



***BERMUDA GOVERNMENT***  
***MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SPORTS***  
***DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION SERVICES***  
Custodian of Historic Wrecks

**The Sea Venture Bellarmine**

The year 2009 marks the 400th anniversary of the wrecking of the ship *Sea Venture* that led to the English settlement of Bermuda and the entire country is celebrating.

As their contribution to these celebrations, the Historic Wrecks Authority has approved the creation of a series of replicas of one of the most significant artifacts recovered from the *Sea Venture*.

The Allan “Smokey” Wingood Bellarmine Jug.

One of the most distinctive artifacts found worldwide in archeological shipwreck sites from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century are the remains of Bellarmine, Bartman or Frenchen jugs, a common form of ceramic Rhenish salt glaze stoneware originating near Cologne in Germany. Because of their durability these jugs, easily recognized by the presence of a bearded face or mask on the neck of the jug and by the heraldic medallions on the body, were widely distributed throughout the colonies from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, from 1550 to 1764 and they survive exceptionally well to this day.

There have been several whole Bellarmine jugs found in Bermuda as well as fragments and pieces. The most significant of these have been the two jugs recovered from the shipwreck of the *Sea Venture*.

The *Sea Venture* was an English ship full of colonists headed to Jamestown; however, after battling an Atlantic storm for several days, on July 25<sup>th</sup> 1609 it was wrecked on the eastern end of Bermuda. The wreck was heavily salvaged and from her remains two ships were built in Bermuda: the *Deliverance* and the *Patience*.

These Bermuda-built ships with their provisions were pivotal in saving Jamestown from ruin in 1610. Survivors of the *Sea Venture* dispelled the erroneous belief that Bermuda was inhospitable and thus led to



Smokey Wingood on the *Sea Venture* with Bellarmine Jug. Photo courtesy of the Bermuda Maritime Museum.

Bermuda's eventual settlement by the English in 1612.

The wreck and its location were well known until the mid-1600s, but it was then lost until 1959 when Edmund Downing searched for and found her remains.

On the occasion of the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the wrecking of the *Sea Venture* in 1969, Mr. Wingood put together a team of local and international archaeologists to excavate and document the wreck; and it was at this time that the second Jug was discovered.

This Bellarmine is a copy of the second jug found on the *Sea Venture*. The first was found by Edmund Downing and the second by Allan Wingood.

Bermuda is fortunate to have world-class potter, John Faulkner, who specializes in salt-glazed work and has designed and built a custom waste cooking oil fired kiln. When fired at extremely high temperatures, 1300", the clay vitrifies to form a hard, impermeable stoneware onto which a distinctive glaze is created by throwing damp sea salt into the kiln during the firing process. The salt vaporizes with the heat and reacts chemically with the silica in the clay forming a hard mineral film on the surface with distinctive pitted orange peel texture.

The origin and meaning of the distinctive bearded faces, masks and crests on many of these jugs is difficult to decipher. It is thought that, at their origin in 1550, the crests or heraldic signs on the body of the jug were representative of local crests or flags, but it appears that these very quickly became more decorative. The origin of the distinctive bearded face is also a mystery but certainly dates back stylistically to the Roman period, where it may have served as simple decoration or as a symbol intended to ward off evil. However, it also may have links even further back to early pagan symbols.

The attribution of the origin of the face as a representation of Cardinal Bellarmine is surely inaccurate as the face preceded the possibly bearded cardinal by at least 20 years, but there is little doubt that the face was later associated with the hated Catholic Cardinal as a way to ridicule him by having his face on Protestant drinking vessels.

Mr. Faulkner has worked for almost one year studying the original jug and making and testing various molds and techniques to make a replica. We are very pleased with the results and hope you enjoy it.

Dr. Philippe Max Rouja.  
Custodian of Historic Wrecks

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Chairman - The Historic Wrecks Authority