

A black and white photograph of a young man with curly hair, wearing a denim shirt and dark pants, kneeling in a field. He is holding a large salmon horizontally in front of him. The background shows a vast, open landscape with hills under a clear sky.

Akureyri

6,5 kg salmon and a proud young me..

Iceland..

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The ABU Dreamtrip in 1978 went to Iceland and the small village of Akureyri. Salmon fishing was the main course on the menu, but we were also invited to fish for trout in some of the lakes up north.

Iceland was an exotic location and the rivers were teeming with salmon. Not big fish like I knew from some rivers in Norway, but generally between 3 and 7 kg. In the shallow and fast running rivers in Iceland this salmon was a real challenge to land. ABU had brought along the almost new Ambassadeur 5600C and the 2500C, some new rods, and Cardinal reels and once more marketing manager Olle Mattsson was leading us through our adventures.

Kneeling with one salmon is Tor Skjetne, another Norwegian two times ABU Dreamtrip winner.



We started the journey from Copenhagen in Denmark, boarded Iceland Air for Reykjavik where we enjoyed a night out in one of the city's night clubs and then flew up north the next day. Accommodations were at a local school where we lived surrounded by sheep and the spectacular Icelandic nature. The place was cozy and one of ABU's ideas with the Dreamtrips was to invite people into the «ABU-family», we became a tight knit group as the days passed. Nights were spent discussing salmon fishing, ABU and bragging about the big catches we had bagged, and the days were spent by the rivers. For me personally one of the most interesting things was to discuss the future of reel design with ABU's designers and I guess this was the first time I heard of the new material, graphite, which would soon be introduced to a variety of ABU reels.

ABU had hired local guides and they worked hard to keep us happy. One of them, a Scottish priest who worked part time as a fishing guide headed this group of guides. He took us through rough country in his Range Rover and to a few spectacular river crossings with the river finding its way inside the car and leaving us soaked, but impressed. On one occasion we had a break down and were stranded for a few hours in the middle of nowhere until we finally managed to get the Rover moving again. The fishing? Well, on my part I think I caught 6 or 7 salmons and the biggest weighing in at 6,5 kg. Not a record fish in any way, but landing it with an Ambassadeur 2500C and 0,25 mm Abulon line in a tough and shallow river was a fight I remember well to this day. My guide, who had argued frantically against my choice of equipment, told the story of this fight to the rest of the group that evening, and in his words it became the high-light of the evening. Following this catch he expressed enormous admiration for the small Ambassadeur reel and its capacity, and some skepticism towards that Norwegian crazy guy who chose to face the salmon with far from adequate tools. The reason for my strange selection of gear was a practical one. I had seen a rock far away on the other side of the river and a salmon which came up every now and then just behind it. No matter how hard I tried I just could not reach to the far side of this rock casting with a 5600C reel, and so I decided to try the smaller 2500C. On my first attempt I not only reached precisely the spot I wanted, but the fish came straight up and took the bait! At such moments you feel clever, and when the 6,5 kg salmon finally ended its days, yes, I felt I knew a thing or two about the game of fishing, but honestly, it was just as much luck as it was skill I guess. The Ambassadeur 2500C always has had a special place in my heart since that day, though.





Just struck me... this is a 37 year younger edition of me, but the memories of a great fishing adventure are still vivid.

Icelandic nature is wild and fabulous. We went to huge waterfalls, waded deep rivers, watched volcanic activity and we smelled the inside of the world. For a person with a special interest for reel design there wasn't too much new stuff to test, apart from the 5600C reel which ABU had specially prepared with a clicker. It is the only time I have seen that on the 5600C, and I don't think ABU made more than a few reels to this spec. On the last night before our journey home, we had a poker night. Remember that in those days Iceland's currency was of very little value? Well, we had several hundreds of thousands of Kroners on the table, and it was worth only a few dollars in real money, but man what a night! It was my old pal from the 1976 Dreamtrip, Thor Skjetne, another Norwegian, who walked away «rich» with our money.... as I can remember it.

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This reel recently came up for sale on Ebay. The seller is another Norwegian collector and the 5600C with clicker is unusual. For the 1978 Dreamtrip to Iceland ABU prepared a batch of special 5600C reels with the clicker or line alarm. The batch number for these reels was #770500, same as on the reel offered on Ebay. I'm not sure, but it seems ABU didn't sell the 5600C with this spec. and that only the 6600C came with the clicker mechanism. Could this be one of the actual Dreamtrip reels?