



Before *and* After

“Our Pretty Yellow Kevlar 18-foot We-no-nah Jensen”

by Ralph J. Ferrusi

Our 53-pound 18-foot Jensen is our “Top Shelf”, top of the line, “Prima Donna” canoe.

It’s light, and, very fast: it’s length makes it “glide” like a dream: it covers many many yards more with each paddle stroke than our (though much “tougher”) 17-foot Royalex white-water boats.

We “baby” it: take it out mostly on quiet flat water outings: calm lakes—Mohansic Lake and Crom Pond recently—Hudson River marshes. Back in the day, we actually surfed it on Hudson River waves, really dangerous: but we’re smart enough not to do this anymore. And, we rarely take it out on The River: it has a lot less “free board”—the height of the side of the boat above the waterline—than our other boats, so, if we’re not careful/vigilant, big waves could wash over the gunwales and swamp the boat very quickly.

2008

There was a big windstorm up on Stormville Mountain in October 2008, and we were shocked to see a tall, thick Oak tree had been blown down right across the middle of our beautiful Jensen. It was bent practically in half, and it appeared to be totally ruined: I couldn’t imagine it could be repaired, and couldn’t imagine ever paddling it again.

We chain-sawed the tree off it, and bent it back in shape as best we could: it was still a Train Wreck. We contacted canoe racing friend

Bob Allen, who had repaired some of our Zaverall graphite paddles, and we (somehow) got the bent-in-half boat up to his shop in Westfield, Massachusetts.

2009

A year later we drove back up to Westfield and brought it home, pretty much as good as—or in some cases even better: we’d asked Bob to replace the natural aluminum gunwales with anodized black gunwales, and this made the boat even more handsome—than new: AMAZING!!! The repaired parts of the hull are not quite the same yellow as the original, but this gave the boat even more “character”.

2009-2018

As the Basherkill pictures show, ten years after the disaster, and many many smooth water miles—on the Hudson and Beyond—the “yeller” Jensen is still goin’ strong!!! And, it’s still a heckuva lot easier to heft on and off the roof rack of the Subaru than our 80-pound Royalex boats.

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