

# 'Southern Cross'

Kirby Marine-built, Naiad-designed  
Abrolhos supply vessel



Access to the Abrolhos Islands, 60 kilometres off Western Australia's Mid West Port of Geraldton, has always been a challenge for any vessel undertaking the Geelvink Channel crossing.

The weather gods have made sure Midwest Western Australia receives more than its fair share of consistently strong winds and rough water to test the mettle of seafarers undertaking the journey to the Houtman-Abrolhos Group.

The vessel chosen for the task was the 11.3-metre Naiad hardtop, being light, fast and having a proven pedigree of rough water performance in difficult seaways in the southern hemisphere.

Naiad Design and Kirby Marine reconfigured the vessel to cross the 40 kilometres of open sea to the islands and lagoons of this unique archipelago in comfort. The configuration features a forward well deck, forward raked hardtop cabin, work area, accommodation, and helm and navigator position and includes a dinette with workbench and a full size shower/toilet accessed from the back deck. In summer the area is hot and windy so the vessel needed to be opened up for good natural ventilation yet be watertight for the open water crossing to and from the mainland.

The cabin windows are raked forward to minimise radiated heat and internal reflective glare. Good vision is essential for dodging the many hundreds of lobster pot lines in the area and for threading a way into the many lagoons where fishing settlements are located.

Propulsion is via twin F350 Yamaha V8 four-stroke outboards, which have proven to be the perfect choice for the big Naiad. Top speed is 45 knots with a cruising speed of an easy 30 knots. The 1,100-litre fuel tank gives the vessel an excellent range.

'Southern Cross' is equipped with the latest Raymarine electronics package, featuring the "E" series 120 multifunction monitors (of which there are two), high definition radar, autopilot and infrared security camera.

The helm and navigator positions feature seating by the world famous Swedish Company Ullman Dynamics, who are the leaders in shock mitigation seating for boats. The seats have been designed by Dr Johan



Ullman who has dedicated the best part of his life to researching methods to reduce impact loads on the human body.

Lighting throughout is the latest LED technology by Hella Marine. All navigation, external and internal lights are multi-voltage ultra low amperage, ensuring peace of mind without having to worry about battery status. The only lights on the vessel that are not LED technology are the remote spotlight and the Hella high density discharge docking lights which are used to spot the many floating cray pot lines for night crossing.

The return trip from the islands in ordinary weather used to be met with a certain amount of trepidation, a sleepless night before and anything up to a punishing three-hour trip the whole way back.

It was hoped that the new Naiad would improve the crossing time and reduce anxiety levels. According to Kirby Marine, she achieved that with ease, halving the time and with the additional bonus of being far more comfortable than any previous vessel.

A quote from the skipper gives the picture: "Being able to sit and relax for the whole journey is a new and unique experience for us."

A more amusing comment about the dinette seating is that it's "far too comfortable, passengers may fall asleep and miss some of the highlights of the trip."

The team at Kirby Marine is extremely grateful to Bernard Brown to have been given the opportunity to show what they can create when a client allows the team the freedom to influence the final outcome.

Kirby Marine principal Rob Kirby says, "Southern Cross has exceeded expectations in all areas, the project has been a pleasure to be involved with from start to finish."



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## 'Southern Cross' SPECIFICATIONS

Type of vessel:	Supply boat
Home port:	Geraldton, Western Australia
Designer:	Naiad Design, New Zealand
Builder:	Kirby Marine Fabrication, Western Australia
Construction material:	Aluminium
Length overall:	11.3 metres
Length waterline:	10.2 metres
Beam:	4 metres
Draught:	0.75 metres
Displacement:	6.5 tonnes
Propulsion:	2 x Yamaha F350 V8 4-stroke outboards
Side thruster:	Box thruster
Steering:	Seastar power assist
Maximum speed:	45 knots
Cruising speed:	30 knots
Range:	350 nautical miles
Electronics supplied by:	Maritime Electronics
Radar:	Raymarine
Depth sounder:	Raymarine
Net sounders:	Raymarine
Radio:	ICOM
Autopilot:	Raymarine
Paints/coatings:	International Paints
Windows:	Beta Marine Windows
Fuel capacity:	1,100 litres
Freshwater capacity:	100 litres