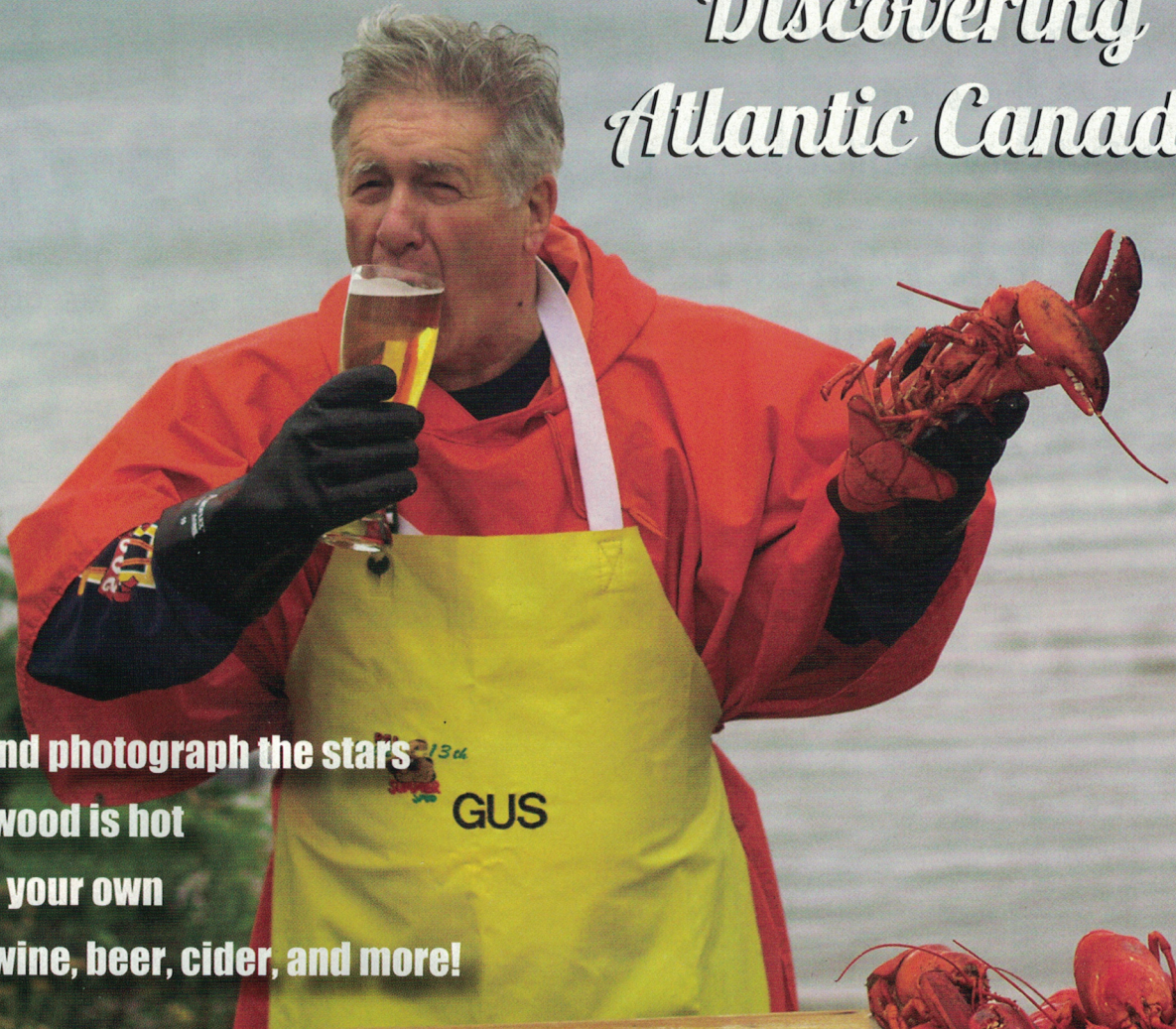


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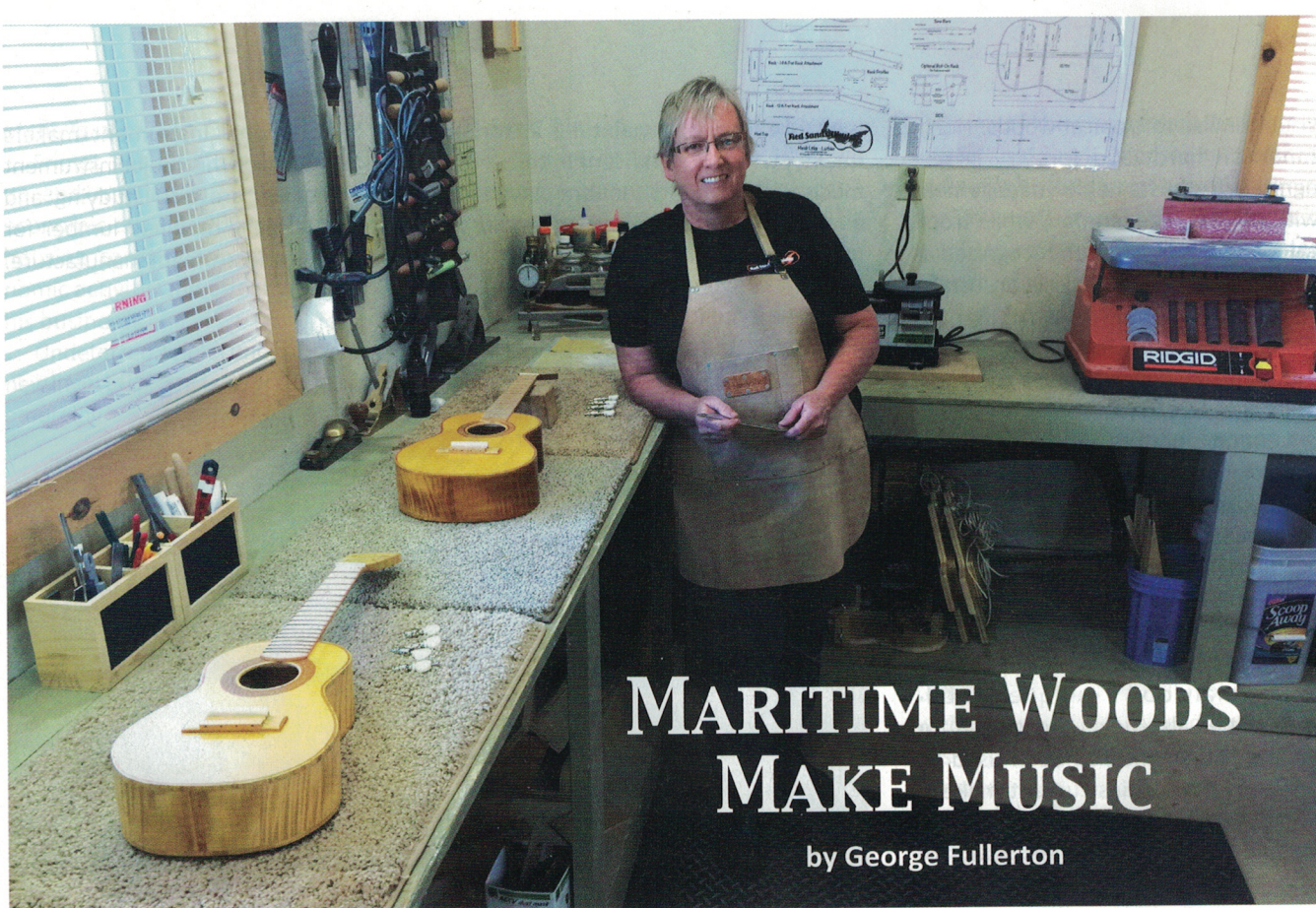
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Vol. 1 #1

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MARITIME WOODS MAKE MUSIC

by George Fullerton

Red Sands Ukeleles

Heidi Litke is a luthier living in P.E.I., and she operates Red Sands Ukeleles. Her shop turns out classical ukuleles and classical guitars. Litke explained she initially struggled to source a local wood supplier, but eventually discovered Dale Smearer through Land and Sea TV program.

“That’s what I do, I buy local wood to make instruments” declares Litke.

Litke began buying Flame yellow birch lumber from Smearer to construct instrument sides and necks, and later worked with Bird’s eye maple lumber. Smearer steered her toward Thermalwood’s torried lumber, which Litke has incorporated as accent wood in her instruments.

“The torried wood is especially nice for the finger board, which is finished only with wax. The torried wood is very nice to slide along while playing the instruments” explained Litke.

Traditionally ukuleles use koa, a native Hawaiian wood. Litke shared that eastern maple and birch provide a brighter sound from her ukuleles.

Windward Flutes

Forbes and Yola Christie have been making flutes at their Windward Flutes shop in Shelburne Nova Scotia for the past 10 years.

Forbes flute making career began with Brannen Brothers Flutemakers in Boston, and later moved to a position overseeing production and training at V.Q. Powell where

he headed the body department, running production and training apprentices.

Windward has been experimenting with constructing flutes using Thermalwood-torried wood in the past couple years, with promising results.

Forbes illustrates one of the benefits of torried wood by comparing their process of conditioning dense hardwood lumber they source from South Africa. Initially the billets measuring 45mm x 45mm x 300-500mm are dried (conditioned) for three years and then trimmed and bored and conditioned for another two years before they begin finished production.

“With the torried wood, we can move directly to production. Acoustically the torried wood is wonderful. On the other hand it is somewhat difficult to cut,” said Forbes.

He admits he was skeptical when he began working with the torried wood, but accompanied several of their “torried” flutes to the National Flute Association convention in San Diego, where they drew a lot of attention.

“They are stunning to look at, and they have a sound which is a bit lighter than African woods,” explained Forbes.

“One of the World’s leading flute collectors visited with us each of the four days at the convention and on the last day explained that he had to have one of the unique ‘torried’ flutes for his collection.”

This year Windward produced 15 “all Canadian” flutes made from torried wood, as a commemoration for Canada 150. As of July 1, Windward has sold seven to musicians in Wales, France, United States, and Montreal.