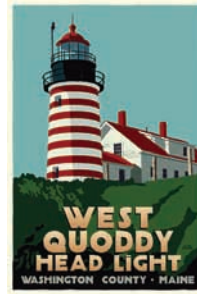
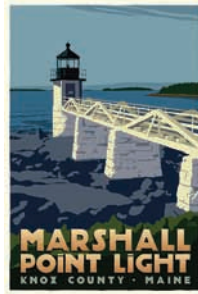


A L A N C L A U D E



Traveling to the Light

BY NAN LINCOLN

AS A YOUNG BOY in the 1970s artist Alan Claude recalls playing with his older brother on the beaches of Biarritz, France while their mother worked as a cleaning woman. Their only supervision was a very tall lighthouse that stood on a cliff overlooking the beach. “I always felt it was keeping watch over us,” Alan recalls. “And it was here that my abiding affection for lighthouses began.”

Fast forward to 1998, while making a living as a graphic designer in San Francisco, Claude met his future wife — rather prophetically at a restaurant across the bay from the Point Bonita Lighthouse. A Mainer, named Erin Skehan, she was also a graphic artist, who rekindled his love of lighthouses by introducing him to Maine and a whole coastline full of lighthouses.

As the internet became more a sophisticated and wide reaching resource, the Claude’s realized they could start making their dream of living and working in Maine a reality.

“The internet allowed us the freedom to live anywhere,” says Alan, “So when we decided we were ready to start a family, we moved to Maine.” In September 2004, Alan and Erin exchanged vows at sunrise at Marshall Point Light in Port Clyde. This experience and many subsequent visits to other lighthouses on the Maine coast inspired Alan to create a series of lighthouse travel posters.

“Working in various mediums including pen and ink, photography, and digital illustration, my challenge was to create an original series with a certain freshness of expression,” he says. “I wanted to reflect in this series the way I personally feel

about lighthouses, and to honor them.” With a lifelong affinity for 1920’s travel posters and a deep admiration of painter Edward Hopper, Claude mixed style and subject together. “I look for the inherent drama in things as in the light and shadows that magnify or reduce a feature or shape.”

The result of these artistic influences, his long-standing personal relationship with his subject, and his 21st-century technological abilities, are images that manage to combine a classical, silk-screened look, with a fresh new dramatic perspective.

“Alan Claude’s illustrations are some of the most stunning renditions of Maine lighthouses I’ve ever seen,” says Tim Harrison of *Lighthouse Digest* magazine.

Ned Johnston, an accomplished photographer and filmmaker, recently purchased two of the large size prints from the artist. “The grand view prints are spectacular. I love their size, their bold graphics, and how the strong colors brighten my house in Bar Harbor. Every day they remind me of why I moved to Maine.”

Rhode Island art collector Adrian Beaulieu is also a fan. “Alan Claude looks at Maine lighthouses with a fresh introspective eye,” he says. “Somewhat akin to peering into their soul. In doing so, each seems to be silently gazing back, revealing to patient and discerning observers something equally singular about themselves.”

Claude says “They are positive symbols of vision, hope, endurance and scenic beauty. It’s good energy.”



“Each has their own personality, its own characteristics. Can you think of any historic other structure that actually saved lives?”

He offers the limited edition prints in several sizes including an impressive “Grand View” 36 by 53 inch which command just about any room like a, well, like a lighthouse.

A 2010 Lighthouse Poster Calendar will also be available. His posters are sold in lighthouse museum stores such as Portland Head Light, Pemaquid Point Light, and Rockland Breakwater Light. In order to keep the lights burning, Mr. Claude has donated a number of his posters to the American Lighthouse Foundation and The Maine Lighthouse Museum and urges folks who visit a lighthouse not to forget to donate to its preservation fund. For more information, visit www.alanclaud.com. 🏰

Nan Lincoln is a reporter and Arts Editor for the Bar Harbor Times and the author of “Cecily’s Summer,” a true story about raising a harbor seal pup at her home on Mount Desert Island.

