



Arriving on Rùm in a Rapier.

1 It's very light. My boat only weighs 10kg. So it's dead easy to lift on and off the car and carry down the beach. Sea kayaks weigh twice as much or more.

2 It's quick. I can still sustain 6 mph for over 11 miles at the tender age of 76.

3 It's great in the waves, as it's designed to handle big waves – of course. So it's a very dry boat

4 It's brilliant for downwind paddling because it's so light and responsive, and has a rudder for superb control.

5 I can Eskimo roll the racer quite easily – so I feel very safe in it.

6 It's much more stable than a K1.

Recently, Gilbert Speirs and I paddled 14 miles down Loch Tay at an average speed of 7.6mph (+12km/h).

He was in a ski and I was in the racer. The racer is very slightly slower than a slimline ski in most conditions, but it may be quicker in short, steep waves, which we often get in the lochs of Scotland.

I've often likened it to the MX5 of the sea, and yet no one appears to be keen to paddle them on the sea. I guess there are two reasons for that:

1 without a rudder they are difficult to control, and
2 they are not as stable as most sea kayaks.

I might mention at this point, I've no wish to go overnight camping in one. I tried it once, and didn't enjoy the experience at all. In Scotland, you have to contend with midges for a starter. So I paddle on the sea, but I'm not a sea kayaker.

There's another reason I find the Marlin racer a perfect companion. Because it's so light and easy to handle, I can carry it and manoeuvre it easily on and off my bigger boat, *Tiptoe*. Dave Dickson, former slalomist, is a wonderful engineer, and he fabricated aluminium blocks to fit the handrails of *Tiptoe*. I can then bolt my V-bars to the handrails and carry my racer anywhere.

But that's a long story I'll leave for another day.

Andy Morton

Another concept originated by Andy and copied by myself was the false seat. This was placed on top of the normal river racer seat and gave a better paddling position for marathon races although it was less stable. It was attached with wires so that it could be removed for wild water races, when stability became more important. I still have it although it has fifty years of dust on it. Ed.



Andy Morton photographs