

Etain

by Valley Sea Kayaks

For 2011 we've introduced a new strand of DNA into the Valley range, one that's a little more contemporary in style and feel. Valley kayaks are traditionally fish-form. The Etain is very slightly Swede-form with its widest point just rear of center, giving slightly more glide. You'll paddle a narrower part of the boat so your stroke is less encumbered and you'll feel less boat between you and the water. Better, no; different, yes! The hull has a shallow to moderate 'V' cross section for good initial stability, and the rocker is slightly less than some other Valley boats to provide secure tracking but still a lively ride. A hardening of chine amidships bolsters initial and secondary stability. A fourth hatch mounted on a removable front deck-pod allows small items to be well within reach while on the water. The Etain is designed to appeal to paddlers looking for an expedition-capable boat with a contemporary feel and lively performance.

—Valley Design Team

REVIEWERS

MC: 6' 1", 160-pound male. Overnight camping trip.

Winds to 8 knots, 1-foot chop. Cargo 60 lbs.

TE: 6' 1", 200-pound male. Day trips. Winds to 18 knots, waves to 1 ½ feet. No cargo.

MK: 6' 1", 215-pound male. Day trips. Winds 10 to 15 knots, waves to 2 feet. Cargo 25 lbs.

Length overall	17' 6 ⅜"
Beam	21 ¾"
Volume	14.2 cu. ft.
Cockpit size	15 ¾" × 30 ⅜"
Cockpit coaming height:	
Forward	12"
Aft	8 ½"
Height of seat	1"
Weight	61 ½ lbs.

THE REVIEW

First Glance

Valley's Etain is "well finished, attractive and solidly constructed" (MC). "The exterior is smooth and fair; the interior is cleanly finished" (TE). The seam is glassed inside and out. For a solo carry TE found the Etain "moderately heavy but manageable" and, like MC, noted it "balanced with the edge of the thigh brace flange against my shoulder." The toggles extend past the ends of the kayak for safe use in the surf. Bungees clip on to keep the toggles on deck until needed. The deck fittings are recessed plastic inserts. The deck lines are all you need for storing a paddle and hanging on to the kayak during rescues. The grab line serves for setting a paddle-float outrigger" (TE).

Fit and Outfitting

"The cockpit is spacious and comfortable. I had no trouble entering or exiting and there was ample space for my feet" (MC). The keyhole cockpit opening was large enough to allow MK "an easy entrance and a secure fit." For TE it was "long enough to get into seat first with a bit of leaning back to get my legs in. There was just enough room for size-13 booties." "The seat is well shaped and comfortable with non-slip material keeping you firmly in place. It was also comfortable and completely secure when the kayak's held on edge" (MC). "The seat contour was just right with even pressure all around. The lateral fit was perfect. I spent

several hours in the seat without discomfort. The backrest is as form-fitting as the seat. It wraps around the lower back without pressure points and is low enough to allow good mobility while paddling and a fair layback for rolling" (TE). "There is no padding on the thigh braces but because the shape of the cockpit was a really nice fit, it was still reasonably comfortable bracing against the unpadded hull. I felt secure in the cockpit" (MC). MK thought the thigh-brace flanges "seem to be a couple of inches aft of where they might offer better contact." All reviewers suggested adding padding: "Some foam glued to the flanges and shaped with a bit of contour would do the trick without much trouble" (TE). The foot braces—plastic pedals on aluminum rails—provide "an especially solid feel and are easy to adjust while sitting in the cockpit without opening the spray skirt" (MC). The Etain is equipped with a skeg. Its slider is "conveniently located" (MC) and "has very smooth action."



Stability and Maneuverability

With cargo aboard, MC was “more than comfortable in the Etain. The initial and secondary stability were ample.” TE rated the initial stability as “light, a bit on the twitchy side. The secondary stability is moderate. I could edge the coaming into the water.” MK “did not take long to find the balance point for secondary stability and then the Etain felt very familiar in choppy water.”

The Etain “tracks well and is easy to keep on course while paddling” (MC). “When I edged the Etain strongly it wasn’t quick to initiate a turn but a sweep would get the stern to swing around in a moderately tight turn” (TE). For MC the Etain was “easy to turn. It turns nicely on its own when on edge, especially if I helped initiate the turn with a stroke. Without edging the kayak turns relatively easily; it’s a pleasant paddling experience.” “The Etain has a good balance between tracking and maneuverability. The response to minimal edging and the slightest corrective stroke is very predictable and reassuringly accurate” (MK).

Speed

MC’s average over “30 minutes using a wing paddle was 5½ knots, with the kayak fully loaded.” TE logged “4½ knots at a cruising pace, 5½ knots at an exercise pace and 6 knots in a short sprint.” MK could paddle “comfortably around 4 knots, and sprint at 5½.”

MC “had a dry ride even with the occasional larger wave coming over the cockpit. The deck never kicked up spray, and the bow cut nicely through waves. The foredeck shed water like a duck’s back.” “With just the slightest bit of edging to weather, the Etain tracked straight in a beam wind and seas” (MK). TE “rarely felt it was necessary to deploy the skeg. Weathercocking in winds to 18 knots was scarcely detectable. The skeg, when fully deployed, didn’t seem

BEST FEATURES

- Hatch covers
- Dry ride

TO IMPROVE

- Add thigh-brace paddling and move flange forward



The foredeck storage pod, shown here partially out of its recess, can be removed so small valuable items can be easily carried ashore.

to get the boat to leecock but it did stiffen the tracking so I’d set a downwind course and then lower the skeg. While surfing wind waves the Etain tended to wander a bit on takeoff, but had good speed for catching waves and holding rides” (TE). “It feels quite quick to accelerate, and very easy to manage when beginning to broach” (MK).

Rescue and Rolling

The Etain “posed no problem for exiting or reentering” (MK). “Wet exiting was easy when leading one leg out before the other between the thigh-brace flanges, and the pump-and-dump drained the cockpit quite nicely. For reentry the grab lines worked well for getting back aboard. A scramble reentry was quick and simple. The backrest took care of itself and didn’t get in the way. Rolling with a layback worked well because of the good clearance of the backrest and aft deck. The C-to-C was also effective” (TE).

Cruising

The Etain “is a full-size touring kayak that would easily carry food and gear for two weeks. The two large oval hatch openings make packing an easy task” (MK). “The two main oval hatch openings were just large enough to accommodate my gear, and I found the small opening of the day hatch to be appropriate. The mini-compartment on the foredeck was

useful for storing small items. There were no leaks and the hatch covers were easy to use” (MC). “All four Valley hatches performed flawlessly. They were easy to put on and take off and were completely waterproof” (TE). “After two days of elevated sea state, rescue practice, etc., there was not a drop of water in any of the three hatches or the deck-mounted pod” (MK). The bulkheads are translucent fiberglass, glassed in, “solid and well constructed” (MC).

The Bottom Line

“The Etain was refined and solid. Steering was a pleasant experience and with the skeg deployed, weathercocking was not an issue. I was able to easily leave other paddlers behind and cut smoothly through waves. I felt safe and comfortable and had enough space to store my gear” (MC). “The Etain performed well for a cruising boat. It is comfortable to be in for a long day and would easily keep pace within a group” (TE). “With the Etain, Valley has a very nice addition to its line. I have paddled many and owned a few kayaks in this class: This is one I could take right off the shelf and enjoy for many years” (MK).

MANUFACTURER’S RESPONSE

Valley Sea Kayaks wishes to thank *Sea Kayaker* magazine and their reviewers for this great objective review. Just to note, the Etain reviewed is our larger 17’ 7” version in our standard composite construction, although in this case it was a heavy pre-production/test-boat lay-up. There is a smaller version at 17’ 5” that will appeal to slightly smaller framed paddlers.

With the Etain, we set ourselves a stiff task, to break with some of Valley’s long-held design traditions but to maintain the paddling essence of Valley kayaks. The ultimate aim was to keep Valley’s famed performance in wind and waves, but match the sensory gratification, the feel, if you like, afforded by some companies’ newer designs when in less demanding conditions. We are pleased that the reviewers confirmed our design goals have seemingly been met.

Just to pick up on one comment about outfitting: MK commented that the thigh-grip area could use some padding. Our new boats do ship with pre-shaped self-adhesive foam pads especially for this fine tuning of the cockpit area, allowing them to be positioned exactly where needed. We rely on our full-service dealer network to ensure proper boat fit at the time of purchase. Because this Etain was not acquired through a dealer, the appropriate foam padding was not installed.

We obviously agree with the reviews that the Etain makes a strong addition to the Valley range. More over, we believe, it offers something new that will appeal to those paddlers who, for whatever reason, haven’t previously been attracted to some of Valley’s other designs

—Peter Orton
Designer and Co-Owner, Valley Sea Kayaks

KAYAK REVIEWS

ETAIN

MANUFACTURING DATA

Designed: 2011

Standard construction: Glass/Diolen Composite

Optional construction: Carbon-Kevlar and Triple-layer Polyethylene

Standard Features: Three watertight compartments and a removeable deck storage pod, recessed deck fittings, bungees and grab lines, locking point.

Weight: 51 lbs. (standard Diolen construction, excluding hatch covers) (Weights stated are approximations for standard Diolen construction, excluding hatch covers)

Price: US \$ 1,899 (Diolen) \$3,749 (Fiberglass) \$4,349 (Kevlar)

Availability: See website for dealer locator

Manufacturer: Valley Kayaks,
+44 (0)115 961 4995; info@valleyseakayaks.com;
www.valleyseakayaks.com

SPEED VS. RESISTANCE

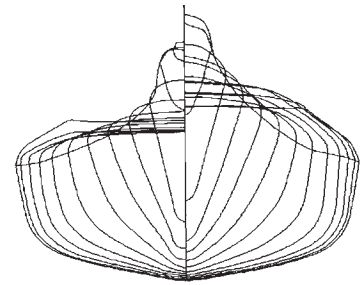
Resistance in pounds.

Speed	Winters/KAPER	Broze/Taylor
2 knots	0.94	0.93
3 knots	1.96	1.98
4 knots	3.61	3.70
4.5 knots	5.07	5.12
5 knots	7.52	7.89
6 knots	13.15	14.21

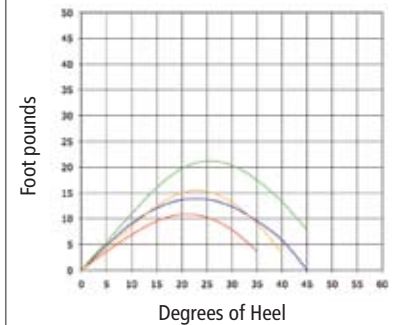
HYDROSTATICS

Waterline length	15' 0.4"
Waterline beam	21.4"
Draft	5.4"
Prismatic coefficient	0.53
Wetted surface in sq. ft.	21.90
Center of buoyancy	54%

(Hydrostatics calculated with a 250-pound load.)



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.)

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.

It's All About You

There's not much that pleases us more than making paddles and ultimately we do it for you. You see, we want you to have a great time on the water every time you go which is why we've created the most advanced tight-locking two-piece adjustable paddle shaft in the world. Call it a smart paddle, if you will. This design allows you to select your offset at 15 degree increments to accommodate your unique body type and paddling style. Our paddles are for you!

For further assistance, visit our on-line interactive Paddle Fit Guide at www.WernerPaddles.com.



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