

Speedart Wish Review by Chris Norbury

I've been paddling a Wish for nearly 3 years now, and have paddled an Obsession I, Esox (original), ZBS Waka and Zastera Corvette extensively as well. I currently own 3 Wish's, one in Europe, one that was made for the 11kg weight limit and one that was made for the new 10kg weight limit. Of all of those boats the Wish is my favorite for whitewater, especially when it starts to get difficult to keep up your speed because the boat becomes unstable. The SpeedArt construction is absolutely the best available. My Wish that is 11kg is very well made, and has taken some big hits without any major damage. It is very stiff and responsive and I expect it to last a long time. The Wish that is 10kg is not quite as stiff and I know from others that they are more fragile. When a manufacturer such as SpeedArt cannot make a boat that will last as long at 10kg as at 11kg you know that the weight limit is likely a bit too low.

As with most modern designs the characteristics of the boat will differ according to whether you are under or over 175lbs (about 79kgs). The Wish hull is based loosely on the Prijon Bala, although it paddles a bit differently than the Bala. There are updates to the Wish in the Wish 2 (which has a skeg) and the Wish 3 (which I haven't seen). I haven't paddled either of those boats so am discussing only the original design, which won the Classic World Championships in 2010. As I said above, the boat is very stable and I generally feel pretty good paddling it on bigger water when I would not feel at home in most of the other boats I have tried. I have heard it said that it is less stable and predictable than an Esox 2, but I cannot attest to that. The boat is quite predictable and has a lot of volume to keep it going through the waves. It can get bounced around a bit, but you remain stable while getting bounced around. The rear wings do not have a steep angle, which means that the transition between primary and secondary stability is essentially seamless, in direct contrast to a Corvette (or other boats, like a Dynamic) where you feel like you are falling from primary to secondary. If you are over 80kgs you may get bogged down with bottom drag in shallower rivers where you cannot get the boat to plane as well, and turning on the flat will also be an issue. The boat turns very well off of the top of waves in all conditions I have tried. In terms of flat water speed the Wish is not "that" quick, but it certainly isn't the slowest design out there either. The one major concern that I had, and which I have heard from others, is that the seat is pretty horrific. It is a fixed seat that is very narrow – when Andrew "Stick Man" McEwan complains about a seat being narrow you know there is an issue. I have messed with the seat and have tried other seats. Cutting the flanges down that affix the seat to the boat on the sides seems to retain the stability of having a flat seat while increasing comfort. A seat of your own choice might also work well.

In summary, this is a predictable stable boat that allows you to put the power down on the rough, turns well in whitewater, planes up well at higher speeds (as long as you are light enough) and is exceptionally well made.