



GREAT BRITAIN CIRCUMNAVIGATOR

MARCUS DEMUTH

GERMAN ROCK 'N' ROLL DRUMMER MARCUS DEMUTH MOVED TO NEW YORK CITY FOR THE MUSIC SCENE. During a smoke break six years ago, he saw kayakers paddling on the Hudson River. Soon he could think of little else. "I just felt like that was what I wanted to do," he says. He attacked paddling with the same passion he applied to drums, notching 620 miles in Tierra del Fuego last spring, the first-ever circumnavigation of the Falkland Islands in 2009, and other expeditions in Wales, Ireland and Australia.

The Mission: A record-breaking 2,540-mile circumnavigation of Great Britain last summer. "It was a total *yin-yang* from my trip in Tierra del Fuego," he says. "It was harder and longer than anything else I've ever done, but it all went super smooth." He finished in 80 days, the fastest solo circumnavigation of the island.

The Ride: Demuth picked up his 18-foot Valley Nordkapp from the company's headquarters in Nottingham. The composite boat's narrow beam, low volume and pronounced rocker proved the perfect tonic for the route's rough water. "It behaved well in beam waves and following seas, and was super nimble and easy to edge," says Demuth. "I fell in love with it. It's the most underrated kayak in the world." (*Not anymore, see p. 62.*) Case in point: It's the same boat Paul Caffyn used for his team's first circumnavigation of Great Britain in 1980.

The Paddle: For Demuth, whose longest day tallied 59 miles in 14 hours, the smaller the blade the better. He chose a 210-cm Cyprus from Werner, with a two-piece Ikelos as a spare. "Everyone recommends a smaller blade if you're on a big expedition," he says. "You don't get as tired and it places less strain on your shoulders."

The Apparel: Two words: Kokatat drysuit. "People warned me that I might get too hot, but the weather was uncharacteristically cold, and I wore it 70 out of 80 days." If it was hot, he would undo the zipper or tie the top half around his waist. "The weather changes very quickly," he adds. "There was a lot of back and forth, which it was perfect for."

The Safety: While he had a bilge pump, an EPIRB device, VHF radio and flares, Demuth didn't carry a paddle float for self-rescue. His solution, if needed: re-entering the upturned boat and then rolling a water-bound kayak. "I had to roll a couple of times," he says. "It happened on Whitby on the east coast. It's pretty shallow there, and north-easterlies caused big waves to break a half-mile offshore. Thank God I never had to use any of my safety gear."

— Eugene Buchanan

> THE REST OF DEMUTH'S KIT

- > Ibuprofen and Paracetamol ("For the pinched nerve in my back")
- > Kokatat OutFIT Tour PFD
- > VHF radio: Standard Horizon HX850S
- > 26 (paper) IMRAY nautical charts ("On loan from Barry Shaw, whose team paddled around Great Britain in 2005, also in 80 days")
- > Clothing: Kokatat Expedition Drysuit, Gore-Tex Full Zip Jacket, Kokatat Scout shoes, Kokatat InnerCore layers, The North Face Heathen jacket
- > The North Face Spectrum 23 single-wall tent and Cat's Meow sleeping bag
- > Books: *The Canoe Boys*, about a 1935 sea kayak trip on the west coast of Scotland; *Rowing Faster* by Volker Nolte
- > Sony FM/AM radio for the 12:48 a.m. maritime weather forecast
- > Casio Pathfinder watch ("For barometric pressure readings and to wake me at 12:47 a.m.")
- > Sudocrem antiseptic healing cream for chafing on arms, legs and armpits ("A farmer gave me a jar in the Falklands after seeing my bloody arms; now it's a staple in my kayak kit")
- > MSR cooking pots, stove and water bags
- > Sea-to-Summit Mosquito Head Net ("To withstand the clouds of midges in Northern Scotland")