

The Sky Antea was launched last year and attracted interest straight away. It's certificated to the new EN standard. Sky Paragliders is based in the Czech Republic, the gliders are designed by Alexandr Paux, a Swiss National, and the company is managed by Martin Nemeč. The gliders are made in a purpose-built factory at the very eastern end of the country near Ostrava. The UK importer is Tim King at Sky Paragliders UK.

The present Sky range is made up of the Fides 2 Evolution (LTF 1), Atis 2 (EN B), Brontes 2 (AFNOR Performance), Antea (EN C), Ares2 (EN D) and Eris 3 (Competition). A replacement for the Ares is expected soon. There's also a freestyle XS version of the Atis 2 which is trimmed for acro.

The Antea is aimed at the experienced pilot wanting to go XC. This is reflected in the certification rating and the flat aspect ratio of 5.5:1, with the span divided up into 59 cells. The glider covers all-up weights from 60 - 130kg in four sizes; the size supplied for the test was the 90 - 110 kg (L) size, flown at 105 kg all-up.

The glider is made of Porcher Sport 9017 (40 gm/m<sup>2</sup>) with the water repellent (E77A) coating on the top, with the same weight of cloth in the medium (E38A) finish on the bottom. Sky is now a 100% Porcher Sport company as far as glider cloth is concerned; they do not use fabric from any other company. Lines are Liros or Edelrid, mostly Dyneema with a polyester sheath. Sky claims a total weight of 5.2kg for the whole glider. The risers are the newer, thinner 20mm material preferred for this sort of glider. Standards of finish are very high and attention to detail is good including a butt-hole for extracting debris. The brake lines in the top cascades pull through rings to increase trailing edge tension whilst braking.

The Antea is supplied with a rucksack, inner bag, compression strap, T-shirt, log book and a piece of Skytex patch. The supplied rucksack is very well made and the main compartment will hold the largest of harnesses with 17cm back protection. The top where you would put the helmet is a bit tight, but once you have learned to pack it carefully the slightly smaller size makes for a pack that will easily fit in the boot of a very small car... like a 1989 Vauxhall Nova! The bag is good for the longer walks to take-off that you may be caught with.

Ground handling is a pleasure with the Antea, and its good manners make for a glider which can be used to demonstrate a lot of techniques to pilots whom one is coaching. The use of the lighter 9017 cloth really pays off at inflation time, and if there is any breeze at all a reverse launch is possible. Despite the experienced-pilot target certification the ground handling on this glider is so easy that it should present no problems for a pilot capable of flying it. It rises easily, requiring only the slightest of dabs on the brakes to stop it overhead. When alpine launching it also rises easily with the lightest of pulls, and will come up very quickly if launched with a shock loading.

The glider is a delight to thermal, and given that most of the test flying was done in the small, high-pressure thermals around Annecy and Chamonix early in the year, it acquitted itself well. In this sort of thermal it is easy to tell if a glider will be pushed or rolled out of a thermal. This isn't a problem for the Antea, as I never got near exhausting the reserve of bite that the inside brake can deliver. For those first few hours of flying, whilst you are getting used to the glider, letting the outside brake go also has the outer wing whipping

## Specification: Advance Alpha 4

Model	S	M	L	XL
No of cells	59	59	59	59
Span (projected, m)	9.26	9.63	9.96	10.36
Area (flat, m <sup>2</sup> )	22.65	24.50	26.25	28.39
Aspect ratio	5.5:1	5.5:1	5.5:1	5.5:1
Glider weight (kg)	4.8	5.0	5.2	5.5
All-up weight range (kg)	60 - 80	75 - 95	90 - 110	105 - 130
EN Certification	C	C	C	C
Guarantee	1 year materials and workmanship			
Price	£2,350	£2,350	£2,350	£2,350



PHOTO: STEVE UZOUCHUKWU



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round smartly. I flew the glider with the chest strap set to 46cm, and enjoyed the weight shift/brake co-ordination so much I saw no need to experiment. The Antea is very agile but achieves this agility without being twitchy or nervous. The glider also has this ability to bite into thermals but does so without being too pitchy, and in fact pilot input to control pitching is only needed when entering or exiting small and very strong thermals. Using the inner brake to bite into a thermal results in a carving turn, but not the diving turns some paragliders exhibit which then require careful use of the outside brake to avoid plummeting.

The B-line stall is very straightforward. A moderate pull results in the glider folding spanwise, and then dropping back quite some way. The stalled wing then moves smoothly back overhead and establishes a high descent rate. Once it is back overhead or slightly forward, a sharp release results in the glider diving smoothly (without a surge to be damped) and regaining speed, then climbing out slightly at the end of the dive. Big ears are easy to pull in (no split A-riser) and require that they be held in. Once they are released, they will self-recover extremely rapidly, and faster than many EN B or LTF 1-2 gliders. Directional control via weight shift with ears in is very good.

There are two levels of spiral on the Antea. There's an easy to do mild spiral, with a useful but not very high descent rate, which is very low stress, and then the usual spiral where you've gone over the nose and the rate builds up as quickly as you want it to. The Antea heads into serious spiral mode after 180 to 270 degrees of trying to get in. It also does very good asymmetric spirals, because it responds so well to the inside brake being tweaked. A high descent rate with low G can also be obtained by pulling a small ear on one side then spiralling the opposite way. The glider descends fast but does not have the high G feel associated with a normal spiral.

I only had one minor collapse whilst flying the Antea and it was due to being unable to make the right input to avoid it, as to do so would have put me closer than I wanted to be to another pilot in a small thermal. The resulting collapse was manifested by a momentary drop in brake pressure and an audible pop as the tip came out. No loss of height nor change in direction occurred. Provoked collapses were fiercely resisted and came out instantaneously, with the glider not turning much. However, if induced collapses are held in for any time the glider does start to turn quite rapidly so you can see that it's for the more experienced pilot.

UK importer:

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PHOTO: TIM KING



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On a glider at this level the speed bar must be easy to use and have a serious speed increase, and the Antea excels in both areas. The hidden pulley and the unsheathed Dyneema line running over it are very well matched, allowing me to get to about a third of the available travel with the lower rung of my speed bar, then getting full travel with the second stage of my set up. The whole range of travel is easy but with sensible levels of feedback. In the last two-thirds of the bar travel there is a little bit of movement in the undersurface at the front, but otherwise the whole sail remains totally solid. The sail has some small pockets sewn into the lower surface, possibly to stop the deterioration of the glide angle at higher speeds caused by outflow of air at the bottom of the cell opening.

Landing the Antea is relatively easy. The high trim speed is no issue here and it helps to fly through the wind gradient with just a tiny bit of brake, when a progressive flare allows a one- or two-step landing. By releasing the brakes very slightly 1 to 2m above ground a little bit of swing through can be combined with a flare for a no-step landing even in very light or nil wind. Only a little speed gain is needed, otherwise energy retention means an embarrassing climb as the brakes are pulled.

I first flew the Antea over year ago and when I was offered the chance to review it I all but took the importer's arm off. I disappeared with the glider before he could change his mind or any of the Southern Club mob could try and take it away for a test flight. It is simply superb, and a great glider to upgrade to from a high end EN B or LTF 1-2, as well as a good all-rounder for the more experienced pilot. Faults? None. Scouring the forums and asking the other two reviewers who have flown it can't turn up anything except a wish for a bigger pocket for the helmet in the bag. The performance, on bar and off, the gorgeous handling, the simplicity on the ground and the flying pleasure make it hard to beat in the EN C/LTF 2 category. If you are buying in this category you will have to test fly it or regret the missed opportunity. The Sky Antea is an exceptional glider.

Other reviewers said: The easiest ground handling of any glider I've flown, and I mean that literally. Typical Sky handling, i.e. very good. It has similar characteristics to my Ares, but toned down and easier to fly. Asymmetrics are handled well and counter-steering is very easy, so that you can keep it straight after pulling an A-riser down hard (Dave Massie), and: If I could add just one word to your review it would be 'easy' - mind you I'll bet you've used it already! (Ian Grayland)



**Excellent performance**  
**High agility with very good compartment**  
**Easy ground handling**  
**Resistance to turbulence and very quick re-inflation**



**Nothing!**

### Importer's comment

Every time I fly the Antea, I can't believe how fuss-free and easy it is to fly and also the high degree of performance I can get from it. I almost feel like I'm cheating every time I fly it! It seems Steve got it spot on. He was obviously impressed with the Antea and I value his experienced words. It's a great feeling when you can give someone who knows their stuff a wing, and have complete confidence in the knowledge that it will perform for them.

TIM KING, SKYLINE UK