

# Only boat he'll want

This custom-built Kirby Naiad RIB was made to fit a tall order

■ Mike Brown

All Kirby Naiad RIBs are custom built to some extent; this 8.5m centre console had possibly more thought per metre than any of its predecessors, with its bimini consuming a near unbelievable amount of design and modelling time.

It had to fit the height of an exceptionally tall owner, yet at the same time look in proportion with the rest of the boat. Bimini, windscreen and console were subject to considerable fine-tuning. And, in contrast to the usually red colour scheme, the hull is black and the upper works blue.

One of the tricks to disguise the height of the bimini was increasing its fore and aft length. As well as the aesthetic effect this had the benefit of increasing the shaded area: a total of 2.5m x 1.9m.

The boat is destined for a busy life. Much of the time will be spent on the south coast, but the plan is to trail it wherever the family wishes — which will certainly include the Abrolhos. One of the annual rites will be escorting the Rottneest swim — a task tailor-made for an RIB.

Some of the south-coast launch sites are very hairy; part of the detailed design brief was to ensure the boat — and owners — could cope with them. The specially designed trailer is particularly low slung, carrying the boat on skids rather than rollers. Coupled with auto catch-and-release at the bow the set-up made launch and retrieve the fast operations they needed to be. In places, the trialled launch sites were simply natural rock platforms that needed the surge of the swell to give the needed depth; hairy indeed.

To help the hull cope with vigorous use such as this, Kirby grafted on to the keel a sacrificial doubling plate.

The 8.5m is Naiad's most built model and all previous examples have been powered by twin motors; this has a single,



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although it is the biggest motor Yamaha makes: the 350hp V8.

Accepted wisdom says that a single produces noticeably more go than a pair of motors of the same total horsepower. It certainly looks true here: top speed is 47 knots. Normal cruising would be a modest fraction of that — usually between 25 and 30 knots, depending on sea state — but still significantly faster than a conventional hull of similar size.

This sort of speed calls for something special in seating and, like almost all Kirby Naiads, this one has Ullman suspension seats at the console. Differences here are adjustable dampers for varying body weights and fold-out foot pegs for occupants shorter than the owner.

This is a family boat, but it's also a boat for a keen fisherman and his mates; sounder and plotter need to be on duty at the same time. Accompanying the screens is an immaculately laid out arrangement of communication and entertainment electronics, switches and controls.

Keeping the console in scale with the windscreen made it unusually tall and thus with an exceptional volume. A

## LOWDOWN

### KIRBY CUSTOM 8.5 NAIAD

Price from \$200,000

Length overall 8.5m

Beam 3.0m

Fuel capacity 600 litres

Motor fitted 350hp Yamaha four-stroke

Builder Kirby Marine, 24 Sparks Road, Henderson

Phone 9410 2270

proportionately big gas-lift door gives access to a compartment big enough for a tall person's toilet, a portable fridge and other bulky items.

Possibly unique for a craft this size is a dual anchoring system. The Naiad will be operating offshore and in shallows, and the owner specified anchors appropriate for both locations.

Kirby was an early adopter of pot winches and hauling arms, certainly with RIBs. This 8.5m is equipped with pot-pulling gear designed by Kirby for the Naiad, including tailored stowage for the arm when out of use. When in use the rear lounge folds to give clear access to the winch.

Having a custom boat built from scratch isn't cheap. But this owner now has the only boat he'll ever want.