

## Pinguino Sport

by Pygmy Boats Inc.

I designed the Pinguino Sport as a recreational kayak for fishing, photography, bird watching, gunkholing and messing about. At only 34 pounds with a 25.5" beam she's stable, very light weight, accelerates rapidly, and is easy to lift up on your car. On fresh water she is perfect for lakes, wetlands, and meandering rivers. On salt water she's great for coastal exploring and rock gardens, and when fitted out with our new keyhole knee braces and hip pads, she loves to surf. With her extra-large 19" x 36" cockpit she's easy to get in and out of. Her graceful multi-panel epoxy fiberglass-wood-fiberglass hull is durable and rugged, but looks like a piece of fine furniture. With her roomy cockpit and full volume, she's comfortable for paddlers from 5'5" to 6'4" and 150 to 245 pounds. Despite her shorter length and increased maneuverability, she still tracks and handles well.

—John Lockwood

### REVIEWERS

MK: 6'1", 210-pound male. Day Trip. Wind 15 knots, wind waves to 2 feet. 15 pounds of cargo.

TE: 6'1", 200-pound male. Day trips, flat calm and winds to 20 knots, waves to 4 feet and cresting. No cargo.

TW: 6'1", 180-pound male. Day trip. Winds to 10 knots and small wind waves. No cargo.

Length overall	12' 11 1/2"
Beam	27 5/8"
Cockpit size	18 1/2" x 35 7/8"
Cockpit coaming height:	
Forward	13 1/8"
Aft	9 3/4"
Height of seat	1 1/2"
Weight	41 lbs.

### THE REVIEW

#### First Glance

The Pygmy's Pinguino is a kit kayak with a 4-panel deck and a 4-strake hull. "The hull is quite full through the middle, both beamy and deep. The sweeping lines of the chines and deck give the Pinguino a graceful look for a short boat" (TE). "The outward appearance of the Pinguino is a bit portly when compared to sleek touring kayaks, but the little boat was actually quite spirited and fun to paddle. Noticeable was how well all the pre-cut panels fit which added to the very true lines throughout the hull and deck" (TW). "For a boat designed for a large person, its light weight comes as quite a surprise. It is well balanced for a single carry" (MK). The Pinguino has bungees forward and aft of the cockpit opening but no place to stow a spare paddle. There were no perimeter lines but they are available as an accessory kit.

#### Fit

The cockpit comes in two sizes. The large version provided for review "made entry and exit a breeze, a blessing for the big paddler and certainly useful to a photographer, fisherman or anyone who wanted easy access to gear inside the cockpit" (TW). TE "had no trouble getting in seat first and had plenty of room, even had extra space for size-13 booties. The deck has narrow panels at the sheer that angle down to the hull so the volume doesn't get in the way of paddling." The Velcro-fastened foam seat "fit me very comfortably and securely. The back band offered good support and is adjustable for height from outside of the cockpit by an innovative

rope-and-cleat system. You can loosen the back band for entry into the boat and then snug it up when you are ready to paddle" (MK). "The back band does not adjust forward and back as most other systems. To get the right relationship between the seat and backrest the seat must be moved" (TE).

The thigh-brace flanges "had a lot of contour in the foam and provided a very positive grip for great control of the boat" (TE). The plastic Keeper foot braces "were easy to adjust while seated" (TW).

#### Stability and Maneuverability

"This kayak has considerable initial stability and yet the hull design allows it to be comfortably tilted on edge until the cockpit coaming is in the water. Hats off to the designer!" (MK). "The initial and secondary stability are both excellent" (TE). "Initial stability was comfortable and the



secondary stability was very predictable, allowing edging without fear of sudden capsizing" (TW).

"Tracking was surprisingly tight. Despite choppy conditions, the boat held its course satisfactorily through all 'points of sail'" (MK). "The Pinguino is exceptionally maneuverable. With a strong edge and a sweep it skids around in a tight turn. Steering maneuvers like bow rudders are rewarded with quick and positive response" (TE). "Steering was very predictable and made short radius turns a breeze" (MK).

The Pinguino is "very well balanced in the wind. I noticed only a little weathercocking on a downwind run. It was easily corrected with edging and a slight sweep" (TE). "In windy conditions this boat certainly exceeded my expectations. The designer seems to have gotten the fore-and-aft balance right. I have seldom paddled in a boat that performed better in a crosswind. The boat held its course extremely well" (MK). "The Pinguino is quite lively rising over waves. The only water I got on deck was from oncoming waves that were close to breaking" (TE).

MK had "a good opportunity to surf wind waves, and I was amazed at how well it tracked downwind. I have not often been in conditions like that when I didn't need frequent use of a stern rudder. This boat was a dream—quick to catch the waves and steady on them. Amazing." "I had some fast waves and I had to work hard to get up the speed to catch them, but once on the move the Pinguino did very well" (TE).

#### Speed

"Speed is not a strong point of the Pinguino but it did accelerate quickly and I was able to maintain a reasonable pace conducive to bird-watching and general sightseeing. Paddling with faster touring kayaks at a fitness pace would be challenging" (TW). "Using a GPS I measured

#### BEST FEATURES

- Light weight
- Stability and maneuverability

#### TO IMPROVE

- More secure hatch closures



The new latch lever has joggled edges to prevent unintentional release.

a cruising pace of 3.75 knots and exercise pace of 4.5 knots, and a top speed of 5 knots in a short sprint. The bow rises when the boat is pressed hard and the 5-knot limit

was pretty solid" (TE). MK found the Pinguino "very quick to accelerate and I could not sprint above 5 knots. Cruising at 4 knots seemed feasible enough, but the boat labors to climb much above that."

#### Rolling and Rescue

"The Pinguino is very easy to fall out of for a wet exit" (TE). "Draining the cockpit is quite easy due to the proximity of the bulkhead at the rear of the cockpit. The back deck is higher than many boats, and yet, when you leap onto the stern, it is easily submerged" (MK). "If I lunged aboard too far aft, the stern would submerge enough to lift the bow and slide me off. I had to stay close to the cockpit to get back aboard. The latches on the rear hatch are susceptible to being released when climbing aboard. Lunging over the hatch I twice tripped two out of the three latches" (TE). In the course of our trials, Pygmy redesigned the latch levers to prevent accidental release. The new latch remained locked despite repeated attempts to brush it open, yet is easily released when you want to open the hatch. "The knee bracing makes rolling fairly easy. The back deck and back band are higher than some boats and might inhibit a pure layback roll" (MK). TE found the Pinguino "a big boat to roll that

doesn't forgive sloppy technique."

#### Cruising

There are two fairly large hatches and the boat would carry enough for a two- or three-day trip" (MK). The hatch covers are secured by straps and sealed with gaskets. A half cup to a cup of water was reported by TE and MK after rolling practice. The bulkheads are plywood glassed in place.

#### Bottom Line

"As a large paddler I applaud Pygmy Boats for designing and building a short playboat to fit people like me. The handling characteristics really exceeded my expectations. It was a fun boat to paddle" (MK). "The Pinguino was a lot of fun in wind and rough water. There are a lot of things to like: light weight, lively feel, good manners in a blow. It also adapts well to lazing about on a calm day and tending to camera or fishing pole" (TE). "The Pinguino hits the mark dead-on, a recreational-style kayak for the home builder. It is perfectly suited for photography or bird watching and its stable behavior made it confidence inspiring, fun and easy to paddle. Its short length and light weight make storage and transport easy and it would certainly work fine for an overnight trip" (TW).

#### MANUFACTURER'S RESPONSE

I'm really glad your testers liked the Pinguino Sport so much! The independent testing and assessment by SK's expert paddlers provides a service to us all. I worked hard to get the fore-and-aft balance right on this little beauty. Pygmy kayaks are renowned for performing well through the strength of their hull designs rather than rudder or skeg attachments.

It is very gratifying to hear your testers praise for my design of a recreational kayak that will handle wind, waves and surf, execute solid leaned turns, and provide good stability with excellent tracking, while offering ease of entry and roominess that is "perfectly suited for photography or bird watching" or "lazing about... tending to camera or fishing pole." That's the design I wanted.

I'm glad SK took the opportunity to test my new patent-pending hatch levers and found they were bombproof, yet easy to get on and

off. My personal experience with this type of positive-force hatch closure system is that if I adjust my levers regularly to maintain the appropriate amount of downward force, the hatches are leak proof.

I agree with TW and MK's assessment of the Pinguino Sport's top end speed. Pygmy Boats is scheduled to release the Pinguino 14.5' in March 2010. It will have the same great performance, and the added waterline length that will let it maintain higher cruising speeds and carry more gear for light touring.

With regard to TW and MK's reference to "large paddlers" and "big feet", we have another new kayak design, the seventeen-foot Borealis XL touring kayak, which was released in March of 2009. It was designed for folks 220 to 300 lbs, and we have been receiving extremely positive customer feedback on it.

—John Lockwood, Founder and designer, Pygmy Boats Inc.

# KAYAK REVIEWS

## PINGUINO SPORT MANUFACTURING DATA

Designed: 2009

**Standard construction:** Kit.  
Stitch-and-glue, fiberglass/wood/  
fiberglass composite

**Standard Features:** Foot braces, seat

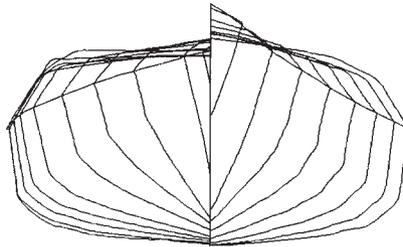
**Optional features:** Smaller cockpit  
opening (17" x 33")

**Weight:** 34 pounds

**Price:** \$889 USD

**Availability:** Order direct via website,  
phone, or mail

**Manufacturer:** Pygmy Boats Inc.  
360-385-6143  
info@pygmyboats.com  
www.pygmyboats.com



### SPEED VS. RESISTANCE

Resistance in pounds.

Spewed	Winters/KAPER	Broze/Taylor
2 knots	0.91	0.88
3 knots	1.94	1.98
4 knots	4.68	4.05
4.5 knots	8.06	9.40
5 knots	11.31	15.60
6 knots	18.14	26.56*

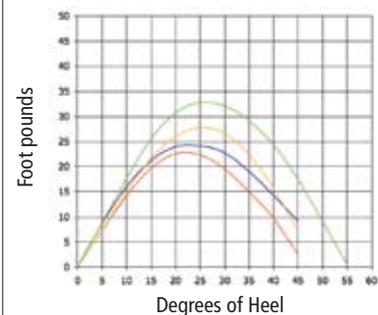
\*The large difference at 6 knots is the result of an extrapolation beyond the limits of the KAPER formula.

### HYDROSTATICS

Waterline length	11' 8.9"
Waterline beam	25.1"
Draft	5.4"
Prismatic coefficient	0.50
Wetted surface in sq. ft.	19.51
Center of buoyancy	48%

(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](http://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.