

## Novenove Chameleon impressions in Finland

by Stefan

First a very brief background. I am 90 kgs, 187 cm tall. I played with the board during this month of august. Typical baltic/eurowave onshore/side-onshore conditions. I rode the board in the standard tri-fin configuration with the supplied stock fins.

The first time was at Emäsalo for about 4 hours, well powered 4,7m2 (25+ knots) being choppy as usual with the rideable shoulder-high set wave being a very short but steep side-on wave breaking on the Emäsalo rock, enough for one good bottom turn and top turn.

The second time was for 4 hours at the two spots in Pori fondly known by the surf community as Pumppari (pumphouse) and Pollari (police). I went upwind from Pollari to Pumppari with the 4,7 m2 in 25+ knots. The wind was working very well with the side-on shore break, although the waves were small, maybe waist-high. I would have liked to spend more time there, but the wind started to drop so I headed back to Pollari. I eventually rigged an Attitude sails Rebel 5,2 m2 and basically enjoyed soul freeride after sunset for more than 1 hour.

The third time was for about 3 hours + 2 hours at Pollari. Pollari was working well in terms of wind and waves, with most of southern Finland's surfers enjoying the good conditions, up to 25 sails on the water. It was blowing 25+ knots with waves shoulder-high in the morning, long rideable side-on and onshore lines and even pretty much side shore near the golf center (much smaller waves though). I decided to use the Attitude 5,2m2 for two reasons: to be well-powered for testing jumping performance and to access the side/side-on waves closer to shore where the wind is weaker. I wanted to really push the board and see what it could do, and more importantly, how easily it could do it. The 5-batten **Attitude Rebel is very stable**, eats gusts very well and has a very wide tuning range. No nasty surprises when using this sail. It is more 'locked-in' feel-wise as a result, compared to modern 4-batten maneuver-oriented sails, but still goes neutral well enough for good wave performance.



The board can be described in two words: **easy performance**. Everything about this board is easy. Easy to plane. Easy to drive upwind. Easy to jump. Easy to land the jump so that you can easily plane away. Easy to gybe. Easy to bottom turn. Easy to tighten the bottom turn with the back foot, transition, and dig in to redirect on the top turn/cut back. Just easy. It might sound like a choice board for freeriders transitioning to wave and wave newbies in general. This is true, you will become a better sailor more quickly. However, easy performance also means high performance. The harder you push the board, the more you will always get from it, so it suits experienced riders as well. The performance is just easy to access. The board can also be tuned for the type of riding you want to do. I do recommend the board especially for eurowave on/side-onshore conditions for the following reasons which the board does **really well**:

- + excellent pop and control for good airtime
- + fast tail rocker design: good speed for good air and necessary for on-shore waves
- + volume distribution and tail rocker design: really good early planing so you can punch through the on-shore slop
- + tail design and back-strap positioning: snappy turning off the back-leg, which is important to quickly initiate bottom turns and cutbacks in onshore conditions
- + well-balanced performance for wave and bump&jump: a eurowave competition board for sure

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The board is interesting in that it feels floaty and bigger than some in a straight line, but when you turn, the size suddenly shrinks away. The bigger board feel is often very true for all the designs that optimize early planing, and you notice it more only in choppy conditions like Emäsalo. However, with the Chameleon, you are still always very much in control. There is also an easy trick to tune the ride if you want to slice more cleanly through the chop: just set the mast plate near the back of the track, it engages the bottom shape effectively and the board still works really well allround in this setting. The board is very efficient, so you do not need to really oversize the board like often recommended for modern quads: here, a few minus to a few plus liters is enough if you want a single board to handle all conditions. If you are 90 kg, the 93 is great; if you are 80 kg, the 78 or 85 is great, etc.

Board **tuning with the Chameleon is easy**, if you leave all the fins in the middle of the slotboxes, it will always work well in any condition. There is not too much tuning extent due to the shortness of the slotboxes, but the usual rule applies: front fins and back fin closer together gives more looseness; fins further apart gives more drive and grip. Moving all the fins forward makes it pivot more in the middle and moving all the fins back makes it drive more off the tail. I still need to play with this more. I noticed that moving the fins on this board is more for fine-tuning and will not radically change the Chameleon into something that doesn't work: it just improves the board depending on what you want to do and what the conditions are.

Front and rear footstraps in the middle holes will always work well. Again, **easy**. This is a perfectly neutral stance for my frame. The straps and deckpads felt a little slippery to bare feet for about the first 4 hours, after which they felt perfect: grippy and snug. Actually the best fit I have ever had on any board! My feet are size 45 and quite wide, yet the fit felt perfect without having to stretch one end of the strap to a different hole set in order to fit bigger feet. I tried front straps all the way forward and rear strap all the way back. This is a truly wide stance if you want it for manoeuvres. The back strap is set close to the tail, so if you want killer snap and drive off the back leg, you get it when you put the back strap all the way back.

The real tuning question for the Chameleon is the long mast track. Like I said before, you can move the mast plate all the way back so that the edge of the plate is at the edge of the nut cutout part of the mast track, and it makes the board ride better in chop, lifting the nose a little to engage the aft part of the board differently. The board will always work well from mast track middle to all the way back. I did not try forward of middle since the track seems to go quite far forward. Maybe this waterline engagement length adjustment is great especially in big, smooth waves. We will see when the fall storms arrive and also when I try quad fins. I'll let you know.

**The board is overall, a competition level eurowave-focused machine with a full bag of tricks.** Well-balanced performance for the task, easy access to great performance. And **killer** graphics! I have heard really good reviews from lighter riders with the smaller boards, but I would say the heavier and bigger riders will love the larger sizes. For a more radical, front-foot oriented sideshore/side-off wave machine, I would certainly look into the novenove KS model, but I can't wait to try the Chameleon in the bigger stuff and even in quad setup. Like the chameleon lizard, this board is supposed to be completely adaptable to any condition, blending in perfectly with the surroundings.

