



JULY 1-3 T0waterfrontfest.com



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Largest Viking Ship in the World Sets Sail for Toronto

Toronto, ON – April 26, 2016 – A courageous crew of sailors from around the world set sail last week aboard the world's largest Viking ship. Departing from her homeport in Haugesund, Norway, on Sunday, April 24, Draken Harald Hårfagre and her crew committed to the daring journey to cross the North Atlantic for her Expedition America. The great ship will be joining the fleet of international tall ships in Toronto for the Redpath Waterfront Festival presented by PortsToronto from July 1 to 3.

The Expedition America project curator, Sigur Aase, wanted Draken Harald Hårfagre to follow in the wake of one of the most challenging Viking explorations – the Viking discovery of the New World. Built with archaeological knowledge of ships, extensive research of Norse literature and using boatbuilding traditions, Draken Harald Hårfagre is what Vikings considered a "Great Ship." Before casting her sails for Expedition America, Draken Harald Hårfagre was celebrated with a Dragon's Head Ceremony. The dragon's head is traditionally not mounted until departure for long journeys to defend the ship and her crew from sea monsters, bad weather, evil creatures and unexpected raids. The ship's mythological head was revealed in the ceremony, and the great adventure of sailing the historical route was wished "Fair winds and following seas."

"Even though she is a great sailing ship, no one can predict the weather conditions along the way and the crew will face a real challenge," states Björn Ahlander, captain of Draken Harald Hårfagre. "It's hard to say which stretch will be the toughest before we've set sail, but the waters of Cape Farewell by the coast of Greenland are among the most dangerous waters in the world. It's extremely windswept and there will probably be a lot of ice."

Draken is crewed by 32 sailors from Norway, Sweden, USA, Canada (Jeff Lievre, Vancouver Island), Estonia, Russia, Spain, France and the UK, all of who were chosen from over 4,000 male and female applicants worldwide. Draken Harald Hårfagre does not provide any shelter for the crew other than a tent where the rotating crew sleep, 16 at a time, four hours work and four hours sleep. The crew will take on the challenge of crossing the North Atlantic Ocean, taking the same route the original Vikings travelled 1,000 years ago from Norway to Iceland, Greenland, Canada and finally the USA.

"It is a challenge to tame the Dragon, which makes reliable seamanship extremely important for the expedition," adds Ahlander. "The work onboard is heavy, wet and cold, therefore it demands a great physical and mental condition. There will be no privacy for the crew, they will be exposed to rain and cold weather with only short breaks to sleep."

Draken Harald Hårfagre is 114 ft long and has an oak hull, a Douglas fir mast, hemp rigging and a 260 square metre silk sail. If there is not enough wind, Draken Harald Hårfagre is equipped with 50 oars that take two oarsmen per oar to row. **For voyage updates, visit <https://www.facebook.com/DrakenHaraldHarfagre>.**

ADDITIONAL REDPATH WATERFRONT FESTIVAL FLEET

EI GALEÓN

Step back in time aboard El Galeón, a breathtaking 1:1 scale reconstruction of a 16th century Spanish galleon that was part of Spain's West Indies fleet. Built in Spain by the Nao Victoria Foundation to be a unique vessel where tradition and modernity meet and represent the Spanish culture, El Galeón is a replica of the Spanish galleons that linked Asia, America and Spain for three centuries. El Galeón will participate in the TALL SHIPS CHALLENGE® Great Lakes 2016 series, and the Festival will be the first port to launch the series. With more than 3,400 square feet, the ship has six decks to explore, 164 ft long and has three masts and seven sails.

PRIDE OF BALTIMORE II

Built in Baltimore's inner harbour, Pride of Baltimore II was commissioned in 1988 as a sailing memorial to her immediate predecessor, which is a reproduction of an 1812-era topsail schooner. Distinguished from other topsail schooners of the time by its backward-raked masts, the Baltimore Clippers had the speed and agility to outmanoeuvre the heavier ships of the Royal Navy. Pride of Baltimore II has sailed nearly 200,000 miles and visited over 200 ports in 40 countries in North, South, and Central America, Europe, and Asia. The Pride of Baltimore II has a sail area of 9,018 sq. ft. and is 157 ft long.

BRIGANTINES

Harbour Square Park will be host to four Canadian Brigantines at this year's RWF, the **STV Fair Jeanne** (Ottawa), **St. Lawrence II** (Kingston), **TS Playfair** (Toronto), and **STV Pathfinder** (Toronto).

BE INSPIRED BY THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY

Visitors will have the opportunity to tour the decks of two of the Navy's 55-metre coastal defence vessels, Her Majesty's Canadian Ships (**HMCS Kingston** and **HMCS Goose Bay**), throughout the weekend. Early risers can come to Harbour Square Park and join the Navy for a fun and motivating 5km run, July 1 and 2 at 8am. Join the Royal Canadian Navy at Toronto's HMCS York! They are actively recruiting for a variety of exciting careers and opportunities.

2016 **Redpath Waterfront Festival** partners include Redpath Sugar, PortsToronto, The Waterfront BIA, and Waterfront Toronto, among others.

The Redpath Waterfront Festival is an annual summer event providing on-land and on-water programming for people of all ages and interests, with the goal of promoting Toronto locally and internationally as a premiere waterfront destination. With music, food, nautical programs and entertainment, the festival offers something for everyone to enjoy. Every three years, the event welcomes majestic TALL SHIPS® to Toronto.

www.TOwaterfrontfest.com

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For information on the **Redpath Waterfront Festival**, contact:

Peggy Sheffield/Peggy Sheffield & Associates Inc.

Office: 416 246 0474 Cell and text 416 822 8511

psheffield@psapr.com