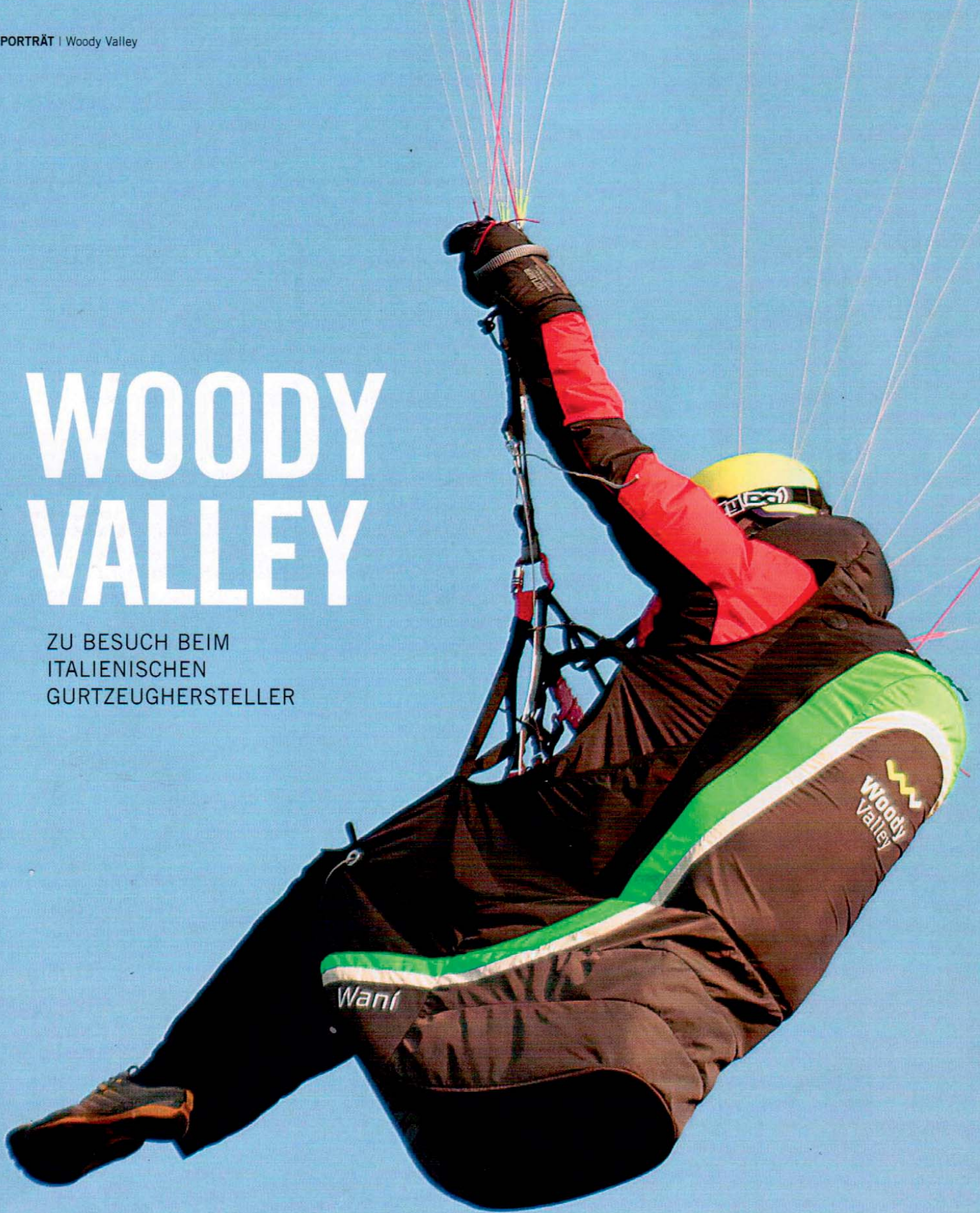


WOODY VALLEY

ZU BESUCH BEIM
ITALIENISCHEN
GURTZEUGHERSTELLER



The Italian manufacturer is riding the wave of success with the reversible Wani and Wani and Wani light harnesses. THERMIK went to the Italian city of Trento to meet the fascinating company owner Simone Caldana...

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Woody Valley, what an unusual name for an Italian manufacturer! The literal Italian translation makes no sense! This and many other questions whirled around in my head while crossing the Brenner Pass heading south. A journey en-route to summer! Whilst north of the Alps, the outside temperature remains 10°C, upon arriving at the "Autogrill" service station, just before Trento, summer awaits. The Woody Valley headquarters is easy to spot, it is located near the "Trento Nord" motorway toll booth. Shortly afterwards, we were welcomed by Simone Caldana and the Turnpoint importer team who joined us for the occasion.

Turnpoint's Ilona Albrecht views direct contact with the Woody Valley team as a good opportunity to discuss details - and organise a large supply of harnesses! The product is currently in high demand!

Woody, the dog

The origin of the name "Woody Valley" is equally peculiar and decisive, used in a fun way to indicate the development of something which was originally just a hobby for one of the most important harness manufacturers.

At the end of the 70s and early 80s, Simone Caldana and Elio Valenti were enthusiastic hang-gliding pilots. With their cutting and sewing experience and owing to the fact that it was difficult to find good harnesses in Italy, they decided to make customised harnesses. At the beginning, they made them just for themselves, then they began making them for their friends.

During their flights, they were often accompanied by Woody, a clever dog belonging to one of their friends. The dog was deemed clever because as soon as its owner and friends took off, he would, unaided, identify their landing

WOODY VALLEY

Links: Aktueller Kassenschlager – das Wendegurtzeug Wani.

Unten: Der charismatische Firmenchef Simone Caldana (rechts) in der Woody Valley Produktionshalle in Trento.





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spot and wait for them there. When Woody died, he was buried in the valleys of the local mountain. It became common for local youngsters to say "Let's go to the valley of Woody" and set off to hang glide on this mountain. A short while after, the memorial site for the well-loved dog, quite recently, became a hang gliding club. The "Woody Valley" hang gliding club has become an institution within the Italian flight sector. In 1985, at the time Simone Caldana and Elio Valenti's "harness sewing" hobby became a genuine profession, it was time to look for a name for their new company. During this same period, the Woody Valley hang gliding club merged with another club so the name "Woody Valley" was available. From "Woody", the dog, to "Woody Valley", the place where the dog was buried and the hang gliding club, to "Woody Valley", one of the emerging harness manufacturers within the aerial sector.

Smart business

In 1989, Stefano Paissan joined the founders, Simone Caldana and Elio Valenti, as co-owner. This year represented a

change for Woody Valley also for moving to new 400 square metre headquarters and hiring of qualified personnel. Stefano Paissan still works within the company as Head of hang gliding harness production. Yes, you are not mistaken! Approximately 350 hang gliding harnesses per year are still produced in the Trento establishment. Simone Caldana has invited outsiders to look into his company. It is possible to meet him at sector trade fairs, where he provides advice on the development of paragliding harness seat safety.

On the one hand, he is typically Italian, shrewd and witty. Behind this undeniable charisma and nice appearance, lies hidden great determination and attention. This gets immediately clear when we follow him around the production department and listen to him describing the most modern equipment the company has and all the related operations.

Passionate about safety

It is no secret that by ensuring the "safest" harnesses, many paragliding accidents can be avoided. Owing to the protection

devices, it is possible to avoid extremely serious spinal column injuries. The Woody Valley development team consider "Safety" fundamental in terms of the production process, in the knowledge that present harnesses are always representative of a compromise between safety, weight and aerodynamics. At present, Woody Valley focuses, as part of the protection test simulation, on the issue of the harness angle of incidence. Just like the other major harness manufacturers, Woody Valley also has an in-house "guillotine-type system". The applicable standard according to LTF 91/09 provides for relatively direct impact below the seat. According to the opinion of many experts, this does not correspond to genuine impact subsequent to an accident. Additionally, many manufacturers do not appear to be complying with this standard, seeing as up until this point, these protection devices were not widely applied to the rear, upward area. Woody Valley wanted to get to the bottom of this so it modified the test arrangement with its "guillotine", so that the tested harness presented a more supine position.



1. Das X-Alps GTO ist ein Klassiker in der „5 kg-Klasse“ der Liegegurtzeuge.
2. Das Haska, Woody Valleys neuestes Gurtzeug mit extrem guten Protektorwerten, in der realistischen 45°-Neigung auf der Protektortestanlage von Woody Valley. Zur Zeit ist nur beim italienischen Hersteller diese Einstellung möglich.

3. Anselm Rauh von Turnpoint überprüft den Protektor im Haska.
4. Das „Fallbeil“ fällt: 25 g Verzögerung, trotz 45° Testanordnung sind sensationell. Bis zu 50 g sind laut LTF 91/09 erlaubt!

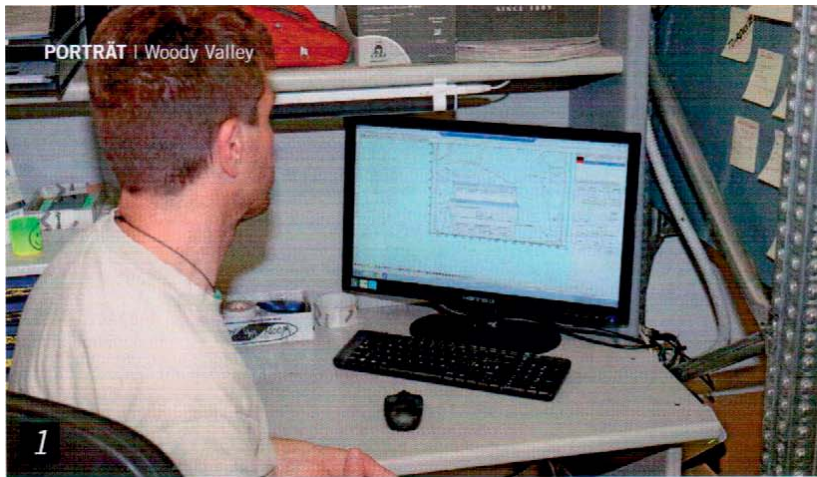
Based upon the "Haska" model harness, Simone Caldana presented us with a simulation of impact with a 45° supine position with a result of 25 g (50 g is the maximum value specified with a standard angle). It is undoubtedly sensational!

In addition to the extremely important issue of harness protection devices, Woody Valley does not leave anything to chance. A very odd looking machine catches my attention: "our washing machine" explains Simone, smiling at my question. What looks like a washing machine is, in actual fact, a self-built, long range power machine. It is possible to simulate thousands of strap, buckle and clip attachment operations. In such a context, optimal cases where carabinas are correctly closed are not used, instead, worst-case scenarios are applied. More specifically: obliquely applied straps, obliquely applied metal clip attachments

and those not closed at all, and so forth. In other words, everything that could take place in a genuine, real situation.

High-tech harness manufacturing

We are continuing to work on development and tests, which enable us to form ideas on the manufacturing of harnesses. Evidently, the work is computerised and high-tech. A single harness is made up of a maximum of 200 individual components. Complex telemetry provides the necessity to integrate manufacturing and production.



Italy - Poland and vice-versa

We enter the Woody Valley production room to better understand these production processes. Up to seventeen persons work here. Simone Caldana's pride and joy is the laser cutter. The advantage of this machine primarily lies with the possibility of accurately cutting extremely complex parts. Woody Valley production focuses on a mixed system: the complex parts are cut using the laser cutter, whilst mechanical moulds are used to cut the more traditional parts here in Trento and within a production establishment in Poland.

Every fortnight a lorry from Poland arrives to collect the components cut in Trento and brings the finished harnesses; the "assembly" of the harnesses takes place in Poland. A logistics challenge! An entire harness is made up of a maximum of 200 individual components. The cut parts must be suitably labelled for final manufacturing in Poland, hence, for every harness, the various dimensions must be noted and the individual components sorted based upon size.

Complete range

Woody Valley, a genuine harness supplier, provides a complete range of harnesses suitable for all types of paragliding. Here is a summary of the fundamental parts:

HASKA	Extrem sichere Protektoriösung mit Metallfeder, die den Lufttairbag schon vor dem Start füllt
WANI	Das Haska als Wendegurtzeug. Der Superseller 2015!
WANI LIGHT	Leichtversion des Wani
EXCENSE	Einsteigergurtzeug
EXCENSE AIR	Leichtversion des Excense
VOYAGER PLUS	Das erste Wendegurtzeug mit integriertem Rettungsschirmcontainer
X-RATED 6	Das „Boot“! Klassisches Wettkampffliegergurtzeug mit zwei integrierten Rettungsschirmcontainern und einem Extracontainer für Anti-G-Retter.
X-PRESSION	Das Acro-Gurtzeug von Woody Valley
BIX	Spezielles Tandemgurtzeug
PASSENGER	Das Gurtzeug für den Tandempassagier
X-ALPS GTO	Der Klassiker unter den 5-Kilo-Liegegurtzeugen für Streckenjäger
TRANSALP	Ultraleichtgurtzeug für Paraalpinisten und Hike & Fly

Cooperation with Turnpoint

Ilona Albrecht, owner of the Turnpoint Company, who has imported Woody Valley harnesses to Germany right from the start, primarily appreciates, from the cooperation with the Italian manufacturer, the possibility of immediately responding to client issues or requests. On numerous occasions, Simone Caldana spoke about the advantage of a European production vs one in the Far East: "Everything is more expensive here, but we are faster and more flexible!"

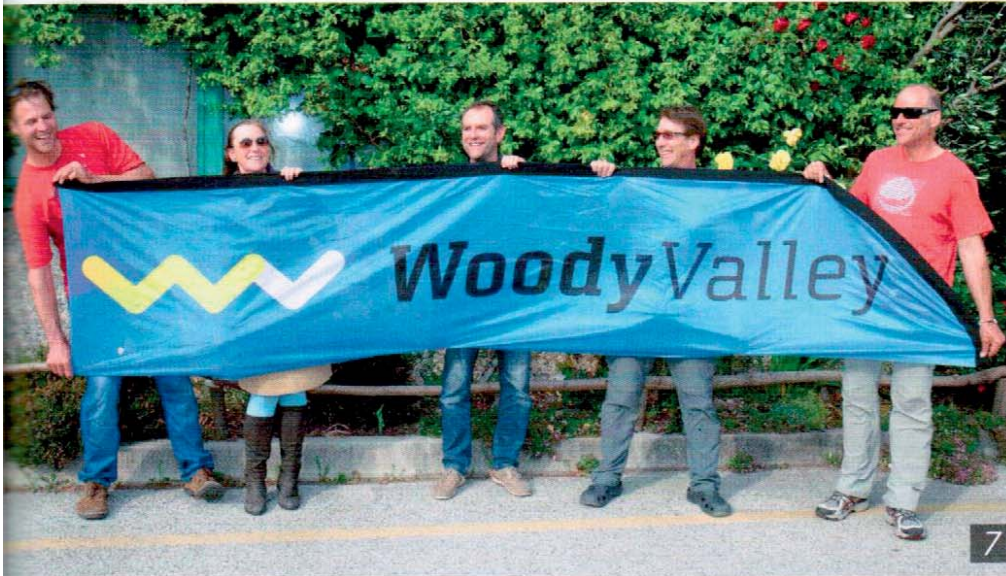
During our visit to Trento, Ilona Albrecht was accompanied by Christoph Weber and by Anselm Rauh. Truly interesting representatives! Christoph Weber, in the capacity of Director of the Red Bull X-Alps race, has participated in many interviews and always has plenty to discuss with Anselm Rauh, flight test expert. It is nice to see that there is always something to discuss with Simone Caldana when it comes to harnesses. With reference to harnesses, much is easily understood and predicted, and additionally the "harness" equipment actually displays greater potential with greater intensity activity when

WOODY VALLEY INSIDE

1. Nesting-Programm: Der Lasercutter arbeitet dadurch möglichst materialsparend.
2. Vollautomatische Vernähung der Gurte am Nähautomaten.
3. Der ganze Stolz von Simone Caldana: Der Lasercutter von Woody Valley.
4. „Waschmaschine“: Die selbstkonstruierte Maschine führt Langzeitbelastungen an verschiedensten Materialien durch.
5. Simone Caldana präsentiert einen halbfertigen Gurtzeugprototyp.
6. Simone und das Turnpoint-Team: Christoph Weber, Anselm Rauh und Firmeninhaberin Ilona Albrecht (stehend v.l.).
7. Posing vor der Abfahrt vor dem Woody Valley-Gebäude: Mit im Bild der Miteigentümer von Woody Valley, Stefano Paissan (Zweiter v.r.).



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compared to paragliding. Where not applied to an actual activity and where knowledge is limited, often, much is lost. For example, it is commonly known that Woody Valley gave up on the in-flight adjustable buckles a while back. "The adjustable buckles continued to slide after a certain number of uses and the settings had to undergo modifications over time. We believe that harnesses should be pre-set, initially, using a simulator. After the first flight, minor changes can still be applied to the settings, and then they will be valid on a permanent basis", highlights Ilona Albrecht.

Farewell Trento.

A beautiful summer's day in Italy comes to an end. We are heading towards northern Austria. You could hear a pin drop in the car! All the passengers are reflecting on the day, mulling over impressions. Significant and interesting impressions which leave us actually feeling as if we are touching the complexity of the "harness", an often underestimated piece of equipment. Thank you Woody Valley!