



This month the test team turn their attentions to 54-56cm wide, 75L single-fin waveboards for tearing apart anything from onshore wind-blown waves to down-the-line perfection. **Words:** Paul Griffiths **Photos:** Julia Toms

Yes, two's company and three's a crowd – but we're not having a party here, and when pushie comes to shuv-it we're in this for ourselves, so don't be afraid to embrace the single life! With all the hype of twinsers, thrusters and quads, don't forget about the boards that have stood the test of time and are still being manufactured by every brand today. You may not get as many admiring glances when you pull your single-fin out of the back of your van, but once you're on the water no-one will be able to tell, and then you can let your sailing do the talking.

From our experience and general feedback from the UK market we decided to test the single-fin waveboards in the 54-56cm, 75L range. This size of board tends to be the one that gets used by the average weight sailor when they've got plenty of power for their wave sails and the conditions are starting to get too much for their 85-95L boards. These smaller boards are generally more controllable when fully powered and offer a much smoother ride through choppy waters. You only have to look at the PWA contests in Pozo and Sylt to realise that single-fins are still the weapon of choice for many of the world's best when the sea state gets rough. In recent years there have been two distinct board shapes in this size bracket, with some offering better onshore riding and others better down-the-line performance. For 2010, and with the advent of the twin-fins, there seem to be fewer manufacturers offering a board for each situation and instead they are producing single-fins which supposedly work well in both scenarios.

Every manufacturer has a single-fin in their range this year, and for this test we had seven different boards, from seven different brands, ranging from 54cm to 56cm (68-77L). These varied from 225cm to 236cm long and weighed between 6.3 and 7.0kg including footstraps and fin.



Single Fin Life



THE CRASH TEST DUMMIES AND THEIR OBJECTIVES

Our main aim for this test was to see how relevant today's 75L boards are to the UK market and how they compared with one another. We wanted to do this from the perspective of the average competent UK wavesailor, so we put together a test team comprising people of different weights and wavesailing perspectives. Our lightest member was 70kg wave head Dan Lobato from North Devon. Next up was our highly experienced and extremely skilled regular, Emile Kott (a.k.a. 'Captain Kodak') at 78kg. Then came our freestyle wonder-kid, wave shredder, over-excited experimentalist, Neilson Centre manager, and advanced instructor of instructors, Sam Ross at 81kg. And finally myself, self-confessed South Coast chop botherer, at 86kg. We were also lucky enough to gain some invaluable information from the knowledgeable team at the OTC, which helped us to establish an even more rounded view of the kit we were putting to the test.

SHOULD I STILL BUY A SINGLE-FIN?

Our short answer to this would be a simple and resounding YES. But for a full explanation, read on... Of course twin-fins in general carve a tighter arc and feel much looser and easier to redirect on a wave, tri-fins tend to have more grip, and the quads feel loose and grippy at the same time, but none have that solid directional feeling that you get from a single-fin, or the same sort of versatility. And when the going gets tough, the tough don't go home, they simply reach for their single-fin – and so should you.

BUYING YOUR FIRST 75L BOARD

If you're only just considering buying a board of this size because you're progressing from something slightly bigger or venturing out in stronger winds and waves, then you're starting in the right place. There's not one board in this test that wouldn't give someone out there an awesome time on the water. The only problem comes in choosing which style will suit you.

Firstly, if this is to be your first 75L board we'd recommend that you stick to the single-fin set-up. If you've been reading the forum recently or looking at the magazines then you may have thought twins, thrusters, or quads were the only way to go. Well, they're not. You'd be better off experimenting with those once you're comfortable sailing in waves on your single-fin.

Secondly, we'd recommend that you visit your local retailer and tell them exactly what sort of conditions you're likely to sail in. Armed with this information, they can steer you in the right direction. And, with some personal knowledge from reading this test, and perhaps even attending a demo day or two, you might be able to tell them what you're looking for and why.

Thirdly, read every bit of the individual write-ups and compare them so that you can judge whether the board is likely to work for your ability, weight, and the conditions you're likely to sail in. And finally, read our testers' mini reviews. If you're of a similar weight, sail in similar conditions and are of similar ability, then you may well like a similar board. But remember, the golden rule is that the only way to know for sure is to try the board for yourself.

	Tail (cm)	Nose (cm)	Max (cm)	Planing (cm)	Tail (mm)	2cm (cm)	30cm (cm)	Overall (cm)	Weight (kg)*	Length (cm)	Volume (ltrs.)	Fin (cm)
	width				rocker							
Exocet U-Surf 68	36.4	37.4	56.0	52.5	4	129.9	13.5	26.5	7.0	224	68	20.5 US box
Fanatic NewWave 76	33.2	36.5	54.5	52.0	12	142.5	10.0	21.0	6.4	231	76	21.5 US box
Goya One 77	34.3	36.0	56.0	53.0	3	139.9	13.5	27.0	7.0	236	77	23.0 US box
JP Wave 75	34.5	38.0	55.5	52.5	12	145.0	11.0	21.5	6.3	228	75	22.0 US box
RRD Wave Cult 75	34.4	36.0	55.0	52.0	8	145.4	11.5	24.0	7.5	232	75	22.0 US box
Starboard Kode 74	33.2	36.0	54.0	51.5	8	149.6	11.0	23.0	6.5	232	74	22.0 US box
Tabou Pocket 75	35.3	40.0	55.0	52.5	9	135.6	11.5	23.0	6.5	225	75	23.0 US box

* Weights with dry straps and fins



EXOCET U-SURF 68 II STANDARD MODEL – £1,049

Dubbed as the perfect board to use in anything from big hollow surf to small mushy waves, the Exocet would seem to cover all bases for UK waveriding. The U-Surf is said to deliver snappy turns with great manoeuvrability, supposedly shattering any myths that only narrow boards turn. It features a slightly squashed tail, is available in four sizes from 62L to 84L, and in two different constructions.

DESIGN: With a maximum width of 56cm it's actually one of the widest boards tested here, despite having a quoted volume of just 68L. It has very little tail rocker at 4mm, the second least of all of the boards in this group. It also has a 2cm point closer to the tail than any other board here at 129.9cm. The U-Surf has a fair amount of vee throughout, but its most notable design feature is the fact that it has a much thinner profile than anything else on test.

ON THE WATER: The first thing you notice about the U-Surf is that despite its relatively large max width, it feels pretty small. This feeling is just fleeting though, as it gets up and going relatively quickly due to that reasonably wide tail. And once planing, the board is an absolute joy – it's fairly quick off the mark and has great speed to hit ramps on the way out. It feels comfortable to blast on and would make an ideal high wind bump-&-jump board. When you come to turn around it carves with ease and maintains speed. On the wave it is again effortless to carve and feels loose and

lively whilst gripping well. Off the top it's as snappy as anything else out there, and the extra width in the tail helps you to carry speed into your next turn.

FITTINGS: The board was supplied with a fairly stiff 20.5cm fin, the smallest on show here, in a comparatively long fin-box. The double density pads made it extremely comfortable for blasting and jumping. The straps were a bit spongy and not that easy to adjust, but nevertheless comfortable.

OVERALL: A great board for somewhere with consistent wind straight off the beach – if you're over 80kg and it's a bit iffy, you'll find it a struggle to punch through the white water as you'll more than likely be in submarine mode. That said, once up and planing you'll love the awesome manoeuvrability and great carving and jumping characteristics this board has to offer. It's a big board disguised as a small board, with the best traits of both.





FANATIC NEWWAVE 76 TEAM EDITION – £1,390

Although retaining the same name as last year, the three smaller New Waves are entirely new shapes with shorter, wider outlines and fuller, softer rails supposedly allowing for tighter turns and more dependable grip. The fact that Klaas Voget stormed through the double elimination in Sylt on a production NewWave – eventually finishing in second place – goes to show the pedigree these boards have straight out of the mould. Klaas also says he uses them in almost any conditions, which promises awesome all-round appeal. The NewWave range includes a 69L, 76L, 83L, and a 91L, giving different weight riders the choice they need.

DESIGN: With a maximum width of 54.5cm, it was one of the narrowest boards on test. The NewWave has a standard quoted volume of 76L, quite a lot of tail rocker at 12mm, and an average length planing flat of 142.5cm. Both single and double concave were noted on the hull.

ON THE WATER: The NewWave is relatively quick to get planing, giving the rider plenty of scope for bunny-hopping the white water and hitting the steepest section of the wave on the way out to claim some rocket airs. The new outline makes it feel a little wider than last year, giving the rider less of a 'trad shape' sensation when out on the water. It's also very comfortable through chop and extremely dependable, making it a great bump-&-jump board for those looking for something to take out in high winds but not necessarily waves. But it would be criminal not to take

it into the waves, as this is where it really performs. The board's loose nature allows the initiation of extremely tight arcs, yet it still feels under control due to the smooth and dependable attributes.

FITTINGS: The Fanatic comes with a 21.5cm fin, with a very flexible tip. The straps are excellent, and were without doubt the most comfortable of all those on test. The deck is quite domed and the pads comfortable.

OVERALL: The NewWave would be a great board for anyone looking to purchase something of this size, especially for those that only want a one waveboard quiver. It scored highly with all of the testers for both riding and jumping, and is comfortable for blasting in between. Whatever your wavesailing ability this board will allow you to progress in any conditions you care to throw it at.





GOYA ONE 77 PREMIUM – £1,099

The 'one board quiver' from Goya has seen a few improvements for 2010, with new straps and pads plus a few design tweaks. The Ones are claimed to be the ultimate single board for all styles and all conditions – apparently, Francisco Goya travels with his when he doesn't know what the conditions will bring. Historically this range has always performed well in BOARDS tests, often offering huge versatility on a very early planing platform. For 2010 the boards are available in four different sizes from 77L up to 105L, catering for a huge range of sailor abilities and weights.

DESIGN: With a maximum width of 56cm the One is wider than most others on test – and with a quoted volume of 77L it's also very slightly more buoyant. It has the smallest amount of tail rocker at 3mm, an average length planing flat at 139.9cm, and plenty of vee in the tail developing into a double concave. The widest point is quite a way forward in comparison with the other boards on test.

ON THE WATER: The One gets planing in a matter of milliseconds – just jump on, and off you go towards jumping heaven. This is probably down to its lack of tail rocker and slightly larger size compared to other boards on test. But if you're over 80kg you'll never find it too much of a handful when the going gets rough. For anyone below 70kg this would be an excellent partner to a smaller waveboard. As well as planing early, the One has a good top speed and is a joy to carve – the testers found themselves fully planing out of gybes more often on this board than any other. It works very

well for both onshore and cross-shore riding, and would therefore suit those that sail in a variety of conditions. On a wave, the One has heaps of grip, and despite the small amount of tail rocker is loose enough to carve relatively tight turns.

FITTINGS: It comes with a 23cm MFC fin, which is quite stiff throughout. The new straps supplied are a 100% improvement on last year's and are now very comfortable, as are the pads.

OVERALL: If you want to get planing earlier than your mates and boost some impressive jumps, this One's for you. It's a great small board for those over 80kg and an excellent mid-sized board for lighter weight sailors. Goya have excelled themselves again with an awesome 'one board quiver' – and this year, there's no need to buy new straps!





JP WAVE 75 PRO EDITION – £1,399

The 2010 Wave line replaces the Real World Waves that have been around for the past few seasons. With this range, JP suggest that the same shape can perform in both less-than-ideal conditions and down-the-line sailing. JP say these new boards will appeal to a wider range of sailors and perform in all manner of conditions. They even go on to say that every team rider has one of these in their quiver for when conditions get difficult. The boards have a slightly reduced rocker, reduced tail width, and a wider, more rounded nose.

DESIGN: With a max width of 55.5cm and quoted volume of 75L, the board is a pretty standard size for this group. It has quite a bit of tail rocker at 12mm – the most in this test, but not the most we've ever measured – and a 2cm point at 145cm, giving it a fairly standard length planing flat. There's a small amount of double concave running throughout the board.

ON THE WATER: Despite that amount of tail rocker, the JP gets up and going fairly early. Once planing it's very comfortable to blast on and sails upwind with ease. It feels extremely light in the air, making it one of the favourites for boosting huge jumps on. The board feels relatively large for its size when stationary, but turns out to be very comfortable when sailing fully powered and seems to perform better in conditions of this nature. The board really comes into its own when riding – it was very predictable and easy to drive hard bottom turns, keeping its speed well, and allowing very vertical, tight and snappy top turns.

FITTINGS: The board was supplied with a 22cm G10 fin which felt a little bit stiffer than most. In common with all JPs it had extremely comfortable footstraps and excellent pads which help to create a great value off-the-shelf package.

OVERALL: The JP is an excellent all-round waveboard. It's as happy charging down-the-line as it is getting vertical in less than ideal onshore conditions. The board has the great feeling of being extremely predictable whilst still being fairly loose. It was at its best when well powered on 4.7m, but would happily take a 5.3m. JP have done an excellent job here, producing a board that really does work in a variety of conditions – an excellent choice for any competent UK wavesailor.





RRD WAVE CULT 75 X-TECH – £1,099

The Wave Cults are marketed as RRD's range to suit the broadest variety of wave conditions. They're also said to excel in choppy water and onshore conditions, with more potential for jumps thanks to their early planing characteristics. This 75 is the smallest board in a range comprising four sizes up to a volume of 90L. RRD reckon that the wider outlines, tails and noses make for easier all-round sailing.

DESIGN: The Wave Cult has a maximum width of 55cm – fairly standard for a board with a quoted volume of 75L. It has an average amount of tail rocker at 8mm, a relatively long planing flat with the 2cm point at 145.4cm, and features vee throughout.

ON THE WATER: The RRD was quick to accelerate, great for getting up and going and in a good position to hit that first ramp. This trait would make it great for those onshore days when you need to get planing quickly to enjoy any airtime. It was also smooth and fast through chop, making it an excellent choice for bump-&-jump style sailing in strong winds. And it went upwind fairly well, which helped a lot when sailing to different breaks. Although not as loose and slashy as some boards, the Wave Cult had heaps of grip for ultimate confidence in the bottom turn. Despite lacking snappy turning characteristics, it was still fun off the top. Get your

timing right and it's as satisfying as any other board on the market.

FITTINGS: The board was supplied with a 22cm MFC fin, which had nice flex. The deckpads appeared thin compared to previous seasons' RRDs but still featured well-cushioned heel areas. And as per all RRDs, the straps were very comfortable.

OVERALL: As a fairly standard sized 75L waveboard the RRD was liked by all for blasting, jumping and a bit of riding. Lighter weight sailors could happily put a 5.3m sail on it, and heavier sailors still had enough float to return to shore if the wind died. The Wave Cult isn't as loose and lively as some, but gets planing early and is more than capable of hitting lips both frontside and back. A great out-of-the-wrapper package that will appeal to many.





STARBOARD

KODE 74 WOOD / CARBON – £1,299

Starboard's Kode shapes differ throughout the range to suit the conditions in which the board is most likely to be sailed, so every model tends to be designed for a different purpose. The 74 is one of the dedicated waveboards in the line-up (Starboard's only wavesailing offering apart from the all-new Quads). For 2010 the 74 Kode has had extra vee added under the back foot to the tip of the tail. Starboard say this should loosen the board up, allow it to carve a larger variety of turns and ride more vertically without sacrificing speed or acceleration.

DESIGN: With a maximum width of just 54cm, this is the narrowest board on test yet it still packs a quoted volume of 74L. It has an average amount of tail rocker at 8mm, the longest planing flat with a 2cm point at 149.6cm, and quite a lot of vee throughout.

ON THE WATER: When we were sailing in well-powered 4.7m weather or below, this was easily one of the most comfortable boards to be on and was cited by many as their high wind board of choice. It sliced through chop and was fast and lively, making it excellent for bump-&-jump style blasting. It did feel quite small in comparison to some of the wider-tailed boards on test, and didn't plane quite as early, but made up for this in the way it handled being overpowered in confused water. Its speed was also key – point it at the biggest ramp you could find and expect more air than you've ever experienced before. Once on a wave, it seemed to

prefer a little bit more power, but was very sure-footed in the bottom turn and great off the top.

FITTINGS: The Kode came supplied with a 22cm fin that was fairly flexible in the tip. It was fitted with very comfortable straps and really nice pads. The rear strap had double screw inserts, which reduced twist.

OVERALL: An excellent high wind board that seemed more at home in powered cross-shore conditions than the onshore gusty stuff. It rides well through chop and has the speed to score high, floaty jumps. If you need a board for blasting in rough sea states, or you predominantly sail in cross-shore conditions, this could well be the one for you.





TABOU

POCKET WAVE 75 TEAM EDITION – £1,299

After four years of solid development, with quite a few changes throughout that time, Tabou have decided to keep this board the same as last year's model with only a slight alteration in graphics and a different fin for 2010. The Pocket Wave is marketed as easy and super-quick to plane, giving it an all-round appeal. The rockerline is said to promote speed and drive to get you moving faster through the white water and staying upwind with ease. Tabou reckon it's user-friendly enough to be a first-time waveboard, but will also be the weapon of choice for advanced riders in variable conditions.

DESIGN: At 55cm wide and with a quoted volume of 75L, the Tabou is pretty much the standard dimensions of a modern 75L single-fin waveboard. It has 8mm of tail rocker, which again is standard for this type of board, and a 2cm point of 135.6cm, which gives a fairly short planing flat but not the shortest. It has a fair amount of vee running from tail to nose.

ON THE WATER: The Pocket Wave felt slightly larger than some of the other boards on test, which gave it great sail carrying ability. Although we only tested with sails of 5.4m and below, a lightweight rider could probably get away with 5.7m. We found the board planed comparatively early and therefore offered the ability to get jumps in almost immediately, which was of huge benefit when sailing in onshore conditions. The board was comfortable through chop and very relaxing to sail in bump-&-jump and blasting type situations. It tracked upwind well and seemed to have good speed. On a wave, it was one of the easiest boards to ride – especially when underpowered. It would keep plenty

of speed down the face and an extremely sure-footed bottom turn paved the way for a satisfyingly snappy top turn.

FITTINGS: It comes with a 23cm G10 fin, which appears tall with a fat tail, and has nice flex throughout. The straps are comfortable and the pads spongy and thick, cushioning the ride well. The deck is fairly domed, but when riding you don't notice this as the pads make it feel quite flat.

OVERALL: An excellent all-round waveboard that really is easy enough for a first-time waverider, yet still rewarding enough for someone more advanced. Feeling slightly bigger than other 75s in this test made it great when underpowered on 5.3m or 4.7m, but some of the smaller guys felt it was a little bit too big when they were well powered on 4.2m. The Pocket Wave would be a great choice for British wavesailing, offering the confidence to go out in gustier conditions and exploit all kinds of onshore conditions.



THE TESTER'S VIEWS...



DAN – 70kg, confident riding frontside and backside, learning to forward loop, sails in North Devon (i.e. proper waves)

"I would definitely buy a single-fin as my smallest waveboard. I prefer the secure feel and direct tracking they give you, and they seem better for jumping – as I'm trying to loop, I need all the help I can get! My favourite all-round board was the RRD Wave Cult. It felt great on a wave and was really good for jumping. I also thought highly of the JP Wave and Fanatic NewWave, because again they were pretty good at everything. If any brand managers are reading this and want to cut me a deal, I'd be happy on any of those three! They all seemed to cope well when stacked on

a 4.2m, but would still handle a 5.3m. This sort of versatility is essential with the conditions we encounter in Devon – especially if, like me, you can't afford to fill the van full of toys. Because of my weight I think some of the other guys were a bit shocked that I didn't prefer the smaller-feeling boards. I put this down to the fact that I'm pretty lazy and prefer something quite easy to sail! I'd pair my 75L board with a 95L freestyle-wave."



SAM – 81kg, confident riding frontside and backside, can loop, punch, and throw an array of freestyle trickery, only sails at South Coast breaks around the Poole area (i.e. more often than not, onshore waves)

"I have to say I would still buy a single-fin over any other configuration for my smallest board because it means I can just jump on and pretty much know what I'm going to get. I don't have enough free time to get used to my waveboards because I spend most of the year in freestyle locations, therefore I need something that will work immediately with my style. As an all-round choice I'd go for the JP Wave. It did everything that was asked of it and worked from 5.3m down to fully powered 4.2m weather. I could

take it to a cross-on Branksome or I could use it on a good day at Kimmeridge, and would be happy in the knowledge that it would work either way. If I had the luxury of an extra board in my quiver, I could be tempted with the Starboard Kode. On full power days it worked extremely well because it felt a little bit smaller and more controllable than most of the others, but as an only board I wouldn't be able to use anything bigger than a 5.0m on it. I'd pair my waveboard up with a 100L freestyle board."



PAUL – 86kg, confident riding frontside and backside, can forward loop competently, but scared of rotating backwards (smashed his front teeth out crashing a push loop), sails mainly on the South Coast (i.e. cross-onshore muck)

"Like the rest of the test crew I will most probably be buying a 75L single-fin waveboard because I prefer a secure and directional feel in a board of this size, which I only really use when well powered on a 5.0m or below. When it's this windy the water state at the locations I usually sail at is chopped up and confused, and in these conditions I find a single-fin tends to be easier to handle. As an all-round board that I know I could have a good time on, and as a change-down from a 95L freestyle-wave, I would probably choose

the Goya One because it has slightly more float and gets planing in an instant. But, if I also have an 85L board in my quiver this year, then I would be stuck between the JP Wave and the Tabou Pocket, both of which are great all-rounders. The Exocet U-Surf and the Starboard Kode felt great when I was well powered, but felt a bit too small for me so probably wouldn't get that much use."



EMILE – 78kg, the most able sailor in the team on a wave, and the best at jumping (50 back loops before breakfast). Sails almost exclusively at the Witterings, except when he decides to go off on a jolly to Cabo Verde, the Canaries, Brazil, Morocco – the list goes on...

"I've already received my Fanatic NewWave 76, and now I'm off to Punta Preta, so I suppose that answers everything. End of text. [You're not getting off that lightly! Ed.] Okay, the main thing I would say is that the seven boards on test could be split into three different size categories. The Goya One would be in a class of its own because it feels slightly larger than the others, and therefore if I were to buy it, I wouldn't need an 85L, but I would probably still need a smaller board for the really hardcore days. The Kode and

U-Surf would also be in a separate group because they felt slightly smaller than the standard size 75L boards. If I had one of these, at my weight, I would certainly try to pair it with an 80-85L board. The four remaining boards all felt like they were the perfect size for someone like me to own as a single waveboard option. They handled a 5.3m down to a 4.2m with ease and would probably cope with a 3.7m."

OVERALL

As you can see, single-fins are still very much in demand and supply. The brands are working hard on improving them every year, and they're certainly better than ever before. The single-fin waveboards are probably the most versatile they've ever been, with the fast-tailed examples being fairly loose and the most manoeuvrable still planing fairly early. To top it off, there really wasn't a bad board amongst this group. Some were good all-rounders, others were better in strong winds and suited the lighter weights, while a few were better suited to heavier sailors or lighter breezes. As far as one, two, three or four fins goes, we've spoken to many pros over the last few months and have received mixed feedback. Some say they love their multi-fin boards, others say they prefer the single-fins. Now it's just down to you to pick the board that will suit your style, fit in with the rest of your quiver, and match your budget. If you're new to this or in need of further assistance, then get down to your local retailer or pop along to one of the many demo days that run around the UK and try a few boards for size.

