

# BETWEEN THE SHEETS

## NIVIUK HOOK 2

EN B

Marcus King fell in love with the original Niviuk Hook. Does the Hook 2 live up to expectations?



Photo: Charlie King

### NIVIUK'S DESCRIPTION

The all-new Hook 2 allows you to fly in complete comfort and harmony with a glider designed for performance and security; A glider designed to let you live your dreams.

### CONSTRUCTION

The most obvious feature of the Hook 2 is the structured leading edge (what they call the SLE).

It has cut-down Mylar stiffeners reinforced with plastic inserts. These inserts are set back from the top seam, so shouldn't cause any problems with wear of the outer material. They do mean that it's probably better to concertina pack the wing, but this is true of many wings these days.

The SLE is said to give an improved leading edge that is more efficient and streamlined. The leading edge has no closed cells apart from at

the wing tips.

Niviuk have increased the aspect ratio slightly over the original Hook and also increased the arc of the wing. The wing sports the now infamous Niviuk colour scheme and is available in four standard colours.

The wing has four risers with split As, held together for take off with magnets that are buried in the riser. Everything is finished to a high standard:

#### We liked most

The agile dynamic handling combined with smoothly damped pitch

#### We'd recommend it to

Just about anyone who enjoys precise handling and lots of energy in their wings but wants a good degree of safety

the maillons have logoed plastic line-keepers; the brake handles are attached with lovely anodised swivels; and from the rubber badges to the speed bar pulley covers you can tell a lot of attention has been paid to the details.

The lines are all sheathed and use a fairly standard layout with two bifurcations high up in the arc. There are just three main lines on A and B risers with four on the C riser and two on the D. The speed bar is the standard fare and attaches with industry-standard Brummel hooks. The brake handles are comfortable with quite a bit of padding in the handle area and attach to the risers with plastic magnetic keepers. The keeper on the riser has a raised edge to make the attachment more positive.

The glider comes in five sizes covering a weight range starting at just 45 kg and going all the way up to 130 kg. I flew the 27 which has a weight range of 95 kg to 115 kg at an all-up weight of around 103 kg.

## LAUNCHING

The uncluttered risers make it easy to grab the correct riser whatever launch technique you use. As you would expect it comes up easily and is easy to handle on launch. There is no tendency for the wing to overshoot or to hang back during the pull up.

## IN THE AIR

When I tested the original Hook I fell in love with its sporty handling and dynamic feel. At the time I attributed this to Raul Rodriguez's position in the test team. With Raul's departure and a trend these days towards a more stable relaxed feel plus a move to the centre of the weight range I feared this would be missing. I shouldn't have worried because as soon as I was in the air it became evident that this is still a sweet little sports car.

The handling is sharp and direct, allowing for accurate piloting as well making it easy to throw around. The wing has eyelets on the trailing edge that the brake lines run through. This 'tip-steering' bunches up the tip as you start to pull the brakes making it easy to initiate a flat turn using a small amount of brake. Adding more brake and weight shift will get the wing banked up.

The wing bites well into thermals but is nicely damped in pitch. Even in the small punchy thermals of a late spring day at Gourdon with the meteo wind coming over the back I had no problems staying in the cores. Don't confuse the dynamic handling with a nervous wing, it feels stable overhead allowing the pilot to concentrate on the core. The wing gives a



good level of information through the brakes and risers allowing you to make the most of the lift.

The stall point is well defined and there is plenty of warning before the onset of spin and I was able to use the full range of the controls to crank it up. It carries plenty of energy so only small brake movements are needed to keep it centred.

Looking at the certification the 27 only gets four Bs – the rest are all straight As. Two of these are because the big ears take a little too long to come out and may need a pump when used with the accelerator. Another B is given because it descends at more than 14 m/s after two revolutions of a spiral. Also, as you would expect for a glider with this level of dynamics, it turns and dives a little too much in the 75% collapses for an A rating. Overall though, the test results suggest a pretty safe wing for its class.

Something the test results won't tell you is how prone a wing is to collapse, but there were no problems in this respect. Even in rough air I had no major collapses, just the odd wing tip when I ventured too close to the edge of a particularly strong thermal.

In transitions the glider proved to be efficient. The speed bar is easy to use, although it lacks the extra finesse of a kick down system. Even pulley-to-pulley the glider felt solid and there were no problems with pitching. In the first half of the travel there is no appreciable increase in sink rate.

When the call of the bar gets too much and it's time to descend I found that all that energy and the dynamic nature of the wing put a great big smile on my face. It's easy to leave spirals smoothly with the precise handling and the well-damped pitching can save face if you do get the timing a bit wrong.

## CONCLUSION

The original Hook was a hard act to follow but Niviuk have managed to keep the agile, dynamic handling of the original along with improved pitch damping. Performance is at the top of its class.

I would say the glider is probably too much for all but the most talented beginners, but would thoroughly recommend it as a second wing that will take pilots on their first cross country flights and to their first competitions.

With its precise dynamic handling it's perfect for anyone who, due to the constraints of jobs and family, no longer fly competition wings but don't want a boring ride. In summary the Hook 2 should be on your shortlist if you are looking for a wing in this class. **XC**

### The reviewer

Marcus King flew the Hook 2 27 at an all up weight of 103 kg using SupAir Vampair and Evo XC harnesses

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