



BAMBOO JOURNAL

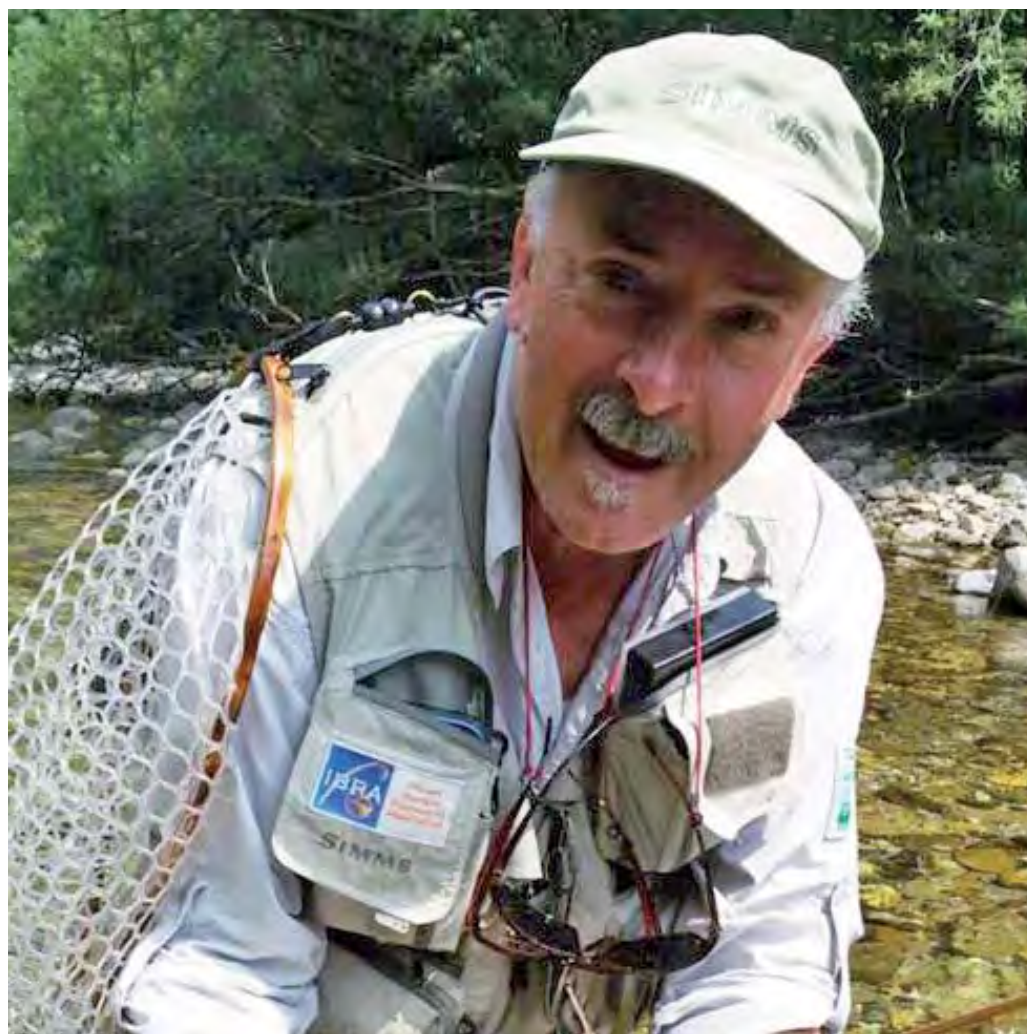
IBRA ONLINE NEWSLETTER



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ITALIAN BAMBOO RODMAKERS ASSOCIATION

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**Bamboo Journal issue 17- november 2016**

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Front cover:	Gabriele Ciarrocchi, rodmaker by San Benedetto del Tronto
Photo on page 2:	Ortensio Ambrosini and his CNC milling machine
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EDITORIAL

Here we are with the Autumn-Winter 2016 issue of the Bamboo Journal: number 17 of the IBRA newsletter.

It is a great honour for me to present it, I am still struggling with the first curves on the long road of rodmaking! So I do not have the experience or the charisma to philosophize on bamboo and rodmaking and I can only offer some general fishing comments on the season that is about to draw to a close. A strange season, both in the North and Central-South, with a Summer that was not very hot, but generally dry, an Autumn warmer than average until the beginning of October, when we saw a sudden drop of temperatures and some rain. According to my friends and the Web, the fish have been less and less active, almost everywhere in Italy and surroundings. The water was too high, too low, snow-water or perhaps it's the fault of the Cormorants, the foolish water extraction or the untamed pollution.

Many Italian fly anglers have complained about a deteriorated quality of the fly fishing. On the equipment front, the trend that has brought many of the big rod brands to produce graphite rods with "moderate" or indeed, "soft" actions to continue. On the same train of thought the success of the market of fibreglass rods, which will never have "tip action" carries on.

Another thing that sticks out browsing through online catalogues is that almost all of the more famous producers have gone back to proposing bamboo rods.

Number 17 comes out a little late, but we were struck with writer's block or perhaps many think that it has all been said and done. It is not so at all and I invite all the readers to share with the community of Italian and foreign rodmakers even the smallest experience, because it could be valuable to all those who have never experienced it.

We have had to struggle more than usual to gather articles good enough to publish the magazine you are used to. In the end – I am sure – you will find many interesting and pleasant things to read and lovely pictures to look at in this issue too.

First, the separator pages. The splendid works that "adorn" them are water paintings by Diane Michelin, a Canadian artist who dedicated her passion and art to fly fishing primarily.

I do not want to repeat the index on this page, but the noteworthy exposition of historical bamboo rods at the IBRA May gathering deserves to be mentioned. It is not every day that one can admire up close and touch about forty "works" of many of the most famous American rodmakers. A special thanks to the fortunate collectors who kindly "lent" them to IBRA for this exhibition. You will read their names in the photos of all the pieces that were exhibited, with interesting historical notes by MOG.

A new and particular contribution is the one by Alberto Mussati: the first part of a trilogy that recalls the genesis of his unconditioned passion for bamboo.

From the European gathering in Sarnen, which included an IBRA delegation, the novelty of a "variable" bamboo rod with an additional element which can be inserted between the butt and the tip, with the relative photos. I appreciated and was fascinated by the "engineering" approach with which all the aspects of this new object were thought of and calculated in the design stage.

Then there are technical articles by Gio Nese on the casting mechanism and by Ed Berg on the "nodeless" method of rodmaking.

The series of philosophical "reflections" by Giorgio Grondona continues and there is a full report of the 2015 "Alta Val Gesso Fishing Show" in this issue too.

As usual I wish you a pleasant read and please contact me with any suggestions or even criticisms you may have. Write to editor@rodmakers.it, above all with new articles for the next issue.

I'm waiting!



Gabriele Ciarrocchi

Unfortunately, some weeks ago, Gabriele Ciarrocchi passed away due to a quick and critical illness. An excellent fisherman and self-taught rodmaker who produced exquisitely refined works of art. Gabriele was an introvert, but when he let someone into his life, you were sure to have a friend forever. I hope that wherever he is now, the trout are always well disposed.

We will miss him a great deal and I am sure he has left a void in his family to whom we extend our deepest condolences.

Adieu Gabriele! Sit tibi terra levis*.

*(May the Earth rest lightly on you)



IBRA Gathering 2016 ... a great exposition of historical american rods

*texts by Marco Giardina
images by Maurizio Cardamone*





Walter E. Carpenter



...without hesitation ... HATS OFF!

We are in the presence of one of the great modern rodmakers, the link between the golden age of bamboo and our turbulent times.

The figure of the man is perfectly inserted in the grand tradition of the Huston Valley of New York with his grandeur and authority next to the great rodmakers like Leonard, Thomas, the Hawes, the Paynes and naturally, the Edwards family.

But it is also a material tradition: in 1958 F.E. Thomas Rod Co. from Bangor (Maine) was bought by "Sam" Carlson.

Fifteen years later, Carlson sold the Thomas beveller to a young Walt, who wanted to follow in the footsteps of the famous masters of the Atlantic coast.

In the following years Walt decided to complete his training as a rodmaker and worked at Leonard for five years and then as production manager at Payne until its closure.

This was his ticket to found the W.E. Carpenter Rod Company in 1980.



rodmaker: Carpenter, Walter
year: 1982
model: Browntone

pieces 3/2
length: 8'
owner: Angelo Droetto



Frederic Davis Divine



Frederic Davis Divine began making fishing rods in about 1875 for himself and his friends and relatives using a very simple, but sharp instrument – a pocket knife.

The rods were built with various woods, as was the custom in those days, the most common being Lancewood, Greenheart and Bethabara.

Between 1888 and 1890, with the foundation of "Fred D. Divine & Co.", he moved to an artisanal production in large numbers.

In this period the production of rods with Calcutta Bamboo (*Dendrocalamus Strictus*) cultivated in India began.

They were rods with six and eight strips. He also introduced the production of twisted rods, i.e. rods that were twisted in the gluing phase to increase their rigidity.

On 17 March 1900 Fred Divine met a horrifying death in the factory and his wife Ada took control of the company, which she then left to her brother, George McDuffee, twenty years later.

By then the rods produced by the Divine company were appreciated for their action – modern for the time – as well as for their finish, which today we could describe as "baroque".

On the other hand, the Hardy rods of that period cannot be described as an example of simplicity either.

The age of Bauhaus's aesthetic modernism applied to bamboo rods was still far.

Fred D. Divine Co. was on the market for the last time in 1936.

The tradition and ingenuity could do nothing against the economic difficulties of the time.

The name Divine would come back into the market in 2007 for a short period of time as The New Divine Rod thanks to a small group of rodmakers, among which Michael Sinclair and Chris Bogart, who began a very cured reproposal as "copies" of the historical Divines. Unfortunately, it was short-lived.

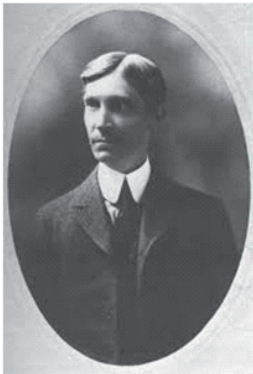


rodmaker: Devine, Fred
year: 1925
model: Trout

pieces 3/2
length: 9'6"
owner: Maurizio Gaviraghi



The W. E. Edwards Rod Company



It is difficult to speak about the rods signed by Edwards if we do not discuss the whole family: in fact, for the Edwards making bamboo rods was a family affair. Their history started back in 1882 when the 25 year old Eustis moved to the Central Valley NY. He began his apprenticeship with the Leonard Rod Company and worked side to side with the best group of rodmakers that could be united under one roof: F.E. Thomas, E.F. Payne, Fred Devine, George Varney, Hiram Hawes and Loman Hawes.

A wonderful beginning. In 1889 Eustis with Thomas and Loman Hawes followed shortly by Payne, left Leonard and set up a new production adventure under the name Kosmic. Spectacular rods that marked the end of the century. However, the adventure was short lived and in 1894, Kosmic was liquidated. From here there is a long break in the history of Edwards as a rodmaker who decided to quit rods and become a professional photographer.

Fifteen years would pass before Edwards, at the age of 58 returned to rodmaking. An important return that led Edwards to be the first to use the technique of "tempering" Tonkin cane to improve its physical/chemical qualities. These are the years of the collaboration with Winchester Repeating Arms Company which in 1919 purchased the la E.W. Edwards Rod Company.

In 1927 work and the lives of the Edwards, led them to move to Mt. Carmel in del Connecticut.

Eustis passed away in 1931 and was buried in Highland Mills, New York in the Highland Cemetery where today Hiram Leonard and Jim Payne also rest.

His son Bill together with his young son Scott and his brother Gene, decided to continue in the family business and they founded W. E. Edwards and Son.

It will be an interesting journey full of satisfaction. Bill Edwards decided for a less common design after the preponderance of hexagonal rods, and went for quad rods made of 4 strips with 90° angles. This type of construction presents no difficulty when using a beveller, in fact it is favoured by a series of passages. "Edwards Quadrates" we successful and created an unbroken chain of admirers and successors with great qualities like the reserved Clarence "Sam" Carlson, who worked for Edwards as a young lad or the algid and refined Per Brandin. They were all drawn by an undeniable fascination for Quadrate rods.



rodmaker: Edwards, Bill
year:
model: Quadrate 35

pieces 3/2
length: 8'6"
owner: Maurizio Gaviraghi





James “Jim” Heddon

James “Jim” Heddon was born in 1845 in a family that had recently immigrated from England and which at the beginning of the '60 moved to Michigan in the town Dowagiac.

The fortune of this enterprising family would be forever tied to two small creatures: in 1869 the Heddon Apiary was founded and it allowed the family to become wealthy and influential in the community. At the end of the century, in the family kitchen, the first “frog” was born. The little frog, carved in wood would be the first of a long series of lures that are still present today. The James Heddon’s Sons Fishing Tackle was founded and it would accompany American and foreign fishermen along rivers and lakes for almost a century. Just to get an idea of the production and sales capacity of Heddon, the production of fishing rods in the period 1939/1940 touched 100.000 pieces.

Despite these high levels of production, they always strived to have a quality product which would suit a large spectrum of customers. The quality was never cheap and in some ways reached points of excellence even though they were factory produced. A brief digression: in USA and concerning the production of rods, these are divided in sectors that characterise the production methods and in part to define the quality of the product.

These sectors are:

Factory. Factory made like Heddon, H-I, Montague, Granger, Phillipson – characterised by large production quantities in complex factories with a large number of employees.

Cottage. With a number of employees that is rarely more than 15 units. Relatively low production and production methods not excessively partitioned on single elements. Excellent examples are Sweet Grass, T&T, Winston, Leonard, to name but a few.

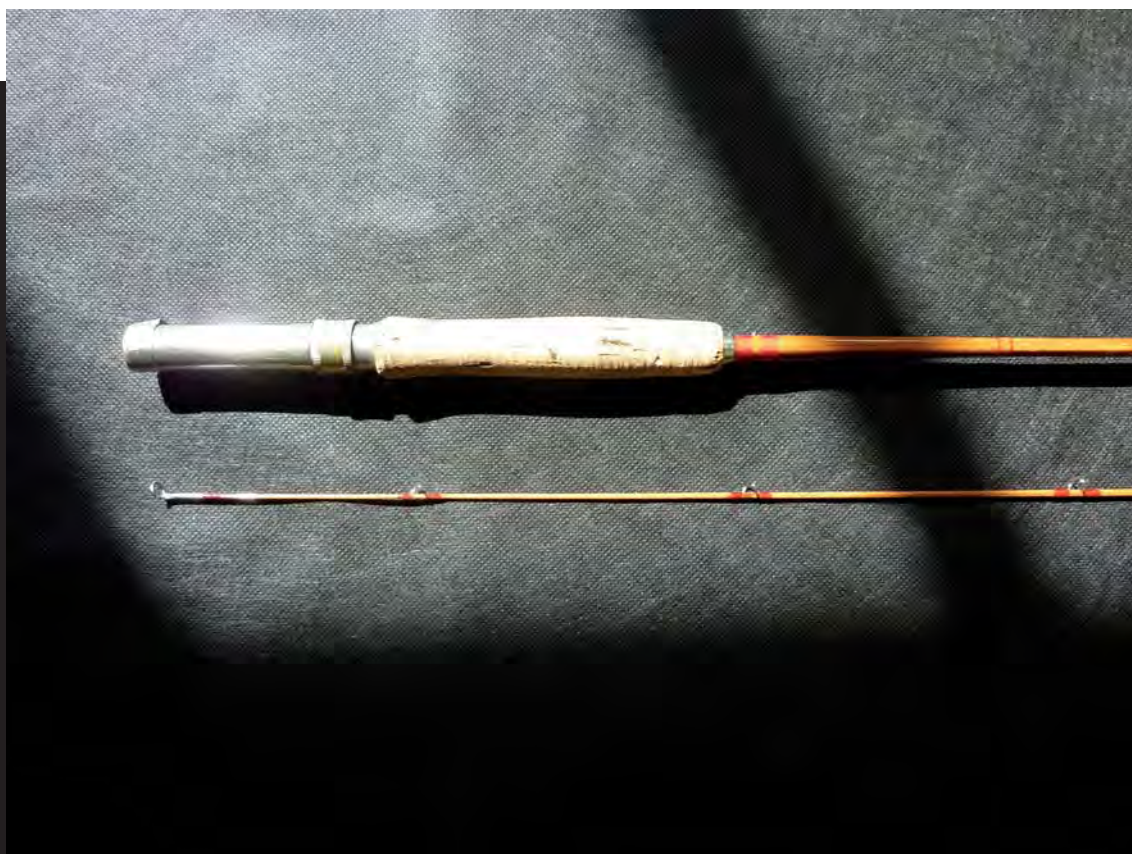
Shop. Workshops with one or few operators; often not tied by employment terms but rather associates. We must be care when dealing with these. In truth the embargo on importation of bamboo from China is over and the large factories have practically disappeared, there are situations where the Cottage production has survived and perhaps even grown. On the contrary, the Shop production which already existed in limited numbers in the past – Garrison, Gillum, Howells to name a few more famous ones, – explodes after the publication of the book by Hoagy B. Carmichael A Master's Guide to Building a Bamboo Fly Rod based on the working methods of Garrison.

If we wish to analyse and compare the quality of these sectors of production based on the price level, one must conclude that the best products come from the Cottage sector even if there are some excellent exceptions in the Shop sector.

It is also true that the Shop sector is where the hobby makers are positioned and this inevitably distorts the correct comparison. Until and during the thirties but also afterwards, a normal rod went from 8'6" to 9'6", in three pieces for 6 weight lines.

Short rods and light lines would become the prerogative of the sixties, only after a passionate crusade by Arnold Gingrich in favour “Short and light is beautiful!”

Nevertheless, starting in the thirties, Heddon brought out a series of light rods that were called Featherweight in lengths between 6' and 8'. A series of rods that found favour in an interested public and that allowed the series to be present even after the war.



rodmaker: Heddon, James
year: 1934
model: Jay Harvey The President

pieces 2/1
length: 6'10" # 5
owner: Mirko Magnani





rodmaker: Heddon, James
year: 1950
model: 35 Peerless

pieces 3/2
length: 8'6"
owner: Maurizio Gaviraghi





The G. H. Howells Rod Company

The name Gary Howell is not one of the recurrent ones in the Pantheon of rodmakers, especially not in Europe.

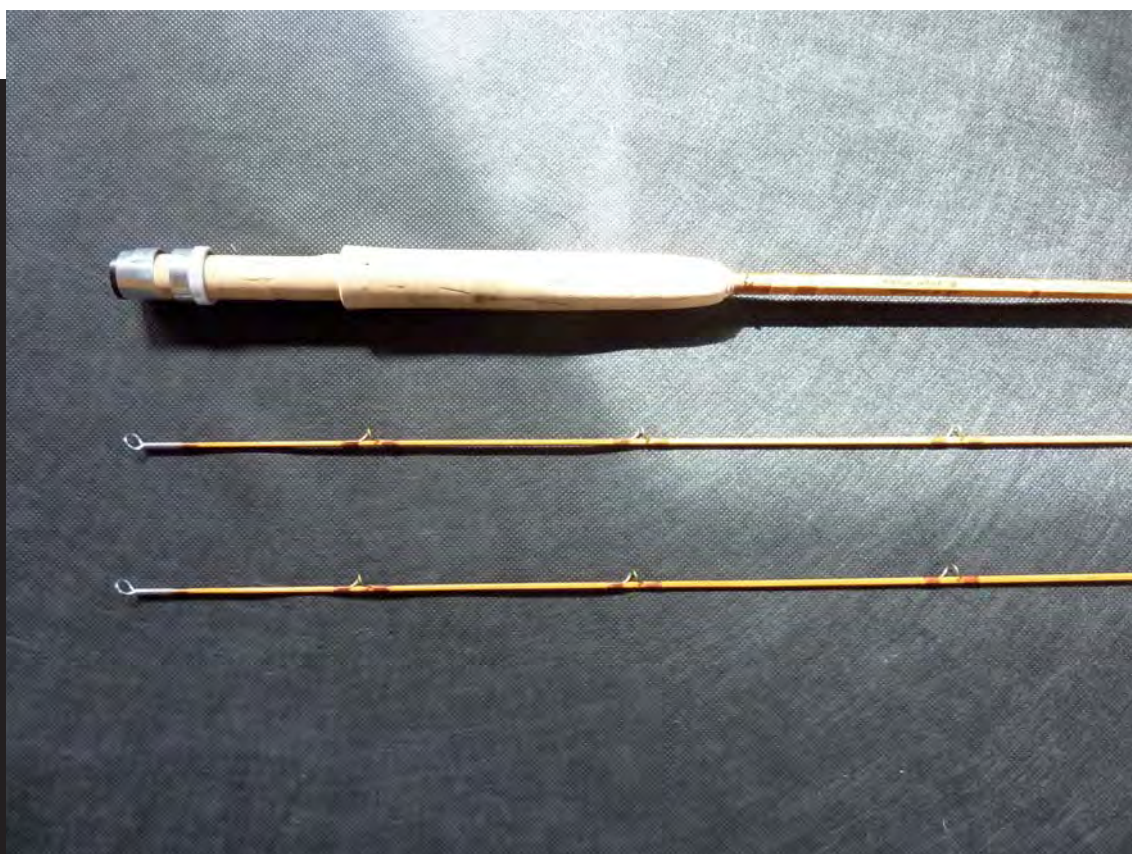
This shouldn't come as a surprise since his first rods we made in the Winston shop in San Francisco and even after that his production was never underlined by great numbers. After the Winston chapter which lasted 13 years, Gary Howells made rods under his name between 1970 and 1997, when he prematurely passed.

Even though his name wasn't common for the vast public, it most certainly was for a small and privileged group of devote customers. For about 25 years he made a careful and proportional number of rods, that allowed Howells to meticulously take care of quality without any indulgence towards easy and immediate fame.

Gary Howells had placed a limit to rods per customer per year and at the end of the year he cancelled back-orders. This did not hinder the fact that requests continued to flock.

Howells worked in his shop in San Francisco for eight or nine months a year and the rest of the time he spent in his favourite fishing waters: Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, but also South America and British Columbia.

What can be said about his rods? It is evident that never as in the evaluation of a bamboo rod is the saying "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder" true, but in my personal opinion, they are unique pieces: examples in which the concept of form as effect of a function is declined knowingly by the artist. True masterpieces which can travel through time. Sometimes copied well by other makers but never equalled. Howell was, in a certain manner shy, not inclined to showing off and with a great capacity for introspection and desire for learning as is evident in his writings, notes and letters which are kept by Howells and that have recently been published with a painstaking and precious work by Joseph H. Beelart Jr. for Whitefish Press.



rodmaker: Howells, Gary
year:
model: Hollow

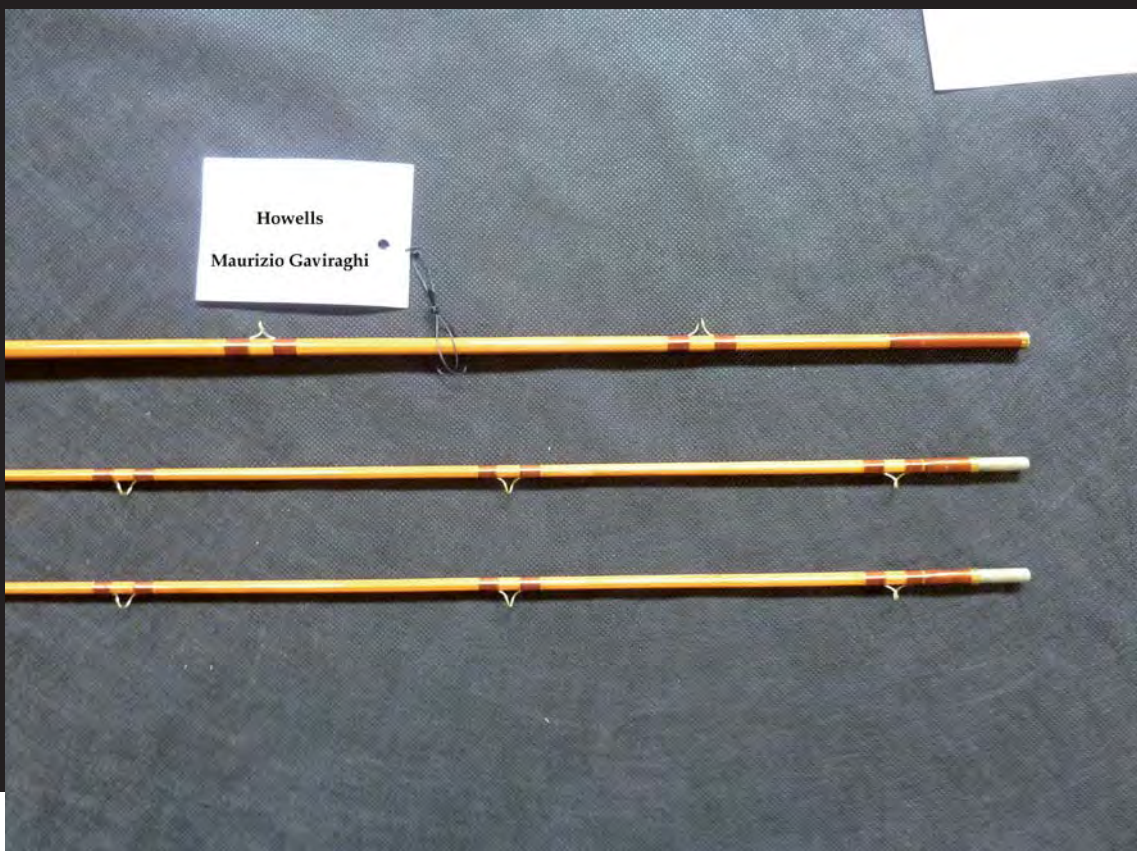
pieces 2/2
length: 8' # 4
owner: Giovanni Pratesi





rodmaker: Howells, Gary
year:
model: Trout

pieces 2/2
length: 8'6"
owner: Maurizio Gaviraghi



H. L. Leonard Rod Company



Hiram Lewis Leonard's adventure as a famous rodmaker began in 1871, when the sports equipment company Bradford & Antony from Boston orders a supply of rods for their customers from him. Truthfully, the fascinating career of an adventurous man – a real Out Door Man – started well before and it was sealed by meeting Thoreau, who took him on as a guide for his expeditions in the Maine forests.

Leonard was a man of many talents: an excellent musician, able hunter and expert guide. For a certain period, he was also a gunsmith.

But it was with the rodmaking that his presence would be noted in the years between the two centuries.

At the end of the 1800's he was surrounded by the best possible rodmakers there were: Fred Thomas, Ed Payne, Billy Edwards, Hiram and Loman Lowes.

The Leonard production was supported by the construction of a refined Beveller – in wood! It made the building of perfectly hexagonal rods with a precision of a thousandth of an inch possible. It was the first machine of its kind to appear in the rodmaking world and it was the inspiration for all the other bevellers and mills that would follow – on both sides of the Atlantic – in rodmaking for more than a century.

Leonard died in 1907 at the age of 79 and by this time many things were changing in American rodmaking and in the Leonard management. The best technicians of the company had left it to follow their own paths to success.

With the death of its founder, the company was taken over by the Mills family that consolidated it with a production of high quality for many decades.

Such a long story cannot be without moments of glory and moments of despair: the worst was in June 1964 when a fire in the Central Valley factory completely destroyed the designs of Leonard's historical tapers.

In fact, when we speak about Leonard's models we use the expressions Pre-fire and Post-fire.

A glorious moment was at the end of the 1970's when Thomas Maxwell joined the company. He was Tom Dorsey's ex-partner at Thomas & Thomas and he was able to relaunch the production in Central Valley until his untimely death in January 1981.

But Leonard's time was running out: in 1984 it was forced to close down because of bankruptcy.



rodmaker: Leonard (Maxwell)
year:
model: 49-6

pieces 3/2
length: 7'6"
owner: Giovanni Pratesi





rodmaker: Leonard, Hiram Lewis
year: 1980
model: 39 DF

pieces 2/2
length: 8'
owner: Fabrizio Stefanini

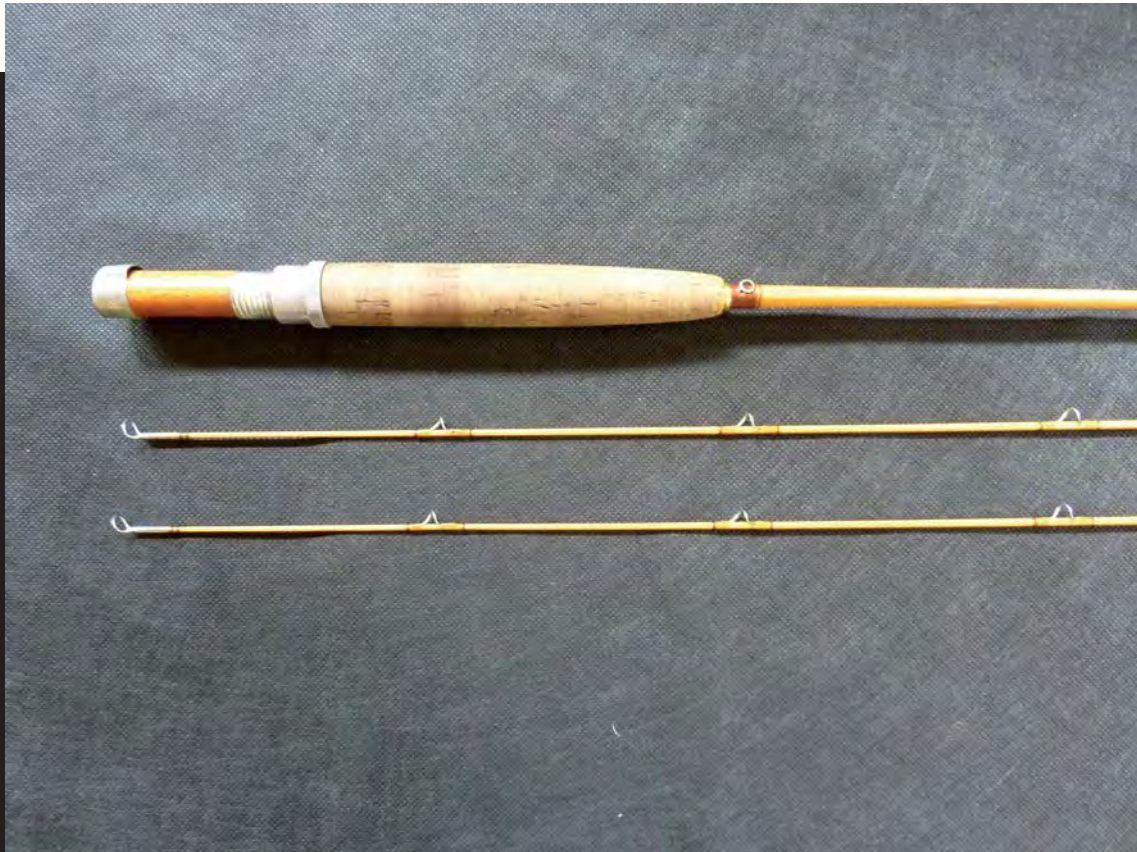




rodmaker: Leonard, Hiram Lewis
year:
model: 39 H

pieces 2/2
length: 7'6" # 4
owner: Gigi Gallina





rodmaker: Leonard, Hiram Lewis
year:
model: 40 H A.F.

pieces 2/2
length: 8' # 4
owner: Gigi Caramori





rodmaker: Leonard, Hiram Lewis
year:
model: 40 H P.F.

pieces 2/2
length: 8' # 4
owner: Gigi Caramori





rodmaker: Leonard, Hiram Lewis
year:
model: 39 H

pieces 2/2
length: 7'6" # 4
owner: Gigi Caramori





rodmaker: Leonard, Hiram Lewis
year:
model: 39 H

pieces 2/2
length: 7'6" # 4
owner: Silvano Sanna





rodmaker: Leonard, Hiram Lewis
year:
model: 38

pieces 2/2
length: 7' # 5
owner: Silvano Sanna





rodmaker: Leonard, Hiram Lewis
year:
model: 50 DF

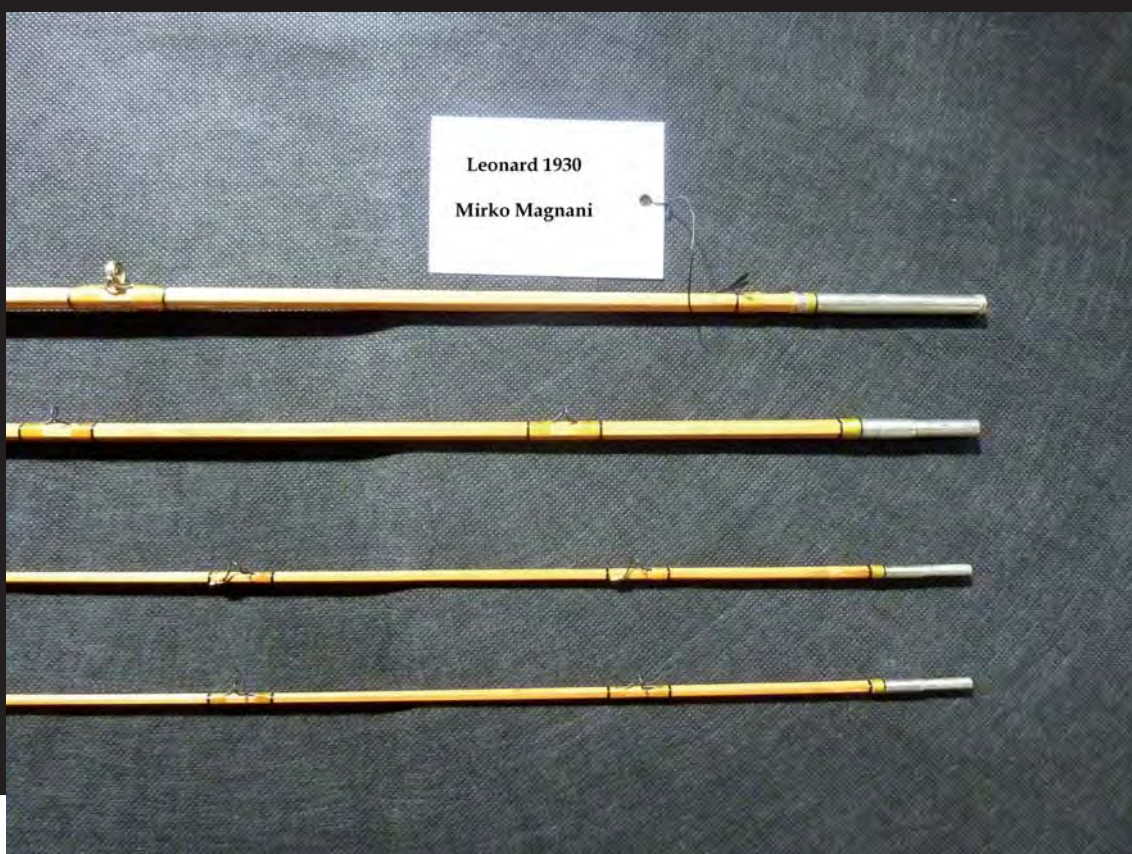
pieces 3/2
length: 8' # 5
owner: Gigi Caramori





rodmaker: Leonard, Hiram Lewis
year: 1930
model: 9 ft/3pezzi

pieces 3/2
length: 9'
owner: Mirko Magnani





rodmaker: Leonard, Hiram Lewis
year:
model: 755 Duracane

pieces 2/2
length: 7'6"
owner: Maurizio Gaviraghi



The Montague Rod Company



If you have ever asked yourself why there are so many Montague rods in the world (obviously not in Italy, where fly fishing slowly arrived only after the Second World War), in the various auctions, offers, on Ebay or even just in the hands of people that are not necessarily collectors, the answer is simple: the Montague Rod Company was from the beginning of the 1900's the biggest producer of bamboo rods in terms of numbers with the takeover of another historical factory, the Chubb Rod Company and with this merger, the factory in Montague City in Massachusetts produced and sold all things connected to the equipment of an angler until it closed in 1955.

A real "all you need for fishing"!

Rods for fly fishing, trolling, spinning, casting, rods for the sea, reel accessories of all types.

The equipment was affordable for the average angler of the time, without frills or elegant details, but durable and reliable and this is the reason there are still so many examples of this production today. Among the fly fishing rods, they produced, the most appreciated ones were Manitou and Redwing.

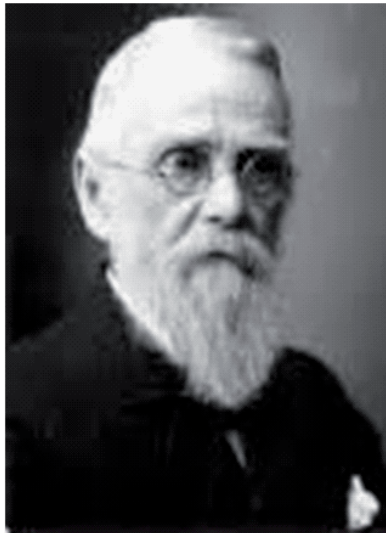


rodmaker: Montague Rod Company
year:
model: Blue Collar

pieces 3/2
length: 9'
owner: Mirko Magnani



Orvis



Charles F. Orvis



Wesley "Wes" Jordan

Charles F. Orvis was only 24 years old when he began making rods in his house in Manchester, Vermont, and the rapid success pushed him to transform this hobby into a lucrative profession. e.

It was 1856.

So, to the present day, 160 years have passed from the founding of a company that has followed the history of fly fishing in America and the rest of the world, overcoming difficulties and dangers to reach excellent results and prestige.

The name Charles Orvis was synonymous of products of excellent quality, great range and prices that were adequate to a middleclass clientele. Orvis for many years, guaranteed products and success in all spheres and techniques of fishing.

Amongst the many products presented by the company, one cannot forget the incredible series of flies which were designed and tied by Charles' ingenious daughter, Mary Orvis Marbury.

When Charles passed away, the company was taken over by his sons, Albert and Robert, who were not at their father's level and soon the company without orders, workers and hope was on the verge of bankruptcy. AT the end of the 1930's, just a short of bankruptcy, the situation was saved by a young businessman – an avid fisherman – who bought the company with a small group of partners. He was D.C. Corkran, aka Duckie.

His brainwave was that to call an ingenious person to the new-born Orvis company. A person that had already contributed with his work to leave his mark while managing the productive and design activities, firstly of Cross, and later of the South Bend Rod Company.

The top-man rodmaker and production manager was Wesley Jordan, aka "Wes".

Wes Jordan gave momentum back to the Orvis production, he created productive methods and designed and made a new beveller for the production of rods.

In truth, at the start, Orvis has thought about purchasing the materials - beveller and bamboo stocks which were laid off by the defunct The Montague Rod Company and which had in the meantime become the property of Sewell N. Dulton, but preferred to make a beveller with more modern specs. Dulton is a name that, in this game of intertwined stories will come up again in the next 30 years.

The commercial and productive activities of Orvis, under the management of Duckie and productive skills of Wes grew rapidly and after WWII they had a real boom.

Another point in favour of and that distinguished the production of Orvis rods, was a procedure which was developed by Wes and which was operated by the Bakelite Corporation: impregnation of the blanks with plastic products based on Bakelite. This technique reduced the long and tedious need for traditional varnishing and limited drastically the maintenance operations. It was a huge success.

To honour Jordan, Orvis made a series of rods with the name Wes Jordan. This was however the swansong: Jordan was 78 years old and it was time to retire. It was 1971 and carbonfiber was at the door. But the Orvis brand would continue to be in the heart of other generations of fishermen and sportsmen.



rodmaker: Orvis
year:
model: Madison

pieces 2/1
length: 7'6" # 5
owner: Gigi Gallina





rodmaker: Orvis
year:
model: Wes Jordan

pieces 2/2
length: 8' # 7
owner: Gigi Gallina

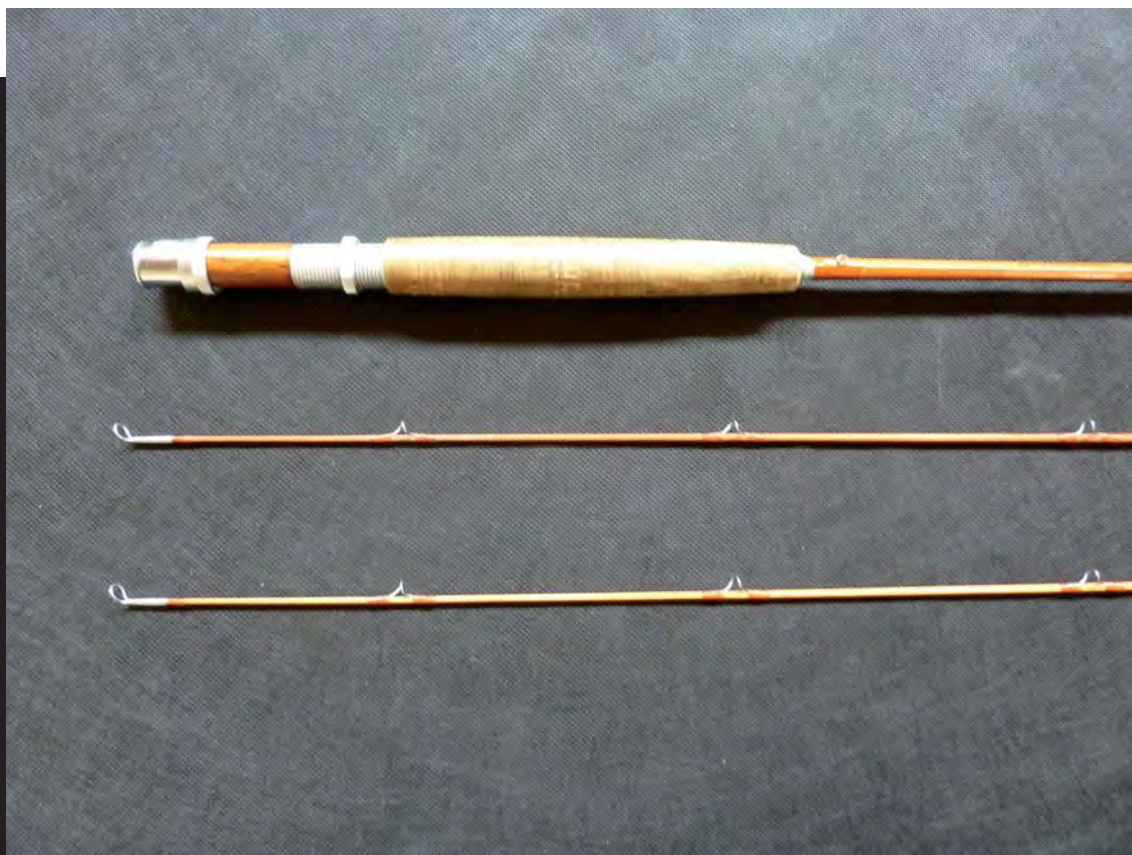




rodmaker: Orvis
year:
model: Battenkill

pieces 2/2
length: 8'6" # 7
owner: Silvano Sanna





rodmaker: Orvis
year:
model: Wes Jordan

pieces 2/2
length: 7'6"
owner: Maurizio Gaviraghi





rodmaker: Orvis
year: 1950
model: Impregnated

pieces 3/2
length:
owner: Angelo Droetto



E.F. Payne Rod Company



There is a long story behind this name. A story of great workmanship and of pieces that only a few have managed to equal.

It begins far away. AT the end of 1800's and in the H.L. Leonard factory and the group of clever youths that surrounded the work of Leonard.

When he died, his "disciples" had taken new paths that led them to a well-deserved success. Ed Payne was one of these.

Hi factory was built not far from Central Valley and Leonard. Around these factories and others, a new style of fishing and equipment came about, which came to be known in the following years, as the East Coast Rod Style and which would consecrate the area of the Catskills as the temple of the Atlantic fishing style. Unfortunately, in 1914 Ed Payne died suddenly and his heritage would fall on the shoulders of his very young son: the heritage of a great name, a tradition and a fantastic beveller. There are no precise records on the exact number of rods made by the Payne Company, but if you consider an average production per year of 70'0 rods for the 80 year period of activity, a reasonable estimate would be around 56.000 rods. The rods were profoundly different from each other, fly rods, bait casters, sea rods, spinning rods – Jim Payne was an avid spinning fisherman and he preferred this to fly fishing – but all of them had in common a perfect workmanship, sobriety and great precision and accuracy and last but not least, fruit of a story and unequalled tradition.

In May Jim Payne left his work place in the factory and said to his friends and employees that he did not know when he would be back. He died on 12th June 1968.

The day after his death, the clerks at Abercrombie & Fitch – one of the most refined sport shops in New York, exclusive resellers for Payne, corrected the prices of the rods with a 10% increase. From these little signs, you can understand that an era was ending, but other stories would have started unexpectedly. As Tom Chandler said, a new Bamboo Renaissance was beginning.



rodmaker: Payne, Jim
year:
model: 205

pieces 3/2
length: 8'6"
owner: Maurizio Gaviraghi



Phillipson Rod and Tackle Co



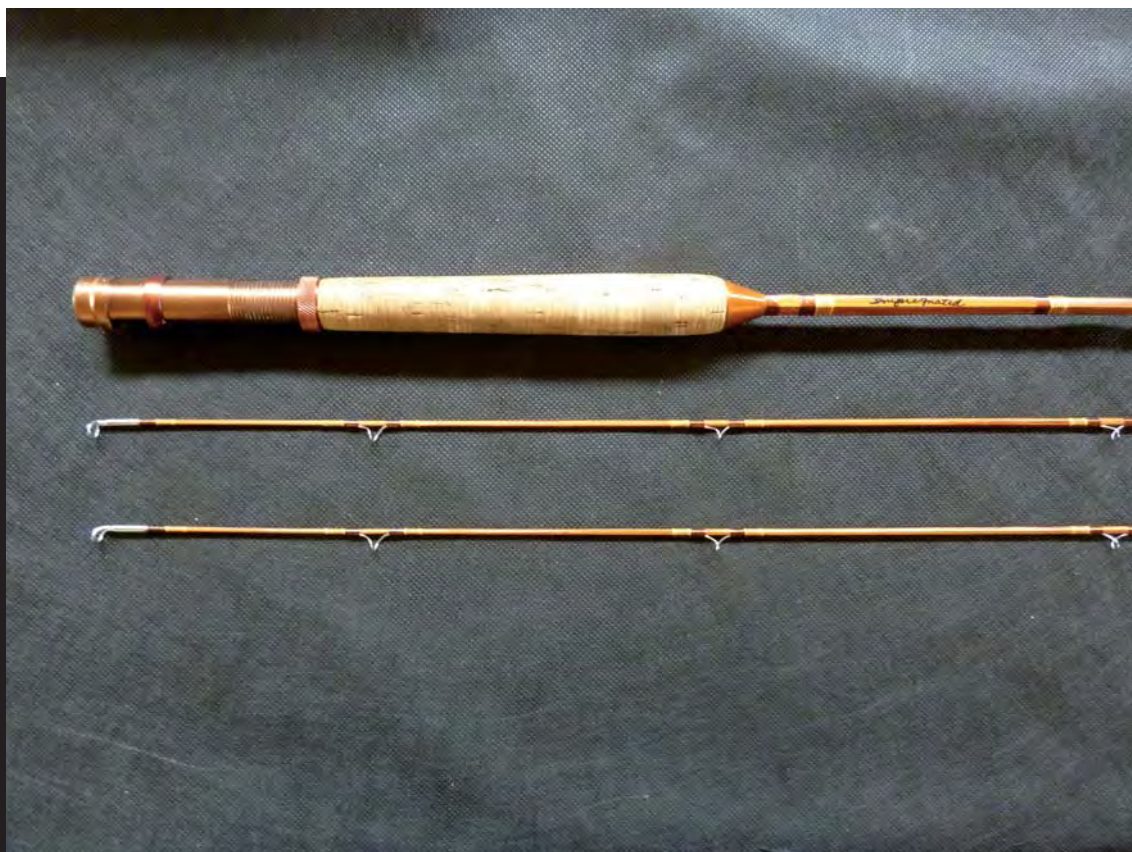
Bill Phillipson was a protégé of Goodwin Granger and he was in charge of the production line for Goodwin Granger Co. until the company shut down shortly before WWII. In 1945 he tried to purchase the Granger brand but was unsuccessful, so he founded his own company, the Phillipson Rod and Tackle Co. and he produced his first catalogue of rods in 1946. Phillipson was an innovator, in the true sense of the word. He was constantly making changes and improvements to his rods and later, during the 1950's and 1960's he became a pioneer in the development of fiberglass rods. Effectively many of the characteristics of the Granger rods were developed during Bill's time as production manager. For example, the Registered rods, the elliptical grips which later also appeared on some models of the Phillipson rods and the patented reel seat in nickel silver.

His work is often questioned for the glue lines that appear on all the Phillipson rods. The glue lines resulted from the use of Penacolite glue that Phillipson used and not because of defects or lacking tolerances during the milling. Bill always worked with values that were respectful of the quality of the product and he refused to change to what he considered inferior glues or because once dry they would be transparent and the glue lines invisible. Penacolite, at the time was the most water repelling glue available. Even more so than Resorcinol based glues. The disadvantage was the dark purple line that made the glue lines show; similar but even more evident than the glue lines in Garrison's and Gillum's rods, who both used resorcinol resin glue.

The most common models made by Phillipson include the original Pacemaker series, Power Pakt, Paramount and Premium; and the Paragon series which was added a year later. During the last years Bill produced a series of impregnated rods that included his favourite Peerless.

Each of these models was available in a variety of lengths and line weights. Other models which were less common include the Smuggler, a four-piece rod made only in 1952 and the Peerless Dry Fly Special.

Phillipson ceased production when Bill sold his company in 1972 to the 3M Corporation, that produced another 300 Peerless impregnated rods in the Phillipson facilities in Denver. They then move the equipment to Minnesota. Currently the Phillipson Rod Company is situated in Denver and is owned by Rick Gottdenker and his partner, Marilyn Richter.

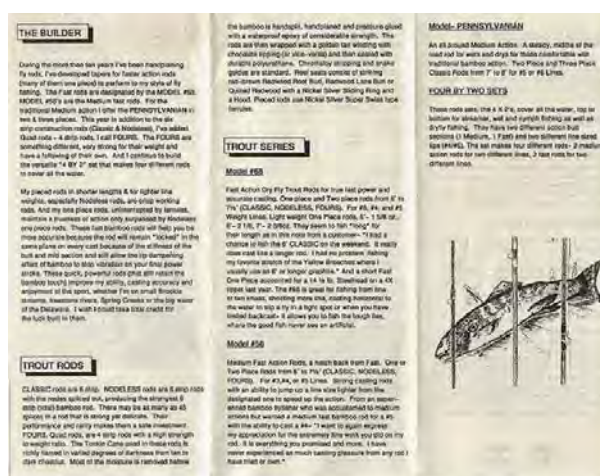


rodmaker: Phillipson, Bill
year: 1970
model: Peerless

pieces 2/2
length: 7'6"
owner: Maurizio Gaviraghi



Dale D. Schoch



Not much is known about the life and the works of Dale Schoch, except what Dick Spurr reports in his CLASSIC BAMBOO RODMAKERS - Ed. Centennial Publications in 1992.

Another source of information is the leaflet/catalogue that Schoch used to promote his rods. The following dates to 1992.

This rodmaker has been missing from the scenes for about 20 years. He began probably around 1982 – so he is probably another of Hoagy Carmichaels victims – from his catalogue we learn that his production is vast and diverse: hex rods, quads and above all which is rather unusual for that period, knotless rods. A precursor of Ramanauskas?



rodmaker: Schoch, Dale D.
year: 1988
model: nodeless

pieces 3/2
length: 8'
owner: Angelo Droetto



D. G. Schroeder Rod Company



The D. G. Schroeder Rod Company began in 1979 in southern Wisconsin.

Don can be considered as eponym of the One Man Shop. The artisan who in solitude and meditation is able to produce rods of such quality and create a court of very faithful clients who compulsively continue to renew their contact with objects that are without a doubt unique and beautiful. His production is very accurate, substantially simple but directed towards efficiency and functionality. Don makes both hex and quad rods. His production spaces from minimalistic 6' three weight rods to 9' #9 - two handed rods.



rodmaker: Schroeder, Don G.
year: 1979
model: The Gentle Art n.2

pieces 2/1
length: 7'7" # 5
owner: Mirko Magnani



Jim Shaaf



After having served in the Second World War, he attended college in Georgia.

In 1951 his job took him to California where he was fascinated and stimulated by his meeting with great rodmakers of the Pacific coast like Lew Stoner e Doug Merrick of the R.L. Winston Rod Co. or John Weir of Weir and Son and finally his visits with Powell family in their shop in Cisco.

A great encouragement.

In 1980 he started working as the Schaaf Rod Shop and in 1985 he retired as a chemist to dedicate his time completely to rodmaking and with a large stroke of luck, he managed to purchase all the tools belonging to Lyle Dickerson, who had died in 1981. Dickerson's shop had been bought by Tim Bedford who had transferred it from Michigan to his home in California.

Unfortunately, Bedford died suddenly in 1985 without starting his production and his widow sold all Dickerson's tools to Schaaf.

With this equipment, Schaaf's production doubled to about 30 rods a year.

His production was in line with Dickerson's style and the legendary beveller of the great rodmaker was brought back to life.

Jim Schaaf died on 20 July 2010. His shop was bought by John Pickard's Pickard Bamboo Rod Company ... and the story continues in Lyle Dickerson's path and tradition.

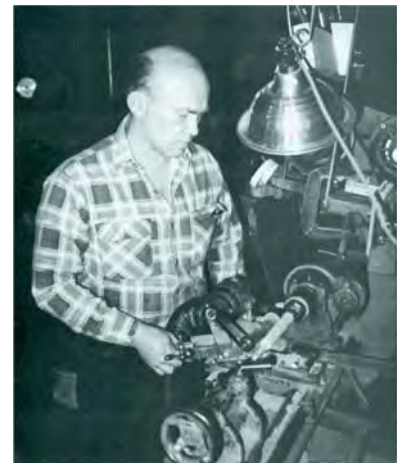


rodmaker: Shaaf, Jim
year:
model: Calcutta cane

pieces 3/2
length:
owner: Angelo Droetto



Robert W. Summers



Bob Summers is one of the great living rodmakers.

Like Carpenter his roots and soil go back to a distant past.

Bob was a protégé of the legendary builders from Michigan, Paul Young and Lyle Dickerson.

He worked in Young's shop for eighteen years, moving from the site in Detroit to the one in Traverse City in 1970 and he absorbed Young's style and technique.

Just as useful was his friendship with Lyle Dickerson whom he often visited in his shop in Bellaire from Traverse City where he lived. Dickerson was not only a friend, but above all a teacher and the motivation to keep improving. The example and professional rectitude were a great influence on his work.

With time, Summers became autonomous and starting thinking about his own shop and his own beveller.

He started designing and building his personal beveller, but then bought the machine built by Morris Kushner. That started his new path.

Once he completed his beveller, Bob sold the Kushner one to a young rodmaker, Mike Splittler.

Summers has produced a wide range of rods, all impeccable, with an average production of about 50 rods.

Rods from 5'6" to 11' in length, for weights from #4 to #9.

His rods reflect the aesthetic harmony and rigor of Young and Dickerson. Bob Summers' work is a noble example for anyone wanting to start rodmaking.

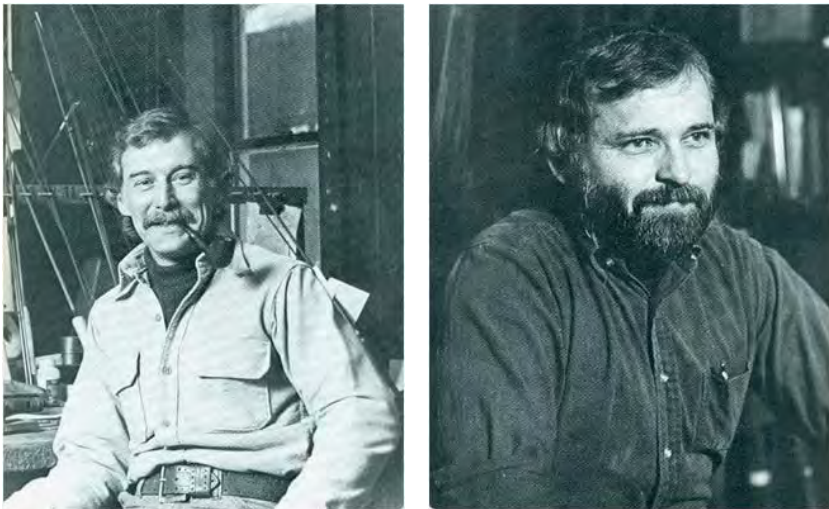


rodmaker: Summers, Bob
year: 1982
model:

pieces 2/2
length: 7'6"
owner: Angelo Droetto



Thomas & Thomas



Tom Dorsey and Tom Maxwell: a case of “serendipity”. A series of circumstances that would have unexpected results with a happy ending.

At the end of the 60's two young university students were preparing for a future in teaching and family life, having married two Michigan sisters.

The story: a relative of the sisters was an amateur bamboo rodmaker and the two young men were raptured. Teaching philosophy became a lot less interesting and they embarked on an adventure that would radically change their lives.

Having taken the decision of their life, the two looked around for ideas and their meeting with Sewell Dunton – who years before had bought all the materials and machinery from the bamboo rod department of the Montague Rod Co. – was fundamental. A state loan allowed the two young managers/artisans to buy machines, bevellers and an entire stock of Tonkin bamboo.

From the dream to reality: two teachers of philosophy less and an exceptional number of happy anglers with fantastic bamboo rods more!

The production grew in models that covered all the applications of bamboo in fly fishing. Extremely well-built quality rods with beauty and sobre elegance that made T&T rods an example for rodmakers for the next forty years.

The production was – and still is – divided in two series: the Classic Series, with a simple design and construction, characterised by an impregnated blank; and the Individualist Series, the top of their production.

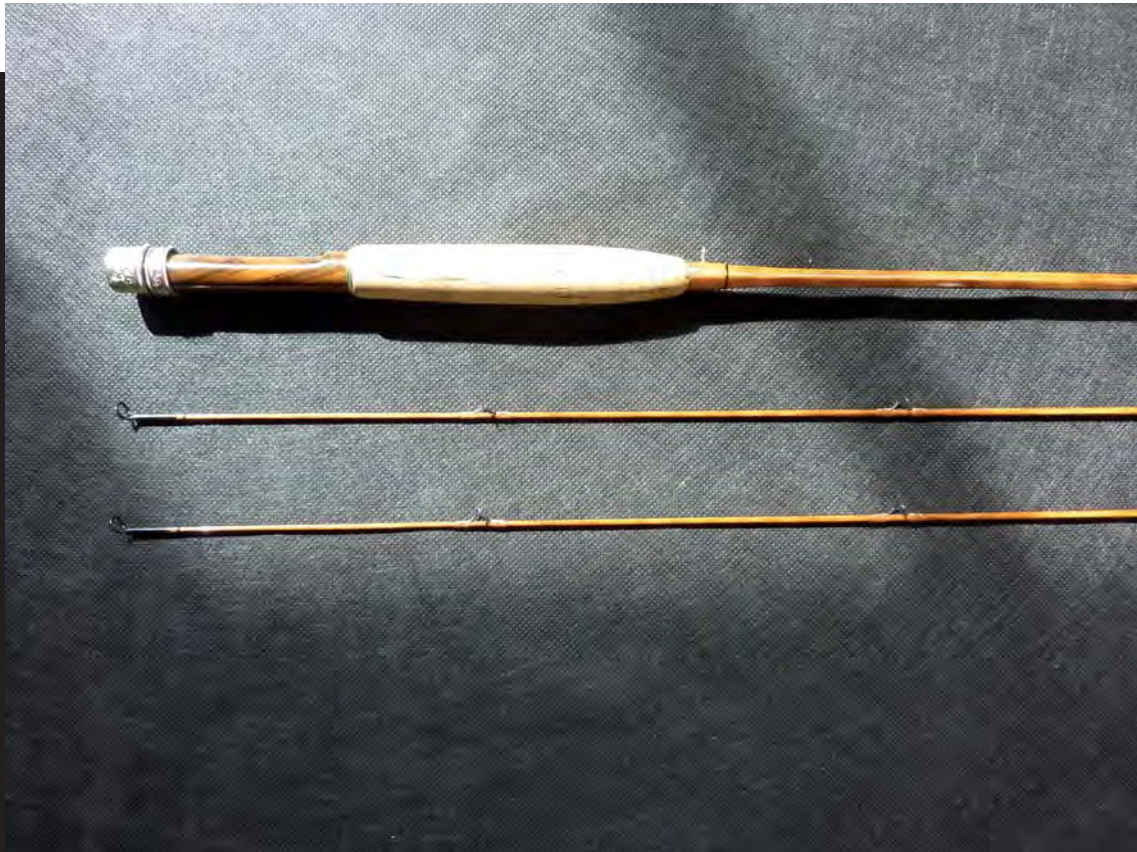
Over the years, others were added, like rods for special occasions, significant anniversaries and moments in the history of the factory. Or individual and particular rods known as “Sans Pareil”. Unique and sensational rods for quality and beauty.

Individualist rods like Montana, Hendrickson, Caenis, Midge are now part of history.

T&T's success was also achieved thanks to the collaboration of very talented workers like Marc Aroner and Bob Taylor, who were apprentices at T&T.

All good stories come to an end and it is not always a case of “... and they lived happily ever after ...”

The partnership broke up suddenly and their paths split in 1976. Dorsey remained at Thomas and Thomas and Maxwell went to Leonard, running the company until his premature death.



rodmaker: Thomas & Thomas
year: 1930
model: Midge presentation

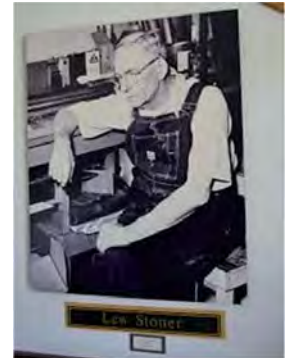
pieces 2/2
length: 7' # 4
owner: Giovanni Pratesi



L.R. Winston Rod Company



Ondaatje, Brackett, Morgan and Merrick 1991



Lew Stoner is the second half of the Winston name. The first part comes from the name of Robert Winther, who soon abandoned the endeavour, leaving only his name.

In the 30's the competitions of "tournament casting" became very popular in the USA and this gave the sports initiatives and meetings organised by the Golden Gate Angling and Casting Club in San Francisco great impulse.

Stoner was a member of the club and so was able to introduce his rods during the tournaments with great success. A stroke of genius was the technical idea to lighten the rods – essentially the butt – by creating a fluted channel all through the blank.

This technique allowed for significant weight reduction but maintained the same strength.

This system – patented by Winston – had great success on the market.

Winston rods were powerful, designed for competitions and for the West coast waters: steelhead, salmon and large trout.

They were perhaps not particularly beautiful rods, but definitely reliable. Simple but efficient finishing. Real fishing instruments.

The Winston rods had Duralumin ferrules (a bronze alloy) and the ferrule is completely wrapped to hide the, quite frankly, ugly Duralumin!

In the 50's Stoner was also a pioneer in fibreglass and low budget rods.

He died suddenly in 1957 without heirs, leaving Winston in the hands of his young protégé and partner, Doug Merrick.

Able hands to continue the development of the company to meet the demands of a wider and more modern market.

The production rods in the "Merrick era" were unanimously recognised for their high quality and they were more attractive and "fishable" than those of the "Stoner era", also thanks to the presence in Winston of a true genius of rodmaking, Garry Howells. We will talk about him later.

Howells left Winston in 1970 and Merrick sold the company to Tom Morgan in 1973 who employed a young Glenn Brackett who proved to be one of the best rodmakers at the turn of the millennium.

Tom Morgan moved the production from San Francisco – where Winston had started in the shadows of the Golden Gate – to Twin Bridges in Montana.

Today Winston is still there and from 1991 it has been owned by the Californian businessman, David Ondaatje. But this is another story!



rodmaker: Winston
year: 1965
model: Trout

pieces 2/1
length: 8'
owner: Maurizio Gaviraghi



Paul H. Young Rod Company



Paul Holden Young was born in Cherry Valley, Arkansas in August 1890.

Paul was an adventurous young man, a lover of the outdoors, of fishing and hunting, which lead him around the USA and Canada.

After graduating from the University of Arkansas in 1912, he did many jobs: taxidermist, fly-tier, guide and farmer.

In 1919 he met a young, lively French girl, Martha Marie Moisan, whom he married in 1920. She would be at his side for all his life.

In 1923 they settled down in a cosy house in Detroit, which they filled with children and not far from the house, in 1926 they opened a fishing shop.

Thus started the happy adventure of the PAUL H. YOUNG ROD COMPANY that would last many years and even after Paul's death in 1960, passing first in the hands of Martha Marie and then in 1969 to their son Jack.

The rods designed by Paul were very successful with vast sectors of the users, those who likes short, light rods – just think of Arnold Gingrich, who said in his book *The Joys of Trout*: "He was venerated in the last decade of his life as "the Stradivari of the Midge rod".

But most certainly Paul Young's excellence derived from the Parabolic series. The rods were inspired, as told by him, by the meetings with Charles Ritz, Garrison and Payne concerning the revolutionary tapers by Ritz.

This series was so successful that Young was forced to outsource production to other producers like Heddon, South Bend Bait Company and E.W. Edwards.

He applied new and efficient constructive techniques like the heat treatment through the "rings of fire", which gave his rods their characteristic flaming.

Martha Marie was always at his side and a constant source of inspiration and support.

Paul created a rod which bears her name.

Martha Marie fished along the banks of her beloved Au Sable until her death.

It is said that a well-known couple of anglers were due to meet on the Au Sable for a day's fishing, but when they got to their favourite pool, they found an elderly lady casting flies with incredible grace. The older of the two anglers whispered to the other as if he were in a church "...it's Ms Martha Marie." They stopped to look at her for a few minutes in silence so as not to disturb this moment of unequal grace and meditation and then left.



rodmaker: Young, Paul
year:
model: parabolic 15

pieces 2/2
length: 8'
owner: Maurizio Gaviraghi





VIBRATIONS

pendulum clock, bamboo,
Payne parabolic and Young Princess,
fast rods in America

by Giovanni Gio Nese

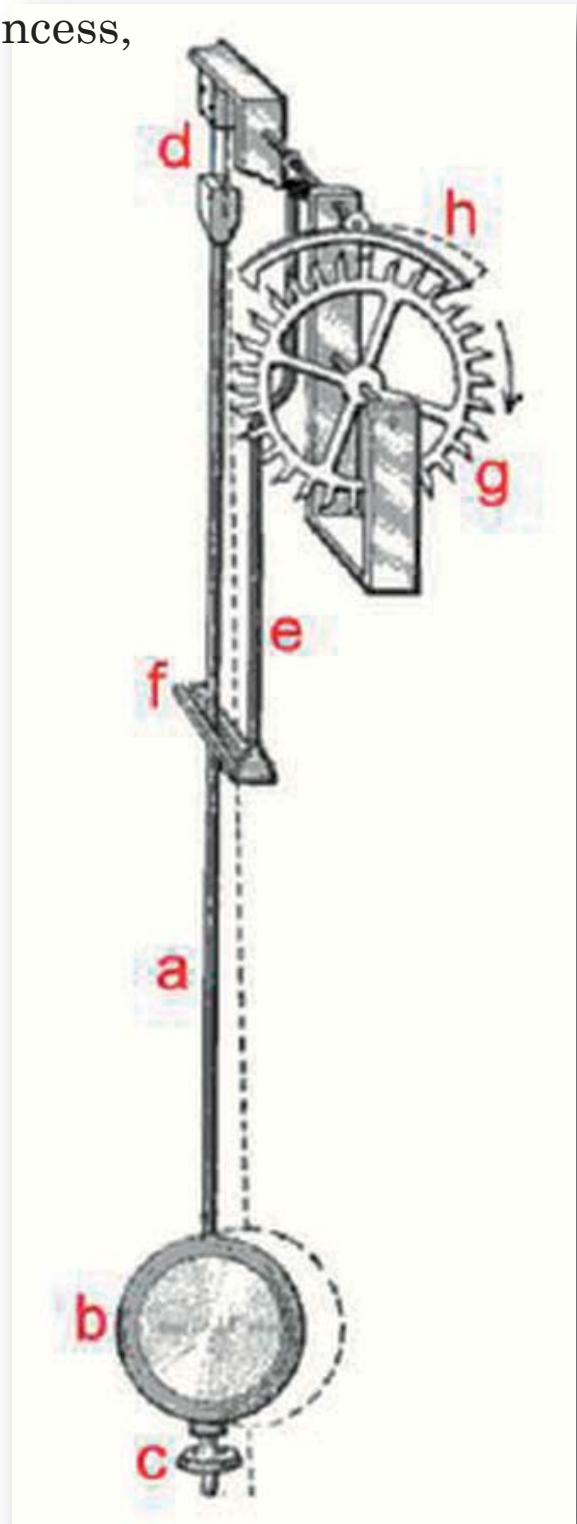
I decided to write a technical and humanistic article, as long as I am able to do so and the interest in the casting technique and fly rods does not wane. Disinterest will never be possible for the things that are part of life.

This is the first part of a technical article on the casting technique. Does it belong here in a journal of articles on bamboo? I think so, if we consider that everything I write is already applied to existing rods and that some solutions that I propose to make rods faster have been around for 50 or 70 years.

An elastic body subject to a cyclical impulse is put in vibration as a function of its mechanical characteristics, the size and the constraints; the effect of the vibration is also related to the frequency and impulse power.

A typical example are houses in earthquakes. The constraint is represented by the soil and foundation, the size is represented by the dimensions and the mass of the house, the mechanical characteristics by the quality of the building materials: steel, concrete, wood ...

The frequency response is related to the wave train that transports the energy generated by the earthquake. The earthquake itself is like the snap of the fingers, the wave train is sound waves that travel up to our ear where they are detected. The composition of the soil affects the frequency and energy dispersion. The power, the earthquake energy, is related to the geological phenomenon that generated it, the depth and size of tectonic plates that shift.



- And what is the relationship of this with rods?
- Now I will explain it. The impulse for the rod is given by the movement of the hand.
- OK
- It is a cyclical impulse, every time the rod passes in front of me, I push it a little. Like pushing your son on the swing, every time it passes you give him a little shove. It does not need a lot of effort, just apply it at the right moment. Once you reach a certain oscillation stability all you need is a tap and you continue to swing. With the rod, it is a little more challenging with regards to the timing; the operation is the same. Whenever the rod passes there, there is an impulse to keep the fly line in the air. One forward and one back. This is also a wave train, low frequency, low intensity, but with one more problem. The impulse must be synchronized with the movement of the apparatus, otherwise the cast falls apart.
- Or?
- The fly line falls!
- Ah!
- But what is the frequency of this cycle?
- Variable!
- What do you mean?
- If you cast short and you have little line out of the tip of the rod how much time passes between a forward cast and a back cast?
- Little time
- Is it any different from the pendulum clock?
- No! It is the same, the principle that we use is always the same. It is the center of gravity of the pendulum position that establishes the frequency. I'll give you an example. You know the grandfather pendulum clock; how do you adjust the clock?
- There is a small screw at the base of the pendulum rod; if you move the weight down, you slow the clock down, if you move it up, it goes faster. That is, if you move the mass away, it slows down, if you move it closer, it speeds up. Just like in long and short casts, the longer the cast, the slower the speed of the rod-line system and vice versa.
- Nice to see that even for fly rods the general principle of physics applies!

- Did you doubt it?
- Yes!
- If you look carefully the elements that constitute a pendulum clock are the same as your hand. Mass, rod, elastic element, boundary and cyclic propulsion system.
- OK for the clock, I see them all, but for the rod let me illustrate them. a) is the rod, b) is the fly line, c) is missing or has a slightly different interpretation from what is illustrated, d) is the rod but still considered as an elastic element e) is the hand that is the constraint; the mechanical system constituted by h), g), e), f) is the hand that generates the impulse.
- I do not understand h), g), e), f)?
- I will not explain it, but I invite you to disassemble a clock, at least once in your life and you will understand it right away. g) is connected to the spring system or the weight that provides the moving force. There, you do not see it, as you do not see the gear system for the movements of the spheres, but it is there. g) and h) are the escapement!
- Well then, when I lengthen the cast the frequency decreases and the speed increases.
- OK! The line has a longer way to go, so the speed should increase.
- Why should it?
- Because at the same time I have increased the travel time, although I cannot be categorical about it. Should we say it almost certainly has increased?
- Surely when I cast short and have little weight off the rod tip it is as if I had the pendulum closer to get a high frequency.
- Right!
- Did you know that in mechanical watches the frequency control system, the oscillation which replaces the pendulum is constituted by a rotating mass and a spring winds and unwinds?
- Yes! It is the clock rocker arm!
- What is the balance spring made of?
- Of spring steel, I suppose!
- And before?

- When before? When they first made clocks, did they not have spring steel already?

- The first watches were made of brass and the first rocker arm springs were made with pig bristles. The spring steel was already there, but they were not able to reduce it to thin wires to build such light springs.

- Do not joke!

- This was the same reaction I had when my uncle told me. But he used to tease me and I pretended not to take the bait. Then, 30 years later, I found a magazine about the restoration of antique watches, saying that the spring of the rocker was made of selected pig bristles! I have not figured out who told him these things. He knew some extraordinary things. One day he told me how in DEUTZ they checked for micro-fractures in the differential gears. With talc and naphtha. Even there, perhaps only 25 years later, I found that micro fractures are highlighted with dust ... He kept bees! His little empire. Maybe it was from them that he drew this news. Bees are curious and they know many things.

The analogy with the rocker serves to introduce the concepts of frequency, frequency and impulse. The impulse. The small force that keeps the rocker in motion is provided through an escapement from the watch mainspring.

The escapement is a kinematic mechanism that engages and disengages a toothed wheel; in the release phase it provides a small energy input that compensates the mechanical losses of the rocker and it increases the rotation motion.

The impulse magnitude is very small and concentrated in a very short period of time. The amount of dissipation is also very small, it is mostly sliding friction of the axis of the rocker arm on a ruby support and lubricated mainly by friction with the air of the rocker crown!

- So my propulsion system, the hand, the arm and the whole pushing body could be reduced to a small boost given at the right time.

- Certainly, to an extent that unlike in the pendulum, the dissipation is frighteningly higher and may create vibrations that further dissipate the energy applied, which is detrimental to the cast.

- I know. I know how dissipation works: with a fly rod I can, with effort, cast 9 grams to 25 meters, with a spinning rod and a 10/100 mm line I can slam the same weight to nearly 100m! Definitely not a very efficient delivery system.

To be continued...







THE BAMBOO

(1st part)

... a memory

by Alberto Mussati

(Thoughts, memories, emotions and some considerations soaked in unconsciousness).

My friend Giovanni Nese told me "you can write something about this wood," what you feel, nothing technical, nothing mathematical (I hate math and he knows it), only emotions.

And I accepted; immediately, anxiety overwhelmed me. I know that there are no mathematical formulae to describe an emotion, I know that words are always insufficient, they do not follow a particular order; they become chaotic, overlapping, they do not respect certain priorities nor do they tolerate comparisons, they live compressed in their selfish insecurity. I know that words cannot give completeness and above all do not succeed, even with fantastic lexical acrobatics, to be what they should be, to be what we would like them to be.

My name is Alberto and I was eight, my brother Guglielmo is two years older than I and our aunt Rachele was our "bodyguard", even though I saw her as a little fairy from a fairy tale.

Our "ritual" holidays were celebrated in Malcesine, a small town on the Verona side of the shore of lake Garda. I do not remember much of that town, but I remember the part of the lake that washed it. And I remember the bay called "Corsaro" under the ancient castle perfectly. There we fished with the passion, imagination and unconsciousness of children, sustained, guarded and caressed by aunt Rachele's lightness that has never stopped, in my memories, searching our eyes for a smile.

The water in the creek was deep, the blue sky darkened quickly and became cobalt blue, worthy of respect and full of fears. The depth of the water like the depth of the heart is always scary. We possessed one rod among the three of us. Aunt Rachele kept it for us. She took us to the fishing area, she prepared it, she tied on the leader.

It was a spinning rod, but wonder of wonders, it was a hexagonal bamboo rod, I cannot remember the length in "feet", but I remember it was a two-piece rod. At that time, for me, the word "foot" had a single and unequivocal meaning. It was wood, polished, elegant, soft, in short, with time, I would understand ... only with time.

Our favorite prey, although the area was full of pikes, were the minnows, in our dialect called, "aolette" and could be captured in great quantities because the lake in that area was very rich.

The set-up was called "lanzettiera" and was composed of angled, smoothed hooks, on which aunt Rachele with skill and speed would bait a maggot.

The trace boasted ten to twelve hooks. Most of the time we were using a cork bobber, although the experts preferred to fish at the bottom, but we were not. Aunt Rachele managed the fish we caught and made sure we shared our time with the bamboo rod equally.

By now we had acquired the ability to observe the movement of the bobber, to set the hook quickly and above all, to keep the line in constant tension.

I remember how the wooden rod bent, its softness and sensitivity. I remember the sparkling varnish in the sun and the water droplets splashing and evaporating from the rod guides.

The memories of a child, who is in love with water and his essential, scant memories that need to be discovered. All I can say, with a certain lack of precision, is that I was an eight year-old fishing with a hexagonal bamboo rod; I was not sure what it was, how it was built, how it had come to be from the patient skills of the hands of a man. This I will discovered many years later.

What I do remember, even if they are distant memories, is its beauty and elegance. Our fishing was also a small business. Our only client was the owner of an ice cream shop located in the town center. The more "aolette" we delivered in the evening, the more balls of ice-cream we got on our three cones, one for Aunt Rachele, one for my brother Guglielmo and one for me. I remember that there were ice creams with only one ball when the lake was very rough.

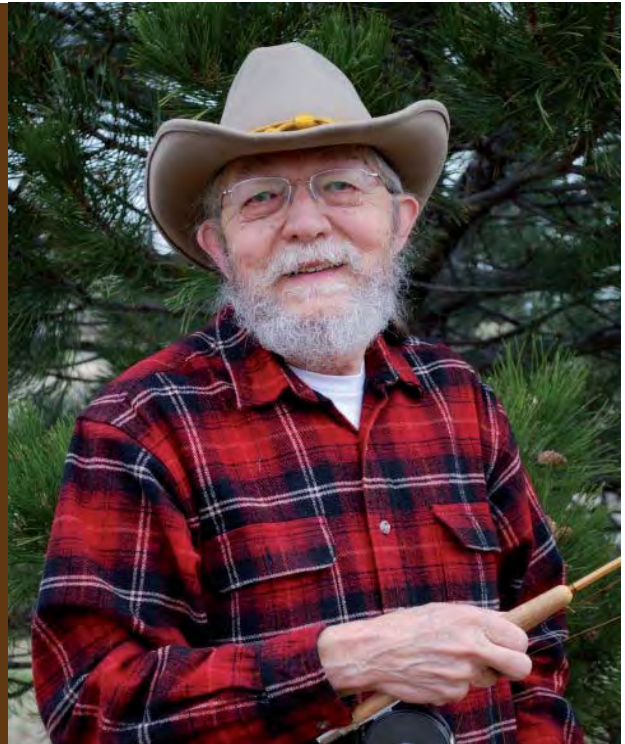


Malcesine - lago di Garda



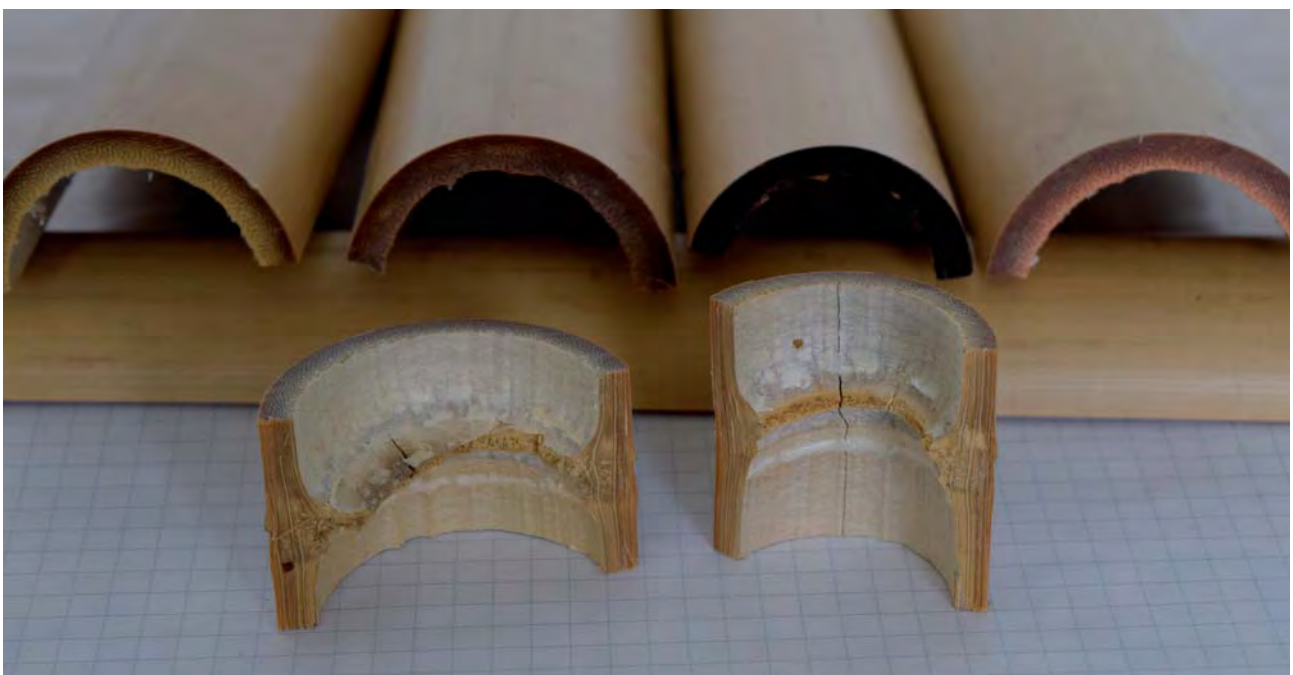
A Simple Scarf Joint Jig for Nodeless Construction

by Ed Berg



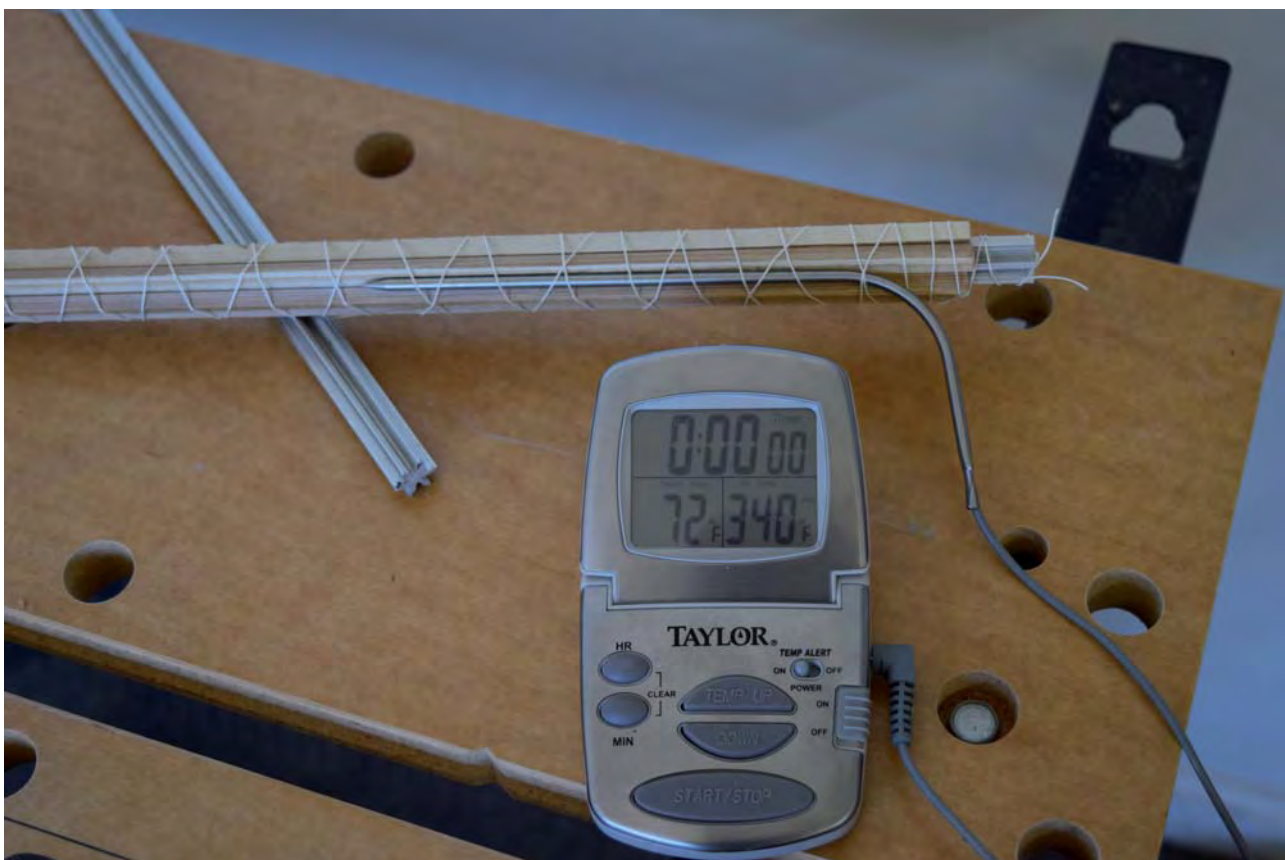
Nodeless construction of bamboo fly rods offer some advantages and requires it's own techniques. I have developed several methods and jigs that make the process much smoother for me. What follows are some of these methods and tools. This is what works for me.

The initial step is to saw out the nodes and approximately 3-4 cm on each side of the node. This leaves the beautiful straight grained material that will be used for the rod. I mark the butt of each section with a different color to identify it's direction and position on the original culm.



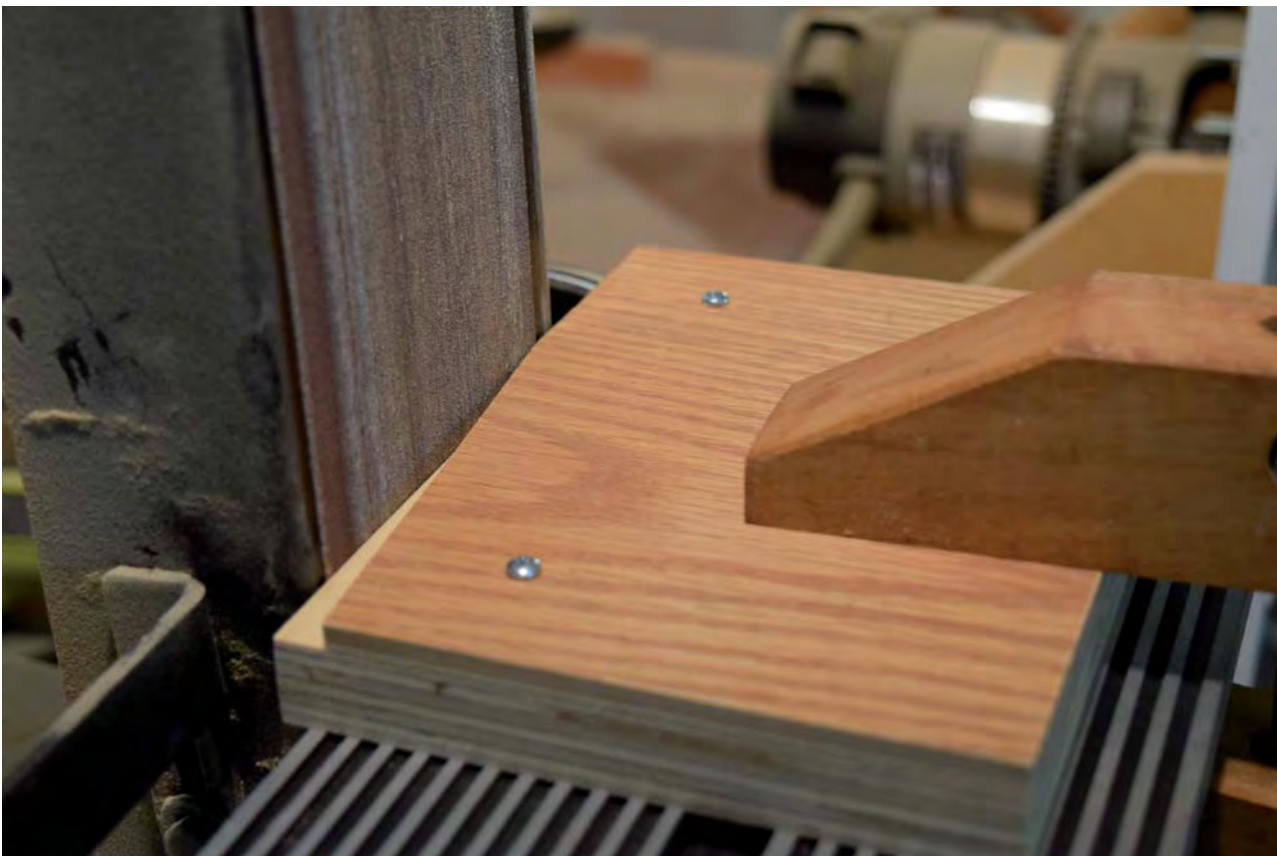
Splitting the material is straight forward with the nodes removed. We can now split much finer strips for tip sections for more efficient use of the cane. Heat treating the strips must be done at this point to prepare for accurate splices. I use the MD fixtures now being sold by Harry Boyd of the Ozark Rod Making School in the USA.

One 5' section of the fixture can be cut into four equal lengths that work perfectly for our nodeless lengths. I bind the strips onto the fixture along with a probe from a digital meat thermometer. This allows very accurate heat treating in a common household oven. No special oven has to be constructed or purchased. Time and temperature of heat treating will depend your cane, age and storing conditions, and local humidity.



Once the strips have been heat treated and cooled, we are ready to cut the scarf joints that will join our sections. The first step is to scrap off the enamel and flatted the strip.

On these narrow strips this will not take much. This flat surface is essential for accurate splices. My jig uses a table belt sander to quickly and easily cut the scarf joint angle.



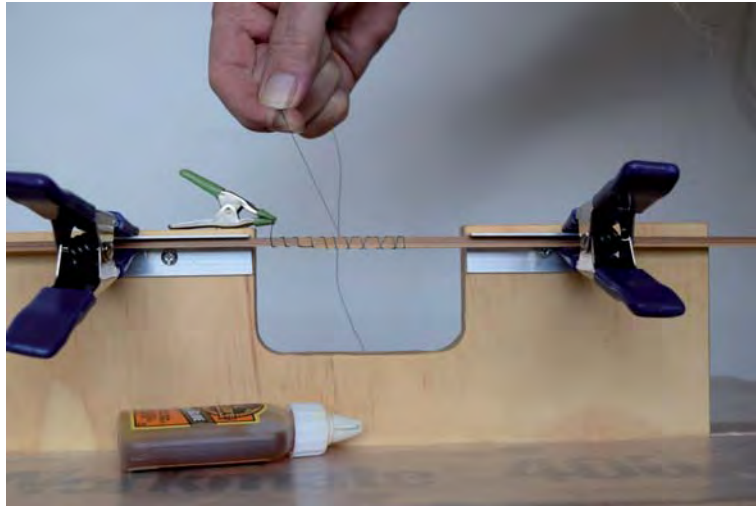
I use a bent-tip forceps to keep the strip aligned on the jig and keep my fingers safe.



Almost all bamboo strips will have a slight 'sweep' curving away from the power fiber surface. My binding jig is adjustable for this 'sweep' and allows the actual joint area to be aligned accurately.



Clamp both sections into the jig and adjust as needed. I use Gorilla Glue for my scarf joints. Lightly moisten, and then apply a thin layer of glue to each joint surface. Wrap each joint tightly with the same binding thread you use on rod sections. Remove the joined sections from the jig and make any necessary final adjustment to ensure the power fiber surfaces are properly aligned. Set aside to dry.



When dry, use the same techniques to join two 'doubled' sections together. Usually four sections will be long enough for a butt or tip section on a rod. Longer rods, of course, will require more sections.

Remove the binding thread and clean up each joint. Now you will proceed with rough and final planing the same as conventional methods. When planing, I totally ignore the direction of the splice and have never had any problems.



I stagger the splices in a 3X3 pattern in each section. Nothing more complex is required.

This is my procedure for nodeless construction of bamboo fly rods. I hope you will try it and decide if it has something to offer you.

You can reach me at: edflyfisher@aol.com





...between legend and truth

by Giorgio Grondona

Among the various topics we face when speaking about rodmaking the positioning of the nodes is, in my view, one of the most divisive for rodmakers, today and since we have begun the making of fishing rods using bamboo sections. The discussions around the nodes are varied, from the "treatment" of the nodes to their positioning in the assembling stage. The theories are plentiful and all worth considering, those from (more or less) detailed studies as well as those that come from "simple" observations or dictated by...personal taste.

In nature the nodes in bamboo are "strengthening" points in the trunk of the plant; without, being a hollow structure, it would become more and more oval until it would collapse under its own weight and/or by the effect of external forces like the wind or the weight of animals that use the plants as shelter or for reproduction. I apologise, I haven't explained that what I'm writing does not want to (and above all cannot) be a mock treatise on Botany.

Agreed, bamboo is a Gramineae but the only Gramineae that I know well is Oats, remember I am a poor donkey...

After this dutiful explanation let's move forward and while we do so the fibres that constitute the plant at the centre of our hobby move upwards and get "knotted" then they move upwards again and get "re-knotted" and so on until the top. All this occurs in a disorderly fashion, the internodal distance increases from the bottom to the top in the bamboo that we are interested in, i.e. *Pseudosasa Amabilis*, for the pleasure who "digests" the nodes with difficulty, but the real disorder is concentrated in the nodal point where the fibres that come from the bottom finish and the ones that move upwards start, this area is not always perfectly orthogonal to the direction of growth of the culm, very often it is positioned slightly obliquely and what is worse, it is not dimensionally homogeneous both in thickness as well as height, with the result that sections of the same node are different in width and consistency.

We are at the first question: heat treatment and crushing or “simple” filing? Gabriele Gori and Marco Orlando Giardina had started giving us the TECHNICAL answer at the 2014 gathering and while we wait for the completion and publication of their study on the matter let us only consider the aesthetic aspect of the two interpretations: a heated and pressed node will be less evident than a filed one (in most cases), as far as the enamel side is concerned, while if we look at the internal surfaces we will see that the nodes are anyway different one from the other even if initially they were positioned at the same level.

Another topic of discussion come from the (presumed?) difficulty to plane the nodes, but if we have levelled them well and we have straightened the strips just as well, there are no problems, any difficulties will need to be sought in an insufficient sharpening of the blades of the plane. Mmhmm....

And for those who use a beveller and hand-mill? We will talk about this another time, for now I want to live quietly, I do not like the idea that someone is tempted to use my flesh for stews and sausages!!!



Leaving food discussion aside, let's talk about staggering although I must frankly say that for all I have read and listened to, I have heard more legends than truth. I'll try to explain: every node on a culm hides a diaphragm, which guarantees a strong point. Indeed, if you look at a Bamboo plant after a snowfall, you will notice that the broken culms have fractures in the portions between the nodes where the weight of the snow has generated an ovalization that has caused that point to collapse. Obviously, for those who do not live in snowy areas, please take my word for it...but if Nature positioned the nodes and relative diaphragms to defend the structure why did someone think of positioning the strips in such a way as to have "staggered" nodal areas?

If, as mentioned before, we have pressed or filed well and planed even better and we build a "solid" rod, the staggering could be useless, but aesthetically I must say it has a certain air about it.

Perhaps on a "blonde" rod it is less noticeable, but on a flamed one, the chiaroscuro effect is intriguing. It is different for hollow-built rods, whether scalloped or fluted because the harder nodal part definitely has a different elastic module from that of the internodal portions, thus "weight distribution" seems useful to reduce the risk of giving, a risk that can actually be cancelled: get equipped to make "nodeless" rods, but if you are like me and this type of building leaves you indifferent, you must resort to staggering and now we are free to choose the motivation, the aesthetics, functionality or both!!!

Second question: which staggering method do we use?

2 / 2 / 2 ???

3 / 3 ???

Garrison type ???

These three methods have been amply "reviewed" with (in my opinion) improbable mathematical calculations to even foresee (hypothesize) the sectioning of the feasible distances...only in the case of Bamboo sections with identical nodes from the base to the tip. Perhaps one day we will get there and it might be the same day that the GMO techniques will be used to cultivate *Pseudosasa Amabilis*, I hope this will never happen. What I have defined as "revision" seem more like attempts to "camouflage" other needs, but I will say more on this in the next issue.

Whichever "staggering" method you decide to use, if it effectively prevents the danger of breakages...only time will tell, the time spent fishing, but undoubtedly you will have, in my opinion, a more beautiful rod. Think of anything made of wood: a beam, the top of a table, the frame of a door, the butt of a rifle and so on; they are pleasant to look at just because they are made of wood, but if the veinings showed the "stain" of some nodes, wouldn't they deserve to be looked despite these...imperfections?!

We are again at the end. Thanks to all those who have had the patience to read these lines and I remind you:

"The braying of a donkey does not go to heaven"!!!







On 5 and 6 September 2015 in the fishing reserve IL GESSO DELLA REGINA in Valdieri (Cuneo), the "6th Alta Valle Gesso Fishing Show" – Memorial Danilo Ottonello was held.

The sports association, already concession holder of the section of Stream Gesso di Valdieri since 2010 and bound by a strong internal friendship, did an excellent job of getting ready for this important weekend to spend with other friends and enthusiasts of what is the climax of events in the fishing year in Alta Valle Gesso.

This year the event was planned with I.B.R.A. (Italian Bamboo Rodmakers Association) that, since 2005, has gathered in May on the Tiber of Borgo S. Sepolcro (Arezzo) for the "European Bamboo Rodmakers Gathering", a world-famous event for enthusiastic fishermen and bamboo rodmakers.

This was the first occasion to organise the "1st Bamboo Fishing Show" in Northern Italy: special guests of the event were Giorgio Grondona, rodmaker I.B.R.A. and founder of IL GESSO DELLA REGINA, and Alberto Poratelli, rodmaker, founder and President of I.B.R.A.

The event involved using bamboo rods on the river, with an evening workshop lesson in the councilors' hall in the Municipality of Valdieri, starting with the history of American and English rodmakers (by Angelo Droetto) and the constructive technique of the rods (by Alberto Poratelli and Gabriele Gori, Honorary President of I.B.R.A.).

Many friends from the I.B.R.A. establishment from all over Italy were there (in addition to those already mentioned, Silvano Sanna, organiser of the I.B.R.A. events and Massimo Giuliani, I.B.R.A. councillor), Fabrizio Stefanini President of U.N.Pe.M., Maxime Prevedello as representative of "T.O.S." (Trout, Ombre and Salmon), old club in Geneva, a delegation from the reserve on the Stura di Masone of the "S.P.S. Masone" it too dedicated to Danilo Ottonello, a delegation from "Bormida Fly Angler's" from Savona.

Our old friends, Renato Grasso, Daniele Sobrero and Paolo Levaggi (founders of IL GESSO DELLA REGINA) were also present.

We took this occasion of the Memorial to put up a notice board on the Nursery Stream of the reserve, a project made possible with the funds of the association as well as the funds of the European Union (PSR funds Piedmont Region for the rural development on the territorial GAL* bid for the IMPROVEMENT OF TOURIST RECEPTION BY ENHANCING TERRITORIAL PECULIARITIES. The title of the winning project was: "A nursery stream for the conservation and increase of water biodiversity in the Gesso Stream and for the tourist enhancement of sport fishing"), with the direction of G.R.A.I.A. ("Management and Environmental Research Fishing Water" of Varese).

The Council Member of the Mountain and Parks department of the Piedmont region, Dr. Alberto Valmaggia as well as the Mayor of Valdieri, Emanuel Parracone participated at the event.

During the two days we also spoke about another important initiative that was delivered in February 2016: a complex infrastructural tourist project INTERREG/ALCOTRA ITALY - FRANCE of the 2014-2020 programme in the "Environmental and tourist enhancement of alpine water ambiances through sustainable sports fishing" that involves the creation of an international fishing circuit in natural environments on two water webs and on lakes (even on artificial hydroelectric basins) of the Gesso Stream basin in Alta Valle Gesso of the Municipality of Valdieri - area Alcotra CUNEO/Piedmont (Italy) and of the basin of the Roja Stream in Alta Valle Roja in the municipality of Tenda - area Alcotra Region PACA/Alpes-Maritimes (France).

Coordinators of the event (and the reserve) are Simone Ardigò with Enrico Gallina (President of "Pesca Promotion ASD") who manage the sections in concession.

The success of the event is stimulating the association to plan new initiatives with I.B.R.A. and who knows? Perhaps the interreg/Alcotra dossier initiative will be a chance to organise a new party in the near future and to dedicated a new space to the making of Bamboo rods under the directions of our friends from I.B.R.A.....we hope and believe in it ...

See your soon in Alta Valle Gesso!!!!!!

For information on the reserve IL GESSO DELLA REGINA www.flyfishingvaldieri.it or phone Simone Ardigò (347 0554683)

*Italian acronym for Grandi Autonomie e Libertà (Great Autonomies and Freedom)



PHOTOS FIRST DAY



Enrico Gallina (President of the "Pesca Promotion ASD", concession holder of IL GESSO DELLA REGINA), Emanuel Parracone (Mayor of Valdieri), Simone Ardigò, Alberto Valmaggia (C.Ir Mountain and Parks Piedmont Region), Ivan Di Giambattista (C.Ir Municipality of Valdieri) – photo by Luca Gosso



Formal photo of the inauguration of the notice board on the nursery stream. With the Ottonello family (Founding member of the reserve to whom the stream is dedicated), as well as the guard Serse Congiu and Renato Grasso – photo by Luca Gosso



Detail of the notice board on the nursery stream – photo by Simone Ardigò



Fabrizio Stefanini (President of U.N.Pe.M.), Angelo Droetto, Alberto Poratelli (President of I.B.R.A.) and Simone Ardigò posing with the anti-cormorant profile of the Fishing House – photo by Simone Ardigò



Renato Grasso (Honorary Member, Founder and Art Director of IL GESSO DELLA REGINA) with Angelo Droetto in front of the notice board of IL GESSO DELLA REGINA – photo by Simone Ardigò



Ivano Rovigo, Silvano Sanna (manager of I.B.R.A. events), Marco Diani (member of IL GESSO DELLA REGINA and of "Bormida Fly Angler's") and Louis Comanducci (Alta Val Roya) – photo by Simone Ardigò



Gabriele Gori (Honorary President of I.B.R.A.) with Massimo Giuliani (I.B.R.A. Councillor) – photo by Simone Ardigò



Gabriele Gori with Giorgio Grondona (I.B.R.A. rodmaker and founder of IL GESSO DELLA REGINA) joking in front of the Fishing House of IL GESSO DELLA REGINA – photo by Simone Ardigò



View of fishing moments at the event on the Gesso Stream from the Fishing House – photo by Simone Ardigò



Alberto Poratelli at the evening workshop held in the councillors' hall of the Municipality of Valdieri at the chair during a lesson on the constructive technique of bamboo rods – photo by Simone Ardigò



"Lectio Magistralis" by Angelo Droetto on the history of American and English rodmakers – photo by Simone Ardigò



Some strong "pieces" shown by Angelo Droetto at the workshop – photo by Simone Ardigò



An audience concentrating during the evening – photo by Simone Ardigò

PHOTOS SECOND DAY



Fabio Romanello talks about his thesis on "Macrobenthic Fauna of the Gesso Stream" carried out in the studies with the "Department of Earth Sciences, Environment and Life" of the University of Genoa – photo by Simone Ardigò



The hydrobiologist, Fabio Romanello's workbench – photo by Simone Ardigò



The ticket for the handing out and use of bamboo rods for the two-day event – photo by Simone Ardigò



Final farewell of the organisers of the two-day event who enjoyed organising it in detail together confident they will be able to organise more days like these with even richer stimuli and ideas!!!! See you next time– photo by Simone Ardigò



Not everyone fished well done!!!!!! – photo by Simone Ardigò





Foreword

It has probably happened to everyone to be out on the river, far from the car and to find that your rod is not suitable to fish the way you would like in a certain spot. The reasons could be many: you started on the dry and suddenly out of the blue the fish stop rising and they are feeding on nymphs or vice versa, or the stream after a long stretch widens or narrows, perhaps it goes from deep to shallow with fast waters or it goes to a depth of a couple of meters with slow waters. Perhaps you are fishing an Alpine stream which sudden flows out from a beautiful mountain lake.

But the fact is that we have only one rod and the one that could be suitable is in the car trunk an hours hike away or even worse ...at home or at the lodge (for those lucky ones that can spend a week out fishing!)

In these situations, many of us would like a Palù telescopic rod! But we only have our bamboo rod that is not very useful when the conditions change.

Alberto Poratelli

It is just about this that Moreno Borriero and I discussed at the gathering in Sansepolcro. Moreno Borriero feels this problem a lot more than I do because he fishes a lot more. We discussed that some graphite rods have the possibility to be lengthened or shortened by adding or removing a section but we did not have any news about something similar with bamboo rods.

So we decided. Let's make a rod with these characteristics.....it is necessary!



From here we started a period of research to understand if it is possible to make a rod like this, which would have good characteristics in more than one configurations. We spent a lot of time studying a taper that would be suitable and personally this help me to have a better understanding of how much a rod changes by varying the length even by little. Perhaps we do not realize it, but even a slight variation in length has a great influence on the action of the rod.

The project.

We studied a rod that could be used in two different lengths.

1. - 7'6" for a 4 weight line – a typical dry fly rod. Not too short and not too long and with a medium weight line.
2. - 9'0" for a 3 weight line to be used as a nymph rod when necessary.

So the rod would be composed of two pieces which in total would be 90" long and a third piece of 18" which would bring the rod to 108". This third piece could be carried in a fly vest without creating any impediments and the 18" which are around 45cm seemed the right length.

So assuming that a nymph rod must be quite rigid in the butt and very sensitive in the tip in order to feel the take, clearly the 2-piece configuration should have been very tippy with a very stiff butt and a very thin tip.

Another issue we were confronted with was the position of the ferrules because in the three-piece configuration the two ferrule would be very close – exactly 18" apart and above all it needed to be positioned in such a way that they would not be too big. Naturally we designed the rod for both bamboo ferrules and traditional nickel silver ones too.

Third and final problem was the number and position of the guides that needed to take the extra midsection into account.

Having said this the approach was to design the rods in both configurations as if it were a one-piece rod without initially considering the position of the ferrules.

For the design process we used the Garrison method and RodDna Designer by Larry Tusoni (thank you Larry!) and as a starting point we used a perfectly conical 7' 6" taper with a constant slope and derived from:

- 1) taper at station 0" 1,45mm
- 2) taper at the end of the butt section 10,03mm

The section under the grip and under the reel seat was defined as untapered and with a dimension of 10.03mm.

Having done this, we modulated the dimensions at the various stations, trying to achieve a rod with an accentuated tip action.

Then the taper for the 7'6" rod produced a stress curve that seemed suitable to our requirements, it was just the case to define the position of the ferrule which needed to be sufficient to accommodate the ferrule of the 18" section (which would be untapered of course) but not too big to have a ferrule that would be unwieldy. Let's say that if we are discussing a NS ferrule, it should not be larger than 13/64".

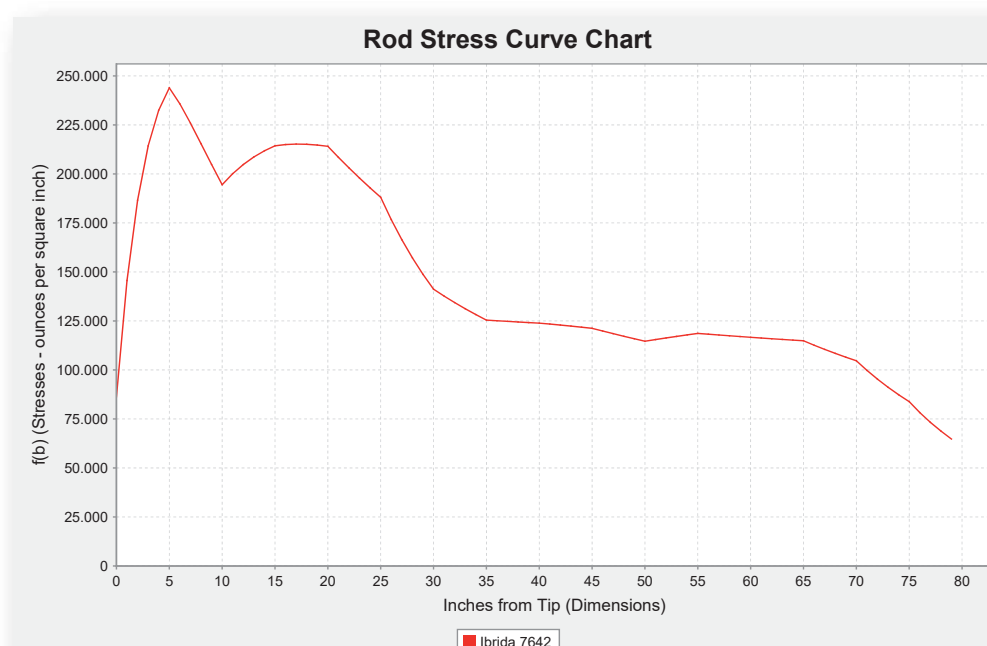
It was therefore determined to have the section cut at 40" where the taper is 5mm – which we felt to be a congruous size for the project.

In the two-piece configuration, the butt section is 50" while the tip is 40" long.

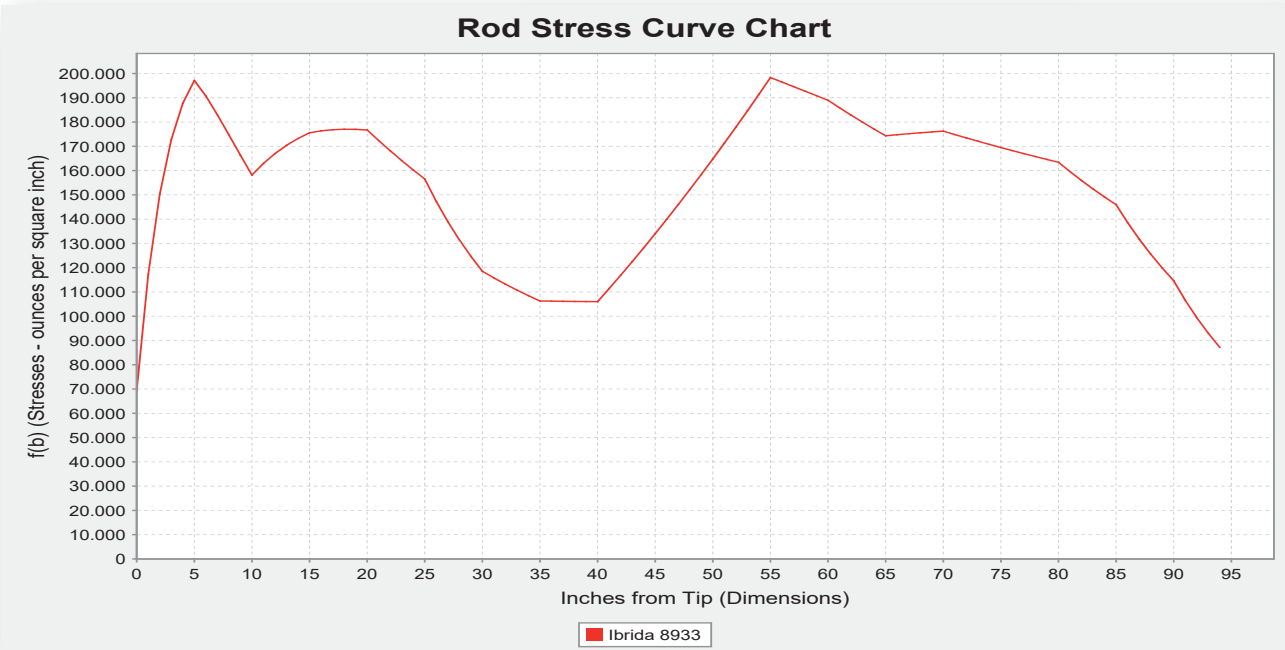
At this point all that was needed was to "simply" add an 18" midsection at station 40"; a mid that in theory was untapered because the ferrule needed to be same size as the one on the butt section. Here is where the bamboo ferrules were a great help because even in this short section, because even for this short midsection the could be a taper. Unfortunately, this is not possible with traditional NS ferrule.

We said "simply" in the paragraph above but it was not at all simple because by adding a midsection you vary the stress curve in the butt section. We modified the taper over and over until we reached the parameters we required (again we thank Larry Tusoni because without his hardware this would have been a difficult task).

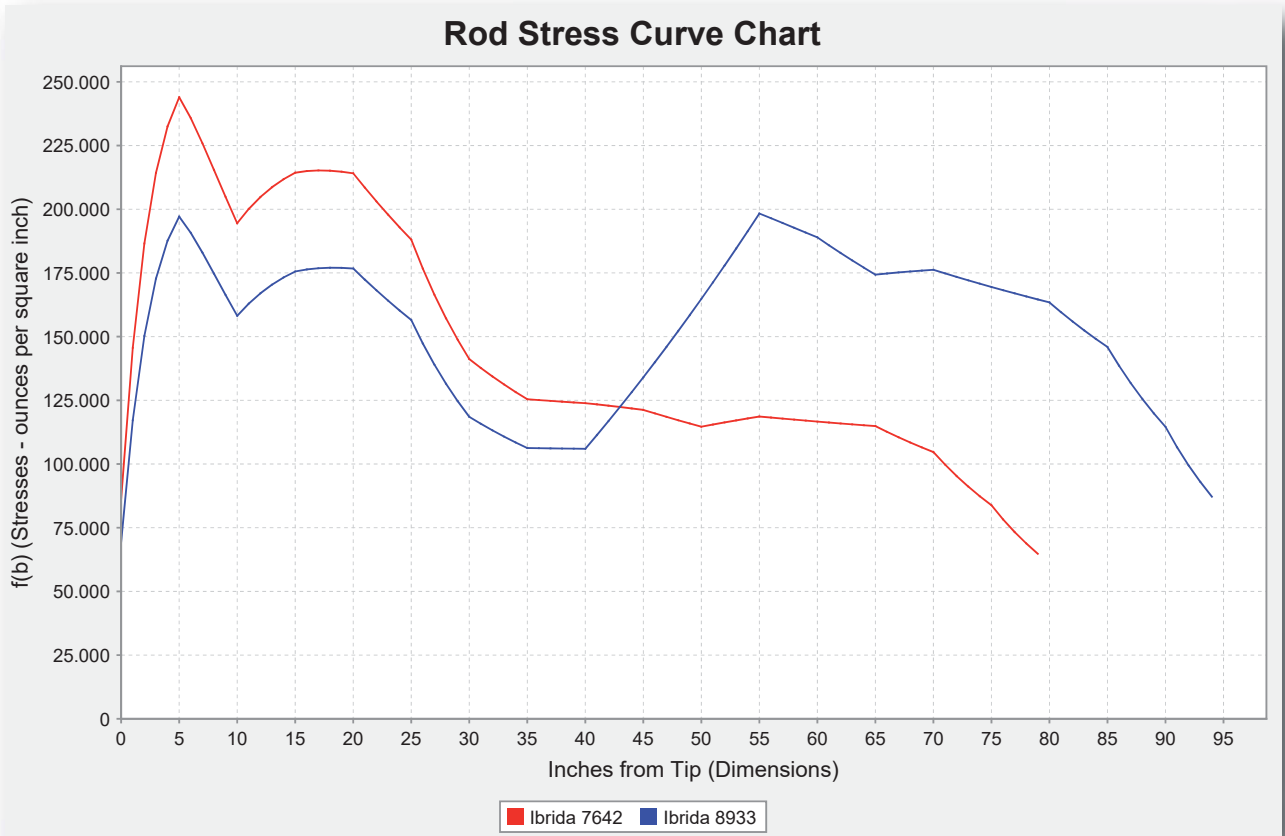
Below is the stress curve of the rod in the 7'6" configuration for #4



The stress curve of the rod 9'0" configuration for #3



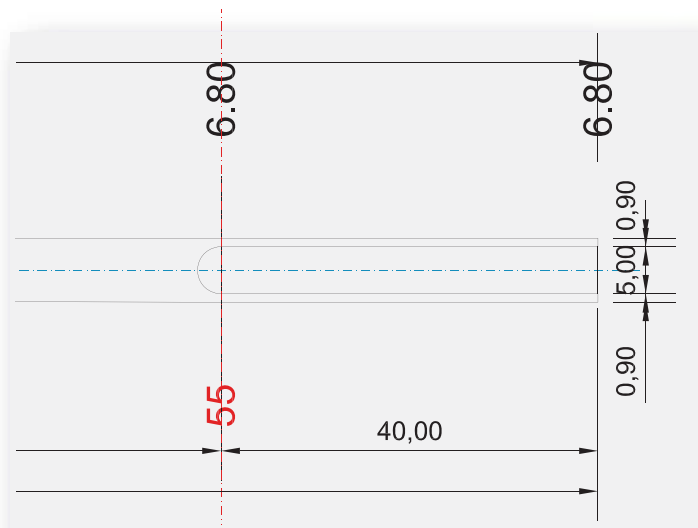
The comparison of the two:



In reality, the lengths of the two rods are not exactly those indicated but they are around 5mm less for the two piece and around 9mm less in the three-piece configuration. This is because when we decided the final design, we decided to reduce the bamboo ferrules to 40 mm instead of 50,8mm so that their influence in the 3-piece configuration would be minimal. For the version with NS ferrules for the same reason we decided for truncated ones.

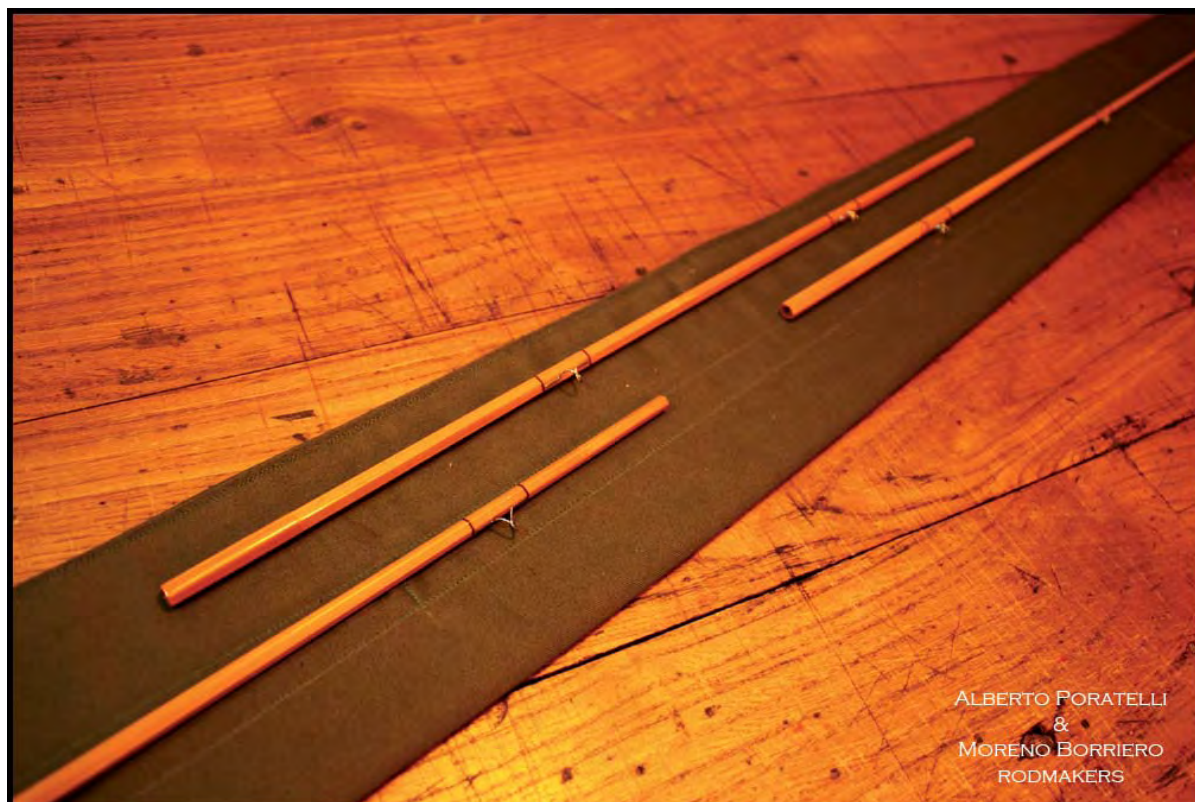
For the guide spacing we decided to proceed the normal way (at least for us) by attaching them temporarily with tape and checking the line followed the rod curvature in the best way. Since the tip is so fine, the fixed points were:

- the first guide should be quite close to the tip top
- the first three guides quite close to each other too



Up to here we have discussed what was behind the design of the "Hybrid rod".

I tried this rod in both configurations and I am satisfied...but since I am not so good at casting and I consider myself an average fisherman, I will leave Moreno Borriero (who can cast very well) the task to describe the action and his sensations.





Moreno Borriero

I will not go into the design phase, which was excellently covered by Alberto Poratelli, without whom I would never have been able to finish. I will speak about my impressions concerning the action and utility in fishing.

First I would like to tell you how I thought of this project. I was fishing on the Piave in Perarolo and on the Ansiei with a dear friend, Tiziano Natali, who is the Vice President of my club, Friends of Fly.

Those who know me know that I do not like the dark side, having been taught to fish in times when fishing under was not looked upon very well. I want to reassure you, though, that I have nothing against it, I just prefer dry fly fishing. That said, sometimes when there is no activity on the surface, I mount a nymph and perhaps two if it is allowed. I must say that since I have been building rods, this technique has become very tough because you cannot go underwater with a short rod. Going back to my fishing outing, it was very hot and there was no activity on the surface. My friend Tiziano, on the contrary, was catching one fish after another...fishing underwater. Although I was obstinately trying with the nymphs, I was practically fishing under my feet. Eventually I swallowed my pride and mounted a strike indicator and a small nymph. I caught about twenty trout.

It was then that I remembered that some graphite rod brands have the possibility to be lengthened if necessary. On the way back, Tiziano and I discussed it and it seemed a good idea. I then spoke about it with Alberto at the last gathering. We looked at some tapers and the first idea of a hybrid rod was born – dry fly/nymph. Alberto built the version with bamboo ferrules and I the one with nickel silver ferrules.

Unfortunately, the bad weather has prevented me from fishing with them; I have only tried them on a lawn.

The two-piece configuration is really strong, precise and quick. A very marked but delicate tip action. It allows for long and short casts indifferently. Actually, a bomb. Perhaps not what one expects from a bamboo rod, but constructive demands have lead us to make it like this. I did not notice any major differences between the bamboo and nickel silver ferrules, not in weight or action. I used truncated ferrules to reduce to a maximum the influence of the ferrule.

In the three-piece version, the one with metal ferrules is a little slower. Consider that in 15" there are two ferrules, so more mass in the central part. The action of the version with bamboo inserts is more regular. In fact, the midsection has a taper, while the one with metal inserts is level. In any case, both versions have a much slower action, the rods with a #4 line cast well, both in short and long distances.

Now the verdict passes to the expert casters. Naturally there is room for improvement but I think it was a successful project.





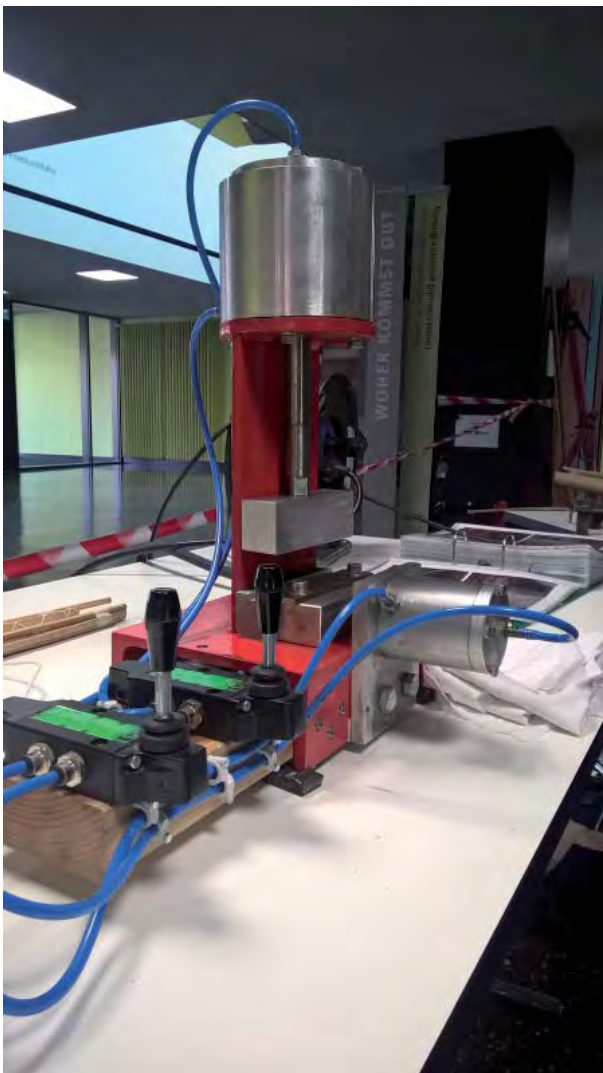
8TH EUROPEAN RODMAKERS GATHERING 2016 SARNEN, SWITZERLAND



ITALIAN BAMBOO RODMAKERS ASSOCIATION













Diane Michelin

Diane Michelin is a professional watercolour artist since 1990. She was born in Montreal and currently resides in Nanoose Bay on Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

Diane has exhibited in numerous events across Canada and her artworks are on display in many public locations and private collections throughout Canada, the United States and in Europe and Asia.

This is what she said of her artistic work: "my watercolours describe the essence of fly fishing as told by exotic paraphernalia, rusty pick up trucks, fishin' dogs and snazzy tackle. The story is about optimism, bits of fur and feathers, solitude and companionship. Each day on the river is notable in the mist off the water or the misadventure of the moment. Consequently, I am inclined to depict the everyday aspect of our passion amid the complexity of the water, light and colour. For it is this that fuels us in our inordinate conservation commitments and the nonstop chatter in the fly shop."

If you like to see more of her watercolours have a look to
www.dianemichelin.com
or also to
<https://www.facebook.com/diane.michelin>



IBRA AT MASONE LABYRINTH OF FONTANELATO



IBRA AT WEST VALLEY FLY FISHING OF CHIALAMBERTO





GROUP OF GATHERING 2016

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