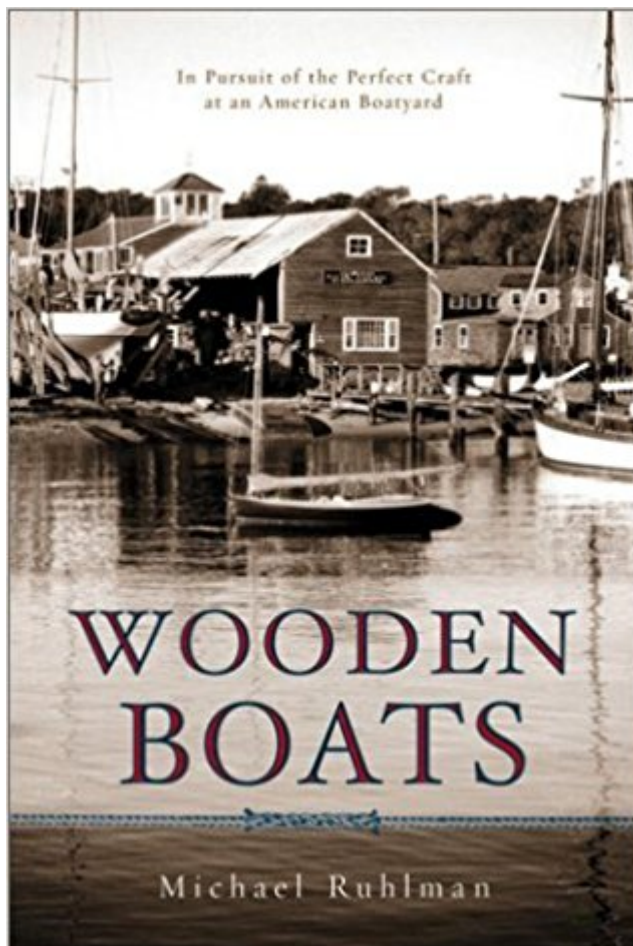


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# Wooden Boats



## Synopsis

There are fewer than 10,000 wooden boats in America but the circulation of WoodenBoat magazine exceeds 180,000. What is it about wooden boats that has captured the popular imagination? With the "lively blend of reportage [and] reflection" (Los Angeles Times) that made his *The Soul of a Chef* such a success, Michael Ruhlman sets off to Martha's Vineyard-the location of a renowned boatyard-to find out. As refined as a Stradivarius and as ruggedly powerful as an ocean vessel, wooden boats and the art of crafting them nearly fell victim to the modern era. Yet as cheap plastic and fiberglass boats proliferated the seas, a handful of craftsmen persevered. Today, the makers of these handmade miracles of curves and wood are highly sought-after artisans and wooden boats have emerged as a magnificent metaphor for the "old and true" in our homogenized, throwaway culture. At the heart of *Wooden Boats* is Rebecca-a sixty-foot modern pleasure schooner being constructed, with centuries-old techniques, to outlast any other boat today. Ruhlman follows Rebecca's construction and profiles the vivid personalities at work in a boatyard filled with stories of the sea. His exciting chronicle will enthrall not just wooden boat owners but also craftspeople of every stripe, nature enthusiasts, and seafaring and landlocked fans of compelling nonfiction.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Ruhlman (*The Soul of a Chef*) provides an insightful look at the life and work of legendary master boatbuilders Nat Benjamin and Ross Gannon, whose boatyard on Martha's Vineyard is the site of the most innovative work happening today. Ruhlman tells the men's stories through the boats that

they construct, so a long chapter on building the 65-foot-long schooner Rebecca for a newly boat-struck buyer turns into an exploration of the unique connection between the rich people who buy boats and the working-class people who make them, as well as the slow and detailed work that goes into building a boat by hand. Ruhlman's discovery of the "extraordinary integrity" of Benjamin and Gannon's work, as well as "a parallel integrity in these boatwrights' lives," becomes "urgently important" to him "because this work and this kind of person [are] vanishing from our midst."

Ruhlman is "not afraid to claim that the wooden boat is both ancient and great, that it connects us to the life that has gone before and that it's fully worthy of a life engaged in its construction." His ability to simply tell the boatbuilders story, making connections between boats and life, gives this sharply observed book its pleasures. (May)Forecast: Ruhlman, who has written extensively for the New York Times, should garner some attention, especially given the acclaim of his previous book and his author tour. The book's attention to manual labor, craft and the lives of men should interest readers of the more intelligent men's magazines. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

"Wooden Boats describes in loving detail how these vessels are made. . . . Mr. Ruhlman consistently comes through with touching lyricism." #151;The Wall Street Journal"Ruhlman's deft blending of boatbuilding description and seagoing lore will satisfy even the fussiest of wooden-boat enthusiasts." #151;WoodenBoat magazine --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Read this years ago in hardback. This was a gift for an aspiring fine woodworker friend. Ruhlman is a writer of the first order. Highly recommend his other work.

I really enjoyed this book. Ruhlman spends enough time on the process and craft to make it worthwhile. Too often such books are too much about the people and not what they do and how they do it. This book was a bit biased in that direction but not so much that I skipped a lot of it. What would have helped were a few more illustrations. A visual glossary in particular. Some of the terms are unfamiliar: Garboard? I know a bit about boats and ships but some of the terminology is unique to this craft. So the glossary would have been helpful.

Ruhlman is an exceptional writer. He has the ability to communicate technical subjects clearly, involving the reader in the techniques and the passions of the artisans he writes about. An excellent book.

This is certainly is a great book to read if you ever plan to build a wooden boat or run a wooden boatyard. I chose both. Thanks for the extra push Nat and Ross. You are a "true" inspiration.

Started out really interesting and then got really boring.

I was so excited I bought 2 copies, one for myself and one as a gift. Ruhlman writes a narrative of an arcane craft with it's own language in such a compelling and informative way even the most casual rreader can grab the art and nuance of Gannon & Benjamin.

"Walk in Water" and "Wooden Boats" reach into the depths of the soul. Don't read one without the other :)

im nearly done with this book,and ill tell ya,,what a book it is.its a enthralling story about a shipyard and the boats they build. it tells about the boat shop,and nearly what it might feel like being/working in one. i for one would love to have a job in one,,money or no.(being disabled,,it aint gonna happen) the boats they build are amazing,and the writer describes them in a way that i can imagine what it will look like even before i check out the pictures.the best part of this book,,is its a true story.if there is a boat lover in your life,,or you happen to enjoy all things boat,,this book will not disapoint.buy it and enjoy,royst

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