

Icaro gliders need no introduction in the hang gliding world. This well known Italian company have produced some truly fantastic wings and it was with great interest that I viewed their foray into the world of paragliding. Icaro have in fact been building paragliders for the last five years and their reputation is growing fast, mainly due to the fact that they have top designer Michael Nesler working for them. An independent designer, Nesler has developed his own paraglider design software that is now used to create the majority of all modern canopies. The Icaro range also includes the DHV2 Ice that has received very positive reviews of late.

The Cyber 2 is a development of Icaro's original DHV1 Cyber. Looking through the excellent manual it's clear that Icaro have aimed for a thorough package suitable for the beginner through to the more experienced pilot. The manual is very comprehensive.

The Cyber 2 is built from Porcher Marine Skytex polyurethane-coated ripstop, giving good durability and resistance to UV damage. A nice colour scheme makes it a strikingly attractive wing that should turn a few heads on the hillside. Build quality is high with no hint of corners being cut. The lines are Edelrid HMA in 1.1mm and 1.8mm, again proven and reliable technology. Brake handles are held in place by magnetic poppers, which may prove unattractive to some pilots with a suspicion of their magnetic properties. I however found them more than up to the task in hand. The brake handles also have removable composite rods for those pilots that prefer 'soft' handles.

The glider comes in a snug inner bag with a Velcro restraining strap. The large-capacity outer bag is fully adjustable; I was able to fit a full complement of winter flying gear, suit, gloves, etc, in easily with the wing and my airbag harness. A large pocket on the back has just enough room for an open-face helmet. This lightweight bag is comfortable to carry and has no less than four compression straps to get everything tightened up.

So, is DHV1 the new 1-2? A few years ago many pilots began to downgrade to 1-2s, finding the performance more than adequate for their requirements and relishing the new-found security. Could the trend be continuing down to the DHV1 level? Mention the DHV 1 class and the word that springs to mind is "easy". A DHV1 glider should be easy-handling, with security that will allow the pilot to concentrate on their flying in confidence. With this in mind I tried to be as ham-fisted and amateurish as possible when testing the Cyber 2. I was also interested to see how it performed against other wings, keen to see if downgrading to a DHV1 glider would leave me at any disadvantage.

Ground handling the Cyber 2 is very easy even though the brake travel is a little longer than I am used to. A gentle pull on the split A-risers brings the wing straight up with no problems in even the lightest of breezes. Only a real ham-fisted pull-up provokes any tendency for the wing to overfly. Once up, the glider's predictable behaviour makes controlling it stress free and reassuring. One point I really liked was the ease with which the wing could be killed using the D or C-lines.

Although this was always a really simple operation, the D and C lines were the same colour on the model 1 I flew and this could cause confusion. But ground handling the Cyber 2 is a real joy. Even when the wind was gusty and a bit on the strong side its behaviour was predictable and reassuring.

Alpine launches again presented no problems, with the wing coming up straight and level as long as it is laid out properly. Once up, a slow release of the brakes allowed the wing to accelerate smoothly, giving very easy and fluid launching.

In the air the Cyber 2 feels very solid, noticeably more than any other 1-2 I have flown. The brake pressure is moderate to heavy, but still gives a good feel for what's going on, encouraging active flying. The glider turns well too, without a hint of hesitancy. Again, very predictable and reassuring. Once established in a 360 the wing is as steady as a rock, allowing the pilot to search out different cores without having to worry about it pitching too much. But the glider is no bus and I found it more than manoeuvrable enough to enjoy some small and weak spring thermals without having to put too much effort in. Once centred in lift the wing goes around without any sort of pitching and the sink rate seemed well matched to other gliders in the air. Thermalling is very confidence-inspiring, a trait that will see the newer pilot smiling from ear to ear rather than worrying about deflations. Tightening up the turns towards the spiral is slow and sure-footed, particularly compared to some DHV1-2 wings on which things can suddenly start to accelerate.

The speed bar system firmly pulls down on the A-risers first and then the Bs. Although a little firm, it seemed to work well and gave a feeling of high security at top speed, as you would expect for a wing of this rating. Speed system connection is by Brummel hooks so it is easy to swap harnesses, something regularly done during an early flying career.

Big ears came in with a reassuring amount of resistance and popped out instantly on release, a very comforting trait for a wing of this type. Split-As made execution of this manoeuvre straightforward. Any large asymmetric I pulled failed to cause much of a turn before it instantly popped out again. Very reassuring again, and after a while the thought of any collapse seemed very remote.

The trim speed seemed quite fast, though I was at the higher end of the weight range. Approaching

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to land seemed straightforward if a little fast due to my high wing loading. The Cyber 2 however landed perfectly with a judicious amount of brake; there was never any need to take a wrap.

In conclusion the Cyber 2 is a great wing. Its predictable, easy handling gives a great feeling of security. It is not a slow wing and I felt that it would keep up with the majority of DHV1 and 1-2 wings out there. But like most wings, how it performs really depends on the pilot that is under it. I liked this wing a lot and I'm certain that a wing as confidence-inspiring as this can only help the pilot under it do well and enjoy their flying.

summary



Stylish-looking wing, stability



Moderate brake and speed bar pressures

SKYWINGS AUGUST 04

DAN WOOD



DAN WOOD



ICARO



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importer's comment

All the feedback we have had seems to match exactly what Dan says: the Cyber 2 is fast, very easy to launch and very resistant to collapses. A perfect DHV 1 machine. It is personal taste, but we see moderate brake pressures and especially moderate speed bar pressure as an advantage on this sort of wing.

With Icaro continuing their total domination in hang gliding competition, retaining their Class 5 World Championship in June and the Class 1 European Championship in July (that's four times in a row), and having been World Champions for years, you would expect this sort of quality glider. Check out the new English version of the website www.icaro-wings.de. We have been impressed with this very efficient branch of Icaro, with super-quick delivery and impressive DHV results on their canopies.

STEVE ELKINS, ICARO UK

specification

Model	S	M	L
No of cells	40	40	40
Span (flat m)	11.6	12.2	12.8
Area (flat, m ²)	25.6	28.4	30.7
Aspect ratio	5.3:1	5.3:1	5.3:1
Line diameter (mm)		1.1/1.8	
All-up weight range (kg)	65 - 85	80 - 105	100 - 125
DHV certification	I	I	I
Guarantee	3 years or 300 hours materials and workmanship		
Price	£1,749	£1,799	£1,849

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Dan Wood



Dan is a local club coach on the Isle of Man and has been flying paragliders since 1988.

He describes himself as "the quintessential club pilot, not too interested in Comps but more concerned with bimbly around and appreciating the unique wonders our sport offers."