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Credit: Øivind Haug

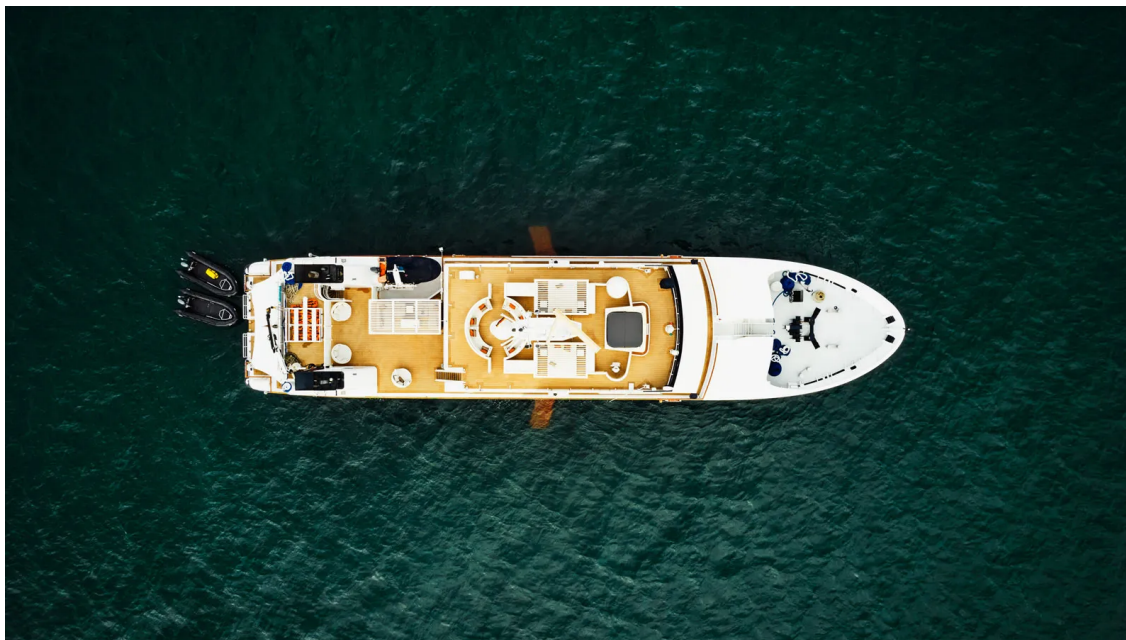
Hanse Explorer: Inside the refit of the 48m expedition yacht

26 November 2021 • Written by Olivia Michel

Polar expedition yacht [Hanse Explorer](#) is ready to welcome back charter guests following a multi-month refit project. BOAT has a first look inside...

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“The refit was finished about five minutes ago,” laughs EYOS Expeditions co-founder Tim Soper, as he welcomes BOAT on board *Hanse Explorer*. Whatever last-minute fixes may have been going on behind the scenes, the light and airy saloon space that greets guests on entry offers an immediate sense of serenity as the yacht prepares to leave land behind and cruise into the North Sea.



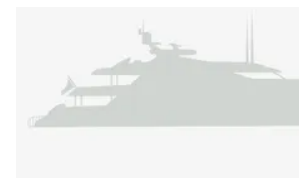
Hanse Explorer is fresh from a refit and ready for adventure. - Credit: Øivind Haug

The 48 metre superyacht was first delivered in 2006 by German shipyard [Fassmer](#). With expedition management exclusively by EYOS she has since then tested her expedition capabilities from the Arctic to Antarctica and everywhere in between, including the first ever fly-in / fly-out Antarctic yacht charter in 2008.

In 2019, she was purchased by her current owners, Sven and Kristin Lindblad. Sven, who is CEO of pioneering travel company Lindblad Expeditions and an advocate for eco-tourism, wanted to transform *Hanse Explorer* from a robust-looking ship into a luxury charter yacht that could open up the expedition experience to a multitude of guests. So from late 2020, work began on an extensive refit that practically stripped that yacht to its bones.

Well suited for polar cruising, *Hanse Explorer* boasts the highest possible ice certification. - Credit: EYOS Expeditions

Having now been totally restyled by Partner Ship Design and AROS Marine, *Hanse Explorer* is once again ready for adventure.



HANSE EXPLORER

Fassmer
48.01 m · 2006



GAME CHANGER

Damen Yachting
72 m · 2017

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The rugged, steel-hulled exterior, boasting the highest commercial ice classification, conceals what is now a refined interior with a distinctly modern style. Traditional dark panelling and leather furnishings have been swapped for light woods and a neutral palette of creams, clean whites and chromed silvers, with just a touch of nautical navy blue. Expanses of glass flood spaces with sunshine and allow for optimal viewing of wildlife during expeditions.

Sliding glass doors connect the interiors with the outside world. · Credit: Øivind Haug

“We started with the idea that the boat felt closed in, and I wanted to open it up,” says Sven. Realising this effect involved installing glass-paned sliding doors to create a seamless transition from the saloon to the outside decks – a feature which Sven describes as “the greatest victory in this process.” A similar entryway has been outfitted in the master stateroom to offer primary charter guests private deck access.

The new interiors are light and modern. · Credit: Øivind Haug

The Lindblads add that the elegant simplicity and neutrality of the design is key to optimising the experiences offered on board *Hanse Explorer*. “The main goal was to maximise and create the deepest connection with the outside world,” details Kristin, with Sven adding that it was crucial to design “an interior that doesn’t compete with the outside.”

“We wanted it to be very calm, and not too brash,” he adds. “I think we’ve achieved a sense of calm and openness and modernity, and I think it’s very elegant,” concludes Sven.

Previously unused, the top deck has now been transformed with a lounge area and Bali beds. · Credit: Øivind Haug

Deck spaces have also been completely transformed to further prioritise time in the great outdoors. The top deck – previously off-limits – has now had the radar raised by three metres to create an outdoor oasis during expeditions. “The top just was not used, but it’s such a beautiful part of the ship,” explains Sven.

The refit included the installation of a hot tub, a cocktail area with Bose sound systems and cabana-style Bali beds for sleeping under the stars in warmer destinations. Kristin notes that the hot tub will make for an atmospheric experience in colder climes and enthuses that “in the South Pacific, being up there and looking at the aquamarine all around is going to be spectacular.”

Guests can now enjoy a dip in the new sundeck hot tub. · Credit: EYOS Expeditions

The Lindblads' desire to prioritise the external environment while redesigning the interior was undoubtedly on-brand given Sven's background in expedition travel. Lindblad Expeditions, founded by Sven's father, explorer Lars-Eric Lindblad, was formative in opening up some of the most remote destinations to adventurous travellers and was an early pioneer of eco-tourism. The Lindblad legacy will now be continued with *Hanse Explorer* as the yacht brings its guests to the globe's most far-flung places. The type of tourism offered by *Hanse Explorer* charters, Sven argues, will encourage environmental awareness.

Exploring Helgoland, an island in the North Sea, during our time on board. · Credit: EYOS Expeditions

“The reality is that we expend energy on things that we understand and things that we care about. And so travel creates an opportunity to develop understanding, and interest and care,” he says. “Certain kinds of tourism are actually key to the protection of the environment. We need advocates for the environment and the best way to do that is to expose people to it.”

Outdoor areas are now spread across two decks. · Credit: Øivind Haug

Guests on board the world-girdling *Hanse Explorer* will certainly have the opportunity for maximum exposure to the natural world, while still being cocooned from the harshness of the elements. Another significant portion of the refit was the addition of retractable SKF zero-speed fin stabilisers that reduce rolling while still allowing the explorer to continue breaking the ice.

As the explorer cruises through the choppy waters of the North Sea, the captain temporarily takes the stabilisers off to demonstrate the difference. We are standing on the bridge, which Sven has nicknamed "the observation lounge" as guests frequently gather here for wildlife and scenery viewings. The increased movement throughout the interior is clear, and when the stabilisers are switched back on, it becomes apparent that the duration of the rolling motion is noticeably shortened for increased stability.

The refurbished master suite. · Credit: Øivind Haug

Following her refit, *Hanse Explorer* will head to the Antarctic and then on to the south pacific islands of French Polynesia where her upgrades will serve her well. But the completion of this refit does not mark the end of her owners' plans for continual improvement. Getting equipped for unparalleled activities in the south pacific is the next step, hints Soper.

Her owners are planning to upgrade her dive facilities in 2022. · Credit: Coulson Tennant