

The Great Loop

6,000 Miles
in Style!



When you take the adventure of a lifetime, everything about it should be special...including the vessel.

It was December 25, 2020 when I saw I had a 16" x 20" print sale in my email box. I thought it was rather interesting that someone would buy a print on Christmas day. Little did I know just how interesting it would become.

I filled the order, shipped the print, and then followed up to make sure my customer was happy. She replied back that she was ecstatic and the print was beautiful and asked..."By the way have you ever done any boat graphics?"

I have to say out of all the things I have placed my art on...from scarves to mugs, to jewelry and tote bags...I had never thought about placing it on a boat. But, I replied, "I haven't ever done any boat graphics, but, I am a graphic designer, in addition to being a fine artist, so ABSOLUTELY! let's put my art on your boat."

So the other challenge was that the boat, which is actually a 47" yacht, was in Chattanooga. So I contacted a few sign companies in Tennessee, and started "Photoshopping" my art on photos of their yacht, to determine the placement. Originally the Parks had wanted

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- Nicole Parks*

my art on the back of the yacht, on the transom wall, but the addition of a dingy would hide the art, so they opted for the upper sides of the yacht.

Now as an animal artist "Who captures the essence of your favorite animals!" I have sold thousands of prints and paintings, and merchandise, and traveled to hundreds of art festivals... and I get it...we LOVE our pets! They are our four-legged family members! Especially the dogs. Dogs are like rock stars! Everyone wants to meet, greet, and pet your dog. We all love them!

The Parks are no exception, they love their four-legged family members and are taking Haka the Australian Shepherd and Tux (their 20 y.o. cat) along with them on this adventure of a lifetime. Nicole Parks said her husband, "Bill has been owned by one Australian Shepherd or another since the early '90s. We've had Scout, Adama, Basil and now Haka in our lives. Aussies are free-thinkers—smart, loyal and fun."

As for the yacht's name, they said, "Our Ranger Tug was the first Blue Merle, named after our Australian Shepherd, Adama. Tropical Storm Zeta destroyed our truck that we used to trailer our Ranger Tug, so that set in motion the purchase of the yacht. **We've intentionally worked to take every challenge and make it an opportunity.** When we got our new boat, we put a big flip chart in our living room and we would add possible boat names as they came to us, but we just couldn't find anything that fit better than the Blue Merle II."

What made them think of putting my art on their yacht? Nicole says, "The piece is just such a perfect match--both for the boat's name and for our dog. It looks exactly like Haka! The vivid colors and sense of whimsy drew us to the painting. We closed on the boat just before Christmas and I purchased "Awesome Aussie" as a Christmas present for Bill, knowing it would have a place of honor on the boat. Little did we know it would become our boat graphic too!"

Blue Merle II WOODSTOCK, GA

As the Parks and I talked, I learned that they planned to do the GREAT LOOP in their new yacht. The 6,000 mile, GREAT LOOP is (according to Great-Loop.org): "...a circumnavigation of the eastern U.S., and part of Canada. The route includes the

Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, the New York State Canals, the Canadian Canals, the Great Lakes, the inland rivers, and the Gulf of Mexico. "Loopers" take on this adventure of a lifetime aboard their own boat."

Ever since the Parks heard about the GREAT LOOP, a few years ago, from other boaters, it's been on Bill's bucket list to take the year long journey.

They have been boating since 2009. Bill says, " We started small with a 19-foot Rinker, then moved to a 27-foot Ranger Tug." And when asked if he is going to be Captaining the yacht the whole trip, Bill said, "Nicole will learning as we go. By the end, she hopes to have enough time in to seek her Captain's license."

When asked how it makes you feel to take such a grand adventure? They replied, "Alive!!! Bill has Parkinson's and we simply don't know what the future holds. Between that and the pandemic, we decided not to wait any longer to live our dreams. We're so grateful to have this opportunity."

How does having my art on the outside of the yacht make you feel? I know you wanted to make the art a statement piece...how do you want people to feel when they see my art on your yacht? "It's so fun!!! Everyone who sees the art remarks on how beautiful it is, so it's a great icebreaker. Art like this is usually on a

big cruise ship. When people see it, we want them to smile and feel as joyful as we do. It's just a happy piece of art. Supporting local artists is important to us. And we both love animals, so it's a natural extension of that."

And in closing, "I have to say that my intention, as the artist, "dovetails" with the Parks'. I want to make people happy when they see my art, and I am so happy that the Parks have provided this opportunity to share my art with people over 6,000 miles. I believe that Nicole Parks Coaching not only empowers women to become their best selves, but encourages us all to live our best lives...even through life's challenges."

"I feel like the Parks are inspiring other people to live their dreams... telling them...your dreams can become a reality!"

- Barbara Rush

Article by: Barbara Rush

Barbara Rush is an internationally renown, Roswell, GA artist. She created her GeoCubist style in 2004-2006 after a visit to a Cubist exhibit at the High Museum (Atlanta GA), and has been painting and selling art since 2007. A master of color and movement, Ms. Rush, uses her artistic genius to create unique paintings of animals that delight animal lovers around the world.

Visit www.BarbaraRush.com for more information about her work. If you live in the Atlanta Area and would like to view the Artscaping (as seen on 11ALIVE NEWS) in her yard, please request information at br@BarbaraRush.com

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