

Title: *New Zealand WHITEWATER 5*

Subtitle: *180 Great Kayaking Runs*

Author: Graham Charles

Published: 2013

Publisher: Graham Charles

Website: www.grahamcharlesnz.com

Contents: 332 pp, maps, black & white photos, central colour plate section

Cover: softcover

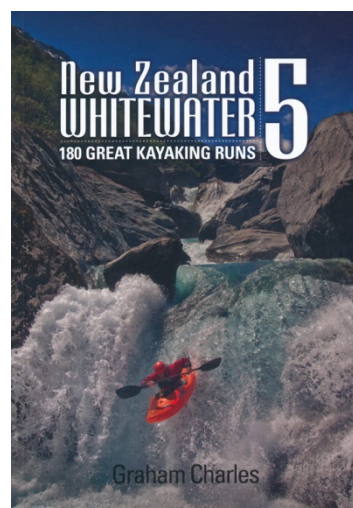
Size: 147 x 209 mm (A5)

Price: \$34.95

ISBN: 978 0 47326 094 1

Availability: NZ bookstores

Review: Paul Caffyn



Graham Charles is well known to Kiwi paddlers for the Adventure Philosophy team trips to the Antarctic Peninsula and around South Georgia, both of which have books in print. But like many Kiwi bi-paddlers, that is, they paddle both whitewater and the sea, Graham is also a serious whitewater paddler.

Back in 1996 when Graham's guide to running New Zealand rivers was first published as *New Zealand Whitewater 100 Great Kayaking Runs*, this whitewater guide filled a big 'hole' with serious and localized whitewater trips. Paddlers in the 90s were seeking more challenging whitewater trips than those listed in regional river guides published in the 70s.

Graham's book format worked well, with a central colour plate section, plenty of black and white photos, good sketch maps, and a side bar summary which included class (grade), level, gradient, time, distance, maps and a hot tip of each of the 100 runs.

That same format was used for two revised editions, although the number of runs had grown to 125 with the 4th edition published in 2006. Graham has self-published this brand new *Whitewater 5* which uses the same easy to follow format, but the number of great kayaking runs has jumped to 180, and although an extra 36 pages, there is no difference in the size or weight of the book – which is ideal for chucking in a dry bag.

Graham has grouped whitewater lists into 11 chapters based on geographic regions, from Northern North Island to Fiordland. The biggest chapter is devoted to West Coast rivers, almost 90 pages, and Graham notes that this area 'really deserves a guide book of its own.' In the introduction to this chapter: 'Big rivers/small rivers, steep creeks/steeper creeks, scenic wonderlands/multiday trips, beginner trips, intensely difficult walk-in trips – you name it and the West Coast region has it.'

In both the 4th and 5th editions, cartoons by Bruce Dowrick add humour to the serious and committing nature of the runs - almost worth buying the books for the cartoons. Quite topical with the recent release of a epic film, is a paddler dropping down a raging, flooded river, closely followed by a huge ark, with two giraffes peering over the bow. With the preponderance of pencil cams and Go Pro cameras with whitewater paddlers today, the cartoon on page 240 shows a paddler with 30+ cams, the cameraman on shore with the radio control pack, and the captions reads: 'I'll switch to sphinctercam as you hit the drop...'

Appendices include a glossary, a list of helicopter operators (essential for many of the south of Hokitika West Coast runs), runs both alphabetical and by class and lastly a reading list.

An excellent guide, with informative sketch maps, delineating individual rapids, and space for notes after paddling each run. My only gripe is with the quality of the paper – the black and white photos have not always reproduced well, often too dark and with a loss of sharpness. A satin finish paper may have improved this.