

(SuperYachtWorld) -- They may not be big on looks but explorer yachts can realize even the most intrepid traveler's desire for far-flung and exotic corners of the globe.

Explorers offer all the comforts of traditional superyachts but with souped-up specifications -- an ice-strengthened hull to cope with polar ice or ocean-going capability.

Which means these tough boats can cruise from Patagonia to the islands of the Caribbean and from the Arctic ice to the Mediterranean.

They also come with an impressive array of gadgets and gizmos: Helicopters, fishing boats, luxury speed boats and state-of-the-art navigation gear are all among the play things likely to be aboard.

While chartering one of these yachts is not within everyone's budget -- prices range from about \$100,000 to \$500,000 per week, depending on the season -- most people can relate to the fantasy of escaping the crowds and exploring some of the world's most remote and beautiful spots.

'Atmosphere'

Why we like it: "Atmosphere" is more than a yacht -- it is the perfect escape for the 21st century adventurer. It is a specially designed platform from which to explore undiscovered Chilean Patagonia in three ways -- by air, land and water, using the yacht's on-board vehicles, which include a helicopter.

There is nowhere we can't go. And wherever we go, we do so in style, carrying more tenders, toys and cars than you can shake a stick at.

–Kostas Andreou, 'Allure Shadow' Captain

Where has it been? It has been based off the fjord-like coast of Chile since its launch. Its cruising area is 400 or so nautical miles from Puerto Montt in the north to the Taitao peninsula.

What its captain says: "My crew will fly you in helicopters, drive you to see wildlife in special tenders and take you on rugged shore-based excursions in one of a fleet of all-terrain vehicles we keep ashore in strategically placed locations along the coastline. We can fly you in the helicopter to isolated ski slopes with virgin snow." Victor Espinoza

Web site: nomadsoftheseas.com

'Allure Shadow'

Why we like it: "Allure Shadow" was built for a yacht owner who purchased a shadow boat to carry the toys for his big white yacht but then discovered he enjoyed the shadow more than the other one. It's not short

on luxuries: every cabin has its own balcony.

Where has it been? Most recently it was deployed to Bimini in the Bahamas where its huge hangar and massive crane were used to launch a research submarine that was looking for the lost city of Atlantis.

What its captain says: "There is nowhere we can't go. And wherever we go, we do so in style, carrying more tenders, toys and cars than you can shake a stick at. When you talk about carrying a helicopter, we ask how many would you like!" Kostas Andreou.

Web site: iyc.com

'Senses'

Why we like it: "Senses" is packed with toys, including a luxurious 13 meter "Nelson tender" speedboat with its own slipway system enabling guests to step directly aboard from the main deck, an 8.5 meter Herreshoff sailing sloop, a "Hobie Cat" catamaran, a Waverunner, an 8 meter fishing boat and a 7.5-meter RIB.

Where has it been? With a decade of adventures under its belt, it is one of the few charter yachts that can cruise from pole to pole. Its current owner has already taken "Senses" around the world twice.

What its captain says: "'Senses' can acclimatize to every use, be it diving in the Tropics, three month-long self-contained adventures up the Amazon, or entertaining. Its flotilla of tenders can be customized to suit the adventure at hand and that includes the seven-seat helicopter with a range of 600 nautical miles." Geordie Nicholson

Web site: burgessyachts.com

'Big Aron'

Why we like it This capacious 2004 yacht was refitted in 2006. With five decks reserved for guests it commands vast interior and exterior spaces.

Where has it been? South America and Brazil, where it explored some amazing uncharted river deltas, and the Angra dos Reis south of Rio -- a perfect charter area with 365 islands, beautiful beaches with wonderful fishing.

What its captain says: "Our French Polynesia charter trips show off some of my yacht's better features. Its seaworthiness sailing between island groups and its ability to carry a large tender on deck, which we use to explore lagoons and diving areas, make it the perfect yacht. Our large deck spaces are good for bringing entertainment on board -- including,

once, a large Tahitian dancing group!" Will Kaye

Web site: camperandnicholsons.com

'Titan'

Why we like it: Built for the Royal Navy as "HMS Beagle," it was one of a flotilla that undertook voyages around the world to ensure that the Admiralty's hydrographic charts were fully up-to-date. It is a classic example of how a yacht should be converted from a ship.

Where has it been? Following a change of ownership, "Titan" was refitted again in 2007. It changed its hull color from white to dark blue, and set off around the world.

What its captain says: "Having chartered the world for the Admiralty as "Beagle," "Titan" is now ready to charter the world for the discerning guest." Luca Lazzari

Web site: ocyachts.com

'Devotion'

Why we like it: "Devotion" was the first superyacht to enter Desolation Sound in British Columbia. Reliable, solid, and seaworthy, this is a vessel with beautiful and timeless lines.

Where has it been? After three circumnavigations of the globe, it's now based in Alaska, and what a place to explore -- from lush green forests to glacial fjords.

What its captain says: "'Devotion' heightens your awareness of the surroundings. The big deck spaces and windows allow our guests to experience nature's beauty virtually the entire time aboard." Dan Stabbert

Web site: njyachts.com/#home

'Maverick II'

Why we like it: "Maverick II" is loaded with sailing dinghies, kayaks, wind surfing boards, tows and a fighting chair for fishermen. This Japanese-built yacht is a proven world cruiser.

Where has it been? Just about everywhere, but it's now based in Phuket, Thailand, giving it access to Indonesia, Singapore, Myanmar and India, as well as being able to offer all-year cruising.

What its captain says: "My crew is highly service oriented with several

taking classes to learn new skills in their spare time, such as new massage techniques." Robert Hossack

Web site: burgessyachts.com

'Leo Fun'

Why we like it: "Leo Fun" has a range of 5,000 miles at a cruising speed of 15 knots. The night-vision cameras with infrared to make the boat more secure. With four generators instead of the usual three, it's got the power to back up its explorer credentials.

Where has it been? Launched in April last year, this Turkish beauty is still very new to the blue planet.

What its captain says: "Because of its solidity, seaworthiness and state-of-the-art navigation gear, I would be happy to take 'Leo Fun' anywhere with more than three meters of water." Frederic Castaignos

Web site: yachtcharter-monaco.com

www.superyachtworld.com

Frances and Michael Howorth contributed to this report.