

PHOTO COURTESY OF SUGAR AND LUCY LINDWALL

The Vaquero II, *ready for launch in this 1959 photograph, is the most famous of the Lindwall boats. Designed to carry 50 tons of livestock, she transported cattle to and from Santa Rosa Island for forty years.*

HISTORY

SUGAR LINDWALL

AND HIS WONDERFUL WOODEN BOATS

By Hillary Hauser



PHOTO: JÜRGEN HILMER

A beautiful array of Lindwall boats and their enthusiastic owners recently arrived in the harbor to celebrate Santa Barbara's reigning shipwright, Paul "Sugar" Lindwall.

A number of standout sights and scenes in the Santa Barbara Harbor make it unique among California ports—the lineup of flags along the breakwater, the end-to-end urchin fishing boats along the CUDA dock, the upstairs restaurants and bars overlooking the old Navy Pier where local fishermen hang out and the rough-and-tumble fishing boats along the floating dock facing the Coast Chandlery.

If you look out into the marinas, you can't miss one of the most noticeable boats in the harbor—a big white and brown-trimmed vessel with an enormously wide, low-slung deck. This is the *Vaquero II*—probably Santa Barbara's most famous boat. It is a cattle boat, said to be the only one of its kind in the world.

The *Vaquero II* is among a list of handsome wooden boats

Santa Barbara Harbor (circa 1960s) remains home to a commercial fishing fleet. Morgan Castagnola currently owns Sugar Lindwall's first boat, the 40-foot commercial fishing boat, Remora *(now* Lucy L*), built in 1948. Next came* Cecilia *in 1951, named for the mother of eight prominent Castagnolas and now owned by Tim Castagnola.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF SUGAR AND LUCY LINDWALL

built by Santa Barbara's reigning shipwright, Paul "Sugar" Lindwall, whose khaki-suited presence in the harbor was enjoyed by locals for the years he built boats in Rod's boatyard. Today, Sugar is often seen walking quietly along the breakwater hand in hand with Lucy, his wife, best friend and boat-building partner of 61 years. Lindwall boats are the legacy they leave to the Santa Barbara waterfront, as well as to the owners who are rabidly enthusiastic about the historical and aesthetic significance of their vessels.

Many of these owners—including Dr. Fred Hepp (*Angelina)* and Rick Fricke (Los Angeles-area owner of the elegant cruiser *Tonina),* together with a few Castagnolas in Santa Barbara (Tim owns the *Cecilia*; Morgan owns the *Lucy*)—gathered at the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum in June for a day-long tribute to Sugar Lindwall and the wooden boats he created. Visitors got to take a floating tour of these vessels, lined up along the docks in front of the museum, and were treated to slides and films of Sugar's boat-building history, including Huell Howser's "California's Gold" segment on the building of the *Vaquero II.* Howser's televised coverage emphasizes the uniqueness of the boat which was used for transporting cattle to and from Santa Rosa Island between 1959, when it was built, and 1999, when the National Park Service took over the island and ended the cattle operation begun in 1902 by the Vail and Vickers families.

Sugar is a quiet man, not much given to a lot of hooting and hollering about his work. Some say that work is a unique piece of maritime history because the wood used to build Lindwall boats, including oak and Douglas fir, seasoned for three years before a tool was ever put to it, has been replaced by fiberglass—"Tupperware," Sugar calls it.

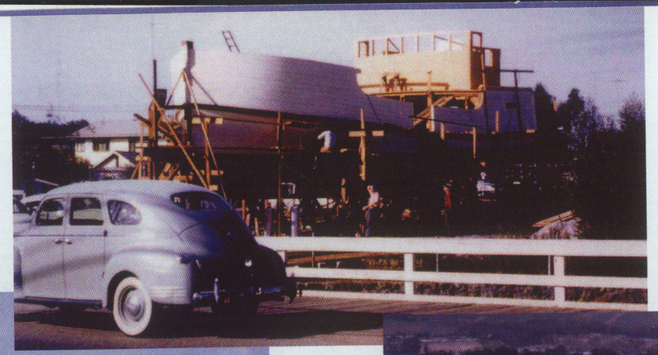
"Today, you can't get the right lumber," he says. "Beautiful teak and mahogany are a thing of the past." Compared with modern building materials, wood has "warmth, comfort—and is seaworthy," Sugar adds.

Lucy, the high-school sweetheart Sugar married in 1942, was bookkeeper for the Lindwall business, and she hasn't forgotten

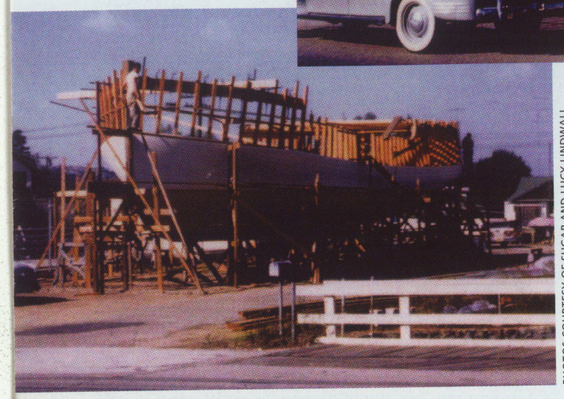


PHOTO: JÜRGEN HILMER

Today, Sugar and Lucy Lindwall, boat-building partners, are often seen walking along the breakwater.



The building of the Vaquero II *was the subject of a Huell Howser "California's Gold" segment. Below, she is readied for her trip to the harbor in 1959.*





PHOTOS COURTESY OF SUGAR AND LUCY LINDWALL

even one detail of her husband's boats. She remembers the yachts that were finished inside with wet bars, stoves, soapstone fireplaces—"the *El Vencido*, 50-feet long, had a king-sized bed in the stateroom," she recalls. "In that day, this was almost unheard of in a boat."

"He was a bachelor," Sugar explains, a typically wry statement that makes them both laugh.

Sugar got his nickname when his family lived in a duplex on Ortega Street. "The lady upstairs called me that when I was eight years old, and it stuck. I guess I was such a sweet kid," Sugar says.

The Lindwall boatbuilding story began with Charlie Lindwall, Sugar's father, who left his home in Finland in 1894 at the age of 14. Moving through Boston and Chicago, he finally settled on Cathlamet Island in the Columbia River, where he began a family with his wife, Angelina, and became a salmon fisherman. Their young son Paul (Sugar), however, suffered from asthma, and so in 1929, upon a doctor's advice, Charlie and Angelina moved the family to a warmer place—Santa Barbara. Here, Charlie established Lindwall Boatworks on the end of Stearns Wharf.

LINDWALL BOATWORKS

40'	Commercial fishing boat	*Remora* (now *Lucy L*)	1948
49.4'	Commercial fishing boat	*Cecelia*	1951
32'	Power sport fisher		1954
65'		*Vaquero II*	1959 (March)
47'	Offshore cruiser	*Rapparee*	1959
47'	Offshore cruiser	*Pau Hana*	1960
52'	Offshore cruiser	*Chickadee*	1961
50'	Offshore cruiser	*Marda*	1962
58'	Offshore cruiser	*Tonina*	1963
38'	Sport fisher	*Dulsea*	1964
51'	Sport fisher		1964
50'	Offshore cruiser	*El Vencido*	1965
48'	Offshore cruiser	*Blue Peter*	1965
52'	Offshore cruiser	*Galatea*	1967
52'	Finished/completely outfitted hull of racing vessel	*Widgeon* (won Trans Pac race)	1970

The first boat built by Charlie and three of his sons—Lloyd, Vic and Paul—was the 45-foot *Linda*, lowered into the ocean from the end of the wharf with great fanfare in 1943 and trumpeted by the local press as the "Largest Boat to be Built Here." Lloyd used the *Linda* to fish albacore, swordfish and shark. Shortly afterward, Lindwall Boatworks launched, in similar fashion, the 48-foot-long *Angelina*, which Sugar intended to use for fishing.

Sugar was not at the launching of the *Linda* because he was enrolled in a Navy shipbuilding school in San Diego, where he attained "marks just two points short of the highest ever given by the instructors."

In February 1943, during World War II, he shipped out to the Philippines, where he repaired landing craft. Sugar and Lucy had been married for less than a year, and the separation was hard on her. "Don't get me started," she says, getting teary-eyed thinking about it. For Lucy, watching current television news about the war in Iraq is impossible, because "it brings it all back." She remembers the exact day her husband came home—"On my birthday in 1945…and our daughter was born ten months later," she laughs.

As for Sugar going off fishing with the *Angelina*, Lucy said to her husband, "There's no way you're going fishing." She wasn't about to let him out of her sight again.

The *Angelina* therefore passed to brother Vic, who worked side by side with Lloyd on *Linda*, from Scammon's Lagoon, Baja, to Astoria, Oregon. A collection of old photographs owned by Fred Hepp shows the boats together in their glory days—traversing Tomales Bay en route to British Columbia. One golden-toned photo shows the two brothers sitting on the deck of *Linda* in Astoria—a scruffy scene of fishscales, caps and cigarettes and, above all, adventure.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. FRED HEPP

Lloyd (left) and Vic (right) Lindwall onboard the Linda *(circa 1948).*



In 1967, the 52-foot offshore cruiser Galatea *was built and launched for Bill Hanna of Hanna-Barbera Productions. Below, Hanna and Sugar Lindwall relax aboard the cruiser.*





PHOTOS COURTESY OF SUGAR AND LUCY LINDWALL

Sugar, meanwhile, relocated Lindwall Boatworks during the fall of 1946, next to the railroad tracks in a leased yard on Micheltorena Street and Hwy 101. With Sugar doing the designing and building and Lucy doing the books, Lindwall Boatworks began producing a string of classic commercial fishing boats, sport fishers and elegant offshore cruisers. Their first boat, launched in 1948, was the 40-foot commercial fishing boat *Remora* (now *Lucy L*, currently owned by Morgan Castagnola). In 1951 came the launching of *Cecilia* (named for the mother of eight prominent Castagnolas, including Mario and Dario; the boat is now owned by Tim Castagnola).

The same year Charlie Lindwall passed away, 1959, the *Vaquero II* was launched, followed in the next four years by the



PHOTO: JÜRGEN HILMER

The renovated stateroom of the Galatea, *a boat now owned by Brad Avery of Newport Beach, who was present at the recent celebration of the Lindwall Boatworks at the Maritime Museum.*

Rapparee, Pau Hana, Chickadee and *Marda*. The 58-foot offshore cruiser *Tonina* was built for Frank Collbaum, head of Rand Corporation, in 1963 (now owned by Rick Fricke, who recently took his family aboard the vessel on a month-long trip to the Sea of Cortez). In 1967, the 52-foot offshore cruiser *Galatea* was built and launched for Bill Hanna, of Hanna-Barbera Productions. Brad Avery of Newport Beach is the current owner of the *Galatea*.

In 1970, the owner of the Micheltorena property died, the property changed hands and Lindwall Boatworks moved to Milpas Street for a year or so, then to Montecito Street near the "old city dump" at Santa Barbara Street. This last location lasted only a few months, because the "city kept raising the requirements," Sugar says, and in 1972, the Lindwalls moved the boat building business to Rod White's boatyard in the Santa Barbara harbor.

Here, harbor regulars could see Sugar quietly going about his daily business, wearing his ever-present khaki uniform and a gentle demeanor that everyone appreciated in a world where things can be rough. He continued to work on boats through subsequent yard owners after Rod's boatyard changed hands in 1990, and finally retired in 1999.

In the living room of their Samarkand home, built by Sugar in 1946 ("Sugar's father beamed the corners of the kitchen cupboards like a boat's," Lucy says), the two enjoy a gentle life, filled with a large family that consists of two daughters, Diane and Carol, their husbands and children—and their grandchildren's children. All four generations of Lindwall women meet for tea every Wednesday afternoon—rain or shine, sleet or hail—to visit, have fun and share memories.

Sugar looks contentedly over these all-woman gatherings and smiles, just as he must do when he and Lucy take their daily walk in the harbor, where some of his other girls—the wonderful wooden boats he has created—have become permanent fixtures in Santa Barbara's ocean-going history.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RICK FRICKE

The 58-foot offshore cruiser Tonina *was built for Frank Collbaum, head of Rand Coporation. Rick Fricke, the current owner, has completely restored her, fulfilling a boyhood dream of owning this particular Lindwall boat.*

Hillary Hauser is a native Santa Barbaran and freelance writer and author whose articles have appeared in national publications. She is a frequent contributor to this magazine.

Editor's note: This article is in memory of Dr. Dean Smith who passed away on July 20. A sailor who loved all manner of boats, he brought the story of the Lindwall Boatworks to our attention.