

2nd time around

Nimble Nomad 24 www.NimbleBoat.net

At first sight, the Nomad, built by Nimble Boats, Inc. of Odessa, FL, is likely to elicit such adjectives as cute, quaint and perhaps even impractical. But, owners are quick to extol its virtues as an alternative choice for boaters in search of a mini cruiser for exploring protected bays, small lakes, rivers and canals.

The Nomad is trailerable, dramatically expanding its cruising range and a feature taken advantage of by many owners who have enjoyed cruising from the Florida Keys to the Gulf Islands of British Columbia and places in between.

Noted yacht designer Ted Brewer who, in his long career, has designed everything from dinghies to three-masted schooners, designed the Nomad, which does not fit into any particular genre. In profile, the design has a mini tugboat appearance. Her hull form is somewhere between that of a flat bottom skiff and deadrise sharpie, and the layout, with forward, aft cockpits and walk-through passage between them, has some characteristics reminiscent of an English canal barge.

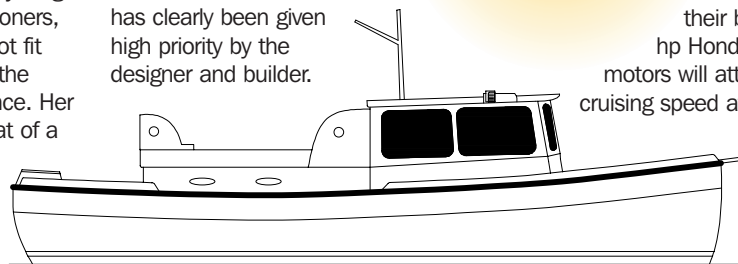
According to Jerry Koch, owner of the Nimble Boats, hull number one of the Nomad model was delivered in September 1990. Koch reported that the original Nomad was capable of 17 knots and had a short, five-foot-long keel that ranged from zero depth at the forward end to five inches deep at the aft end. This design proved to be quite difficult to steer, particularly at slow speeds. After hull number four, they began to experiment with keel size only to find that a longer deeper keel improved steering but resulted in less speed. Eventually, demand was so small for the shallow keel model that it was dropped from the line.

Nimble builds two models of the Nomad — the Nomad Special and the more expensive Nomad Tropical — which share identical dimensions and nearly identical exterior appearance. The only feature, apparent from the exterior, that sets these two models apart are two oval, bronze ports along the hull sides that are unique to the Tropical model. The Special model uses a less expensive rectangular sliding windows on each side. The Tropical model includes pressure water, a 120-volt AC electric shore service, teak and holly veneered and

upgraded interior furnishings that are not standard on the Special model.

The Nomad is simply but solidly constructed of fiberglass composites which are vacuum bagged to ensure even distribution of fiberglass resin throughout the laminate and secure adhesion of the foam core used in the construction. The deck and hull are securely joined at a four-inch-wide outward flange. The joint is secured with 3-M 5200 sealant and 1/4" X 20" stainless nuts, bolts and washers on four-inch centers.

The security of guest and crew aboard the Nomad has clearly been given high priority by the designer and builder.



I know of no other boat of this size that offers cockpits as secure as the Nomad. Yes, I said cockpits — plural. Rather than a precarious, sloped foredeck found on most boats this size, the Nomad has deep cockpits that a guest or crewmember would seriously have to work to fall out of. The forward cockpit, although small, has plenty of room for handling bow lines and ground tackle. There are molded seats on each side which also serve as steps into the cockpit.

The aft cockpit is not as long as the forward — only about 38" from the cabin bulkhead to the outboard motor well, but it is nearly 90" wide and quite a bit roomier than forward. There are steps down into the cockpit sides and a seat that doubles as a storage locker along the port side. The deck and cockpit arrangement is definitely one of the model's most appealing features.

Nimble works closely with original owners to create an interior that best suits their needs and for this reason I have never seen two interiors that were exactly the same. The helm is forward to port and there is an enclosed head aft of the helm seat.

A typical layout includes a dinette aft and to port that converts to a small double

berth, a settee on the opposite side of the cabin from the dinette and a galley forward of the dinette. The galley sometimes extends along the port side of the cabin to the forward bulkhead while other models have a shorter galley and a mate's berth at the forward end of the cabin.

Nomad models are powered by outboard engines which range from 9.9 to 50 hp. Even a 9.9 hp engine will push the

Nomad along at five to six knots when run at maximum RPM. However, for several reasons, most Nomad owners choose larger engines to power their boats and the 45- and 50-hp Hondas are very popular. Larger motors will attain the five- to six-knot cruising speed at lower RPM, consume about one gallon per hour of fuel and run quieter than the lower horsepower engines. Another benefit of the larger engine is that top speed increases to seven to eight knots.

It is important for perspective owners to keep in mind that the Nomad is a boat intended for use in protected water such as rivers, canals, lakes and small bays. While there are many of these boats on larger bodies of water, owners must use caution to avoid the extreme conditions that these boats were never intended to handle.

Cliff Stoneburner who operates Nimble Mid-Atlantic of Edgewater, MD, the country's largest dealer for Nimble boats, says he usually has several used Nomads for sale at any given time. Used models typically sell from \$17,000 to \$40,000, while new models start at a base price of \$31,000 for the Special Nomad to nearly \$50,000 for a fully equipped Tropical Nomad and trailer.

A colleague has cruised more than 3,000 miles from the Everglades to Lake Champlain on her Nimble Nomad and, in her words, "there is no better boat for getting to the backwaters." The Nomad's designer, Ted Brewer, chose a Nomad as his personal retirement boat. These endorsements are tough to beat and a good reason the Nomad is worth serious consideration.