



Millennium 760

By Mike Brown

This Millennium Fabrications' 7.6m plate sports cruiser is an 'air rider' by name and nature. Designed by WA's Gavin Mair, it once again raises the holy grail of the industry; combining the best elements of a cat's ride and handling, with the economy and efficiency of a mono.

Millennium Fabrication is about as far from mass production as Austal Ships is - and they build very few more vessels - but although every boat is built to order every one so far has been a trailer boat, though admittedly some have needed one hell of a trailer and tow vehicle.

Millennium, almost inevitably being Western Australian, builds in plate aluminium and further specialises by building only Air Rider hulls from the board of WA naval architect Gavin Mair. Air Riders are a modern take on the cathedral or tri-hulls that had

their heyday 20-odd years ago. Those earlier models mainly did not live up to their promise of offshore superiority, with high drag and odd handling as common extra problems.

The Air Riders had a long evolution and have ended up as firm favourites with off-the-beach abalone divers in South Australia, and sea rescue groups in places with terrible weather. As well as a rough water reputation they have also gained Brownie points for their frugal use of power and fuel. They are far from frugal in construction hours and welding wire. Look at an Air Rider before it gets its skin over the

framework, and you would swear that if you poured a bucket of water over it minutes would pass before it all made it through to the floor.

Which of course means this must be one tough boat. Those innumerable stringers are stitch welded but everything else gets a continuous weld, and the large number of surfaces to the shell plating adds a lot of stiffness too. The weather nature laid on for the day gave the review boat every opportunity to show me how good it was.

The buyer of the reviewed Millennium 760, a fanatically keen