U-Turn has been on the market with its Helium, Oxigen and Nitro for the past 18 months. Now with the Butane there is another kite available, fitting between the Nitro race kite and the intermediate Oxigen.

Kite & Friends tested every size.

The Butane was planned long ago, but U-Turn designer Ernst Strobl was taking his time. He used this time not only to optimise the kite but also to analyse the kites' position in the market. U-Turn as a company are known for the latest developments and highest quality, but the Butane comes not only with maximum performance and good handling, but also an affordable price.

The construction
The Butane is available in 9 sizes, the 11m² and 13m² versions included. The sizes are the same as the Raptor II that Ernst also designed and the outline is similar, but the kite has been re-worked with computer aided design. The latest know-how from paragliding development also influences the Butanes' flying characteristics. Concerning the cost structure, the Butanes' construction (26 cells from 2.5 to 6.5m² and 32 cells from 7.5m²) is simple compared to the Nitro (36/42 cells). Additionally, instead of the expensive Porcher Marine material, U-Turn uses Aqua-Ripstop, which showed good performance in the wet. Although the new design with the U-Turn claw on top and bottom surfaces is more costly than that found on other race kites, a whole set of Butanes costs only the half of the average price of other common race kites. This is one reason why the topic of "competition kites" gets interesting again for many ordinary kiters, particularly as the Butane comes with features like Kevlar/Dyneema bridle and dirt-outs.

The Butane in gusty inland winds

The first mission
The first flight and the first ride in the kite buggy with the Butane presents no problems for the pilot. Even those who are used to flying with beginner or intermediate kites will get on easily the Butane. Of course the Butane accelerates faster and translates any steering inputs more directly, but flying in steady onshore winds the kite rewards the pilot with unexpectedly easy handling. Just don't exaggerate the steering and braking actions as the Butane is a competition kite and reacts very quickly and needs to be worked when underpowered.

Well powered
When the Butane is well powered, or even overpowered, it shows a fascinating stability. This is because of one of the built in features, the slight 'reflex' that occurs when

the brakes are off. Even with the brakes fully off the Butane needs absolutely no corrections and sits very reliably in the air. This is the sort of behaviour that one expects from intermediates, but for a race kite it's just brilliant.

In gusty winds
This is when you realise that the Butane is a high performance machine as it translates wind energy into traction. You cannot expect the Butane to sort out your mistakes or wind changes, but gusts can be handled better than with many other competition kites. As it reacts more gently and later in the gusts, the pilot has more time to make his reactions and deal with a folded wingtip. Even with lines that are not too long or heavy (about 20m), the Butane stabilises itself without overshooting. This is thanks to the U-Turn developed AFS (Automatic Flight Stabilisation) system that has brought a big step forward in paraglider safety.

Effectiveness
By taking first place in the German Open class, Thommy Gempel (U-Turn team pilot) shows without doubt that the Butane provides enormous performance on every heading and course. Any pilot can fly the Butane; average pilots can use 25m lines, whilst experts should fly it with 20m (or less, except perhaps the bigger sizes 11 and 13) to gain the full performance. With short lines like that you decrease the drag on the main and brake lines, allowing the kite to fly right to the edge of the wind window and create traction with little side drift.

The stability of the 9.0m Butane at the edge of the wind window

Generous bags with mesh ventilation and 'VIN' plate

Braking activity
The proper use of the brakes is the secret of the Butane, as playing with the brakes reveals hidden potential. When the kite is flown with the optimum configuration of line length and thickness, the pilot has a wide range in which the brake can be used in order to produce additional power. You can adapt with astonishing flexibility to the race course, the chosen direction and the wind range. This makes it possible to use one size for a wide wind range, without having to change up or down too soon. Steering the Butane only by the main lines has little effect. On the contrary, without using the brake lines the stability can be upset by too aggressive movements and can bring the kite close to luffing. The same applies to over exaggerated movements of the brakes with the smaller sizes.

Always easier
It is getting easier to fly kites with high performance and the Butane shows that impressively. Although the stabilising systems can take away some of the potential maximum power of the Butane, the effective performance is still very high for ambitious pilots. We *(the testers from Kite & Friends)* were pleasantly surprised by the low entry price for a U-Turn kite of this standard. It means you do not need to be rich to afford a race kite made by a big brand like U-Turn.

Using the power of the Butane in the buggy is like Childs play