

[P R E F A C E]

The North Carolina Outer Banks is a unique place. For centuries this narrow strip of sand has greeted explorers, pirates, sailors and fishermen. Sometimes the welcome is warm and cordial, framed by Carolina-blue skies, emerald green waters and gentle rolling waves. Other encounters are harsh and foreboding with hurricane-force winds, fierce waves, storm-tossed shoals and treacherous inlets. No matter what Mother Nature offers, mariners can always count on the hospitality, generosity and integrity of the “Bankers.” This book is a tribute to these wonderful people and their boatbuilding and sportfishing heritage.

During our research, we found that many of the boatbuilding pioneers and sportfishing legends continue to be active and involved in their craft. In addition, we were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and support offered by everyone who participated in this effort. Boatbuilders stopped building, fishermen stopped fishing and families put dinner on hold to talk about their coastal heritage. We are most appreciative for this kindness, and we can report that the famed Outer Banks reputation for hospitality is alive and well!

Boaters and fishermen from around the world associate Manteo, Wanchese, Harkers Island, Marshallberg and Morehead City with Carolina-style custom offshore fishing boats. Likewise, Oregon Inlet, Wimble Shoals, Cape Hatteras and Cape Lookout are synonymous with great offshore fishing. Legendary boatbuilders, ageless charter captains and knowledgeable historians along the Outer Banks eagerly tell of their exploits and we have attempted to capture their spirit and enthusiasm.

Boatbuilding and sportfishing continue to be vital parts of the culture of the Outer Banks. To document this heritage, we focused primarily on the history of custom sportfishing boats and sportfishing, and to tell this story, we incorporated many historical and contemporary photographs as well as personal interviews. Our research led us from backyard boat sheds to state-of-the-art boatbuilding facilities. We walked the

docks with boat captains and sat on front porches with old-timers as they reminisced about “their good old fishing days.” We made many new friends and we thoroughly enjoyed our journey.

We started this effort as a family project to survey and document the Outer Banks custom boatbuilding and sportfishing heritage. It was to be a book about boats and fishing, but what we learned is that it’s really about people—extraordinary people. We hope our effort is a tribute to them.

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