



review

**Nimbus
305 Coupé**

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NIMBLE SWEDDE

Some boats kind of slip beneath the radar. There are around 10 Nimbus 305 Coupés already in the hands of satisfied Kiwi owners and importer Sports Marine has another five on order from the Swedish factory, but this one is the first we've had the opportunity to review.



N

imbus manufactures a range of GRP sportboats and motoryachts in a variety of sizes and styles. The Nimbus 305, produced in Coupé and Drophead versions, sits somewhere in the middle of the company's range.

That the 305 Coupe should prove to be so popular in New Zealand shouldn't really be a surprise: its compact dimensions, single-engine configuration, comprehensive equipment levels and a build-quality that benefits from Scandinavian style and attention to detail resonate with New Zealand boaters. The 305 Coupé is proving especially popular with ex-yachties transitioning from sail to more relaxed power boat cruising and with experienced boaters downsizing from larger vessels.

A single engine installation is attractive, says Sports

Marine's principal Scott Williamson, for its simplicity, lower fuel consumption and reduced maintenance costs. With powerful SidePower bow and stern thrusters supplied as standard equipment, docking and manoeuvring the boat in tight spaces holds no fears even for beginning boaters.

Unsurprisingly for a boat built in Sweden, the Nimbus 305 is equipped with Volvo Penta engines: D3 110hp, 150hp, or as reviewed, a D3 220hp driving a shaft via a v-drive. The two lower horsepower options still provide reasonable performance and good fuel economy, but unless you are going to spend most of your boating at displacement speed, the D3 220hp is the best bet. It's the one Kiwi Nimbus buyers generally opt for, says Williamson.

Nimbus says it has developed the hull to perform equally well at any speed between 0 and 22 knots. Hull design has been optimised for smaller engines like Volvo D3s, or for electric

RIGHT The offset wheelhouse/saloon provides a wider walkway on the starboard side.

BELOW The 305 has a light-filled saloon, stylish, ergonomic helm station, a functional galley and decent accommodation in two cabins.



propulsion, to run economically and comfortably across the whole speed range. The transition from displacement to planing speed is virtually undetectable, which Nimbus credits to the hull's hydrodynamics.

ACCOMMODATION

In a boat of this size, space is at a premium, so it was a pleasant surprise to discover the Nimbus 305 Coupé provides all the comforts of much bigger vessels, thanks to clever packaging and design. The walk-around cabin is offset to port to provide excellent deck access via a sliding helm door on the starboard side, the modest-sized cockpit offers wraparound seating, a removable solid teak cockpit table with folding leaves and decent underfloor and under-seat storage.

The cabin roof extends over most of the cockpit, providing shade and rain protection, while a clear screen along the port side is usually left up permanently, to protect anyone seated in the cockpit. Another set of drop-covers encloses the rest of the cockpit for overnighting and winter boating.

The swim platform is also quite useable, for fishing, loading a dinghy or lounging on between swims. The boarding ladder is mounted amidships, there's a pull-out hot and cold freshwater shower to one side and shorepower cable storage on the other. A stainless-steel rack keeps the fabric-covered, Nimbus-branded fenders out of the way, but still close to hand.

Inside the saloon, Nimbus has made the most of the space available, especially considering that this is a walkaround design and the cabin is narrower than it might be. On the starboard side aft of the helm is a well-appointed galley, with mahogany-trimmed cabinets and drawers.

The fridge is under the helm seat, there's an optional freezer drawer under the dinette seat, an under-bench gas oven and a ceramic-topped three-burner gas cook-top – no naked flames. Gas





bottles are stowed in a dedicated gas locker under one of the cockpit seats and, of course, the Nimbus has New Zealand gas and electrical certificates.

Along the port side of the saloon, the dinette's fore and aft seats, upholstered in Scandinavian blue fabric, address a polished mahogany saloon table with a folding leaf to make through-cabin and seating access easier. The front seat is reversible – when the boat's underway two people can sit facing forward, bracing themselves against the leather-clad grabrail on the bulkhead.

Dropping the saloon table and adding an infill squab provides another double berth, giving sleeping accommodation for up to six adults – not bad for a 10m boat.



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BELOW The cockpit layout works well, whether entertaining or actively enjoying water sports.

OPPOSITE Notable details include the main switchboard and fire extinguisher concealed under the helmsman's footrest and fuel and water fillers, with drain, hidden under an attractive stainless steel grate.



A large chart locker under the windscreen on the port side contained a Nimbus tool kit with tools to fit every nut and bolt aboard the vessel. A Fusion Bluetooth and wireless stereo head unit is set into the bulkhead alongside a 12V/USB outlet and auxiliary input and there's another 12V/USB outlet in the master cabin.

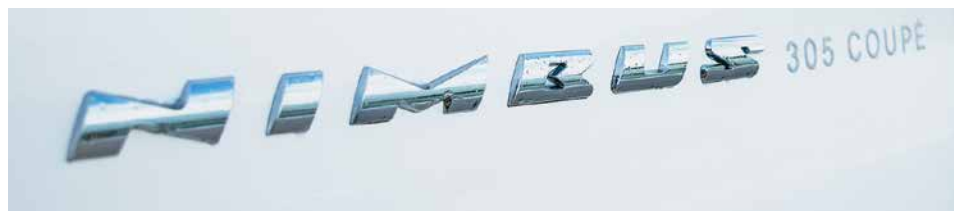
Although the saloon isn't especially large, it feels spacious thanks to full-height glass sliding doors aft, big windows and especially the glass roof panels. Occupying virtually the whole roof, they are furnished with spring-loaded roller screens set into the vinyl headlining. The forward panels slide back manually to open the roof to the sky.

Along with the roof panels and skylights, all the vessel's windows have screens to block the sun or black out the cabin at night while the helm side door, sliding passenger side window and opening roof panels ensure good saloon ventilation. Diesel heating keeps the cabin toasty in winter and

includes a windscreen demister to complement twin wipers and freshwater washers fed by the main water tank. Lighting throughout the vessel is LED and the combination of mahogany trim, textured moulded surfaces and bold fabric upholstery give the interior a modern, stylish but distinctly nautical feel.

Below decks Nimbus has managed two generous cabins, plus a good-sized bathroom. The bathroom includes a separate shower with a clear curved acrylic sliding door, a vanity and toilet. The forward cabin is available two configurations: a queen berth set across the beam or a large v-berth with infill as fitted to the review vessel. The second cabin extends under the saloon sole, so headroom is tight, but the berth easily accommodates two, and like in the forward cabin, there is generous storage.

The 305 Coupé is a sedan-style launch, so the saloon and cockpit are all on one level and the helmsman is never isolated. The helm station is modern and stylish with excellent ergonomics. The console, moulded in GRP with an attractive matte-grey finish,



has enough real estate for a pair of medium-sized MFDs, plus the usual array of switches, buttons and toggles. I like the way the thruster toggle controls are mounted vertically one above the other so they can be operated with the thumb and forefinger of one hand, leaving the other free for the throttle.

The vessel's main switchboard, circuit breakers and a fire extinguisher are underneath the helmsman's footrest, which hinges up for easy access. Relying on three house batteries, plus an engine start battery, and a dedicated heavy-duty battery for the thrusters, this boat operates on a 12-volt electrical system while at sea and shore power at the dock. A battery charger is included but an inverter and/or generator are factory options.

This boat was delivered with a factory-installed 12-inch Simrad NSS EVO III MFD, Simrad VHF radio, a Lewmar rope-chain capstan with chain counter and a good quality stainless-steel plough-style anchor. All the stainless steel used aboard the 305 Coupé – and there's plenty of it – is good quality and

appears to be of heavier gauge than many other manufacturers use. The Swedes invented stainless steel, so maybe Nimbus is making a point.

PERFORMANCE

This is a single-screw vessel with a conventional rudder, not a sterndrive, so it's not quite as agile as some boats of similar length. Nonetheless, it handles sweetly and helm response is good. There's very little bow lift under acceleration and, as noted, the transition to planing speed is almost undetectable. The boat is also very quiet when underway, especially at displacement speeds.

Into a head sea the trim tabs allow the hull entry to do its best work and they also assist keeping the vessel on an even keel in a quartering sea, but it took me a moment to figure out which way was tabs up and which was down. The wheel quickly lets you know when you've got it wrong, but when the tabs are



ABOVE The helm station is comfortable with modern styling. The side door is handy.

ABOVE The Nimbus 305 Coupé rides softly and attains a maximum speed of 21–23 knots.

properly adjusted, the Nimbus runs downhill straight and true.

The ride is admirably soft at any speed, but especially at cruising speeds of between 16-19 knots. We had a bit of northeasterly wind slop for our outing aboard the Nimbus, but the boat was very comfortable punching into a head sea at 16.5 knots.

At that speed it burns just 26 litres per hour, topping out at around 40 litres per hour at 21/22 knots and 3800rpm. The 305 Coupé uses less than two litres of diesel per nautical mile at any speed between 10 knots and 18 knots; at 8 knots it burns less than one litre per nautical mile. With the 220hp, Nimbus reckons the 305 Coupe will reach 21 knots in heavy trim, which is conservative – we saw 23 knots on the Simrad GPS with fuel and water topped up and two people on board.

The 305 Coupé offers decent build quality to match its sea credentials. With an efficient hull design, it performs well with one relatively modest engine, and seems as happy at eight knots as it is at 20. The focal point for any sedan-style launch is the saloon-wheelhouse area, which the Nimbus 305 Coupé gets just right. It can meet the needs of a wide range of boating enthusiasts: new boaters, boaters down-sizing to a more manageable vessel, yachties moving to powerboats, families and couples of all ages. **BNZ**



Nimbus 305 Coupé

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HIGHLIGHTS

Simplicity and economy of a single engine

Bow and stern thrusters ensure stress-free docking

Well-designed interior and exterior spaces

Stylish, light-filled living areas

SPECIFICATIONS

loa 10.07m
beam 3.25m
weight 4,100kg dry
construction GRP
engine 1 x Volvo Penta D3 220hp, V-drive shaft
fuel 250 litres
water 150 litres
waste water 80 litres
cruising speed 8-20 knots
max speed 23 knots

WATCH IT



The 305 Coupé offers decent build quality to match its sea credentials.