

The Fishin' Magician

Welcoming
Dave Graybill

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I had a very special experience last week. If you aren't aware, I am now sponsored by the WestWinn Group, makers of HarberCraft, JetCraft and KingFisher aluminum fishing boats, and Bob Feil Boats and Motors. My wife Eileen and I met Dan Feil at the WestWinn production facility in Vernon B.C. Feil works with WestWinn, and is the JetCraft dealer here in East Wenatchee. We were greeted at the plant by Mark Delaney, who is the sales manager for the WestWinn Group.

The three of us were given a tour of the boat manufacturing plant, which is one of the most modern production facilities for aluminum boats in the world. The plant has been making these quality boats from a new, state-of-the-art plant for just a

year and a half. They produce the HarberCraft line, which are 16 to 22 feet and distributed in Canada. The same designs are distributed in the U.S. under the brand name of JetCraft. Their big boats, the KingFisher line, are the off shore models—up to 33 feet are also built at this plant. WestWinn is the leading producer of aluminum boats in all of Canada, and rank third over all in the world for aluminum fishing boats.

We were all there to learn more about these fishing boats, shoot a video of the process of building them for one of my Fishing TV Shows, and to see where my new boat was in the process of production. I actually got to see all the steps that go into the construction of the boats and saw the very boat I will be getting in December.

Mike Clements, the plant manager took us on our tour, and showed me the boat that was being built for me, and all the "extras" that were being added to it. It is going to be a very special JetCraft. The boat was through the welding steps and to the point of having the windshields, boxes and fittings added. It would then go through the final finish work before entering the paint shop and having the engines mounted.

I hear that the ship date is December 3rd. When it reaches Bob Feil Boats and Motors in East Wenatchee the final rigging will done, and I will be on the water once again. I can't tell

you how excited I am about working with the folks at WestWinn and Dan Feil, our local dealer.

On our way home we spent the night in Omak. I wanted to take the time to really take a close look at the Similkameen and Okanogan rivers. The Okanogan is open to steelhead fishing right now, and the Similkameen will open the first of November. Eileen and I drove up to Oroville and starting at the Enloe Dam began shooting video for the Fishing TV Show. I have fished the Similkameen for steelhead, and it is a beautiful stream, and the size and quality of the fish will surprise you. I know the show will be informative and get some anglers interested in trying this river. It is loaded with salmon right now, and it was fun seeing them in the shallow riffles chasing each other around. I know that these fish can be a frustration to steelhead anglers in the early season. They will often take a steelhead lure and are tough to land to get your gear back.

We then visited some of the public access to the Okanogan River. The Okanogan is a great steelhead river. I have caught some very impressive fish on the Okanogan, and I don't think it gets the attention that it deserves. It is an ideal stream to float.

There aren't many hazards, and once you know where to put in and take out you can have a great time on this stream. Fishing the Okanogan from a drift boat is a special experience.

We found a great hole on the Okanogan just south of Oroville, and a couple more on our way to Omak. I had never checked out the launch in Riverside, which is just north of Omak. I was

surprised to find a very well maintained public access area, with an excellent launch. We stopped an inspected the launch located at the Stampede Grounds in Omak, and saw a couple of folks fishing just below the bridge into town. We then drove down to the public launch on the edge of town in Okanogan.

Anglers can float down the Okanogan from Riverside to Omak, or continue on down to the take out in Okanogan for a very full day of fishing. As I mentioned earlier, I have had the chance to float the Okanogan a couple of times, and have tremendous experiences on the river. There should be good numbers of fish in the river now, and the numbers build through the season. The Okanogan will freeze when our temperatures drop, and anglers can be out of business for a while in the winter.

They don't mind, though, because when the ice comes off the fishing is red hot. Be sure visit my web page in November to learn when the show on the Similkameen and Okanogan rivers will air.

I want to close with a reminder that there is an important informational meeting on the changes and plans for the National Fish Hatchery in Leavenworth. It will take place at the Fire Hall near Cascade High School in Leavenworth on Monday, Oct. 25th, beginning at 6:30 p.m. I hope to see you there.

Reach Dave at:
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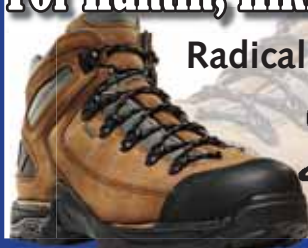
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