



→ Introducing

Version four of the Rally is amongst us. With a very dedicated following, this is an exciting moment for devotees. The Rally was a surf kite before surf kites existed and the antics of Patrick Rebstock et al show that it is still top of its game. So, a few changes for 2014 – what's on?! **Tested AH**

→ Basics

Build and construction

As with all Slingshot products, the first word that comes to mind when you get things out the bag, is 'quality'. Everything looks and feels good and there is real attention to detail. It's got five struts – although the outside struts are super-close to the tips so it looks more like a three strutter in the air – and there is a lot of exposed cloth in the centre. The Splitstrut design keeps everything super-taut. Materials wise and the surf tough status seems intact – there's nothing overboard or overdone but solid reinforcements where you need 'em.

Set up and tuning

The bridle has three attachment points on each side and there are no pulleys – there's a lot of control here. New for 2014 are additional attachment points for the front lines to really tune in to

your personal preference and riding style. The original one pump is present and still very much going strong, and it's nice to see knots on the front AND back attachment points at the kite end. Good use of resources!

Bar and trim

The new Compstick feels bombproof – it's a very solid piece of kit indeed. There is heaps of throw, so much so that you generally need to have the stopper down a notch unless you have real monkey arms. The below the bar depower is super smooth – you need to be precise with it but it works great – and the grip is super comfy, but still solid. You would expect to get a few seasons' use out of it for sure.



→ Info Panel

- **Main Market** Freeride, Wave, Race
- **Sizes** 6,7,8,9,10,12,14
- **Line configuration** 4 Line Bridled
- **Inflation** The original One pump
- **Safety** Front line flag out

→ Performance

Turning speed, handling and feel

The 2014 Rally is a further refinement of an already highly-evolved kite. The low end is definitely improved this year – the power is there from the get-go and the predictable flying characteristics make the Rally a real pleasure pretty much straight away. There is a phenomenal amount of power on offer and the throw on the bar can be used to good effect. It's more of an upper body workout than other similar kites, but with that degree of movement comes precision, and you can really tune the Rally and make incredibly subtle adjustments to get the very best out of it. The tips have been revised for V4 and this has improved the turning speed which had been a little sluggish on the larger sizes of the previous version. It's not as snappy as other kites with bigger tips, but it comes around plenty quick enough, and feels like it's working with you. Sitting relatively deep in the window, it's just great fun in the waves – you can really thrash it around without losing control and it'll sit there, drift, or drive you into your next turn with a smile on its face

Trim, depower and range

The power delivery is incredibly smooth throughout the throw, don't get us wrong – this is no pussycat – there is power there, but it's just very easy to opt into or out of. If you want to truck back upwind after some down the line action, then you really can ease on the power, sheet in, and it'll pull like a horse. The massive amount of throw means that you can ease things right off too – it's quite a physical way of riding, but very effective. And if you watch Rebstock/Ropner etc closely on the Rally, you can see how much they work the bar to use the grunt and 'on tap' power of the Rally to their favour, both for generating speed on the wave, and for generating lift for above the lip trickery.

Relaunch

The swept back design of the Rally sees it pop straight back if you slam it down, in fact, it's pretty rare to end up with it completely face down, it's generally on its side again before you've even picked the seaweed off your bar.

→ Icing

The look

It's got souped up graphics, but still looks very much like previous Rallies. Which is nice to see – both its shape and the colourways will make it easy to spot from afar and have non Slingshot aficionados squinting at the sky and asking, "Is that the new one mate?"



→ Verdict

For a pure kiteboarding engine, the Rally is hard to beat. The power is 100% on/off and so smooth. All of the massive throw is effective, gives you a nice upper body workout and allows you to make the smallest of adjustments. The fatter tips give it a bit more flair than last time round and for wave and freeriding: it's a weapon.