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The compact 19m Numarine 22XP has large social areas and a spacious flybridge

an weeks, you also need the room for and friends to relax without stepping on er's toes. That's why smaller explorers n more emphasis on generous volumes, ng broad beams and well built-up ictures. Of course, there's outside space the focus is on protection from the s; after all, the world around the boat is yground in an explorer. Being able to e the interior in a way you couldn't on a motor yacht helps those building smaller on yachts to pack on even more volume. rine sales manager Ali Tanir says that this a major attraction of the genre. "Most of ers are making the choice because of the hat we offer - big living spaces." His new

22XP and larger 26XP make much of sound and vibration insulation to stay comfortable on long cruises. "We are giving lower [sound levels] than RINA Comfort Class requires, with floating floors on the 26XP. In our 'silent package' we use lithium-ion batteries, so we are able to stay on battery power from 8 to 10 hours with all systems functioning."

But if the prospect of butting through the ice floes in high latitudes doesn't set your pulse racing, there is another strand to the explorer genre which might be better described as a long-range cruiser. Brands such as Grand Banks and Numarine are



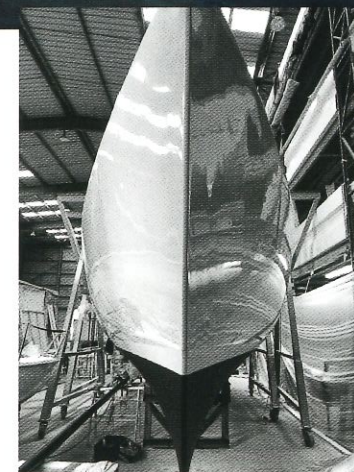
Thanks to its semi-planing hull, Turbocraft's Silverfin has high fuel efficiency and an impressive range

hugely capable motor yachts with many of the same characteristics as their more rugged counterparts - efficient hulls, long range and seakeeping comfort. But their smaller boats are pitched at those more interested in independence than extreme adventure, with hulls in lightweight GRP.

It is this demand that Turbocraft is hoping to tap with its new 13m Silverfin concept, described as being halfway between an explorer and a lobster boat. It has clean, military looks, but the extreme efficiency of the "sleek, slender and razor-shaped" hull gives the prototype a range of around 500 miles at 11 knots - ideal for exploring the Norwegian fjords or for ambitious Mediterranean cruising. "In our case, a bigger range is possible thanks to a different type of hull allowing for much lighter weight and much bigger fuel efficiency," says managing director John Clapot. The Silverfin concept will eventually run up to 30 metres, he adds.

There is also an eco element to all of this. "People are going more and more slowly and choosing boats with lower consumption," says Numarine's Tanir. "The lifestyle has changed. Instead of going from one place to another fast, they are cruising comfortably during lunch breaks. Or they go down to sleep and they wake up in their new location."

Grand Banks' new 18 metre has a range of 2,500 nautical miles, but offers speeds up to 36 knots, thanks to its lightweight GRP hull with carbon fibre superstructure. "I've got customers living on board their boats and doing exploring they've never done before," says CEO Mark Richards. "Every nook and cranny has storage - there's a huge cockpit lazarette for that reason. Stability is a big deal, so we use 100 per cent carbon fibre in the superstructure



for a low centre of gravity. There are watertight bilge compartments and the flybridge is great for tender storage or kayaks."

Clearly you won't be able to fit as much kit on a 24-metre explorer as you could on a bigger boat. But there are some clear advantages to staying small, according to Arksen. "The simpler systems on board mean that much less training and specialist knowledge are required to take charge than is the case on a

larger vessel," says Hind. "Operations such as anchoring, berthing or tender launching can be undertaken by a couple, rather than requiring a whole crew."

"Being on a smaller vessel can also enhance the experience for the owner when visiting more remote communities. Arriving in a large superyacht is a very obvious statement of wealth that immediately sets the owner and crew apart from the locals. A smaller vessel is much less imposing, allowing a more natural experience of a location and culture."

It also allows you to tuck into the small bays and pristine coves you encounter on your travels. And if it helps with the mission to explore, thinking small might be the right choice for many adventurous owners. ■



The Grand Banks 60 is an ocean-going cruiser with a range of 2,500nm at 10 knots

BOAT INTERNATIONAL'S GUIDE TO THE BEST BOATS BETWEEN 12 AND 24 METRES

12 18 24

SEAN 50X: OPEN UP
FLEXIBLE STYLE

RIZON FD75: A LESSON IN
RY, LIGHT-FILLED DESIGN

OPAR 37XC: FULL THROTTLE
A SOLID SPEEDSTER

PUMP UP THE VOLUME:
HOW SMALLER YACHTS ARE
PACKING ON THE POUNDS

A LITTLE ADVENTURE:
THE PETITE EXPLORER
YACHTS MAKING WAVES

BOAT