

Planking the hull (7 hrs)

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Now that the frames are attached to the strongback, I can begin planking the hull. The first strips attached are the keel and gunwale strips. After that I start adding strips from the gunwales up until I reach the keelstrips. Every time a strip is attached on alternating sides to avoid adding too much tension to one side and distorting the hull shape. Steadily the hull starts taking shape and looking like a kayak.

Because I am working with max. 4,8m strips I have to add scarfs in the first 10 strips or so on either side. After seeing the straight scarfs on Valeries Soul Mate canoe I was convinced this was the easiest one to create and visibly appealing at the same time if you want to show the wood (transparent finish). When well made this creates a small line at a right angle to the seams between the strips. To keep these scarfs in place I back them up with a small piece of wood (appr. 5cm, see photo set 1) using hot melt glue.

When I reach the sheerline it becomes a bit more difficult to attach the strips as they now have to be persuaded into a three dimensional shape (length, outside in and twist). Fortunately this is only needed for one strip at each side.

The bottom will be filled with strips from the outside towards the keel. This means that every strip now needs to be fit with a sharp angle at both ends them fit to the keel. This seems a pretty complex piece of work, but I soon get the hang of it. Here is how I did this (see the set photo set 2):

1. every strip is stapled to the frames from the middle out as far as possible.
2. the strip is marked where it should to meet the keel
3. the strip is sawed a little bit wider than it is marked
4. shave the strip down to the mark line and regularly check if it fits
5. fit the strip in place
6. repeat steps 2 to 5 for the other end of the strip

This way attaching the the strips is reasonably predictable and I only wasted one strip because I shaved a bit too enthusiastic. The last two strips cannot be fitted this way and need a repeated process of fitting and shaving until they fit into place.

I made one little mistake while attaching the strips. Because the Black Pearl is a hard chined kayak, it would have been better to also fit the chinestrips together with the keel and gunwale strips. This results in a harder chine. Because I forgot this, my Black Pearl will have slightly less hard chine in a couple of places than it could have been.

Foto set 1: Een rechte las in een strip

The straight joint
The piece of back up wood

Photo set 2: Fitting strips in the bottom

1. attaching the strip
2. marking the strip
3. sawing a bit wider
4. shaving the strip to size
5. setting the strip