

The Dutchman's Log



In these colder months, as we dream and scheme how to maintain and upgrade our boats, we checked in with Annie Mahle at Georges River Canvas in Rockland, Maine. What boat wouldn't love some stylish new threads?



Meet ANNIE MAHLE: Artistry begins with the canvas



What sort of custom work does Georges River Canvas focus on?

We are definitely marine-focused and our primary client is someone who is looking for high-quality custom canvas enclosures or upholstery for their motor or sailboat. Our work also leads us into the homes of our customers where we offer custom cushions, pillows, and slipcovers. Lastly, we work with local hospitality businesses to create deck enclosures, awnings, and interior furnishings. There is a wholesale arm to our business as well, for companies that prioritize a local, made-in-Maine focus to their products.

You've owned and operated a 120-foot schooner, been a head chef in the galley, now you're running Georges River Canvas. How did you get into boats?

When I graduated from college, I needed a break. I wanted to learn how to sail, to travel, and not call home for money. A friend said, hey, my parents have a boat in Maine, and you'd be perfect. I started out as a mess cook and a deckhand on the *Stephen Taber*—still sailing in Maine's windjammer fleet. A few years later, my husband and I purchased the *J.&E. Rigg* and sailed her for 23 years.

What got you off the windjammer and into the custom canvas work ashore?

Over the winters, the former owner of Georges River Canvas was kind enough to teach me how to make canvas projects for the *Rigg*. She taught me a lot. When Covid hit, she asked me to come work with her in the shop. Three months in, she said, you know, you need to buy this business. You're really good at this. Once we sold the *Rigg*, I was in the canvas business.

Does that mean practically every single job is a custom job?

That's right. People have boats; they need canvas. But you can't buy this stuff off the shelf. They need somebody to make it who understands all the different forces at work and the angles and what is suitable for outdoor use. Every job is a custom job, which means we are fitting and

measuring to a specific space every time. Although if you have a production boat, we may already have the pattern for that model and that year.

And it's not just cloth. You're working with see-thru material too, right?

Yes, clear vinyl on dodgers and enclosures, along with today's fabrics which are mostly acrylic and UV resistant, water resistant, and mold-and-mildew resistant. So when you say canvas, that's really an old word, right? Because we don't use cotton fibers any longer. It's great for indoor applications and clothing, but the marine environment is hard on cotton. You take a modern fabric like Sunbrella. It's a fabulous fabric. You can even clean it with a bleach solution.

What are some of the most challenging patterns that you've designed?

Awnings for schooners. There are so many different angles to the main piece that comes off the boom and goes out to the corners. Different planes, different angles, and a lot of captains want flaps that come down, go back, and cross over in the front so that when you're at anchor, and all the wind and weather is coming at the bow, you can create a room on your top deck, and people guests can be dry and comfortable.

How about care and maintenance? What's your advice?

For anything that is going to be in a marine environment, it matters that you put things away clean and dry. That's half the battle. Otherwise, you are asking for mold and mildew, which will degrade your product, whatever it is.

And if you're dealing with anything that can be rinsed, get the salt off of it. Because salt also invites moisture retention, and that includes your clear vinyl. The biggest thing you can do to preserve clear vinyl is to clean it with just water and a little soap with a lot of water. All of that will extend the life of any canvas work. Sails, too.

Best advice for shopping new canvas?

When you're choosing the person who's going to do your canvas work, think about the level of quality you're looking for. A top-notch canvas maker can contribute to a sleeker, smarter design—and really care about the quality of work they're providing you. That kind of care takes time.

And I think that's sort of the intersection of Epifanes and Georges River Canvas. We are both providing high-quality products, and expert advice, and expertise to vessels that are often someone's home. There's a match there that the customer is experiencing: the care that we put into the work and the product that they're getting in the end.

I have definitely learned that the more time I take on a vessel, taking pictures, taking measurements, and taking extra measurements is an investment well spent. Quality work comes from careful preparation. I don't want to spend one extra second of my customer's time, but I'm going to pause and I'm going to make sure before I step off the vessel.

Check out Annie's custom canvas workcanvas creations at georgesrivercanvas.com. We also recommend Annie's book *At Home, at Sea: Recipes from the Maine Windjammer*, available at Amazon.



Epifanes Poly-urethane Rocks The Roller!

Who could have imagined painting a boat would get this easy? With Epifanes Poly-urethane, all you gotta do is roll. And it rolls beautifully—with a four-inch, high-density foam roller available at

fine marine supply stores. You can skip all that painstaking overspray protection that spraying demands or the double-fisted chore of rolling and tipping.

The results are incredible: a head-turning glassy finish—on fiberglass, wood, aluminum, or steel. And the painting is easy.



Your prep work? Full disclosure: There's no escaping the importance of superior and thorough surface prep. Sorry. But Epifanes will reward your prep work like no other paint. Once you put the roller into the paint tray, the rest is pretty simple. Just keep it going. Be consistent. Maintain a wet edge and work quickly, but don't rush the job. Be smooth. You'll see the beauty of your labors immediately.

Amazingly, that beauty will deepen as the leveling properties of the paint take effect. As it cures, a glassy finish appears as a rich gloss with mirror-like reflection. What's more—and this is a huge plus—unlike spraying, rolling Epifanes puts more paint on the boat. That greater mil thickness gives you a tougher, more resilient layer of color that resists scratches and lasts longer.

Ready to rock your masterpiece? You can do this! Watch [Rolling Epifanes Poly-urethane](#) on our YouTube channel for a detailed, step-by-step demo, and look for Epifanes Poly-urethane at your favorite marine store. Got questions? Give us a call at 207-354-0804 or toll-free at 1-800-269-0961.

THE OLD SALT'S SAY

Bactrian or dromedary? This camel is no camel.

Over coffee recently with some lobstermen, one of them mentioned he'd tied up his boat to the camel. Huh? Well, there's a dolphin (cluster of pilings), a dog watch, a ratline, but a camel? Turns out you've probably seen one. A camel is a stout log or other long, large, floating cylinder that holds ships and large boats just off the wharf to which they're tied. The camel keeps vessels from slamming against the pier in a heaving sea. As an old Arabian saying goes, "Trust in God, but tie up your camel."



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