



Rod holders turn this kayak into a capable fishing vessel.



The comfortable seat is removable for cleaning.



The keel allows for balanced handling.



Fishing from this kayak was a breeze.



With plenty of storage space you can go from using it as exercise equipment to a fishing kayak very easily.



The centre of gravity allows for a comfortable ride for even the tallest kayaker.

Versatile FeelFree Nomad kayak

WITH the combination of technological and design advances, the days of the one dimensional kayak are well and truly gone.

Often seen exclusively as a recreational vehicle, the modern kayak has undergone a transformation from a single use tool into a multi-purpose, highly versatile and user-friendly piece of boating equipment, with capabilities well beyond the commonly perceived uses of the craft.

One kayak at the forefront of both design and affordability is the FeelFree Nomad.

This super light, highly manoeuvrable kayak incorporates design elements so subtle you may not even be aware of them when you first use it, but these will come to the fore in a functional sense as you realise exactly how user-friendly it is.

Unlike many kayaks on the market, the Nomad has a well-designed hull shape that provides a balanced mix of rocker and keel which contributes to commendable handling, turning and tracking abilities.

Having tested this particular kayak in extremely heavy wind and choppy open ocean, I can say firsthand that the design elements incorporated into this beast take a lot of the thought out of navigating in less than ideal weather.

And by remaining true in



Kayak Review
by STEVE CALLANAN

the water you lose far less energy correcting your direction, allowing you to move forward far more efficiently.

Weighing in at only 20kg (excellent weight distribution for a 3m vehicle) it provides minimised drag and resistance.

The conveniently placed drainage holes also allow any water you take on while paddling to run straight out the bottom of the kayak, eliminating any increase of mass, which any kayaker will know makes paddling all the harder.

Other noteworthy design features include the moulded and really quite comfortable seat, which is locked into place by a strap system, allowing you to remove and clean the seat after use.

The gear pocket on the back of the seat gives ample room for storage of items you need readily accessible, and combined with the self-draining system and comfort of the seat, it creates a first-class cockpit area.

The storage space doesn't stop there either.

You will find a brilliant, waterproof, well sized and centrally located hatch, which allows you to store whatever items you need kept dry, yet remaining

easily accessible from the seated position.

The drink bottle holder that sits on the floor between your legs was also a nice touch. There is a multi-purpose storage space directly behind the seat, with two 1.5 inch buckle straps that hold your gear in place.

Conveniently, this space is filled almost perfectly by a milk crate, which is also easily strapped in.

The back half of the Nomad is a well-designed space with comfortable seating, great storage capacity within arm's reach, and two sunken rod holders with lanyard attachments which safely hold your rod in place, even if you get that lucky strike while you are occupied elsewhere.

The kayak comes equipped with two robust handles built in to either side, as well as the paddle rack, a small lip that holds your paddle when not in use, and secures it with elastic rope.

There is a handle on the nose of the kayak, but unfortunately not one on the back, which can make life a little difficult when turning the kayak over while carrying it with two people.

The lightweight and quite sturdy paddle has a

clip lock system allowing you to break it down into two pieces to make storage all the more convenient.

This fits in seamlessly with perhaps my favourite piece of design, the edges of the hull.

This unique and quite innovative design ensures you don't cop any spray, by directing the water straight back down as it splashes against the edge.

It is surprising such an integral and convenient element of boat design took this long to permeate into the realm of kayaking, but not to worry, it's finally here!

Another optional feature is the removable skeg, which gives you the discretion to alter the abilities of the boat to suit your purposes.

In the rough conditions in which this kayak was tested, it proved to be an invaluable feature, but the option to remove it can lend itself quite strongly to freshwater and estuarine fishing where the skeg isn't always necessary to maintain direction.

I found the fact that it's optional adds yet another entry to a long list of strengths.

Perhaps what won me over with this kayak was its ability to compensate for unusual centres of gravity.

I am about 208cm tall, and my legs, added end to end reach to the moon, so smaller craft generally pose a balance issue, be-

cause as any tall person will tell you, the more you crouch in, the higher your centred weight becomes.

This kayak was unphased by this, and stayed true in the water, even if I was leaning into a turn, and had ample space for even the longest of legs.

It's also suitable for the bigger folks among us with a weight capacity of 150kg.

It's is easy to transport as well, with its weight of 20kg and a width of 78cm, it was quite easy to move on and off roof racks, and is transportable by a single person.

The conveniently placed handles on either side also make it a breeze if it's a two person job.

While it is not a purpose-built fishing kayak, the rod holders and ample storage space make it almost as good as one for the casual or social angler looking for a workable middle ground between a purpose-built piece of fishing equipment and a general purpose water toy or exercise tool.

All said and done, the Nomad is a functional, visually pleasing and user-friendly kayak that would be just as at home fishing on the open water, as it would be hauling up the Brisbane River for an early morning workout.

A truly versatile and commendable effort from FeelFree Kayaks. 🐟