



MEET MONIQUE RICHTER

THE FORT LAUDERDALE ARTIST WHOSE CANVASES FLOAT

Spend any time on or near Fort Lauderdale waterways and no doubt a streamlined sportfishing boat or stately superyacht has caught your eye. Beyond the stunning lines of these vessels, their transoms are often what garners attention. Stylized boat names glittering in goldleaf under the Florida sun, colorful designs featuring prized marlins and other artistic flourishes are all on full display – sometimes all on the same boat.

Chances are, these eye-catching transom masterpieces are the results of one woman – Fort Lauderdale artist and native Monique Richter. She's known worldwide in boating circles for two things – her unmatched talent at creating hyper-realistic faux teak finishes and using gold and platinum leaf to turn boat names into stylish works of art that harken back to a bygone era.



The foundation for Richter's career as arguably the most sought-after boat artist in the world began at a young age. At just two years old, Richter's mom handed her paintbrushes and began teaching her the painting techniques that would serve Richter so well in subsequent years.

Richter painted throughout high school and college, mostly canvases and murals featuring her signature vibrant color palette and favorite subjects — sunsets, salt water and sea life. She began selling her art, often at venues on Las Olas, sometimes commissioned for projects to adorn the walls of businesses and private homes in the area.

She's always painted, but her budding art career eventually took a backseat to other pursuits. She enjoyed a long, successful pro wakeboarding career until a broken toe sidelined her ambitions. She went on to earn her captain's license and helm large boats for private clients throughout the Caribbean. It was on one such excursion to the Bahamas when a chance sighting of a passing boat with a faux teak transom paint job reignited her artistic passion. She was so motivated by the possibilities of what she saw that she handed in her resignation notice and charted a new career course.

Richter returned to Fort Lauderdale, convinced she could master the faux teak painting technique and turn her love of fine art into her career. She reached out to boat building legend Roy Merritt who, after seeing her early faux teak work samples, realized her potential. He teamed her up with his woodworkers, and Richter focused on refining her technique to achieve ultra-realistic results. It wasn't long before she was regularly applying her faux teak artistry to the transoms of Merritt sportfishing yachts.

Once she mastered faux teak, she realized the age-old technique of using gold leaf to craft boat name lettering was a natural complement to her painted backdrops. She learned the craft from Fort Lauderdale-based John Teeto, widely considered one of the best gold leaf artists in the world. He helped her refine her approach, and today Richter is also recognized as a master at gold and platinum leaf application.

Her work soon caught the eye of other boat builders, along with well-heeled private boat owners. She quickly became the boat artist everyone wanted, and her schedule quickly filled.

Her energetic personality and ability to manage a seven-day workweek saw her flying around the world to add artistic flourish to boats owned by celebrities, singers, athletes and other high-profile customers. These customers, impressed with her precision and work ethic, recruited her to also adorn their planes and homes with her signature style. ©