

VANISHING SAIL: THE STORY OF A CARIBBEAN TRADITION (film) – written and directed by Alexis Andrews, produced by Alexis Andrews and Justin Sihera, Indian Creek Films 2015. Available on DVD from www.store.vanishingsail.com at £19.15 / US \$24.95.

We loved this film. It tells the story of Alwyn Enoe, one of the few remaining traditional boat builders in the West Indies, as he builds his last boat in Windward, Carriacou. Alexis had become enchanted with Carriacou sloops and bought one in Antigua in the 1990s, subsequently sailing her back to Carriacou where she had been built. He became friends with Alwyn, from whom he commissioned a boat which they named *Genesis*.

In 2012, Alwyn had not received any commissions for new boats for several years, and his sons had found other employment to support themselves, away from the boat-building craft. In his late 60s, Alwyn decided it was time to retire. Before he did so, however, he wanted to build one last boat for his family and asked Alexis to document the tradition before it was lost for ever. “If this thing gone from here, everything gone you know ...”, Alwyn explains. The result is this beautifully-filmed story which follows Alwyn and his sons over a three-year period as they build *Exodus*, a traditional Carriacou gaff-rigged sloop.

They haul trees from the forest to make her frames, and fashion a mast out of a utility pole. As the boat nears completion, Alwyn is seized with the idea of finishing her in time to compete in the Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta, five weeks away. They complete her just under the wire and launch her in an enthusiastic, traditional ceremony. Alwyn and his sons then set off on the 48 hour sail to Antigua to join the regatta.

Woven throughout the film are stories and commentaries by some wonderful island personalities including boat builders, neighbours and seamen of all stripes. Don Street even makes an appearance. The film explores the vibrant history of boat building and trading (and smuggling) under sail in the eastern Caribbean, and reaches back to the Scottish settler origins of the art. Besides being an engrossing story of an ancient, vanishing skill and one man’s poignant effort to preserve it, we are given intimate and genuine exposure to this small island community. For now, Alwyn’s legacy continues as his sons do their best to carry on their father’s work and Carriacou’s tradition.

Vanishing Sail is the winner of numerous awards including the Directorial Discovery and Audience Choice awards at the 2015 Rhode Island International Film Festival, the 2016 Grand Jury Prize at the Barcelona International Film Festival, and most recently, the 2017 Donald Gosling Maritime Media Award for Best Television or Film.

One last thing. The film is gorgeous. Shot primarily in Carriacou, the Grenadines and Antigua, it had us ready to jump on the next plane from wintry Maine. It also inspires one to take part in, or at least attend (plus

camera!), the Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta. Whether your interests lie in cruising, racing, boat building, or boat design, *Vanishing Sail* will not disappoint.

Jack Griswold

This review originally appeared in the 2018 issue of *Voyages*, the annual magazine of the Cruising Club of America.

