

# BOAT REPORT **NIMBUS 27, FAMILIA COUPÉ**

This new and radically different version of a well-proven Swedish cruiser features a substantial aft cockpit.







THE Familia Coupé from Nimbus is the latest revision of one of this Swedish company's original designs from the early 1970s.

Having started life as the wholly-displacement, single-engined 26, it was modified to become the 2600, and then relaunched in 1990 as the 27 Familia, with updated superstructure styling and alterations to the underwater sections of the hull to give full planing performance. All these models embraced the same almost fully enclosed layout, incorporating an aft cabin, and this style will remain in production.

The new Coupé introduces yet another variation on the theme, providing a good-sized cockpit with immediate same-level access to a wheelhouse-cum-saloon and also with greater access to the elements (not least by easing the way to the bathing platform) than you enjoy with the cosseted aft-cabin style.

## Design

Pigeonholing the 27's hull shape is impossible. It has a hard chine with a medium 19° vee

amidships, sporting a short run of keel here. Aft, the bottom flattens to only 11°, with a second elongated skeg appendage to support the conventional inboard engine drivetrain. A steel shoe extending aft from the skeg provides a landing for the lower rudder bearing and helps to protect the propeller.

The topsides incorporate a fully moulded bathing platform, whilst the flare of the forward sections has been pinched out, compared with the original lines, as a landing for the bow roller.

Nimbus construction policy is to bond a full inner tray moulding to the hull, to provide a matrix of stiffeners and the foundation for further mouldings and modules of prefabricated joinery.

## Exterior

The full-width cockpit measures 5ft 5in (1.65m) from the transom to the half-glazed wheelhouse bulkhead with its sliding access door. The coaming sides are a good height, and topped off with sturdy stainless steel handrails.

Attached to each side are slatted, hinge-down

**Bright and breezy. The Coupé's helm position (above) offers all-round visibility, and there is plenty of light to the starboard dinette (top right) and port galley (right).**



wooden benches which come complete with cushions. With these folded out of the way, there is plenty of room to set out some freestanding deck chairs.

These can be stowed in the large lazaret beneath the cockpit sole, which is reached through a pair of gas strut-supported hatches and is provided with duckboards to keep items clear of the bilge and steering gear. This and the batteries and sternland can readily be inspected, and the division of the vessel's inner moulded tray into a number of webs and bearers creates a compartmentalised stowage area. The hatches themselves are faced in pseudo-teak and holly decking which continues through the wheelhouse.

A central, full-height transom door leads to the bathing platform, with its swimming ladder and teak-topped storage lockers on both sides.

Whilst providing more shelter, and indeed more privacy due to the separation of the sleeping accommodation, the aft double cabin of the original design made the layout a mite bitty for entertaining purposes. The Coupé still makes full use of the boat's length, by enclosing the cockpit in a full-headroom canopy which stows tidily beneath a protruding lip fashioned to the rear of the superstructure.

You reach the cockpit via a medium-height step, moulded into the coaming and finished with a wood tread. The 6.5in (16.5cm) side decks are just about adequate, but a little more lip to the slightest of toe-tails would be more comforting. The wheelhouse top is fitted with handrails, finishing just where the guardrails begin.

The coachroof is flat and covered completely in a moulded non-slip, so working the foredeck is no problem. Hardware here is limited to a couple of chunky 10in bar cleats, more of which are sited amidships and at both quarters. Any windlass is an optional extra, but a large locker is provided for the ground tackle.

## Interior

The helm-cum-saloon is bright and, if the fancy takes you, breezy as well, with a large portion of the moulded deckhead opening to the elements



courtesy of a pair of sliding perspex hatches.

The front screen (serviced by a couple of self-parking wipers) and side windows are sufficiently deep to allow full all-round visibility for skipper and crew.

The latter can face forward on the double settee to starboard or, once alongside, can turn it 90° to face a second settee across a hinged dinette table. The table drops, allowing a separate infill to create a 6ft 2in (1.86m) long berth, but its built-in storage area at one end reduces the usable width to only 2ft 4in (0.71m). Possibly, a better idea would be simply to use the table as the infill.

Opposite is a galley moulding. Its work surface is extended by hinging forward the single helm seat, beneath which is an adequate-sized fridge with a small freezer compartment. A stainless steel cover hides the twin-burner hob, which also incorporates a good-sized oven, and the stainless sink is furnished with a mixer tap.

A locker beneath the oven will accommodate bulky items. The rest of the storage comprises a set of three large drawers, the bottom one being especially deep for foodstuffs. A hinged rubbish bin is neatly tucked into the side of the seat-base opposite.

Beneath this there is a measure of further storage, although with the gas bottle locker also here stowage is restricted. There is a useful-sized stowage area beneath the sole, at the bottom of which you find the plastic water tank, as well as a manual pump (to service the forward bilge) and the fuel cocks.

The helm moulding is fashioned with a deep perspex-covered chart area, as is the crew station opposite. Engine instrumentation and ready-use switches fall either side of the vertical wooden wheel, which, along with the throttle to the left and the trim tab controls, fall comfortably to hand whether you are sitting or standing with the sunroof open. Overhead pods in the deckhead moulding will take standard-sized instrument heads, as will a raised fascia above the companionway to the forepeak.

Rather than acting solely as a sleeping cabin, this forward section is fitted with a U-shaped dinette, giving extra living space during the day and making into a good 6ft 0in (1.83m) by 5ft 0in (1.52m) double berth at night. There are lined lockers beneath the seat-bases.

A locker/wardrobe combination is located between the dinette and a comfortable-looking midships quarter-berth. Although this too has a lined locker, none of them are better than moderate in size, so space will soon be swallowed up.

Completing the accommodation is a good-sized toilet compartment, incorporating dry stowage areas but equipped with a pump-out toilet and basin only. With most of the compartment fabric-lined, adding a shower would not be the simplest of modifications.

Ventilation here is by way of an opening port, while the foredeck hatch to the main coachroof is fitted with a cowl-type vent.

## Engine

The only engine installation offered is Volvo's 130hp TAMD31 diesel, which sits tidily under the wheelhouse sole and is accessed through a large gas strut-supported hatch.

The compartment has been kept small, in an attempt to contain the noise rather than let it run beneath the deck and leak out all around the boat. This is particularly commendable on a mid-engined boat, where the main accommodation is directly above the noise source, and Nimbus have laid trunking in to supply air, and insulated all sides, as well as the hatch, with foil-faced single layer foam.

Having said that, we did feel that space around the engine itself was tight. Whilst daily checks are quite possible, some maintenance points are awkward to get at. Certain auxiliary items are remote from the engine bay anyway, the raw-water strainer being tucked behind a panel in the toilet compartment while the calorifier and pump are accessed by removing the bottom drawer of the galley unit.

The fuel/water separator is on the forward bulkhead, adjacent to a second manual bilge pump (there is also an electric unit), and is fed from a stainless steel tank to starboard of the actual compartment. The top senders and removable inspection plate lie under a screwed-down section of sole.

## Handling and performance

We have had several opportunities to try the aft-cabin 27, in a range of circumstances from river work to coastal cruising, both in the UK and on an extended 500-mile trip along the Baltic coast and across Sweden via the Göta Canal and its inland seas (see MBM Jan 93 p42).

For obvious reasons, with the same hull and much the same weight distribution, the performance and handling characteristics of the Coupé proved similar.

Volvo's 130hp output gives the manufacturers' claimed 22 knots flat-out, the boat seemingly perched high on the water to give a clean, if spirited, ride.

Throttling back to around 3300rpm keeps more boat in the water, to improve her steadiness on encountering fast-moving ferry wakes and any confused chop, whilst maintaining a ground-covering 16.5 knots with little slamming or hull noise in evidence.

Trim tabs are fitted as standard, and do a responsive job of levelling in a crosswind, while for close-quarters manoeuvring the bow thruster might prove a useful optional at £1900 ex VAT. Anyway, the skeg/keel arrangement gives good directional stability at slow speeds.

Fuel and sound figures at our preferred cruising speed were 4.1gph (19lph) and 84dB(A) in the wheelhouse/saloon. On the faster sections of the Göta trip, we averaged 4mpg.

## Conclusions

On being invited to inspect the Coupé version of a cleverly thought-out aft-cabin original, we half expected to come away disappointed, uppermost in our mind being the loss of the privacy offered by the latter layout when cruising with four adults.

But opening up the aft cockpit has created an entirely different boat, and those choosing to cruise with less company (albeit still with the option of having occasional overnighting guests) will appreciate the extra uncluttered roominess in what is still a tidy 27ft package. □

## Nimbus 27 Familia Coupé

**Loa** 27ft 9in (8.45m).  
**Hull length** 26ft 5in (8.05m).  
**Beam** 9ft 6in (2.85m).  
**Draught** 3ft 3in (1.00m).  
**Displacement** 2.8 tons.  
**Fuel** 44 gal (200lt).

**Water** 24 gal (108lt).  
**Price** £53,587 ex VAT with a single Volvo TAMD31 130hp diesel.

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