

**The story about AJA by the current owner, Finn Larsson, April 2021.**

**Ohlson 35, the initial version, later called Ohlson 36**

**"The boat that built the international reputation"**

**Designer: Einar Ohlson**

**Data**

10.90 x 2.85 x 1.60

Displacement 5.5 tons, iron keel approx. 2.2 tons, lead ball load in the keel pig 200 kg

Masthead rig , mast length 11.3 m, measured from the roof-top.

Honduran mahogany on oak frames . White painted hull from the beginning.

Teak deck on oil masonite.

Cabin, cockpit, dead-wood , skarn deck and center fish in mahogany .

5 berths of which 2 pullman berths in the cabin.

**Yard**

She was built in 1961 at Bröderna Arvidsson & Karlsson yard, Svineviken, Orust, Sweden.

**Owner 1**

Merchant Gunnar Wennerström, ordered the boat from Bröderna Arvidsson & Karlsson yard.

Name: "*Holiday III*". Winter storage and all maintenance was handled by Bröderna Martinsson yard, Svineviken, Orust, Sweden .

**Owner 2**

Captain Staffan Wilske took over the boat in 1970. Name change to "*ÅsaBlå*" (after a mountain on Härmanö, on the Swedish west coast). Family sailing for 10 years, often to Norway, as far as Bergen, otherwise around Denmark, Göta canal, Gotland.

During a renovation work in the forepeak in 2013, I found in a cupboard in the toilette a hidden typewritten address label, and was able to locate Staffan Wilske, who on the phone told me about his sailing experiences with *ÅsaBlå*.

Especially a dramatic event when the family sailed from Mandal in Norway towards Hanstholm, on Jutland's west coast. Once there, it had blown up to gale force from the SW. The sea boiled and the skipper did not dare to enter the narrow pier opening, instead turned north towards Hirtshals for a safer harbor. But now the wind was flat from behind in Jammerbugten with a wave height of 8 m. In a strong wave, *ÅsaBlå* broached, and

lay with the mast top in the water. The son Dan, who was sitting to windward in the cockpit, grabbed a Genoa sheet at the last moment and held on. Inside the cabin, the youngest child was thrown across the cabin into the arms of mother and two siblings. *ÅsaBlå* got up - the self-draining of the cockpit worked and the companionway kept closed. Once in Hirtshals, everyone could breathe a sigh of relief.

### **Owner 3**

Maybe it was a group, maybe 2 couples, or there were several owners between 1981 and 1984. The purchase contract states that Staffan Wilske sold the boat to a Madeleine Johansson in Stenungsund, Sweden.

Name changed to "AJA", after the wife of one of the owners.

### **Owner 4**

Urban Zachrisson, at Hjärteby, Orust took over AJA around 1984. He kept the name and started extensive maintenance. Built a large boathouse with standing height on deck (!) in Almösund, Orust. Only 20 years old, he was full of energy, and it was needed. The mast was cracked, and it was replaced by a new aluminum mast that still stands today. The old petrol engine (Gray 4-cyl) had given up and was changed to a Volvo MD 11C. The gas heater was replaced with kerosene one and as well all mahogany in the cockpit, and on deck it was scraped clean and varnished 10 times. New cushions in the salon and forepeak as well as a stereo with large speakers in the bulhead - the only thing he then regretted.

One late evening in July 2017, when Anna and I sailed into Anholt, Denmark, we saw a tall man on the pier who watched us very, very closely. "Is it an Ohlson 35 ??" "Yes!" "Is it AJA !! ???". "Sure!" "Are the wallpapers left ??? "Yeah!!!"

Ohlson 35 were built primarily for export to the United States, where Ohlson boats had a good reputation. In America, people wanted bright furnishings and the bulkheads in varnished and forepeak are therefore covered in white tapestry - no mahogany cave here.

It was fun to see the former owner Urban Zachrisson (who also left a secret name tag by itself in one of the closets..). He said that when he worked with the boat in Almösund, an old boat builder came in from Bröderna Arvidsson and Karlsson's shipyard. He told me that they built two Ohlson 35 boats at the same time by 7-8 men and it took them a year at the shipyard in Svineviken. When the boats were ready, they were loaded on a truck for transport to Gothenburg, and on to the USA.

### **Owner 5**

Arne Goksöyr, boat builder and Koster sailor, bought the boat in 1991. On the way home to Nilsson's boatyard in Strömstad, Sweden, they had to bail diligently. It was necessary to change 5-6 layers of planking from the bottom up. New transom, new front outer stem up to

the waterline, new skarn decks and moldings aft of the cast iron, reinforced and extended mast foot and more, and more. Many new replacements, but *AJA* kept her name.

Arne raced with Koster boats, and *AJA* was family sailed primarily during the 15 years she had her home port in Bojarkilen, Strömstad, Sweden.

In 2005 Arne owned no less than 3 nice wooden boats , there was a lot to take care of, something had to be done.

**Owner 6** - current owners are Finn Larsson and Anna Hellqvist in Gothenburg, Sweden.

We got tips that there was a nice boat for sale in Strömstad and went up with our children for test sailing her. In a gentle breeze outside Strömstad we were completely seduced, she moved smoothly like an eider duck in the water, despite her size .

It was almost settled, there was a re-grazing of the deck and a winter before *AJA* left Strömstad for a new home port in Saltholmen, Göteborg, Sweden. The sailing to her home port went faster than expected, the welcome committee did not have time to be in place before *AJA* was moored.

Now we have sailed *AJA* for 15 years, every summer, in Bohuslän, Sweden, around Denmark and as far as Stralsund in Germany.

*AJA* is now a mature lady, turns 60 this year, and there have been many repairs and improvements over the years.

I once sought contact with the designer, Einar Ohlson's brother, Carl-Erik, who worked at Saltholmens Yard. I was curious about the drawings and the design of the keel and stem, and asked if he wanted to come and look at the boat. But it did not happen. Carl-Erik sat in his workshop, looked out at the horizon and said half aloud - "yes, they believed in gluing the sticks...". That was the end of the conversation, but after a few years it was time to change the remaining part of the outer glued bow to solid oak.

Finn Larsson

Gothenburg April 5, 2021