

THE JOY OF SIMPLICITY

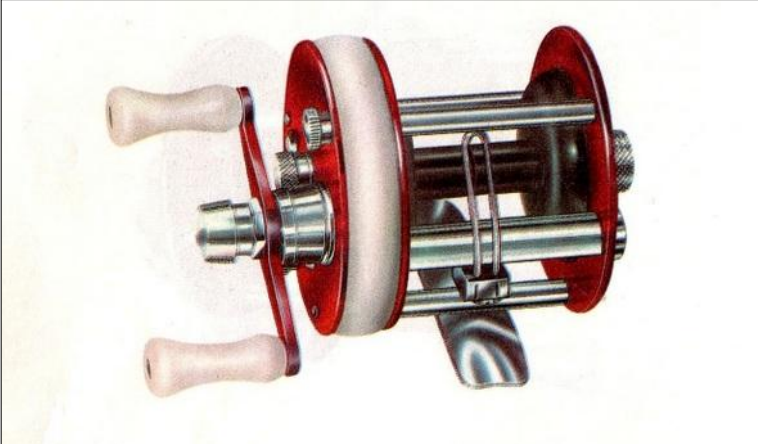
Hans van der Pauw

Things can always be made more advanced and more complicated. And sometimes that's useful. But I've always found that a combination of well-thought out simplicity and good quality can also be irresistible. And certainly in the pleasant design of the fifties and sixties. That's why it always cheers me up when I take my old ABU 1750A reel out of the cupboard.

The ABU 1750 was introduced in 1964 and first appeared in the Swedish ABU catalog *Napp och Nytt* of that year. It was a small reel of an uncomplicated design, but it was well made and for casting it had the two most important technical features that were also present in the more expensive reels of those days, like the Ambassadeurs: a free spool mechanism, that would disengage the handle during the cast, and a centrifugal brake, that, combined with the mechanical brake (which gives pressure on the spool axis), helped to reduce the risk of overrun, the dreaded 'bird's nest'. The spool capacity was 130 m of 0.30 mm line or 115 m of 0.35 mm, which was about 40% less than the 190 m of 0.35 mm that a deep spool Ambassadeur 5000-size reel could carry.

About a year after the reel was introduced, probably in the course of 1965, two small improvements were made to it: the gears of the level winder were changed from

straight to helical teeth and the construction of the spool was reinforced with aluminium washers. Although these were only minor changes, ABU apparently found them important enough - or perhaps just commercially interesting - to change the name of the reel from 1750 to 1750A. That name first appeared in the 1966 Swedish catalog. This 1750A then remained in production until 1978. For a while the ABU 1750A was listed in the Swedish and other European catalogs as the Ambassadeur 1750A (from 1975 until 1978; and even earlier in the American Garcia catalogs), but that name never appeared on the reel itself.



ABU 1750 **New**

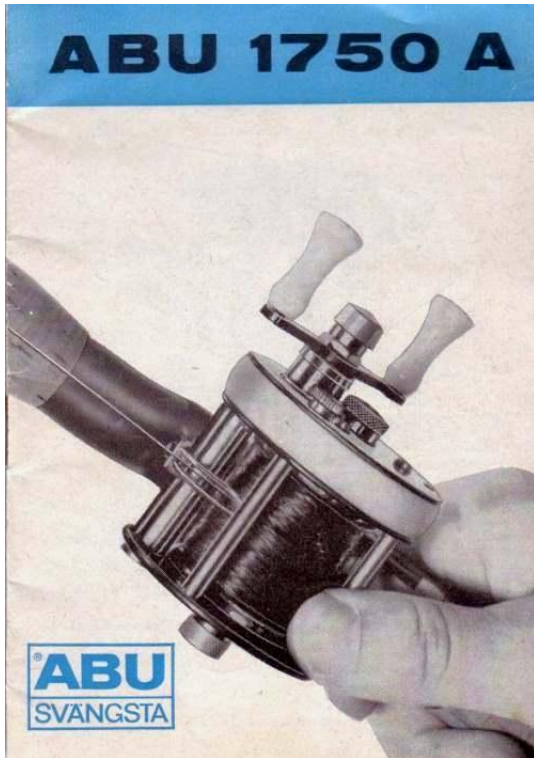
A brand-new multiplying reel of modern, elegant design. Guarantees record distance casts. Never before has a multiplier in this price class and with all these features been offered to anglers.

- Two braking systems; ABU's world famous centrifugal brake and mechanical brake with click adjustment and fine-calibrated reminder scale. Positively prevents backlash.
- Free-spool. Anodized against corrosion. The spool is disengaged by pressing the center button on the top of the crank nut.
- Anchored side plate screws for immediate and convenient inspection as well as for cleaning, lubricating and exchange of brake blocks.
- Side plates anodized in red.
- All through corrosion-proof.

Spool capacity: 145 yds. 9 lbs. (0.30 mm), 130 yds. 12 lbs. (0.35 mm) or 100 yds. 15 lbs. (0.40 mm) ABULON monofilament.

Suitable rods: ABU Caster, ABU Sport, ABU 156 and 157.

50



I bought my 1750A reel in January 1978 in a tackle shop in Rotterdam, Holland. It must have cost me about 60 old-fashioned guilders then (nearly 30 euro's). An Ambassadeur 5000 would then set you back more than 140 guilders, which was way out of my reach. But even so my purchase certainly wasn't a second best choice. I was attracted by the sturdy simplicity of the reel and its compact design. This made it more manageable and one-third lighter than an Ambassadeur 5000, which I found an advantage. And of course it also was a very *pretty* little reel!

What precedes such a purchase? We all know. You turn over the matter in your mind again and again, but even more you fantasize about what all you could do with such a reel and how wonderful and successful that all would turn out. There were two things in particular that I had in mind with it: casting plugs for pike and live-baiting with a floating line (nothing wrong with live-baiting, back then). For that purpose I bought a spool of Berkley Crusader braided nylon line - dyneema lines didn't exist yet. And also a tin of

Mucilin line dressing to make the line float. Then the rod. I had built me a baitcasting rod, consisting of an ABU trigger grip speed-lock handle in which a hollow fiberglass blank could be fixed with an aluminium ferrule. The blank was a Conolon spinning blank with about two inches of the tip cut off. After building and testing the optimum casting weight turned out to be about 3/4 oz, which was fine for the plugs I wanted to use: ABU HiLo's and Heddon River Runt Spooks.



Of course a short baitcasting rod (mine was 6'8") was not as suitable for live-baiting from the bank as a longer rod (say 10'). But the wonderful lightness of the rod & reel combo made up for that and the interest of fellow anglers in such an unusual outfit - seldom seen in Holland back then - wasn't so bad either. Next to that the floating line proved to be a miracle! When live-baiting in the weedy polder waters it floated neatly over all underwater vegetation and when a pike had grabbed your small roach, it betrayed the place where the green robber held your float hidden in the murky deep.

And then the playing of a fish with such a reel. No star drag, all 'thumb work'. The moment a fish pounced upon your lure you were the busiest man in the polder. Struggling and sweating! But live-baiting would often be more frightening, as you were put up with plenty of time to build up tension and become pretty nervous before you could get into action. After a bite you first had to wait until the pike took position to turn its prey, then you carefully had to lean over - without falling in - and pick up as much slack line as possible without disturbing the fish, and finally you had to muster up courage to strike, because there was no telling what would happen next. All you could hope for was you would stay in control, more or less, and all would end well. Sometimes the strike resulted in the brave splashing and jerking of a smallish pike, but every now and then what happened was exactly... nothing. Hooked on a tree-stump? A car tire? A tough old mattress? But then surely a mattress that wasn't too old to start pulling back!

I have hardly any recollection of the battles that then followed, probably because I was taken over by something like an auto-pilot running on adrenaline and no longer capable to calmly register and observe what was happening. Usually I became aware of myself again by the rattling of my knees in my trouser-legs once the pike was safely on the bank. Happily surprised that it got there at all. The fish handsomely resting between the clover and the buttercups, rod and reel next to it, and me finally standing upright to take a deep breath and enjoy the tableau. And then quickly but carefully sliding the fish back into the water, in a moment of great contentment. The joy of simplicity. ■

