

The Kiteboarder

magazine



<http://www.thekiteboarder.com>

A LOOK INSIDE NEXT YEAR'S GEAR CLOSET

SNEAK PEAK 07

DESTINATION DREAMS:

**BARBADOS
QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S
ST. LUCIA**

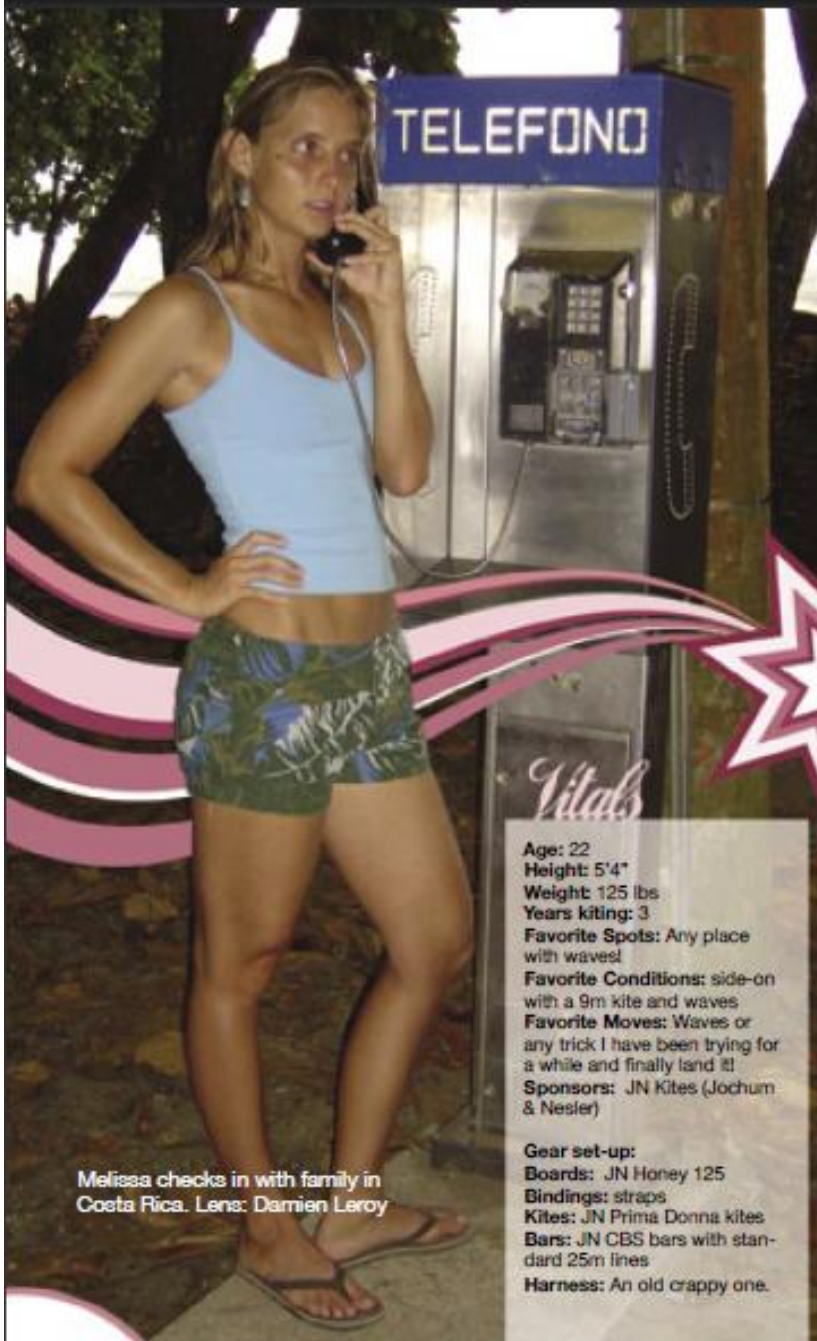


SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2006



5495 USA

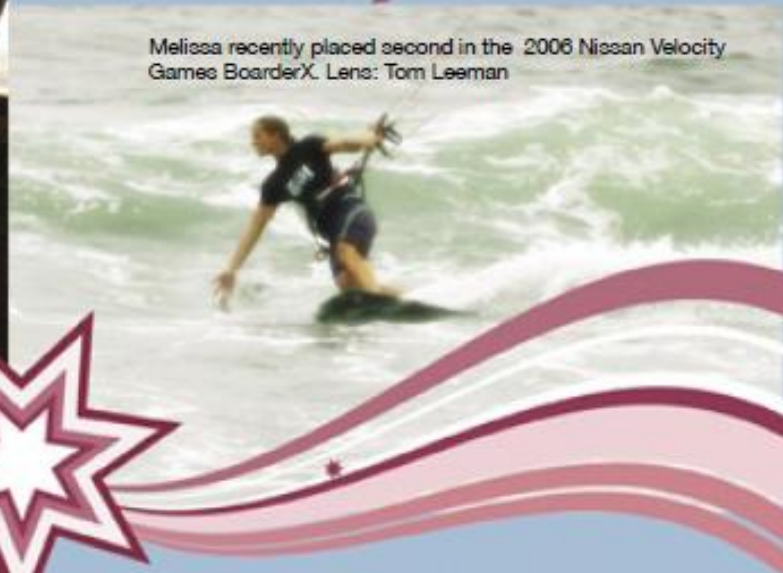
- TRY THIS: DOWNLOOP TURNS, RIDING UNHOOKED
- WAVE THEORY: PIVEC AND TOP HAT DISCUSS WAVE RIDING



Melissa checks in with family in Costa Rica. Lens: Damien Leroy

department:
Close up

Melissa recently placed second in the 2006 Nissan Velocity Games BoarderX. Lens: Tom Leeman



The Kiteboarder Profile:

Melissa Gil

M's Tips:

The only way to learn something new is by trying, and trying means crashing!

Success doesn't come easy. It means a lot of trying, a lot of hard days and failures, but the reward is worth it, so go for it!

Always know you can do it; when there is doubt you most likely will fail

Always be positive because what you focus your attention on is surely to happen.

Never give up, because giving up only hurts your inner self.

Do not wait until tomorrow because all you have and all you will ever have is now.

Age: 22
Height: 5'4"
Weight: 125 lbs.
Years kiting: 3
Favorite Spots: Any place with waves!
Favorite Conditions: side-on with a 9m kite and waves.
Favorite Moves: Waves or any trick I have been trying for a while and finally land it!
Sponsors: JN Kites (Jochum & Nesler)

Gear set-up:
Boards: JN Honey 125
Bindings: straps
Kites: JN Prima Donna kites
Bars: JN CBS bars with standard 25m lines
Harness: An old crappy one.

When, where and why did you start kiteboarding?

I started kiteboarding a little less than three years ago when I moved to Miami to go to college. My uncle and aunt, Eduardo and Irene Owen, are windsurfing rippers and introduced me to kiteboarding. Irene and I learned together helping each other out; she was my partner in crime and it was lots of fun! We couldn't have done it without the help of two good friends Lock Pirie and Tim Barber. They were our true teachers, kind enough to teach these two girls that showed up at Matheson Hammock and knew very little about kitting!

What other sports helped influence your kiteboarding?

Surfing and wakeboarding.

What riders influence you most?

Damien LeRoy, alias the "Fat Kid." I wouldn't be where I am if it wasn't for him and thank him for everything. He gave me the little push I needed to excel in the sport and give competition a try. Also, Lock Pirie; he is the nicest kiteboarder, always positive, happy and smiling. I tell him I want to be like him when I grow up!

What do you do off the water to help you on the water?

Damien introduced me to a bar hanging from a tree and that is lots of fun! It helps get your body used to the movements so that you are more ready when you go out and try it in the water. I also do some Yoga to relax and stretch my aching muscles!

What is the latest trick you are working on and how is it going (what is the challenge)?

I have been working on the raley to blind and I get worked! I have to go past blind when I land so that I don't end up looping the kite and going topside the other direction or crashing the kite in the water. I am close though -- I just need to pass the bar quickly when I land. I also practice the KGB in the tree and it comes easy, but in the water it is a different story! I have to control my mind and truly commit!

Where is your favorite place to ride and why?

I haven't been to many places, but I do know that any place with waves is my favorite; it is so much more fun!

You are from Costa Rica. Have you kiteboarded there? If so, how does the riding scene in Costa Rica compare to the US?

I am ashamed to say I have never kiteboarded in my home. Every time I go there I simply go surfing! But I do know Bahia Salinas and Lake Arenal are good places to go, super windy!

What is your view on contests?

I have never competed in any sport before and I gave it a try. I am not much of a competition person but as long as you are having fun it is good. The moment it becomes stressful and not fun it is over.

You just graduated in Marine Biology at the beginning of the year. What do you plan on doing with your degree?

I studied Marine Biology so I could pursue my dreams of understanding and protecting my favorite place: the ocean. Ever since I can remember, I have had a passion for nature, so I would like to work in environmental protection. But in the immediate future I would like to give a try to being a professional kiteboarder because now is the time to do it!