

Nimbus 365

Greg Copp reports on a typically Scandinavian craft that combines a high degree of practicality with a focus on safety and close attention to detail in its finish ...

Photo credits: Graeme Main

Described by its designer as a product of 'functional design', the Nimbus 365 Coupé is typical of this Swedish yard. If you have ever stepped aboard a Nimbus, you will be in little doubt that function takes precedence over form. It is a Scandinavian thing – building a boat that you would be happy to take your family out to sea in, in 'almost' all weathers. This may be a purist approach to boatbuilding, but whether or not we really need it, we all want the most capable seagoing boat that our budget allows.

Nimbus build a range of boats for different budgets, and they all have an underlying theme of being tough, practical, well-finished seagoing boats. The 365 Coupé is all of this, while offering comfort and a degree of sublime Swedish style. It is a semi-displacement boat, albeit one with chines and a small keel that can be mistaken



POWER

The single 435hp Volvo D6 works well in the 6.4-tonne Nimbus, which, combined with a twin rudder set-up, gives the boat a good degree of response when you need it.



1. Scandinavians like big bathing platforms and fender storage. 2. A TV sits inside the chart table. 3. The joinery throughout this craft is superb.

for a planing boat, not just because of its appearance, but also its performance.

It is fast – not staggeringly so, but fast enough to have no problems reaching 28 knots, while being able to comfortably settle into a swift 23-knot cruising speed. It can also ply its way through the waves at a more sedate 17 knots, which feels and sounds like this boat's sweet spot, something that is supported by the fuel flow meter.

Heading out towards the Needles channel past the Hurst narrows, 20 knots was an easy pace for the increasing sea state. The 365 has a fairly sharp hull entry in her lower sections, which, combined with two spray rails and reasonably wide chines, does a good job of keeping the sea below the deck line, most of the time.

However, once we were past the Needles lighthouse, things would change. Three days

of very strong south-westerly winds had left a strong residual swell outside the Solent. With the tide having recently turned, this started to heap the sea up into an ever-changing mess, and in a matter of moments we were climbing a series of tall, steep waves, bow on.

The single 435hp Volvo D6 works well in the 6.4-tonne Nimbus, which, combined with a twin rudder set-up, gives the boat a good degree of response when you need it. The boat easily powers up the waves rather than having to gain speed in advance and then lose it as you run over the crest – as would be the case with a smaller engine.

Consequently you always have something in reserve after you have backed off and are running down the wave preparing to ride the next one. You get the distinct feeling that you are able to dictate terms to the sea, rather than the other way round.

In these conditions I was managing to maintain over 20 knots most of the time, without any real complaint from the boat. There is a distinct lack of impression of speed – not just because of the effective soundproofing but also because of the boat's planted feeling in the water, no matter what point of sailing you take.

Running with the weather, she proved just as easy to drive, as the 365 has a good degree of forward buoyancy. There were a few occasions when we came down off the back of a particularly steep wave and drove the bow in deeper than anticipated, but she shook it off quickly and got back into her stride. With the sea on the stern, we were running quicker and in many cases we were nigh on flat out, but with such confused conditions you had to keep focused, as the wave pattern was unpredictable. As a result, I left the trim tabs tucking the bow down



1. The huge sunroof provides the saloon/wheelhouse with loads of light. 2. The master cabin boasts plenty of storage. 3. The heads compartment has a large separate shower section and electric toilet.

slightly, as it seemed more often than not that we were turning into the front of another wave – and to be fair, this ad hoc setting works well.

Driving in these conditions is helped by the helm arrangement – notably a seat I was actually keen to sit in, rather than leaning against a flip-up bolster. The line of sight over the bow when seated is perfect. The seat, other than being very comfortable, gets a grip, so there is absolutely no sliding about. The ergonomics are spot on, with the wheel

and throttles comfortably to hand, and a 12" touch screen Simrad plotter under your direct line of sight to the bow. Even the VHF can be used with an easy stretch of the left hand. Trim tabs sit under the throttle and the windscreen wipers are located by the wheel. On this note, I will say that the large three-speed wipers were by and large capable of dealing with what got thrown at them. However, as the weather worsened, there were a few occasions when a fourth speed could have helped. Visibility is good forward and

... THE 365 DRIVES VERY WELL, ESPECIALLY IN THE ROUGH, IS VERY WELL BUILT AND FEELS EXCEEDINGLY SAFE.

Fuel figures

Single 435hp Volvo D6 – shaftdriven V drive
(Volvo flow meter)

RPM	Speed (knots)	NMPG	Sound (dB)
1000	5.7	8.6	68
1250	6.8	4.8	69
1500	7.8	2.3	70
1750	8.6	2.3	71
2000	10.6	1.8	71
2250	13.0	1.8	72
2500	17.2	1.9	73
2750	20.3	1.8	75
3000	22.8	1.7	76
3250	25.7	1.6	77
3500	27.8	1.6	79

Performance

27.8 knots – sea conditions F4 with 50% fuel

Range: 230 miles at 20 knots with a 20% reserve

All performance/consumption readings are taken over a two-way average. Sound readings taken at the helm.





The helm set-up works very well.



The galley has all the core facilities needed for a short cruise.



The mid-cabin double berth is generous.

across the beam. If you want to look across your quarters, you will have to drop your head down to take a good look before you tuck the boat into a turn. It is a case of being disciplined, as once the boat is banked over, the coachroof shuts out any view, and unlike a planing boat with a sterndrive she does not heel hard enough for you to look through the huge sunroof.

Life on deck is secure and safe, courtesy of an offset wheelhouse providing a wide bulwark-enclosed starboard side deck. The trade-off, apart from reduced saloon space, is the slim side deck on the port side. Though embellished with coachroof handrails (as is the starboard side), it is very narrow to move along when underway unless you have been on a starvation diet for six months. Nimbus have considered this and fitted a neat folding/sliding window by the navigator's seat – perfect for hanging fenders out amidships, or securing a tied-back bowline when berthing single-handed. Tall, solid guard rails run from the cockpit to the pulpit, and all the cleats are large enough for the warps that you would use on a 37ft boat. The deep anchor locker not only houses the windlass and 50m of chain, but can also store a couple of sensibly large fenders.

IT OFFERS A HIGH DEGREE OF PRACTICALITY AND IS PERFECTLY SUITED TO SINGLE-CREW SKIPPERS – ESPECIALLY WITH ITS WHEELHOUSE SIDE DOOR.

I have mixed feelings about the engine access with its sound reduction box. The concept is good – it just needs refining. The insulated sound reduction box does what it says on the tin, as sound levels in the saloon are low for a hardtop boat with a large diesel engine. However, once you have folded back the aft bench seat and opened the two hinged cockpit hatches, you then have to slide out three box lids from under an aluminium cross member – with little clearance. I would not want to do this at sea, though to be fair, the raw-water strainer can be accessed by just removing the aft box lid. The lid system needs reworking into a series of smaller hinging panels – and steps need to be inserted into the storage sections on each side of the engine.

Accommodation is typically Scandinavian inasmuch as it takes second place to the functionality of a seagoing boat. The saloon loses space to the starboard side deck, which is a small price to pay, all things considered. The navigator's seat is a spin-around affair that can be turned to face the dinette, which provides easy seating for four adults. Cleverly, the port-side chart table houses a hidden TV in its lid. The galley is pretty generous, and features a large twin-ring gas ceramic hob, a Corian worktop, a realistically sized oven and a big fridge. All the storage drawers slide out with precision and the hardwood joinery in the galley is as impressive as it is in the rest of the boat.

The owner's forepeak cabin is built around an island berth, with large sliding drawers beneath. It is flanked by hanging lockers and smaller



Specifications

LOA: 11.56m (38ft 2in)
Beam: 3.45m (11ft 5in)
Draught: 1.14m (3ft 8in)
Power options: Single 260hp Volvo D4, single 370/435 hp Volvo D6 and twin 225/260/300 hp Volvo D4s – all V drives
Fuel capacity: 700 litres (155 gallons)
Water capacity: 270 litres (60 gallons)
Displacement: 6.4 tonnes dry
RCD category: B for 8
Test engine: Single 435hp Volvo D6
Hull type: Semi-displacement with small keel
Designer: Joacim Gustavsson

Price

From: £330,485 (inc. VAT)
– single 260hp Volvo D4
As tested: £351,558 (inc. VAT)
– single 400hp Volvo D6

Contact

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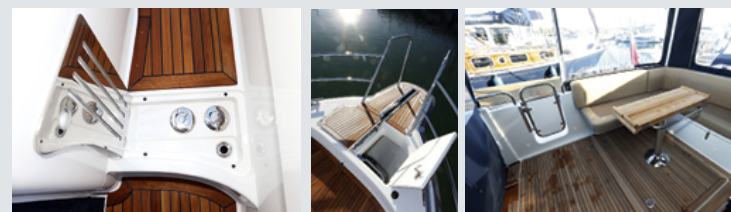
What we thought

For

Superb build quality
Practical and safe
High level of standard spec
Low sound levels
Good steering response for a semi-displacement boat
Good heavy-weather handling

Against

Engine soundbox hatch system awkward to open



1. Fuel and pump out. 2. A truly cavernous anchor locker. 3. There is extra dining space in the cockpit.

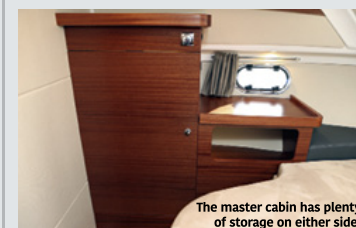
IT IS ... BEAUTIFULLY FINISHED, WITH A HIGH ATTENTION TO DETAIL.

storage compartments, while having en suite access to the heads. The guest cabin has a long double berth running from beam to beam, a small bench seat and a hanging locker just inside its full-height doorway. I was quite surprised at the amount of space in the heads compartment, as apart from full standing headroom, and a Corian-topped vanity unit, it actually has a separate shower compartment.

Verdict

The Nimbus 365 comes from a long-established line of seagoing boats that have been developed, among other things, from the hindsight of extensive use in a northern climate. Consequently the 365 drives very well, especially in the rough, is very well built and feels exceedingly safe. It offers a high degree of practicality and is perfectly suited to single-crew skippers – especially with its wheelhouse side door. It is also beautifully finished, with a high

attention to detail. There are a variety of engine options, either single or twin, which, on account of this boat having no excess fat, all offer a realistic power-to-weight ratio. Considering some of its competitors' price tags, the 365 is a keenly priced boat, especially as she is well equipped in standard form – so much so that you can go to sea without having to fork out for any extras. **PBR**



The master cabin has plenty of storage on either side.