



AT A GLANCE

Length 35ft 9in (10.97m)

Flat out 24.5 knots

Test engines Single
370hp Volvo Penta D6

Price from £247,173 inc
UK VAT (370hp)

It is natural for design to progress: even builders who have kept the same basic concept for years will insist on tweaks and updates to a successful design, to keep it fresh and desirable. At first glance, the new 365 Coupé (along with the also just launched 335) looks like your average Nimbus: a solid, all-weather cruising boat with plenty of practical detailing. Look more closely, however, and you will notice some differences.

Firstly, there's a brand-new, sleeker hull design, less angular and boxy than we've been used to from Nimbus. (It reminds me of when designer Peter Horbury took the Volvo car

range and updated the looks, rounding the edges and softening the lines without losing the message of safe load-lugger.) Secondly, the deck arrangement sets the 365 apart from the rest of the Nimbus range, with the wheelhouse moved to port, creating a large side deck to starboard. But beneath the skin, this boat still oozes Scandinavian cruising practicality.

Upstairs downstairs

The benefits of the big walkaround side deck are numerous. It means that Nimbus have room to fit waist-high bulwarks with guardrails, which makes it much easier and far safer for

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THE TOUGH WITH THE SMOOTH

Is the coupé style getting a little bit long in the tooth? Nimbus's reinvention of an old favourite with the 365 suggests that there's plenty of mileage yet
Text: Jack Haines Photos: Lester McCarthy



crew, who don't need to teeter down a regular side deck with fenders and ropes. You can still, of course, hang fenders on the port side, but you have to carefully guide yourself down the narrow space using the guardrails on top of the wheelhouse.

Inside, Nimbus have retained the one-level cockpit and saloon layout, and rightly so – it works very well, and is made all the better by the walkaround deck and side door. Having the saloon, cockpit and side deck via the side door all on the same level eases the traffic flow, and the lack of steps makes any journey around the boat much safer. The real benefits can be felt when single-handing: being able to not only look out of the side door to check your proximity to the pontoon, but to

step straight out on to the side deck and be next to the amidships cleat makes single-handed skipping a very manageable task. If Nimbus could offer a break in the guardrail, or even better a gate in the bulwark itself, it would be easier still, but once you've helmed a boat with a side door and walkaround deck you won't want to go back to anything else. Boarding from the stern is simple too, thanks to the unencumbered bathing platform and wide transom gate.

The aft cockpit is a very usable space, rain or shine: a full set of canopies means that even in miserable weather the seating and table in the port aft quarter can be used. The bench along the transom hinges down, which is useful in creating

Sunroof and side door provide valuable ventilation in the saloon.



Neat galley is well specified and located in a sociable position.



Saloon and cockpit all on one level – a safe and practical layout.

more space in the cockpit for fishing but also gives unrestricted access to the cockpit sole and engine room.

Step through into the saloon and the amount of light that greets you makes it feel like an extension of the cockpit. The frameless saloon windows, one-piece windscreen and the all-glass retracting sunroof mean that natural light floods in, and as there's only one walkaround side deck the saloon's beam doesn't feel pinched.

With all this glass about, the 365 could turn into a floating greenhouse, but the sunroof retracts electrically and the side door can be locked open, which is useful at rest and when out on the water. Nimbus provide a window on the port side that will pop open a couple of inches or so, meaning that the saloon can be ventilated even if it's raining or if spray is making its way on board.

The rest of the saloon is as practical and easy to use as you'd expect of a Nimbus design. The galley to starboard is hidden under a 2in fiddled countertop, which lifts to reveal a twin-ring gas hob and a large stainless steel sink, and a decent amount of countertop in between. Storage is plentiful and the bespoke pull-out wine glass area is a neat touch, but the fridge is a bit small for those who want to stock up for a lengthy cruise. A slight quibble is with the aft cockpit door: when you try to lock it in the open position (or, indeed, to unlock it) from inside, the handle traps your hand against the standing part of the door. It's not a massive problem, but it means that you have to reach round and lock the door open with the outside handle.

A U-shaped dinette seats six comfortably and eight at a pinch, and the hi-lo table can be adjusted so it's flush with the seats to make a sizeable double berth. A really neat feature is that the forward section of the dinette seating cantilevers on a beautifully engineered stainless steel mechanism to create a double navigator's seat. It provides a great view out, with acres

With so much glass there is loads of light and a great view out.



of room for a chart on the dashboard in front, as well as storage for odds'n'ends, and if you stand you can poke your head out through the sunroof and get the wind in your hair.

The cabins retain a somewhat formulaic arrangement, but this is by no means a bad thing with a master double in the bow, which is ensuite to the single heads compartment, and a double amidships. The master is blessed with swathes of wonderfully finished dark wood and acres of storage, be it drawers under the berth, deep hanging lockers or neat cubbies that pop up out of the bedside units. The only drawback to the cabin – and a direct result of the walkaround deck – is that the deck impedes on headroom at the head of the berth so that you won't be able to sit up in bed to read.

The berth in the mid cabin is a bit confining – the 6ft 3in headroom in the saloon is bound to mean sacrifices here. It is, however, a wide berth, and although there are only two cupboards they are deep and Nimbus supply hanging storage bins within all the cupboards as standard.

+ We like

The ability to be able to travel around the boat with such ease and in complete safety thanks to the one-level living space, side door at the helm and deep, wide starboard side deck.

- We don't like

The finish in the engineroom, which doesn't match the quality elsewhere, and you may find the engine box too restricting maintenance wise.

Cockpit can be used come rain or shine, thanks to the full set of canopies as standard.



Moving the wheelhouse to port creates the wide starboard side deck and makes the 365 a dream to crew, especially when single handed.



Large dinette will seat six in comfort...



...and the forward section flips forward to make a great navigator's seat.



Such practical touches are everywhere. There is a dark wooden boat hook with a stainless steel head fitted in the cockpit, a teak director's chair and matching drinks tray, and four fenders neatly stowed on the bathing platform in custom fender socks – all of which are standard features. And there are reassuring small things, like the magnetic door stays that mean you don't have to bend down to unhook them every time you want to shut the doors, and the rubber seals in every door frame to minimise rattling.

Out on the water

A particularly pleasing aspect of the 365 is that the matt grey helm station feels like the business end of the boat. The chunky wheel is perfect in your hands, and the fore-and-aft seat adjustment means the driving position fits like a glove. A step on the saloon floor means that even the shortest skipper can get a good view out. In fact, all driving positions are comfortable – it's hard to decide which is best. I most often

Step through into the saloon and the amount of light that greets you makes it feel like an extension of the cockpit

found myself sitting down with the aft doors shut but the sunroof and side door open. The wheel also adjusts up and down and you never have to stretch for the throttles.

A Raymarine C120 chart plotter sits nicely in front of the helmsman, but the LCD screen that comes with the Volvo Penta dials is difficult to see in its position at the top of the dash. Similarly – and this is a peculiar anomaly on such a cruising-oriented boat – the compass is not directly ahead of the helmsman on the main dash, but instead is placed just to the left on the bulkhead below the windscreen – irritatingly, so you have to keep stooping down to check your course. Storage at the helm is neatly taken care of by two tinny holders either side of the chart plotter and a pair of detachable fabric pockets at foot level for sunglasses and other cruising paraphernalia.

With so much of the attention on small-boat propulsion focusing on Zeus and IPS, it was instructive to drive a single V-drive boat fitted with standard bow thruster and optional

Extra window in the coachroof provides welcome natural light.



Classy heads with lovely separate shower cubicle.



Plenty of space in the anchor locker for fenders.



Great handling provides fun factor.

stern thruster. The new systems may claim to be the last word in manoeuvrability, but use this set up correctly and you can have the boat dancing around the marina in no time. The 365 tracks very straight and even the slightest nudge with the powerful Sidepower thrusters means the boat is simple to control into the tightest of berths. It is only a small point, but I would like to see the addition of a rudder-angle indicator on the dashboard. Otherwise, it is a very composed ride on the 365, mainly because noise levels are so low.

The 365's single Volvo Penta 370hp D6 is as comfortable cruising at six knots as it is at 20. There is a 330hp D6 available but there seems to be no merit in choosing this option when fuel economy and power are balanced so well with the 370hp unit. With minimum trim tab the boat rides flat enough for the helmsman to stay seated, or he can stand to see round the rather thick windscreen mullions. Steadily cruising at

The handling is very positive – the 365 banks eagerly, losing only 0.1 of a knot in a fast turn with the steering at full lock

2,900rpm with the aft doors shut and the sunroof open, you get good ventilation and conversation is very easy at the helm with only a light murmur penetrating the saloon – we measured only 72dB(A) on test.

The handling is very positive – the 365 banks eagerly, losing only around 0.1 of a knot in a fast turn with the steering at full lock. Designers often avoid twin-rudder arrangements like the 365's to avoid the drag created, but on the 365 it works very well, adding an unexpected grin factor to the handling. The test day weather was calm, but with the odd 20m flybridge thundering by, there were some decent wakes to explore and the Nimbus romped over everything with aplomb, treating us to a soft landing and only the slightest of shudders through the shell. This is mainly thanks to the sharp forefoot and a far deeper-vee hull shape than on previous Nimbuses.

Under the hatches

Here is where you discover why the 365 is so quiet under way. It is down to something that the Scandinavian builders have been doing for some time now: the single engine is mounted inside a heavily insulated box that not only keeps the noise levels down but means that there are no spinning parts exposed, transforming the engineroom into a brilliant storage area. You can drop down on to the box, and there is a decent amount of room outboard of the engine that allows you to work easily around it and there is plenty of space to store kit. The only issue is access. Getting to the raw-water strainer and dipstick is fine in the marina – simply lift up one side of the box and they are all exposed. But for more serious work the box must be taken apart, which is a cumbersome process and storing the removed parts is not easy, especially if you are out at sea in a Force 5.

The box itself felt flimsy, the catches on the side didn't lock very satisfactorily, and lining up the panels to put it back together felt like building flatpack furniture. There is no doubt that the boat is very quiet under way and that the engine box is certainly a factor in that, but there seems to be a trade-off of super-quiet cruising against unrestricted engine access and complete ease of maintenance.

The installation itself is a mixed bag. The fuel filter looks physically small for a 370hp D6 – there is room for either a larger Racor filter with a clear bulb for checking or two filters, so that if one blocks you can divert the flow through the other. The finish is good for the most part. Alongside the engines, all of the wiring is encased in plastic guttering but at the stern it is left exposed and the wiring for the LED courtesy lights was held on with mastic. These are not glaring issues but in contrast to the superb finish and attention to detail inside the boat they come as a surprise.



Easy marina access but what about in a Force 5?

Datafile Nimbus 365 Coupé

Verdict

So is this the same old tried-and-tested formula from Nimbus? A boat's that very practical and safe but with some swoopier lines and a more modern dash? No, it is far more than that: the boat has progressed stylistically, but it has also evolved practically. If you're a single-handed skipper, the ability to pass around the boat so easily and in such safety is a real benefit. Having the living area on all one level makes the boat safer for all on board with no stairs to climb, but also makes the living area very sociable – whoever is in the galley is always part the action.

On top of that, the comfortable cruising capabilities are boosted by genuinely fun handling that will put a smile on your face. And the adaptable 365 is an equally good, economical boat for inland waterways – easy to handle, very quiet, very little wake from the single V-drive, and at eight knots it has a 573-mile range.

The Nimbus regulars are still there: the woodwork is sumptuous, the view out of the saloon is brilliant, and there are practical touches everywhere, like the ever-useful convertible navigator's seat, which works so well in both guises and links with another crucial cruising practically that is too often omitted – a large chart table.

Essentially, there seems to be no obvious downside to Nimbus moving the wheelhouse over to one side. The saloon feels very spacious, the port side is still easy enough to navigate for attaching fenders, and there is the benefit of the larger starboard side deck. The price may seem steep considering there is only one engine but factor in the bow thruster, plotter, VHF and full cockpit canopies included in the base price, and you are getting a lot for your money. **MBY**

Thumbs up or thumbs down?

THUMBS UP

- Safe and practical decks
- Manoeuvrability
- Fun handling
- Comfortable ride
- Very quiet
- Attention to detail
- Sociable one-level layout

- Engineroom storage
- View from the saloon

THUMBS DOWN

- Finish in parts of the engineroom
- Omission of topside gate
- Weedy fuel filter

Rivals



Nord West 370 Coupé

Price from £306,000 inc UK VAT

The quality rival. Available with IPS or twin sterndrives, the 370 is bags of fun out on the water and has an extra berth over the 365. It is also beautifully built and the detailing is nothing short of exquisite.

MBY tested December 2008



Botnia Targa 35

Price from £274,500 inc UK VAT

The rapid rival. Tighter cabins but a great wheelhouse and a neat second helm position. Fantastic hull provides go-anywhere capability, and with the biggest engines 40 knots is within reach.

MBY tested February 2000



Fjord 40

Price from £301,485 inc UK VAT

The stylish rival. The Fjord is a stunning-looking boat with one of the lightest saloons on the market and an enormous galley to boot. A leftfield choice but a contender nonetheless.

MBY tested December 2008

Data

Overall length	35ft 9in (10.97m)
Beam	11ft 3in (3.45m)
Displacement	6.2 tonnes
Draught	3ft 8in (1.18m)
Air draught	10ft 0in (3.00m) (MBY estimate)
Fuel capacity	154 imp gal (700 litres)
Water capacity	60 imp gal (270 litres)

Test Engines

Single 370hp Volvo Penta D6, 6-cylinder, 5.5-litre diesels, 370hp @ 3,500rpm

RPM	1,400	1,700	2,000	2,300	2,600	2,900	3,200	3,500
SPEED	7.9	9.1	10.4	13.7	16.9	20.5	23.4	24.5
TRIM	1°	3°	4°	5°	5°	4.5°	4°	4°
GPH	1.7	3.3	5.3	7.0	9.1	11.0	14.2	16.9
MPG	4.65	2.76	1.96	1.96	1.86	1.86	1.65	1.45
RANGE	573	340	242	241	229	230	203	179

Speed in knots. GPH & MPG figures use imperial gallons. Range in nautical miles and allows for 20% reserve. Calculated figures based on readings from on-board fuel gauges, your figures may vary considerably.

50% fuel, 45% water, 3 crew, no stores, 22°C air temp, 1.031mb pressure, light wind, calm sea, Force 3 for speed trials.

Cruising	20.5 knots, 230 miles @ 2,900rpm
Flat out	24.5 knots, 179 miles @ 3,500rpm

SOUND LEVELS dB(A)	Saloon	Helm	Cockpit
Cruising @ 20.5 knots	72	72	85
Flat out @ 24.5 knots	74	75	85

Readings taken with cockpit doors and side door closed and sunroof open.

Price from	£247,173 inc UK VAT (single 370hp Volvo Penta)
Price as tested	£257,732 inc UK VAT (single 370hp)
Designer	Nimbus 2009
RCD category	B (for 8 people)

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Nimbus 365 Coupé

