

No fireworks, but positive, clean handling complements the 340's precise looks.



below It is pleasing to see such attention to detail; touches of class that make this Nimbus stand out.



below Solid sidedeck guardrails, a nice addition.



lined out and is safe to use due to the fact that the engine is boxed-in either side. A very smart and useful wood cockpit table is also clipped away down here.

If storage facilities could not catch Nimbus's designers out, then access up to the flybridge from the cockpit could be the other main concern. In comparison to the 380, clearly something has to give. The 340's four-foot bigger brother has a nicely angled stairwell, but space here dictates that the outside steps are near vertical. However, in Nimbus's defence, there is only a short run of them and, with handholds either side to give plenty of purchase, they are easier to negotiate than they might at first appear. The other way up is via a short stairway from the wheelhouse, in which case you'll need to squeeze past the inside helm seat. Again, remembering to shunt this forward on its adjuster makes life noticeably easier.

As regards the flybridge itself, you might think that you would feel rather perched on top and a touch vulnerable. Not a bit of it. In fact there is sizeable length of coachroof ahead of you, so that you are effectively sitting in a well.

The skipper clearly has pole position, sat in a comfortable, supportive, contoured seat with a clear arrangement of controls ahead of him or her, including space for a plotter. Additional seating is by way of a bench seat which will take a cosy three, but we would have been

happier had there been a hand or guardrail here, not least at the inboard end by the steps. The stainless steel mast is held in situ by solid



Meticulous. Given that space is at a premium it is easy to move about.

bracing straps that can be slackened off to lower it and reduce the vessel's air draught when required.

ENGINE OPTIONS & ACCESS

Nimbus have been quite happy with single engine installations for models around this size and the 340 is no exception. With just the one option offered – a Volvo D6 310hp unit – potential owners do not need to waste time agonising over what to have fitted. That said, although there is no confirmation as yet, it does appear that the hull is engineered to take a twin configuration, which might endear itself to us cautious British boaters with our penchant for doubling up.

However, speculation aside, this single 310hp installation appears a useful marriage of boat and engine; the right amount of horsepower smoothly delivered by the six cylinder block, which has been turned about face and fitted with a vee-drive gearbox so that it can be secreted away under the cockpit sole. It is a matter of hiking up the sizeable gas strut-supported hatches here to gain access. In fact this only gets you so far, as the engine has in turn been neatly boxed-in to combat the

for keeping abreast of the neighbours when in the marina. Its settee over to port, although not large, is suitable for a lounging twosome who can pop up the foldaway table to take morning cuppas (or something a little stronger, depending upon the time of day). The helm seat across the way is fully adjustable and can swivel, so this section doubles as a socialising area.

A couple of steps down from here and you have the open plan saloon and galley area, which in turn opens out via a sliding door to the cockpit. The convertible dinette to port is slightly raised, and given the saloon's decent-sized windows, the view out is unimpeded. It's another light and airy spot, perfect for watching the world go by, and although it is separate from the business end of the wheelhouse, you don't feel cut-off.

The galley runs down the starboard side and is smartly finished with a wood countertop and a good-sized, stainless steel-fronted fridge. You'll also find a one-and-a-half-bowl sink and two-burner gas hob and oven, but it was the amount of useful stowage that impressed us the most. This included a number of deep, neatly compartmentalised drawers under the work surface and no less than a six-foot run of cavernous cave lockers outboard. Even a nicely turned-out drinks locker has been incorporated.

Back over on the dinette's side – which can accommodate four in comfort – the seat bases incorporate large lined lockers while, at the far end, by the door, the battery switches are within easy reach.

Finally, just as outside, there are plenty of handholds, even including a central overhead one in the saloon area. We felt that the only place that really could do with something extra was towards the front of the wheelhouse settee: being perched there with nothing to hang on to – apart from each other – can make you feel a tad vulnerable when the boat is

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Well proportioned, with plenty of useful but unfussy detail.

underway. A stainless-steel grab rail by the adjacent chart area would sort this out nicely.

EXTERIOR

The yard's attention to design detail is evident as soon as you step aboard onto the bathing platform, with a couple of useful lined lockers set under its teak-finished decking. There's ample fender storage worked into the transom coaming and even the chunky door is sculpted out to provide a small cave locker. Solid guardrails top the coaming here and then run right down either sidedeck, with the exception of breaks at the forward end of the cockpit and others amidships. These come just where you need them, and make hopping on and off easier and safer when mooring. In addition, inboard handrails are perfectly placed, and getting forward to make use of the reasonably sized 10in (25cm) cleats is easily done.

The electric windlass is standard and the



above When it comes to the helm, this armchair-style seat means skippers have never had it so good.

anchor locker – which is a useful size and accessed from deck level – shows the impressively high standard of finish found just about everywhere by being lined out with a moulding.

Indeed, back in the cockpit, the port-hand seat locker benefits from just the same treatment, as well as having its lid held aloft

on a gas strut to make rifling through its contents that bit easier. That said, a portion of this is given over to gas bottle stowage, and we were just beginning to think that deck stowage might be the boat's Achilles heel when we remembered that the lazaret – although half-filled with the engine – provides an extra measure of storage. Again, this

below Storage, storage everywhere! Note the transom door locker and extra provision in the coaming.



below The bathing platform has the same high standards as elsewhere, with nice teak-finished decking.



pleasant cockpit and reasonably easy-to-negotiate side decks, well suited for hopping on and off. The flexible accommodation is mainly due to the position of the engine. Although this is an inboard powered hull (complete with prop tunnel) the single diesel-powered unit is tucked beneath the cockpit on a vee-drive, so that the shaft doubles back under the engine, which saves on space further forward.

We mentioned that this is something of a scaled-back 380, but clearly that is not strictly true. Although some room has been lost in a

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High standards: it looks good and functions well, inside and out.

few areas, the 340's proportions have been kept in tune and head heights are generous throughout.

ACCOMMODATION

Splitting up a boat too many ways can often look clever on the drawing board, but once put into practice the design can result in poky spaces that are not terribly useable. However, the Nimbus team cannot be accused of that, and each cabin area fulfils its obligations without feeling cramped. Indeed the two sleeping cabins demonstrate this admirably with decent-sized berths – both a full 6ft 6in (1.98m) in length and a suitable 'double' in width – and have plenty of sitting headroom as well as handy shelves for odds and ends. The fore cabin's berth is offset, angled across the port bow, and incorporates a useful, fully lined cave locker for kit bags or bedding. Other storage provision is adequate in both cabins, and seats are provided to help you perch while

dressing; all-in-all well thought through and smartly finished (as is the rest of the boat) in mahogany joinery.

Across the way from the two cabins is a reasonable-sized toilet and shower compartment. The toilet itself benefits from being part concealed, so it won't get splashed when you're having a shower. There is good attention to detail here along with useful stowage, and the predominantly moulded compartment is given a lift by virtue of the dark wood counter-top with its inset stainless sink. A hatch to the rear bulkhead allows access to a 'service' area that houses various pumps and the holding tank, fitted as standard.

A couple of steps up and you are in the wheelhouse, which as well as being perfect for taking in the views, is clearly the preferred spot

below This is an exquisitely well designed and finished boat, with plenty of storage, stylish mahogany detailing and a reasonably sized washroom.



below The galley boasts top-notch equipment...



below ...and an excellent array of storage options.



• single 310hp diesel • four berths • overall length 33ft 9in (10.30m) • from £181,419




MOTORTM BOATS

MONTHLY



Nimbus 340 Commander
as featured in October 2005 Edition

Nimbus 340 Commander



Swedish builders Nimbus have performed something of a conjuring trick with this smart, stylish vessel. They have packed in so many features, yet created such a sense of space, that you will struggle to believe it's a 34-footer. **REPORT BY MARK TURLEY**

This Swedish builder is still best known for its highly likeable and practical Coupe line-up. Practically anyone who motorboats will have been aboard the 320 and its long-lived cousins at one time or other. However, if you liked the Swedish style and wanted to stay with the Nimbus marque, but were looking for a bit more space and perhaps the benefit of a flybridge helm position, then it was quite a leap up in size and money to one of their sub-40ft models. The gap in the range has now been filled with this 340 Commander model, a cleverly scaled down version of the 380, which manages to incorporate a raised wheelhouse as well as sporting a flybridge.

DESIGN & BUILD

Model designations, in the form of numbers on boats names, can often be taken with the

proverbial pinch of salt: manufacturers often stretch measurements or omit extremities in their length calculations, depending upon the marketing strategy at the time. However, the 340 is exactly what is says, a 34-footer from the tip of its bow to the rear of its integral bathing platform, with not one single inch of it wasted along the way.

The interior manages to fit in two cabins, a reasonable-sized toilet compartment, a comfortable saloon and galley area plus the neat wheelhouse, which as well as having a door out to the starboard hand sidedeck, also has steps up to the small but well-disposed flybridge. This is all slotted in without any of these spaces ending up cramped and awkward, plus there is still room for a



and you are nicely in the 20 knot band for straightforward cruising, with the hull riding tidily and sitting fair and square so everyone can relax. Even when the helm is put over smartly, the hull, although responding immediately, is not going to catch people out and it pushes round on a wholly reasonable angle of heel. Trim tabs are there to help with any levelling, but other than that the hull assumes its own natural angle of attack and takes care of things.

Both helm positions are nicely turned out and the skipper has everything to hand as well as being treated to a comfortable, small armchair whether up top or in the wheelhouse. These are fully adjustable and have hinged squabs so you can quickly stand unimpeded if you need too. We also liked the fact that the wheelhouse deckhatch is suitably placed so the skipper can stick a head out and offer the foredeck crew some kindly words of encouragement or advice. Visibility from the wheelhouse is extremely good underway, bearing in mind there is a chunk of accommodation behind you. The windscreens are deep and run well aft to give another first-class view, and checking dead astern is easy by glancing through the companionway hatch that runs up to the flybridge.

Down at slow speed the hull tracks in a straight line, but is keen in response to helm and throttle. However, Nimbus now very sensibly fit a bow-thruster as standard, but they also offer a stern-thruster installation



above "Tea! Tea! Get down to the galley, woman!" Some 'words of encouragement' from Cap'n Turley.

too. There isn't much you can't do when using these in tandem.

Our only major quibble is with the boat's fuel tank capacity. It is shy of a hundred gallons, which really is not terribly generous given that although there is just the one engine, 310hp stills needs a fair bit of feeding, doesn't it?

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Good helm positions, smooth riding but could do with more tankage.

noise that so often bounces around large engine room voids.

All very neat, but how about actually 'getting at' things? Well, in fact it is not bad at all; the main raw water and fuel filters are outside the box and readily accessible on the adjacent forward bulkhead. In addition, a cutout in the top of the heavily constructed box allows access to the dipstick. Anything more than this and it is a matter of un-clipping and removing panels. It's the kind of thing you have to get a knack for, not least because the central strut that supports the cockpit hatches is smack in the way. If Nimbus had made this removable, then the job would be much simpler and with the panels removed, service points would be readily accessible.

Other auxiliary items are housed in the wings of the moulded out compartment or are otherwise tucked away in a service space, accessed through a panel in the toilet compartment.

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Light on engine options, but tidy installation and minimal sound levels.



above Sizeable hatches allow easy engine access.



above Clear control layout is another plus here.

PERFORMANCE & HANDLING

Single-engined flybridge boats can do some odd things, but in this instance the hull runs just as positively and cleanly as its no-nonsense looks promise. There is a steady, easy progress through to a flat-out top speed of just under 24 knots. Cut those revs by 10%



SPECIFICATION & VALUE

Offshore Powerboats, the UK distributor for Nimbus, ensure their vessels have as full a spec as possible so that owners are not faced with a raft of add-ons to get the boat in a suitable state of readiness. Let's face it, there are few of us that would not specify a bow-thruster, especially on a single-engined boat, and nobody feels like paying extra to have it antifouled before it can hit the water. Offshore also include a decent array of electronics, which can be boosted by adding slightly to the pot if you fancy an upgrade.

All this makes satisfying reading, but of course to a certain extent these goodies are built into the price. £180,000 for a 34-footer – even given the cleverness of the design and smart, well-executed fitout – is a fair sum when you remember that the manufacturer has only had to shell out for a single engine, which can add something around £15,000 to the pricing at this size of vessel.

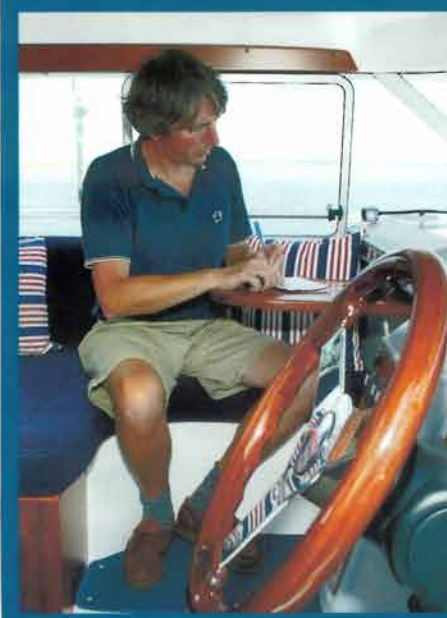
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Smart fitout and spec – which nevertheless has to be paid for.



Verdict

Nimbus have truly excelled themselves. To get two decent-sized cabins, a pleasant saloon and workable galley, a wheelhouse, flybridge and useful cockpit into 34 feet, without feeling that the quart has been squeezed into the pint pot, is incredible. It is single engined, though, and perhaps a bit pricey.

MBM RATING 9/10



Nimbus 340 Commander technical data



specifications

BUILD	GRP
RCD	B
LENGTH OVERALL	33ft 9in (10.30m)
HULL LENGTH	31ft 2in (9.50m)
BEAM	11ft 2in (3.40m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 1in (0.95m)
DISPLACEMENT	5.3 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	88gal (400lt)
WATER CAPACITY	44gal (200lt)

key dimensions

WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	9in (23cm)
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 5in (1.96m)
FORE CABIN BERTH	6ft 9in x 4ft 0in
MIDSHIPS CABIN BERTH	6ft 6in x 4ft 2in

performance

engines single Volvo Penta D6 310hp diesel
 configuration 6cyl, 5.5lt, 310hp at 3500rpm
 conditions wind NE'ly Force 3, sea slight
 load fuel 75%, water 75%, crew 2

rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	noise
2200	9.9	3.5	16	2.83	198	72
2600	13.3	5.5	25	2.42	169	74
2800	15.7	7.0	32	2.24	159	76
3000	18.5	8.6	39	2.15	151	78
3200	20.2	10.6	48	1.91	134	80
3500	23.7	14.1	64	1.68	118	81

Range figures above are in miles, with 20% margin. Noise figures are in dB(A), recorded in the wheelhouse.

prices

STANDARD BOAT	inc VAT
with single Volvo D6 310hp diesel	£181,419
BOW-THRUSTER	standard
HEATING	£3155
COLOURED HULL	£1890
ELECTRIC WINDLASS	standard
SHORE POWER	standard
ELECTRONICS (PLOTTER & VHF)	standard
COMMISSIONING & ANTIFOUL	standard
BOAT AS TESTED	£181,419

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the rivals



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