



February Fly Of The Month

An Innovative Pattern

Deep Sparkle Pupa

By Todd A. Schotts

After much research for the February Featured Fly, an idea hit me while cleaning out past year's fly boxes from fishing the inhabitants of the White River and the Muskegon River. There it was, a very productive fly glistened in my box - none other than the "Deep Sparkle Pupa" by Gary Lafontaine.

The history of this fly is very basic, not as tangled like the wind knots of the other patterns that I have written about in the past. The fly's design came about in the early to mid '70's, created by Gary Lafontaine after he studied the caddis extensively in and around Montana.

Gary Lafontaine was, and still is, one of the most prolific and astounding fly tyers. He created the Natural Drift Stonefly Nymph, Flex Hopper, Firecracker, Creature, and the Emergent Sparkle Pupa to name just a very small portion of his patterns. History has it, at age eight Gary caught his first fish using a fly while growing up in Connecticut. At age 15 he published his first fishing article. This speaks volumes of the legacy he left us in the fly world. Aside from countless magazine articles, he has given us five books that opened our minds up to the world of entomology, tying, and fly fishing. Plus he has various fly tying videos that are always useful and enjoyable. Unfortunately,

with multiply medical issues, Gary left us in 2002 at the early age of 56. Even though his rod, pen, and vise were silenced, he leaves us with an impressive and amazing portfolio of material.

This unique pattern represents caddis stuck in the surface film. When Gary designed this fly, he not only studied caddis from the surface, but also under the water surface with scuba gear. He best explains the pattern in his writings, "Under the water I noticed that caddis pupa were vulnerable only when the pupa was cutting itself free from its cocoon and under the surface layer where it splits its pupa shuck. When the caddis pupa cuts from its cocoon, there is a 15-20 second period in which the pupa drifts along the bottom generating gas to fill the sheath around its body. This gas produces a shimmering effect to the pupa." The ability to mimic this shimmer was critical to Gary's pattern, he accomplished this by using Antron fibers. If you are not familiar with Antron, it is a Trilobal fiber-yarn that is resistant to matting and has the ability to hold air bubbles within water. By utilizing the Antron for the underbody and a sparse overbody, Gary was able to accomplish the gas-attracting qualities of the fly and the translucency required.

There are multiple color combinations; the one I show is called "Ginger Deep Sparkle." It is one of my favorites when fishing the watersheds on the west side of our great state.

When fishing this it, there are many methods; one of my favorites is putting on an indicator to dead drift it through the current at the time the "Caddis Hatch" is taking off, with plenty of fish rising.

Remember, if you are fishing a "blizzard" of a caddis hatch (and yes there are waterways like that in Michigan with size 28 flies) tie on a Deep Sparkle Pupa, and get ready for tight lines. Until next month, Tight Lines, and Snazzy Flies.

Deep Sparkle Pupa



HOOK: TMC 3761 #12-18

THREAD: Tan 140 Denier or 6/0

BODY: 3/4 Cream Antron Yarn, 1/4 White Antron Yarn

UNDERBODY: 1/2 Ginger Antron Dubbing, 1/2 Light Cahill Superfine

SHUCK: Strands of Overbody material

WINGPADS: Lemon Wood Duck Flank Fibers

HEAD: Light Cahill Superfine

