

Spreading the love.....



She sat on the bench, watching the fun on the Minnesotan lake. A club session on Greenland rolling was under way, and I knew Cindy to be a skilled roller and an ACA coach. However, there she sat, hugging her knees. This is never a happy sign. I asked the obvious question, and back came the gloomy reply:

“I don’t have my kayak here. It’s too heavy to get on the car when I’m on my own.”

I pointed her towards my Shrike, nestling on the sands. Cindy picked up the kayak in one hand, carried it into the water, slid seal-like into the cockpit, and went for the roll. It was the first time I’d seen someone laughing while still finishing a roll, and then came the shout:

“It shouldn’t be that easy!”

And then: “I want one!”

So she decided to build a Shrike.



She first went through the decisions to be made when building a stitch-and-glue Shrike from the free plans download at www.cnckayaks.com :

1. It was to be a specialist rolling variant, rather than a day tripper or a weekender.
2. Overall length and beam to be based on estimated total load. A graph in the FAQ section of our website enables this decision to be made, and specifies the percentage scale of the plans. (She chose 100%)
3. Freeboard to be further adjusted according to total weight and intended usage, following the guidance in the Build Manual. A Shrike intended for weekend trips will have more freeboard than a specialist rolling variant. (She chose a 60mm reduction from standard)
4. Cockpit size and shape to be entirely at the builder's discretion, although the plans include a couple of options for Keyhole and Ocean variants. (She chose an Ocean cockpit, extended right out to the gunwales.)
5. Skeg or no skeg, dependant on the waters to be travelled. (No skeg required for this rolling machine.)
6. Layout of deck hatches. (No compromises, so no hatches for this specialist craft.)

7. Foot bulkhead position. Optional, but the plans give the shape of the standard position. (She chose the standard position.)

8. Clearance height at front of cockpit. (She chose 10.5")

Cindy then built her Shrike. She got by with a little help from her friends, and produced her 10.4 kg (23 pounds) baby. In her Gallery entry on our website she says: "I love the kayak! This kayak is a dream. It goes through the water like air!"



Since my son, Christopher, and I launched the Shrike project twenty months ago, two thousand copies of the free plans and Build Manual have been downloaded to over thirty countries. Seventy builders have been kind enough to tell us their stories, and you can see forty of the completed kayaks, with photos, in the Gallery. They range from 108% heavy duty versions to 90% rolling versions weighing less than 10 kg. You will see one that has been fitted with outriggers. Last week we received news of the first Shrike builders in Russia and in Czechoslovakia. Builders have collaborated with us to design alternative deck layouts, low profile skeg systems, and the data files to produce deck fittings via a 3D printer.

Here's Basar, beside the Bosphorus:



One of my granddaughters has built a 90% Shrike LV as her first ever woodwork project, a beautiful kayak that she can carry and launch unaided. It weighs 12.7kg (27 pounds):



Steven Dodd is differently abled. He won a Silver medal for kayaking at last year's Special Olympics in the USA. Steven has paddled the Shrike locally at Saltash, under the supervision of

one of his carers, and he loves paddling it. He has the full-sized plans and he aims to build one soon. Photos of Steven in a Shrike have featured on our CNCKayaks Facebook pages. A diminutive and lovely lady of 75 years, Victoria, will soon launch her 90% Shrike, specifically for rolling.

The Australian body that helps wounded veterans of war to recover has decided to adopt the Shrike for the veterans to build and race, and I'm working with the organisation on the design of stabilizers for some of the craft. Large numbers of kayaks are promised.



So that's our story: we're spreading the love, one Shrike at a time.