

TEST
NIVIUK
IKUMA
23 25



Long awaited in the Niviuk range: a high end EN B, which is a very popular class. The Ikuma fits in between the Hook and the Artik, and is fairly close to the latter.

BY CÉDRIC NIEDDU AND SASCHA BURKHARDT

At Niviuk, the EN C machine for going XC is the Artik (which came out in its fourth version in 2015). The Ikuma is supposed to provide a high-end EN B wing, which Niviuk call "EN B+" and/or "Back Country". This type of wing which is 'still EN B but almost EN C', is clearly a trend. Niviuk promise a wing which will allow you to 'fly the most stunning XCs thanks to very high levels of both performance and safety', indeed 'exceptional passive safety for this level of performance'. Another promise: 'passion and ambition in total harmony, with this safe, fun wing'.

To fulfil these specifications, of course, Niviuk used all the modern technology available: SharkNose, Nitinol leading edge rods and Mini Ribs in the trailing edge. In keeping with the current trends, the wing has also been made lighter, in particular by opening up the vents in the cell walls.

The risers have also become thinner and, in particular, the lines are unsheathed from top to bottom. The pulleys on the accelerator are very efficient, but seem almost outsized on these thin straps. On the (rear) C risers there is a control handle: evidently this wing is aimed at XC pilots (too).



Photo: V. Burkhardt



Photo: V. Burkhardt



Photos: V. Burkhardt

A classic technique which has no doubt contributed to the excellent handling of this wing: the system shortens the trailing edge through the brakes.

Below: a thinner riser with efficient pulleys for the accelerator. Note the brake handle on the Cs. Niviuk use an unusual mix of materials for the lines: the lower lines, in Aramid, are all unsheathed except for a few centimetres around the maillon.

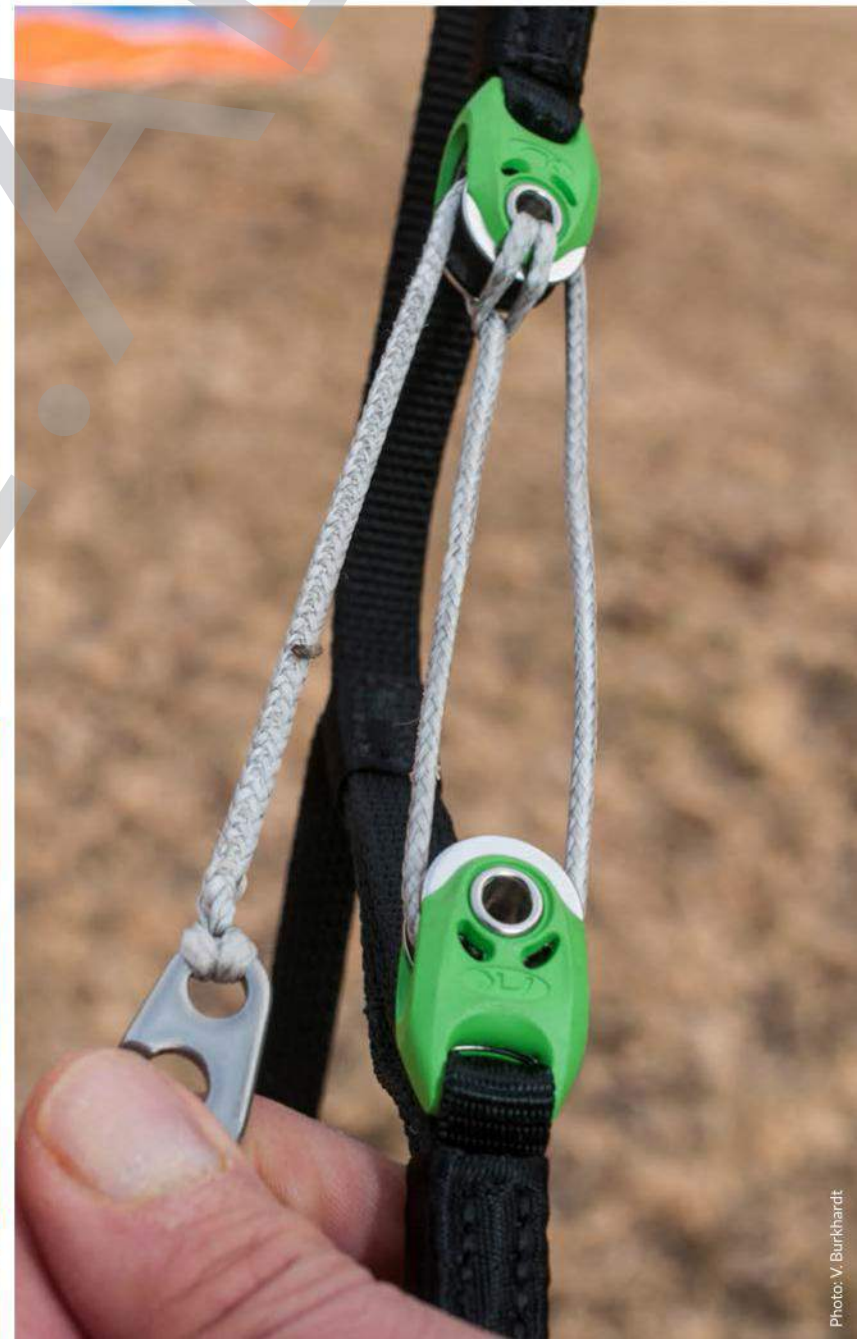


Photo: V. Burkhardt



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For those new to the world of XC flying, the hotter EN C/EN D style wings are often controlled through the rear risers, especially for little corrections during a transition, so as not to 'brake' the performance.

INFLATION AND TAKE-OFF

The Ikuma comes up well, but it misses a little bit of feeling at the start of the inflation and is a bit like a 'block'. But as soon as it comes up above the pilot, it is very solid. Facing the wing at take off with a turbulent wind, you need to work a bit on the wing tips, which is only normal. Overall it's a wing which behaves well during take-off and quickly takes up the load. In strong wind, it can even take the load up a bit too quickly if the pilot isn't paying attention.

FLYING STRAIGHT

The wing glides very well; it's surprising how compact and balanced it is. The Ikuma calmly crosses turbulence and transforms the movements in a positive way. Obviously it can still close a tip in turbulence if you don't control it on the opposite side, but it remains, almost always, exceptionally efficient. Is this balance and nice return due to good positioning of the SharkNose? There is no way of knowing, but the result is there. Its actual performance in turbulent air effectively puts it near the Artik, whilst remaining well behaved. As far as speed is concerned, Cédric measured about 38 km/h / 51 km/h on the 25, with an all up weight of 90 kg.



Photo: V.Burkhardt

The ears are efficient.

IN THE TURN

During the initial brake travel, the wing turns relatively flat, but always very precisely, despite the relatively large amount of travel. As soon as you brake a bit more, it starts to roll substantially as well. It has to be said that the 'fun' part of the specifications is, without a doubt, perfectly achieved: its precise controls and reactivity are a real success, especially if you work on the outside brake too. In a spiral it sets off fairly fast and fairly strong in keeping with its manoeuvrability. It needs to be managed prudently during this part of the flight.

MANAGING A FLYING INCIDENT

This wing doesn't hold any nasty surprises, but requires more precise control to manage its energy than a low EN B wing would. Although it is more accessible than an Artik, the Ikuma isn't aimed at pilots coming out of school.

CONCLUSION

Its handling, playful side and good balance in turbulence let you easily make the most of the performance of this EN B+ wing. The promises in the specifications have definitely been realised, and in a fairly astonishing way. 🙌



Photo: V. Burkhardt

IKUMA - TECHNICAL DATA					
Manufacturer : Niviuk - http://www.niviuk.com Mail : info@niviuk.com					
YEAR	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015
SIZE	21	23	25	27	29
CELLS	57	57	57	57	57
FLAT SURFACE AREA [m²]	21	23	24.5	26.5	29
PROJECTED SURFACE AREA [m²]	17.83	19.53	20.75	22.44	24.56
FLAT WINGSPAN [m]	10.94	11.45	11.82	12.29	12.86
PROJECTED WINGSPAN [m]	8.72	9.13	9.42	9.8	10.25
FLAT ASPECT RATIO	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7
PROJECTED ASPECT RATIO	4.26	4.26	4.26	4.26	4.26
ROOT CHORD [m]	2.33	2.44	2.52	2.62	2.74
HEIGHT OF LINES (m)	6.67	6.98	7.2	7.49	7.83
ALL UP WEIGHT [kg]	55-75	65-85	80-100	95-115	110-130
WEIGHT OF THE WING [kg]	4.4	4.65	4.85	5.15	5.6
CERTIFICATION	EN/LTF B+				
MATERIAL	S9017-E25 38 g/m² Dokdo N20DMF 35 g/m²				
PRICE [€]	3800	3800	3800	3800	3800



Photo: V. Burkhardt

TWO YOUNG PILOTS GIVE THEIR OPINION OF THE IKUMA



16 year old **Valentin Gilet**, a pilot in the sports section of the Font Romeu Lycee in France, has been flying for nearly three years. He has done about 200 flights and has approximately 100 hours under his belt. He tried several wings, like the Rush and the Rook, before buying the Ikuma to replace his Epsilon 6.

"The Ikuma is lively and nice to fly and it turns efficiently. It responds well to the outer brake.

Its glide is very good for a wing of this category, even though I found the Rush had better performance.

On the other hand, the Ikuma is nicer to fly. In addition, it gives lots of feedback, it 'talks a lot' and it enters a spiral strongly."



16 year old **Alix Boudon** is also a pilot in the sports section of the Font Romeu Lycee. He has been flying for three years, done about 150 flights and clocked up about 108 hours. He did six flights (five hours in total) on the Ikuma 23 with a view to buying one. However, taking into account his level, his coaches advised him to buy an Artik 4, but he still has very good memories of the Ikuma.

"Compared to other EN B+ wings, it offers more feedback and it marks little bubbles of air better. The controls are very consistent and it's excellent in the glide. Accelerated, the leading edge remains very solid. Personally, in wide thermals, I have always flown with a loop of brake around my fingers to keep my hands a bit higher and to give it a bit more of an angle in the turns. In weak conditions, on the other hand, without a loop of brake, it allowed me to learn to improve my turning technique and to turn flatter than before. In spirals, it's a wing which engages strongly and which can also be impressive."