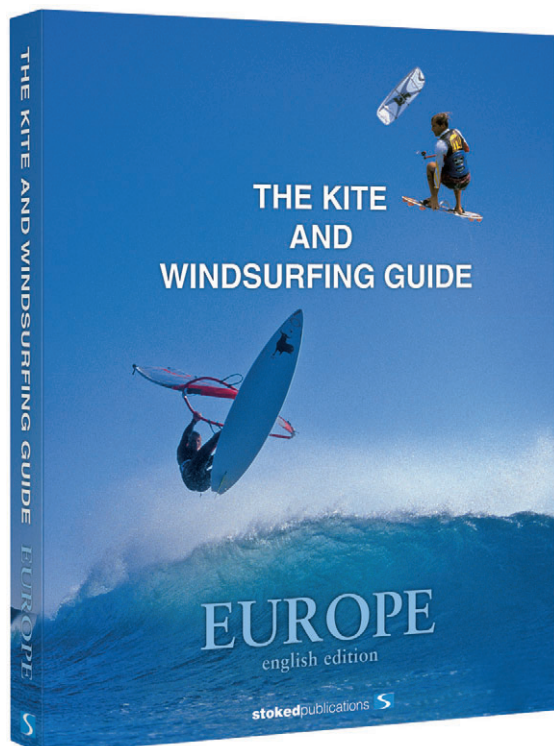




Ireland

At long last, the ultimate European spot-guide – *The Kite and Windsurfing Guide: Europe* – has been published in English. **Duncan Slater** details how it came to fruition...

Continent Heaven



This is a story about a book – a wholly remarkable book. Inspired by the renowned surf-specific *Stormrider Guides*, *The Kite & Windsurfing Guide* differs in one subtle but very important regard – it's explicitly for us windsport types. There have been guides to Europe before; *Rough Guides*, *Hitch-hiker's Guides*, camping / dining / fishing / golf guides. But never anything purely for windsurfers. Well, it seems we've finally come of age...

Over three and a half years ago, a windsurfing (and more recently kitesurfing) addict had a problem. Why wasn't there a guide – similar to the *Stormrider* – for us windsurfers? Udo Hölker and his wife Nicole promptly jacked in their 'real' jobs and set up *Stoked Publications*. Many moons later they'd collated information from local scouts all over Europe – guys you may have heard of like Eduardo Bellini, Bernd Flessner, Jürgen Hönscheid, Rob Jones and Timo Mullen ... plus scores you probably won't be familiar with. Over 15,000 pictures were sourced from almost 100 snappers, and painstakingly whittled down to 1000 featured in *The Guide*.

But all this would have been for nought without some well thought-out design – a standardised format for every spot, be it in Poland or Portugal. It was time for some icons (again, inspired by the *Stormrider Guide*). Thus the reader can get a pretty good idea about each venue at a glance. You should be able to make them out on the spreads to the right – symbols indicate whether it's a flat-water, mid-sized wave or big wave location, a wind-rose shows which direction works best, plus more icons relate to current, tide, parking, water-depth, the likelihood of 'big days', and whether it's popular with kites, windsurfers or both. Now, while a picture might paint a thousand words, iconography alone could never completely describe a location. So Udo needed to draw detailed maps of every region and write-up some words on each venue from his exhaustive research (actually, being quite an efficient chap, he'd already briefed his scouts to write very detailed reports which were edited down). Precise directions, the best place to park, launch, sail, eat, sleep, enjoy a sundowner – wherever relevant, it's all there...

