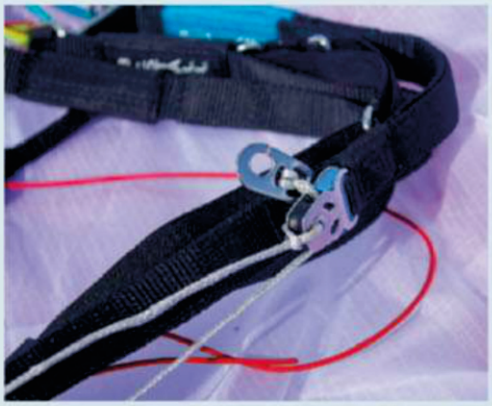
PAWN STAR



Just as the EN B class has expanded to include everything from beginners' wings to full-blooded XC machines, the EN A class has expanded too. It now covers everything from full beginner and school wings to gliders like the Pawn and the Discus. These are wings that you can happily – and very comfortably – go on big XCs with. They are perfect for new pilots, occasional pilots, and those who want the reassurance of maximum hands-up passive security.

Unrolling the Pawn you'll notice that despite being a 'lowly' EN A it is bristling with the latest glider technology. At the front are nylon wires to keep the cells open plus a sharknose (called 'back position intake'). There is also a degree of 3D shaping in the form of a single seam across the top of the leading edge. It's there to reduce billow in the top surface of the cells. At the trailing edge you will find mini-ribs to help create a smooth profile. The wing is made of the well-proven Skytex material from Porcher.

The line-set is greatly reduced; amazingly so for an EN A. There are just two main A-lines on each side, one going to the Big Ears riser and the other to the main one. The lines themselves are, as you would expect, sheathed and not super thin.

There are three riser sets but the C-lines bifurcate across the chord to D attachments. This usually helps with collapse recovery. The risers themselves are wide rather than racy, but this makes the wing, along with the simple line-set, very easy to handle on the ground.

The risers used for Big Ears and B-line stall are well labelled. Big Ears have to be held in. The speedbar pulleys are the same sleek flat design as we saw on the Queen, and the two risers are colour coded at the bottom.

On my second flight with the wing I tried a few collapses – roughly 50%+. The wing reacted well. It did feel slightly dynamic but settled down to stable flight very quickly. Holding the collapse in it was very easy to turn in the opposite direction with plenty of brake travel available. The wing seems very spin resistant: I tried long hard pulls on the brake and there was no tendency to go negative.

While the EN test can give you an idea of a wing's reactions to a collapse, what it won't tell you is how resistant it is to collapses. I was flying well below the top of the weight range here in southern France and the wing felt pressurised throughout the flight. In thermals it took very little correction and the outside tip had no weakness. I was happy to thermal one-handed taking photos. The same can be said for the wing on the bar: it simply sits firmly above your head.