

OSPREY FLY BOX

LADY CAROLINE

contributed by
Dave Kearney

The original Lady Caroline spey fly is a traditional Atlantic Salmon fly which originated in Speyside, Scotland back in the late 1800's. It derives its name from Lady Caroline Gordon-Lennox, who was the daughter of the Duke of Richmond and Gordon at Gordon Castle. This pattern is legendary among Atlantic Salmon flyfishers with many versions and variations developed. It has a loyal following on the West Coast for Pacific Salmon and Steelhead.

Spey style "is recognizable principally for its thin, smooth body and long sparse hackle. Some fly dressers claim that Spey flies are traditionally without tail fibres. This seems to be borne out by the majority of dressings"

The Lady Caroline is one of the few classic Spey patterns genuinely to have survived. Unlike many of the classic patterns, the Lady Caroline is one of the few that had a tail. The long fibres of the body hackles provide in a sputtering shrimp-like appearance. While the hackle is long and flowing, the wing is short - only as long as the body (*if as long as that*) and the slips of mallard are tied in to form a neatly 'roofed' fly like the underside of a keel-less racing boat, with a hump-backed appearance which looks rather wicked as it swings through the water.



In British Columbia, Roderick Haig-Brown found success catch steelhead with the Lady Caroline. He may well have been the first North American angler to fish the classic Spey fly; very likely the first to cast these flies for steelhead.

MATERIALS



- Hook:** Partridge 3/0 Salmon Hook
Thread: Black 8/0 or 14/0
Tail: Golden Pheasant Red Breast fibres
Body: Olive Green Seal Fur
Rib: Gold Flat Tinsel, small Silver Oval Tinsel & small Gold Oval Tinsel
Hackle: Ringneck Pheasant Rump (*substitute for Heron or Blue Eared Pheasant*).
Throat: Golden Pheasant Red Breast Feather
Wing: Two strips of Bronze Mallard

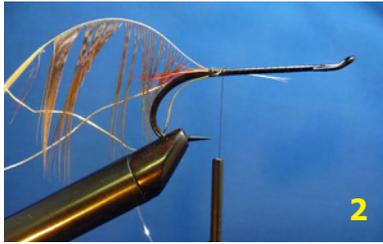
TYING INSTRUCTIONS

and Photography by Peter Chatt



- Pinch barb of the hook.
- Lay down a thread base along covering the hook shank back to the point of the hook.
- Strip a several fibres off a Golden Pheasant Red Breast feather and tie in for the tail.

TYING INSTRUCTIONS *(continued)*



- Strip fibres off one side of the Pheasant Tail Rump Feather. Stroke the fibres back from the tip to the butt of the feather.
- Tie in at each quadrant (top, back side, bottom, front side) the rump feather, gold flat tinsel, silver oval tinsel and gold oval tinsel.
- **NOTE:** this ensures that when everything is wrapped, they are evenly spaced coming off the rear and along the shank of the hook.



- Form a dubbing loop, advance the thread forward to behind the eye, insert sparse amounts of seal fur evenly into the loop. Twist the loop into a rope and wind forward to form the body.
- Tie off and trim the body.



- Wind the flat gold tinsel forward. Five or Six evenly spaced turns. Tie off and clip excess.
- Wind the oval tinsel forward, just in front of the previously wrapped tinsel, ensuring that there is sufficient space to wrap the pheasant rump. Tie off and clip excess.
- Wrap the pheasant rump forward in the space between the flat tinsel and the oval tinsel. Tie off and clip excess.



- Tie in a red pheasant breast feather by the tip.
- Make two wraps, tie off and clip excess.
- Stroke the fibres (*pheasant rump and breast*) down and back, so that majority of fibres are below the shank of the hook.

The Finished Fly



Lady Caroline

- Select two slips of bronze mallard from a matched pair of feathers.
- Mount the slips, one on each side of the hook. The two sides should form a tent shape over the hook.
- When satisfied with the position, tie off and trim the butts.
- Form a small, neat head with the black thread.
- Whip finish the thread and apply a couple coats of head cement.