

Flying the Flag; Chris Clemes bamboo rods

Name a game angler who wouldn't want a hand built, personally designed and constructed, traditionally made to order fly rod? No, we couldn't either so it was very exciting to find out more about what professional rod builder Chris Clemes had to offer.....

Chris Clemes Fly Rod and Reel Makers of England began life around five years ago. Chris considered that some of the skills and heritage of traditional rod building were being lost and so pulled together some of the finest craftsmen in the country to continue traditional methods of working and to preserve much of the heritage of methods past. The company now employs some of England's finest third generation bamboo rod makers and reel makers and has five concessions at some of the most prestigious fishing and shooting establishments in the United Kingdom and the United States.

So what makes Chris Clemes rods so special? Renowned for the Symphony and Harmony range of rods, each rod is a commission work. Customers can expect an interview and casting demonstration to find out what is required to design the perfect casting tool. Amongst custom options, length, taper, weight, action, grip, number of sections and many other things are all considered before an order is placed and it is not unusual to see customers casting in Green Park or St. James Park in London and debating the attributes of the rods as they compare bamboo rods with a modern carbon example!

Chris explained to T&G just what makes him tick; "There are very few traditional split cane rodmakers left in Britain, but with a groundswell of interest in their handcrafted rods and reels, there is a resurgence in demand and appreciation for what they do. At Chris Clemes Split Cane Rods, all our efforts go into revitalizing this cottage industry. Whether by ensuring with our apprenticeship model that there is a transfer of skills for the legacy of these artisans to continue, or by accessing modern marketplaces to bring our products to fly fishing purists worldwide, we are focused on bringing business to these rodmakers and reviving a forgotten art."

The team take great pride in preserving older techniques; unlike many other companies, splitting and planing the bamboo is still done by hand and each individually built rod can take seventy hours or more of manual labour to complete with a lead time of three to four months. Each rod is hand finished with quality fittings and subtle wrappings to make each one special and is presented in a powder coated aluminium rod tube for stylish safekeeping. Custom leather rod tubes are also available to accompany each order...

Customers can also twin their new rod with an exquisite handmade reel from the Chris Clemes Maestro collection. Turned from solid bar aluminium, nickel silver and naval brass, the gun screws, pillars and bridge are constructed from solid nickel silver set within an anodized gun metal frame and a number of optional extras are available in each limited edition production run. Each Maestro is constructed to

balance the given weight of line and harmonize perfectly with the customers rod, and, as expected is beautifully offered in wooden presentation reel case. The perfect 'additional extra' would be to take advantage of a Cadno Silk flyline by Chris Tod which is custom made to order and suited individually to each rod/reel combination. The lines take two weeks to spin and cure, but can last up to ten years of properly cared for and form an attractive option when ordering.

For more information, visit www.chrisclemes.co.uk or call 02081230349