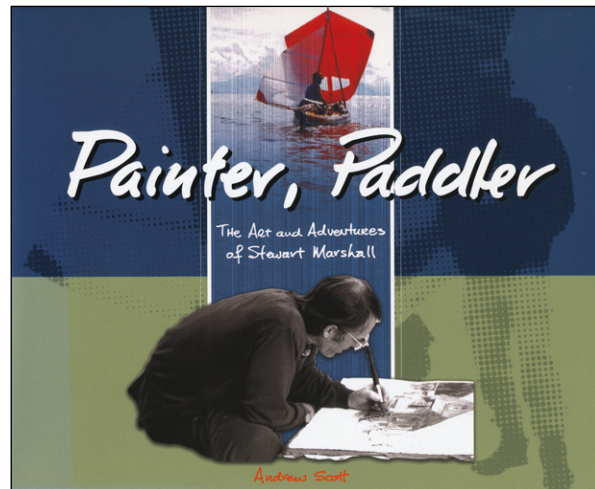


Title: *Painter, Paddler*
Subtitle: *The Art and Adventures of Stewart Marshall*
Author: Andrew Scott
Published: 2003
Publisher: Touchwood, Canada
Contents: 144pp; colour illustrations throughout, one map
Cover: hardback; dustjacket
Size: 245 x265 mms; portrait format
Price: NZ \$55.35
ISBN: 1-894898-07-9
Availability: Amazon or Blackwells
Review: Paul Caffyn



The dust-jacket cover appealed to me for this hardback title, despite the fact the kayak has two sails flying for motive power. As I have moaned before, too many paddling titles of recent years are self-published paddling narratives with bugger all supporting photos, or detailed maps, just words, words and more words; also poorly designed books with superb text like Tara Mulvany's *A Winter's Paddle*, printed on cheap paper, with an abysmal photo layout and the text only left-justified.

So I am fussy - I like a book that has an engrossing text (a good narrative), excellent illustrations (photos, figures, maps) and appeals to the eye ie., a good design. And particularly photos that are bled to the page edge, and not buried in a sea of white paper. In recent years I have reviewed two lovely soft cover titles with a mix of artwork, sketches, paintings and text: *Around One More Point* by Mary Gazetas (painting and paddling in British Columbia) and New Zealand's outstanding artist Ginney Deavoll's *...The Long Way*, a paddle, bike and tramp the length of the South Island's West Coast.

Painter, Paddler is a biography of Canadian artist Stewart Marshall, which meets all my criteria noted above. A landscape format hardback, with full page reproductions of paintings, a double column text layout which does not cram words onto the page, a mix of black and white and colour photographs, and sketches on the page margins or included as watermarks.

In the summer of 1990, author Andrew Scott attended a Vancouver Island beach BBQ and was impressed with not only the mandolin playing ability of Stewart Marshall, but his beautiful BC marine landscapes viewed earlier at a nearby art gallery. Over the next 10 years, the author taped hours of interviews and gained access to the painter/paddler's writings and journals. He felt that the scope of Stewart's travels, 'the breadth of his vision and the quality of his work put him in a category of his own.' Well deserving of a book.

Born 1944 in Montreal, Stewart grew up with two passions, paddling and music. An early canoeing trip in Quebec led to his spending a winter with an old trapper, where he went in as a green city boy and came out being able to live in the bush with just a knife. Art school followed, a boy's trip to South America in a VW, then communal life in Denmark before Stewart returned to BC and built his first 6.5 metre long kayak. In 1977 he joined George Dyson in South-East Alaska for a try out of George's fleet of six baidarkas. Stewart's hand-built kayaks are long by our standards, his third kayak was seven metres long and almost a metre wide; big enough inside to both sleep and house full sheets of watercolour paper.

Initial chapters move chronologically, accompanied by relevant pages of Stewart's evocative landscapes. In a break from kayaking, he sailed across the Pacific, eventually making an interesting landfall near Whangarei's town basin. Twice running aground, sails blowing out, a

halyard wrapped around the prop, stripping off his clothes to fix that, and a customs official trying to catch up with him – a lovely vignette, well described.

Sailing was not always smooth for the sail-powered, heavy kayak and the chapter *Dangers and Afflictions* recounts some close calls at sea, including a torrid crossing out to Haia Gwai, well almost, then blown back towards the mainland, but finally reaching the offshore islands. Off the appropriately named Dead Man's Point, when nearing Bella Coola Harbour, he capsized at speed when a wind gust hit, the kayak sank, and he was close to drowning while trying to take off his waterlogged sweatshirts. By a fluke of luck, a fishing boat saw and plighted and rescued both Stewart and took his kayak in tow.

Encounters with the Wild has a mix of really scary encounters (brown and black bears, and a cougar) and exhilarating close meetings with big and small cetaceans.

As to the paintings, Stewart's landscapes capture the moods of the sea and weather so vividly - almost like being there but without salt spray in the air. Some of the paintings lack the detail I like, a broad brush stroke style, but there are plenty I would love to have on my wall, especially one titled *November Passage* – a moonlit scene with large cresting waves and Stewart flying down the face of a wave with all sails set.

At the time of printing, Stewart was living on an island off the NE coast of Vancouver Island, with his partner and daughter in an old homestead with close by, his art studio cantilevered on piles over the sea.

Author Andrew Scott has made a marvellous job stringing together this engrossing biography, and Touchwood have turned the words, paintings and photos into a lovely coffee table book.