

Romany by Nigel Dennis Kayaks



Designed in 1993, the Romany was meant for kayaking in rough water. At 16 feet long with moderately raked bow and stern, it has a fairly short waterline for good maneuverability. On flat water it topped out at 5 knots, a respectable speed for a boat of its length, and slipped along at nearly 4 knots with little effort.

The Romany has good initial stability that even novice paddlers should find comforting, and the secondary stability is very solid for aggressive kayakers who'll edge the boat for quick maneuvering. The keyhole cockpit has good clearance for getting in and out and the molded thigh-brace flanges make for good control of the kayak. The cockpit sits low around the waist and has a very solid connection to the boat, with great freedom of movement from the hips up. The low aft deck is perfect for doing a full layback.

With the skeg retracted, the Romany tracks well and carves tight turns when edged. The bulkhead aft of the seat is placed at the aft edge of the coaming for easy and complete emptying of the cockpit after a wet exit. The impression I had of the Romany was that it was a kayak that had no idiosyncrasies I'd have to get used to. It was ready for whatever I'd paddle it into.

The Romany is available in two alternate configurations: The Romany S for larger paddlers and the Romany LV for smaller paddlers.

\$3,395

Nigel Dennis Kayaks

www.seakayakinguk.com



Best Extended Touring Kayak

Explorer by Nigel Dennis Kayaks

The Explorer is the Romany's younger sister. At 17' 8" long and 21 1/2" wide it is 20" longer but no wider. The longer hull gives the Explorer 20 percent more volume for cargo and a bit more speed. With a top end of 6.25 knots, I found it a half knot faster than the Romany. The Explorer has more footroom and legroom for larger paddlers but the keyhole cockpit has the same secure fit as the Romany and the same ease of entry and exit. The aft deck is similarly low to provide full clearance for a head-to-the-deck layback; it's an excellent boat for rolling.

The stability profile is very good—the initial and the secondary stability inspire confidence. I could get the coaming dipped in the water and still feel solid support. With an edged turn the Explorer is quite maneuverable and still tracks well, even with its skeg retracted. The three cargo compartments are accessed through round VCP hatch covers: 10" covers for the fore and aft compartments and 7 1/2" for the day compartment.

The Explorer has the capacity for carrying a lot of gear but it doesn't have the feel of a large boat. Without a load of camping equipment aboard, it's a lively kayak that makes day paddling a pleasure.

\$2,999

Nigel Dennis Kayaks

www.seakayakinguk.com

