

The first frame of the restored Bluenose II, erected in January 2011. From bow to stern, some 964 planks and 12,000 galvanized spikes were used in the hull alone.

Photo by Mark Doucette.

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Patrick Hirtle

Bluenose II... Restoring a Canadian Legacy

On September 29, 2012, renowned as Canada's iconic sailing ambassador, Bluenose II made its way back into the waters of Lunenburg Harbour before a crowd of thousands along the shoreline of the beautiful UNESCO World Heritage town.

It was no small journey to restore Bluenose II – in fact, it took the expertise of three marine-industry firms to carefully and methodically deconstruct and restore the Queen of the North Atlantic.

Covey Island Boatworks, Snyder's Shipyard and Lunenburg Industrial Foundry & Engineering, combined to form a brand-new company, the Lunenburg Shipyard Alliance (LSA), bringing more than 220 years of boat-building experience to the Bluenose II project.

The LSA was given the privilege of restoring Bluenose II because of its wide-ranging expertise, bringing together the talents of custom-yacht and boat builders with experts in fabrication, design, machining, metal

casting and historic and classic yacht restoration. In the fall of 2010, the process of deconstructing Bluenose II began. LSA workers began the rebuild by milling the ultra-durable Angelique wood into planks that would eventually become the laminated frames of the new hull.

Early in 2011, the first frame was hoisted into place on the new keel. Over the course of the next several months, successive frames would be built and erected, until the "skeleton" of Bluenose II became clearly defined.

A laminated keelson was built,



More than five miles of cotton and oakum were used between the planks of the Bluenose II hull. Photo by Mark Doucette.



Its protective shelter removed, in the late summer Bluenose II was transferred to the marine railway along the Lunenburg waterfront.

On September 29, 2012, thousands descended upon the community for the 49 year old schooner's launch party.

*Photo by
Mark Doucette,
Halifax*



along with the laminated deck beams and carlins. Work assembling the hull's planking and cold-molded ceiling would then soon follow and, by September of 2011, the final spikes were driven into the so-called whiskey plank.

The schooner's entire hull has been completely rebuilt to eliminate hogging in the future. Bluenose II will also benefit from new mechanical and electrical systems.

The winter months of 2011-12 were filled with interior work, laying the deck and sealing the seams between planks in the traditional manner. The true scope of the restoration of the 143' Bluenose II is evident in the volume of materials used to restore her.

From bow to stern, some 964 planks and 12,000 galvanized spikes were used in the hull. Another 4,000 spikes were used for the deck planking. Between all planking is a combination of cotton and oakum;



TOP: The first frame of the restored Bluenose II, erected in January 2011. Photo by Mark Doucette. The "Team" from left, Marius Lengkeek (Lengkeek Vessel Engineering Inc.), Wade Croft (Snyder's Shipyard), John Steele and Al Hutchinson (Covey Island Boatworks), and David Allen, Kevin Feindel and Peter Kinley (Lunenburg Industrial Foundry and Engineering).

a rope-like textured substance used in traditional wooden-hull boat building. Enough oakum was used in the restoration to stretch close to five miles.

The vessel's two masts, canvas sails and rigging will be installed in the coming months.

Much of the original vessel will be reused including: rigging, masts, sails, ironwork, companionways, bunk boards and her interior wood, as well as ballast.

Overall, the configuration of the deck will more closely resemble the original Bluenose, offering a more

authentic experience for passengers.

By October 2012, after roughly twenty seven months of work, the official mast-stepping ceremony took place. There remains several months of systems, mechanical and interior work left to complete before sea trials commence in the spring.

The Lunenburg Marine Museum Society, which operates Bluenose II, on behalf of the province,

has yet to unveil a summer sailing schedule for 2013, but stronger and as prominent as ever, the restored 43-metre Bluenose II, rebuilt by the LSA to American Bureau of Shipping standards, will be ready to continue sailing the high seas representing Nova Scotia and Canada as our sailing ambassador. GAM

For more information, please visit the home of the Lunenburg Shipyard Alliance online at www.thelsa.ca

More info and photos at www.bluenose.novascotia.ca and www.coveyisland.com



Nova Scotia's sailing ambassador, the Bluenose II, has undergone a two-year, \$15.9-million restoration, with Ottawa covering \$4.9-million of the cost and the province of Nova Scotia paying the rest.



The Bluenose II, launched in 1963, is a replica of the original Bluenose, a Grand Banks fishing schooner that won worldwide acclaim for its graceful lines and flat-out speed. Canada 50-cent "Bluenose" stamp of 1929.



PHOTOS : Bill West - photographed while visiting his hometown Halifax