



INSIDE OUT BY TIM SHUFF

The Baffin BY BORÉALDESIGN

In 2009, BoréalDesign introduced its multipurpose touring kayak, the Epsilon, in three sizes to accommodate paddlers from 90 to 280 pounds. This follows a smart trend in kayak marketing to de-clutter the purchase decision by replacing a dog's breakfast of models with a simple flow: 1) choose a design that suits your paddling style; 2) choose a size; 3) choose from poly or composite. Brilliantly easy, like buying shoes, retailers and customers loved it.

The Baffin first came on the scene in 2008 as a plastic version of the popular Greenland-style Ellesmere and ran away as Boréal's top seller. So, with the success of the three-size system of the Epsilon, it only made sense to add a larger and smaller version to the Baffin's 2011 redesign, and to also offer it in composite.

So if you like the Baffin, Boréal has your size and material. Now back to Step 1: Is the Baffin for you?

If you like a snug-fitting, sporty, close-to-the-water feel; if you like hard chines that let you use super-subtle edging to steer; if you like skin-on-frame-inspired lines that gracefully accommodate low-angle, Greenland-style strokes and laybacks, then the answer is yes.

I tested the smallest size, P1 ("P" for plastic). I found the initial stability to be comfortably moderate yet it took no effort at all to edge the trademark, down-curving "reverse hard chine,"

which carves like a shaped ski, only in the opposite direction.

With high secondary stability and predictable edging, the Baffin has the even-tempered personality you want in a foul-weather friend—a solid blend of soft-chine predictability and hard-chine turning characteristics.

The Baffin P1 has a long, flat keel with low rocker—perhaps to give its shorter hull a speed boost. It tracks surprisingly well, yet it's easy enough to steer by throwing in some of the effortless edging while carrying speed. Or dial up the skeg for rough weather and you're on rails. These are perfect sporty touring traits.

This brings us to Step 2: Fit. This is a low-volume boat so pack accordingly. The cockpit has enough length for just about any paddler within the P1's weight range and a slim fit that's fantastic for boat control—aided by an aggressively contoured bucket seat, adjustable thigh braces and sturdy metal foot braces. Stand warned that the streamlined decks strictly limit capacity.

Boréal rightly pegs the Baffin as "an extremely fun and stable kayak for athletic paddlers from intermediate to advanced, suited for day and weekend trips." And now with more sizes, Boréal's sprightly bestseller will have an even bigger (and smaller) audience.

SOFT AND DRY

Hatch covers are wickedly supple and the easiest we've found to get on and off, while also being dry thanks to the fit of the hard plastic hatch rims.

DIAL 5 FOR OVERDRIVE

We love the smooth, precise operation and bomber spectra-cord construction of Boréal's signature dial skeg, placed up front for easy reach and neatly recessed into the deck.

KEEP A LOW PROFILE

The Baffin's low-slung, beautifully streamlined decks are perfect for Greenland-style strokes, rolls and braces, if a bit wet in rough conditions.

BORÉALDESIGN BAFFIN P1

length	16'6"
width	21.5"
weight.....	59 lbs
recommended load limit...	240 lbs
price.....	\$1,839 US,
.....	\$1,999 CDN

www.borealdesign.com