



Weightless to the max

Porcher Sport to introduce new Skytex 21 prototype at the 2019 Red Bull X-Alps

Since its release in 2017, over 37 million people have watched Weightless, the YouTube film made by Porcher Sport-sponsored paraglider Jean-Baptiste Chandelier.

Chandelier is one of the pioneers of proximity flying – a paragliding discipline requiring extreme dexterity and precision. He is also the designer of the Run and Fly paraglider, the lightest and most compact air vehicle in the world.

Weightless captures Chandelier's amazing expertise in the air – at one point he is even seen alighting on the very tip of a church spire – at a range of locations from the French Alps to the coast of South Africa, and from the Azores islands to the beaches of Brazil.

His Run and Fly paraglider, powered by Porcher Sport sails, is manufactured by Polish-headquartered sports brand **Dudek**.

The reaction to the Run and Fly has been more enthusiastic than we expected," says Dudek co-founder Wojtek Domański. **"Breaking the psychological barrier of one kilogram with the mass of a complete paraglider has triggered the imagination of many climbers and hikers who have discovered they can fly from the peaks to shorten their descent times, or save knees, or simply experience the ecstasy of being a bird as a reward for reaching a summit. Progress in the technology of technical textiles has been indispensable in making this happen."**

X-Alps 2019

At the forthcoming Red Bull X-Alps adventure race this June, Jean-Baptiste Chandelier will help to introduce the prototype of a new Porcher Sport fabric, Skytex 21, weighing just 21gsm, that will ensure he and other extreme paragliders soon enjoy an even greater sense of weightlessness.

This year's Red Bull X-Alps competition starts in Salzburg and ends on the beaches of Monaco and will see 32 athletes





navigate 1,138 km of treacherous alpine terrain by hiking, trail running, mountaineering and paragliding, often covering distances of 100km per day.

All of them will be using paragliders equipped with Porcher Sport fabrics weighing just 27 grams per square meter. The introduction of

Skytex 21 however, which is significantly lighter, will make a huge difference in an extreme sport where every gram counts and delivers a very significant advantage. Its launch is planned for 2020 following further development work that is currently underway.

One US X-Alps entrant is Gavin McClurg, who also took part in the 2015 race and reports that training has been intense for the past nine months.

“Now we’re ready, and will soon be able to focus entirely on just learning the course,” he says. “My gear this year is incredibly exciting – my wing weighs just 2.85 kg which is almost half the weight of what it was in the 2015 race. It’s been estimated that this will save me over two metric tons of weight during the course of the race. As my friend and legend hang gliding pilot Larry Tudor says, “If God hadn’t intended us to fly, he wouldn’t have given us Porcher Sport fabrics!””

Advanced weaving

“What makes Porcher Sport unique is its ability to continuously produce lighter weight fabrics from high-tenacity polyamide 6.6 yarns at our specialised weaving plants in France, in parallel with long experience in advanced coating formulations,” adds Olivier Gros, Global Head of Business Unit Sports and Leisure at Porcher Sport, the Sports and Leisure business unit of Porcher Industries.

“Other manufacturers can achieve similar weights, but they have to use much lighter yarns, so they are not as resistant and durable and they don’t age very well. Having already got down to a fabric that can meet all performance requirements at just 27 grams per square meter, Skytex 21, the new 21gsm fabric, will make a significant impact on what can be achieved. Technically it has proved very challenging, but we will now be introducing it with our partner Skywalk for the 2020 season.”



Riding a bike

Another world standard athlete, Tim Alongi, isn't competing in this year's Red Bull X-alps but is now training for a similar kind of competition and is looking forward to evaluating prototypes of Skytex 21.

"I'm currently using a 3.4kg Sup'air Wild paraglider employing a combination of Skytex 27 and Skytex 32," he says. "Porcher Sports' fabrics have got lighter and lighter over the years and while you're running you don't even feel like you have the machine on your back. It's like riding a little bike – you can easily take off and land anywhere thanks to the light material."

Alonghi is also currently practicing "Combo" – a complete mix of multiple Winter sports.

"I hike up a mountain with my glider, ski shoes, skis and my speed-riding wing," he explains. "You take off with the glider to catch the thermal currents in order to land on a different summit and ride it down on the skis and your speed riding wing and repeat this as long as you can. That's why it's important to have such a light material in order to carry up as much equipment as possible. Thanks for this, Porcher Sport."



DNA

The entire DNA of Porcher Industries, says Olivier Gros, is in achieving the lightest possible weight across a range of materials, while guaranteeing safety and durability.

At X-Alps 2019, the 32 athletes will have to combine skill and strategy – assessing the ever-changing weather conditions and deciding where and when to take to the air each day – while overcoming injury and fatigue. Many will accept defeat and drop out before the end, but a select few will stop at nothing to get to the end.

«Porcher Sport is pulling out all of the stops to help them achieve this goal.»



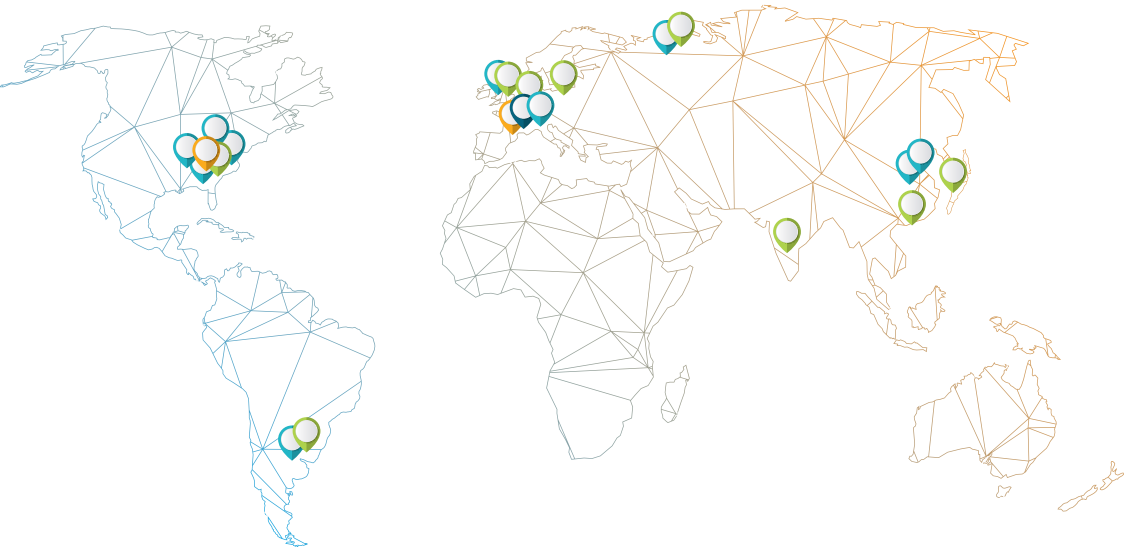
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Pioneering innovation and nurturing the best talents within our team maintains Porcher Industries market leading position at the cutting edge of technical textiles and thermoplastic composites.

