

Dealer Looks at the Ship Model Market: Collecting and Market Trends

- BY: *R. MICHAEL WALL* *Based on notes from a presentation at the 17th Annual Nautical Research Guild Conference, Gloucester, Massachusetts, October 13th, 1990.

As a dealer in ship models, I have been asked to discuss the ship model market as my clients and other collectors view it—and as you as ship model builders would like to see it. Basically the major development has been the acceptance of ship models as a legitimate decorative art form. I realize that this has been a hotly debated issue between ship model makers and marine painters, but it is a point of view that most of my clients have come to accept. This tenet is very much in their minds when they come in to purchase a model.

This presentation will be an informal one, and primarily pictorial, as it will be necessary to draw comparisons among a number of examples of current work. You will hear me mention the names of many model makers who are also members of Nautical Research Guild. These individuals were not selected because I favor them over others, but because their work illustrates the points I wish to make. Another thing to bear in mind is that this presentation is made from a commercial viewpoint. I am looking at the market as a dealer, and I am representing the work of a number of you in the audience (and some of you who are reading this printed version), so bear in mind that I approach this field as a business endeavor.

To better understand the art in ship models, I suggest that you study marine paintings of the same—or similar—subjects, to see how a marine artist brings his knowledge, training and experience, and personal vision of a ship, to his work. These factors will make any original work different from another artist's picture, even when it is of the same ship. [For my lecture, I began by illustrating this point with a selection of prints and paintings illustrating the 1851 schooner yacht *America*, following them with views of models of *America* by four noted marine model artists.]



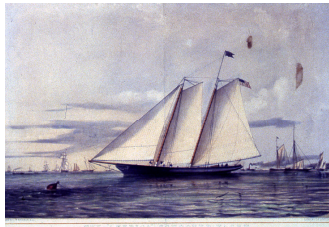
Thomas Hoyne



Fitz Hugh Lane



John Stobart



O. Brierly, Dunton Lithograph

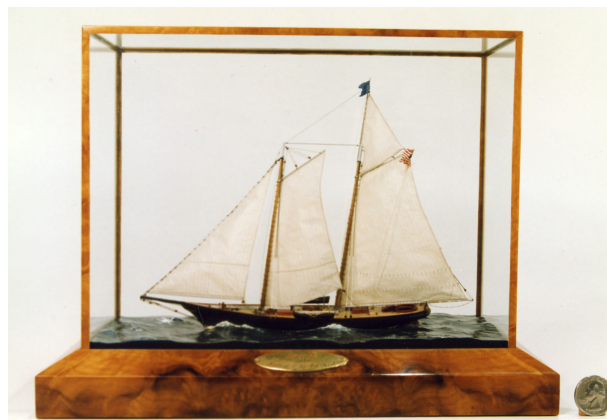


John Mecray



John Mecray

Just as the prints and paintings all differ from each other, so do the models. While manual skill might account for some differences, the artist's/modelmaker's deliberate actions account for most, and it is in these deliberate actions that the artist establishes a style. [A fine selection of paintings and prints of America is to be found in John Rousmaniere, *The Low Black Schooner: Yacht AMERICA, 1851-1945* (Mystic, Connecticut, 1986).]



Philip [Reed](#)'s waterline model [scale 1/16" = 1'] of schooner yacht *America*, 1851, exemplifies the marvelous detail, precision and vitality which the best of today's ship model makers are bringing to the miniature field. Reed belongs to the new generation of English miniaturists who have drawn their inspiration from the pioneering work of Donald [McNarry](#) and the late Derek [Hunnisett](#). This model is very characteristic of the [McNarry](#) school, with delicate wire rigging, molded tissue sails and a carved wood sea which is painstakingly primed, painted and varnished. Like [McNarry](#), [Reed](#) has elected not to show figures representing the crew. While this model conforms to most of the established standards, the handling of colors and the treatment of blocks and other small fittings are unique to [Reed](#)'s work and evidence that he is establishing a style of his own. [Note: all photos are from the American Marine Model Gallery unless otherwise credited.]



This waterline version of *America* by Derek [Hunnisett](#), at scale 50' = 1", is classed as an "extreme miniature" (some builders work to even smaller scales). The overall length hull is about 2". The hull is made of wood from holly shavings, with wooden spars, tissue sails and wire rigging. Blocks and deadeyes are artfully applied droplets of glue and paint. Instead of being carved in wood, this sea is sculpted in plasticine. Crew members are modeled with paint applied over wire armatures. Because of the action depicted by this model, many collectors now refer to this type of model as a diorama, even though there is no painted background or landscape and the presentation is still quite formal.



In this diorama by 'A. Clark', pseudonym for William E. Hitchcock, Sr. and Jr. when they collaborate on a model, depicting *America* and the cutter *Volante* racing for the Royal Yacht Squadron's Cup (a.k.a. the America's Cup), action is the main visual objective. Matters of positioning the models, modeling the sea, action on deck and in the rigging, and the set of the sails all require artistic judgment as well as knowledge of the vessels and event. In terms of composition and use of color, the diorama must be approached as a three-dimensional picture.



Hitchcock



McNarry



Detail of McNarry

The 1/16" scale model on the right, entitled "*Forever in Glory*", is what we call a 'clearwater' diorama. This was artistically produced by William E. Hitchcock and Nader Taheri. The fully transparent water reveals the drama of the yacht sailing in Gulf Stream waters navigating a menacing shoal. The full hull model of *America* on right by Donald McNarry (a Fellow of the Royal Society of Artists), exhibits the vessel's beautiful hull lines at 1/16" scale, muted copper sheathing, and its elegant presentation of four detailed rice paper sails.

Marine artist Tom Hoyne made extensive use of scale models as aids to working out problems of form, proportion and perspective in the fishing vessels he portrayed. This oil painting on canvas depicts schooner *Amy Knight*, a late example of the Marblehead fishing schooner, built at Salisbury, Massachusetts in 1835 for Samuel Knight of Marblehead. The model on which this painting is based was commissioned from Erik A.R. Ronnberg, Jr. and is reconstructed from models by fishermen who saw and worked in this schooner type, as well as contemporary pictures and documents. In all, Hoyne commissioned ten models from Ronnberg, all to scale $3/8" = 1'$, depicting important vessel types in the New England fisheries from the early nineteenth to the early twentieth century. This collection is now exhibited as a group in the Hoyne Gallery at Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, Connecticut.



The above painting is part of the Russell W. Knight Collection at the Peabody Essex Museum of Salem. Photo: Peabody Essex Museum of Salem, Neg. No. 24,041. Copyright ©1984, T.M. Hoyne, Inc. Reproduced with permission.



[Ronnberg](#) began building fishing vessel models for Tom Hoyne in 1979, completing the tenth in 1990, a year after the artist's death. The *Amy Knight* model was made in 1984, and is typical of the style and detailing which evolved for this collection. The lift hull was carved and carefully hollowed, scribed with plank seams, painted, and weathered. The weathering (salt streaks, rust stains, dirt, and fish scales) was added at the artist's insistence, not just for realism but because it also revealed the hull's more subtle contours. The finished model was sprayed with a gloss varnish so, when posed and illuminated with a spotlight, it would show glare and reflection like a wet hull. The oak baseboard and sculpted keel block are trademarks of the models in the collection. The hull is held with steel dowel pins to the keel block, and could be lifted off so the artist could "pose" it in a sandbox for sketching and study.

All of the running rigging and most mechanical details on deck are workable, and were frequently adjusted during the posing sessions. None of the models was fitted with sails, due to the difficulty of getting cloth to behave like scaled-down textile. Likewise, figures were simply represented as sticks of wood to indicate their height and position, the artist using live models for details of the crew.

The models in the Hoyne collection are thus "working" models, conceived for utilitarian reasons. [Ronnberg](#) described them once as "ship models for art's sake." It is rare for a modelmaker and an artist to collaborate in this way. In terms of uniform scale and treatment of detail and finish, not to mention the highly focused theme and intensity of research behind the model construction, this group is probably unique. The models are now "retired" from their original use, but their utility as teaching aids in a museum exhibit has been realized. The large scale and wealth of detail, including fishing gear, make these models ideally suited to the interpretation of historic fishing methods. Photos of model: Erik A.R. [Ronnberg](#), Jr.

One of the key documents now used by professionals in the sale of ship models is the [Ship Model Classification Guidelines](#)©. I realize that some of its specifications are debatable, but it has nonetheless has been a very important guide for clients who earnestly want the models they purchase to meet what are generally accepted as museum standards. Craftsmanship is always, of course, a subjective issue, and subject to personal taste, but this has been a major help to collectors as well as, I hope, to modelmakers who need guidelines for materials and basic standards of accuracy. [[Ship Model Classification Guidelines](#)©, R. Michael Wall, 1980, is published by Mystic Seaport Museum Stores, Inc., Mystic, Connecticut and is available from its department of ship model sales and service.]

Following the same pattern as marine art, the next logical step is the environment in which models are sold. To me, selling models in a professional environment is a key ingredient to success in this field. In some galleries models are integrated with paintings and sculpture, scrimshaw, or any other type of marine art which the gallery feels is appropriate to its aims and consistent with high standards of quality. But again, the environment is formal and there is a very professional business setting. In my gallery, the focus is almost exclusively on fine scale ship models, with very little space devoted to paintings. Scale models run the gamut from

half-models to formal full-hull models to dioramas. There is a significant minority of non-scale models, including ships-in-bottles, shadowboxes, Prisoner-of-War models, and some "sailor's models" of exceptional charm and workmanship.

At any given time I have more than one hundred models in inventory for clients to view. It is important to have "all bases covered" with a wide selection based on vessel type, model size and style of construction; minimizing situations when a client might say "that's a fine model of a vessel I like, but it's painted; I want a polished wood finish," or "that's a lovely miniature, but I wish it were larger [or vice versa]." Even with half-models I find that clients have definite ideas which can cover a wide range of subjects, detailing, and finish or mounting. This is so typical of the art scene, wherein what appeals to me might not please you. The selection process is highly personal and the dealer has to be flexible and versatile in meeting customers' needs.

Going further with professional business conduct, some galleries document all sales with certificates. On occasion, these will be supplemented with biographical data on the artists and additional historical notes on the vessel the model represents. The object is to create provenance and permanent documentation for the model—documentation that we hope will accompany it with each change of ownership. This, in my opinion, comprises a vital part of the investment in the eyes of most clients. We like to think that these papers belong to the model, not the client; however, if the documents are lost, we have copies in our gallery archives, and when the time comes these copies will be donated to the Peabody Essex Museum's research library for future reference.

As I stated at the outset, artistic ability is manifested in a ship model in the form of recognizable style. Just as John Stobart, John Mecray, and Tom Hoyne are celebrated for their unique styles and topical approaches, so have many professional marine model makers won acclaim through developing their own styles and approaches to subjects of which they have intimate knowledge. I shall not attempt a lesson in "how to recognize" an individual modelmaker's style, but rather show examples of work by some outstanding builders, with brief descriptions of important details or methods.

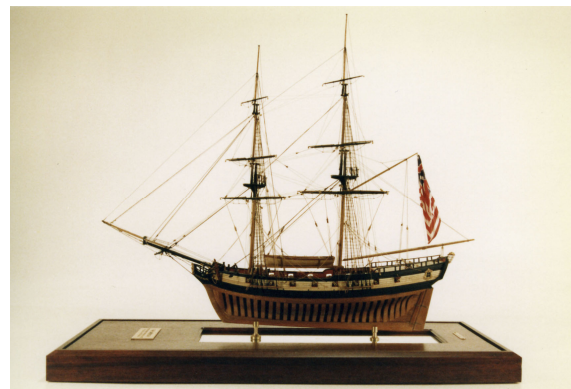
Lest you assume that once a marine model artist has focused on one particular vessel type or method of finishing, he must never do anything else, there are opportunities to "trade off" and try other vessel types and modeling methods. I do suggest to builders that they have options, that they can broaden their repertoire and that they can experiment with their methods. The key is to do so in a gradual way, so their styles evolve and their knowledge grows apace of their new-found interests. Customers like to see the models they collect from an artist improve and change in increments, but tend to be alarmed when a builder whose work they've collected makes sudden and radical changes in what he's building and how he builds it. This

leads to the question “what's so wrong with _____'s models that he's dropped his established style and chosen field of interest?”

One popular recent treatment of framed and planked models is the practice of planking, painting, and coppering the hull on one side while leaving the other side partially planked, with frames and often interior details exposed. While a number of builders are using this approach, each has found a combination of scale, construction and finishing methods that make the models of one builder quite distinguishable from those of another. Many collectors prefer this treatment as the results are like having two models in one. After displaying one side of the model for a while, a "turnaround" allows the other side to be seen, often with a very different impact on the viewer.



The [Costagliola](#) model of *Great Republic*, scale 1/8" = 1', is a fine example of his planked-over block-hull style, with coppered bottom, painted topsides, and complete standing and running rigging with furling sails. A model of the brig *Pilgrim*, ca 1830, built to 3/16" scale, is a reconstruction of the famous brig described by Dana in *Two Years Before the Mast*. No plans of this vessel have survived, so knowledge of the merchant brigs of the period, coupled with Dana's descriptions, were [Costagliola](#)'s chief sources of information.



A model of the Revolutionary War brig *Fair American* illustrates Mike's plank-on-frame method, with one side unplanked to show the framing. This model was built to 1/4" scale, and is based on a large model in the Rogers Collection of the U.S. Naval Academy.

For two generations of modelmakers, the extreme miniatures of Donald [McNarry](#) have offered inspiration and standards by which others' work has been judged. Best-known for his waterline models, his miniature versions of dockyard models are, if anything, even more coveted by knowledgeable collectors. [McNarry](#) models from the 1940s and 50s were often to scales as small as 100' = 1", but in later years his output has been mainly to 1/16 " scale.



The examples shown here are the clipper ship *Dreadnought* (top left), 1853; brig *Pilgrim*, (top right) ca. 1830; Royal Yacht *Charlotte*, 1677 (bottom) are representative of the types of models that are sought most eagerly; all are to 1/16" scale.

McNarry models are distinguished not only by their detail and workmanship, but by the elegance of their baseboards and glass cases. Hardwood burl veneers and lumber are carefully chosen for their color and figure. The joinery and finish are exquisite; the combination of model and case are tasteful and unobtrusive.

The dioramas of 'A. Clark' (Wm. Hitchcock, Sr. and Jr.) are remarkable for their eye-catching designs, lively action, and compact dimensions. Whaling scenes are a favorite, as are clipper ships and yacht races, but the builders are not afraid to try any nautical subject if source material is available. The most common scales are 3/16", 1/8", 3/32", and 1/16".



To add realism to the pelagic scene of clipper ship *Flying Fish*, the model was set in a transparent sea made from rippled-surface acrylic sheet. Skillful painting and shading of the plastic creates the illusion of great ocean depth. A pod of whales off the ship's starboard bow adds variety and interest to the composition.



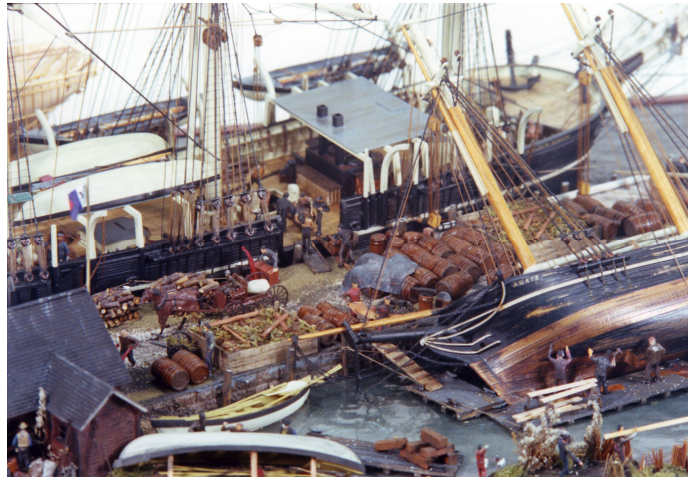
A close-up view of the *Flying Fish* model shows the contouring of the sails and much activity on deck. Scale: $\frac{3}{32}$ " = 1'; base: 3' x 2'.



An Arctic whaling scene depicts a schooner working free of an ice floe while three Eskimos on the ice have had their sealing activity interrupted by the unexpected approach of a polar bear (on the high ground at left) and are making a hurried exit to open water. The "stoved-in" spare boat on the stern of the schooner (note the exposed frames) is typical of the Hitchcocks' attention to detail, stimulating the viewer to consider the vessel's activity beyond the immediate moment. Scale: $\frac{1}{8}$ " = 1', base: 2' x 1'.



In this diorama, "*The Chase*," the [Hitchcocks](#)' have used heat-formed acrylic sheet to create a long mid-ocean swell which adds to the sense of motion and drama imparted by the surfaced sperm whale and the two pursuing whaleboats. Scale: $\frac{3}{16}$ " = 1', base: 2' x 1'.



"Nantucket Wharf" draws its inspiration from the paintings of John Stobart, and is a skillful compression of several motifs appearing in Stobart's Nantucket paintings. Central to the theme is off-loading of a whaling bark, her cargo of oil having been discharged onto the wharf and covered with wet seaweed to keep it cool. On the opposite side of the pier, a small whaling schooner is hove-down for re-coppering. Scale: $1/8" = 1'$; base: $2' \times 1-1/2'$.



Viewed from the other side of the whaling bark, a whaling ship is being framed up while the shipyard horse drags a large knee to the building site. The historic story line, detail and activity in Hitchcock dioramas, together with their reasonable prices, have provided a large number of collectors with an opportunity to own such special works normally found only in museums.

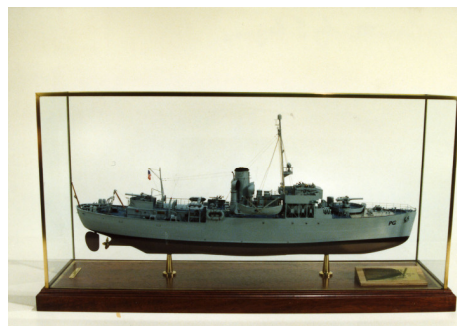
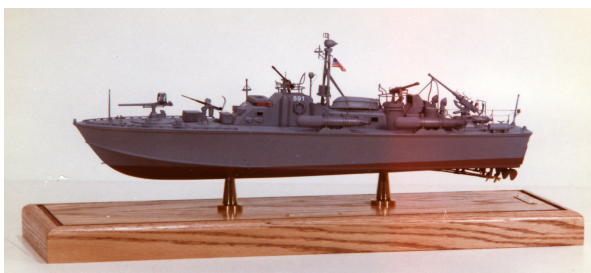


Two dioramas by the late Derek [Hunnisett](#) typify the artistry in his extreme miniatures. "On Approach" (above left) is to scale $50' = 1"$ and depicts HMS *Britannia* in rendezvous with an English royal yacht, ca 1680. "Taking on Provisions" (above right) is to scale $32' = 1"$ and shows US Naval frigate *Boston* in company with a naval topsail schooner and a hoy, ca 1800.

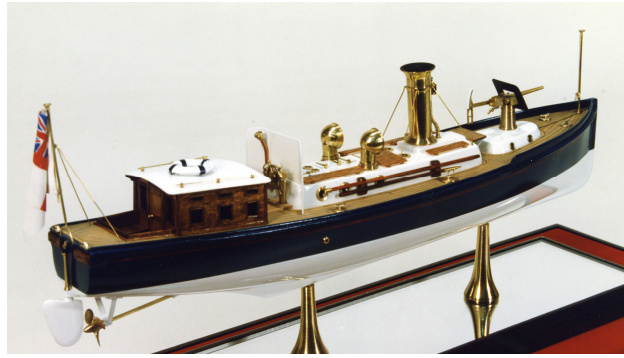


Close-up views of [Hunnisett](#)'s dioramas reveal a wealth of detail in the model of *Brittania*, (left) which is about 4" long. The model of *Boston* (right) is about 6 " long.

Some marine model artists, for diversion, will build models of exotic materials, e.g. ivory or bone, or use exotic finishing techniques quite different from what their “normal” techniques call for e.g. weathering or antiquing effects. This allows them to build more models of a given ship without the tedium of pure repetition or resorting to mass production methods. The dividend in this practice is the re-use of research materials painstakingly gathered for the first model. Research can be a major part of a model's construction time, and few clients appreciate this, or pay for it. Therefore the marine model artist is very much on his own to recover his research expenses.



John R. [Haynes](#) is another Englishman whose work has attracted the attention of American collectors in recent years. A specialist in modern naval vessels, he has built some outstanding models of both British and American warships, primarily of the World War II period. Haynes makes extensive use of metal for fine detail, particularly photo-etched parts from his own artwork, patterns and designs. Careful attention is given to correct colors and camouflage patterns, and the finished model has a very pleasing “to scale” appearance unmarred by out of scale hull plating or clumsy rail stanchions, to name but two of the common pitfalls for most builders of this genre. His models of a *Flower* class corvette (as adapted for US Navy service) and an *Elco* PT boat—both to 1/8 " scale—are recent examples of models built for American clients.



[Haynes](#) gave a more stylized presentation to his model of a 50' Royal Navy steam pinnace, period 1890, scale 1/4" = 1'. A high-gloss finish, together with polished brass hardware (including many fittings and parts which were normally painted) is reminiscent of the finish given to such models by British shipyard model shops of a century ago.



"Steamship office models", so common in the last century and the early part of this one, were noted for their high finish, plated metal fittings, and a multitude of details (deckplanking, ringbolts, airports, doors, etc.) ruled in with pen and ink. John [Haynes](#)' model of freighter *Spray* of Honolulu, ca 1910, is an elegant modern version of this style. The model is to 1/8" scale instead of the customary 1/4" scale—a concession often made to clients who do not have room for larger models.

Michael [Costagliola](#)'s background as a naval architect and marine engineer is unusual for a shipmodel builder specializing in sailing ships of the 18th and 19th centuries. Having worked in a field dedicated to improving and reshaping ship design, his models are remarkable for their fidelity to contemporary details and practice; they have very few anachronisms and betray no urge to "improve" a historic vessel. [Costagliola](#) builds in both block-hull and plank-on-frame style, the latter with one side planked and painted; the other with exposed framing and of ten with interior details.



Custom models of modern yachts are the specialty of Dean [Richmond](#). These are done on a special older basis, commonly to large scales (1/2" or 3/8" = 1'), depending on the customer's needs. The model of the Alden 47' ketch

Unite (left and center) is to 1/2 scale, very imposing, and requires a table of its own for effective display. The model of the Cal-48 sloop *Ayesha* (right) at 3/8" scale is smaller and considerably less demanding of space.



Drawing heavily on his experiences in the Royal Navy, Robert H. [Mouat](#) concentrates on waterline models of warships of the World War I and II period. Wartime action is usually depicted, and the models are painted in camouflage patterns, weathered, and in correct battle trim. He generally builds to 1/8", 3/32", and 1/16" scales, but due to the large sizes of the subjects, the models are of impressive sizes. His model of *Military* class trawler *Grenadier* is typical of subject and setting.



Occasionally, [Mouat](#) will model a naval ship of earlier times, such as the pre-Dreadnought battleship HMS *Formidable*, shown at anchor with a Thames barge off her starboard bow. Depicting his vessels at a time and place adds to Mouat's artistry and personalization. Scale 1/8" = 1'.



Non-military vessels of the 1930s and 40s are also projects [Mouat](#) enjoys, such as the twin-funnel salvage tug *Foundation Franklin* (left) (subject of Farley Mowat's novel, *The Grey Seas Under*), and the three-island tramp steamer *Carib* (right). The tug model is to 3/32" scale; the steamer to 1/16" scale. When the models are cased, the raised hardwood plinths place the model closer to the visual center of the case, which makes the whole more pleasing to the eye and easier to view at waterline level.



William H. [Eisele](#) prefers to build models of sailing ships of the 18th and 19th centuries, using natural wood finishes and plank-on-frame construction. His model of *Bounty*, (left) to scale $3/16" = 1'$, is built from a variety of hardwoods, using their different colors to provide contrast in the hull and deck joinery. One side is fully planked; the other is unplanked below the wales. All frames and planking are trunnel fastened. The detail view of *Bounty* (right) illustrates the effectiveness of a mirror base. The hull bottom construction is easier to see, while the mirror reflects light upward, improving illumination of this normally dark area.



To add variety to his work, [Eisele](#) occasionally builds a model in ivory, very much in the style of Prisoner-of-War models of the Napoleonic Wars period. This model of *Half Moon*, to scale $1/8" = 1'$, is planked-in recycled ivory over a solid wood block, fitted with matching spars and blocks, and rigged with linen.



Ship model or three-dimensional painting! Clipper ship *Cutty Sark*, scale $3/64" = 1'$, on loan to the Philadelphia Maritime Museum. Model by Philip S. [Reed](#).

[This presentation was followed by a lengthy series of questions and answers. Those pertaining to materials or work methods for a particular model or NAUTICAL

RESEARCH JOURNAL modelmaker are integrated with the picture captions. The others are as follows.]

What is the current trend in the ship model market; will current economic trends affect values and sales adversely?

I am optimistic about the market. In periods of economic indecision many of my clients hesitate to make major acquisitions. Having been in this market for eighteen years, I have ridden out these periods and feel that what's needed is some time to define the prevailing situation (recession, inflation, etc.) to which the clientele will adapt. If it's a recession, a purchase will reflect prevailing investment opportunities; if it's inflation, the purchase will be made with other economic factors in mind. But first, the trend must be clear so collectors can anticipate the future.

Ship model values have definitely been going up, not quickly, but certainly ahead of inflation. I find that the more unique the builder's style, the faster his prices will rise.

Considering both accuracy and artistic qualities in a ship model, is it necessary to sacrifice one for the other?

No. You can easily have both. A "weathered" model can be just as accurate as one with a conventional "clean" finish. Weathering, in fact, cannot be used as a way to disguise poor workmanship, which it only serves to emphasize. Many collectors appreciate this, and will usually insist that, whatever artistic qualities a model may have, accuracy and quality of construction are basic necessities upon which all else is built.

Based on your marketing experience, are there any types of models which are not sought after by collectors?

Let me answer by starting with what is most popular, namely 19th century British and American sailing ships. Style and mode of presentation are not important factors here, as each customer will seek out the model with the finish he wants. I realize that there is considerable interest among modelmakers for ships of the 15th to 18th centuries, possibly because they're tired of more recent periods and want to look further back in time for something different. Unfortunately, the market isn't there yet. If a McNarry miniature of a 17th century ship is sought after, it's more due to the miniature scale or the fact that it's a McNarry model. Getting around this problem means working to a special scale, having a special style, or having a very high reputation, but in general, models of ornate warships are not actively sought by many collectors.

What proportion of your clients are really knowledgeable on ships and go about collecting with a definite plan? How popular are the very famous ships as subjects for models?

My clientele is becoming more sophisticated in judging quality of workmanship. Like all collectors, they become discerning critics and tend to specialize. After buying two or three models, they become careful to avoid redundant work; they become aware of differences in builders' styles and uses of materials; they think ahead to what the market will be like in the short and long terms.

Generally, collectors today do not want the *Constitutions*, the *Cutty Sark*s and the *Charles W. Morgans*. Only in unique cases, when such a model is to a special scale, has exceptional detail and finish, or is particularly well presented, will it be in demand. So the modelmaker really has to portray these popular ships in a unique fashion. A standard 1/8" scale *Constitution*, nicely-rigged, solid hull, with standard detail and finish can be a nice model to build—but very difficult to sell at a price commensurate with the effort to make it.

Do galleries take models on consignment, or do they buy them outright! How is the market value, or retail price, of a ship model determined? Who are the buyers, and how many of them are corporations?

Different galleries have different policies; also, it may be necessary to tailor policy to accommodate certain builders. At my gallery, I usually consign the majority of the models on hand; however some situations require that I buy models outright and commission certain marine model artist to build for me. I like to think that I treat all models in inventory equally, as I never know what a client's preferences or needs will be. I like to make a client's visit a private situation where he can view the inventory undisturbed and as thoroughly as he wishes. Once a client zeroes in or asks specific questions, I can begin to see a pattern and anticipate future demands, and that helps me determine whether I want to commission certain models, buy others "on spec," or simply carry certain kinds of models on consignment.

How is the market value, or retail price, of a ship model determined?

This question is raised by many novice modelmakers or semi-professionals who are trying to get into modelmaking on a full-time basis. I will often hear the comment from these people, "Gee, my model's every bit as good as ____'s, so why can't my work get these prices?" What these people fail to realize is that the builders who get high prices for their work have, like marine artists, gone through a long process of developing a style, building up a reputation and attracting a strong clientele. Their prices reflect the recognition they have achieved from long years of

hard work. So to answer your question, if we take a new model by an unknown builder, its price, even if the workmanship is outstanding, will be low by comparison with the established market. I try to help new builders decide on a model's price by working backwards and posing the question "What can I expect to sell this model for, knowing my clientele?" The builder may feel that his model is worth \$20,000, but my sales records for similar work may force me to say that \$5,000 is the best price I can reasonably expect. Confronted by the realities of the market, the builder must then decide how flexible he wants to be, if indeed he wants to market the model. The point of a gallery is to develop a market, or base of collectors, for each builder's work, so as he produces new models, a clientele is ready to acquire them. As this base grows, and demand becomes stronger, prices start to go up.

As opposed to the "high end" of the market, which you represent, isn't there a market for good ship models that could be sold for lower prices to a much broader clientele?

I don't know. I feel that the success of today's marine art market has been due to the building of recognition for the artist behind the work. For example, if all the Fitz Hugh Lane paintings in this museum [the Cape Ann Historical Museum] were devoid of signatures and other provenance, their historical values would be significantly diminished, and the impact on the marine art market would be depressing in a number of ways. So, like the marine painter, identifying the marine model artist and building up his reputation is a vital part of the work of any professional gallery. Marketing models on a 'co-operative' basis, you probably wouldn't have the professionalism in terms of experience to maintain a steady sales volume. I do feel that there have to be differences between one builder's work and another's. As we all know, we could get five people to build models of *Constitution*, and each model would look different, some better than others.

How does a modelmaker choose a gallery and how can he protect his model while it is on consignment? There have been a lot of problems recently with modelmakers not being paid after their work has been sold, or their models coming under the security of a creditor's lien against inventory when a gallery goes bankrupt.

It's unfortunate that this has happened to this market, as well as to other art markets in the past few years. As to choosing a gallery, consider the other side of that question: "How do we as gallery staff accept your work?" Do we want a builder's work, even though he wants us? It's a two-fold system. My philosophy on this has been to maintain long-term commitments to the builders I represent. I don't have an "open arms" policy. I'd rather specialize on the work of a few individuals whom I'll represent for many years. As an example, I might ask a modelmaker to build a *Constitution* one year and a fishing schooner the next. The builder might realize a low hourly wage on the frigate model, but make up for it with the schooner. On

balance, my builders should be able to feel that over a year their efforts were worthwhile. If that doesn't happen, then they have to consider that maybe ship modeling just won't be a paying proposition.

As for protecting your work, it's hard to give a comprehensive answer. UCC forms [SeeNRJ 35-3, pp. 163, 164] are good protection when models are consigned. A gallery should have adequate insurance to cover your work, and it's always a good idea for you as builders to have your own coverage for your work, just in case something does happen. When you look for a gallery, you want to look at its track record; look at the other builders it represents; also the prices achieved for these builders. Are sales of a builder's work happening on a regular basis, or once every five years? Look at the displays of models and the quality of presentation. What is the traffic pattern? Lots of foot traffic, or is the gallery off the beaten path? Location has much to do with the sales approaches used by different galleries. Talk to other builders represented by the gallery in question. Are they comfortable with the way their work is represented?

Do you appraise models for insurance purposes?

We do appraisals on a regular basis. I base my normal appraisals on what I call the mean between replacement cost and the market value of a model. My reason for this is that a builder could spend three years building a model of a 17th century yacht (as an example), lavishing all kinds of time and care on the detail and finish, which if evaluated on a "time and materials" basis, would carry an unrealistically high price. This value has to be modified by the market value—what I can realistically expect if I'm going to sell it.

What types of display cases do you prefer for ship models you sell?

The case is a very important ingredient in the display and presentation of any model. As you can see from the McNarry model of *Constitution* exhibited upstairs [This model was loaned for exhibition at the NRG Conference by Mr. Wall.], a well-designed case can be an integral part of the model; as important to the model as a fine frame is to a picture. Mr. McNarry's models are among the finest examples of good design and workmanship in a ship model case. Sheet acrylic cases are adequate for simple protection, but for stability, minimal glare, and resistance to scratching, glass is preferable.

One thing I forgot to mention in this presentation is the importance of signing your work. I encourage builders to visibly sign or initial their names somewhere on the model. Don't put a business card between two waterline lifts or dropped down a hatch deep into the hull—who's going to see that? You want to have your models signed, preferably on the keel, where it will be seen, but not be obtrusive. A waterline model can be signed on the water in a corner. Just don't let the model go unsigned or without a name plaque recognizing your effort.

