

PICTURE PERFECT LOCATION

WORKING ON THE WATER writer PETER WHITE // photo LUKE MARSHALL

The magnificent setting of the Marlborough Sounds is where **HUNTER BENDELL** goes to work farming mussels for MacLab NZ Ltd.

The 17-year-old started working fulltime last November after completing Year 12 at Marlborough Boys' College in Blenheim. He took Maths, English, Construction and, most importantly, Marine Biology, which he says set him up for his job with MacLab.

"As long as I can remember, I always wanted to work on a boat because I grew up on the water's edge of the Sounds," says Hunter. "I got a job offer through school in the middle of last year. We went on a school trip for Marine Biology and checked out mussel farms and that's how I got the job. I started part-time when I was still at school."

MacLab was founded in 1973 by brothers Jim and Bill Broadbent who pioneered the green-lipped mussel nutraceutical market. Hunter is part of the team that maintain the farms and processes the mussels before the valuable oil is extracted for health products, which are used worldwide.

"It is pretty physical work and you can be pretty much flat-out all day. Some days can be up to 15 hours long but it is well rewarded. I just love being on the water — that is probably the biggest thing for me."

"There are different jobs you can do: you can be out on the boats harvesting the mussels, they also run a factory in Nelson so there is work there, and they even offer work for school leavers who want to do a gap year. I really like it and know everyone in the factory and out on the boats."

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HUNTER BENDELL

The brilliant scenery in the Marlborough Sounds and surprising meetings with local wildlife make the job special for Hunter.

"The really good thing about it is you see a lot of wildlife — like dolphins that we see all the time chasing us when we are heading out to the mussel farms. That is quite entertaining. On a hot day you can't really beat being out on the Sounds."

Hunter is looking long-term at a career in the aquaculture industry and would like to skipper his own boat.

"You can do a skipper's course, which they do over in Nelson, and become a skipper of a vessel up to 12 metres. The other option is to work your way up to become a deck boss and manage a deck on-board. I would like to be a skipper definitely. I just have to wait until I am 18 to do the course."

Hunter says the best advice he can give school leavers keen on a career working on boats is to have a good work ethic.

"You have a four-days-on, four-days-off roster, so that means you are out at sea for four days at a time with early starts. You don't need too many skills as they will teach you once you get into it, but definitely you need to work hard."



KEY FACTS



- **HUNTER BENDELL** WORKS FOR **MACLAB NZ LTD** FARMING MUSSELS IN THE **MARLBOROUGH SOUNDS**.
- HE STUDIED **MATHS, ENGLISH, CONSTRUCTION AND MARINE BIOLOGY** IN **YEAR 12** AT **MARLBOROUGH BOYS' COLLEGE** IN **BLenheim**.
- **HUNTER** ENJOYS WORKING IN THE **AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY** AND HIS **LONG-TERM GOAL** IS TO BECOME **A SKIPPER**.



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For more information on career opportunities with MacLab, visit www.maclab.co.nz/join-us

AQUACULTURE

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