart guys like Sky Solbach and Jaime Herraiz. Kristin Boese (although not





Niccolo first became known to most kiteboarders as a young grom at kite beach during the wakestyle movement. He is now, almost a decade later, making a name for himself in the surf.

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