



WESTERN CANADA
HERITAGE VESSEL
REGISTRY

Statement of Significance

Silver Ann

1969



MARITIME MUSEUM
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Silver Ann

Year built:	1969
Builder:	Sadajiro Asari at Britannia Shipyard
Build Location:	Steveston, B.C.
Vessel Type:	Fishing Vessel / Gillnetter
WCHVR Category:	B.C. Historic Vessel
Owner(s):	Britannia Heritage Shipyard, City of Richmond

PRÉCIS:

Silver Ann is one of the last wooden gillnetters built in British Columbia. Launched in 1969 the boat and its gear are one of the few existing examples of a pure gillnetter from the late 1960's era. ***Silver Ann*** represents significant inflection points in vessel technology in the Fraser River salmon gillnetting fleet. Her hull form and engine also represent major shifts in the industry. ***Silver Ann*** is a very pretty boat, well built originally with some uneven subsequent work done over the years. As a complete and operational example of a period gillnetter the historic value of ***Silver Ann*** is significantly increased.



Silver Ann; a classic period gillnetter

Statement of Significance

Silver Ann is one of the last wooden gillnetters built in British Columbia. Launched in 1969 the boat and its gear are one of the few existing examples of a pure gillnetter from that late-'60's era. Built at Britannia Shipyard in Richmond by Sadajiro Asari, the boat showcases Japanese Canadian wooden construction techniques just prior to the industry-wide switch to molded fiberglass construction.

Silver Ann represents significant inflection points in vessel technology in the Fraser River salmon gillnetting fleet, and these industry wide changes were affecting the entire BC fishing fleet. At a time when almost every other fisherman was switching to a new, lower-cost and lower maintenance production molded fiberglass boat, George Osaka chose a one-off custom wooden boat, presumably at a price competitive with the fiberglass competition.

Additionally, ***Silver Ann***'s hull form and engine represent major shifts in the industry. Her hull is wider with a broad stern, quite flat underwater aft, and a flat transom. The flat transom was a cost-saving measure, being far less expensive than the rounded double-enders and horseshoe sterns that were popular. But this wide form also worked well with the high-horsepower modified car engines becoming available. Higher horsepower meant more speed, a particular advantage in the swift currents of the Fraser River, a faster boat was more likely to get to the fish first.

Silver Ann was commissioned by independent fisherman George Osaka of Steveston, and he fished the boat for 15 seasons, until his retirement in 1984. The second owner was David Hoffman of Abbotsford (1985-96), BC. The third owner was John A. Wilkinson of Mission, BC ('96-2001). In 2001 the boat was acquired by the City of Richmond, and a four-year restoration project was undertaken jointly by the city with the Britannia Heritage Shipyard. The project was led by shipwrights Colin Duffield and Andrew Guilbride.

Silver Ann is 37' (9.24m) in overall length, beam is 9'6" (2.9m), depth of hold is 3'7" (1.10m), and draft is 4'3" (1.30m). Gross registered tonnage is 8.84 tons, and Net registered tonnage is 6.40 tons. Power is a Ford Industrial 6-cylinder gas engine, model I-6 240 rated at 170 HP.

Construction of the boat is red cedar planking over 1" x 2" bent oak frames on 7-8" centres. Deck beams are 3.5"/4" x 2" and 3"x3" on 12" centres with a deck of red cedar. Interior soles are fir plywood and red cedar, lining of fir plywood, and ceiling of fir strips. One unique construction technique used in these boats is the continuous (P&S) frames through the middle of the boat. This was a cost and time saving innovation, where a couple of men could install both the port and starboard frames in one piece, running it over the top of the keelson rather than in two pieces butted into the keelson sides.

Gillnetters of this period are arranged longitudinally in three sections divided by semi-watertight structural bulkheads. The forward is the living area with one bunk, a small galley counter and cooking/heating stove, a bench for the fisherman to sit on, and the raised pilothouse over the engine. Midships is the fish hold, intended for storage of the catch, with a bulkhead forward and aft and accessed via a 47" square hatch in the main deck.

The aft section of the hull is the fishing cockpit, with power-driven gillnet drum forward and working space for the fisherman aft. The stern rollers are a key element of the fishing system; the net is both hauled in and set out through and over these rollers which aid in keeping the drifting boat lined up with the net and with waves or current. The aft cockpit is equipped with steering, engine, and drum drive controls so the boat can be operated by one man while hauling or setting the net.

Silver Ann is a very pretty boat, well-built originally with some uneven work done subsequently over the years. These boats were built to a price to do a job, and high-level finish work was rare. Being a floating and operating vessel that is a complete example of a period gillnetter significantly increases the historic value of ***Silver Ann***.

Statement of Significance for:

Fishing Vessel *Silver Ann*

Prepared and acknowledged by the
Western Canada Heritage Vessel Registry

Lead Assessor: Tad Roberts

Signature: _____

Date: September 3, 2026

SOURCES:

- Nauticapedia: <https://www.nauticapedia.ca/vessel.php?id=40274>
- Mr. David Sharp, Shipyard Manager; Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site.



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