

ROD BUILDING

BY LARRY LEE

Rod Building 101— Why Build Your Own Fly Rod?

This is the first article (of what we hope becomes many) of the Rod Building Corner. The purpose of the Rod Building Corner is to help CFFU members in advancing the art of their own rod building and to educate non-building members of what goes into the building of fly rods. We hope you enjoy these articles, and we welcome any thoughts and ideas these Rod Building Corner articles may generate. Please contact Larry Lee at 916-962-0616, email: larry-lee@L3rods.com if you would like to see an article on a topic that would be interesting to others.

Why Build Your Own Fly Rod?

Such a simple question generates many answers. Some answers involve logical reasons such as saving money or building the rod that meets your specific performance standard for a specific application. Other answers may revolve around more abstract, philosophical, psychological, or emotional-based reasons such as a psychic flash into a dream of catching a huge fish on a special rod. Whatever your reasons, the satisfaction of constructing of your own rod can be immense and fulfilling. It is probably identical to the feeling one gets by tying one's own flies and catching fish on them. Those new rods, with all of their different looks and feels, can be an extension of your own creative expression, and more importantly, catch

fish. It can also be worthwhile passing rod building skills on to others, and watching new rod builders enjoy themselves learning new skills that encourage their own ideas.

When building one's own rod, the builder will have to address many details regarding the type of fly rod to construct. One rod will never be adequate to fit all situations because of the huge variety of fishing conditions in which one can find oneself. Rods come in different lengths, number of segments, line weights, rod weights, material stiffness, blank colors, guide sizes (with different colors), reel seat types and colors, handle configurations types, etc. Some basic questions an anglers should ask themselves when deciding what type of rod to build are: What kind of fish and size do you want to catch (i.e. bass, trout, salmon, marlin, dorado, tarpon, etc.)? What type of water are you planning on fishing (i.e. small creeks, large rivers, lakes, ocean, etc.)? What rod break down size for easy transport to the fishing location is needed? What types of flies are going to be used (i.e. how big, weighted, dry or wet)? How much money and time are you willing to spend on your rod?

The ultimate decision to build your own fly rod is completely yours, but once you've made it, the excitement of building something from scratch, the thrill of catching the first fish, and the envy of your friends and family because they know what it takes to make one, just can't be compared.

The next scheduled CFFU rod building class will be held in Fall 2005. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Larry Lee at 916-962-0616, or

email: larrylee@L3rods.com.