

## BACKGROUND

# International Yacht Restoration School (IYRS)

With locations in the heart of historic Newport (R.I.) and a second facility in Bristol (R.I.), the International Yacht Restoration School is a non-profit institution dedicated to education and maritime preservation. The school teaches the skills, history, art and science of building, restoring and maintaining boats and their systems. IYRS offers intensive programs in traditional boatbuilding and marine systems, employing a time-honored educational model that teaches problem solving, teamwork, project management and hands-on skills. IYRS graduates are highly regarded for their passion and craftsmanship and work in many of the premier modern and restoration yards around the world. IYRS also promotes an understanding of maritime heritage to the public at large through its lecture series, publications such as *Restoration Quarterly*, and its campus in Newport, which is open year-round to the public. The Newport campus includes two historic buildings, one of which houses the student workshops where members of the public can watch students restore classic boats during the school term, and a working marina dedicated to classic sail and power boats.

**Two Industry-Driven Educational Programs** Through the use of a traditional educational model that includes a carefully designed integration of classroom instruction, documentation, hands-on work/study, and mentoring by industry professionals, IYRS offers two curriculums of study: a two-year program in Boat Building & Restoration, and a one-year program in Marine Systems and associated technology. Emphasis in both programs is developing a high degree of technical and craftsmanship skills, leading to certifications that are highly regarded by the industry.

- **The two-year Boat Building & Restoration program** draws an international student body and explores all aspects of restoration—from safety, tool use, surveying and historical documentation, to drafting, lofting, teamwork building, project management, woodworking and seamanship. The school is known in the marine industry—by both modern and restoration yards—for the high level of skill and craftsmanship taught. Graduates enjoy a near-100-percent job placement rate and often multiple job opportunities.
- **The one-year Marine Systems program** was rolled out in fall 2007. In a joint effort with the marine trades of Rhode Island and the American Boat and Yacht Council (ABYC), IYRS has developed an in-depth program that includes onboard systems such as electrical, electronic, fuel, propulsion, and steering systems. The curriculum delivery employs traditional educational methods—such as research and hands-on lab work using the state-of-the-art technology associated with the rapidly changing marine systems environment. At the completion of the program, students will be eligible to take relevant ABYC certification testing.

**Continuing Education & Professional Development** IYRS also offers career-oriented continuing education in conjunction with the maritime industry. Courses are targeted to maritime service professionals, boat yard employees, and serious marine enthusiasts. The skills taught can be used in both modern and restoration boatyards—in restoration work, in building and maintaining classic wooden boats, and in building and maintaining modern fiberglass and composite yachts. The program includes courses in onboard marine systems, woodworking, metalworking, and marine coatings applications.

**Strong Synergy with the Marine Industry** IYRS's expertise in training craftsmen has proven to have a definite synergy with an industry that has a continual need for skilled employees. IYRS has spent considerable time listening to the needs of marine companies, and the school has collaborated with the

Rhode Island Marine Trades Association (RIMTA), RI Economic Development Corporation, and the RI Department of Labor and Training to develop training programs; nonprofits such as the United Way of Rhode Island and The Rhode Island Foundation Newport County Fund have granted monies to help create pilot programs. With these grants, IYRS launched the first Marine Industry Career Day in 2006, where area employers connect with individuals in search of career opportunities; the event has become an annual happening. The first Marine Trades Training Program, a nine-day introductory course that helps individuals gain the skills-training needed to begin marine-industry careers, was run in 2006.

**A Waterfront Campus** The IYRS campus on Newport's Thames Street includes two historic structures: an 1831 textile mill—which has been newly restored and now includes expansion space for IYRS, a maritime research library, the school's Visitor Center, and lease space for twelve companies that have brought businesses, jobs, and new economic activity to the Lower Thames Street neighborhood—and a 1903 electric generating plant. This latter building, known as Restoration Hall, houses the student workshop, machine workshops, and an upper-story gallery where the public can view student restoration projects. The school's waterfront also includes a stone wharf and floating docks where the public can view a seasonal showing of visiting vessels. The school's Marine Systems program is run at a satellite location in Bristol (R.I.) at the Franklin Street Marine Corridor, a unique industrial/education complex where students mix with marine-industry companies located at the complex.

**Returning Classics to the Water** A fleet of classic boats emerges each year from Restoration Hall on Launch Day, an annual event held at the end of term that marks the IYRS graduation ceremony. At graduation, students launch and sail for the first time the vessels they have spent the year restoring. Boats restored at the Newport campus are indigenous to the region—including designs by the "Wizard of Bristol" Nathanael Herreshoff, George Lawley of Boston, and Concordias and Beetle Cats®. The 1885 schooner yacht *Coronet*, now being restored on the campus, is the largest and most ambitious restoration project undertaken at IYRS. The school acquired the 133-foot yacht in 1995 and directed the initial phases of the restoration. In 2006, *Coronet* was conveyed to Coronet Restoration Partners (CRP), an organization whose principals have substantial experience in classic yacht restoration and who share the same values and high standards for historic restoration as IYRS. Jeffery Rutherford of Rutherford Boat Works and Dr. Robert McNeil, an accomplished sailor and classic boat restorer, are CRP's lead principals. The group is continuing the *Coronet* restoration at IYRS, making several positions on the work crew available to IYRS graduates.

**An Affiliation with the Museum of Yachting:** Newport's Museum of Yachting and IYRS converged in 2007. Both educate the public about maritime history and its traditions, while working to preserve those traditions. IYRS's main focus is vocational education: training craftsmen in traditional boatbuilding, restoration, and marine systems. The Museum educates the public at large through its events and exhibitions. "Many great schools are connected to a museum or cultural center. While a school may be focused on educating students and advancing research, a museum can take that knowledge to a wider public," said maritime artist John Mecray, who is co-founding trustee of both IYRS and the Museum. In Summer 2009, the Museum and the school have coordinated exhibitions and restoration projects, so visitors can watch restorations underway at IYRS and tour the historic campus, then travel across Newport Harbor on a water taxi to learn about some of the historic boats being restored at IYRS and the maritime heritage of the region in museum exhibitions that are open from mid-May to October.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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