

Cannes: Prince Albert Celebrates New \$80M+ Superyacht That Isn't Only About Indulgence

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Zebrano and oak veneers give contrast throughout the interior. Wood is kept to a minimum, with man-made material for exterior decks rather than the usual teak.

The Monaco royal is among the supporters of Yersin, an eco-friendly ship that offers 1-percent luxuries in the name of scientific research.

Among the luxury party palaces dotting the waters off Cannes during the festival this year will float one slightly more virtuous vessel: the yellow-funneled, 250-foot motor yacht Yersin, which was blessed in the presence of Prince Albert II of Monaco in June. The world's most efficient, clean and advanced ICE Class explorer superyacht (ICE designates serious ice-going vessels) was conceived and built for scientific research projects — while offering key comforts of more leisure-focused crafts — with the support of the likes of Prince Albert's foundation (luxury watchmaker Blancpain also is a partner). Yersin likely will be the scene of a few fest shindigs in Cannes, but its future holds more excursions like the one Albert's wife, Princess Charlene, hosted in June, with 11 schoolchildren from Nice observing dolphins off the coast of Monaco.

"There is a trend toward more interesting yachts, offering the potential for fuel-efficient, long-range cruising and self-sufficiency," says Peter Wilson of Marine Construction Management in Newport, R.I., which has overseen 75 superyacht builds. "Foundations operating expedition and research projects have become a fascinating area of expansion."



Yersin's wheelhouse features a print of the Belgian cartoon adventurer Tintin, a childhood hero of Fiat's.



A meeting room for press and research presentations.

Yersin's owner, French entrepreneur Francois Fiat (he and wife Genevieve Baud, a grocery and retail heiress, are involved in environmental causes), planned the craft with a focus on adventure, science and education. Named for Alexandre Emile Jean Yersin, who discovered the pathogen that caused the bubonic plague in 1894, it was built over 36 months in France's Piriou Shipyard with the collaboration of Pierre Jacques Kubis Naval Designs, where until March Jacques Cousteau's Calypso was docked. Yersin carries enough diving and lab equipment for a National Geographic expedition and has a library stocked with Cousteau's films.

The master suite, along with another double close by, is situated one level above the main deck (where the remaining six cabins are located) and has two private recessed decks flanking it. Also on board: two gymnasiums, a massage room, hair salon and hammam. A glass sculpture in the main deck saloon portrays Prince Albert II on one side and his great-great-grandfather Prince Albert I, who inaugurated Monaco's Oceanographic Museum, on the other. A pair of 25-foot military-grade, bullet-proof Zodiac rigid inflatable Hurricanes shadow the boat at anchor — they can be used to bring guests aboard or for expeditions. Yersin also has a more refined tender — a 37-foot Wajer Osprey launch — and several toys, including kayaks and an all-terrain quad bike, available for recreation and exploration.



The intimate upper-deck theater has 15 plush seats.

Yersin features electric propulsion through Azimuth thrusters powered by generators. At a cruising speed of 11 knots, it uses only 100 gallons of diesel per hour, about half what a conventional diesel yacht would guzzle. At a slow steaming speed of 9 knots, this drops to 47 gallons per hour, allowing 40 days at sea with 40 people on board, including crew. It's available for charter, but only with a background check and a detailed research proposal; rates will vary according to the project but at a minimum will cover running costs (about \$23,000 a day), with sponsorship opportunities available for scientific expeditions.



The ASE m/v Yersin in Amsterdam harbor during October 2015

Whoever boards Yersin can enjoy large TV monitors in luxurious lounging areas as well as a 15-seat cinema. A 1,400-square-foot multipurpose platform can accommodate a reception marquee, suspended by a crane, and serve as a dance floor. If it all gets too exciting, there's a well-equipped hospital room below decks. Gin and tonic, anybody? Just don't throw the lime overboard — the vessel was designed "to make an impression but not leave a trace" in the ocean.