

## LV.....what's it all about?

By Mark Sundin

I've had a few people expressing puzzlement lately about the term LV (low volume) being used in the name of a kayak design. Valley have recently released the Aquanaut LV, the Avocet LV & the Nordkapp LV, and they're causing a bit of confusion in our market, where the concept is a fairly new one.



The Avocet LV doing what it does best.....

Basically, the idea derives from the indelible fact that a sea kayak behaves very differently when loaded & heavier, to what it does with just the weight of the paddler. Generally, although not a universal rule, a laden kayak will sit lower in the water, extending the waterline, improving the initial stability and 'solidity' for the paddler. For most of us, this is a good thing, taking away any semblance of tippiness & instability, while also increasing the boat speed due to the increased water line length.

The problem with most expedition boat designs is that they are hardly ever paddled on expeditions, with 98% of any kayakers trips being day paddles, where the oversized gear hauling capabilities of these boats is unnecessary. In a pure kayaking sense, they're not much fun when it comes to doing what most paddlers do, which is head out for a morning or a day, to play around, do some harbour or coastal touring, or mess around in the surf.

So, in the case of a manufacturer like Valley, they have re-worked their designs to remove the volume in some of their kayaks, so that the LV versions paddle like a loaded version of the standard boat. The Nordkapp with a load full of gear is a pure joy to paddle, deserving of it's reputation as one of the world's premier expedition kayaks, however if it was your only boat you'd only get to experience that performance if you were prepared to load it up with 30kg worth of gear every time you went for a paddle (or like me are in the 90kg+ range). The Nordkapp LV is designed with a good swathe of the volume removed, while preserving the feel of a fully laden Nordkapp. For someone like me, who can realistically only afford short breaks from a busy business & young family for day paddles & surfing, the Nordkapp LV is a much better proposition than the full sized Nordkapp. It's big enough for me to pack up for a week long trip, but responsive enough unladen to be a pure joy when paddled on the moving water of the sea. There isn't much point taking a bus to the racetrack, when you can have a Ferrari instead.....