

56 cells. Aspect ratio five point seven. Only 230 metres of line. At first glance Gradient's latest wing is clearly pitched right at the top of the EN B slot.



Construction

Wing fabric is the well tried and tested 40g Porcher Skytex with a 45g leading edge strip for extra durability. The 56 cells are grouped in threes for most of the span using partial diagonal cell walls for support. Blocks of four in the centre section and the middle of the inboard line groups use Gradient's unique 'Double Diagonal' bracing. This gives a slight reduction in line attachment count for the total number of cells, or - more importantly - more cells for your line-set and less line drag. This layout also makes the central part of the wing a bit bigger in relation to the ears, which with only two main A lines per side are still relatively large.

Leading edge reinforcement consists of trilam Mylar sheet with nylon rod stiffeners sewn in about an inch away from the wing surface. B line loads are spread chordwise using small arches of nylon rod over the attachment points, whilst the remaining attachments are conventional. Lines are a well thought out mix of Vectran and Dyneema, progressively sized across the span and chord to minimise line drag and maintain good length stability over time.

The three slim risers, plus a split A, join the lines via neat stainless steel maillons with durable plastic inserts. Riser lengths are scaled pro-rata with

glider size, keeping things comfortable for smaller pilots. Brake keepers are large and functional Dot fasteners; there's even a couple of these to attach the two risers together when you pack away. The accelerator uses a 3:1 pulley system on the As with a linear B riser travel, until about half bar when the Bs lock to the As, decambering the wing progressively for the remainder of the travel.

Packing trials

The rucksack is smart, well made, durable and nice to carry, but the XL size is too short for a full-size pod harness and all your kit. Be sure to ask for an XXL unless you have a compact harness.

In common with a good many wings these days the recommended packing method for the Nevada is concertina folding. Also in common with a good many manufacturers these days, the wing is supplied with a conventional nylon inner bag, totally unsuited to this purpose. I ended up bunging the wing in a mushroom bag and carrying it around separately - and my harness and helmet still didn't fit in the rucksack!

On the ground

I lay it out ready for launch. Yikes! Where are all the lines? I look baffled for a moment at the split A

risers before my first inflation. With only one line on each A riser it took a moment or two to decide which ones to pull. In the event, it turned out just about any of them would do.

Ground handling is impeccable; effortless both mentally and physically. The wing is easy to hold overhead even in a strongish wind, with very little tendency to cravat during abusive ground handling. I like the split As for the range of inflation options they provide as well as dedicated big ears control. I also like the clean simplicity, obvious functionality and ease of use of three risers.

For routine reverse launches I mostly used just the inner A risers, allowing the tips to follow and inflate fully with the wing overhead. Collapsing the wing on windy top landings was simplified with the quickly-accessible C risers. They're so easy to find you don't need to look for them.

Handling

On the crucial first take-off my impression was of a fast trim speed with an immediately reassuring feel. The brakes felt a gnat's short at first, then soon bedded in after a few minutes use. Brake travel is long and pressure is pleasantly light and progressive. Agility is excellent with very good response on turn entry,



Specification

Model	22	24	26	28	30
No of cells	56	56	56	56	56
Span (projected, m)	8.99	9.38	9.79	10.22	10.66
Area (flat, m ²)	21.76	23.68	25.79	28.10	30.60
Aspect ratio	5.66:1	5.66:1	5.66:1	5.66:1	5.66:1
Max chord (m)	2.48	2.59	2.70	2.82	2.94
Glider weight (kg)	4.4	5.0	5.3	5.7	6.1
All-up weight range (kg)	62 - 77	75 - 90	85 - 100	95 - 115	110 - 130
EN/LTF certification	None	B	B	B	B
Guarantee	1-year free repair service and 2-year materials and workmanship				
Price	£2,775	£2,775	£2,775	£2,775	£2,775

UK importer:

Snowdon Gliders, Yr Ynys, Mynydd Llandegai, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 4BZ, tel: 01248 600330, e-mail: brad@snowdongliders.co.uk, URL: www.snowdongliders.co.uk.

exit and quick reversals. Weight shift and brakes are nicely harmonised, with the wing feeling well sorted in terms of trimming. In fact, it feels exactly like a top end EN B.

I was immediately able to turn very tightly and efficiently in the small thermal cores of an Autumn Easterly on my first flight. This is a very good climber. Once high, the Nevada has the glide performance to stay there, and the speed and stability to cut into wind to get to the next climb.

Considering the relatively high level of agility, you get a fairly easy ride in rough air. The Nevada is a little 'busier' in rough air than, for example, a

couple of the UPs I have been flying lately, but it is very easy to keep open in heavy turbulence. The wing has quite a 'wide' feel and responds well to a wide setting on the chest strap, producing lots of feedback through the harness from well outboard - very good for sniffing out turn direction in weak lift or picking the best line while penetrating into wind with little or no brake.

Min sink is quite close to trim speed with glide degrading steeply as you slow. It is generally best to keep the Nevada 'on the boil' whilst thermalling unless you are in a good solid core. This wing is at its best in gusty broken lift rather than the weak, wimpy stuff.



Importer's comment

Thanks to Ian for the review. Ian's expertise as a pilot and hang/paraglider designer surely informs his opinion and it's great that the Nevada has satisfied his scrutiny. Nevada offers a really practical EN B as well as giving loads of useful performance. Ian's praise is supported by other web and magazine reviews, and flights of over 200km with the Nevada. My feeling from my tests in the UK and France indicate Nevada will be a cracking XC glider for the new season and beyond. And if you want a Gradient concertina bag with your new Nevada, just ask.

BRAD NICHOLAS, SNOWDON GLIDERS

That said, on the fourth outing, this time in relatively gentle thermic lift (2 - 300 fpm), I was left with an even more positive view. Quite simply, wow! Launching very late in one weak cycle I had to climb through the whole pack. Despite the more bizarre flying antics of some of the crowd around me I was able effortlessly to crank my way up the inside and top out with the early starters. This kind of performance / handling balance on an EN B glider is very rare.

Performance

Glide performance is nothing short of excellent. The Nevada penetrates well into headwinds and climbs very well in gusty headwind conditions. It has a very flat glide on the speed bar and good stability at speed. There is no 'kick down' so the bar has longish travel despite the shortish pulley movement. I was easily able to get the pulleys touching on the top rung of the ladder bar, but I would modify this if it was my own glider to shorten the leg movement required (you guessed, I have short legs).

Trim speed is nearly 40km/h, at the fast end of things for the leisure class. Half bar takes this up to about 50 with very good and increasing stability as you apply more bar. The outboard regions of the wing are noticeably particularly solid. Pulley to pulley the Nevada holds a respectable 53km/h or more, still with a usefully flat glide. I'm in cold thick winter air

here and my feeling is that these numbers don't really do the wing justice; this glider will outrun a good many EN Cs.

Stability

I gave the ears a bit more attention than I normally would for a review. On a glider with only two A lines per side there is a lot of wing carried on the outer A line. This results in very big ears and I was keen to establish that the wing was stable with the ears in - especially with a good bootful of speed bar applied. I can assure you it is completely stable with or without speed bar and despite my best efforts to destabilise things. Pull in the ears with the dedicated split A riser, one at a time, both at once, with or without speed bar, any which way you like... and down you come, stable and fast. Just what the doctor ordered.

Spiral stability is excellent, with a strong pro-spiral input required both to initiate and to hold it in. Easing off, the wing immediately starts to recover (important for wings in the leisure class with our steadily ageing pilot population).

Pitching off trim speed in either direction followed by a quick release results in a rapid return to trim with little overshoot or hunting. This, in combination with very good roll damping, results in a relatively steady flight through rough air. Some recent wings in this class tend to get 'rolled about' quite a bit and occasionally even rolled out of lift - not so the Nevada.

Weight range

The Nevada 26 was a very good fit for me at 95 - 97kg all up using Sky's Excite 3 comp harness. Sink rate is very good, so don't be worried about loading it up if you're a bit heavier.

Summary

This wing is very well matched to the top end B market sector. It responds well to being flown accurately in turns and at optimum speeds, but is also tolerant of sloppy piloting. I found the Nevada fun and rewarding to fly, and the cause of much interest amongst local pilots.

The Nevada will suit pilots moving down from C class or higher looking for sporty, responsive handling with the security of an EN B certificate. Experienced EN B pilots might choose the Nevada over its rivals for its sporty handling, fast trim and flat glide. Pilots moving up should find no difficulty managing the upgrade. Performance-wise, at time of writing its only real direct competitors are not yet in production.



Sporty feel with EN B safety. Performance and fun. Easy handling.



No concertina bag.