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Apreamare 12M Comfort

An old approach to a very modern yacht.

By John Wooldridge
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The hundreds of boats anchored in the Severn River cluttered up the approach to the harbor at Annapolis, Maryland. They were waiting for the Blue Angels to fly their salute to midshipmen graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy. All eyes were on the sky-until, that is, our Apreamare 12 Meter Comfort came charging on the scene. From its gleaming navy blue topsides and sparkling mahogany caprails to its teak-covered decks, the Apreamare 12 Meter Comfort is 40 feet of lovingly designed and exquisitely finished yacht. But it looks like nothing else out there, at least in American waters.

At first glance, our admirers may even have been fooled by the Comfort's rounded transom into thinking we had to be a slow-moving displacement cruiser. That's natural, considering that this design resembles a reliable workboat that plied the waters of the Mediterranean for thousands of years. But as we slalomed precisely through the fleet, deftly avoiding anchor rode of various scope, I could take a sly satisfaction in seeing not a few eyes open wide.

In fact, I believe they would have opened even wider had they watched us for the entire hour-long, 20-knot downwind run from Baltimore to Annapolis in three-foot-tall waves, surfing and overtaking wakes in an attempt to beat the mandatory closure of the Severn River to traffic during the air show. Coming out of the Patapsco River and Baltimore's busy harbor, we had run headlong into a nasty windblown chop. But the modified-V planing hull below the waterline of this yacht is a close relation to fast military patrol craft, and it handled the waters of the Chesapeake Bay on this day with aplomb.

Credit Cataldo Aprea, scion of a well-known boatbuilding family on Naples Bay, with adapting an idea used on traditional fishing designs, large stern tabs. These help keep the design from squatting at the stern under acceleration and improve planing ability. Look over the stern of the Apreamare 12M Comfort and you can see them, an integral part of the solid fiberglass hull structure, extending aft just beneath the surface, adding stability at rest. The striking rounded stern is a real eye-catcher; it is also practical, credited with reducing the "station wagon effect" that has plagued some designs with exhaust blowback. And of course it presents a buoyant, wave-parting aspect to overtaking seas-or wakes when anchored.

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The well-named Comfort is a refinement of the original 12 Meter model that was introduced in the mid-1990s, and it is obvious from the outside that craftsmanship is still paramount at Apreamare. You'll still find the flawless teak planking that runs from stem to stern on the weather decks and onto the swim platform and bridgedeck. Side decks are still eminently walkable and safe to transit due to seamless stainless steel safety rails that are finished to a high polish and strategically placed all around. The deckhouse of the Comfort seems a bit shorter these days, a trade-off that increases the size of the foredeck to allow the installation of a stainless hatch that lets natural air and light below in abundance. A comfortable lounge seat at the forward end of the deckhouse is a welcome addition for those who want an uninterrupted view of the waters ahead.

An optional hardtop, with red lights in the overhead for night running, was a welcome addition on the cool and windy day of our delivery. With optional weather curtains zipped up aft, the bridgedeck was a comfortable platform for navigation and steering duties. Sightlines were excellent, making it easy to avoid the large commercial ships and tugs moving around in Baltimore Harbor, and the instrument



The adjustable double helm bench is an inviting feature for those who want to keep company with the helmsman between ports. Dinette-style seating to port is a real plus for those who don't want to hold meals on their laps. The wet bar abaft the helm bench makes entertaining on the bridgedeck more convenient, and it can be equipped with an optional Raritan refrigerator/icemaker to minimize the number of trips below for refreshments.

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Descending the wide companionway steps into the saloon, the warmth of cherry interior joinery soothes the eyes. The fit and finish of bulkheads, built-in furniture and cabinetry is high-grade, excellent to the touch, flawless in its function. A cherry and holly sole is also standard, balanced nicely with custom soft goods selected by Apreamare; a lounge is upholstered in buttery leather. Flip-down panels on the dinette table allow it to be converted from breakfast- or brunch-sized to a fuller dining setup. The six highly polished stainless steel opening ports admit copious amounts of natural light, yet are easily covered by drapes for privacy in port. Small, dimmable halogen spots recessed in the overhead liner provide after-hours lighting here, as in all cabins.

Apreamare's designers didn't stray too far from a proven two-cabin arrangement, but the subtle nuances express a certain cruising- and entertainment-minded sensibility. The well-equipped, L-shaped galley is placed near the companionway steps, making it easier to pass up food and dinnerware when the crew wants to dine with a view of surrounding waters. While the forward stateroom can be ordered with a V-berth, the more obvious choice is an oversized island berth that is contoured for increased sleeping area. The en suite head includes a cylindrical shower stall with a handsome wooden teak grate underfoot. The portside guest cabin is furnished with twins, but a removable insert quickly converts this accommodation to a couple-friendly double. The adjoining head, also equipped with its own shower stall, does double duty as a day head. Like the saloon, both cabins and both heads are carefully fitted with furniture-grade cabinetry.

A quick look in the engine compartment shows a snug but serviceable fit for the twin Cat diesels and the Mase genset. Standard equipment includes Racor fuel filters, hydraulic steering and trim tabs, an automatic battery charger serving two starting and two house batteries. Electrical and plumbing systems are well protected against chafe.

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For the yachting enthusiast who appreciates the tradition but values enduring craftsmanship, the Apreamare 12M Comfort will be a treat to own-especially when maneuvering proudly through crowded anchorages.

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