



Snap SHOTS



SANDOR FIZLI

Brian Perry: "Nova Scotia has such a rich sailing history, culture, and maritime way of life."

New golden age

The wind shrieks like a banshee, filling the sails and bowing the ship into the icy brine. Every thread in the canvas clenches to withstand the onslaught, harnessing the awesome power of the force eight gale. Blasts of salt spray erupt over the schooner as she knifes through the unrelenting North Atlantic, leaving all challengers to marvel in her wake.

Although the golden age of sail has

passed, the legend of the *Bluenose* still lives on around the world, epitomizing Nova Scotia's rich maritime heritage. Brian Perry, the president of Bedford, N.S.-based Force 8 Sails, recognized that historic craftsmanship demanded of Nova Scotian shipbuilders and sail makers when he launched a line of sailcloth accessories last year that leverages the maritime tradition.

The company produces an assortment of bags, bean bag chairs, shower curtains, and dog beds that are all hand-stitched with nylon sailcloth by local craftspeople. All of the products have a nautical theme and official sailing insignia.

The inspiration for Force 8 Sails (www.force8sails.com) came to Perry in early 2007 while he was living in London, England, during a three-year stint abroad, and he noticed the amount of high-end sailing accessories and clothing lines flourishing there. "It hit

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me that Nova Scotia has such a rich sailing history, culture, and maritime way of life,” he says. “And to my knowledge, nobody was really trying to capitalize on that.”

Perry set his idea into motion by sourcing suppliers, designing patterns, and creating a product line in England, all while planning to return to Halifax. He and his wife, Kellie, arrived in Nova Scotia in June of 2007 and hit the ground running. In late January Force 8 Sails, which officially launched last August, attracted interest and orders from buyers at the Canadian Gift and Tableware Association’s Trade Show in Toronto, where its products were exposed to sailing and yachting markets around

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— Brain Perry, Force 8 Sails

North America. “Our market is North American locations that are nautically inclined and mostly coastally located,” says Perry, “with a sailing lifestyle.”

Sue Bourinot, the owner of The Teazer, a popular gift shop in Mahone

Bay, N.S., started carrying the Force 8 Sails product line in November; she predicts a bright future for the company in its home province. “The line appealed to me because it’s Nova Scotia–made and high quality,” she says. “Our customers love it because it’s unique.”

A self-described serial entrepreneur, Perry is undaunted by venturing into uncharted waters. “I’ve been involved in dozens of different businesses in different industries over the last 25 years,” he says. “If I see a good opportunity, I like to try and take advantage of it.” He is planning a successful voyage for Force 8 Sails, one that will hopefully be reminiscent of Nova Scotia’s golden era.

— JOE FITZGERALD