

## **Rod Building 109D** **Two-Handed or Spey Fly Rods**

By Larry Lee

This is the fourth article in a series about building two-handed fly rods (also called Spey rods). This month we cover guide spacing and selection of handles and reel seats. The next article will discuss selection of reels and fly lines for the two-handed fly rods.

### **Guide Spacing for Two-handed Rods**

Guide spacing for two-handed rods varies from manufacturer to manufacturer, so there is an opportunity for you to be a little creative, if you so desire. In general, fewer guides per running foot are used than one-handed fly rods. For example, one-handed fly rods use approximately 10 guides (excluding tip-top) for a 9'-0" rod, while most 8'-0" rods will use 9 guides (excluding tip-top). Two-handed fly rods will use 10 to 11 guides (excluding tip-top) for a 12'-6" up to a 14'-0" length rod. There is usually also a longer distance between guides on the two-handed fly rods.

Most two-handed rods have the first stripping guide approximately 36" above the bottom of the rod. With this information, you can space the guides in a proportional manner. Simple mathematical formulas have been developed for proportional guide spacing, but it is beyond the scope of this article to discuss them or their derivation. If you are interested in learning about them in more detail, feel free to contact me or refer to The New Advanced Custom Rod Building by Dale P. Clemens, page 194. If you are only interested in the numbers, the following web site provides a calculator for a couple of good methods (you supply the length, number of guides, and length of first guide to tip top): <http://www.uwm.edu/~stetzer/guideN.html>.

For most casts with a two-handed rod, the line does not really slide back and forth as much in the guides as with a one-handed rod. The caster mostly uses casting techniques that work with 75 feet to 100 feet or more of line that is literally out past the tip-top. This being the case, over-sized guides will not help you cast greater distances.

### **Reel Seats and Cork Grips**

Two-handed rods use a fore-grip and a rear-grip made of a good quality cork or custom handles using composite cork with exotic woods (see photo showing custom made grips). The rear grip is located at the bottom of the rod and is approximately 5 1/2" to 6" in length. The fore grip is located above the reel seat and is approximately 12" to 13 1/2" in length. Both fore grip and rear grip lengths can be made to your own length, diameter and style preference, or you can purchase good quality pre-made cork grips.



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Reel seats used for two-handed rods can be larger in diameter and longer than those for one-handed rods. For example, the reel seats shown (see picture of pre-made cork handles and reel seats) have an inside diameter of  $\frac{3}{4}$ " to accommodate the larger blank diameters. These reel seats are also longer (approximately  $4 \frac{3}{4}$ ") to accommodate large reels required to hold large diameter fly lines needed for two-handed casting. The reel seats are also equipped with two locking rings so the reel will not come loose. Reel seats can be placed either direction based on your preference.

In the next article of this series about two-handed fly rods, we will discuss the selection of reels and line sizes. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact me at [LLLee@L3rods.com](mailto:LLLee@L3rods.com) or telephone at (916) 962-0616.