

Rod Construction *by Lee Green*



The construction of a Stalker Outfitters custom fishing rod is preformed meticulously. The process involves several steps from the original design to the final coat of epoxy. Each phase ensures that every Stalker Outfitter custom rod is the highest quality and most advanced design available in the world today.

The first step is design. A rod must have a specific intended species or style of fishing in mind for it's initial design, however the end result will be a product that has multiple uses. The style regarding "conventional", "spin", "IGFA Troll", "stand-up", etc. is decided in this stage as well. Tip action and power also comes into play in the design phase. Cosmetics and overall appearances are the final step in this first process.

Component selection is an extremely crucial factor in the overall quality of the product. The blank is the platform on which the rod will become perfection. The correct blank selection will ensure proper bait presentation, feel, hook set, and fish landing ability. Many factors play a role in choosing a blank. It is important to prioritize these factors in order to achieve the desired goal. The first and most obvious choice is pressure range or line class. Weight, sensitivity, and action are usually second on our

list. Power to flex pattern will ensure proper hook setting ability as well as bait presentation. Taper and tip action will also affect these characteristics. For example, sensitivity and weight are crucial on a live bait rod for sail fishing, but quite inconsequential on an IGFA trolling rod. Another example would be in the case of an offshore stand up rod. A fast tip action will help reduce the stress on the angler, but too light of a tip will not provide a good hook set. In many cases, we will tune the blank by cutting a section from the top and the bottom to deliver the action that we are trying to achieve. Because many of our rod series are available in multiple line classes, we are adamant that the action is identical from rod to rod within a series. At Stalker Outfitter's we utilize a vast variety of blanks to guarantee this uniformity. We never use one blank to build multiple line class rods. In order to make a series of rods in, three sizes, for example, we require three different blanks with identical tapers. We would never take a 30 lb. blank, cut the top to make it a 50 lb. blank, then cut it again to make it an 80 lb.. blank. Although maintaining this inventory is a costly process, we consider it an investment in perfection and quality, which is one of the many factors that separates Stalker Outfitter's Custom Rods from all others.

The next choice in components is guide style and placement. Once the style is chosen, the placement is measured based on flex pattern and symmetry. Proper line clearance and cosmetic appearance must be achieved in this stage. The type of reel seat, grips and butt are determined. These choices are based on the usage, which was decided in the first step of the process.

Component preparation is next on the list. Guide feet are ground, to ensure a perfect fit. The blank is measured and ruffed wherever epoxy will come in contact. The blank is also tested to determine the

natural bend and placement of the reel seat and guides. Once everything is ready, the rod can be glued and set aside to cure.

Each guide is now ready to be tied onto the blank. Under most circumstances a single wrap is put on the blank, which includes the decorative inlay. The guides are put into position, and two layers of thread hold it in place. The length of each wrap is predetermined based on the size of the guide and the overall appearance we are trying to achieve. The decorative base wrap is the last step of the wrapping process. The final step is a three coat epoxy system. Each coat is carefully applied and a full 24 hours are allotted for curing between each coat. This curing process assures that the clarity and longevity of our epoxy will last to its maximum potential.

The steps that we take to build a custom fishing rod that bears the Stalker Outfitter's name are second to none. Every rod we produce is subject to this process from beginning to end. The extra effort that we make is reflected in our final product. We have tremendous pride in all of our products and our impeccable customer satisfaction is testimony to our quality. Heighten your next fishing experience with Stalker Outfitter's Custom Fishing rods.

