



INTRODUCING THE

JACANA

Just in time for the GT Drak Challenge, a new K1 arrives on the market that ups the ante on a design that has already wormed its way into the hearts of plenty of river paddlers. Dave Macleod took it for a spin and puzzled over what the hell the name means...

It's a boat that makes an immediate impression, as much for its sleek, slinky elegant contemporary lines, as much for the word "Jacana" displayed along its nose in big vinyl letters. It's the new K1 from Knysna Racing, and after some serious Googling it turns out that a Jacana is a little lilly-hopper bird that lives in the Eastern Cape and hangs out on the dam where Hubby and Albert do some of their boat testing.

And I have a feeling that quite a bit of testing and R&D has gone into this boat. In the same way as they took some of the initial criticism of the Lancer CX on the chin and factored it all in to come up with the CX Maxi, which has arguably become the best river K1 for the average paddler, the Jacana has set out to take all the positive attributes of the CX Maxi/Lancer CX and come up with a streetwise river boat with higher performance specs.

While the CX Maxi is a wonderful companion on any river paddle, it was noticeable that the pronounced bulge of volume forward of the pedals and the generous volume just behind the cockpit did add to some drag on the boat - you could spot the CX Maxi's primary and secondary bow wave a mile away.

The Jacana has dispensed with that neatly. The nose has been slimmed down forward of the pedals at the waterline, and the hull behind the cockpit has been tucked in quite boldly, making for a distinctly slimmer profile shape, widest at the paddlers hips.

What is very new is the super sexy front deck design. Still with plenty of river volume it sports trimmed away lines at the paddle entry points, accentuated by a cool deck colour design that draws attention to the new shape, and flatters it!

The core design beneath the paddler has not changed much at all, and this is where the crux of the boats appeal comes. The minute you set off in it you realise that it has the same sort of boat feel and stability as the popular CX Maxi, but is markedly quicker off the mark. It's a win - better speed, same stability.

What is also important is that the rocker in the tail has been dropped slightly on the CX design, contributing to this improved performance, but there is still plenty of banana behind the cockpit. That's why I was quick to tag it a great Drak boat because the boat has a lithe maneuverability under pedal and paddle, and will hop skip and jump around rocks in a technically testing river.

I never got time to test it in seriously big water but I would bank that its stability and good volume forward and back in the wetted surface area will make it a pleasure to take down a Fish or a Bushman's in good water.

The design has stayed with the beefed up rudder favoured in the CX Maxi design over the more novice and time-trial geared Lancer CX's titchy rudder. Elsewhere on the boat, the attention to detail is quite intriguing.

Under the deck there is a brand new all carbon footplate that replaces the conventional footbar with a semicircular plate that offers more foot area and a super platform for the pair of footpumps, well positioned when you need them, against a robust base, but out of the way of the pedals.

More advances under the skin are the use of new all carbon cable runners, replacing the glassed in plastic tubes with all-in-one patched on carbon housings.

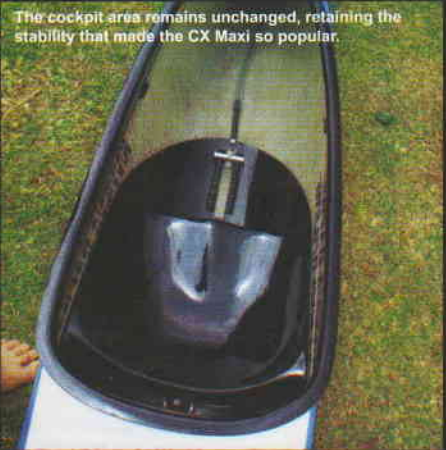
The boat has a zesty personality that will be very rewarding for any intermediate paddler looking to either improve river skills or work up the results sheet with faster times at the time trial or races.

The lion's share of the paddling community will find the Jacana a happy and willing partner for a Drak or Lowveld Croc, a slick and comfortable Berg and just as responsive on flatwater. Not much like a lippy-pad hopping bird, but it will make just as much of a lasting impression.

The Jacana will fill a gap between the CX Maxi and, say, the River Vajda in the Knysna stable, and has what it takes to be an all-round intermediate K1 that will be very unlikely to let you down.



The new all-in-one carbon cable housings.



The cockpit area remains unchanged, retaining the stability that made the CX Maxi so popular.



The Jacana boasts the new style semicircular pedal and footpump platform.