

The Age of Asparagus

The *Age of Asparagus*, at first look, appears to be a fairly innocuous (but exceptionally well-maintained) 30-foot civilian powerboat. Taking a closer look, however, reveals that the boat has discreet hardpoints for mounting machine guns, ballistic inserts in key locations, several gun safes, bulletproof glass, and a communications rig that clearly came straight out of the US Navy. A smart observer would then conclude, accurately enough, that the *Age of Asparagus* was a converted infiltration boat used by special forces for clandestine purposes. An **Illuminated** observer, on the other hand, would *already* be aware of this absolutely infamous and precious paramilitary resource.

The defining feature of the *Age of Asparagus* is that magic doesn't work on, near, or around it - with the definition of 'magic' including things like 'psionics,' 'theurgy,' or even 'random chance.' Cast a spell at it, and the spell just vanishes. A telepathic scan of the area would skip right over the *Age*, and nobody would notice. People with naturally good (or bad!) luck will swiftly discover upon boarding that the scales of probability are no longer tilted for or against them. Magic items shut down when they get

too close to the boat. Supernatural creatures die or temporarily convert to 'normal,' depending on how badly they needed that one particular mana organ to survive. And so on. About the only things that the *Age of Asparagus* **can't** affect are human souls: kill someone on the Age, and the soul goes wherever souls go. They certainly don't haunt the ship.

Nobody knows why the *Age of Asparagus* has this quality - it apparently always has had it, as far as anybody can determine (no, scrying doesn't work on the Age, either) - and the current owners are rabidly superstitious about keeping the boat in perfect order. Aside from the aforementioned usefulness in assaulting overconfident magicians and psionic cults, it's also an excellent place to hide things or people from prying, esoteric eyes. There's also an ongoing investigation - an exceptionally careful one - to determine how the Age does what it does. And, of course, there are many groups out there that would like to acquire the *Age of Asparagus* for themselves, silly (and inviolate) name or no...

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