

S2 Maui Dragon 5,2 and Novenove Chameleon 93I Quad and K4 fins

Novenove Chameleon 93 quad configuration, S2 Maui Dragon 5,2

To finish off the day, I went back downwind to Pollari to change the 93 to quad configuration and change the Alchemy for the Dragon. For the quad setup, **I used K4 Leon 15's in the back and K4 shark 10's in the front**, flexible and responsive fins by design. I had originally planned to use the K4 setup with sails around 4,7m² and smaller, and the factory MFC fins in tri-fin for all larger sails. It would be interesting to see if I was underfanned. I set the fins in the middle of the boxes, there is not too much adjustment room either, a little over 1 cm forward or back from center. I rigged the Dragon 5,2 at factory spec boom setting and downhaul, tensioning the outhaul at +1 cm from neutral. You can immediately see the 4 batten profile works quite differently from the Alchemy, the battens sitting farther from the mast and relying on the material to stretch or 'breathe' in response to the wind. I left the harness lines as they were with the Alchemy.

The wind was picking up, now around 22 knots or a little more with added gusts and less patchiness in the wind on the surface. Unfortunately the waves were getting pretty flat at Pollari as the swell direction had been changing more southerly from the original more SW direction. The first thing I noticed as the board hopped onto plane was that the K4's did not seem 'draggy' at all, and that the **Dragon does seem to have more bottom end compared to the Alchemy** (although the wind had improved). The Chameleon is an efficiently planing board, so the K4's did not seem to really effect planing ability in any noticeable way in the improving wind conditions. **Compared to the MFC tri-fin setup, the K4 fins were more reactive, giving a more connected feel to the water while keeping the board lively, giving more grip, and generally urging you to be more aggressive.** To keep the story short, I must say the flexible K4 fins work very well with the Chameleon board design, transforming the ride feel, the wave performance, the reliability of grip, and still maintaining good drive and upwind ability. All this adds up to increased confidence and aggression. I clearly preferred this setup compared to the MFC trifin setup in all respects, except when conditions are more marginal and you need the added drive efficiency of the tri-fins. The Dragon also had a more aggressive feel than the Alchemy. **Dragon was responsive to wind conditions, filling out the profile for added drive and going neutral very well when asked.** Because you can feel the wind more, you can also feel the gusts a little more than the Alchemy. Still, the Dragon felt **light and controlled** in the hands and even though it wasn't buttery smooth performance like the Alchemy, it was a slick and smooth sail in the waves and otherwise.



Alchemy or Dragon, which one to harness the wind with? Based on my initial impression, my suggestion is as follows. **If you prefer a more aggressive, maneuver-oriented feel with more allround performance feel and bottom end, I would choose the Dragon. If you want ultimate, smooth control and precision on the wave and added control in more gusty or overpowered conditions, I would choose the Alchemy.**

It was getting a bit weird as the evening wore on. The wind was now blowing around up to 25 knots, not much patchiness, 28+ knots gusts, and I was supposed to be getting tired. Instead, **the board was suddenly more aggressive with K4 quad fins and asking to be pushed, the Dragon sail was more aggressive and asking for playtime, so I was becoming more aggressive as well.** I eventually headed back upwind to Pumppari to join 3 other sailors left on the water out of the 20 or so sails that were out during the afternoon. The side-on conditionsCONTINUES AT NEXT PAGE

..... were shifting to favour the sideshore direction more, the wind was better near the shore, and the waves had not really diminished from the day. Set waves still required patience, so in the end, I headed out until I passed some good set wave swell, gave them a bit of time, then raced to catch them near shore. I did manage to score a full speed run with three full-powered bottom turns and cutbacks off a decent wave. I must say the **Chameleon quad (K4) + Maui S2 Dragon kit was very controlled and worked extremely well**. This helps when you go downwind well powered in dim light where it is hard to see the waves and chop. **And here is the kicker: I was using the Dragon on a 70% carbon constant curve RDM mast, so the sail's response would only improve with a better mast.**

