

ARAFURA

By MIKE BROWN



KIRBY/NAIAD TOUR VESSEL FOR THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Access to Seven Spirit Bay Wilderness Lodge in the Northern Territory is extremely difficult overland. It is far easier by aircraft and by boat, emphasising the remoteness that guests are about to experience.

And there is much to see along the way. Once arrived, more boat work is ahead in exploring the waters of the Gurig National Park in the Cobourg Peninsula.

Built by Kirby Marine, the 11.3-metre Naiad Arafura has joined the lodge's fleet of expedition boats, and is set up both for delivery of guests and expedition work.

There are seats for 25 passengers, which leaves considerable deck area, especially at the rails, for them to move around. There is also space for three cubic metres of luggage and provisions in a storage area aft.

The vessel uses a D-section collar, allowing the internal beam a greater share of the overall four-metre beam. Survey is NSCV 1C to 30 nautical miles, permissible with satphone communications.

The seats are Beurteaux contoured exterior models, set at a pitch to draw envy from steerage class aircraft passengers. They are shaded thoroughly and elegantly by an awning that is almost completely

cantilevered to give unimpeded vision – only a pair of slender supporting tubes intrude.

There is no on-board catering, but civilised facilities include a toilet and vanity within the structure of the driving console. The console, on a raised deck aft, has the area to locate displays and switchgear logically and possesses a near 360-degree view.

A trio of Yamaha 250hp (186kW) outboards power Arafura, giving an effortless 25-knot cruising speed. They are ideal propulsion for a remote area. They offer immediate redundancy if one motor dies, with the remaining pair easily able to maintain speed.

If repairs are needed, just a couple of hours work will replace the defective motor with the spare which can then be dispatched to Darwin. Range from the 1,000-litre tank is around 200 nautical miles.

The three life rafts are stowed above the motors on a rack that also gives the motors the equivalent of crash frame protection.

Boarding alongside is through midship doors port and starboard. Between first boarding and finally disembarking most transits will be through a bow door onto the beach. This door hinges forward and

has built-in steps, leading to a variety of wilderness experiences.

These include a visit to the ruins of the Victoria Settlement. The settlement predates Darwin and is typical of early northern Australian attempts at transplanting civilisation: 60 people died before the attempt was abandoned.

Arafura

SPECIFICATIONS

Type of vessel:	Tourist boat
In survey to:	1C NSCV
Home port:	Darwin, Northern Territory
Owner:	Outback Spirit, Northern Territory
Operator:	Seven Spirit Bay, Northern Territory
Designer:	Naiad Design, New Zealand
CAD software:	Maxsurf
Builder:	Kirby Marine, Western Australia
Construction material:	Aluminium
Length overall:	11.3 metres
Length waterline:	9.2 metres
Length:	10.8 metres measured
Beam:	4.0 metres
Draught:	800mm
Displacement:	8 tonnes (full load)
Main engines:	3 Yamaha outboards, each 186kW
Steering:	Ultraflex
Maximum speed:	38 knots
Cruising speed:	25 knots
Range:	200nm
Electronics supplied by:	Lowrance
Depth sounder:	Lowrance
Radio:	Icom
Compass:	Plastimo
GPS:	Lowrance
Winches:	Lewmar
Anchor:	Ultra
Paints/coatings:	Jotun
Seating:	Berteaux
Lighting:	Hella
Safety flooring:	Seadek
Safety equipment:	JN Taylor
Liferaft:	RFD
Fuel capacity:	1,000L
Fuel consumption:	120L/hr
Crew:	2

