

THE ART AND CRAFT OF A MARINER



Paul Deacon –
marine artist

Throughout the ages the craft of being a seaman has included many skills which now, in the modern world, we refer to more loosely as art. Fancy rope work, scrimshaw, whittling or carving of pipes in particular, model ships in bottles, sketches, drawings and paintings are all by-products from skills garnered at sea.

Any art, or the subjects of various works of art, is always a matter of personal taste. Either you love it or it doesn't grab you and so flag it. Then again art has always found a soft spot among seafarers both afloat and ashore and we are not just talking about the girls of the night where sailors developed the art of getting the best deal for the least coin for the most time while still leaving enough for a cleansing ale on the way back to the ship either, such were sailors.

No the art of painting the ports of call or the ships in which they served or battles and other memorable occasions sailors love, has always been a near and dear thing for seafarers and even today we see aboard our ships many examples of fine art, be it on a cruise ship or cargo carrier. Such is our love and respect for fine things. But sadly only a handful of seafarers today have either retained or developed the skills to keep our marine art alive. Could this be the result of the modern fast world where we now work with ships spending most of their time at sea with minimum manning and fast turnarounds in ports? Sailors today rarely get to enjoy the fruits of our trade as our forefathers did.

Marine art, paintings in particular, have always found favour with seafarers, whether it is a subject they just admire or something commissioned. In many cases, it will remain in families for generations. More recently, some of our older hands or their families have had commissioned a painting of dad's boat at sea. But it is often difficult to find an artist who can paint a situation which memories are made of. A time when no one was around to take a photo. These works become life long treasures, crafted in the hands of a fine artist to be enjoyed and the subject of debate or comment for the years to come.

Recently *Professional Skipper* magazine enjoyed the pleasure of meeting Paul Deacon, a marine artist who before coming ashore, was a professional mariner and is now an accomplished artist specialising in marine art using oils.

Paul was born into a seafaring family in the beautiful historic port of Dartmouth, England where from an early age he was surrounded by the influence of the sea. In the late 1950s and early 60s the Port of Dartmouth hosted some of the earliest 'Tall Ships' races and it was the sight of these schooners, ketches and square

riggers laying at their moorings that fired Paul's imagination to become a marine artist.

After joining the Merchant Navy in 1973, Paul spent many years trading on vessels around Europe, Scandinavia, North Africa and the Mediterranean, experiencing every aspect of a seaman's life as a deck officer. He regularly sketched or photographed the maritime world around him. Beyond his work life Paul took opportunities to sail on a range of traditional sailing craft around the coasts of England, France and New Zealand. Paul emigrated to New Zealand in 1995 and since then has had several solo exhibitions in Auckland and Northland. In his spare time Paul keeps up regular maritime activities sailing monthly on the Ted Ashby as well as sailing and sea kayaking to all corners of the Hauraki Gulf.

Paul takes exceptional care in creating his unique marine paintings and enjoys sourcing reference material by sailing on vessels or checking out quaysides, boatyards, shorelines and museums. He uses high quality materials ensuring the final result of each painting will give pleasure to generations of owners. Paul's oil paintings capture atmosphere and detail whether of historic or modern vessels and his works can be viewed at leading galleries in centres including Whangarei, Matakana, Orewa, Devonport, Auckland, Tauranga, Hamilton and Queenstown.

Over the years Paul's paintings and illustrations have been commissioned to illustrate a number of books and magazines in New Zealand, Australia and the UK and several paintings are now marketed as prints throughout New Zealand. Commissioned paintings of commercial and fishing vessels, warships, yachts and a broader range of historic marine paintings are held by private collectors in the US, Canada, UK, Europe, New Zealand and Australia.

Now we have the opportunity to bring to our readers the chance to enjoy a taste of Paul's work. It is an opportunity for readers to talk with the artist himself about any of his existing paintings, or to order that special commission of one's own ship. In doing so, we are pleased to announce that this year, all new subscriptions and subscription renewals, will go into the draw for one of Paul's works. You will receive a beautifully painted and traditionally framed, 780mm x 625mm painting of the *Endeavour*, running before the wind. This work carries an artist value of \$1,000 and will be drawn and announced in the January issue, due out in December, just prior to Christmas.

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