



## **Tradition with a Twist:**

Nova Craft Canoe and Fanshawe College collaborate on new canoe designs

M. I. Garland, Nova Craft Canoe

Nova Craft Canoe has a history of improving canoe design, be it structural for improved hydrodynamics or compositional for improved efficiency. Not stopping there, the production staff at Nova Craft has experimented with different themes for the graphic arts incorporated into the lamination process. After making a couch from an Angler canoe, a birchbark-coloured canoe, several different plaid canoes, and a colourful tie-dyed canoe, Nova Craft staff realized that it was possible to laminate almost any design into a composite boat. Roch Prévost, Sales and Marketing Manager, and Tim Miller, owner of Nova Craft, recognized this as an exciting opportunity to offer a unique, personalized and very different designs to customers and this is rejuvenating the canoe-manufacturing industry.

Nova Craft Canoe has a mandate with the Paddlesports Industry Association to create more opportunity for youth involvement in paddlesports. Today's youth are very aware of cutting edge graphic art on skis, skateboards and snowboards—why not have amazing graphics on canoes? Customizing a graphic design for use on a composite canoe is a wonderful way to reach out to younger people to become involved in the canoe industry and from there into paddlesports.

With this in mind, Roch Prévost approached the Fanshawe College Art and Design instructor Robert Chilver with a proposal for the third-year graphic design class. With persistence and growing rapport between the two organizations, the project took root and was incorporated into the Art and Design curriculum for this year. The challenge presented to the 74 students was to create a design for a canoe, aimed at the 25 to 35 year-old demographic, but not excluding teenagers. Each student had to create his or her design, remembering the practical as well as whimsical as it has to be possible to put onto a canoe, and then write a specification sheet aimed at selling the finished product. Each design must be unique, and translatable onto the curves of a canoe. To facilitate this, the students were given a specific profile for their designs, taken from measurements of a Bob Special, 15-foot canoe. The students were not given any particular theme; rather the design was to represent their personality and what the canoe and canoeing means to them.

Each student had three minutes to present his or her design to a panel of five judges, representing a variety of backgrounds in canoeing, art and marketing. The presentations were evaluated out of 100 possible points in six different judging categories. Sixteen finalists went on to the second tier, and their presentations were judged based on best fit with Nova Craft's ideals and with the target demographic. Of the three finalists, one design each was chosen to represent man, woman and the outdoors. The overall high quality of all the designs impressed everyone involved. They were all outstanding, and picking the ones with the best fit to Nova Craft Canoe proved to be a challenge.

This is a contest where everyone wins: the three students with the winning designs each receive a \$500.00 bursary from Nova Craft Canoe and all the students and their designs will have media exposure and a chance to discuss their work with industry representatives during the reveal ceremony at Fanshawe College. Nova Craft Canoe retains exclusive use of the winning designs, and the overall media exposure benefits Nova Craft and Fanshawe College. The three winning canoes will travel throughout the summer to be featured at various outdoor shows, including Canoecopia, the largest show in North America dedicated solely to paddlesports.