

Nimbus 305 Coupé

Photography: © Lester McCarthy

You could be forgiven for thinking that Nimbus have reinvented the wheel with their 305 Coupé. After all, they have been building all-weather coupés for some time. So what makes this boat different? Greg Copp has the answer ...



THE NEW NIMBUS 305 Coupé is based on their 335 and 365 Coupés launched back in 2009 and uses the same seamless displacement-to-planing-hull design, which is claimed to have no planing threshold. The concept is nothing new. Think Azimut Magellano 43 with its D2P displacement-to-planing-hull, which offered a faster-than-normal displacement speed – and little hump. Though the Nimbus has very different underwater lines to the Azimut, the 305 claims to have much the same effect. It would be untrue to say that its transition to planing speed is totally seamless, but the hump is pretty much non-existent

unless you focus carefully on the bow in relation to the horizon. What is impressive is that at 8 knots, the 305 Coupé is still running at displacement speed with negligible bow-up trim. This is some 2 knots above what would be considered normal displacement speed for this size of craft. This is even more impressive when you consider that the 305 has a waterline-to-beam ratio of 2.5 to 1.

Once you push past 10 knots, the boat runs with a healthy bow-up trim of between 4 and 4.5 degrees. All the way up to her top speed of 22.5 knots, there is virtually no discernible change in attitude from the boat. For a single-engine shaft-driven boat she turns responsively, albeit not with the haste

of a stern-driven sports cruiser – but she is far from lethargic. Once you hit 18 knots, the hull really starts to perform as she lifts her stern slightly and drops the bow a touch. Though our trim readings only showed an improvement from 4.5 to 4 degrees above 18 knots, you certainly notice it. The boat steers a lot more quickly and in the turns she loses that tendency to drag her bottom. Consequently you tend to feel the need to drive the boat at 20 knots or more, as the ride is more dynamic.

Not surprisingly, above 20 knots the Nimbus provides a softer ride as the hull forefoot comes into play. Nimbus have always built their boats with a sharp entry, and the 305 is

i ONBOARD THE NIMBUS 305 COUPÉ



Basic but with great ergonomics, the helm has the benefit of immediate access onto the side deck.



The wheelhouse dinette will easily seat four and converts to a comfortable double berth.

The galley is initially deceptive in what it actually has to offer – it is also superbly finished.



Natural light and space is the order of the day in the wheelhouse.



There is no shortage of storage here, refined Galley with everything you need.

no exception. Banked hard over, hitting our own wave with the forward section of the chine, I half-expected some complaint in the form of the odd creak or bang – but there was nothing. It struck me that this boat could certainly handle some more power in the form of a 260hp Volvo D4.

Though it is not a sports boat in any sense, it certainly has the credentials to crack on at a quicker pace. However, having said that, achieving an easy 22.5 knots from a 220hp engine driving through a shaft on a boat displacing 4.3 tonnes with 100% fuel

The 305 Coupé is an impressive boat given that it performs with one relatively modest engine.

and water is good going, and testament to the efficiency of its hull.

Unfortunately we had a relatively calm day, so running through the wake of other boats was the toughest test we could come up with. This certainly posed no problems, and knowing how well other boats from this yard have performed in the rough, I have no reason to doubt that the 305 is any less capable.

The helm position is basic but well thought out. The 9in chartplotter is under your line of sight over the bow (plenty of room for an optional 12in plotter), the throttles fall to hand well and the radio mic sits on the port side of the wheel. As with all the Coupé range, the 305 has a functional, non-reflective, anti-glare matt-grey finish to the dash, which suits the practical character of the boat. All-round visibility is nothing short of excellent – no blind spots over the quarters, and when seated you can see well over the bow, which is made all the easier by the lack of bow-up attitude.

A distinct feature of the Coupé range



is the asymmetrical wheelhouse design pushing the wheelhouse over to port, which subsequently expands the starboard side deck to 12 inches. These are enclosed by tall little-ship bulwarks and even taller guard rails. Couple this to a wheelhouse door next to the helm and this boat is tailor-made for single-handed cruising, not to mention the safety it affords those on fender duties. If you need to move down the slimmer 6in port-side decks you have a selection of roof handles to keep you on board. The foredeck is no less practical – enclosed by tall guard rails and a pulpit gate over the bow. The windlass is neatly enclosed within the teak-capped anchor locker – a simple but practical touch that makes using the pulpit gate safer.

The overhung cockpit works well as an extension to the wheelhouse



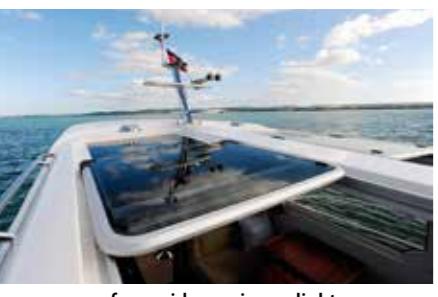
with its covers fitted, which, with the wide patio-style doors opened, gives you a large living area for a 30-footer. The L-shaped seating set-up in the cockpit is located on the port side to enable easy access to the starboard side deck. A hefty transom gate opens

to a deep full-beam bathing platform that enables easy pontoon access. Quadruple fender cages save you the joy of rummaging through the cockpit under-seat cockpit lockers when coming into port. Engine access is a fast affair courtesy of a hydraulic

i STAND OUT FEATURES...



THE CHART TABLE: No seagoing boat should be without a chart table. **BOW:** Neat and practical – with the windlass inside the anchor locker there is no chance of tripping over it when using the pulpit gate. **ANCHOR LOCKER:** Nicely finished inside; the anchor locker also houses the windlass. **ENGINE:** Engine access is quick and easy, though a bit more space would help.



Large sunroofs provide maximum light.



SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 8.95m
Beam: 3.25m
Displacement: 4.0 tonnes (light)
Fuel capacity: 250 litres
Water capacity: 160 litres
RCD category: B for 8
Engine options: Single diesel 110hp, 150hp or 220hp Volvo D3s on V drive (shaft)

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cockpit hatch, with good access for all service items. The lazarette located behind the engine bay is separated by a removable bulkhead, should you need more space when doing your pre-passage checks.

The focal point for any good coupé is the saloon wheelhouse area, and here this boat certainly does not disappoint. The abundance of light afforded from two long sliding glass sunroofs and the acres of window space really opens up this area. A rotating bench seat quickly turns the forward dinette seat into a double navigator's seat, with a full-size chart table to match. The dinette either provides comfy seating for four or, if need be, can convert to a double bed by dropping the table. A substantial Corian galley worktop houses a double ceramic gas hob and a sink, and a 65-litre refrigerator is located below. There is the option of a second, smaller fridge under the dinette seating if you need it. All things considered, the galley storage is good, the joinery, true to Scandinavian form, is excellent and the floor, sensibly, is teak – so no concerns about wet feet in the wheelhouse.

The mid cabin is a typical under-sole affair with a 6ft 6in by 5ft double berth fitted with overhead reading

OPTIONS AND UPGRADES

This boat had the biggest engine option of a 220hp Volvo D3 on a V drive shaft set-up. There is the option of either 110hp or 150hp Volvo D3s, but unless you specifically intend to cruise at displacement speed, these engines will not really do the boat justice. To Nimbus's credit, the options list is relatively short. This does not mean this boat is under-equipped as the standard features list is extensive. Nimbus have had the good sense to fit this single-shaft-driven boat with both bow and stern thrusters, teak decking, diesel heating, a holding tank and a decent set of electronics as standard. There are many other trimmings supplied in the basic package, which, like bow/stern thrusters and electronics, are often supplied as extras by many yards.

lights. There is no standing headroom in the mid cabin, and storage does not exist. Fitted with a Corian-topped vanity unit with sink, toilet and a separate shower with over 6ft of headroom, the heads compartment is quite generous. What it could do with is a magnetic catch to hold the door open when underway. Not surprisingly,

the below-decks design is focused on the forward master cabin. This area enjoys well over 6ft of headroom, lots of under-berth storage and a hanging locker complete with shoe locker. This relatively spacious cabin feels all the bigger thanks to the natural light from two long portholes and a deck hatch, as well as the light interior upholstery.

Verdict

The 305 Coupé is an impressive boat given that it performs with one relatively modest engine. The hull design is clearly efficient, as this boat seems equally happy at 8 knots as it is at 20 knots. Nimbus rightly claim there is virtually no transition from displacement to planing. It can be many things to many people without compromise, while offering a solid level of build to match its sea credentials. Nimbus craft have traditionally appealed to serious seamen, which explains why 70% of them are bought by ex-sailors – as reflected in the boat's practical design and attention to detail. **PBR**

SPEED NOISE AND TRIM

RPM	Speed (knots)	Trim (degrees)	Sound level* (decibels)
2000	8	1.2	72
2500	10	4.0	75
2800	12	4.5	80
3140	14	4.5	83
3330	16	4.5	82
3550	18	4.0	83
3900	20	4.0	84
4000	22.5	4.0	84

Maximum top speed: 22.5 knots (2-way average with 2 crew, 50% fuel and 100% water) with F2/3 wind conditions

* Recorded in the cockpit with sunroofs shut.

FOR

- ✓ Genuine 22-knot performance from a 4-tonne boat powered by a single 220hp Volvo D3 on a V drive
- ✓ Good acceleration up to its top speed
- ✓ Responsive handling for a shaft-driven boat
- ✓ Soft ride
- ✓ Solid build
- ✓ Very good helm ergonomics
- ✓ Spacious accommodation for size of boat
- ✓ Very safe deck access
- ✓ Plenty of space around engines with service items easily accessed

AGAINST

- ✗ No hold-open catch on door for heads
- ✗ No bigger D4 engine option yet

i ONBOARD: THE ACCOMMODATION



Mid cabin has a big double berth, well lit by a long starboard-side porthole, but no standing headroom.



A bright forward cabin makes a large double V berth. Storage is under berth and a hanging locker.



Cockpit covers fitted, this generous area makes a great extension to the saloon. Note handy Cup holders.



The heads is nicely finished and very generous for this size of boat.