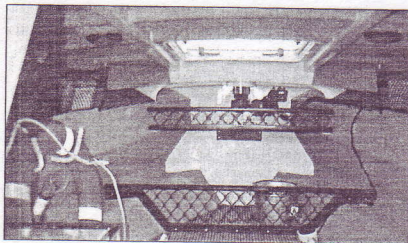
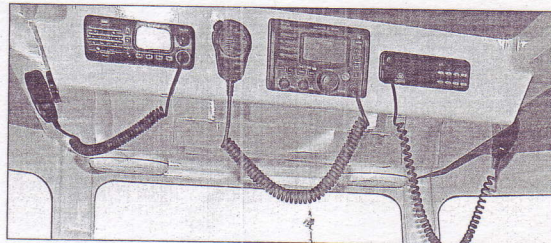


Propelled: A pair of 300 Verados provide ample power.



Stowage area: The fore cabin is set up for storage.



Logged on: The review boat allows Rottnest's rangers to keep in touch.

# Naiad justifies industry award



## BOATS

MIKE BROWN

The winner, by a clear margin, of the outright 2010 WA Boat of the Year award — as well as the Over 6m Aluminium category — was Kirby Marine's 10m Naiad RIB.

That boat was a mouth-wateringly desirable offshore leisure craft; the Naiad under review shares its hull but was finished as a work and patrol boat for the Rottnest Island Authority. But even this version could offer a lot to the private owner.

Naiad rigid inflatable boats (RIBs) are renowned for their rough-water capability but the Rottnest purchase was made at least as much for the softness of the inflatable tubes. The average value of boats on Rottnest moorings is still climbing and the sight of an all-aluminium patrol boat coming alongside them would make the owners tremble.

At heart the Naiad is an aluminium boat and would still perform with the tubes deflated.

The hull is special indeed. Built to far higher specifications than those required for commercial craft, it is almost unbreakable. Without the extra beam of the side tubes, and at speed these are almost entirely clear of the water, it is an efficient, narrow-beamed boat.

Two steps in the bottom make further reductions in drag as well as helping the Naiad hold ideal trim.

The 23deg. deadrise coupled with a deep and sharp forefoot gives a



Built for speed: Kirbys are special boats even at rest but once moving they shift into a class of their own. Pictures: Mike Brown

naturally soft ride and the tubes provide reserve buoyancy, shock absorption and reduce any pitching motion. Further pampering of the occupants comes from the KAB suspension seats for the skipper and navigator.

Anyone standing in the cockpit has the benefit of a fatigue membrane below the reeded deck covering — and this simple device really works.

If all this sounds extravagant for a boat operating in Rottnest bays consider that there are no short cuts, and the rangers may need to cover up to 10 miles in a hurry. The boat is available for fast rescue response and

is equipped with a tow post and fire pump. As well as attacking fires, the latter can operate as a salvage pump for a sinking boat.

The Naiad's fore cabin is long and, this being a day boat, is set up for storage. In a different mode it could be fitted out to sleep four and accommodate a toilet and even a galley. Its large clear fore hatch opens within pilot boat-style rails that provide safety for an emerging person.

The wheelhouse is purposeful looking with its forward-raked windscreen — a device that reduces glare and heat gain and increases air volume. It is a full wheelhouse with

double rear doors, though large areas of sliding side glass plus roof hatches thoroughly ventilate it.

It has two auxiliary seats as well as the KABs. The latter each face a Raymar screen, one being a remote of the other, which displays large amounts of information from the plotter, sounder, radar and computer that handles the Rottnest moorings.

A nice feature for divers or swimmers is the pair of ladders that are hinged on the wheelhouse sides. It always feels better coming aboard well clear of propellers, even with the engines switched off. A removable davit is fitted for handling moorings and this could be another

## LOWDOWN

### KIRBY 10m NAIAD

**Length:** 10m  
**Beam:** 3.2m  
**Fuel capacity:** 700 litres  
**Towing weight:** 5.1 tonnes  
**Motors fitted:** Twin 30hp Mercury Verados  
**Builder:** Kirby Marine, 24 Sparks Road, Henderson  
**Phone:** 9410 2270

diver's accessory. Theoretically, rigid inflatables cannot provide the storage space of conventional boats but the Kirby makes a pretty good fist of it. Apart from the space in the fore cabin, everywhere they could be fitted you find lockers and pockets, all lined with anti-rattle carpet.

Kirbys are special boats even at rest, including phenomenal stability, but once moving they shift into a class of their own. I drove this boat on two contrasting days — one was close to calm and the other was rough enough to make us the only boat in sight.

With a pair of 300 Verados at our disposal full throttle meant speeds closing on 50 knots. There was plenty of movement of course, and more than a few jolts, but nothing even close to pain.

There was not a groan, creak or rattle from the hull. This is the boat for the time-hungry — those who want to know they can get out on the water whenever the opportunity crops up.