



TELL ME ABOUT IT

SPLEENE & FATUM COLLABORATION





Photos: LIFETRAVELLERZ.COM, SPLEENE

For their latest surfboard lineup, Spleene have commissioned the services of one of the best in the business... Gero, from Fatum surfboards in Portugal, has been shaping top class surfboards for more than 30 years and embraced the challenge of shaping two new boards for the Spleene line up, the Cross and the Zone. We caught up with Linda Schuppan from Spleene's marketing department to get the lowdown on the new project...

SPLEENE HAS A WELL-ESTABLISHED REPUTATION IN THE WORLD OF TWINTIPS - WHAT MADE YOU THINK THE TIME WAS RIGHT TO MOVE INTO THE WORLD OF SURFBOARDS?

Our board history actually began with the 'Door' which is - to this day - our bestseller, and a term that has shaped an entire sport. We are extremely proud of that. Over time, the kite market has developed further and so has Spleene, so more board shapes were added for newer demands. Today, our portfolio includes premium carbon boards as well as foil boards. Since 2007 we have had directionals in our program, but we decided that we needed to step up our game here, hence the two new boards.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE THAT GERO WAS THE BEST GUY TO WORK ON THE CROSS AND THE ZONE?

We have been working with Gero on PU boards for three years now. His understanding of surfboard shaping fits our ideas perfectly. Here, the boards are still made by hand, which you can see in the quality. And no board leaves the shaping bay without a thorough quality check from Gero!

WHY HAVE YOU DECIDED ON A PU CONSTRUCTION?

For us at Spleene, the PU construction is the best for kiteboards. It is unbeaten in terms of performance and liveliness. A board made of sandwich construction is very light and stable, but has the disadvantage of being very stiff. For other areas, such as windsurfing, the sandwich construction is superior as the boards are much bigger and therefore heavier. The weight advantage with the sandwich construction is more noticeable here and can be as much as two kilograms for a wave board. With the much smaller kiteboards though, the difference is only a few hundred grams which is hardly noticeable.







SO THEY ARE MORE LIVELY?

Yes. Liveliness is determined by the flex characteristics of a surfboard. The flex should be perfectly balanced. Perhaps this can best be compared to the chassis of a car. If it's too hard, every bump will land in the back of the rider. If it is too soft, a car will float too much around bends. It's the same with a wave board. And of course the thickness of the board determines the flex. The thinner the board, the more it can flex.

AND THAT'S WHAT YOU NOTICE IN THE WAVES?

Exactly. A surfboard has to bend or flex under any kind of force. For example, with a tight cutback, if you have the right flex, the rider gets their energy back smoothly and the board catapults them back down the line with a lot of energy. You also notice it when landing from strapless tricks or when riding in choppy conditions. PU boards have this natural, active restoring force and also absorb shock and are easy on the knees.

HOW HAS GERO HELPED WITH YOUR PRODUCTION?

The secret here lies in the blanks and of course in the construction. The blanks are produced specially for surfboards. Worldwide there are fewer and fewer producers of high-quality blanks, but Gero from Fatum secures the best quality blanks due to his reputation in the shaping scene. Good PU blanks have a lower density in the middle than at the edges. This gives the board flex and liveliness on the water and Gero then creates the shapes that work perfectly for kiting.

YOU HAVE TWO DIRECTIONAL BOARDS IN YOUR LINE-UP: THE ZONE AND THE CROSS. WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES?

The Cross is a nose-less board. This board has a flat-ish rocker and a straighter outline to get up and planing early and to give you plenty of speed. The shape is very compact and easy to turn and, with the Cross, you can focus on strapless freestyle or it is also great to ride in smaller waves as well. We have the Cross in 5'0 and 5'3. Then the Zone is our 'classic' surfboard and gives you that pure surf feeling for rail-to-rail surfing. The Zone is available in 5'7 and 5'10.

SO YOU SHOULD CHOOSE DEPENDING ON THE CONDITIONS?

Yes, for smaller waves the trend is more towards shorter, flatter boards that are easy to plane and turn easily. In bigger waves you need a bigger board with a more distinct rocker line, so it works better with the power and shape of the wave.

WITH SURFBOARDS YOU ALWAYS TALK ABOUT VOLUME. WHAT IS THE SECRET BEHIND IT?

The discussion about volume is not as relevant for kiting as it is for surfing as you do not need to paddle in to catch waves, so a kitesurf board doesn't necessarily need as much volume as a surfboard. The rider weight is an important variable when deciding volume (more volume for a heavier rider) and also the type of conditions. For onshore riding you may want more volume to maintain speed through slow sections of the wave, whereas in classic 'down the line' conditions you get more power from the wave so need less volume.

DO THE BOARDS SHIP WITH PADS AND FINS?

For pads, this is purely a question of personal choice. Some riders prefer wax and some pads. So we offer the Cross and Zone with wave pads from WMFG as an option. With fins we worked very closely with Gero to get this set up right. The ideal positioning of the fin boxes and the right angle are extremely important. When choosing the fins, we decided to use FCS II GF Carver Tri fins, and both boards have a thruster set up. ■

LEFT

The legendary Gero - the brains behind the boards...

TOP RIGHT

Fatum HQ

BOTTOM RIGHT

The boards in their natural environment.

