

Tiburon Engineering Unveils 20th Anniversary Edition Smart Shift Reel

📅 January 30, 2025 👤 Katherine Clements



Tiburon Engineering, known for its innovative and durable fishing reels, has announced the return of its highly regarded Smart Shift reels with the release of a special 20th Anniversary Edition. After a hiatus of several years, the company is reintroducing this popular reel model with updated features, cosmetic changes, and limited availability, offering anglers a unique opportunity to own a piece of fishing equipment history.

Rich Duncan, owner of Tiburon Engineering, explained that with orders slowing down and an inventory of parts on the shelf, he decided to leverage those components to drive some sales. Seeking a way to make the offering stand out, he introduced the concept of a 20th-anniversary edition, marking two decades since the product's initial launch. Duncan acknowledged the effort as a marketing initiative, noting that marketing is not typically one of his strengths.

The Smart Shift reel was first introduced by Tiburon Engineering two decades ago and quickly gained a reputation for its reliability and performance. Designed to automatically shift gears based on line tension, the reel eliminated the need for manual adjustments during critical moments of a fight with a fish. This technology made it a favorite among serious anglers and deckhands, who valued its simplicity and efficiency.

Despite its popularity, production of the Smart Shift reel ceased several years ago. For a brief period, Tiburon partnered with Okuma to manufacture the reels in an effort to reduce costs. While Okuma delivered high-quality production, the partnership ended after a year when Okuma shifted its focus to its Makaira reel line — a series that benefited from a redesigned drag system contributed by Tiburon's founder.

The newly launched 20th Anniversary Edition reel features several key updates and improvements while retaining the core technology that made the original Smart Shift reels a success.

"I changed the color [of the reel] silver to make [the old and new reels] look different," said Duncan in an email to *The Log*. "Also, the silver does not show scratches as much as other colors. I eliminated the star wheel, which was confusing to customers — as well as to deckhands trying to change the drag while helping the angler make their catch. I made a new handle design which is longer and offset to give the angler a better advantage when cranking in a large fish. We make a number of aftermarket handles for the improvement of popular jigging reels and, of course, many other types of reels. So, I kind of wanted anglers to consider this reel as an option for jigging."

Due to the limited stock of parts available, the 20th Anniversary Edition Smart Shift reel will be produced in small quantities. Tiburon Engineering has emphasized that this is a special edition release aimed at reintroducing the brand to the fishing community and celebrating the legacy of the Smart Shift reels. Depending on the success of this limited run, the company may consider developing a new generation of Smart Shift reels in the future.

Tiburon Engineering has long been recognized for its commitment to producing high-quality, durable fishing reels designed for serious anglers. With over 30 years of experience, the company continues to innovate and deliver products that meet the rigorous demands of saltwater fishing. The reintroduction of the Smart Shift reel is a testament to Tiburon's dedication to providing anglers with reliable and cutting-edge equipment.

While the 20th Anniversary Edition Smart Shift reel is a limited release, Tiburon Engineering has hinted at the possibility of designing an entirely new line of reels based on the feedback and success of this special edition. This potential new generation of reels could build on the company's history of innovation, incorporating modern materials and technology to further enhance performance.

Rich Duncan stated that, at this time, there are no immediate plans for another collaboration. However, he is considering the possibility of developing a new generation of Smart Shift reels or potentially designing a jigging reel. He also mentioned that he might explore taking on a partner to help bring these ideas to fruition.

For more information on the 20th Anniversary Edition Smart Shift reel and other Tiburon products, visit Tiburon Fishing Reels. With this release, Tiburon Engineering is once again poised to

make waves in the fishing industry, reminding anglers why their reels have been trusted for decades.