

## Novenove Chameleon 101I

by Stefan

### Novenove Chameleon 101

The location was the nationally popular Pollari and Pumppari surfspots near Pori. I started with the Chameleon 93 and Attitude Rebel 5,2 and rode for over 1 hour to establish a good basis for comparison. Stock tri-fin configuration with fins in the center of fin boxes, mast base several cm back of center, all straps in the center of the available 3 positions. The wind was around 20 knots or less, patchy at times as the warm air mass had trouble reaching the water surface. The bigger set waves in Pollari were up to armpit high and a few even higher (I am 187 cm tall) with the side-on waves closer to shore being smaller, waist high or less. After riding the 93, I switched to the 101, setting its stock fins (tri-fin) in box centers, mast base a few cm back of center: identical to the 93. Because of the larger volume in the tail, I compensated on the 101 by setting the back strap at rearmost setting, which I thought would be better for my 90 kg weight. I still used the Attitude Rebel 5,2.

Within the first 10 meters of travel, I realized that the 101 had all the same basic characteristics as the 93, like a twin brother but thicker and wider particularly in the midsection and tail. The ride was completely familiar, and **everything I wrote about the 93 last time applies 100% for the 101**, especially if you weigh more than 95 kg. Indeed, if you look at the rocker profile, it is pretty much the same as the 93, even the overall tail kick is about the same. The first thing I wanted to see was whether there is a noticeable difference in quickness and ease for planing. I have sometimes used bigger models of a particular board design and noticed that for the same sail size in underpowered conditions, they are actually slower to plane because of a larger wetted surface area. They need to have a bigger sail to improve planing ability. With the patchy wind giving a lot of opportunities to test planing ability at various levels of wind power and using the same Rebel 5,3 sail, it quickly became clear that the **101 planes noticeably early**. When you look at the Chameleon's bottom shape, the board is designed with a flat rocker profile from tail to front of rear fin box (tail kick), then a gradual (nearly flat) rocker profile approximately all the way to between the front and rear straps (straps in middle positions). You get an easy subplaning from the nearly flat profile up to between straps, then you can quickly release some of the wetted area by pressing on the back foot to engage the much smaller tail kick area more. In other words, the board responds well to pumping. The swallow tail (vee cutout) helps with releasing the board, but of course helps in wave riding. **The 101 planes earlier because it has more area and float for easier subplaning but is not 'sticky'** in the water especially when you push your back foot to release onto plane. Because there is more volume in the 'slippery' back part that you push with your back foot, and because you are using one size larger fin, releasing the board to full plane is more effective. Related to planing ability, you will also have more pop to jump in less wind compared to the 93.



The second and the most important thing I really wanted to see with the 101 was its ability to turn and how it handles in the waves. When I dug into my first bottom turn, **I was very impressed with the turning ability of such a large board. Like the 93, it seems to shrink in size when turning, responding like a smaller board.** It is of course true that I could feel the width and thickness effects in the 101 design compared to the 93: it is more floaty and thicker so I did not feel quite as connected to the water for ride feedback. Still, the **101 responds immediately to back foot pressure, digs the rail well in response to the front foot and mast foot weighting and holds speed in the bottom turn well.** You can quickly tighten the turn with the back foot and snap the top turn quickly on the tail. When you fast tack with the board, **you notice that there is not that much more volume up front compared to the 93, so it digs the rail with forward pressure effectively.** ....CONTINUES AT NEXT PAGE



When you look at the bottom shaping, the concaves are deeper and set differently to the rails compared to the 93 at board midsection and elsewhere. In other words, **Novenove has really thought out the details of this bigger board separately to make it work so well in the waves.**

After several hours of using the board in patchy wind to stronger gusts but still never very powered up, I have to say **the board was very good in onshore/side-onshore waves, steeper or mushy, bigger or smaller.** Although not as nimble as the 93 when pushed with speed for my weight, the 101 is better for harnessing the power of more marginal waves, catching them easier, holding speed better, and being easily nimble enough to really carve the wave as you wish. It was a real joy to use for efficiently harnessing the power of smaller waves. **The 101 is a true wave board with great allround performance for heavier riders (over 95 kg).** For large waves, side-shore waves and powered conditions, I am sure you can enhance the performance with quad fin configuration and a premium wave sail like the S2 Maui. I think any bigger sailor who weighs over 95 kg would be very happy with this board as a complete eurowave weapon. I am also absolutely convinced that the volume distribution and board design is so effective that **you should select a board volume close to your body weight in liters, give or take up to 5 liters. For me, +11 litres (101) over my 90 kg body weight certainly felt like the absolute maximum float and ride board of this design for lighter days, with the 93 being my go-to board when possible. For a one-board solution, an 85 kg rider would like the Chameleon 85 best, an 80 kg rider should choose the 78 (preferred) or 85 (if more underpowered conditions usually or wants more bump&jump).**

