



BOAT REPORT
NIMBUS
33 AVANTA

Expanding this versatile Swedish builder's range, the Avanta is the smallest Nimbus yet with a flybridge.

THE NIMBUS range now encompasses no fewer than 14 models, from a centre-console sports-fisher to the 40ft flybridge 4004 flagship.

Eminently practical, semi-enclosed-wheelhouse/saloon models still dominate the line-up, but slightly different is the latest model in the 30ft-plus bracket, the twin-cabined Avanta topped with a flybridge.

Design

The design team have based this 33-footer on a deep-vee hull (23° amidships and 16° at the transom) which quickly fills to push plenty of volume and reserve buoyancy into the forward sections after the cut of the chine.

Inspecting the boat out of the water, you find the actual chine is stepped to produce a narrow, inner flat area, to terminate the slightly concave vee sections, before turning boldly up and outward into a wider-radiused outer chine. A further 90° step is found in the vertical topside. This effectively gives an additional outer sprayrail beyond the main chine, the upshot of which is a dry ride and crisp high-speed handling.

The two pairs of inner sprayrails have been fashioned short, just covering the incidence face between air and water. This allows them to do their job of turning back the water film which spreads outward to the chine, and to offer a more effective hydrodynamic area of lift over this important section of planing surface, without the increased resistance of full-length sprayrails.

The topside, superstructure and screen lines all flow well together, with the bathing platform fully incorporated into the transom and the outdrive legs tucked well out of harm's way. The foredeck coachroof has been kept low, even though there is plenty of headroom below, and

can be readily used as a lounging area once the boat is at rest.

Given the Avanta's fine proportions, it is fun to see the designers adding a cheeky mast atop the flybridge, and the large, eye-catching oval side windows in the main superstructure.

Considering the solidity of the fit-out, we are always surprised at the comparatively light weight of Nimbus boats. This one is no exception, coming in at under 5 tons. We can put this figure down to both build and method of fit-out; the latter being based on an inner liner bonded to the hull, which in turn strengthens the light but strong GRP/Divinycell sandwich method of construction favoured by the manufacturers.

Exterior

The extended moulding to the rear of the flybridge affords a measure of shelter to the teak-laid cockpit, and a useful landing for fixing the canopy supplied to enclose it. It also serves to increase space on the low-slung flybridge, by creating a small sundeck area. This is bordered by a rail, but by little in the way of protective coaming.

The exterior helm position has two bucket seats set behind a low console moulding. This is topped by a perspex windbreak set in a full wraparound stainless steel frame-cum-handhold. Whilst there is plenty of space for necessary instruments and electronics, the driving position feels a little pinched and basic, with any available space for a more luxurious layout being taken up by the central funnel-shaped mast. The area also lacked any stowage space.

Back below, down an unfriendly ladder which unpleasantly goes beyond the vertical when the boat is underway, a transom door gives access



Left: the bathing platform area is fully integrated into the topside and hull mouldings, offering solid protection for the outdrives. Above: with the sliding door open and the canopy rigged, the amount of sheltered entertaining area is usefully increased. Right: light finishes, easy-to-clean mouldings and plenty of dry stowage make for a practical toilet/shower compartment.

to the bathing platform. This has useful lockers-cum-seats on each side, together with a shower, a swim ladder and fender storage.

The cockpit itself has teak seat lockers to each side, and is bordered all round by stainless steel grabrails. These also run right along the superstructure, from the cockpit to where the guardrail takes up to protect the fully non-slip moulded foredeck.

The latter, an enlarged split-pulpit affair, has been kept low, albeit still of a useful height. Unfortunately, it is fashioned with a top rail but no intermediate one. The foredeck is kept clear, with the anchor housed in a captive bow roller set below the gunwale, and the electric windlass beneath a hatch; there is also space to stow a warp or two here. Adequate 1 1/2 in (28cm) cleats are positioned with consideration both for feet and possible chafe.

Interior

Many manufacturers use GRP carcasses as a base on which to build up a boat's accommodation, but few use their potential as well as Nimbus. They combine detailed, intricate, well finished mouldings with well executed joinery, and panels of both wood and fabric to create a readily-cleaned and functional but still warm and friendly interior.

The inset teak and holly sole in the Avanta's saloon-cum-galley are a case in point. A hatch in the after portion gives access to the battery



Nimbus 33 Avanta

Engines: twin Volvo AD 41/DPs, 200hp at 3800rpm, 6 cyl, 3590cc.

Conditions: wind W Force 2-3, sea slight. **Load:** fuel 25%, water 100%, crew 2.

rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	trim	sound levels dB(A)			
							saloon	fwd cab	cockpit	flbdg
1500	7.0	1.7	8	3.88	428	2.5	68	68	81	67
2000	8.4	4.5	21	1.84	205	3.5	73	72	84	70
2500	13.5	8.3	38	1.62	180	6.0	76	75	86	72
2750	15.5	9.5	43	1.63	179	5.5	76	75	87	73
3000	22.0	10.6	48	2.07	228	4.5	77	76	87	73
3500	27.4	13.4	60	2.02	222	4.0	77	78	88	74
3800	32.0	18.8	85	1.71	188	4.0	77	79	89	75

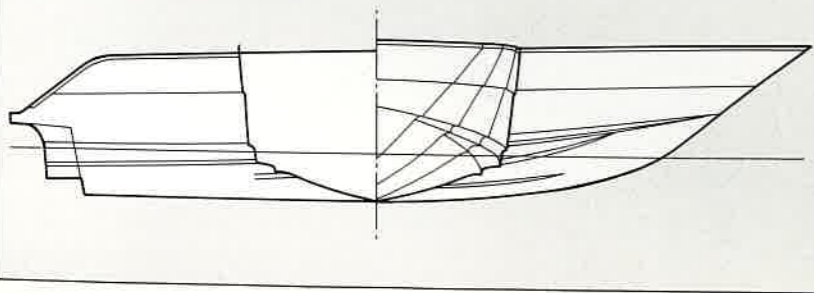
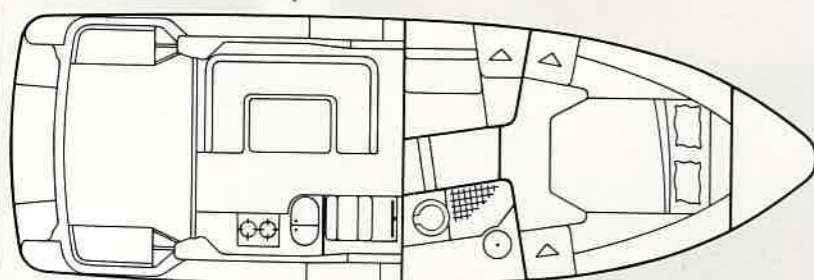
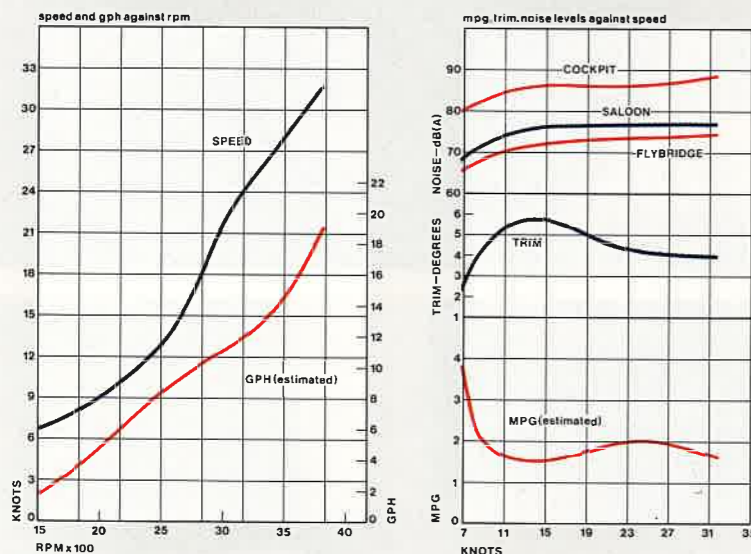
Acceleration: 0-20 knots, 9.8sec.

Loa	33ft 0in (10.0m)	Displacement	4.8 tonnes
Beam	10ft 9in (3.3m)	Fuel	110gal (500lt)
Draught (legs down)	3ft 1in (0.95m)	Water	40gal (180lt)

Price: £96,922 ex VAT with twin 200hp Volvo Penta AD 41/DP diesel outdrives.

Builders: Nimbus Boats, GKSS-Hammen, Box 5152, S-421 05 Vastra Frolunda, Sweden. Tel: (46) 31 29 46 98.

UK enquiries: Offshore Powerboats Ltd, Lymington Yacht Haven, Kings Saltern Road, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 9QD. Tel: 0590 677955. Fax: 0590 671890.



switches, the heater installation and general bulk stowage space.

The galley itself is to the left of the wide sliding door from the cockpit. As well as being equipped with a twin-burner hob and oven, a fridge and a stainless steel sink, it is planned with sufficient storage and countertop space; the helm seat hinges forward to increase the latter, while a draw beneath the dinette opposite is segmented for the crockery. Opening sections (thoughtfully hinging from the top) in both the distinctive oval windows will allow any cooking smells to escape.

A stainless steel handhold around the inboard edge of the countertop doubles as a fiddle.

Along similar lines, a handhold has been placed in front of the twin forward-facing passenger seats. When hinged back through 90°, these complete the U-dinette. The table in turns drops to form a 3ft 8in (1.2m) wide berth.

The helm position is on the snug side. With the



Although there does not seem to be a lot of windscreen to see through, visibility from the lower helm (above) is not impaired. Layout here is in the usual tidy style of Nimbus. The upper helm (right) is less conventional and might benefit from further development. The Avanta has two sleeping cabins, with a double forward and a further double amidships (below left).



angled engine instrument console and electrical panel creeping up from the chart area, and the overhead fascia encroaching over the screen, initial impressions are that visibility must be lacking, but fortunately this is not the case. The skipper has a good view all round, even though the front screen does seem pinched.

Controls and ready-use switches are all to hand. The teak wheel is comfortably positioned, with throttles, trim and power-trim a hand's-span from each other. There is room on the deep overhead fascia for a reasonable quantity of electronics, with some additional space over towards the double navigator's seat for any bulky nav aids such as a radar or plotter; this station also has its own covered chart area.

Access to the rest of the accommodation is a matter of descending a couple of steps between the two consoles.

Immediately to the right is a reasonably-sized toilet-cum-shower compartment which is almost fully moulded, for minimal fuss and bother over cleaning. Plenty of dry stowage is incorporated behind smoked perspex doors. An opening port provides ventilation and, as a matter of convenience, we were intrigued to find a manual bilge pump set adjacent to the sea-toilet.

The main cabin is in the bows, with the guest cabin athwartships under the dinette and sole.

The 6ft 6in x 4ft 6in (2.0m x 1.4m) double berth in the latter has plenty of sitting headroom with the dressing area, complete with seat and hanging locker, benefiting from full standing headroom. Further storage is by way of bin-lockers towards the head of the berth and beneath the seat-base. An opening port provides ventilation and light.

The forecabin is rather roomier, although it is pretty well dominated by a fixed double measuring 6ft 4in x 5ft 3in (1.92m x 1.6m). Beneath the berth are storage compartments, painted out but running down into the bilge, while the after area is fashioned into a cupboard. This supplements the two hanging lockers outboard, either side of the main cabin area, and small cave lockers beside the berth. The foredeck hatch comes complete with an inset ventilator.

Engines

Two engine options are listed, both from Volvo: the smaller is a pair of four-cylinder AD31 outdrives rated at 130hp apiece, while undoubtedly the more popular will be the 200hp AD41s as fitted to our test boat.

These were to be found under a heavy and awkward full-width cockpit hatch. A simple modification, and one we hope to see adopted on future boats, would be to split this hatch in two, lengthways, to allow either engine to be inspected while you are safely crouched on the closed adjacent hatch.

Access around the engines and drives is good, with service points well within reach, although space is a little tight towards the front of the compartment. The installation is neat, with cables and pipework run clear of hazards, and the engine bearers and surrounding hull benefit from a moulded covering which will help when mopping-up spills. The bilge is serviced by both manual and electric pumps.

On Volvo outdrives, the raw-water filters are to be found on the engines themselves. These are

easy to check, as are the fuel/water separators mounted towards the front of the compartment. The forward bulkhead and the hatch are the only surfaces to benefit from any noise insulation.

Both engines are fed from the same stainless steel tank, tucked under the sole with the fuel cocks accessible to the top. Outboard lie the calorifier and heat-exchanger for the hot-air heating system, which is engine-supplemented, usefully utilising waste energy from the Volvos while the craft is underway. An integrated Ardic system can be fired up once berthed, using the same ducting and blower system — a neat arrangement.

Performance and handling

We had the Avanta out on the water over a couple of days, but could not catch any poor weather to tax the deep-vee hull. The worst we could muster was the sizeable wake thrown up by our Grand Banks 42 photoboat, trundling along at 20 knots. This we sliced cleanly and evenly in every direction, a couple of times showing clear air under the keel but without cause for concern.

The acceleration and directional thrust of the outdrive configuration make for an extremely responsive package, albeit with steep banking turns once helm was applied. The fullness of the hull vee, minimal running chine width and more top-hamper than usual all augment the high angle of heel encountered while turning. Straighten the wheel and the boat is immediately square-footed again, but some will find this unnerving and the skipper should think of the crew's comfort before going into sportsboat-driving mode.

In-line with its brochure specification, the Avanta turned in a top speed of a clear 32 knots, with consumption from a pair of 41s being 19gph (87lph) flat-out at 3800rpm. Setting the throttles at a cruising 3000rpm over the short, needle-like chop of the Solent and the slight swell encountered further out, the boat's 22 knots proved both economical, at a wholesome 2mpg, and most comfortable, although it is best to keep the legs trimmed reasonably well in.

Sound levels are laudable throughout the accommodation, never above 80dB(A) once the large, sliding patio-style door is shut. The cockpit bears up less well, with a fair intrusion of noise from the rather poorly insulated engine compartment beneath.

Conclusions

As an overall length, 33ft (10m) is about as short a cruiser as you will find with a flybridge. Whether this feature on the Avanta will appeal depends upon how you go about your boating, as the layout is not particularly conducive to entertaining, though this is not a tragedy in itself given the convivial nature of the saloon. The upper helm has a sportsboat feel, especially as the craft performs more like one, rather than that of a conservative cruiser. Even so, a little more clever thought to increasing the usable seating, and access, up here would not go amiss.

With the rest of the boat we were well pleased. Sound build, practical features and a good standard of finish, combined with plenty of pace, sum up the boatbuilding standards we have come to expect from Nimbus. □