

## This Rocket Roars: The Consortium Rides the Roarokit Pintail.

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Over the past year or more, Silverfish Longboarding members have read about and seen longboards built with Roarokit's "Thin Air Press" vacuum-bag lamination kits. The Roarokit longboard kits include virtually everything one needs to construct a 40", 7-ply maple pintail deck in your home, and several have reported how easy it's been to make their board using the system. Last Spring, we also read about "Longboard Building 101", a class offered to UCSD students that resulted in over a dozen of the Roarokit pintails hitting the streets. While stoked over the idea of building our own boards with Roarokit's system, The Longboard Consortium wanted to know, "How do these boards ride?" Well, it's time to find out! For our largest testing process to date, we've ridden a lot of miles, put the boards through everything from teaching a new rider to skate to commuting, cruising, high-speed carves and even sliding sessions.

**Defining the Roarokit Pintail.** Anyone can order the Roarokit longboard kit, so you can all build a deck exactly like the boards we rode for this review. The Roarokit kits use seven plies of Canadian hard rock maple, with a smooth pintail shape that's pre-cut into the veneer sheets. There's room for variation, of course, but it's safe to say the dimensions and specs we've provided in our chart for this review are generally applicable to all the Roarokit pintails.

Roarokit's website shows photos of their pintail, built out with RII-150's and Flashbacks. Most of the LB-101 boards were built this way, too, with a few variations such as Pink Powerballs wheels (and one skater built a drop-through with 180's and Grippins). This basic "build spec" with the 150mm hangers and 70-72mm wheels is perfect for the Roarokit, giving excellent track width and no wheel bite. This setup gave us a good platform for testing and review of the deck and several different wheels and bearings. ROAROKIT LONGBOARD: 40"; LB-101 PINTAIL

MSRP: \$89.95, "Master Longboard Kit w/graphic"; \$79.95 kit w/o graphic. As tested: \$200.00  
 Contact: roarokit.com

Length: 40"; Width at Widest Point: 9, 1/8"; at F. Axle: 5.75"; at R. Axle: 5.75";  
 Thickness: 7/16";  
 Concave: at Middle/Front: 0.400"; at R. Axle: flat  
 Wheelbase: 30"; Camber: .100";  
 Construction: 7-ply Hardrock Maple, laminated with TiteBond III  
 Static Flex: at 120lb: 3/8"; at 160lb: 1/2"; at 220lb: 5/8";  
 Wheel Wells: No Cutouts: No Wheel bite: No  
 Deck Height: 4.75"; (unloaded, at middle of concave)  
 Trucks: Randal RII 150, as tested with flat washers and red/yellow stock bushings, rear hanger flipped.  
 Wheels: tested with ABEC-11 Flashbacks 75a; Pink Powerballs 78a; 60mm NoSkoolz 98a, 78a; Pink Polkadots 96a, 78a  
 Bearings: Biltin 3,5,7's  
 Hardware: 1/4"; Khirio Shock Pads, stainless steel 10-32 hardware.  
 Grip: black, Jessup.

**Out of Many, One.** For this review, we consulted with students from the LB-101 class, some of whom were experienced riders but most of whom counted their LB-101 Pintail as their first skateboard. We wanted to know what they thought of their boards, either in comparison to others they'd ridden, or as a first-ever longboard. It turned out that several have been logging serious commuter-mileage on their new decks since May, a few spent their time pretty much "learning to ride", some had been carving and shredding and several gave us detailed input. But that's not all: we obtained one of the LB-101 boards and passed it around to experienced riders of several types and then gave it to San Diego's Ninja Bomb Squad for the acid-test: what would hardcore, performance skaters think of the deck and the setup? It turns out all the riders have consensus: we dig this board!

**In the Beginning.** New riders will find this deck to be predictable, dependable and with plenty of room and support to develop your skills on a longboard. It's a great board to learn to ride on. The wheelbase and truck setup make for an agile deck, very suitable for campus-cruising or commuting, yet the overall length, flex and wheel-sets ridden lend themselves well to both comfort and speed. At first exposure, several of our new riders were concerned by the concavity of the deck — it makes the board feel very turny and places a premium on proper foot placement. If you stand or shift off-center, this board responds quickly. After some riding, the new skaters began to praise the concave surface for the way it "teaches" one to push with proper foot alignment.

The camber and flex of the maple board generated positive responses from all our riders. Some of the newer skaters observed that the board feels "plush" or "smooth" (this is also those Khiro pads and soft wheels) without feeling "mushy". "I feel like it just glides forever," reported one new rider, "and cracks in the sidewalk are like nothing!" Our lighter riders got enough flex out of the board to pump and carve, while our heavier riders reported the board's flex is good for them, too. Look at our "static flex" measurements over the weight range and you can see the nearly linear progression of flex as our rider move from light to heavy.

Our casual and beginner riders intended their LB-101 pintails to be cruisers, and the high-traction, plush and predictable Flashbacks certainly fit that bill, in combination with the Randal 150's. The Pink Powerballs were popular with a few riders on their boards, and we found them to noticeably spike up the performance of the decks. Without wheel bite, even at extremes, the board can be turned hard, but can also be easily setup to maintain a stable feel. To "counter" the turny-sensation for the beginner riders, the LB-101 instructor "flipped" the rear hangers on the Randals to slow the rear steering a little and provide stability. This is a hot tip for this deck, and our performance skaters loved it, too. Several of the riders commented about how well this board corners and carves.

"This is a Powerful Pintail". Our more aggressive skaters were skeptical: would the Roarokit pintail turn out to be a novelty, appropriate for a "woodshop class" but lacking in performance or durability? Far from it, we found out. San Diego's Ninja Bomb Squad took this board out with instructions to "push it, find the weakness and tell us what you find". They gave it no mercy, carving, descending, shredding and sliding the deck for several group sessions. When it was all over, a decidedly "non-pintail" shredder known for grinding through bearings, boards and wheels in very short order, sat cradling the Roarokit in his arms, claiming "You can't ask for anything more in a deck", and adding, "this is a powerful pintail!" Others kept asking, "This board was made in a class?!"

With the setups we rode, the Roarokit pintail is a beast, lying in wait. It's a serious speed demon with a propensity to carve. The length and wheelbase provide stability at speed, with room for even larger riders to drop into a tuck, and the rounded pintail shape provides more foot-room than one might expect at first. "I am not usually a fan of the pin shape as I prefer a bit of wide symmetry for my foot base," one Ninja reported. "However, on the more serious hard toe-side carves, I found my self perched with my toe hardly resting on the rail with all my weight just leaning with the G's and feeling myself fly." Another rider, well-accustomed to pintail riding, raved about the cradling-effect of the concave main section on his feet and the subtle, yet stabilizing effect of the flipped rear hanger when shifting direction at speed. He wasn't alone in that: we nearly had to pry the board away from one Ninja after he spent time laying down fat slabs of carve all the way down Church Hill.

We found that the camber and concave combine well with the maple construction to provide a fluid, amplifying effect for pumps and carves. This is certainly a board you can crank on, and one of our pro-riders took particular delight in ripping through imaginary cones with it, pumping aggressively from a central stance on the deck. Several commented that the deck feels torsionally stable when changing directions at speed. On that note, the LB-101 students finished these boards with "square edges", and we found this feature combined with the concave to provide a clearly perceptible feel through our shoes for where that edge is underfoot. This is a good thing to know when carving hard or when whipping the board around with your back foot on the more slender sections of the deck.

By the time we were done ripping it up with the LB-101 board, we'd mildly coned some Flashbacks and a set of Pinks, chunked a Powerball on broken glass, scarred the edges of the board and thoroughly pushed it to the limits. It's a sleeper deck, no question. With a freshly-cleaned set of the Biltins, some minor refinishing with supplies from the LB-101 class and a new set of Powerballs on it, you'd never know we had it, and the deck's owner was happy to get her board back, alive!

Wrap It Up, Take it Home. Are you interested in a really nice deck that you can make yourself? If you've read other articles and the Board Building forum on the "fish", you know how amazing some of the Roarokit pintails can turn out looking "that part's up to you!" We're here to tell you that, whether you go with one of Roarokit's graphic plies, your own simple finish or a major work of art, the finished product will be a great-riding longboard. The Roarokit pintail is a deck that will always be there to help the rider move up; to evolve to the next step in their riding style. Whether you're a new skater or a die-hard, this deck will always shine when answering to the call for some solid soul carving, a cruise across campus or a session of downhill slashing. This rocket roars! Read and comment the Forum Topic