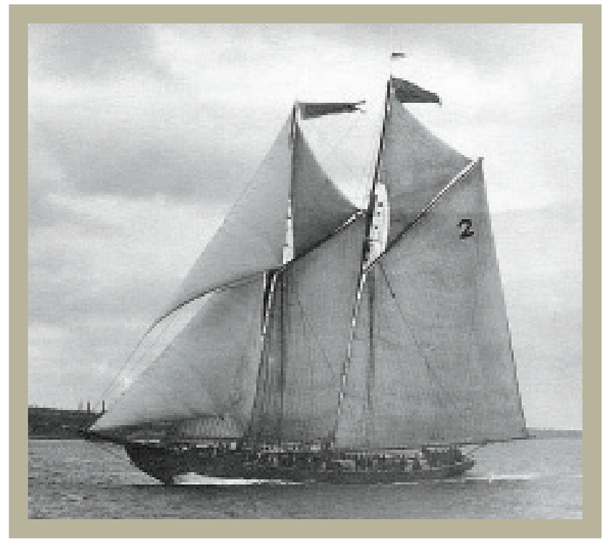
original



THESE PAGES: THE FIRST *BLUENOSE* BEAT NOVA SCOTIA'S RIVAL FISHERMEN IN A SERIES OF 17 RACES BUT SANK IN 1946 WHILE WORKING AS A FREIGHTER. SHE IS COMMEMORATED ON THE CANADIAN 10 CENT COIN. *BLUENOSE II* (OPPOSITE), BUILT IN 1963, CONSOLIDATED HER LEGENDARY STATUS

BLUENOSE II

Originally Bluenose and Bluenose II

THE OLD TOWN OF LUNENBURG IN NOVA SCOTIA RISES ON A hill overlooking the waterfront. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it is the best surviving example of a planned British colonial settlement in North America. The town is a little quirky and, to an outsider, might seem rather melancholic. According to historian Mike Parker, in her golden years during the late 1880s Lunenburg County was home port to 193 salt bankers and 4,842 fishermen. The salt bank enterprise and the impressive fleet of schooners that plied their trade in Nova Scotia contributed more than a third of the entire Canadian fishery. But it was not an easy life. Vessels were often caught unaware in storms. At the town's waterfront, the Fishermen's Memorial lists 128 vessels lost, 41 lost with all hands.

The fishing schooners headed to sea with a crew of about 28. When they reached a spot where cod was plentiful the crew would lower dories and fish, two men to a dory, until the belly of the vessel was full. Then it was a race back to town knowing that the first schooner to arrive would earn the most for her catch. By 1920, however, the notion of building a Grand Banks schooner was more about honouring the heritage – fishing under sail was finished; the new steam trawlers were simply more efficient. Yet one such vessel was under construction in Lunenburg, and she had a particular purpose – to beat those lordly American fishermen from Gloucester, Massachusetts, in a schooner race. Little did they know that their vision, their vessel named *Bluenose*, would become a legend. What is it that makes a boat endear herself across decades? Is it the boat or the men who pushed her to the limits? Either way, *Bluenose* is a love affair that has lasted for nearly a century.

The Nova Scotia fishermen and their Gloucester counterparts, who often fished the same seas, raced annually in a series of 'put-up-or-shut-up' events to establish which had the fastest schooner. *Bluenose* was victorious 17 consecutive times in the races for the International Fishermen trophy and retired undefeated after the final race in 1938.

Her fiery captain, Angus Walters, had a special bond with *Bluenose*; he claimed she talked to him. There are many stories in Lunenburg about the boat and her irascible captain. Her distinctive bow can be attributed to his insistence during the build that the overhead in the fo'c'sle be raised 18 inches to accommodate the men more comfortably. The bow's upward

lunge not only became her identifying feature, it actually increased her speed by keeping water off the deck.

By 1939 *Bluenose* was struggling financially. Walters, in an effort to save her, bought her outright and then tried to solicit funds to help set her up as a permanent memorial. He finally sold her in 1942 to the West Indies Trading Company as a freighter. In 1946 she struck a reef off of Haiti and sank.

Bluenose II, built in 1963, was a 'yachtier' version of the original fishing boat and intended as a promotional tool for Schooner beer, produced by Oland Brewery in Halifax. Produced by the same yard, Smith & Rhuland, townspeople liked to boast that she was built by the sons of the original builders. William J Roué, the designer of *Bluenose*, and Captain Walters helped drive the first spikes at the keel laying.

Oland sold *Bluenose II* to the Province of Nova Scotia in 1973, and she has since served as its ambassador, drawing as many as 8,000 visitors a day at tall ship events. By 2009 she was nearly 50 years old and had gone through three major refits. No longer did she have the traditional schooner sheer. Hogged in the stern by more than a metre, she was taking on water under way. Since the vessel is such an icon, the Province really had no choice but to restore her.

Covey Island Boatworks, an established yard known for cold-moulded custom yachts, Lunenburg Foundry and Engineering, which specialises in metal fabrication, refits and repairs, and Snyder's Shipyard, with expertise in commercial fibreglass boats as well as traditional wooden hulls, joined forces to create a company called the Lunenburg Shipyard Alliance (LSA). It was contracted by the Province of Nova Scotia to restore *Bluenose II*.

Applicants from around the world contacted LSA for an opportunity to work on the vessel; retired craftsmen offered to work for free. Judging by the adoration, the project could have been financed just by selling splinters from *Bluenose II*. In 'ship-literate' Lunenburg, however, some grumbled and labelled the project 'Bluenose 2.5' because, to the locals, every piece of the boat takes on the reverence of a relic. Yet much of *Bluenose II* was beyond saving, so elements that could be conserved were, while other parts, and here we mean the entire hull, were built anew. The restored vessel has the same exterior dimensions as her predecessors: 160 feet six inches (48.9 metres) long overall, 145 feet (44.1 metres) on deck and 112 feet (34.1 metres) at the waterline. The beam is 27 feet (8.2 metres) and, fully ballasted, the draught will be at least 16 feet six inches (five metres).

'The restoration combines attributes of the original and *Bluenose II*. The Province wanted this restoration to incorporate more aspects of the original in honour of her legacy,' says Alan Hutchinson, president of Covey Island Boatworks. From *Bluenose II* came all the spars and standing rigging, bowsprit, some of the deck furniture, the deck structures such as the companionways, and the windlass.

The primary reconstruction material is angelique, a dense, tropical hardwood from Surinam, resistant to rot and decay and similar to teak. Hutchinson reports: 'I think we went through 10,000 dollars in bandsaw blades just milling the planks that we laminated for the ribs and deck beams.' Strength also comes from six watertight bulkheads of laminated wood and epoxy sandwiched between several layers of fibreglass. Neither previous *Bluenose* had any watertight bulkheads.

Hutchinson sheds some light on the construction process: '*Bluenose II* [today] is a combination of modern processes and materials and traditional processes representing the town's

The restoration attracted interest from around the world – some retired craftsmen even offered to work on it for free

THIS PAGE: SOME PARTS OF THE BOAT WERE SAVED BUT THE HULL HAD TO BE RECONSTRUCTED. THE PRIMARY TIMBER IS ANGELIQUE, A DENSE HARDWOOD SIMILAR TO TEAK

The crew's galley table was built from pieces of native wood contributed by every Canadian province and territory

THESE PAGE: THE RESTORERS SALVAGED MUCH OF THE BOAT'S AFROMOSIA AND MAHOGANY JOINERY AND ADDED ASH AND BLACK WALNUT. IROKO AND DOUGLAS FIR WERE ALSO USED, IN ADDITION TO THE HARDWOOD ANGELIQUE. THE NEW *BLUENOSE II* MIXES MODERN PROCESSES WITH THE TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES THAT MADE HER HOME PORT OF LUNENBURG FAMOUS

250-year tradition in shipbuilding. We used a lot of cold-moulding that Covey Island is known for. The frames and deck beams were built of laminated angelique with epoxy, the keelson is laminated iroko and angelique, and the cold-moulded ceiling is of laminated Douglas fir.' The hull planking with angelique is traditional, as is the caulking. The keel timbers have been scarfed and bolted together. The sole is all iroko, glued with epoxy and bunged. A lot of the afromosia and mahogany joinery was salvaged from *Bluenose II*, and ash and black walnut were added. Although new, the deck is traditional Douglas fir.

Because of the reverence for *Bluenose*, the rebuild incorporates some special details, such as the fo'c'sle table built by Covey Island's shipwright, Colin O'Toole. 'We felt the crew's galley table should be built using wood from every province and territory,' says Hutchinson. 'We sent letters asking if they would like to donate a species of wood native to their territory. Far northern provinces sent other materials: The Yukon sent a gold nugget, Acasta Gneiss rock came from the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut sent 10 pieces of granite.

'We routered out a hole in the table and put the nugget under glass. We also routered out places for the rock and slate along the table's centre to serve as hot plates. We had the Lunenburg Shipyard Alliance logo and the name of each province and species laser-engraved into the wood. The table was on display at Province House, and it was such a hit that when the first ministers, our "governors", met here in 2012 they all came to see the table and each head of state signed the underside.' In the traditional manner, when the mainmast was stepped the coins from *Bluenose II*, which included a 1700 Spanish doubloon, were placed under the mast.

No project is without controversy or delays and this one is no exception. Hutchinson says the people of Nova Scotia are quite aware that the delays were caused by the province's decision to bring the boat into class with the American Bureau of Shipping. 'That decision dictated that all of the drawings had to be approved by ABS, and it took much longer than anyone estimated. With the sinking of *Costa Concordia* [the cruise ship that capsized off Italy] and HMS *Bounty* [the tall ship lost during Hurricane Sandy], I think most Nova Scotians agree that the decision … to have the vessel brought into class with ABS was a good one.' It also added to the cost.

Peter Kinley, CEO of Lunenburg Foundry, says: 'Doing a wooden schooner to ABS standards has given us a whole new appreciation for the technologies needed in modern construction. It's been kind of fun – I mean, we have LED lights in the bilge! Most of the fasteners are galvanised steel and every bolt on the boat had to pass some kind of scrutiny.' Kinley's general manager, Kevin Feindel, adds: 'Despite all of the difficulties we have gone through… installing the rudder (heavy steel versus a buoyant wooden one in the original) and some of the equipment, I am very proud just to be involved.'

Wade Croft, co-owner of Snyder's Shipyard, says: 'One of the challenges has been with the requirements of additional fasteners in every frame. Back in the deadwoods, in the stern of the boat, some of the bolts were eight to 10 feet long drilled through timber 12 inches thick. The planking – that's stuff we know – was a lot heavier material to work with. The guys had muscles where they never had muscles before.'

There is renewed excitement in Lunenburg as the town awaits the day when *Bluenose II* sails again, her massive black hull and spars appearing like a mirage through the fog that often envelops the harbour. It has been an interesting journey.

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA
160' 6" (48.9m)
LWL
112' (34.1m)
BEAM
27' (8.2m)
DRAUGHT
16' 6" (5m)
DISPLACEMENT
285 tonnes
ENGINES
2 x John Deere 6081AM75, 235hp @ 2,100rpm
SPEED (MAX)
16 knots under sail, 6 knots under power
RANGE UNDER POWER
1,500nm
GENERATORS
1 x 80kW Kohler, 1 x 32kW Kohler
FUEL CAPACITY
12,000 litres (3,170 US gals)
FRESH WATER CAPACITY
5,000 litres (1,320 US gals)
CREW
23
TENDERS
1 x RIB, 2 x Lunenburg dory
CONSTRUCTION
Laminated frames, traditional carvel planking
CLASSIFICATION
ABS
ORIGINAL BUILDER/YEAR
Smith & Rhuland/1963
REFIT NAVAL ARCHITECTURE
Lengkeek Vessel Engineering
INTERIOR DESIGN
Lengkeek Vessel Engineering, Shea Marine Services
REFIT/YEAR
Lunenburg Shipyard Alliance/2013