

Clem's Seacycle data

Length:	4.5 m
Beam:	1.8 m
Weight:	140 kg (roughly 40 kg more than the original set-up)
Cruising speed:	5 to 7 km/h (single engine mode)
Hull speed:	around 10 km/h



and canals in our local area, I realised that a pedal boat would be a delightful way to relax. So much quieter, cleaner and more healthy than a motor-powered boat!

I must admit that originally, I had envisaged designing and building an amphibious, sociable (side by side) human-powered vehicle. What a project... but I'm impatient, and I found that too much of my energy and drive were taken up with work. So it seemed better to look for something to buy. I could then focus my limited energy and leisure time to modify whatever I ended up with, to enhance the ergonomics and versatility, just as I had done with the Duocycle. I would then have two vehicles, one for street use, the other one for cruising on lakes, canals and rivers.

SEACYCLE

The Seacycle is a human-powered catamaran produced by Meyers Boat Company in the USA. It's a catamaran equipped with two pedal drive units, with both riders in a recumbent riding position, and with space behind for extra child seats or luggage. It seemed like the perfect match to the Duotrike! I also liked the shape of its slender hulls, promising efficiency, and I was very excited to gain some experience with the pedal operated drive units.

But even before I bought the Seacycle I had made plans to modify it. I wanted to stow some gear aboard, and with the sun's rays coming from above and reflecting off the glittering water below, I also felt it really needed some sort of sunshade

Soon the two yellow hulls were sitting on our lawn. My neighbour glanced curiously over at the strange boat from his garden. Maybe he thought I was preparing for the big flood. Fortunately, the water has not yet come...

Eventually I found some time to measure, draw some sketches, calculate, and to order some wooden beams and planks. My aim was to use as many original parts as possible, and I wanted to retain the option of converting the boat back to

its original configuration if at all possible. So my approach was just to add some additional parts and to replace some original ones.

As BikeE are no longer in business it was fortunate that some time ago I had bought three spare seats along with my two BikeE AT recumbents, so I could fit BikeE seats to the Seacycle too. The other main modification was the canopy. I also moved the rudder to the stern for better steering, and added a two-piece wooden deck for storage.

CANAL CRUISING

I tested my conversion kit on a two day trip on the canal connecting the rivers Rhine and Marne. On a Saturday morning in late September a friend and I headed out by car and we reached the canal just east of Saverne, a town in the French Vosges.

It took us about another hour to get the hulls and wooden beams off the roof rack and to assemble the Seacycle alongside the canal.

The next step was to lift the boat a few inches above the ground and to move it sideways before lowering one hull down on the water. Then we put two ropes around the second hull, lifted it up, pushed it sideways and placed it gently on the water. We loaded our gear, strapped it to the deck, got on our seats, lowered the drive units and cast off.

What a pleasure! As we started to pedal the craft quickly reached its cruising speed – with only a little effort required. At about 4 knots we glided silently past villages and fields. What a peaceful way to travel! It was very calm on the canal that weekend. There was hardly any traffic; we encountered only one commercial barge and perhaps twenty rental boats. Nevertheless, our little craft drew a lot of attention.

We climbed a flight of 14 locks – heading towards Paris – until we reached the small town of Lutzelbourg where we stayed for the night at the local hotel. The next day we descended back to the Rhine valley and home.



SEACYCLE CAMPING

After that successful trip, I was converted, and began to contemplate even longer journeys. When I spotted the smallest of Quechua's 'Up in seconds' tents at a store nearby, I was suddenly fired up with a new idea. With a further small extension of my wooden deck it should be possible to install the small tent on the Seacycle!

And indeed it was possible. The design has



proven to perform superbly on two excursions on Lake Constance, the large German lake bordering Switzerland and Austria. I'm also now equipped with a small anchor, and I just love to camp out on the lake all by myself, away from harbours and civilization.

CONCLUSION

The Seacycle is the most efficient stress-relieving treatment I can imagine – especially when applied for more than one day. No negative side effects have been identified so far. I'd recommend it to anyone!

Clemens Winter

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The Seacycle is from Meyers Boats Company, USA: see www.meyersboat.com/seacycle