

Psychedelic P-Quad

Wet Fly



This is *THE* “Big Fish” pattern--but don’t ask me why.

I had flogged the weed bed at the west end of Silver Beach Lake for some time before hooking a horse that took me into the weeds. My Egg-sucking Tokaryk’s Special had scored for most of the day, but this was the largest fish so far. For one tantalizing moment I thought that I might turn it, so hadn’t hurried to lower my rod tip. I now know that the ferrule had surpassed its maximum load limit, for a week later it broke, but for the moment I watched the fish shoot away with my second last fly in the corner of its mouth. Like the farmer who stood outside his third burning barn, I learned again that one shouldn’t smoke in the stable -- or use OX tippets and then fail to lower an 11-foot lever when a big boy started heaving around. Like that farmer, this was my fourth lesson.

As I tied on my last fly, Mark Vogel, who had witnessed my latest disaster, came kicking over and asked what I’d been using. I showed him.

“I’ve got something that’ll work,” he announced when he saw the flame-orange chenille egg at the head of my fly. My eyebrows shot up when he brought out a “Psychedelic P-Quad.” His buddy, L.O. Brend, had smirked even more widely the winter before, when Mark first disclosed the fly’s existence. He had chastised Mark, as he often does, claiming him to be one of his “brighter students” -- a true grasshopper/master relationship that is deserving of more detailed description but, as a continuing saga it would require an entire book of its own.

“Should work,” I allowed. It certainly looked buggy enough.

After his twentieth fish, I begged one from Mark and stuck it in my hat. It still graces the wall of my office, replete with name of tier, date and name -- all misspelled, of course.

This fly is yet another spin-off from Mark Olinger's deadly, original P-Quad, which has spawned a growing family of flies à la Muddler Minnow. The version here is unlike Mark's original, but after reworking it for many months it's one that I find to be more effective. I exchanged a tuft of olive marabou for the tail, since it pulses when I give it the hand-twist, and that, coupled with Hairline's medium brown Crystal Dubbing, makes this pattern cook. I've tried different body materials, but always end up with medium brown dubbing. In my opinion, at least for the moment, it's the best -- but hey, I'm not done yet. That will come with the last shovelful of dirt that they throw into my face (trout bums can't afford coffins).

On a bright October afternoon, when things were slow, I gave one of the flies to Utah's Mike Andreasen. He gave it his usual country-mile launch across Silver Beach's Bay of Pigs in his customary tight loop, which unfurled perfectly across the surface before dropping. Instantly, he was fighting a 24-inch rainbow.

"My word!" he exclaimed in his typical, understated manner, never having learned to swear properly. "It barely touched the water."

I guess. But then any fool can see a Day-Glo orange gel over a bright flashlight beam in the dark of night -- even a critter with a brain the size of a pea. I'm talking about the fish here, not Mike.

Whatever the nuances of this pattern's multiple attractions, this is my chosen big-fish fly for early spring and late autumn. It has to be, for when I qualified for the prestigious 25-25 Club in 1997, this was the fly that nailed 13 of those legless, silvered hogs that took me there. (The 25-25 Club recognizes 25 stillwater non-steelhead trout of 25 inches or more caught during one calendar year.)

On the last weekend before freeze-up, Mark Vogel and I again teamed up to finish off the year. We cast this strange pattern across the semi-frozen waters of Silver Beach Lake until we ran out of steam, and released enough trout to keep us warm with memories throughout the cold prairie winter months that followed. Since then, this fly has become standard fare on many western USA reservoirs, and it even pulls rave electronic reviews from New Zealand, Tasmania, Sweden, and merry old England. I see and hear of "original" versions sprouting up all over, and one guide in southeastern Alberta swears by "his" creation. So, big deal -- I'm a thief, too.

I've used it in almost any water I've visited and within the seasonal constraints it has proved to be dynamite. Give it a try -- it will put a little color in your life.

Pattern

Hook	10 2X long
Thread	Flame Orange Monocord 3/0
Weight	Under shank
Tail	Medium Olive Marabou
Body	Medium Crystal Dubbing
Rib	Fine gold wire
Hackle	Partridge
Wing	Teal
Head	Buildup of orange thread

Tying Instructions:

1. Tie in weight
2. Tie in tail
3. Tie in rib
4. Tie in body, spin a dubbing rope and wind forward
5. Counter-wind with rib and anchor
6. Tie in wing
7. Tie in hackle
8. Build up a head of thread and shellac