

gallery profile

Goode Fella

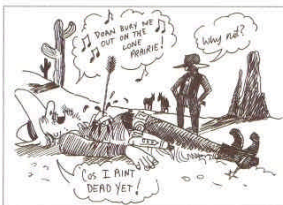
Martin Goode painted his autobiography, documenting his travels in over 2000 watercolours. **Picture Business** pays tribute to the entertaining entrepreneur



When artist Martin Goode passed away earlier this year, aged 69, he left a loving family, countless friends and a portfolio of work that would make even the most prolific artist look positively tardy. During the last 15 years, his self-publishing company Martin Goode Watercolours has published over 2000 titles, making it the country's largest catalogue of local views. Goode founded the business in 1987 and from the outset Martin Goode Watercolours embodied the artist's enthusiasm, his love for his art, and his acute commercial sensibility.

Commercially minded

Prior to launching the company, Goode was running his own printing outfit Essex-based Speedprint, one of the first independent instant print and copy shops in the country, and had already enjoyed a career as a commercial photographer and artist. But, ever the



Above: popular artist Martin Goode painted over 2000 watercolour scenes, including (top) Edinburgh Castle – it was in Scotland that he showed the most empathy with the landscape; (top right) St Pauls Cathedral and (below) his best seller – Tower Bridge

Left: Goode the cartoonist often caricatured family and industry figures

canny businessman, when Goode visited a trade show in the mid-80s and spotted a firm selling prints of local views, he identified a business that would allow him to ally his commercial acumen with his knowledge of printing, art and photography. When his son Vincent joined two years later in 1989 to manage sales and marketing, Goode could dedicate his time to painting, and

Martin Goode Watercolours quickly evolved into a thriving business.

Goode's legacy of separate titles, as well as a host of private commissions for clients as illustrious as the National Trust and Tower of London, is a remarkable achievement. It seems even more incredible when you consider that he did not even know how to paint in watercolour when he decided to become a self-publishing artist.

His early career had been built on commercial art, drawing and graphic design, and while he had enjoyed great success designing record sleeves for Lightning Records and creating popular cartoon characters, as well as working as a portrait photographer, he had no artistic schooling and had never learned how to paint.



For Goode, however, this did not represent an insurmountable challenge. He launched the venture with over 500 local views of London and the Home Counties, all published from his watercolours, and then went on to write, film, edit and produce his own series of watercolour instruction videos. In galleries, too, Goode demonstrated his technique at one-man shows, his swift brush strokes quickly bringing his work to life.

He fostered strong relationships with many of his customers – galleries, gift shops and framers, and invited their input so he could tailor his range to meet their needs. In his trusted camper van, the Goodemobile, he toured the UK and Ireland, meeting customers and collecting his reference material.

Love of Scottish landscapes

Goode's collection now caters for every area of the country, yet it was always in Scotland that he felt the most empathy with the landscape. Goode was born in Hackney in 1932, but like many young children was evacuated

during the early years of WWII, and from the age of six lived in Scotland. It was in Tillicoultry, near Stirling, that he first developed his love of drawing, exploring the wild, rugged countryside of the Ochil Hills, and sketching cartoons and caricatures of the people in his village.

This love of Scotland, and of cartooning, stayed with him, and many a spare minute on his stand at Spring Fair Birmingham was given over to the production of witty cartoons and sketches of the fair's main characters.

For all his talents, and in spite of all the business he has helped galleries enjoy with his highly saleable range of prints, it will be for his sprightly humour and zest for life that Martin Goode will be most sadly missed. His son Vincent will continue to run the family publishing business and ensure Martin Goode's range of watercolour prints will continue to bring enjoyment for many years to come. ■

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