
RECREATION



TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

ACA Instructor, Maurice Van de Maele shares his story of evolution & exploration in some of the world's most remote paddling destinations





Hello Fellow Paddlers!

My name is Maurice Van de Maele, I am a Chilean paddler from Puerto Williams, the southernmost town on this beautiful planet, located in the vicinity of the legendary Cape Horn, Chile. Given my location, I am likely the southernmost ACA Kayak Instructor you can find! I need to remark that I feel truly honored and humble to have the opportunity to share a little bit of my kayaking story, and how the ACA has played a role in my life's work.

Believe it or not, I started to lead nature tours at the tender age of 8 years old when a little cruise ship going to Cape Horn started to visit our town every two weeks. I had the idea that it would be nice for visitors to learn how to skip stones, chop wood & make a fire on rainy days, climb trees, find insects under the rocks, and other activities. I may not have been an expert on some of these scientific topics but at least the visitors were entertained and happy. They gave me one or two dollars as a tip that I used all to buy groceries in the local store. As I am writing right now, so many memories of my youth start to pop up in my head! But my point is that this early beginning as a local guide helped me to develop a kind of "customer service voice" inside my brain and to always aim for high quality and enjoyable nature experiences.

"I am so proud and happy to be the kayak instructor and activity guide on board the first and most modern hybrid battery powered expedition ship in the world; I lead kayak excursions in both the Arctic and the Antarctic"



It is quite challenging and hard work to be responsible for the safety of our paddling guests. Every little detail in these environments is very important. From delivering high quality mandatory safety kayak briefings, assessing the venue on the Bridge together with the Captain, Safety Officer and Expedition Leader before every kayak excursion, to checking that the waterproof zipper of our guests' dry suits are properly closed...fellow instructors and guides know how comprehensive these kinds of trips can become! I can tell you that after 25 years of pushing myself through life, I look back and I would never thought I would end up as an Expedition Activity Guide in the Polar regions (Arctic & Antarctica) and as a certified ACA Kayak Instructor paddling in these wonderful, extreme places. Even with the addition of these many adventures, I always reflect upon my youth and the paths that have led me here.

My mom still insists on giving me paddling advice even though she has never been in a kayak before! And I still spend my tips in the local store. My life truly has become a grand adventure, and I eagerly await more exploration! Have great paddling adventures mi amigos, and let's keep making the world a better place to paddle!

