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# ON THE WATER

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## Naiad tailored for tea breaks

Owner wanted comfort for trips between Geraldton and Abrolhos Islands through often rough waters



MIKE BROWN

**THE HULL** of the Kirby 13.5 Naiad rigid inflatable is about as special as they come: this is the one used for the chase boat of the successful defender of the last America's Cup. To chase 50 knot yachts you need to be good. The buyer of this one, though, had a different need in mind — his wife required access to tea wherever she went.

As the owner of a rock lobster boat with a Zone-C licence, he is entitled to have a shack at the Abrolhos. The main reason for owning a Naiad is to provide a comfortable trip there from Geraldton through frequently nasty waters. In the five years he had owned a previous 11.3m Naiad this sea-sickness prone man had never succumbed, and nor had any of his passengers. Clearly his new boat had to be a Naiad, but with more space to provide tea-making facilities.

The earlier boat was powered by twin outboards, and fuel consumption was a major drawback. This one has twin diesels, and the exceptional fuel capacity of 1600 litres to feed them. Weight could have been a handicap but the motors are Yanmar 8LVs, the latest common rail motors of exceptional lightness putting out 370hp each. They are teamed with Yanmar's own stern-drive units: equipped with separate water cooling, they are also the first examples in Australia to be given joystick docking controls.

To compensate for the deck area lost to the engine box, Kirby used D-section buoyant tubes rather than circular. These increase the internal beam, allowing walking space to the transom either side of the box. The absence of outboards frees up a lot of space consumed by their need to tilt, and permits a large swim platform.

The finish is immaculate

A mini-dinette is opposite a basic galley.

Kirby Naiad has D-section buoyant tubes rather than circular to increase the internal beam.



without luxury. In the accommodation bulkheads are painted rather than lined; all the surfaces are easy-clean. The owner wanted a workboat more than a yacht. He specified, though, a pair of top-line Ullman suspension seats, acknowledged as the world's best. These face a forward raked windscreen that reduces glare, heat build-up and refraction. The side glass opens for ventilation but a household air-conditioning unit is also installed: the Abrolhos gets very hot. The standalone unit was chosen above anything ducted for easy maintenance — if it breaks down it can be easily replaced.

The fit-out is simple. A mini-dinette is opposite a basic galley: a sink, drawers, two small fridges and a microwave. There is a TV, but no tricky electrically disappearing arrangement: the modest-sized flat screen is housed against the deckhead and lowered into viewing position by loosening a couple of thumb screws. Forward, a pair of V-berths give overnight accommodation when visiting friends at other islands. Between that compartment and the saloon, side racks have been built in for transporting stores and equipment. Also here is a king-size Engel doing the job of ship's freezer.

There is enough electrical demand to justify a genset but Kirby fitted a powerful inverter as well. The whole AC installation has the most foolproof controls I have seen: a single switch for off, shore power, ship's power and inverter.



The finish is immaculate without luxury.



### LOWDOWN

**KIRBY 13.5 NAIAD**  
**Price** From \$550,000  
**Length** 13.5m  
**Beam** 4.2m  
**Fuel capacity** 1600L  
**Fresh water** 300L  
**Motors** 2xYanmar 8LV @ 370hp each  
**Builder** Kirby Marine, 24 Sparks Road, Henderson  
**Phone** 9410 2270

The toilet and shower compartment is reached from the after deck, fishing-boat style. A clever touch here was to give the shower head an extra long flexible pipe so it can be used on the open

deck for after-swim showers. Swimmers have the choice of boarding via the swim platform or a side ladder that folds neatly up to the superstructure's side. The cork-sheathed after deck is where most activities take place and where passengers sit in great comfort under the shade of a hardtop.



Some deck area is lost to the engine box.

A settee stretches across the front of the engine box for them, and the upholstered box top is available as extra seating. It is also the natural perching spot when fishing.

Speed was a secondary consideration of the owner's, but the Naiad has plenty of it: 47knots at a rarely used full throttle. Cruising speed is typically 28-30 knots at which the two shallow steps in the bottom are adding their efficiencies. Fuel consumption is 80-100 litres per hour for a range of comfortably over 500 miles (800km).

All Kirby Naiads are built to order but this 13.5 perhaps more exactly fits its owner's needs than any other.