

## First Impressions - Windtech Kali

The all-new DHV 1-2 from Windtech

By Neil Cruickshank

I was trying to settle into a day in the office, but the day was just starting to look too good for staring at a computer. The windsock behind the centre was on and a couple of customers had hiked up and were able to soar. So, sod it, down keyboard, grab the Kali and up the hill! I love this job, hee hee...

No surprises in the bag - nice and neat, fairly standard-looking set of risers and good build quality on the wing.

Take-off was a doddle, but I have to say that with practice pretty much any wing in this class is. The Kali sits nicely over the head, but with the brakes set as they came, there is very little pressure at hands up - a bit disconcerting at first but something that you'll adjust to.

My first impression looking at the inflated wing was that it isn't very high aspect ratio - but on looking at the specs its actually a bit greater than the Sport - Windtech haven't (in my view) done a great job on the colour scheme in this respect. Having said that, the gold/grey combination does work well.

Settling into flight, immediate feeling is that the Kali handles very very well. Medium/light brake pressure, with a nice progressive feel to it. I did find that it banks quite easily which is great fun when you're on the ridge but read on...

The thermals were quite punchy and low down it was very bumpy. The Kali handled all this well giving great feedback and offering no surprises. Finding a nice core I climbed away from the hill. It was a funny day - wave bars to the west, messy cumulus and a bit of frontal activity thrown in for good measure. The climb was bitty - a strong core (up to 4.7m/s) but small and hard to centre. Unfortunately the Kali didnt handle this too well, a tendency to bank out of the lift if one wing strayed out of the thermal made for a hard time staying in the lift well. Having said this, it wasn't easy and most gliders wouldn't look their best in this kind of air.

Making my way back to the hill in heavy sink and apres-thermal bumpiness showed the Kali well behaved again, ironing out bumps and reassuring me along. The bar is effective and linear with a good speed range.

I need to fly the Kali again in better conditions to get the full measure of her, but overall I'm impressed. For me it wasn't a love at first flight affair as it was with the Sport 3 - it would take me another flight to form a lasting bond, but I'm sure that any reservations I have now would soon be overcome.

In summary:

FOR... easy handling, good secure feeling, excellent performance

AGAINST... just that banking thing, judgement reserved!

++16 Oct 2006 - Postscript

Friday pm saw an opportunity to try the Kali again and the soarable conditions at Semer Water made for the perfect venue. The nagging doubts about my first test had been preying on my mind so I wanted to set it at rest. Once again, the lovely sharp handling was evident and smooth conditions allowed full use of the speed rang - which is both impressive and easy to use. As for the banking, yes the Kali banks easily. In the small, light thermals coming through it needed outside brake to stop this happening to the detriment of efficiency, but with practice the Kali can be made to turn efficiently, but can easily be tightened just by relaxing the outside brake.

All-in-all a nice wing, redeemed in my view with more time on her.