



Nimbus

Nova 42

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Written By: **Peter Poland**



Nimbus is no different to any other major European boat builder. As its business grows and its customer base expands, so it needs to build bigger boats. If not, there's a risk that existing (contented) clients looking to move up to the next size boat might be forced to abandon 'brand loyalty' and move elsewhere. So last year the 42 (the largest boat yet in the Nova range) took to the water.

The Nimbus story started in the sixties. Volvo Penta (still Nimbus' main engine supplier) wanted a way to market its marine engines. A suitable

leisure boat was needed and the Volvo MD, Harald Wiklund, persuaded design engineer Pelle Petterson to put pen to paper. The resulting Nimbus 26 went on to be voted "Boat of the Year" and brothers Hans and Lars Wiklund subsequently started the company now known as Nimbus Boats. Over the ensuing decades, the company has grown into a group that turns over close on 100 million Euros (putting it into the 'top 10' European boat builder league), employs over 500 people and now also encompasses other famous Swedish brand names Maxi (sailing yachts), Ryds and Storebro.

The new 42 Nova follows on from its successful smaller sister, the 35 Nova. These Novas complement the long running and ever popular Nimbus Coupé series (from 28 to 38ft) and the flybridge Commander series (from 34 to 41ft). The principal challenge facing designer Pelle Petterson was to maintain the trademark (and highly desirable) Nimbus 'walkaround' side decks and the elegant Nimbus 'look' without diminishing the interior space one expects in a 42 footer. Petterson explains; "The deck has to be deep set and feel safe to walk around on, and this means it steals volume from the cabins. On the 42 Nova we



MAIN PICTURE: The saloon is light, airy and spacious, TOP LEFT: The boat has a well equipped galley, TOP RIGHT: The port saloon settee in 'harbour mode'

solved the problem by building concave inner sides to the gunwales. In this way we obtained room to turn around in without the cabin sides taking too much off interior volumes".

There can be no doubt that Petterson has succeeded in the 'good looks' stakes. As you approach the Nova 42, her lines cannot fail to impress. The ratios between foredeck, raised saloon roof, aft cockpit and boarding platform are near perfect. Some motor cruisers can look dumpy, fussy, top heavy or just plain unattractive. Not the Nova 42. She oozes class. The Swedes put this down to their quest for 'function before pretension'. I don't think this does the boat justice.

Favourable impressions continue as one boards the boat via the stern platform. This is big enough to accommodate a 'fold away' bathing ladder, two decent sized wet lockers and an optional stern anchor arrangement. But the platform is not so large that it detracts from the line of the boat. And then there are the fender stowage 'baskets', the grilles over the engine room air intakes (on the quarters) and the two access gates into the aft cockpit. Beautifully shaped parallel stainless steel tubes form continuous lines from one side of the stern to the other, transforming these mundane 'functions' into a work of art. The aft cockpit area is another fine piece of design. Being on the same level as the stern platform, there is no step to negotiate (or trip over). And it's bigger than others I have seen in boats of this size, incorporating two round tables and large wraparound settees in either quarter (with voluminous lockers under). Then the entire deck can hinge up (in two halves) to give access to the engine room and further stowage areas beneath.

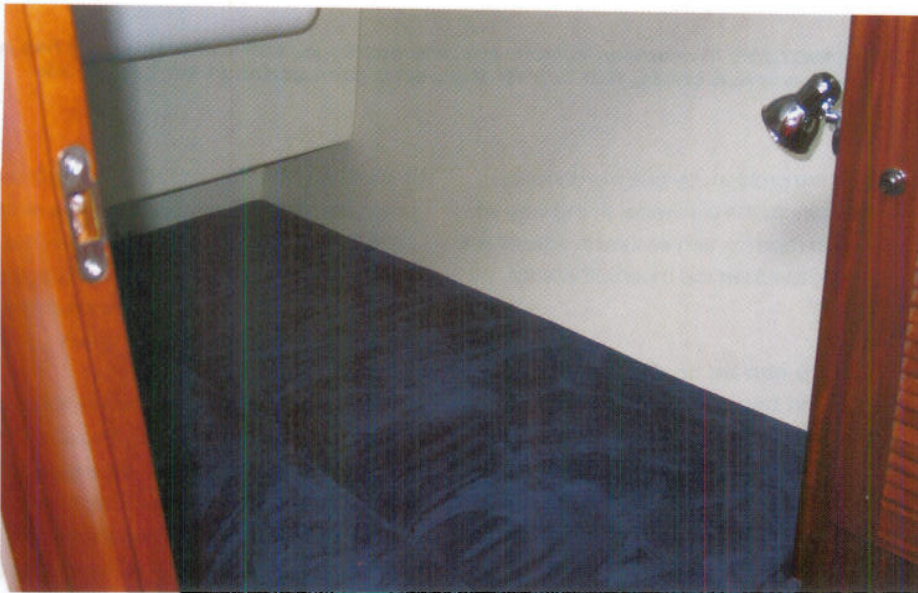
Access to the saloon aft is through three substantial sliding doors. Depending on the weather, one can either slide just one open – or double the access (and fresh air) by sliding two (overlapping each other). Alternative access is through Nimbus' trademark (and excellent) sliding doors at the front of the saloon (port and starboard), opening directly onto the secure walkaround side decks. The saloon sole is on the same level as the aft cockpit. So effectively one has a single level 'run' from the front of the saloon right to the back of the stern platform. This greatly enhances the

overall feel of space and means that the entire combined area can turn into a single socialising or entertaining zone when the weather permits. If it is like June 2007, you can just leave the aft deck canopy and side panels in place to keep out the rain.

The saloon itself is classic Nimbus, albeit bigger than before. Sociable living remains the theme, with an extensive galley unit stretching along the starboard side and a dining table and wraparound settee to port. The galley includes hob, oven, sink and fridge. And there's a reasonable array of lockers (both overhead and beneath the work surface) and drawers. If the cook needs to press extra work surface into use, there's always the adjacent saloon table. The big bonus, though, is that the galley (like the rest of the saloon area) enjoys natural light galore and wonderful panoramic views onto the outside world. The saloon and galley may not perhaps be quite as wide as on a run of the mill flybridge cruiser (with narrower and higher side decks) of this length; but the gains in terms of a sociable environment and the unrivalled airy ambience more than offset this in my opinion. The whole saloon/galley/aft deck area is adaptable and works well – whether the boat is heading into a nasty sea or resting in a peaceful anchorage.

The Nova 42 also scores well in the sleeping accommodation stakes. Unusually for a boat of this size, she has three separate cabins and two separate heads. The owner's cabin (in the bows) has a large double bed on the centreline (with drawers under) and hanging lockers (either side). The only small drawback is limited headroom for tall people sitting up in bed. The en suite heads is to port, and this has plenty of space and the luxury of a separate shower cubicle. Then the two guest cabins are situated aft, one to port and the other to starboard. One has twin beds, the other a double. The second heads (with shower) is to starboard, although it is not big enough to have a separate shower cubicle. As throughout the rest of the boat, the joinery in the sleeping zone is mahogany and the upholstery is blue. And, as usual on a Nimbus, everything is neatly and crisply finished. If garish floral décor and mirror gloss lacquer are your thing, then you might find the Nimbus décor understated and even slightly conservative. But on the other hand it's beautifully executed, won't date and is discretely tasteful.





TOP LEFT: The third (double berth) cabin is to port, TOP LEFT: The 'en suite' owner's cabin heads has a separate shower cubicle, BOTTOM: The forward owner's cabin offers luxury galore

What about the business end of the Nova 42? She comes with a choice of twin Volvo D6 (370hp) diesels driving through shafts (via V drives) or twin Volvo D6s (350hp) with stern drives. The boat I tested was fitted with stern drives. But closer inspection of the engine compartment showed that there was an interesting development. Instead of locating the engines (with all their weight) right aft and connecting them straight to the stern drives, Nimbus had fitted the D6s well forward, with separate shafts linking the engines to the stern drives. As a result, excess weight is kept out of the stern, with all the benefits that this brings to trim and performance. What's more, the reduced drag and horizontal drive of stern drives (as opposed to the inherent drag of exposed shaft and P

bracket plus the less efficient angle at which the prop drives) significantly increase speed and reduce fuel consumption for given engine sizes.

By the time we left Lymington Yacht Haven, a good force 6 had sprung up.

Mike Morgan (an experienced instructor and delivery skipper who was having his first trip on the Nova 42) closed the twin overhead hatches above the helmsman's and crew's seats. He just flicked a switch – these hatches open and close electrically. Despite a strong wind and tight berth, the bow thruster and twin engines edged her out easily. The Nova's low and sleek lines make cross winds less of a challenge. Then, once out in the open Solent, Mike opened her up and headed (with a grin on his face) for the

big breaking waves building up in Hurst narrows. Once up to 2000 rpm, she made a smooth 12 knots. At around 14.5 knots, she was planing and level. 2,200 rpm brought up 17 knots, which rapidly became 32.8 knots at 3,300 rpm. As the Nova planed easily through the growing chop (now at around 36 knots and 3,500 rpm), the waves and overfalls at Hurst were getting closer. The helm felt light and easy, all round visibility was superb and hardly any spray reached the windscreen. The driver's position is extremely comfortable, with wheel and controls at just the right angle and distance. There's no doubt about it; this Nova 42 is a real driver's boat. The dash board is tidy and well laid out; without being ostentatious. The crew's seat (to port and created by hinging the forward end of the saloon settee over) is

equally comfortable. And there's a chart table in front.

When we arrived at Hurst narrows and met the turbulent and broken water, we throttled back. But it was no problem. The Nova took it in her stride. Whether heading into the waves, scooting across them or running before them, the boat behaved perfectly. True, her hull is not over wide for her length. So you have to pay attention and use the trim tabs on occasions. But there can be no doubt that this boat will take a sea in her stride and make long passages with ease and in comfort.

Having had our fun in the breakers, we headed back for base. I tried tight turns at high speed, and she cornered as if on rails. When the strong wind was on the beam, minor tinkering on the trim tabs kept her level. And, whether planing at full speed or throttled back in rough water, the noise levels were low. Mike and I carried on a conversation at normal volume. Even when at full chat (and this boat is decidedly quick) she somehow felt smaller and nimbler than her 42ft length would suggest. There's no doubt about it – this boat retains the Nimbus reputation for seakindliness and easy handling; but has an extra appeal. Serious speed.

So who will buy this boat? The Nimbus marque is historically popular with sailors switching from sail to power. There's something very reassuring about the Swedish construction, attractive but understated styling, wonderful panoramic views from inside, splendid and secure walk-around side decks and inherent air of sensible seaworthiness. And all of these attributes apply to the new Nova 42. But she's definitely got an extra 'wow factor'. She should appeal as much to the experienced powerboater as she does to the ex sailor. It's not just her speed and silky handling. And there's more to it than her adaptable three cabin accommodation. It's almost intangible, but maybe it just boils down to one final extra ingredient. Sensational looks.

The boat I tested included (as standard) electric anchor winch, bow thruster, GPS/Plotter, shorepower, holding tank, antifouling, teak decks, cockpit canopy, winter cover and had a few extras such as heating, demisters, radio/cd and a non standard Britannia Blue hull colour. She comes out at £377,341 inc VAT, and I think that's good value for a quality product from a respected builder. And as a final bonus, Nimbus motor yachts are renowned for their high resale values.



There's plenty of space around the twin Volvos, situated in a large engine room beneath the cockpit sole

Nimbus Nova 42

Specification & Pricing:

LOA	41'0" (12.50m)
Hull length	37'6" (11.43m)
Beam	12'10" (3.90m)
Draught	3'0" (0.9m)
Weight (dry)	8,500 kg
Fuel	2 x 500 litres
Water	400 litres
Fridge	85 litres
Price standard boat With 2 x Volvo Penta D6 370 hp diesel (shaft drive) ..	£343,324 inc. VAT
With 2 x Volvo Penta D6 350 hp diesel (stern drive)	£365,992 inc. VAT
With 2 x Volvo Penta D6 350 hp diesel (stern drive) & extras as tested ...	£377,341 inc. VAT

Contact & Acknowledgments

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