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Yacht Yersin: Learn and Explore

A man who grew up spellbound by the sea is now helping to preserve it, by using his yacht to help educate others.

<http://www.yachtworld.com/boat-content/2015/07/educational-yacht-yersin-learning-exploring/#ixzz3hlKdXHht>

She may not look like a typical yacht, but then again *Yersin* is anything but. Measuring 252'6", *Yersin* is an intrepid explorer meant to take on the oceans of the world. She will take her owner and his family on many an adventure. She'll also welcome aboard researchers and schoolchildren alike. More than all of this, though, *Yersin* is a dream come true for a once-little boy. That now-grown-up child is François Fiat, who was enthralled by the fictional escapades of Tintin and the real explorations of Jacques Cousteau's *Calypso*. Fiat further was fascinated by *Hirondelle*, a sailing yacht used by Prince Albert I in the early 20th century for scientific studies worldwide. Fiat's imagination fueled his passion to build a boat for himself and he set out in similar fashion. "I wanted a boat that could sail anywhere, in any weather, with a reinforced hull for the ice," he says.



Yersin arrived in Monaco (here with the Monaco Yacht Club in the background) on World Oceans Day, June 8. Besides hosting researchers, the yacht is environmental-minded. She features diesel-electric propulsion, with Schottel azipods. The propulsion system permits a reported 11-knot cruise. At this speed, Fiat says *Yersin* consumes 100 gallons, "half of what we would consume with diesel engines." He adds, "At a slow-steaming speed of 9 knots, our total consumption (electricity, heating/air conditioning included) falls to 180 liters an hour, giving us autonomy for 12,000 miles and 40 days at sea with 40 people onboard." Furthermore, all grey water is recycled for wash downs.



Yersin was conceived around three key concepts—adventure, science, and education. Fiat's love of the above-mentioned real and fictional explorers explains the adventure aspect. But adventure also comes into play in how *Yersin* was outfitted. "We wanted to set aside 70 percent of the space to communal and technical areas," Fiat explains. For education, "We can take children onboard to educate future generations on protecting the environment."



Fiat and his family did exactly that in June, at an event with Princess Charlene of Monaco. Eleven schoolchildren from nearby Nice, France were selected as the winners of a competition. They spent two days aboard Yersin, observing dolphins and other marine life off the coast of Monaco. "The broad smiles and messages they retained after a day on the water convinced us that this mission for the vessel is a very valid one."



The 11 schoolchildren who stayed aboard Yersin got an extra-special treat in meeting with Princess Charlene of Monaco, on behalf of her foundation. In terms of his educational mission, Fiat has become the first La Belle Classe Superyachts ambassador for the Monaco Yacht Club. This recognizes his efforts to protect the oceans and promote the development of new technologies that will in turn ensure sustainable development. Related to this, when Fiat first came up with the idea for Yersin, he received support from three Monaco-based organizations. One of these is the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, which is squarely focused on environmental efforts. The other two are the Oceanographic Institute and the Monaco Scientific Centre.



Some yacht owners request a member of the clergy to officially bless the yacht, and all those who will cruise aboard her, at the christening ceremony. Yersin was blessed by the vicar general of Monaco, His Grace René Giuliano.



When it was time for the traditional champagne bath, the duty went to Fanny Fiat, the owner's daughter—and the godmother of Yersin. The Prince of Monaco's military band performed on bagpipes, too.



François Fiat (first at left) and his wife (second from right) welcomed many dignitaries to the Yersin ceremony. They included Prince Albert II (middle) and Bernard d'Alessandri, the general secretary of the Monaco Yacht Club (far right).

If you're wondering whether there's a story behind the vessel's name, yes, there is. Fiat admires the work of Alexandre Yersin, who is perhaps most famous for helping find a cure for the bubonic plague in the late 19th century. However, Yersin was also a great explorer. He additionally served as a physician for a merchant shipping company. "Humanity owes this man a great deal for his research," Fiat states. "I also chose one of his quotes, 'You are not truly alive unless you keep moving,' to be the vessel's motto."

Yersin will surely be moving this summer. Fiat and his family plan to cruise aboard in the eastern Med and the Adriatic Sea. In late September, fellow eco-minded yachting enthusiasts will get their chance to see her up close and in person. Yersin will be on display at the Monaco Yacht Show.

Fiat and his family haven't revealed where she'll point her bow towards after that. The specifics don't really matter, though. Plenty of far-off horizons await. And as Yersin goes on her way, surely Jacques Cousteau, Prince Albert I, and the creator of Tintin, Georges Remi (who wrote under the pen name Hergé), will be smiling.

LOA: 251'3" - Beam: 42'6" - Draft: 14'4" - Displacement: 2,246 tons - Fuel Capacity: NA



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