

# P&H Plays at the Gales



Months ago my friend Keith Wikle asked me if I might like to get involved in a new event he was putting together. With little hesitation I asked him to feed me some details and what I could do to help. In a few short minutes he laid out the formation of the “The Gales, a Storm Gathering” and told me he’d like me to do some coaching there and bring some P&H boats. The answer was “Yes”!

P&H offers some of the best sea kayaks in the world; that’s no secret. But two stand out boats we have are the Aries and Delphin. These two boats are rough water and surfing machines. At 15’6”, both give the cruising qualities of a proper sea kayaking and the playability of a white water boat in surf, rock gardening, and current. The unique hull design is simply innovative. We started with a midsection that is super easy to edge and is rock solid when heeled over to give the paddler a greater capacity to work well in a secondary position. The conundrum we needed to address is the rocker vs. tracking situation. How do you make a highly maneuverable and playful boat stay straight? For this we had to look outside the box and really have a talk about cause and effect. For these boats, while the paddler is in a static position in terms of forward motion, he or she can take full advantage of the rocker. Once forward energy is applied to the boat, the force pushes the bow in to the water and the water pushes back. With most boats that have a sharp entry point at the tip, the water sheds and fires off to the sides with not too much effect. With the greater volume and flat planing hull of the Delphin and Aries, the water forces the bow to rise and almost plane in a sense. This action forces the stern to dig in and lock. That means the more energy you put into the boat, the more tracking you get out of it. However, when you are moving with the speed of the conditions (down a wave) you can take full advantage of the rocker. The last issue to deal with on this

kayak was it's "stickiness" in the water. After reading the above, you can understand that if the boat is moving forward, the tracking element kicks in and you'd have a harder time turning due to the properties of the rocker going deeper in the water. So how did we work that out? For this we drew from our Pyranha white water side of things and put to use a flat planning hull just ahead of the cock pit. This allows the boat to ride loose on the water and the bow and move easily over the water to dictate direction. All in all, these boats are pretty friggin' different and pretty friggin' sweet to paddle! The Aries is in glass and the Delphin is in plastic!



Why did we make these boats? What drives us at P&H? Why are we willing to BBQ a sacred cow or two as we go? The answer to that is really easy. We decided a while ago that we weren't going to make boats that seem good on paper but rather, make boats we would love to paddle. We do what we do because we love the sport and we are the end users just like our customers. What would you make if you could make the boat of your dreams? We asked ourselves that and we came up with the Cetus, Scorpio, Aries, and Delphin. We love them because, like you, we love to paddle! We love to surf, go out into the rough stuff, bang our boats off rocks, and generally use a sea kayak where it was intended to be used. If you see those pictures in the magazines where people are floating over calm waters wearing no PFD, holding their paddle upside down with a big, floppy hat, it's most likely not a P&H boat they are rocking. But, if you see a paddler on the water, disappearing behind waves and smiling from ear to ear, you can roll those dice and bet they are paddling a P&H boat.

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Sound to good to be true? If I was reading this I would say “yes”. So don’t take my word for it. Come up the Gales Storm Gathering and try one for yourself. I’m one of those guys who is happy to prove what I claim.

See you all up there and I look forward to having some laughs, enjoying some adult beverages, and getting some proper sea conditions with you all!

Until then,

Kelly (P&H Midwest Guy and overall kayak nerd)