

IT'S ALL ABOUT LIFESTYLE

ENGINEERING AT SEA

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ZAC THOMAS joined Sealord aged 16 and straight from school. He has not looked back as he builds his career out on the ocean.

Now 18, Zac is a trainee marine engineer for Sealord on board the vessel *Rehua*, which mainly catches ling and hoki fish. He joined *Rehua* recently, having been promoted from working as a deck hand and trainee factory hand on Sealord vessel *Aukaha*.

"At the moment, it is all about learning all the different systems to do with fuel and oil, and how the engine runs, refrigeration – there are lots of different things. You are sort of looking after the whole boat," Zac says.

"In the future, I would like to get to be a chief engineer. I feel that would be a pretty good lifestyle and I enjoy that sort of work. It is definitely not mind-numbing work. You are actually thinking all the time."

Zac loves the lifestyle he gets from working for Sealord. He is rostered six-weeks-on, six-weeks-off, and is looking forward to his first trip to Australia shortly. He likes having those decent periods of rostered time-off to work on his two cars he is building.

The next goal for Zac is to own his own home in the next few years.

"It is definitely a good thing, building your savings while you are away, and you also don't have to pay for gas to go to work every day and you are not paying for food. While you are out at sea, it is all money in the pocket really."

With so much time at sea, it is absolutely vital that all the crew get on well. Zac says the Sealord crew have been like a second family to him ever since he started.

"You are living with them for half your life, away at sea, so it is so important. It is all about keeping the morale up. Everyone looks out for each other, so you rely on having that good relationship with the crew.

"They are good people and everyone is really welcoming when you first go to sea."

Zac says the views and close-up glimpses of whales and dolphins are always cool to see but one of his highlights is taking the little rescue boat into port to pick up supplies or drop someone off.



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Zac went to Waimea College in Nelson. Mechanical Engineering was definitely his favourite subject. He left during Year 11, after turning 16, to follow his dream of going to sea with Sealord.

"I had always thought about it because my dad has worked for Sealord for a long time and I grew up hearing about it. Now with that passion for engineering that I have always had, it is just cool to be able to combine the two."

His best tip for school leavers is if you want to do something, just give it a go. It may not be anywhere near as difficult as you think it will be.



KEY FACTS



- **ZAC THOMAS** WORKS FOR **SEALORD** AS A **TRAINEE MARINE ENGINEER** ON BOARD THE VESSEL **REHUA**.
- HE HAS RECENTLY BEEN PROMOTED FROM WORKING AS A **DECKHAND** AND **TRAINEE FACTORY HAND** ON **AUKAHA**.
- **ZAC** RECOMMENDS **SCHOOL LEAVERS** JUST GIVE IT A GO – SAYING WHATEVER IT IS THAT YOU WANT TO DO MIGHT NOT BE AS DIFFICULT AS ANTICIPATED.



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