

Equinox Boogie Festival 2006

The Nox Rocked

By Archie Jamieson

How is it that you can look forward to a boogie for so long and before you know it, it's over and you're hanging out for the next one? That's how Nox was for me, Australia's premiere boogie just got better and I can't wait to see what they come up with next time... only 780 sleeps to go.

Numbers wise it was a little down on 2004, but when you take into account Pre-Nox and DeTox, it was heaps bigger! People came for the trifecta! I thought DeTox was a joke, but it was the perfect way to get over those post boogie blues.

The Pre-Nox was an awesome week, structured much like Ramblers Learning Curve Camps. It was perfect for everybody to get ready for the main event. The "B" Licence minimum for the Equinox meant that new jumpers could go hard at the Pre Nox, take advantage of the coaches and get off on the Equinox build-up vibe too. Many jump pigs used and abused the Caravans and coaches, other POPS types used PreNox to settle in.

For the boogie, there were over three hundred registered participants (plus staff) from who knows how many countries! Over 10,000 jumps were made in 3 weeks! All the disciplines were well represented with load organisers, coaches, participants and plenty of jumping action and camera angles for everyone to enjoy. It was certainly the most well rounded boogie that I have been associated with in my twenty years in the sport. Everything was there - CRW, skysurfing, formation loads, big ways, little ways, freeflying, tracking, atmonauti, novelty jumps, raft jumps, night jumps, records and those flocking bird people. They were right when they called it a skydiving Festival - it had the lot!

With such a vast array of action taking place every day and even more at night it was difficult to keep track of what was going on, and that was just the skydiving! The highlight of the evening for most was the day tape on the huge screen - apparently they could see it from outer space! Elad's edited masterpieces of the awesome footage taken by the camera crew totally blew everybody away, with a mixture of the day's skydiving action and comedy skits, the production put an even wider smile on already beaming faces. Coombesy would have been proud.

Equinox is also renowned for it's incredible parties and this time round it was certainly no different. In pink grass skirt, Jesse and her Calypso Bar

cocktails were very much appreciated and with Herman the Burnin' German and Ash (pardon the pun) playing tunes by the pool, the afternoon delight was plentiful.

Kicking off the nightly entertainment were those infamous raffles - around \$20,000 worth of prizes given away over the course of the boogie - unbelievable! The Talent Quest was sensational - I think we were all pleasantly surprised to see that some of us do actually have some talent! Live music from enthusiastic Brissy bands were an absolute treat to the ear - what a blast. Local Brissy group, Band of Frequencies, grooved well, didgeridoo artist Matt James spellbound us and the Humdingers rock and rolled the young and old of us. Many soaked up the atmosphere from the bon fire, others from the bar and considering the number of new romances, the pit and the mockup were popular places to soak it up too!. Most band members went for their 3rd and 4th tandem jumps, one fella, Andrew, choosing to do the course instead, yahoo!

Mmm, the smell of jet fuel in the morning! Most days started early with the CRW gang up and at 'em - nothing like waking up to the sound of canopies in the air to get your day going.

Take three of Big Al's Caravans, throw in Sydney Skydivers Skyvan plus some of the world's and this country's best coaches and load organisers and you've got a mixture for some hot action. Even the oldies got in on it, they hotted up so much they set a new Australian record - a 47-way - equalling the current Australian women's record that was set at the 2005 Skysisters boogie. This just goes to show that old people really are as good as girls! Congratulations to all those participants on a magnificent days jumping.

The night times were not just confined to guzzling free beer and socialising -many people took advantage of the night loads to do their first night jumps, others fancied some night rel and freely, some birdies even went flocking. The Ramblers team of Meteor Men lit up the night skies with a spectacular display of pyrotechnic madness which even saw the DZSO Rodney Wilson go for a jump.

Safety-wise we saw a well disciplined group of jumpers and at one stage I thought we were going to last the week without seeing an ambulance on the drop zone (apart from Herman's head catching on fire) until that nasty Willy Willy came along and took Corey Harrison's canopy out. My faith in human nature took a healthy boost when some \$8,000 was raised in a matter of hours for Corey and his new family. Eleven incident reports and none from the Birdies this year, well done! "Five cutaways meant an average of 1 in 2,000 jumps.

Apart from jumping there were other ways to enjoy your day - Cookie's coffee machine gave many a much needed caffeine boost and who can

forget Deepseed's oxygen bar? Wow! It reduced the side effects of many hangovers and also provided much needed medical assistance for Kim and her asthma attack, Herman's hot head and Corrie's Willy.

Equinox could be the same without free beer. Eleven kegs and countless cartons were put on for achievements and happy moments - the beer guzzlers thank you from the bottom of their bellies. Thanks to Ben for finally getting the tempite worked out and for teaching those of us who have no idea, how to pull a beer! With food and beer in our bellies, fantastic entertainment and a warm fire to stand around, what else do you need but nude flare runners?

I could blah blah for ever, what a week?! We came, we jumped, we partied, we indulged, and for those of us who were crazy enough, drunk enough, or just plain stupid enough, we copped ourselves an EFS branding from those darling Territorians. Where would we be without them hey? And where would we be without Nox?

Archie Jamieson

"It was great to see a new crew of skysurfers giving it a go, staying safe and always coming down smiling. I've gotta give a big plug for Rikard, the Swede, for progressing from his first board jump all the way through to pulling some great moves on the inter board! PT also had an awesome week, working through some of the harder moves and now has a lot to live up to by being given a new rig from the Team Off Track boys. The week was full of highlights, as well as off DZ landings (sorry Rodney!) and I hope we did our little bit in keeping this part of the sport alive. Sorry to anyone who's toes we stomped on with the boards!"

Rob Simunic, Team Adrenaline Skysurf

"Equinox was a whirlwind 9 days of jumping, meeting new people and renewing old acquaintances. The weather was mainly great and everyone wanted to go hard, which suited me down to the ground. The spots were great (thanks pilots) and the camera pool worked hard and produced excellent results, making us all look like skygods. The chance to do quality jumps and improve skills over a long period was embraced enthusiastically by all the people I jumped with. This is my favourite type of skills acquisition as I can see jumpers improve quickly, often to beyond what they thought they could achieve. I am constantly amazed at the progress people make and by the fact they never forget that they have had to work to get there and will willingly go and help others along the paths to success. The vibe among the load organisers was awesome and just fed on itself, to the point where we all wanted a day off to go jump with someone else! Suddenly it was all over and we were loading the skyvan to go back to cold Sydney. I left with a feeling of batteries recharged and general wellbeing but a pretty tired body. Roll on the next Nox!" **Fiona McEachern**

"The Equinox Boogie was Deepseed's first step outside New Zealand. We came to Australia not knowing anyone or what to expect but we really needn't have worried. Everyone was so friendly and helpful, we settled in very quickly. The facilities were top notch as was the hospitality, so everyone was just able to get on with the oh so tiresome job of jumping their arses off! Elad's day tape was a succulent daily feast for the eyes and drove people to go hard to try and make it onto the tape, I was stoked to got on there twice.

The day tape was a great round off to the constant soundtrack of Archie, the human mouth on stilts, whose humour and energy gave the place a great buzz - not bad for an ugly bald fella!. The Territory Boys led by their skipper Handbrake, showed everyone the real meaning of going hard and gave me a whole new idea about promoting our BRAND!

The coaches were leading by example and jumping hard out and the camera pool supplied some awesome footage and camera angles. We made some great friends and contacts over there (Cookie rocks) and basically we just want to say a big thank you to all who came to see us, spent time talking with us at the Oxygen Bar and to all those who bought some of our cool looking threads!

Finally a big thank you to all the staff at Toogoolawah and for taking a punt on a relatively unknown company as a boogie sponsor. We loved it, you guys rock."

Deepseed Boys, Liam & Dave

"At any boogie it's always great to catch up with old friends and make lots of new ones.

Nox 2006 was no exception. Skydiving is a unique sport with unique people. You put lots of these people in the same place at the same time and you tend to get a lot of, well, unique stuff happening! Some of it in the air and some of it on the ground. The day tapes every evening were a great way of keeping up with others uniqueness.

Most of the jumps I did were 4-ways and it was great to see some new faces improving their skills. It is very satisfying as a load organiser to land after a jump to hear "that is the most points I have ever done on a jump" or "that's the best fun I've had today". To those I jumped with: thanks for the jumps. I hope you had fun and maybe even learnt a bit. To those I partied with: hmm, I'll have to think about that one!"

Rob Tasic, Airtite

"This was a very special Equinox for me as it was exactly 10 years since I met Lisa at the 96 Equinox. One thing led to another and we have now been married for five years. From a jumping perspective it was also very enjoyable. I was really uncurrent on arriving at Ramblers, but soon got back into it. It was great seeing lots of jumpers that we only see at boogies, so catching up was great. I had lots of good jumps with Fiona's group and also got involved with Dave Morris's larger groups.

The highlight of the jumping for me was the 12 and 8-way groups that Belgium Steve invited Lisa and I to join. Belgy did a fantastic job in organising some really challenging jumps and it was a real pleasure jumping with a group of such experienced jumpers.

I also enjoyed seeing the other South Australian jumpers progress quickly during the week, with a few doing their first large formation loads and Helen Hayes buzzing from her first lot of night jumps. Martin Koenig and Paul Newberry did their 500th jumps and on the last jump of the boogie I completed 24hrs freefall time. Then there is James Stevenson who never disappoints with his amazing photos and Jenni Neubauer became a 'Re-Noxer'. We hope to see more South Aussies at the next Equinox.

From a social side of things I thought that Herman continued to do a great job entertaining the crowds and the talent night never ceases to amaze me with the diverse range of "stuff" skydivers can do!"

Scott MacDonald

POP'S 47-WAY

By Simone Bambach When I arrived at the Equinox Festival, things were cranking and the vibe was great. Dave Morris and Fiona McEachern were doing what they do best - getting people in the air on big ways and formation loads. So started my unenviable job of getting names together to do the attempt on Thursday. Over the next 2 days I did jumps with whoever was not in the Dave and Fiona groups and by Wednesday night I had 65 people wishing to be on the record. This is always the hardest part. Dave & Fiona had done all the work for me by jumping with a lot of the gang and with their suggestions I had about 55 names, from these I had to pick 50. This is when I think I got called hard-arsed bitch!

Thursday morning brings another gorgeous day and I call the 50 skydivers names for the first jump. The lead plane is the BOX with the two Caravans hugging the right and left tail is awesome! You can almost reach out and feel the prop blast of the BOX from the Caravan! About eight people out and a few hiccups, it's not bad for the first attempt.

With a few changes, our second attempt sees us doing well but a bit of rush factor comes into play and it is not as smooth as the first attempt but the potential is all there. After a few more changes our third and supposedly last attempt was a 47-way. As we only planned three jumps, the 3rd attempt was fantastic with the last grip being taken only a second before break off height. From my possie in the formation I did not know if it was all there, but it felt like it. It was only on the video that we realised a wrong grip was taken, even though it was complete. A unanimous decision was made to have another attempt.

The vibe was awesome going to the plane with everyone knowing that we could do it even better. A flash to the pilot from a loyal female player ensured plenty of height for a great skydive. Everyone skydived their butt off and it was one of the smoothest big ways I have ever been on, held for approximately eight seconds before break off. Unfortunately, there was another wrong grip taken so it was not a record but it was the largest formation for POPS and it was a buzz! The two Kim's say "Yes we know! We owe 46 beers! Sorry ya'all."

See the centre spread for a glimpse of the record jump. It definitely would not have been possible without Top POP Downunder Robbo and his fantastic lady Deb, also big-way organisers Ben Nordkamp, Stretch, Julie Nichol, John McMahon and Alan White, as well as the awesome flying of Big Al, Marcus, Jay and Jonesy at the Nox, and everyone who participated or tried out for a go.

Remember that this is only the beginning and bigger & better is yet to come at the World POPS meet in Australia, so for all those out there who are over forty and are not into it because of the word "POP", get over it and get into it!

Echoes of Nox

"Thank you for a marvellous Nox! I tell people about docking on the outside of the POPs 47-way as never having seen so many unopened parachutes at once! The SOS - skydivers over 60 - then decided that it is not only the youngsters who can make big-ways. We did get seven jump tickets together, then somebody forgot something then somebody else forgot something else... Oh dear, at least I did my share: I got all rigged up and ready to go and sat down near the plane until a nice young person patiently explained that the DZ had been on a weather hold for two days. Oh well, I'm sure the 2006 SOS record was a marvellous jump, but for the life of me I can't quite remember it myself!"

Roger Clifton