

THE NEWEST STAR OF BRAZIL

WORDS BY:
RENALDO SCOLA
PHOTOS BY:
JOHN SOUVILLE

Most of the windsurfing locations on the North-east coast of Brazil are now well known. The past few years have seen Jericoacoara become one of, if not the prime windsurfing destination in South America and others are not far behind with Icaraizinho and Flecheiras among the most popular. The latest is Sao Miguel do Gostoso and the name behind the newest windsurfing centre there is a three times World Wave Champion.

I'm up at four in the morning, spend a good few hours at Lisbon airport waiting for the flight connection and right now I'm on a roller coaster of a flight over the Atlantic as the 747 hits another wall of turbulence. 'It's not so bad', I say to myself, 'at least I'm finally on my way to Brazil.' I feel a little uneasy when I think about my last trip from Fortaleza airport to Jericoacoara, a long way made worse by primitive roads. And the trip back was hell too! But I know that this time things will be better as my destination is the town of Sao Miguel do Gostoso and a quick look on Google confirmed that it was nowhere near as long a transfer as the one to Jeri.

As far as windsurfing is concerned this place is not well known at all though the wind statistics for this part of the Brazilian coast between Natal and Fortaleza look very promising. But at least it's off to a good start because of its name. 'Gostoso' means 'good' or 'pleasant' and the local legend has it that an old man lived there and became known to all his friends as 'Gostoso' simply because he was such a nice fellow. After a while the whole place became known as 'Gostoso' eventually adopting the name it's known by today.





Kauli Seadi draws his lines
on a Gostoso point break

GOSTOSO

Slash off the lip from Seadi.

“ I had been searching for a place to open my second club but it was not so easy. But here in Sao Miguel de Gostoso, I finally found a place where everything was perfect ”

Kauli Seadi

It's gotten so that this little spot has become a sort of second home for the Seadi family. Kauli introduces me to an older woman who he calls his 'Gostoso mama substitute'. In fact Maria is the owner of the 'Mar de Estrelas', the pousada that is almost directly next to his centre, less than five minutes walk through a tropical garden. She's an absolute charmer. But as the week of my stay progressed I began to understand why the family enjoyed staying here. Wherever you go in this small village, everybody is an absolute charmer. The people are all very friendly and you really feel welcome. And that's what makes this place so special, the lovely atmosphere and the open and genuine friendliness is something I have rarely experienced elsewhere.

THE WINDSURFING SPOTS

SAO MIGUEL DO GOSTOSO.

There are pretty good wind conditions throughout the whole of the north east of Brazil and especially during the European autumn and winter. I've been here three times, in 2007, '09 and '10, always between October and the start of December and the wind has blown every single day. Sometimes it blows strongly, other times less so but I have been able to windsurf every single day.

The windsurfing area at Sao Miguel do Gostoso is next to a sandy beach a few miles long. Most of the time the wind blows side shore from the right. At the windward end of the bay there is a point break but there are better places for those mainly interested in wave sailing. This location is ideal for windsurfers who like just blasting around on

freeride boards or for freestyle while at low tide even beginners will feel comfortable sailing in the bay. But generally Gostoso is suitable for windsurfers of just about every level. Even during their high season the beach or the water are never crowded and there are almost no dangers and those that exist are limited to some small reefs that are marked with buoys and can also easily be seen at low tide. The two centres are 'Clube Kauli Seadi' which opened last October with JP Australia and Neil Pryde equipment and Paulo's 'Dr. Wind' centre with RRD, Neil Pryde and The Loft rigs.

PRAIA DO TOURINHOS.

You can reach this beautiful and lonely bay in just twenty minutes by car. It's North West of the market place in Gostoso along a straight sandy road though you don't need a four wheel drive or even a buggy to reach it. At the eastern end of the bay are nice small waves, nothing too daunting but always breaking very cleanly. As well as the windsurfing the spot is ideal for stand up paddle boards together with swimming and snorkelling. It's even really worthwhile to go there just to watch the fantastic sunsets. But whatever you choose to do you really should not miss the trip to Praia do Tourinhos.



Intrigued local

GOSTOSO

Gollito Estredo drops by for a freestyle session



LAGOA DO SAL.

This spot is also about twenty minutes from Gostoso but along the road to Natal. It's a turning off the main road just before the lagoon which you pass and then drive over a sand dune to reach the beach. With a buggy you could also drive right along the beach for Gostoso at low tide but it's worth taking local advice to see if this is possible because if you get stuck the chances of someone coming by and helping are slim to say the least.

When it's flat in Gostoso this is the place to head for and you'll quite often get lucky and find waves here. You probably won't have to share them either because the chances are you'll only see some local fishermen and perhaps some children playing in the sea. Kauli reckons that sometimes you will find some really cleans waves here, perfect for surfing.

WHERE TO STAY.

There are many pousadas in Sao Miguel do Gostoso so it's really up to you where you want to be located. If you want to stay as close as possible to the Clube Kauli Seadi you should stay in the 'Mar de Estrelas' or in the 'Lagoa Mar'. Both have fantastic tropical gardens and a high level of cuisine. Equally attractive and just a few minutes walk away is the 'Pousada So Alegria'. The Dr Wind centre has its own guesthouse although accommodation is limited. It has just three rooms, two of which are doubles while the third can sleep three. But next door is a beautiful new hotel, opened in September '09 called the 'Pousada mi Secreto'.

EATING AND DRINKING.

Bearing in mind the size of the village there is an incredible variety of good restaurants. The restaurants in the pousadas 'Mar de Estrelas' and 'So Algria' offer excellent food from either local or Italian cuisines. For really good Portuguese food visit 'Dom Bacalhau' which is the restaurant at the 'Lagoa Mar' pousada. For Mexican try the 'Jardom de Serido'. If you like pizza I can recommend the 'Quintal' which has a nice atmosphere and is built completely on sand. For specialities with grilled potatoes as well as a good pizza go to the 'Space Mix'. Here you can hire a small roof terrace above the bar for an intimate candlelit dinner. For small snacks and possibly the best Caipirinhas in town visit 'Madam Chita'. But whatever you do don't miss a massage at either the 'Surya Kendram' or the 'Tamplo' – just the best thing for tired muscles after a great days windsurfing.

GETTING THERE.

There are no direct flights to Natal from the UK. The Brazilian airline TAM flies there daily and most flights will stop at Sao Paulo and involve a stopover which could last up to ten hours. The onward connection will either be a direct one or include another stopover either in Fortaleza or Salvador though you won't have to leave the plane for these two. So choose the connections carefully but reckon on twenty-two hours of travel as a minimum. Costs vary according to season – the cheapest we've seen flights from is £775 but they can be higher than that. Other airlines that fly there include Lufthansa and Air France.

Stunning scenery in Brazil



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