

Groundstake Kiting with John Barresi

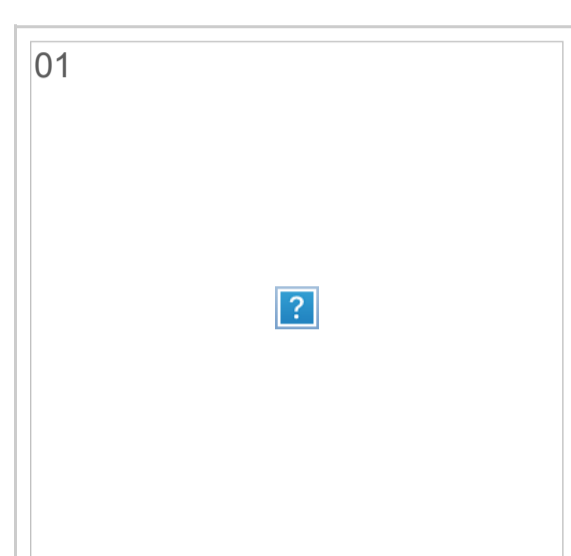
27. November 2015



Groundstake Kiting

KITE & friends: We can read about “dogstaking” in Alison Fujino’s Stunt Kite Book of 1989 and it was shown in the German publications Drachenmagazin and the Lenkdrachenhandbuch of Dr. Rocker in the early 90s. But who was the real inventor? When did you first hear about the idea of dogstake kiting, and how was your first try?

John Barresi: While the technique has been used by many pilots over the years (primarily in the early 90s), I think it is safe to say that the pioneer of dogstake flying is the legendary and amazing Lee Sedgwick.



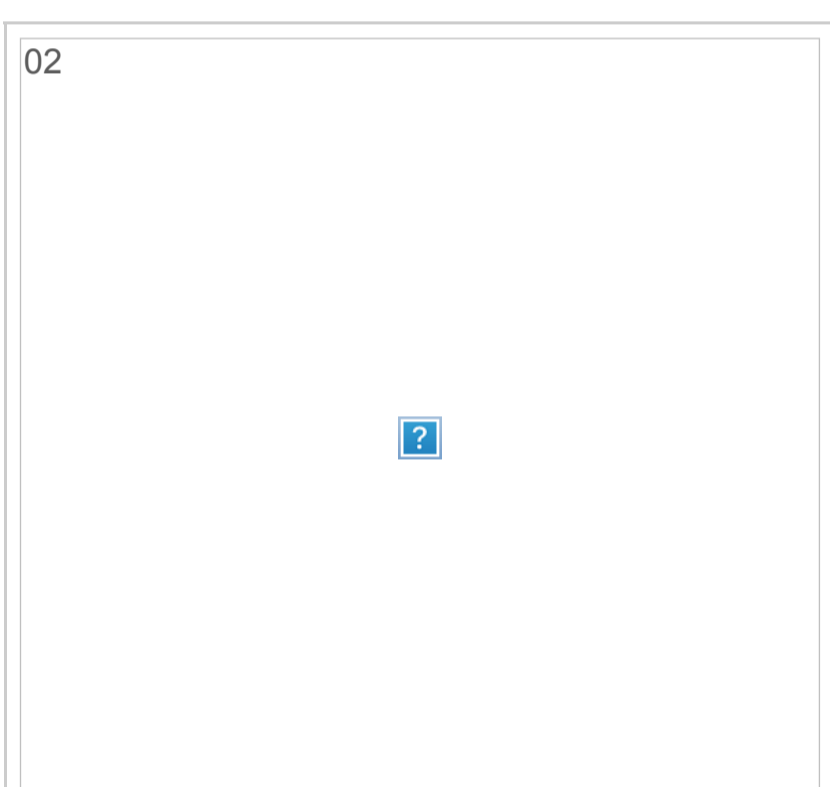
If you search for his name and “Lady in Red” on YouTube, you can see the first major public appearance of this flying style in a ballet competition at the 1987 East Coast Stunt Kite Championships. It was so new and such a shock to the judges that they immediately standardized regular ballet and created an entirely new category called Innovative (later changed to Freestyle and Outdoor Unlimited) for creative methods like dogstake, multiple kite flying, interpretive performance and others, starting in 1987.

My first try with it was actually just a couple of months after I started flying in 1990—seeing photos of Lee dogstaking in the magazines, I thought it was super cool and bought a dog stake from a local pet store to run my first kite through. The wind was blowing pretty hard and I actually crashed, ripping almost the entire keel off the kite and forcing me to take it to a local tent repair shop before I could fly again—yes, lesson learned.

I did not try it again until 1992, when I started my “Wolfman” routine for Innovative where I would wear a rubber wolf mask and dogstake a red Rev II while flying to Little Red Riding Hood by Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs. You can find a video of this performance on my website if you would like to see it, but I still did not dogstake very often due to the primitive equipment which caused a lot of line binding and damage, especially on sand.

K&f: But then you did not only use a stake. What are the advantages of a system with a number of special rings and pulleys?

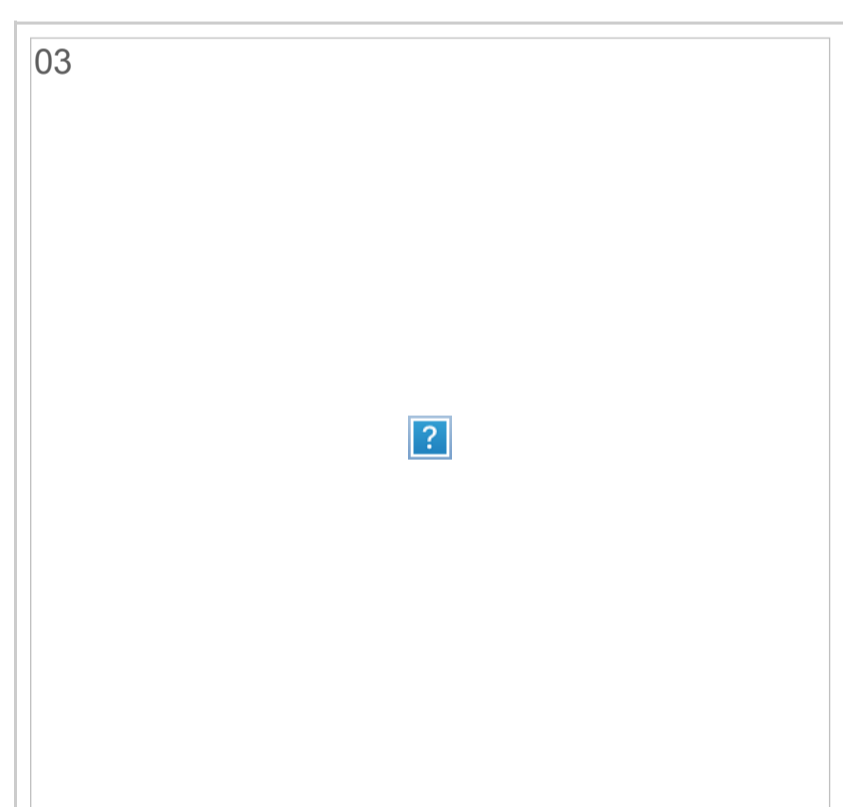
JB: Well, I have tried pretty much every dogstake variant over the years and the common issue was line binding, where the lines would start to lock up against themselves (through the same ring) or against the immobile ring or loop. If you have ever made too many twists in your dual or quad line, you know the grinding feeling and loss of control that can occur, and using a pulley correctly can reduce that friction.



K&f: You mostly like to dogstake your quad line kites?

Simple: A good quad line kite offers multidirectional flight, speed control and the ability to hover in any orientation. It is possible to dogstake dual line kites and I do enjoy this sometimes, but it is much more challenging without the ability to accurately stop or control your flight speed. Couple this with the intimacy of being so close to your kite and it is like the kite comes alive, becomes some sort of mythical falcon that is a part of you, enabling the flier to directly interact and dance with the kite.

K&f: You worked with your friend Mikey Devereaux to co-design and develop a rig with separate pulleys for each line. Why is this system so good to use?



JB: First and foremost: Two or more lines moving through the same ring or pulley in a traditional dogstake—and the lines tend to lock up or resist each other’s movement, whereas our rig uses a separate pulley for each line, allowing free movement regardless of the input made. Additionally, our unique design allows the pilot and kite to reach opposite sides of the wind window

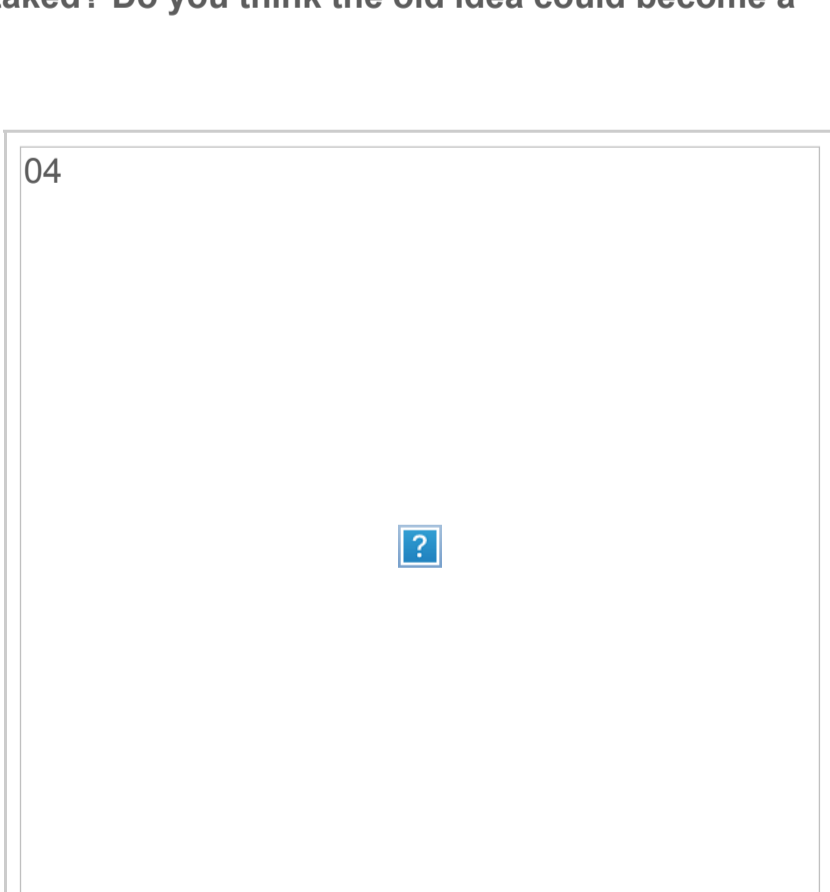
without any danger of the lines jumping off the pulleys. And lastly, it also allows for a flier to input their lines without needing to thread them through from the ends. And of course, Mikey’s craftsmanship and choice of materials made a tremendous difference. The whole rig is quite light, comparatively, using custom fabricated Delrin and stainless steel parts.

K&f: What is the secret of Mikey’s system, and is it possible to purchase one from him?

JB: The secret? That is simple: More than 24 years of flight experience have gone into the functional design. Add to that Mikey’s amazing fabrication skills and his demand for absolute quality in each Piece. The dogstake is available directly through his company Dark Spark Designs. You can reach him via e-mail through darksparkkites@gmail.com to inquire about pricing and availability.

K&f: Do you often fly dogstaked? Do you think the old idea could become a new trend?

JB: Actually, I had to give my final prototype back to Mikey for reference while he finished his production set-up and I went without for most of 2014. I just received the final product this past September for personal use, which was near the end of an 18,000 mile tour around the country and just having entered the off-season. But I am very much looking forward to using it more often in the new year.



Old trend, new trend ... flying as long as I have, I do not really think about trends. I do what I love and try to share it every way I can, and then the “fliers of the day” make what they want of it.

K&f: Please offer some help to our readers: What are the main things to bear in mind when trying the first reverse flight?

JB: Assuming we are using a stable quad line kite, it may be best to focus on hovering and flying simple “holding patterns”, like soft figures of eight and circles, with lots of landings in-between to “reset” your mind on each attempt. Remember that a dogstake effectively cuts your line length in half, so 20 meters quickly become 10 meters or less—my recommendation would be no less than 40 meters (approximately 120 feet total length) and up to 60 meters.

K&f: The worst thing that could happen is to crash into yourself. Can you tell us about the dangers and how we can best prepare ourselves?

JB: The danger, of course, comes from the cutting nature of the lines and the kite’s potential speed because your are sharing space with it. Use common sense, but most importantly, always wear good eye protection (wraparound sunglasses are enough). Additionally, starting closer to the edge of the window or in moderate winds can reduce the amount of pressure and drive, making the kite less dangerous to yourself. And of course, do NOT try this with innocent folks within striking range: Choose a safe place to Experiment.

Aktuelle Ausgabe



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