

Wildfowl Carving
MAGAZINE

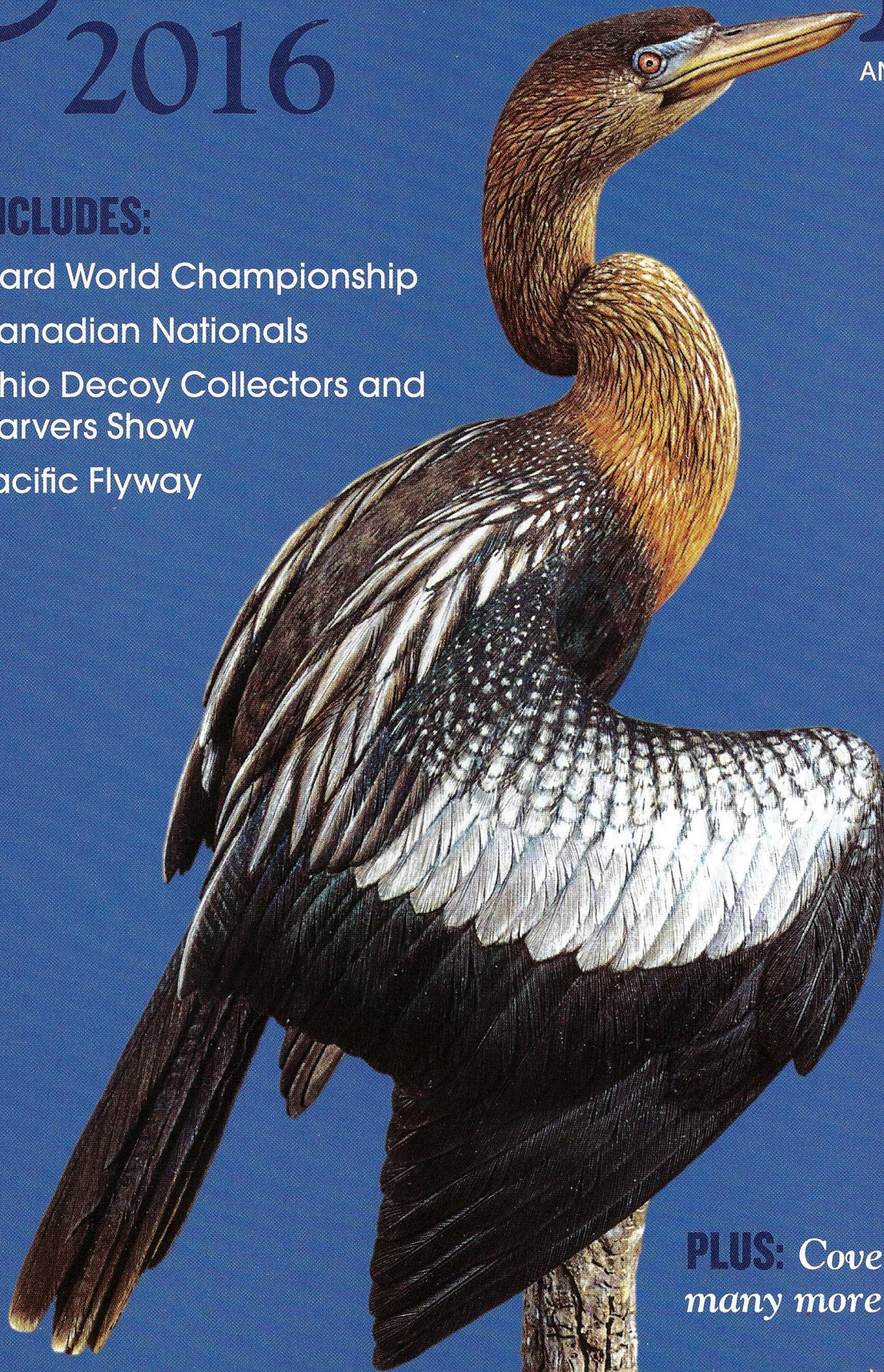
COMPETITION

2016

ANNUAL 2017
\$25.95 US

INCLUDES:

Ward World Championship
Canadian Nationals
Ohio Decoy Collectors and
Carvers Show
Pacific Flyway



PLUS: Coverage of
many more shows

JERRY TALTON

TEXT BY STAN RULE

*Core Sound-style decoy by
Jerry Talton.*



The 2015 Core Sound Decoy Festival's featured carver Jerry Talton carved his first decoy, a pintail drake, in 2002. Since then Jerry has refined his craft to make desirable art while following his passion for waterfowling history. He has emerged as a respected regional resource for both. Known for his Core Sound-style decoys with their pleasing lines and historical paint patterns, he is even more admired for his desire to mentor others and create mutual bonds of friendship among waterfowl carvers. Asked why he finds such joy in carving, he replies that he is not sure. "It's just who I am."

Though regularly successful in traditional decoy competitions, Jerry most values being honored as the 2015 featured carver. He has contributed to *WILDFOWL CARVING MAGAZINE*, been featured in *Hunting and Fishing Collectibles Magazine*, participated in numerous outreach events, and now enjoys having those he mentored compete against him. Before turning to decoys he made surfboards and custom skateboards, and he still branches out into fanciful carvings such as a recent whale windvane or elegant pipes. "If I go too long without doing something, I get ill," he says. His long list of commissions should keep him in good health.

For mentors, Jerry points to Jamie Hand of Cape May, New Jersey; Walter "Brother" Gaskill of Straits, North Carolina; and Pete Peterson of Cape Charles, Virginia. Curt Salter of Harkers Island mentored him in carving but also "taught me about life." Jerry embraced the advice of another local carver, Gail Corwin Gerringer, who told him to draw his own patterns and not copy others.

A visit to Jamie Hand in 2008 became a turning point for Jerry. He left New Jersey with a commitment

to carving in his own style and abandoning fillers for cracks and joints. He also decided he would hollow his bodies, leaving his river decoys heavy on the bottom to dampen movement, and his pond decoys, such as wood ducks, fully hollowed and light so they would respond to every ripple. His decoys look good on the mantle, but more than a quarter are regularly hunted over. He is pleased by the utility of his carvings, which connects him to his predecessors.

"Use a pencil and draw decoys—not ducks but decoys," Jerry advises. "When you get a pleasing pattern, pin it up. Let it sit. Come back and refine it after a few days. Study it." When you carve, he advises buying the best wood, using the best and sharpest tools and good paint. "Carving one good decoy is more satisfying than 10 less than good. Make the experience enjoyable; that's what it's all about." Jerry prefers traditional carving with tools such as the hand ax, drawknife, and spokeshave and sometimes he even uses a glass shard to smooth his work, but he believes all carvers should use what they like.

"As a decoy carver, it seems we share a bond others might not understand," Jerry says. "Our carving distracts from some segments of our days (politics, events, personal issues) and lets us focus on 'life'—all else is pushed away for a while." And Jerry obviously cherishes the fellowship of his carving community. He is a cornerstone of the Core Sound Decoy Guild and shares its goals of preserving and passing on the Down East waterfowl heritage. He is a colorful philosopher as well. "Life is a short, sweet ride—too short to hunt over plastic decoys," he says. "There's already enough plastic in the ocean."