



INSIDE OUT BY TIM SHUFF

The Chinook TX

BY SEAWARD KAYAKS

WE DIDN'T KNOW that our demo kayak would be sold out from under us while we were paddling it. We returned the Seaward Chinook five hours late from a multi-day trip in Clayoquot Sound to learn that its frustrated buyer had long ago quit waiting for us to bring his boat back and had gone home.

Now, you can define kayak performance in various ways. For some, performance is being able to put a boat on an aggressive edge so it'll spin on a jellyfish and feel as stable sliding sideways down a wave as it does on a trout pond. Others define high performance in arguably more practical terms. Like being able to throw the entire contents of a minivan into the hatches, plop first-timers in the cockpit and send them onto the ocean without a worry—or buy it off the rack and know that you're sure to find it comfy and easy to paddle. That's the Seaward Chinook TX: a beginner-friendly, outfitter-friendly, "buy it on spec" friendly craft.

The Chinook started life as the now-discontinued Tye TX, a boat intended for outfitter fleets that turned out to be too tippy for beginners. The redesign emerged as the Chinook, a "stable, capable cruiser" with the exceptional primary stability that beginners and outfitters crave.

With the classic 17-foot by 24-inch dimensions of an all-purpose West Coast tourer, the

Chinook stands apart for its depth and volume. The cockpit is roomy and the coaming and thigh braces are very high for big paddlers. The bottomless hatches turn this boat into any trip's packhorse.

Seaward's recyclable ZyTx thermoformed ABS plastic makes for a hull that's lightweight for its size and pleasing to the eye. Thermoform plastic is a soft material and we noticed some hull flex in the cockpit on the water, but with no noticeable effect on performance.

On-water performance is predictable and well-suited to the intended outfitter use. Tracking is excellent. The Chinook takes effort to edge, let alone flip, when loaded. The rudder counteracts a slight tendency to weatherecock in wind and adds manoeuvrability.

A lot of things conspired to make us late coming home from Tofino, including bad weather, a sick paddler who needed to be towed, opposing tidal currents, and an ice cream break at the the country market with the goats on the roof in Coombs, British Columbia. The Chinook handled them all. Although we don't recommend anyone buy a kayak while it's still being paddled by someone else, we do recommend the Chinook for large beginner paddlers looking for comfort, rock-solid stability and expedition capacity in a thermoformed kayak.



MAIN PHOTO: VICTORIA BOWMAN // INSET PHOTOS: TIM SHUFF

WIDE-BODIED WATERCRAFT

The shallow-arch hull is deep and full for maximum carrying capacity and nearly flat-bottomed for rock solid initial stability.

A RUDDER IN DISGUISE

Seaward's new and improved cockpit includes a height-adjustable seat, angle-adjustable rudder pedals and a rudder-deployment system that uses a slider, more like a skeg control than a rudder's usual deck-top pull cord.

FOOLPROOF HATCHES

Seaward excels at friendly features that seem so obvious you wonder why every manufacturer doesn't copy them: like bow and stern directional arrows on the neoprene hatch covers.

length	17 ft (518 cm)
width	24 in (70 cm)
depth	14.5 in (37 cm)
cockpit	32.25 x 16.5 in (82 x 42 cm)
total storage	75 gal (285 l)
weight	56 lbs (25.4 kg)
price	\$2,650 Can, \$2,375 US

seawardkayaks.com