

# WORKING THE RAILS

BY: RAPHAËL DEROME

OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS, WAKEBOARDING HAS EVOLVED SO QUICKLY THAT IT IS PROBABLY ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING ACTION SPORTS AROUND. WAKEBOARDS AND BINDINGS ARE NOW AS LIGHT AS A FEATHER AND HAVE MORE OF A SNOWBOARD LOOK. MANY ASPECTS OF WAKEBOARDING EVOLVED VERY QUICKLY, BUT I BELIEVE THAT THE RAIL ASPECT IS DEFINITELY THE MOST EXCITING PART TO WATCH GROW.

Sliding on rails on a wakeboard pretty much started when Patrick Panakos, the ambassador of wake parks, built rails all over the Projects Wakeboard Camp and decided to make the first rail-only wakeboarding event, "the Carnival".

Since then, rail riding in wakeboarding progressed at an impressively fast rate. Today, hitting a rail on a wakeboard is more accessible, you can just drive to a cable park and ride for the day or you can build your own rail in your backyard and session it. All you need is some money for a cable park season pass or a wave runner, and then some imagination to build your own setup.

## CONSTRUCTION OF YOUR RAIL

There are so many types of rails! Which one should you build? This is probably the question we all ask ourselves before building. The trick is to not overdo it! The most fun rails are often the most simple to build and to ride.

Personally, I would recommend a **Rooftop Rail** or just a simple **Flat bar**. Both of these rails are as fun for a beginner as they are for an advanced rider. Easy to build, easy to ride and they are the most fun to slide on!

## FIRST TIME ON THE RAIL?

For those who have never hit a rail before, before you think about jumping on an obstacle, make sure you can Ollie off the water properly. Once you are comfortable, all you want to do is to have a mellow approach towards the rail. Then, as the rail is getting closer, bend your knees and Ollie off your tail, and suck up both knees to make sure you clear the front part of the rail. On the rail, keep your knees bent to stay stable and try to keep your head up. As you look towards the end of the rail, you want to have a little more weight on your back foot to make sure you don't fall out the front. You also want to keep the handle relatively low and close to your hips. Then, when you see the end of the rail approaching, you prepare yourself to execute a little Ollie to give yourself time to turn

your board. The key to rail riding is to visualize your trick before you get on the rail, to stay focused, to relax and to have fun!

## PRESS? STYLE? WHAT'S NEXT?

Rail riding on a wakeboard should be really similar to snowboarding, the type of trick and the way it looks is important. Once you are comfortable riding your rail, don't be scared to try different things; backside or frontside, switch or regular, spinning on or off, out on the nose or on the tail, pressing, etc. It will feel really good and right when done the way you had imagined it, and that's when it's rewarding. Different types of rails can lead to different types of tricks; it's easier to press on a flat bar and it's easier to gap on an A-Frame. To be a good rail rider you need to be versatile, doing the same trick is alright to build your confidence, but so is landing a new trick. It doesn't have to be scary, you just need to know your limits and work within them. The key to rail riding is patience and creativity!

