

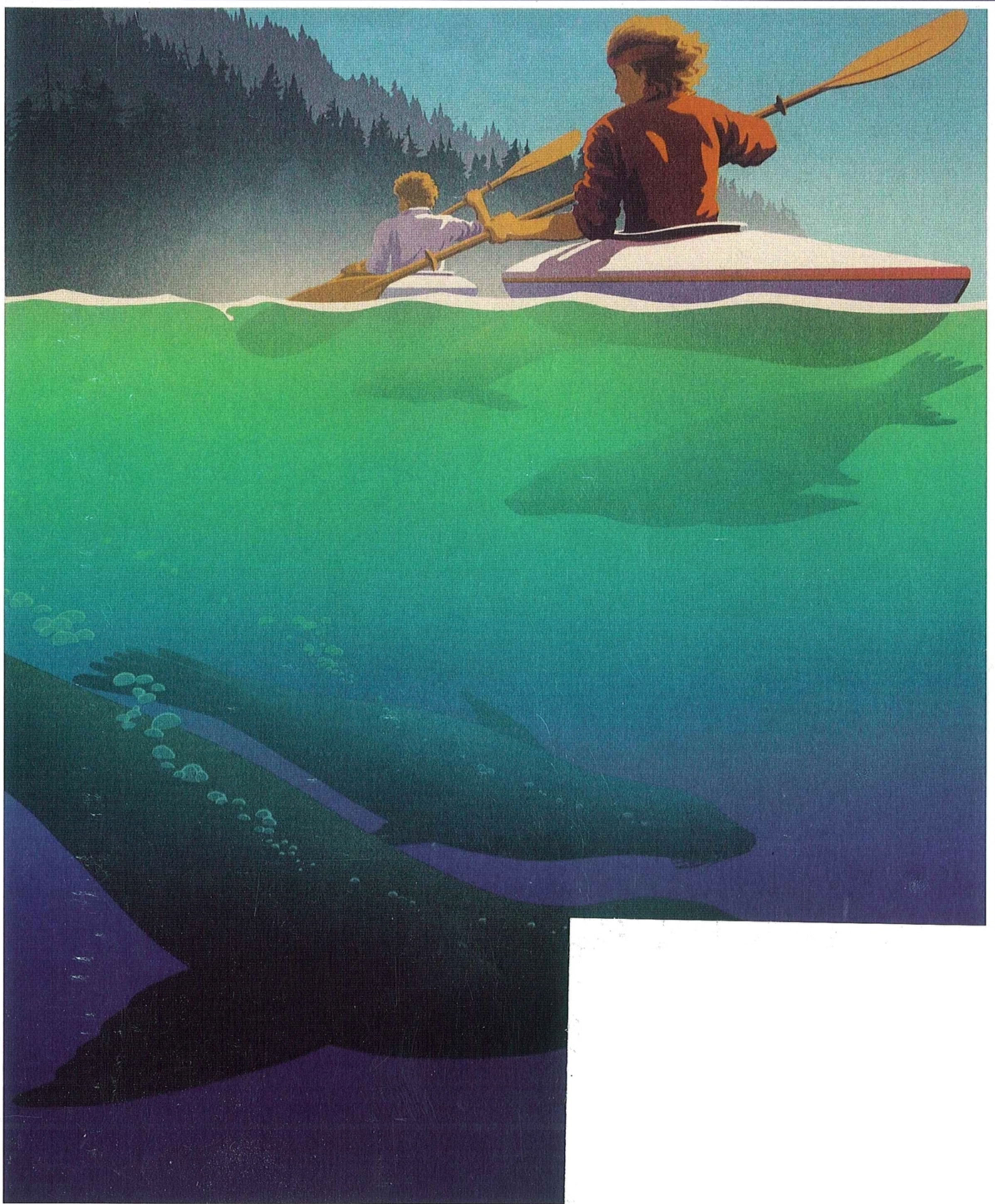
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February/March 2014

Sea Kayaker

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Experience the World's Waterways



KAYAK REVIEWS

Petrel Play SG

by Chesapeake Light Craft

Frankly, most people don't really need a long kayak. A short kayak can be efficient enough to maintain a decent cruising speed while being lighter and easier to handle. I wanted a versatile short kayak, suitable for casual paddlers but appealing to hard-core adventure seekers. The DIY wood-epoxy Petrel Play SG is a kayak that creates a crossover between a recreational kayak and a rough-water play kayak. Recessed hatches clear the deck for rescues and are reliably dry. The cockpit is roomy inside, but the coaming is small enough to allow snug outfitting. Sloped foredeck sides permit a close catch. The plumb ends create a long waterline for efficiency, with plenty of flare for stability. The transitional chine is multi-chined up front. This resists locking in while surfing. It blends into a single chine amidships, making the kayak responsive to slight leans. The Petrel Play SG is a comfortable, attractive recreational kayak for beginners and a versatile play boat for experienced paddlers.

Nick Schade, Designer
Chesapeake Light Craft

REVIEWERS

JK: 5' 6", 140-pound male. Day paddle. Wind 10 to 14 knots, wind waves and boat wakes to 1.5 feet. No cargo.

GL: 5' 11", 165-pound male. Day paddles. Wind 5 to 15 knots, waves to 1 foot. 45 pounds of cargo.

TE: 6' 1", 200-pound male. Day paddle. Winds to 20 knots, wind waves to 3 feet and occasionally cresting. No cargo.

Length overall	14' 5/16"
Beam	23 1/4"
Volume	10.8 cu. ft.
Cockpit size	16 1/8" x 31 1/4"
Cockpit coaming height	
Forward	13"
Aft	8"
Height of seat	3/4"
Weight	41 lbs.

First Glance

The Petrel Play is a kit kayak with "some very nicely executed details: clever recesses for the hatch covers and finger joints patterned like waves" (TE). "The joints are perfectly cut by CNC machine and the seams look uniformly smooth. The flat foredeck and steep-sloping side-cut panels facilitate both an upright paddle stroke and extra foot room" (GL). The Play is "a very light lift and an easy carry. It balances well on a shoulder and, inverted, rests very comfortably on both shoulders with my head against the seat" (TE). "The knotted rope loop toggles were comfortable for a short tandem carry, but I wouldn't want to use them for long distances. Their location at the ends of the kayak is convenient for swimmers to grab onto" (JK).

Fit and Outfitting

The cockpit is "roomy yet secure. I could easily get in seat before feet but still felt like I could brace myself well. At first glance the foredeck seemed a little high, but the steep facets on either side give plenty of room for paddle strokes" (JK). GL "had enough room to sit down and bring my legs in one at a time." TE "had plenty of room for my size-13 booties and yet the deck was low and didn't interfere at all with paddling."

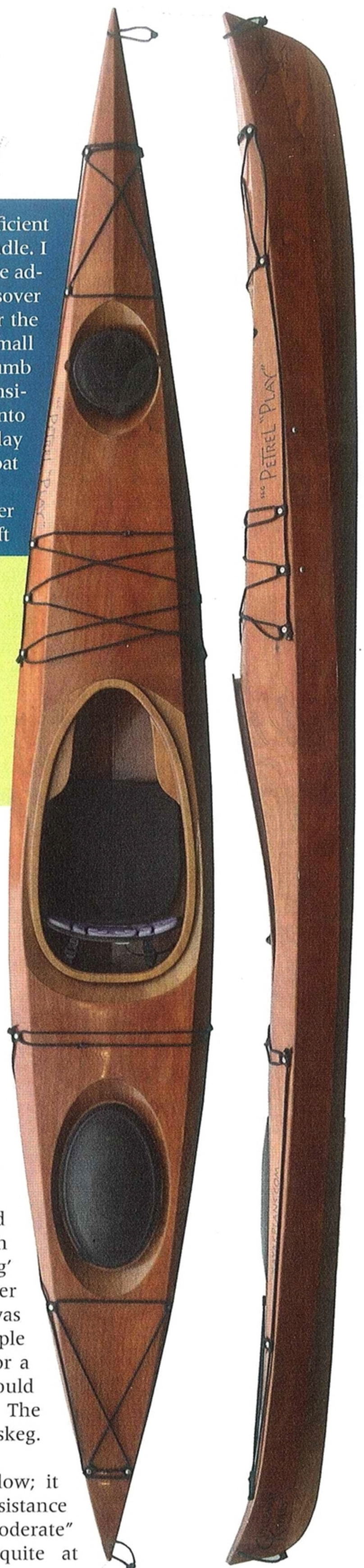
"The closed-cell foam seat is glued to the hull, quite comfortable and could be shaped to suit a wide range of paddlers" (GL). "The foam comes up at the sides to cradle me laterally and was a

perfect fit. I had no pressure spots or discomfort and the seat is quite warm too—simple and well executed" (TE). "A comfortable Surf to Summit back band does a nice job of providing support yet gets out of the way for laybacks" (GL). The plywood thigh-brace flanges are foam padded and "comfortable and secure" (JK). Their "contact was spread over inner thigh and I never gave them a thought—a good thing—while rolling or bracing" (GL). "The foot braces are solid and adjustable by foot" (TE).

The deck fittings "are attached with flat webbing screwed through the deck. I practiced 'walking' around the kayak while in the water and the thick perimeter line was easy to grasp. The layout is simple and effective. There is no setup for a paddle-float outrigger, but one could be added by the builder" (JK). The Petrel Play has neither rudder nor skeg.

Stability and Maneuverability

Initial stability was rated "fairly low; it rocks back and forth with little resistance but doesn't feel twitchy" (JK), "moderate" (GL) and "very good. I was quite at



ease on flat water and comfortable writing notes. In the waves I was a bit twitchy, but still could keep the boat under me while the paddle was out of the water" (TE). Secondary stability was, respectively, "light to moderate," "moderately high; pretty secure on edge" and "moderate and softened up after the sheer submerged. Overall a good stability profile for a play boat" (TE).

"The Play yaws slightly when paddling, but no worse than most kayaks I have paddled" (JK). "It held a good line at all speeds and had no tendency to veer off" (TE). The Play is "maneuverable, but not what I would call agile. On edge it can carve turns, but for me it required a lot of edge—past the point of secondary stability—to make tighter turns and then the back deck dragged through the water slowing the turn down" (JK). "Steering with leaned turns was excellent. The Play responds well to sweep and lean" (GL). "The Play responded well to edging. It took a single sweep to initiate the turn and then the Play would carve a fairly tight turn; the stern skidded only a bit, favoring maintaining speed over swinging around in a tight turn" (TE).

JK "found the Play weathercocks noticeably, particularly with wind on the beam. I could correct with strokes and edging but I wouldn't want to for a long crossing." "The slight weathercocking can be compensated by paddle-stroke adjustments and an occasional bit of lean. It's an easy turner in wind; I had no problem turning upwind or down" (GL).

Speed and Surfing

JK "could cruise at around 3 ½ knots, exercise at 4 ½ knots, and sprint to 5 ½ knots. I would not call it speedy, but it is fast enough to catch waves." For GL the Play had "very good acceleration, a cruising speed adequate

BEST FEATURES

- Performance in wind and waves
- Dry cargo compartments

TO IMPROVE

- Carry Toggles



for group paddles, but at the top end this is not a fast kayak." With a GPS and flat water TE logged "4 ⅓ knots at a relaxed cruising pace, 5 ½ knots at an exercise pace and a bit over 6 knots in a short sprint."

"The Play could accelerate smartly to catch the waves and was responsive enough to get oriented on the wave face. At speed it lifted up and rode high in the water. It held its speed and I could chase troughs to link waves and make long rides. Turning around for another run was easy and I could make good speed upwind. The bow slapped some spray out which got picked up by the wind and was carried back toward me. The bow rode high and didn't often punch through crests" (TE).

Rolling and Rescue

The Play "rolls easily. The back band and the low back deck allow for nice laybacks" (JK). "The Play is a snappy roller and popped right up, whether with a C-to-C roll or layback. The fit of the cockpit is superb for rolling. The wet exit was easy. There is enough room between the thigh-brace flanges to get through without getting pinched. The pump and dump went well. The bow is an easy lift and I could hold it up to drain before the Play rolled itself upright" (TE). "Reentry and roll was no problem and the cowboy entry was routine: it was easy to bury the stern and climb aboard, slide up the rear deck and drop into the cockpit" (GL).

Cruising

"The Play is a small play boat and cargo room is, as expected, limited. The aft deck is low, great for layback, but limits cargo space. You could get by with a weekend's worth of gear" (TE). "Tethered hatches snap snugly onto a plastic rim with a minimum of pushing" (GL). They have a good seal and were dry for all reviewers. The 3-inch-thick foam bulkheads are caulked in and watertight. With "a load of 45 pounds aboard the initial stability felt about the same, but an already great secondary increased. It felt a bit more sluggish turning, and slower" (GL).

The Bottom Line

"I would recommend the Play to novice paddlers looking for a day-paddling kayak to grow into. It can handle flat or rough water. It might be a bit tippy for beginners. I recommend trying it" (JK). "The Play will excel in surf or rock gardens, and the maneuverability, lightweight and reassuring secondary stability will appeal to less aggressive boaters for recreational activities like bird-watching. Advanced paddlers will love it; aggressive beginners looking for a versatile performer that they can grow into will find immediate fun" (GL). "The Petrel Play lives up to the 'Play' in its name. It was quick and nimble in the waves, not bothered by the wind, and its very comfortable fit made it a pleasure to be in. Lots of fun" (TE). **SK**

MANUFACTURER'S RESPONSE

As a long-time reader of *Sea Kayaker* it is an honor to have my Petrel Play SG reviewed in the final issue of the magazine. I've spent years developing the ideas incorporated into the Petrel Play SG design, and it is evident from the positive response of the reviewers that these ideas have paid off. The goal to create a versatile transitional design that is comfortable for recreational paddlers and a solid performer for aggressive paddlers. The reviewers found that this short kayak can maintain a quick cruising speed while having the responsiveness and maneuverability expected of a shorter design. After my own test paddling of the same prototype used by the reviewers, I modified the production version by increasing the rocker slightly and marginally flattening the center section for greater maneuverability. Combined with the available skeg option to eliminate weathercocking, DIY builders can produce a responsive,

highly controllable kayak.

The reviewers have reinforced the feedback I have received complimenting the comfort and outfitting of the Petrel Play SG. I want a kayak that is comfortable to sit in on calm water, yet secure when the conditions kick up. A home-built kayak allows a great deal of customization to suit the needs of the builder: everything from deck lines to hatches and skegs are open to individualization. But it's important to start from an excellent, well-tested hull. The Petrel Play SG is a fun kayak to build and paddle with flexibility to please both novice recreational paddlers and skilled rough water kayakers.

Nick Schade, designer
Chesapeake Light Craft

KAYAK REVIEWS

MANUFACTURING DATA

Designed: 2013

Standard construction: Stitch-and-glue kit

Standard Features: instruction manual, computer-cut parts, epoxy kit, fiberglass, bulkheads, recessed hatches, SeaLect (rubber) hatch assemblies, foam "tractor" seat, Rapid Pulse back band, Keepers foot braces, hardware, and complete deck rigging

Weight: 40 pounds (18.14 kg)

Price: \$1,299

Availability: from the manufacturer

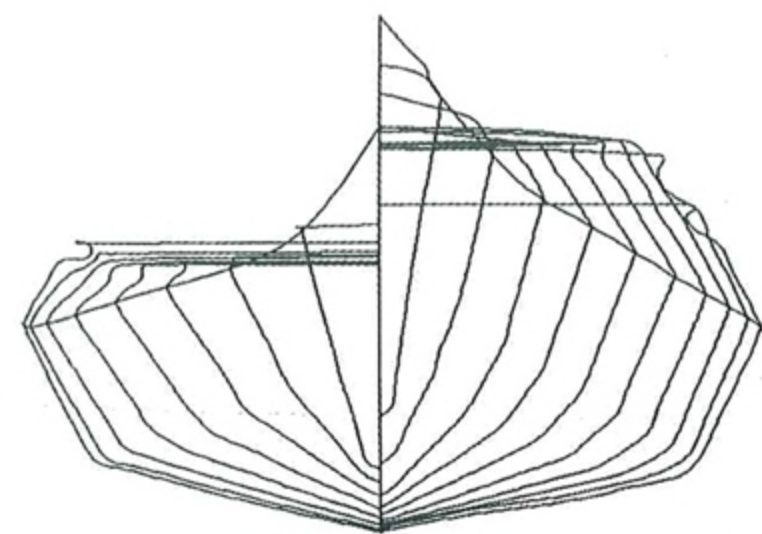
Manufacturer: Chesapeake Light Craft, 410-267-0137, info@clcboats.com, www.clcboats.com

SPEED VS. RESISTANCE

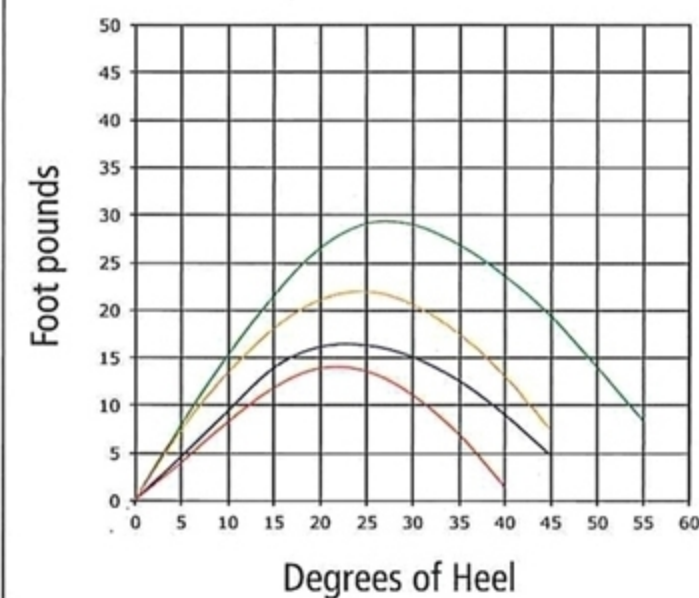
Resistance in pounds.

Speed	Winters/KAPER	Broze/Taylor*
2 knots	0.91	0.89
3 knots	1.89	1.92
4 knots	3.79	3.77
4.5 knots	5.86	6.14
5 knots	9.14	10.19
6 knots	14.30	—

*Automated with the Gertler program by Robert Livingston. Values may be omitted if hull data exceeds Gertler's parameters.



Righting/Heeling Moments (Fixed-weight)



Stability Curves*

- 150 lb. paddler, no cargo
- 200 lb. paddler, no cargo
- 150 lb. paddler, 100 lb. cargo
- 200 lb. paddler, 100 lb. cargo

*Formula revised December 2009. (Not comparable with stability graphs generated prior to December 2009.)

HYDROSTATICS

Waterline length	13' 2.4"
Waterline beam	22.5"
Draft	5.6"
Prismatic coefficient	0.53
Wetted surface in sq. ft.	20.26
Center of buoyancy	53%

(Hydrostatics calculated with a 250-pound load.)

TECH TALK: Readers interested in the full set of hydrostatics can find them posted on our website at www.seakayakermag.com along with additional data. An explanation of the terms and procedures used in the kayak test program is also available on the site.

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Intrepid 18' Sea Kayak

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