

Paddle Review: Lendal Storm

My paddling background: ACA L-4 Coastal Instructor, BCU coach, ACA SUP instructor, full time professional sea kayak guide for 30+years. Other users that shared: Lisa, L-4 instructor, BCU Coach and a few clients of various skill levels including some with instructor ratings. My normal go-to paddle: a Werner Cyprus 205 straight shaft.

The proving ground: two months Caribbean paddling at our winter base on the island of Roatan....a few hundred miles of time both touring and teaching.

Initial Impression:

Visually striking, the build quality is excellent with a very smooth finish and few visible deformities. The model that Lendal was kind enough to lend used a previous year's shaft. We also had a Cadence to test that utilized a newer shaft that retained the same overall shape but seems to have a slightly larger diameter and may be a bit lighter. This same shaft is used in the current Storm. Both of these shafts have a pronounced triangular feel in the hand leaving absolutely no doubt as to non-visual orientation of the blade. On land holding the paddle with a relaxed handgrip would result in the paddle's sloughing into a low brace position without a firmer grip. Left me wondering if I would need to "muscle" it more in use than my Werner. The paddle joint is Lendal's proven carbon padlock system. This joint is stable and has the plus of having non-corrosive parts. Downside? You need a tool on your vest to lock the joint...the Lendal Key...lose it and you now own a one piece paddle. The current Lendal wrenches also don't hold up very well to saltwater. Notable is Lendal's large beautiful graphic on the back face of the blade and the power face sports a "Storm" graphic that doesn't quite live up to the Lendal name, but it's just a sticker; so let's go paddle.



Stainless Steel...isn't.



On Water:

First impression was that blade size and its 24 oz. weight made for very pleasurable all day touring. It feels very “strong” despite its lightweight and seems to have just enough flex. As for the balance issue I experienced with the shaft on land; it was simply nowhere in evidence once the blade was in the water. In forward strokes the stiffness of the shaft made for smooth power transfer with the blade catching smoothly and exiting quietly with no flutter at all. Despite the lack of drip rings, the paddle was quite dry to use. The blade also gripped well through sweep strokes and draws...that nicely shaped shaft coming into play again allowing very precise control with little ventilation. The blade worked predictably and felt completely natural through a whole litany of strokes, except one. I often use blended strokes that may involve slicing the blade forward from a vertical orientation, as in a sculling draw...I

found that with the bottom of the blade oriented forward it would try to dive under my hull if I didn't open the blade a bit "assertively" when slicing forward. My Cyprus would open itself naturally on forward slice without being forced open, but I find I have to "drive" the Storm a bit harder on that move. Overall? None of the others I passed it to noticed it and it certainly wasn't any sort of deal breaker for me. This trait is one I've noticed with most of the Lendal blades.

Other testers in our tropical winter groups universally enjoyed using this paddle. In fact, that was a bit of a problem as once they got it in their hands, I couldn't get it back. Fortunately, I also had a Lendal Cadence to test, so I was quite happy to stroke all day with a slightly heavier paddle utilizing the newer shaft design, whose diameter I preferred to the older style. In summary, this is a terrific top tier paddle that I would take anywhere with confidence. The Storm is light enough yet durable enough to hold up under extremes. I will order a four-piece to take to Greenland and soon as they are available.