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Surfcore Hunter ATAC Stand-Up Paddleboard

Taking a Long Shot on a Value-Priced SUP

Rating: 7/10 *Very good, but not quite great*

\$700 · [More info from Surfcore](#)

Reviewed by [Eric Tegler](#) June 12, 2013 | 6:23 am | Categories: [Sports & Outdoors](#)

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Photo: Eric Tegler/Wired

If you ride a stand-up paddleboard on flat water like rivers and bays, the “glide” will make or break you — Take a paddle stroke and see how far your board coasts across the surface before slowing to a stop. The amount of distance you get from that single push will tell you a lot about the quality of your board and the execution of its design.

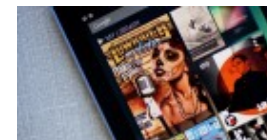
The first stroke I took on [Surfcore's Hunter ATAC](#) confirmed the hunch that drove me to purchase one off the internet without the usual test ride — it's a pretty good glider for a \$700 board, which is inexpensive as these things go.

I came across the Hunter ATAC because I needed to upgrade. I've been paddleboarding for three years, and recently decided to move up from my outdated inflatable board. I wanted something that would help me cover more distance, as well as a piece of gear that looked cool like those needle-nosed boards I'd seen the SUP racers use. But for a board I'll primarily use to burn calories on the Magothy River and the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland, I didn't see the need to spend \$1,500 on a high-end SUP.



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A couple of chats with friends led me to Ebay to get a fix on prices. A few searches presented me with a Surfcore board. I hadn't heard of the company before, but there's quite a large gaggle of SUP brands popping up across the U.S. Like most of them, Surfcore sources its boards from Asia — the majority of SUPs are manufactured in factories in Thailand or China, with the higher-quality boards coming from Thailand.

The Carson, California-based Surfcore sells through scattered retailers, but also runs a direct sales business through Ebay, a distribution model the more expensive brands frown upon because it makes it more difficult to control pricing. But for a board that costs roughly half the cash of a fancy SUP, the Hunter is an attractive option.

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Photo: Eric Tegler/Wired

The 12-foot-long paddleboard combines design cues from racing SUPs, like a displacement hull (the needle nose and chine), with features common to flat-water, “floater” boards such as thick, 4.75-inch rails. According to Surfcore, the blend offers speed and stability when you're taking on modest waves upwind, or when crossing the surf to open water. Everything about the board is beautiful, from the white chevron on the

How We Rate

- 1 A complete failure in every way
- 2 Barely functional; don't buy it
- 3 Serious flaws; proceed with caution
- 4 Downsides outweigh upsides
- 5 Recommended with reservations
- 6 A solid product with some issues
- 7 Very good, but not quite great

underside of the nose to the contrasting white deck, “Hunter” script, and ATAC logo.

After a bit of research, I made the leap and ordered the Hunter through eBay. Shipping added \$150 to the bottom line. About a week after the order was placed, the SUP arrived in a semi-tractor trailer — a necessity due to its 14-foot-long box.

When I unwrapped it and finally laid eyes on it, I was impressed. From the hull to the deck pad, it looks like a high-quality piece. The leash and three fins installed with ease, and for my purposes, only the main fin needed to be affixed. If you’ve never installed one, it’s easy enough to YouTube your way through it.

The Hunter uses an EPS foam core and three-layer epoxy resin construction similar to other brands. Higher quality SUPs use denser EPS foam, sandwich construction and five to six layers of epoxy, which offers greater durability. However, [New Surf Project](#) (NSP) brand SUPs use the same basic construction as Surfcore, and SUP board rental operators routinely subject those to hard use.

That said, regular SUP use is almost sure to bring about dings. My previous board was about ten and a half feet long, and the difference in handling a 12-foot SUP, whether carrying it or navigating tight spaces near piers or pilings on the water, is noticeable. It’s easy to bump into something, and after a few weeks, I’ve already managed a couple of small chips. The Hunter weighs about 35 pounds, so carrying and manipulating it requires some muscle. If you’re of smaller stature than me (5 feet, 10 inches), a shorter board makes sense both in and out of the water.

- 8 Excellent, with room to kvetch
- 9 Nearly flawless; buy it now
- 10 Metaphysical product perfection



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Once you're up and paddling, though, the Hunter ATAC rides like a Cadillac. Its weight and length contribute to its stability, as does the displacement hull. In flat or choppy water, I easily outpaced my brother on his cruiser-shaped NSP. The difference is greater upwind into chop, but the Surfcore rides everything short of 3-foot waves quite nicely. I wouldn't surf with the Hunter, but then again, I wouldn't take any SUP out into the lineup.

The deck pad is comfortable for hours, and sitting or kneeling is easy, too. The Hunter would be a bit challenging for a beginner to maneuver, but anyone with reasonable fitness and a little bit of focus can get the hang of it quickly. Overall, as a value-priced paddleboard, Surfcore's Hunter ATAC is a good deal. Based on looks alone, folks will think you paid considerably more.

WIRED Priced for the practical SUP enthusiast, but built with a quality anyone can appreciate. Beautiful lines. Design works well in a variety of conditions.

TIRED Less durable construction than higher-priced SUPs. Weight and size make carrying and transporting it a chore.

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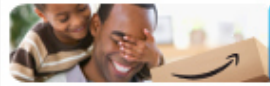


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Uplrons · 6 hours ago

I am looking at the Imagine Surf Speeder SUP "board". I was able to see one in person and test it out at all. Reviews online are hard to come by as well but I am with the author of you. I haven't heard of this company but appreciate the honest review.

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