

# GEAR UP

## INSATIABLE INFLATABLE

I had my first encounter with a standup paddleboard (SUP) a few years ago in Hawaii, and while it wasn't exactly the transcendent exercise experience I hoped it would be, I enjoyed it enough that I wanted to do some more SUPing back home in Colorado. The problem was that I wasn't sure how I was going to go about it. At the time, there was nowhere locally to rent a SUP, and buying one seemed like a no-go based on their large size. Simply put, I didn't think I could fit one in my car, and I wasn't about to go buy a roof rack that could accommodate one.

As luck would have it, last year my wife was loaned a couple of paddleboards to demo, and, lo and behold, these ones were inflatable - which I was not aware was an option - and could be packed away in carry bags that fit easily into the back of the car with room left over for our two dogs. We drove the boards, dogs and my then 9-year-old son to nearby Chapman Reservoir to give them a try, and my affection for SUPing was reignited, despite the fact that it was difficult to get my smitten son to let me have a turn on a board.

With the inflatable SUPs being such a hit with my family, I decided I wanted my own and ended up getting a Driftsun Explorer 10-footer. It turned out to be an excellent choice. The board came with the complete package, including an adjustable-length paddle, high-volume air pump, leash and carry bag with shoulder straps to make it easy to transport from car to lake.

Inflating it is a piece of cake, although it does take a lot of pumping (electric pumps are available to make this task easier), and once it reaches 10-15 p.s.i., the board is every bit as rigid as the solid one I'd used in Hawaii. It also features a cushioned, no-slip pad on the top and a remov-



able third fin that inserts easily into the bottom to help keep the board pointed where I want to go. The board itself is constructed of the same sort of thick rubber used in whitewater rafts, so I have no concerns about accidentally puncturing it on the rocks near shore when I launch it. (I'm also not afraid to bring one of my dogs aboard with her unclipped claws, although she isn't quite so enthused about the idea.)

There are also a couple of smaller, less noticeable features that add to the Driftsun's appeal, such as a handle right in the middle to make it easier to carry when inflated and a latticework of bungee cord across the front to secure things like the paddle should I choose to go for a quick swim.

The market for inflatable SUPs has been oversaturated of late, meaning there are great deals to be found. Indeed, my Driftsun Explorer can be found online right now heavily discounted off its suggested retail price. With costs coming down and quality going up, now is a great time to get into the SUP game. I plan to get right back into it myself as soon as I can get my son to take a break and let me use the damn thing.

- Todd Hartley

### GET YOUR OWN

Driftsun Explorer Ultimate Inflatable Paddleboard Package  
\$499.99 • driftsun.com

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### Top 5 Movies

1. "Dunkirk" \$26.6 million
2. "The Emoji Movie" \$24.5 million
3. "Girls Trip" \$19.6 million
4. "Atomic Blonde" \$18.3 million
5. "Spider-Man: Homecoming" \$13.3 million  
(*imdb.com*, July 28-30)

### Top 5 TV Shows

1. "America's Got Talent" (Tuesday) NBC
2. "World of Dance" (Tuesday) NBC
3. "The Bachelorette" (Monday) ABC
4. "Big Brother" (Wednesday) CBS
5. "Big Brother" (Thursday) CBS  
(*Nielsen*, week of July 24-30)

### Top 5 Albums

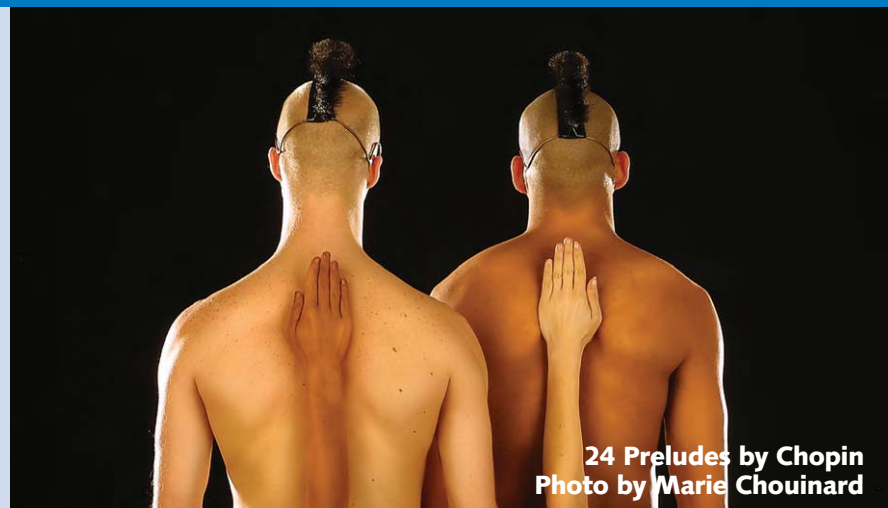
1. "Descendants 2" Original TV Movie Soundtrack
2. "Atomic Blonde" Original Motion Picture Soundtrack
3. "Everything Now" by Arcade Fire
4. "Evolve" by Imagine Dragons
5. "Trolls" Original Motion Picture Soundtrack  
(*iTunes*)

### Top 5 Songs

1. "Despacito" by Luis Fonsi & Daddy Yankee featuring Justin Bieber
2. "Wild Thoughts" by DJ Khaled featuring Rihanna & Bryson Tiller
3. "That's What I Like" by Bruno Mars
4. "I'm the One" by DJ Khaled featuring Justin Bieber, Quavo, Chance the Rapper & Lil Wayne
5. "Unforgettable" by French Montana featuring Swae Lee  
(*Billboard*)

# Editor's Pick

## Visitation Rites



24 Preludes by Chopin  
Photo by Marie Chouinard

For a small (but universally acclaimed) company in a mountain town, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet punches well above its weight, as evidenced by its current summer program, which features a brand-new work, "Dream Play," by acclaimed choreographer Fernando Melo, as well as "Little mortal jump," by Alejandro Cerrudo, and "Eudaemonia," a work by Los Angeles-based choreographer Cherie Barton that was an ASFB premiere itself.

That program, which debuted on July 8 and ran again on July 20, concludes with a third performance on August 18 and would likely be enough to satisfy town's ballet fans on its own. But Aspen's resident dance troupe doesn't stop there. In addition to its own members performing the works above, ASFB has filled its summer schedule with an intriguing trio of visiting dance companies that stretch the boundaries of what can be considered ballet.

Things started off July 26 with Compagnie Hervé Koubi, a group of 12 dancers from Algeria and Burkina Faso who delighted the Aspen audience with a physical performance filled with backflips, head spins and other athletic maneuvers set to an eclectic score of traditional Sufi music and pieces by Bach and Hamza El Din & Kronos Quartet.

Next up on the ASFB slate is Compagnie Marie Chouinard, which will take the stage at the Aspen District Theatre tonight at 8 p.m. The 27-year-old company

out of Montreal comes to town fresh off bravura performances in Massachusetts and Mexico that included Chouinard's "24 Preludes by Chopin," which the company will reprise in Aspen along with "The Rite of Spring."

The latter, which re-examines Igor Stravinsky's iconic orchestral work, is considered one of Chouinard's most important creations, but it's the former piece, a 1999 work that will be accompanied by a live pianist, that is perhaps more intriguing. Described by The Berkshire Eagle as "physically rigorous, visually striking and wonderfully strange," the work consists of a series of vignettes performed by 10 dancers in provocative costumes that leave little to the imagination. Witty, even funny, and physically impressive, "24 Preludes by Chopin" is destined to be a real crowd pleaser in Aspen.

The run of ASFB visitors finishes up on August 18 with Stars of the American Ballet, a troupe of elite dancers hand picked from the New York City Ballet and American Ballet Theatre by director Daniel Ulbricht, named "one of the best male ballet dancers" by Dance Magazine. The program will include George Balanchine's "Apollo," Kenneth MacMillan's "Romeo & Juliet," Christopher Wheeldon's "After the Rain" and more.

If you can make it to any of ASFB's remaining performances this summer, you're in for a treat, but do yourself a favor and attend all three to experience world-class ballet in a dazzling array of styles and forms.

## ON THE COVER

Photo courtesy of Colorado Scottish Festival