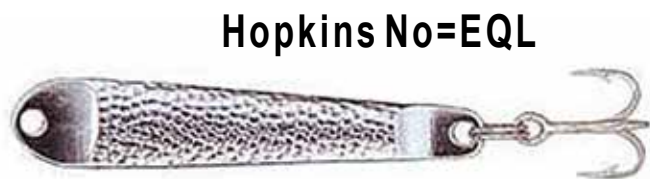


# 6 GREATEST HARD LURES OF ALL TIME

by Carl Bruger

Case in point is the venerable Hopkins spoon. My dad and I were throwing Hopkins spoons in the Jersey surf in the 1950s and I believe my first decent bluefish from the suds was on a **Hopkins No=EQL**. I even jig for pike and pickerel through the ice with a Hopkins Shorty as several tackle box battle veterans can attest. The hammered brass is a top notch quality product and casts like a bullet into the wind. One of my Hopkins is over 60 years old and only the hooks and rings have been replaced!



Hopkins No=EQL

An even simpler slab of metal that catches every fish from trout to stripers with bass blues and just about everything else in between is the ubiquitous **Acme Kastmaster**. They come in all sorts of colors, patterns and sizes, but one streamlined air piercing slice of metal that casts further than any lure of similar weight. Again they can be used under ice, ripped through schools of blues, used to fill buckets of white perch or vertical jigged for deep water trout and salmonids.



Acme Kastmaster

The only spinner in my Hall of Fame is no surprise; MEPPS. While this famous French company has been making awesome spinners since just after World War II the best of the lot is the **Aglia**. Once again you can purchase sizes measured from 0 to the big boys at 5 and 6 that tame muskies and pike if you are lucky enough to piss off a water wolf with your spinner offering. Silver, gold and copper are standard offerings while bare hooks or feathers or squirrel tails are popular options. New holographic spinners are available and of course there are still more varieties of blades such as Colorado, Indiana, Willow leaf, Chopper, and Fluted blades just to list the most common of as many as 17 on the market today! You can catch every species of fish on a spinner that feeds of minnows since that is what they imitate. My weirdest success was a 17 pound channel cat off my lake Ontario dock on an Aglia while I was seeking bronze backs in early spring.



MEPPS spinner

A couple of months ago I shared a cherished list of beloved fresh and salt water lures that are in my personal Hall of Fame. You might remember my waxing with great respect over the Arbogast Jitterbug, Heddon Crazy Crawler, Bridgeport Diamond jig, Rapala minnow, K-9 Grinch from Yakima Bait, and last but not least the Deadly Dick. There was nothing obscene there except the exceptional catch rates accrued on species ranging from trout to tuna and bonito to big mouthed bass!

This month's sextet of winners are lethal killers too with most capable of catches on sweet water or brine. That's because the manufacturers built so many varies sizes and color patterns that the savvy angler could pick and choose from ultra-lite to several ounces of metal to heave at the target quarry.

I can't tell you how many copies, imitations fakes, and knock-offs have been foisted on the angling public since Bill Lewis came up with his awesome lure, the **Rat-L-Trap** in the early 1960's. But his company has sold 150 million lipless crank baits all over the globe. The noise of the rattles and the special vibrations of the body are a singular attraction to predator fish of all kinds. I have caught stripers in the East river on bunker pattern Traps, Largemouth bass have fallen for perch pattern lures and smallmouth go nuts over the crayfish versions especially when you retrieve them just over the round rock piles where the fish and their favorite crustaceans coexist.



Rat-L-Trap

Eppinger Dardevle



The most famous spoon in fresh water with the weirdest "correct" spelling is the **Eppinger Dardevle** spoon. This authenticity is clearly noted by the stenciled devil on the real product, a brass based heavy curved chrome and colored side spoon. The red and white on one side with the concave chrome is the multi-million seller that has caught more pickerel pike and muskies than any other spoons ever made! Like bulls these thee species seem to love striking at red and if you want action in waters where they stalk then you must have dardevles in your tackle box. I suggest a few since teeth of these guys enrich tackle shops quickly

I saved the best spoon for last in my opinion because it has caught me thousands of pounds of salmon over the years! I am referring to the very round and heavy Little Cleo made by Acme the same folks who also made the Kastmaster. While it can also fool blues and stripers as a bunker imitation, **Cleos** are a lethal alewife replica that gets salmon on the troll, in the rivers on their redds( spawning beds), and just about any time you can put one in front of the other! ¼ Oz. Blue silver Cleos with glow ladderback tape is deadly at night where this is legal and during the day time any color that will piss off the salmon that day is the right call.



Acme Little Cleo