

# The Adirondack Guide Boat

By

Jeb Rumbough

"They are one of the finest things that the skill of man has ever produced under the inspiration of the wilderness. It is a frail shell, so light that a guide can carry it with ease, but so dexterously fashioned that it rides the heaviest waves like a duck and slips through the water as if by magic." Henry Van Dyke, 1885.



Since I was a child, I have had the good fortune of spending a few weeks a year in the Adirondack State Park of New York. Learning to row as kid was as much a thrill for me as learning to ride a bike. While I cannot remember the exact age that my father turned the oars over to me, I would venture to guess that it was before 10. Since then, I have rowed in just about everything that has oars, in just about any conditions. While I competed in high school, and had a brief stint coaching a small college team, I have developed a greater appreciation and love for the pure beauty of the sport outside of competition. Whether it is watching an 8 on the Charles River pausing at the finish or rowing my guide boat through the glassy deserted waters of a mountain fiord, I find there is much that is special about the pureness of the sport without competition.



The author's guide boat

I own a couple of traditional shells and do try to get out for the exercise in the mornings, but my favorite boat is still the adirondack guide boat. It has a unique personality that makes it more special its faster fiberglass counterparts. It is much quieter than sliding seats and feathering oars. So quiet, that loons and trout startle me as they pop out a still mirror of water. I can let go of the oars to snap a picture or reel in a fish on a trolling fly. Perhaps it is the remarkable beauty of the lake and mountains that makes the experience so special. Perhaps it is the relaxation of a slow long row. Perhaps it's classic warmth of wooden hull. The smell of the camp fire at the lean too. Whatever the reason, the joy the boat has given me is intense and something that dreams are made of.

Now my children row and while they have never known competitive rowing, their joy of rowing the Adirondack Guide Boat will continue to be something special in their lives.

