



# CHESAPEAKE BAY BRUSHSTROKES

**There's a secret to David Turnbaugh's hauntingly beautiful paintings—talent and hard work.**

by PATRICIA RYBAK

**N**othing so stirs the imagination as the sight of a Chesapeake Bay skipjack, under full sail, carving its way through the foam-tipped waves of a turbulent Bay. Add the sunlit image of Thomas Point Light, or the distant tree-lined horizon of Howell Point, and you have the stuff of which David Turnbaugh's oil paintings are made.

"What intrigues me about the skipjacks is that the wind is blowing them along as they're dragging their dredge baskets, and the baskets get so heavy that the boat almost comes to a complete stop. Then, as soon as the baskets are lifted off the bottom, the boat shoots ahead into the waves. It's really neat," says the artist who is currently working on a series of skipjack paintings that are being reproduced into prints.

David Turnbaugh is a tall, slender man with a warm smile and a gracious manner. A native of Maryland, he graduated from the Maryland Institute of Art in 1959, and taught art in the Baltimore County schools for 12 years. "I really enjoyed teaching school," he says, "but as long as my main income was from teaching, I didn't feel like I was a real artist."

The turning point—when the art teacher became the full-time artist—



occurred in 1971. Bendann Art Galleries in Baltimore sold one of his paintings for \$1,000 and owner Lance Bendann had confidence that they could sell more of his work. "When I started I had a wife, three kids, a house, two cars, and 667 bucks—that's all the money I had. But, I was at a point where I thought I could make a living in art. At least I wanted to try," recalls Turnbaugh.

Turnbaugh's life as an artist in the late seventies and early eighties revolved around a comfortable routine of painting Chesapeake subjects, part-

**"The Howard," one in Turnbaugh's series of portraits documenting the last remaining skipjacks.**

time teaching, and family. Then, he entered and won the 1985 Maryland Duck Stamp Contest with his painting of a pair of Canada geese. This event added a whole new dimension to Turnbaugh's career.

"Handling the duck stamp is a big job," says Turnbaugh. "All the

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**T**ucked away in his studio, artist David Turnbaugh renders a romantic Chesapeake scene.