

Reviews for Night Heron by Guillemot

Submitted by: JPF  
01-09-2005

I built the S&G Night Heron kit. The kit is very well designed and the tips on construction plus the puzzle joints used to join up the ply parts help you fly through it. Very easy and clear. My kit came in at about 45-50 lbs due to the extra heavy layup I put on. It can be built 5-10 lbs lighter. Email tech support is fast and friendly. I am 5'11", 165 with a size 9.5 shoe. The boat fits well but I think it would prefer a slightly heavier paddler to sink it down a hair more. The boat rolls easily, turns very well, tracks a bit loosely which I prefer, and is very fast. Fast. Fast. Fast. You do need to be able to gently edge control this boat as you go. It holds a reasonably amount of gear but not a ton. Slick to look at it turns heads more than any other boat I have built. It enjoys a following sea, likes bumpy water well and is a capable rough water boat for sure. It has good initial stability and great secondary stability. I have used both a Euro paddle and a GP while in the Night Heron. It is enjoyable to use both. The back rest system supplied with kit is unique to the designer and I was quite skeptical at first. I am now quite satisfied that the man is brilliant. It is the most comfy back rest I have ever used. Visit "The Kayak Forum" if you can and enjoy the company of fellow boat builders. They are all pleasantly addicted. Lucky them...

Rating: 9 of 10

Submitted by: DonG  
08-20-2004

I have found the S&G Night Heron to be a fun kayak to paddle. I am 6' 160 lbs. and really like the fit and handling characteristics. The initial stability is excellent and the secondary is okay. For my weight I found the kayak did not track as well as I like and it has a tendency to weathercock. I tried adding a little bit to the stern keel and found that it stiffened the tracking but I lost most of the maneuverability that I liked. I returned the stern keel back to it's original shape and added a keel line skeg (1"x18") to the hull under the rear bulkhead area. I found this to work much better. The kayak now has very little weathercocking, tracks nicely and is still very maneuverable and responsive to paddle strokes. I think the original design would handle great without any add on's for a heavier person. I built mine from plans and everything went together very well. The low rear combing allows for easy leanback rolls. The kayak is very fast. It's nice to be able to rest a little when paddling with other people. It is a beautiful kayak that keeps turning heads. Many builders of other wood kayaks are really impressed with the curves and lines.

Rating: 9 of 10

Submitted by: jcaldeira  
05-17-2004

The Night Heron is a fast, attractive kayak by Guillemot Kayaks with a hint of Greenland styling. Plans are available for both wood strip and stitch and glue construction. I built the wood strip version and have been paddling it for five months. It took me 5 months of weekends and evening to build and weighs 40 pounds.

At 18 feet long and only 20 inches wide, it is oriented to the more experienced paddler but feels very stable due to the relatively flat bottomed hull design.

The flatness of the hull bottom is brought farther towards the bow and stern than in most kayaks. This hull shape probably contributes to higher efficiency at higher paddling speeds. The flatness of the bottom also means the boat has a very shallow draft and I find it a little more prone than most kayaks to side slippage in cross wind. I encountered no significant weathercocking, even in winds greater than 20 miles per hour.

The Night Heron is very maneuverable for an 18' kayak and a 'fun' kayak to paddle. It is responsive to paddle strokes and leans on the hard chines. The maneuverability allows the paddler greater control, but paddlers who prefer strong tracking kayaks may not find the Night Heron's performance appealing. To improve its course-keeping, I enlarged the stern stem of my Night Heron to form a very small keel and am pleased with the performance.

The Night Heron seems to be a well designed boat, but my preference is for a slightly more rounded and finer bow entry. This should produce a smaller bow wave and a less hard 'slap' coming down when heading into waves.

The strip plans include both 'high deck' and 'low deck' design options. The low deck being closer to a Greenland styled deck, and the high deck option having more storage capacity.

As far as strip-built kayaks go, this boat was relatively easy to build. The plans are very complete and easy to follow, and includes full-size cut-out mold station templates. I receive many compliments on this kayak design.

Rating: 9 of 10

Submitted by: Dave Murray  
03-03-2004

I recently built one of Nick's interesting S&G night Heron. This is kayak # 13 through my shop. I paddle generally twice weekly, a conditioning paddle midweek and a buddy paddle on weekends. I like to paddle fast when I can and maneuver well when socializing. Stability is important to me.

When I was ready to build the Heron my Okoume supplier was out of 4mm and informed me that it would go up to over \$70 per sheet (4 required) when it came in. No way. I searched around and found 4 good sheets of Luan and decided to use this. Not my favorite medium, but this is kayak 3

that I have used it on. The construction is straight forward, Nick uses a true reference surface, cradles and forms. This yields a much better kayak than the common "Oragami" method of stitching the panels, prop them open with a stick and hope you can eyeball good enough for a true hull. Seldom works. Good design feature, Nick. The rear hatch cover is a neat project and looks good. The kayak came out just as designed, 19 7/8 inches wide, just under 18 feet long (I trimmed the points front and rear, Lee). Weighed 38# ready to paddle.

The kayak paddles easily, maintains good speed with minimal effort, less than most other kayaks. It tracks nicely, extremely minimal weathercocking and easy to correct. It responds so well to leaned turns that I jokingly say that you could run into docks if you don't pay attention. The low rear deck sacrifices cargo area but this is not an expedition kayak. Maybe weekends. The bow bouancy is excellent, the kayak just bounces over the waves and shows no tendency to bury in heavy conditions. Good dry (in a kayak?)ride. The stability, both initial and secondary is superior, better than most wider kayaks. The hull speed seems to be in the 5-6 mph range which is normal for kayaks this size. I ran a series of speed tests with my Speedmate, speeds through the water. Easy cruise for extended periods is just under 6 mph for me and I can sprint it up to 7mph plus , but there better be a finish line near! v My conclusions are that this is a great day and fun kayak. It is a good build and a great paddle. I understand that it is also available in kit form from Newfound kayaks.

Rating: 10 of 10

Submitted by: [Petewp](#) 

06-30-2003

I had the oppurtunity to try out Nick Shades Night Heron of Stitch and Glue construction. This is my fourth kayak "tested" and it most closely aproximates what I seek in a Sea Kayak...

Only 20" wide, it asks that the paddler have sufficient skills in steeper waters, however on the 6" chop I paddled, it behaved unusually well. A few mild boat wakes were no problem either. I found its initial stability a little better than my West River 180, tho my own construction methods with that particular kayak could have caused more initial instability than the designer intended. Speed was all that, and tho I cant tell if it was any faster than my WR180, there was no doubt this hull likes to move quick and effortlessly. Turning was easy for a hull that tracked so well. Storage space is ample, especially the roomy bow where I'd have to imagine all feet would fit with room to spare.

What didnt I like? Not much. I prefer a cambered deck as opposed to the handsome panels Shade offers but thats just me. And frankly, if camber is your cup of joe too, then adding one to a kayak you are building anyway is hardly a tall order.

I would recommend this fast mover for anyone wanting to rack up miles while enjoying a hull that enjoys a paddler interested in applying skills in the more challenging waters.

Rating: 9 of 10