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ITALIAN BAMBOO RODMAKERS ASSOCIATION

In this number

- page 3 Editorial
by Maurizio Cardamone
- page 5 IBRA 2015 Rodmaking Course
by Matteo Cadonà
- page 13 It all started with ...
by Angelo Droetto
- page 18 Save the varnish!
by Alberto Poratelli
- page 25 The Masone labyrinth
by Maurizio Cardamone
- page 44 World Champions fish with bamboo too
by Davide Fiorani
- page 57 Hemingway
by Giovanni Nese
- page 60 Set the software
by Gabriele Gori
- page 66 Cutting the blank of a 3-piece rod
by Massimo Giuliani
- page 74 Reflections ... from the dunce's desk
Ethics and Föhn...etics
by Giorgio Grondona



Bamboo Journal n. 16 - aprile 2016

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Front cover:	Marzio Giglio, the dean of Italian Rodmakers
Foto on page 2:	Image from the European Gathering 2015
Foto on page 80:	The gorges of the Liro River in Valchiavenna

EDITORIAL

I was afraid I would need a magic wand for this issue. Yes, I would have needed it to make some articles appear for the Bamboo Journal.

The collaboration proposals, above all on the technical subjects were lacking (and this is a playful reprimand to all the readers that are not the usual serial writers). I cannot believe that in Italy, the rest of Europe and the world there is nothing new or interesting, some constructive experience, some method you have experimented, a trick you have discovered, that you do not wish to share with your rodmaker friends on the Bamboo Journal!

Despite this "vocational crisis" here is number 16. The articles did arrive and they are many in the end. You will find funny and anecdotal stories, hints of "fishing" culture and very interesting technical notes.

This issue of the BJ sees the beginning of a hopefully long collaboration with Angelo Droetto (who will also be a guest at the May gathering). Angelo started fly fishing almost 50 years ago. To satisfy his curiosity he turned to (not only) the world of fly fishing in the USA. He has had epistolary contact and in many cases he has met people like Charles Ritz, George Grant, Paul Jorgensen, Lee Wulff, Hoagy Carmichael, Bill Cushner, Walter Brunner. Over the years he has collected an impressive number of catalogues, magazines, books, correspondence, as well as flies, rods and reels. He will, from this issue, begin to share with us everything he knows (and he knows a lot) about the history of fly fishing and its connection with the world of bamboo. I find these stories really fascinating.

Along the same lines as his memories, in this issue there is a personal story that is linked to a very famous name: Hemingway, by Giovanni Nese. I think it will make you smile.

The traditional report on the IBRA construction course (2015 edition) is written by Matteo Cadonà. Matteo is only 17 and thus the youngest participant ever to attend our courses. In his case I don't think there is a father, an uncle or a grandfather that precociously taught him the art of the plane. He has been fly fishing for four years. He also started self-taught, building flies and now rods too: well done, Matteo, keep up the good work!

An article by Davide Fiorani describes a very special fishing outing with none other than Valerio Santi Amantini. In addition to an amusing story, Davide shows us a spectacular river and views: the Monte Avic park and the Chalamy river, in Valle d'Aosta.

Along with the "stories" and "general culture" from your dear editor an account of a pleasant visit to the "Masone Labyrinth". Read it and you will understand the connection of this magical place to the Bamboo Journal!

Giorgio Grondona offers us a new chapter of his "Reflections from the dunce's desk". It could provoke a debate...

Then there are the technical articles: in the first one Alberto Poratelli shares his trick to save and conserve varnish. For anyone who does not have a massive production of rods, it could be a solution.

Gabriele Gori offers us an article at the same level as his previous contributions to the Bamboo Journal: here he deals with a specific, but quite important aspect of the setup of various softwares to calculate the taper with his usual engineering precision.

"Last but not least" the calculation method for a perfect cut of 3-piece rods successfully implemented by Massimo Giuliani on a calculation sheet. This Excel sheet will be available to the members in their reserved area on the IBRA website, as will be the one shown by Gabriele Gori.

Finally, I wish to mention and thank Sergio Berti, who took the beautiful photos on the interposing pages. I would also like to collectively thank all the writers who have contributed to this issue. I am certain you will enjoy reading it and find a lot of interesting and new information.

I hope to meet many readers at the next IBRA gathering, which has its poster in this spring issue as usual!

Maurizio Cardamone





Sergio Berti Fly Fisherman - Marco Sbizzera Photographer

IBRA 2015 Rodmaking Course

by Matteo Cadonà

Editor's note:

Matteo is very young and approaching rodmaking: read about him in the editorial.



Premise

I was introduced to IBRA last summer, when I met Argeo Babbi, during a fishing weekend on the Sava Bohinjka. Chatting with Argeo, he told me he was a rodmaker and he showed me his bamboo rods and told me about this branch of fly fishing. During the day Argeo, out of the goodness of his heart, let me try one on the river. It was love at first sight: its action, its strength and its aesthetic fascination. After fishing, we started talking about my opinion, if I liked it and he spoke about IBRA: what it is, the courses it holds and the gatherings. Argeo also invited me to sign up for the course, but warned me that it would have been difficult to be accepted for the 2015 one, because there was already a long list of willing participants. Nonetheless, I tried and I was lucky.

The course

For the IBRA association this was the ninth course and it was held at Podere Violino in Sansepolcro, in the province of Arezzo. It lasted three days, from 27th to 29th November and there were six students (as the previous years).

The first morning was divided in a meeting and a theory lesson. They explained what we would do in the course and how it was organised; the bamboo (what it is, where it comes from, how to work with it and its history); the rod we would build (a 7' hexagonal for a 4 line in two pieces) and finally, very important, the safety norms. The afternoon was about the practical side: we were given the culms we would work with, they explained that with the distal part, we would make the butt, while the upper part is used for the tip. Then we split the culm in pieces with a splitting knife. Then there was the staggering of the nodes, an important operation, to avoid having 2 consecutive nodes next to each other. The next phase is the treatment, node dressing and straightening of the strip, to straighten the irregular fibres around the nodes. This for me was the hardest and most boring part of all. We heated the bamboo until it was almost plastic with a thermal gun, to then be able to straighten it. The first day of work ended with the heating of the part of bamboo with the node, then we put it in a vise to straighten it and finally we sanded it smooth, without protrusions. The first day ended and it was harder work than I had imagined.



The second day was, for me, lighter than the previous one. We planed the strip on the wooden planing form, first at 90° and then at 60°. When this was done, we tied them together: the butt ones in one group and the tip ones in the other and then tempered them in an oven at 187°C for 7 minutes. After 3 and a half minutes, we turned them, to give the rod a uniform colour. The tempering brings about chemical physical changes to the bamboo, it removes the water and sugars from the fibres. Then we set the iron planing form with a comparator, according to the taper diagram and then planed again until we obtained the final strips. We then glued the butt strips together and then did the same with the tip strips. We applied glue with a brush, spreading it along the strips. We tied them and put them in the oven at the same temperature and for the same length of time as before. We untied them and used fine sandpaper to remove the excess glue, smoothing all the faces without spoiling the edges. We mounted the reel seat and the cork. Our final task of the day was tying the rings.

The last day was the lightest. In the morning we finished the tying and the president, Alberto Poratelli, explained the various techniques of varnishing the rod and the material to use. Lastly, we tried our rods, twirling our lines on the lawn. Roberto Pragliola was present as a guest. We also posed for the ritual photo and ended the day by having lunch together for the last time and saying our goodbyes.

Conclusions and hopes

That concluded our course. All I need to do now is thank all those who accompanied me in this brief trip. To start with, I thank the instructors for imparting their art to us with passion; I thank Roberto Pragliola for his presence and showing us the world of TLT (total cast technique, t.n.); I also thank the president for giving me the task to write this article. And last, but not least, I thank my father, without whom I would not have been able to attend this course.

Matteo Cadonà













Sergio Berti Fly Fisherman - Marco Sbizzera Photographer



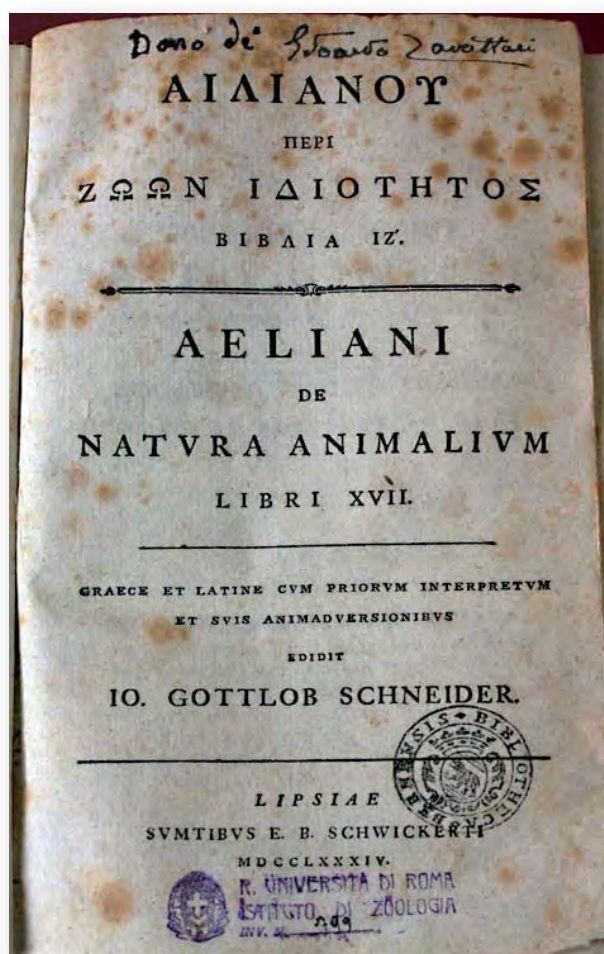
IT ALL STARTED WITH ...

by Angelo Droetto

Our passion is very varied: there are those passionate about casting, those passionate about tying flies, those passionate about building rods. The end is always the same: catching fish with a technique that allows their release in the best conditions for the happiness of the fisherman.

You fell in love with rodmaking, but I don't think we can overlook the history of fly fishing in general. How we came to find constantly better tools to present our fly further and further, with more precision so that it looks like a real insect drifting freely on the water.

Across the ages thousands of books have been written about our sport, even if, among these, most should never have been printed. Everyone agrees that the first book that speaks about an artificial lure to fool a fish, is the book by Claudio Eliano, *De Natura Animalium*, written in the third century after Christ. The writer tells stories he heard about a fishing technique with artificial lures, used by the Macedonians on the river Astraeus, and he gives a vivid description of how the fish attacked the insects that came down on the surface of the water.



So it is not only the first book that deals with fly fishing in general, but dry fly fishing! But which fly is he talking about? Eliano says that the Macedonians call it Ippurus, this is vague, gnats or bees, colours of the wasp. It is imitated with purple wool on the hook and embellished with two small feathers taken from the wattle of a cock and coloured with wax. And this 16 centuries ago!

The reason the fishermen did not use the real insect, which would seem more natural is that it is more fragile and inflexible, it would have been spoilt and unattractive for the fish, so they were forced to do their best to make an imitation.

The historians debate that Marziale, about a century earlier, had already spoken about flies, but I do not want to elaborate the subject, I know little and nothing is certain. What I am sure about and I want to underline it, is that our sport had a place already in Roman literature.

To those who are interested in rods, I will say that in Bad Reichenhale, in south eastern Bavaria on the border with Austria, there is the church of Saint Zeno, where there is a representation of the saint holding a fishing rod with a fish attached to it and a book at his feet. Incidentally, Saint Zeno, the patron saint of Verona, lived in the 14th century and he is considered one of the patron saints of fishermen, because he made a living by fishing in the river Adige.

In the following centuries there are traces of texts, but none of them deals with fishing as a recreational sport for Man, but only a form of survival, until the 15th century with *Treatyse of Fishing with an Angle*.

At this point we should start a long chapter on the debate that has brought historians to write numerous books and articles on who to attribute this work starting from the gender of the writer. Man or woman? I will not consider this matter. Nothing conclusive has been found. Anyway, whoever it was, they were certainly a person of great culture and knowledge of the subject. The inventor or collector of the knowledge of his time, is not important.

For the first time it deals with rods, the materials to use to make them, of the hollow butt and how to build it, of ferrules for the inserts of the pieces and the dressings of 12 flies to use during the year.

The aspect I find most fascinating about this book is that, for the first time, fishing is elevated to the same level as sports, which at that time, were considered leisure activities for gentlemen, hunting and falconry. Remember that recreation was reserved to lords, the common folk did not have access to all that; if they were practised, it was done in secret, poaching, which was done risking one's life, with the only purpose to feed the family.

In one paragraph of the *Treatyse*, it is underlined how fishing is better than hunting because the fisherman who has not had the luck to catch fish, has enjoyed the pleasure of walking in nature and its contact anyway, while the hunter has had to put up with the barking of the dogs, the noise of the hunting horns and the squalling of the servants.

We are in the 15th century, the exact date is a little vague, say the second half of the century, Christopher Columbus has not discovered America yet and we can already read how to choose wood to build a rod, how to straighten it with heat, drill it internally to make it lighter, take two metal rings to join the pieces of wood, the first ferrules, primitive yes, but we are speaking about more than 500 years ago.

After this first book, which was the modern approach to fly fishing, we must wait two centuries for the book printed by Izaak Walton. Gutenberg's invention has allowed everyone access to the reading of texts. All those able to read, let's not forget.

It is 1653. In England, king Charles I has been beheaded, Oliver Cromwell is a puritanical dictator, the second plague pandemic is about to strike London and with it the great fire that would destroy most of the city. This is the world Izaak Walton, a supporter of the king, has escaped from by moving to the country, abandoning his profession as a ironmonger to dedicate his time to writing and fishing.



Without telling his biography that is almost a century long, he died at the good old age of 90, unusual for the time, living through the reign of Charles I, Cromwell's dictatorship and then again the monarchy, the most important aspect of his life. He was a voluntary exile in the country where he, as a realist, wrote and fished with Charles Cotton, his faithful fishing companion, who carved their initials on his fishing hut. Here he conceived *The Compleat Angler*, first edition printed in 1653 and four more followed in his lifetime. The fifth edition, printed in 1676 is the definitive version we can still read today. The book was completed with a second part written by Charles Cotton.

To understand the importance of Walton's book, suffice it to say that in English literature, his book has been printed in almost 500 editions in all languages and it is the second most read book after the Bible, and before *The Pilgrim's Progress*, a book on meditation and prayer. He was buried in Winchester Cathedral, where he was dedicated the Fisherman's Chapel, he is depicted on the glass with a fishing rod, a basket and a river flowing at his feet.

In the first part of Walton's book, there is the story of a dialogue between *Piscator e Venator* (Viator only in the first edition). In it *Piscator* describes the pleasure of fishing as the contact with nature, affirming the non gory aspect, almost a precursor of catch and release. The second part, by Cotton, is technical: Instructions how to angle for a trout or grayling in a clear stream. A milestone in our sport.

The technique of using a dialogue such as that between *Viator*, *Venator*, *Piscator* is not original, it is found in several books, nor is it original for Walton, but we cannot talk of plagiarism; it was common, at that time, for writers to use traces of things used by others.

Here ends my introduction to an in-depth look into the history of rodmakers, but, in my opinion, we could not skip this historical premise of our story.

See you soon.

Angelo Droetto





Sergio Berti Fly Fisherman - Marco Sbizzera Photographer



In my experience as a Rodmaker, there are a few things that have always really irritated me because they seem irresolvable or rather they are irresolvable not without an effort.

Varnish....here is one of those things I have always been irritated by.

In my opinion, varnish has a huge defect: when it comes into contact with oxygen it oxidises, it catalyses and it hardens. Now this is a good quality when it is spread out in a fine and even layer on the faces of a new bamboo rod but it is a bad thing when this happens when it is still inside the tin where it should rest without changes indefinitely.

When I varnish a rod, I use a minimal quantity of varnish – about 3 cc for each section. So a two piece rod with two tips I need 9-10 cc of varnish of the precious amber coloured liquid that is manufactured by Fratelli Cecchi from Livorno (Italy). The smallest can you can purchase contains 500 cc and so in theory it could be sufficient to varnish about 50 rods with two tips.

If you have ever managed come forward.

Nobody?

Well I'm not surprised. Every time you open the lid to take 3 cc, the surface of the varnish takes a nice breath of fresh oxygen and after the tenth opening, the surface start to solidify and a nice crust is formed making the varnish useless. I have thrown away much more varnish than I have ever used for actual varnishing.

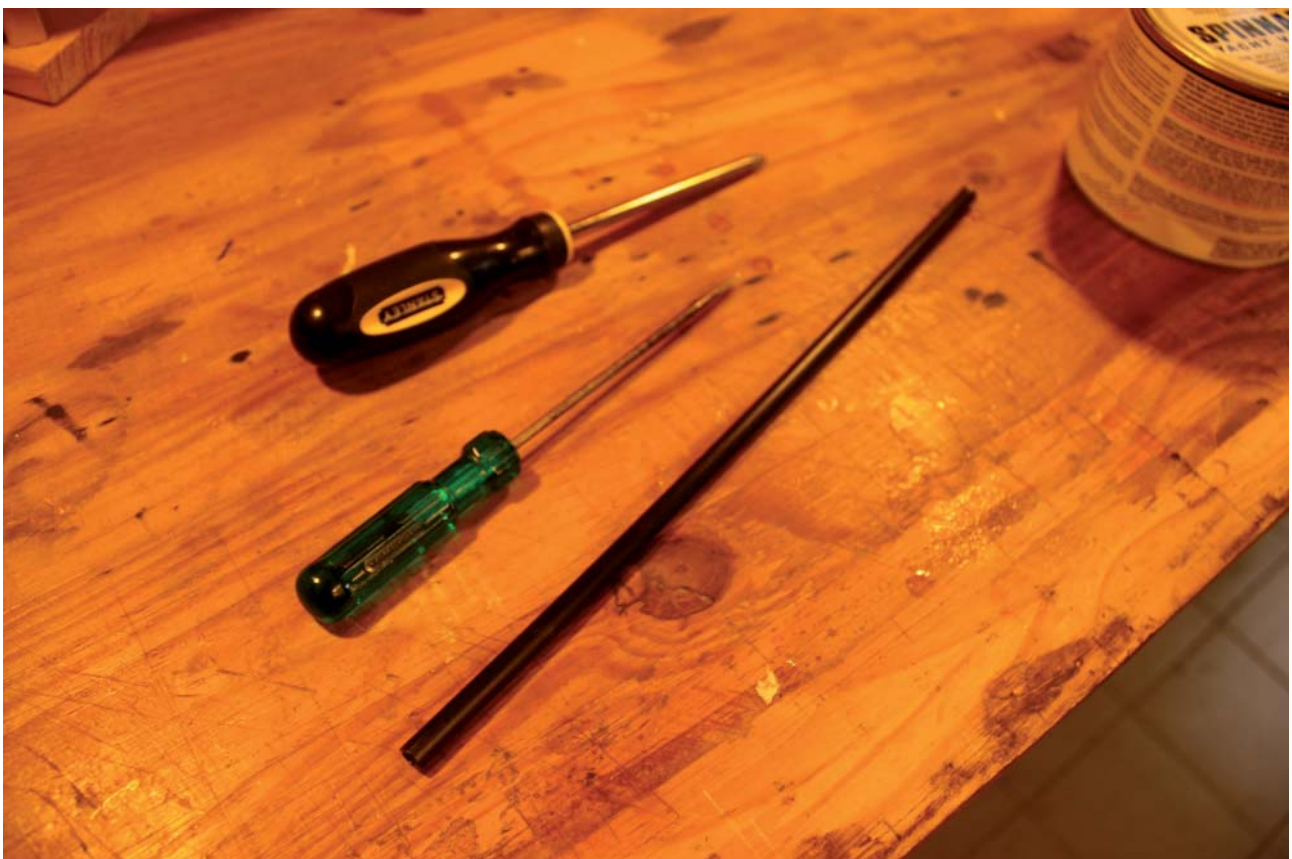
I racked my brain to find a solution to prevent this, but none were simple enough for me and so I never managed to solve the problem until last September when I got an idea which took me three minutes to implement. I tried it out.... yes! Three minutes... ingenious!

I thought that a solution could be to get the varnish out without opening the lid. How? Well here it is...

What you need to do this operation is:

1. a sealed can of varnish
2. a piece of PVC pipe with in inner diameter of 4 mm
3. an awl or a punch
4. a star screwdriver with the same diameter as the outer diameter of the PVC tube.
5. Quick drying epoxy
6. a syringe without the needle





The procedure is simple.

1. Firstly cut the PVC pipe so that it is 3 cm longer than the height of the can. The cut must be a diagonal one.
2. Puncture the lid of the can with the awl and widen the hole with the screwdriver.
3. Last step. Insert the tube in the hole until the diagonal cut touches the bottom of the can and seal the hole around the pipe with epoxy.

That's it!

Now to get 3 cc of varnish all I do is use the syringe to suck out the quantity and then I seal the top of the pipe with tape.

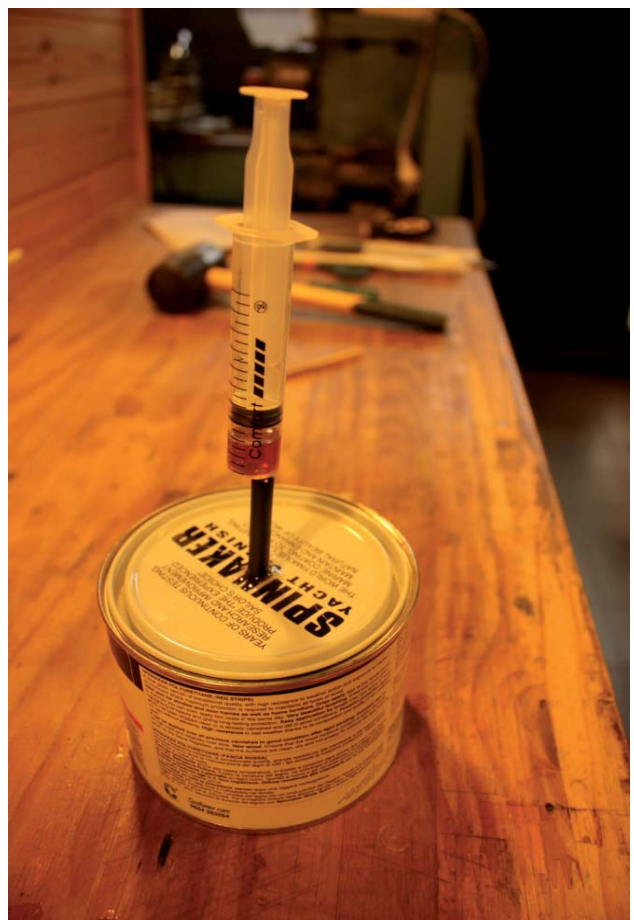
It took longer to describe the procedure than to carry it out. The great thing is that the can I perforated in September is still going strong and it's still supplying fresh varnish. It's been 5 months and not a problem.

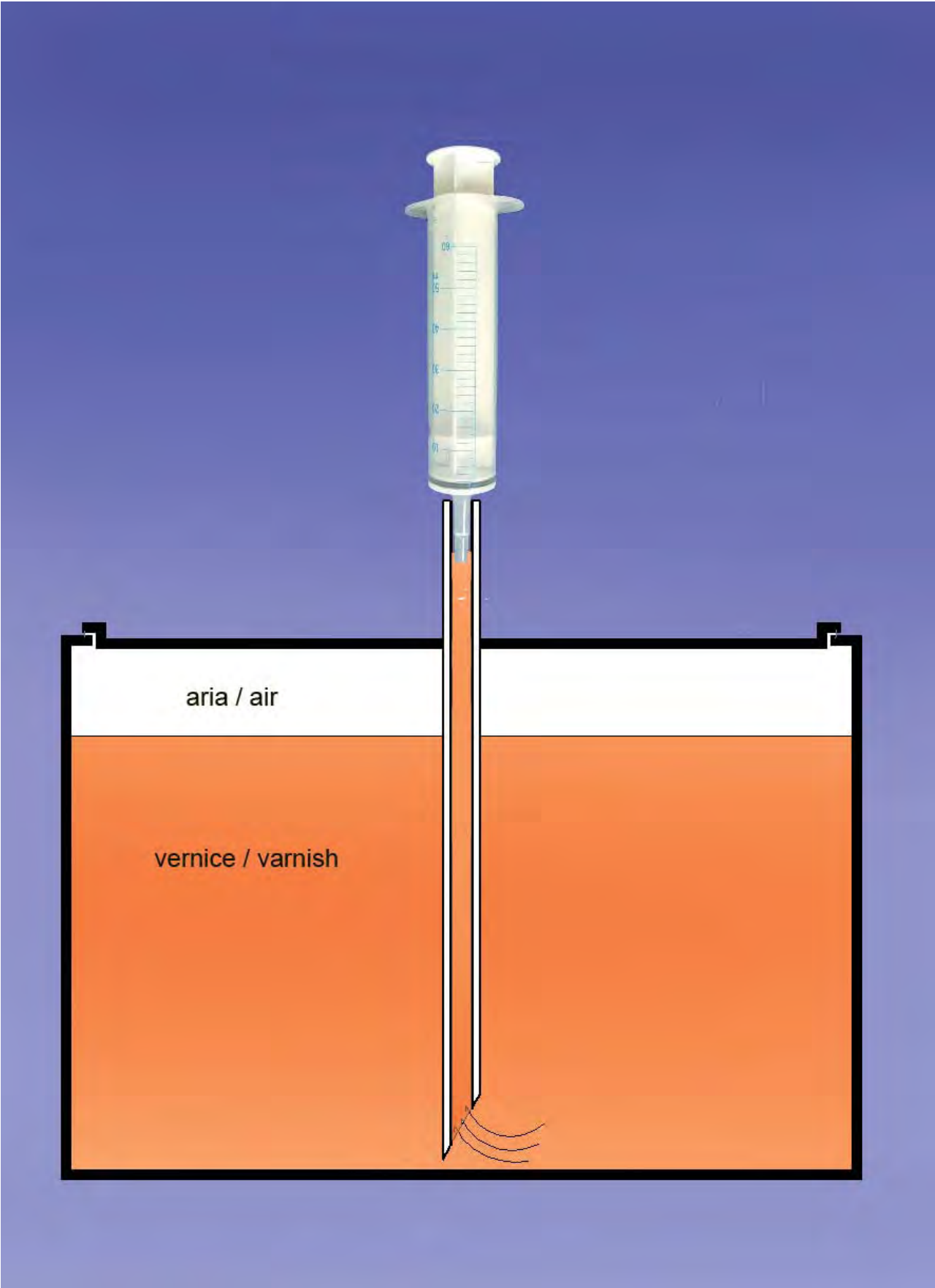
In any case I presume that the crust on the surface will form sooner or later (I should check but I don't feel like opening the can), because in any case when you suck out 3 cc, you cannot prevent the same volume of air from getting in. In any case since you are sucking fresh varnish from the bottom, I don't think the crust will have any effect.

Perhaps this is not so much of an ingenious find but it is important that it is easy and I managed to solve a problem that has always concerned me.

Alberto Poratelli









Sergio Berti Fly Fisherman - Marco Sbizzera Photographer

The Masone labyrinth ...

by Maurizio Cardamone



... or bamboo is not only used to make fishing rods!

Dear rodmaker friends, I can announce an important confirmation: bamboo is not only for planing very fine fly fishing rods! There is a 78 year old gentleman from days gone by, an obstinate visionary, who with an infinity of live and lush bamboo plants, has finally realised the dream of a lifetime.

This dream come true is in the countryside of Parma and it has a name: the Masone Labyrinth. It is in the town of Fontanellato, between Parma and Fidenza, not from the Emilia road. The man who constructed it is Franco Maria Ricci and long before it was famous for being the largest labyrinth in the world, it was famous for the publications of the publishing house that bears the same name.

It was founded in 1965 and through the years it has published works that are instantly recognizable for their precise graphic designs and extravagant covers, in black and gold. Perhaps their best known publication is the FMR magazine, described by Federico Fellini as "the most beautiful magazine in the world". Franco Maria Ricci is not only a successful editor, he also studied Geology and then became a graphic designer and designer, a collector of books and art. Ricci published FMR from 1982 al 2002, when he sold his publishing house to dedicate his time to the new project. The magazine and the publishing house have now returned to Masone and it seems the publication will resume this year. After several years, the complex of the labyrinth and the museum were opened to the public at the end of May 2015 and up to now has had about 60.000 visitors.



Franco Maria Ricci: geologist, graphic designer, editor, art collector, dreamer...

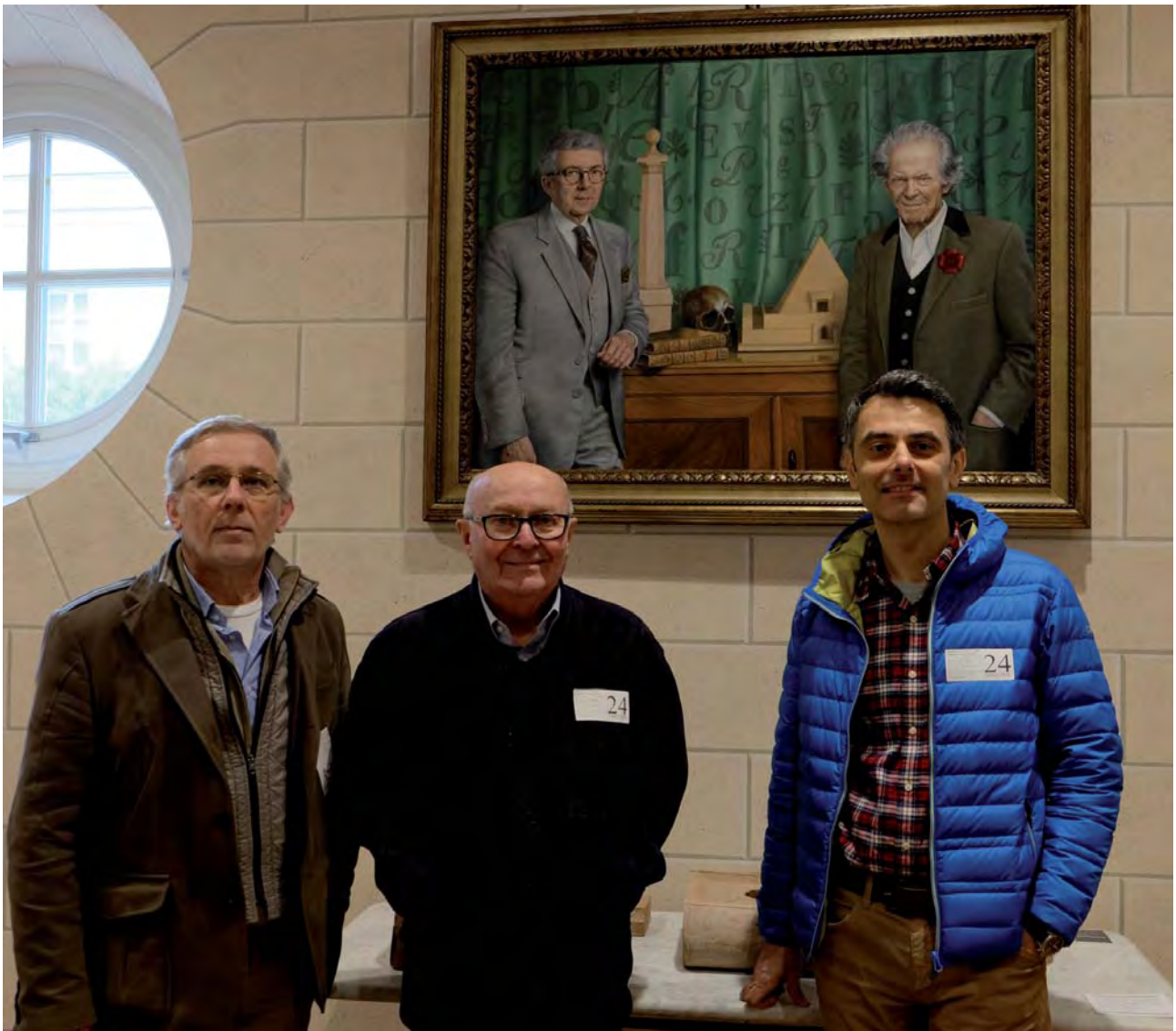


The entrance courtyard: the bamboo starts here.



The project hall.

I learned about this novelty last autumn from some colleagues who come to Milan from Parma and knew about my passion for bamboo. For them, *Arundinaria amabilis* may as well be an edible mushroom and bamboo is all the same, but I nonetheless appreciated their thoughtfulness. Some days ago, a grey, misty and humid February day, I visited this marvel with a small IBRA delegation (see photos).



*The portraits of Ricci and the architect Bontempi staring at the IBRA delegation:
Poratelli, Fiorani, Oltolini and your editor, of course.*

"At the back of my house in Milan there was a type of hortus conclusus, a small garden surrounded by high walls, a competent and kind Japanese gardener suggested I plant a bamboo forest...In Italy bamboo is a plant that is not popular or used: at the most we know a little about one species alone, the Phyllostachys aurea, often mistaken for reeds. To buy the little bamboo I needed I went to France where I discovered a wonderful place: the Bambouseraie d'Anduz... In my small garden in Milan the bamboo quickly grew luxuriantly until it was higher than the walls, to the annoyance of some neighbours. I was falling in love with the plant. I went back to the Bambouseraie and this time my purchase was larger: I had decided to plant a bamboo garden in the fields around my country house in Fontanellato. This too turned out to be a successful experiment...Up to that moment the bamboo had not had any connection with the labyrinth; then one day I had a brainwave: that plant offered me the ideal raw material to construct it. In life things slowly come together. After Borges and Dutto, it was the turn of the Japanese gardener, who had unwittingly added another element to my project."

These are the words used by Franco Maria Ricci to tell the story of his labyrinth; a dream born and shared for a long time with the great Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges (a good friend of Ricci's), since the 80's. In 2004, he found in the young architect, Davide Dutto, the designer of the meticulous geometry of the park.



Ricci's car in the 60's: a splendid Jaguar E-Type.



From the observation tower.

This is how Ricci justifies his choice of bamboo:

"The traditional plant for labyrinths is box, perhaps I would have used it too when I was younger; but it grows slowly, while bamboo is very fast. If the bamboo grew so luxuriant it could be because it breathes so well, in proximity of a river that faintly reminds us of China: the Po river. It is an extraordinary plant, it doesn't get ill, it doesn't shed its leaves in winter, its impatient growth makes it absorb huge quantities of carbon dioxide, leaving us oxygen and it does not cause disasters due to typhoons or whirlwinds (nobody has ever died because a bamboo trunk fell on them). I hope that in the near future this plant will become an important element of the Padano landscape and that our entrepreneurs will agree to mask their industrial buildings behind the delicate green curtains of my canes. Changing the face of the Val Padana, restoring its lost grace is the most ambitious of my dreams today. The Foundation will supply the necessary plants and free consultancy."



A view of the luxuriant bamboo.

Giovangiorgio Afan de Rivera, the manager of the park and the bamboo, who was once an important collaborator of Ricci in the publishing house, meets us at the reception and tells us of the many problems and practical difficulties that he and his gardeners face with this not so common plant. The labyrinth was “laid” in 2004 and after some initial problems, was substantially formed in 2006. For this project, Ricci was inspired by the “Roman” labyrinth, a single-path labyrinth with right angles and divided into quarters. Practically four inter-communicating labyrinths to which Ricci added traps, forks and dead ends, typical of an 18th labyrinth .



One of the halls of the museum. Please note the floor, in bamboo.



In the museum there is also this wonderful sycamore root: how many inserts could we make out of it?



Alberto shows the curator of the labyrinth what else we can make with bamboo.....

The labyrinth has the shape of an eight-point star and occupies an area of about 4 hectares, of which 20.000m² for the beds alone, formed by about 150.000 bamboo plants. Most of them are *Phyllostachys bissetii*, but in some areas there plants of approximately twenty different species, from the miniature plants to the gigantic ones (1). There are no *Arundinaria amabilis* (or perhaps *Pseudosasa amabilis*) which, as we all know, is the prince of bamboo to make “split cane” fishing rods. I will look into the possibility of fixing this absence...but maybe rather not: hoards of rodmakers would walk along the paths to get the material for their work..... The hedges of the labyrinth line a total distance of more than 3 km, which currently makes it the largest permanent labyrinth in the world, certified by the “Guinness Book Of World Records”. The height of the hedges is enough to create a sensation of total isolation: this sensation is enhanced further on in the season when the plants will create tunnels. The labyrinth is not only very large, it is a true labyrinth where one can really get lost, but do not fear, you can call for help from one of the numbered stones along the path and someone will come to your aid!



The entrance to the maze (at the reception we were given a map, in case of emergency).

I must also say that Ricci's love for this plant is not only found in the form of hedges, forests and woods in the labyrinth, but all over the large property of the house where he lives .

Wandering pleasantly along the paths, we try to find out more about the bamboo: in the labyrinth the plants are cut regularly and kept at a height of 2-3 metres with a machine designed for this purpose, because if the branches are crushed, the plant dies. The quantity of residue is considerable and a virtuous use of this material has not been found yet. A bizarre and casual discovery, Rivera tells us, is that starlings, which are present in huge amounts in this season, do not rest on the cut branches. Their droppings were creating some problems, but now they prefer to rest in other areas of the property where they find trees in their natural state. Another interesting aspect of the labyrinth is that the tight weave of the plants has in time created an impenetrable haven for many species of small animals.

Even spiders seem to have found an ideal environment in it, so much that their webs need to be removed every morning. The paths are also cleared from the leaves every morning. The bamboo plants were planted in cement boxes to contain their natural tendency to spread freely. In the past this created a problem for the water drainage, because the stagnation was a killer of the plants. An effective drainage and watering system was created and today the hedges are very thick and form a compact and almost impenetrable wall. Thinning them out when necessary is no easy task. In addition, 10 years after making the beds, there is now the serious problem of changing the soil. Various practical possibilities are being studied. The snow too, has been a problem: some species (for example flexuosa) naturally resist well, while edulis for example, which has a thick crest at the top, when it is loaded with snow, breaks easily.



Here is the IBRA group facing the labyrinth.



This way

..... or this way?



After the labyrinth, Ricci built two complementary buildings, which make it a very special garden. The first one is the entrance to the complex. On the ground floor there is a cafeteria, a restaurant, a shop with typical products and the ticket office, which also sells the works of the publishing house, which has its new office here too.

In a hall beyond the entrance, there are the original drawings of the project by the architect Pier Carlo Bontempi. Then there is the access to the labyrinth, but also to the museum, which is on the first floor and it consists of a private collection of more than 500 paintings, sculptures, books, art pieces, as well as the complete collection of the publications of the publishing house FMR. A real gem on the ground floor, is the black Jaguar E-type that a young Ricci drove in the 60's. A detail which cannot escape the careful eye of us rodmakers is that all the floors are in bamboo!

There is a small round tower adjacent to this building which offers a view on the labyrinth, the test to face. At the centre there is another building of about 2000 m² with wide arches and a small pyramid at the end. For those who are successful, this is the exit from the labyrinth and it takes one back to the entrance. The entire complex is built with face bricks and it is an appealing sight. We were all particularly struck by the great attention to detail, equal to the almost maniacal care that was the characteristic of the "most beautiful magazine in the world".

I would like to end my story by telling you an anecdote that connects Franco Maria Ricci to our world, almost an omen: the acronym of his name, FMR, also the title of his most famous editorial work, in French is pronounced "éph-ém-ère". Ephemère, like ephemeroptera, the name of the insect that is the basis of fly fishing, the reason we plane our bamboo!

A strange coincidence, n'est pas?



Discussion on the cultivation of bamboo and its many problems



Phyllostachys bissetii, really luxuriant here.



Phyllostachys glaucescens: this seems more interesting for the plane, but the nodes are too close to each other.



Phyllostachys vivax aureocaulis: a nice colour before the drying, the nodes do not protrude much.



One of the external paths from the labyrinth; here the bamboo grows freely.



The central building, dominated by the pyramid



The large courtyard and arches of the building at the centre of the labyrinth



Three quarters of the IBRA delegation: Cardamone, Oltolini and Fiorani

(1) The species of bamboo in the labyrinth and the park:

Phyllostachys bissetii, the hedges consist mostly of this species, it has an erect, thin and willowy cane; it reproduces abundantly and can reach a height of 5 metres;

Phyllostachys nigra "boryana",

Phyllostachys viridis "sulfurea", a giant species with light yellow trunks with stripes in various shades of green; beautiful and decorative;

Phyllostachys viridiglaucescens, a bare cane that can reach 10cm in diameter and 6-8 metres in height;

Phyllostachys flexuosa,

Phyllostachys aurea,

Phyllostachys bambusoides "castillonis",

Phyllostachys rubramarginata,

Phyllostachys vivax "aureocaulis",

Phyllostachys nigra "henonis",

Phyllostachys aureosulcata "spectabilis",

Phyllostachys aureosulcata "aureocaulis",

Phyllostachys nigra,

Phyllostachys edulis "pubescens", the classic giant bamboo from the epic Japanese films with the heroes flying among it. It has a slower growth than the other species, but sooner or later it will form a forest of organ canes;

Pseudosasa japonica,

Sasa tessellata,

Hibanobambusa tranquillans "shiroshima", it forms a type of bush of medium height, with large bright green leaves with yellow stripes

Pleioblastus viridistriatus, medium-sized bush, with large light green leaves, delicately striped with golden green,

Pleioblastus pumilus, low, thick bamboo, it substitutes lawn in the shady areas; it can be mowed once or twice a year.





Sergio Berti Fly Fisherman - Marco Sbizzera Photographer



Well, the bamboo epidemic is spreading continuously and it seems we still have not found any type of cure. The contagion is getting the upper hand and inexorably infecting the fly fishermen, equally and even taking famous victims.

The last acquaintance to fall victim was the 2011 and 2013 Fly Fishing World Champion, Valerio Santi Amantini. Last season I witnessed the transmission of the disease which attacked him for two days, tormenting him: so I have decided to tell you about this experience with the scope of putting all fishermen on guard, helping them to take all the necessary precautions to avoid the infection.



The theatre of this misadventure was the beautiful natural park Mont Avic in Valle d'Aosta: a fairytale place, with picturesque landscapes and an environment only marginally modified by man due to its arduous land that has limited activities of exploitation.



In the park there are large forests of mountain pine, Scotch pine, larch and beech and there are dozens of ponds, marshes and peat bogs....and through all this runs the Chalamy. Along its route this stream changes many times: it can be winding with gin-coloured water that strokes the green lawns to then dive faster among the grey rocks of a waterfall, run into a canyon and become dark to then slow down exhausted and breathless, shiny again and lightly skipping among boulders and stones.

Here is my story.

Valerio, Simone and I decided to spend a few days in the natural park of Mont Avic fishing in the Chalamy, walking up from beat 6 to reach the shelter Barbustel at Lac Blanc, at 2200m before dark. We arrived at Champdepraz early equipped with backpacks, food and essential tools. We left our car at the Hotel Parc Mont Avic which is above the town, at a little under 1300m. Beat 6 is at an altitude of about 1800m and so we started walking in the colours of a wonderful day, in the fresh air that helped us bear the initial effort of the walk.



The first part of the path is a neat dirt road that takes us to the first lodge. From here we take the path that climbs among the woods. It runs long the stream and sometimes crosses it, showing its various shapes along its steep descent.

In less than three hours we reach beat 6, also called the "the brook trout plain" where a herd of cows was grazing.

We left our backpacks near an unguarded shelter that dominates this small plateau and ran to the stream.



We cross the lawn that seems to float on the water with an almost artificial green colour: above it a blue sky that looks like a shawl you could drape around your shoulders and different smells rise up through the grass.



We mount our rods. Valerio has a graphite 10'0" #3 to fish with light nymphs, Simone has a graphite 7'6" #3 to dry fly fish and I have a bamboo 6'9" #3 3-piece rod to dry fly fish. This is Simone's first time on the Chalamy, so he has the first fish: a few casts and a brook trout is hooked near a large boulder.



From that moment on "anything goes" and we start fishing following the rule of "one fish each". The low water levels are better for dry fly fishing, it is easier to face all the situations presented on the plain....





...from the almost still and deeper water...



...to very shallow water and small currents among the stones.

Davide: ...there are very few situations for nymphs, are you mounting a dry fly too, Valerio?

Valerio: The levels are lower than usual and the deep holes are further on....perhaps.

Davide:would you like one? A parachute?

Valerio: Well, yes, I'll change line and put a dry one.

Davide: But why change lines if further on you will need to change it again if you want to fish in those holes in the canyon with a nymph, use my rod.....

Valerio: ...your rod?

Davide: Yes, mine, try it....don't worry, nobody will see you here (followed by a devious giggle).

Valerio:mmmmh, okay, let me try this rod.....

I take his 10'0" from his hands and substitute it with the 6'9": in two seconds!

Davide:.....try a few false casts to measure the leader which is not very long.

Valerio:I thought it would be heavy and slow, instead it is reacting nicely. Let me try near that stone.....and there in that small currentnear the bank too.....I thought that lengthening the line would make it give in, instead.....



Davide: ...I understand: Simo let me fish with yours, we'll fish that part together.



Et voilà! The infection had slowly and inexorably taken hold of him. While he was talking to me, I was recording the event with a few photos....one never knows when they may come in handy, I thought... you know, just among friends.



We walked on to the waterfall which tells us that beat 6 is finished and to move to the next one we need to take our backpacks and walk uphill another hour....awesome! We went back to the shelter and had a bite to eat first: we fill up our flasks and start our walk.

In the afternoon our only concern is to respect the schedule which forces us to be at the Barbustel shelter by 8.00pm, otherwise, no dinner. We will make it



In this part the Chalamy offers us some fantastic views, they are almost surreal and it is incredible how, in a few metres, it can change so suddenly. The leaps of water, the holes carved in the rocks, the fast flows among the green, the many small currents among the rocks offer us alternating situations we need to face in different ways: but we are equipped for this and we have loads of fun.



But what time is it? I don't



But where is the shelter? It shouldn't be very far now....

Well, more or less.....fish that hole and then we will go up and see.



.....and is nobody fishing that little current?



Come now, look at that hole down there!



.....nooooo, we cannot leave this behind: look at the pool next to that stone!



Obviously we arrived much later than 8:00pm, but Valerio knows the owners very well and they are used to the fishermen's habits, so they give us permission to sit at the dinner table.



We are exhausted and I ate a pasta dish I cannot remember by pure inertia with a type of numbness. We went outside with our three beers to enjoy the jet-black sky with a breathtaking amount of shiny stars.

Valerio:well guys, how are you feeling?

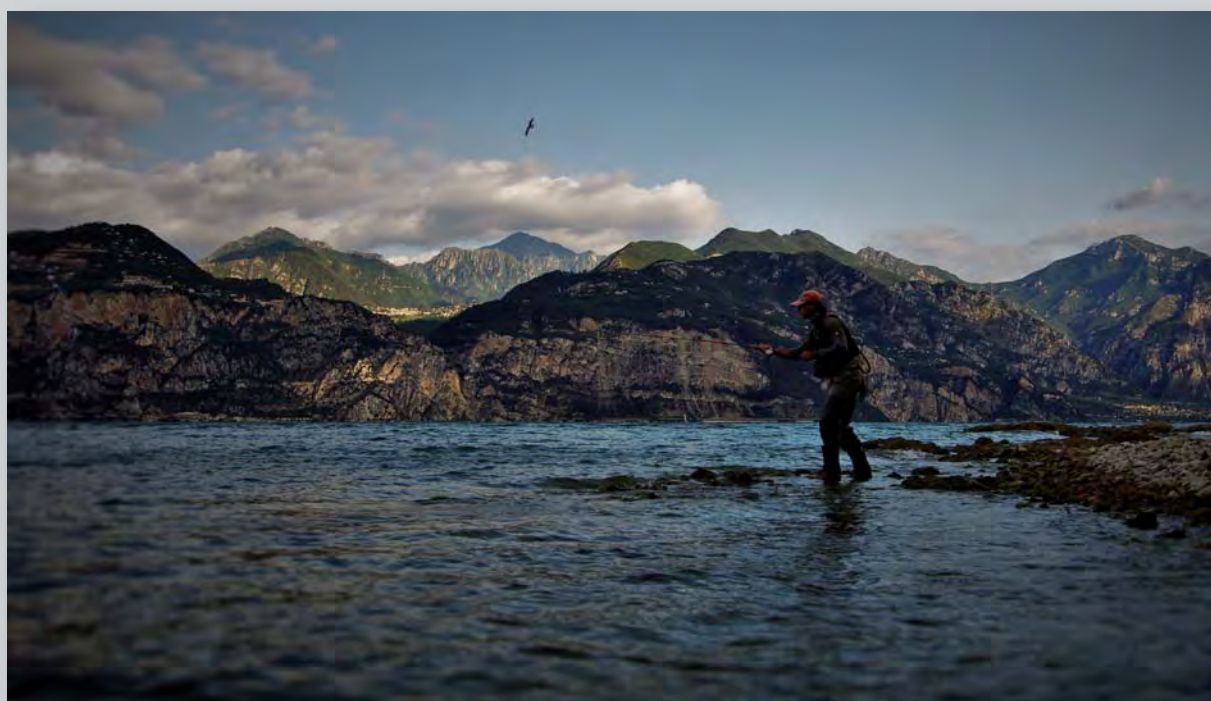
Simone: Tired, but satisfied, I did not think it could be so beautiful....there is something magical about this park.

Davide:and how was the rod, Valerio?

Valerio: Come, let's go to bed, tomorrow morning we need to go further uphill and then in the afternoon we need to tackle the downhill....and then you need to get home.

Davide: Yes, OK, but I asked you how the rod was.





Sergio Berti Fly Fisherman - Marco Sbizzera Photographer

HEMINGWAY'S RODS

by Giovanni Nese

Introduction

To combine the facts that I will illustrate one must have started working at 9 years old, be a veteran of a world war, escaped bombardments and have spent the last phase of the war in an English prison.



The memory is surrounded by a cloud of smoke; something my father said about the fact that my uncle had a beautifully crafted fly fishing rod somewhere in his house. I searched for it, without success. Pity. Perhaps he had sold it or one of my cousins had lost it.

However, something has remained, a story and some old rods.

They are hexagonal bamboo rods that my uncle gave my father. My uncle was not passionate about fishing, he loved hunting. I used the rods too: one was a spinning rod, a heavy rod that I used for bottom fishing, another one I cannot classify; it looks like a fly fishing rod because of its flexibility and weight, but strangely it has a two-handed butt on a length just over 8' and I have no idea how it was conceived.

My uncle. My mother's brother, was a man from the last century, he died on Christmas day in 1999, he did not want to see the new millennium. His life was bizarre and adventurous, he had thousands of stories to tell with wit and wisdom, a keen observer and with hundreds of interests, he was a bee-keeper and this fact alone made him a great man in my eyes. He liked words, he was an instinctive storyteller, a man with ten lives, each of which had something to teach and something to joke about, useful things to survive and to laugh at life. I am sure the bees taught him a thing or two.

He had had many jobs: goat herder, baker, truck driver, fishmonger...

During his life as a truck driver, which started in '48, he "did overseas", this is what they called international transport by truck. Belgium was his usual destination, so Germany and Switzerland were crossed weekly.

He had a travelling companion who was as quick and sly as a ferret. He had also survived the war and imprisonment, so he felt entitled to take back without scruples what life had taken away from him.

One day the two had to go to Belgium in 1948 or 1949; they had go to Milan and then via Switzerland and Germany. They loaded the truck in Milan and left, up one mountain pass and down the other side. One day to cross the mountain range. Once in Switzerland, they stopped to refuel and cool the brakes down. In the parking they saw an American convertible. In his story, I could feel the wonder at the size and excitement at the luxury of a car he had only seen in films. The car was uncovered, on the back seat there was a bundle of rods and a sack, casually thrown there. In Switzerland nobody steals. They left, went to Belgium, unloaded and headed back to Milan. A pit-stop in the same place, refuelling and checking the brakes again, the convertible was still there and so were the rods and sack; they were in Switzerland, nobody steals! This is true for the Swiss, not for a couple of Italians (from Alto Adige) that were on the wrong side during the war; they were badly bombarded by the American and English allies; they spent time in an English prison camp. The rods could be considered war reparations, they changed means of transport and come back to Italy in a very modest 3Ro Lancia.

At home they divided the loot and neither of the two ever used the rods.

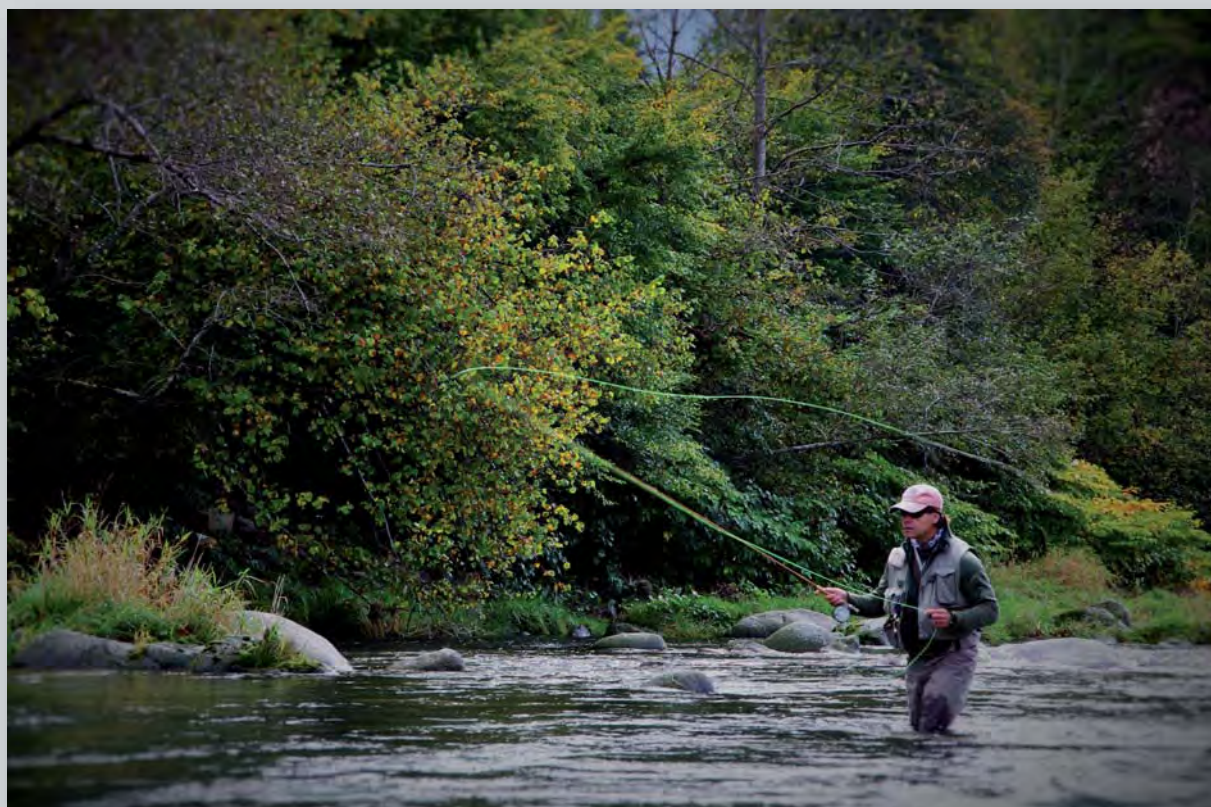
Many years later my father was given two rods and a reel, a third rod and reel were given to me in the 90's. They had been kept in the attic of his home for almost 40 years.

In October 1948 Hemingway disembarked in Genoa with his fourth wife, Mary Welsh and a light blue convertible Buick ... (Taken from: Did Ernest ever fish trout in Val Trebbia or in Val d'Aveto? By Gianfranco Cereda http://www.valdaveto.net/documento_69.html).

I suggest you read the whole article and reach a conclusion a little different from Fernanda Pivano's one: "The Buick was full of souvenirs and I am sure there were no rods!"

Perhaps someone had, "socialised" them in Switzerland?

I dread the thought of having to lock my uncle's old rods away and never tell this story to anyone...



Sergio Berti Fly Fisherman - Marco Sbizzera Photographer



A FEW WORDS ON THE TIP IMPACT

While talking with some IBRA members about the use of the most common rodmaking programmes, I have noticed that there are uncertainties on the length of the line to insert into the programmes that request it.

Many of us use the calculation programmes like Hexrod of Cattnach-Stetzer or RodDna of Larry Tusoni.

In some aspects these programmes are very different from each other, but they offer the chance to intervene on the design of the taper with different approaches and benefits.

Although they are different, the two programmes have a fundamental common aspect: they are both based on the Garrison model.

Please refer to the article on the Bamboo Journal n. 10 of February 2013 <http://www.rodmakers.eu/> for the elements that are the basis of the Garrison model.

To summarise, the Garrison method refers to a static diagram of a crushproof beam restrained on one end (grip) and free on the other (tip) and subjected to a series of forces and loads that are represented by:

- Tip Impact that is a force concentrated on the tip (weight of the tip plus weight of the line out of the tip);
- weight of the bamboo, which is a trapezoidal distributed along the length of the rod;
- weight of the snake guides and ferrules, which are forces concentrated on the respective positions;
- weight of the line in the snake guides, which is a uniformly distributed load along the length of the rod;
- weight of the varnish, which is a trapezoidal load distributed along the length of the rod.

Once we have identified the force and load agents on the rod, we can calculate the bending moment that acts in a certain station as the sum of the moments generated by the single forces and by the single loads.

Thus we can determine the bending moment that acts in each station of the rod and from this obtain the relative stress by dividing the bending moment by the Resistance Module of the transversal section, which depends on the dimensions of the rod, variable from station to station (taper). See the above mentioned article in BJ 10.

Obviously, the inverse operation is also possible; once the bending moment in a certain station has been determined, vary the dimensions of the rod, i.e. taper, to obtain the set value of the stress.

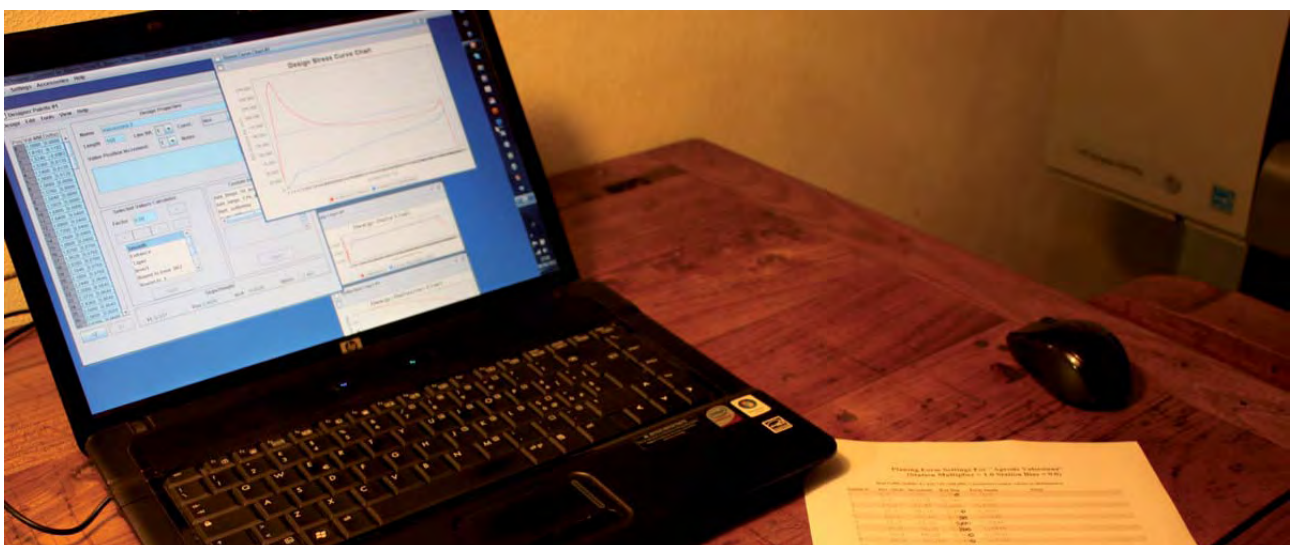
The Garrison model is quite rough: it does not consider the deformation of the rod that, by bending, reduces the application distance of the forces and loads.

Then, it is a static model, very far from the real behaviour of the rod, which is subjected to mostly dynamic actions.

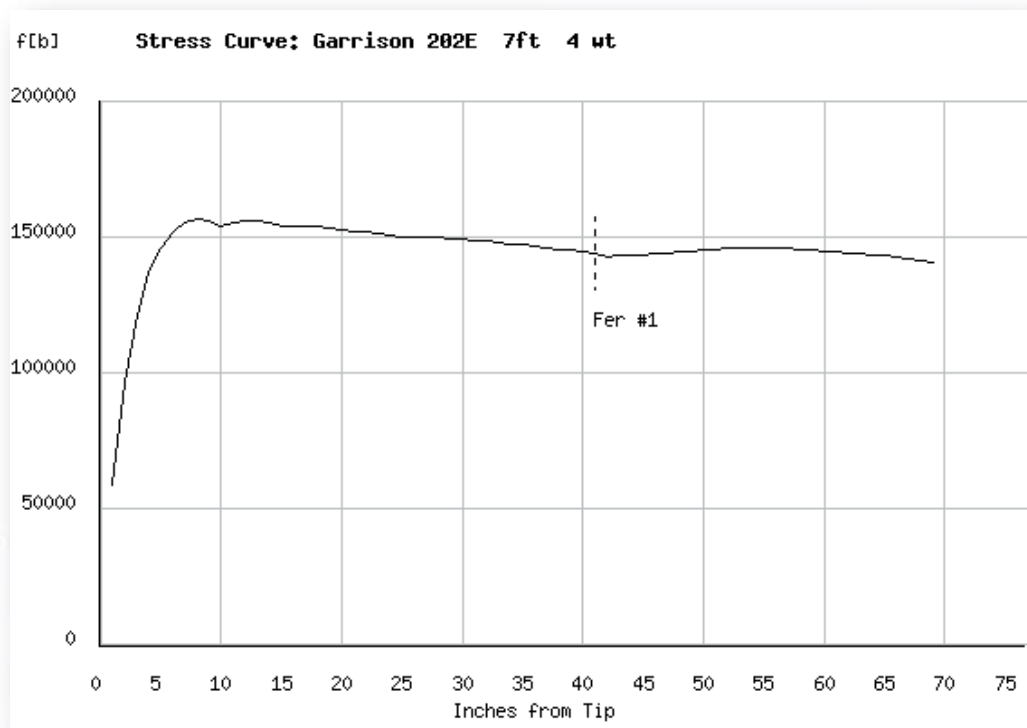
To take into account the dynamic effects, Garrison introduced an amplification coefficient of the forces and loads value of four. Taking the example from Carmichael's book, if we put a weight on a trampoline, it will deform in some way; if instead, we lift the weight and drop it, the trampoline will deform more, 4 times more, according to Garrison.

Obviously, though, the model remains static.

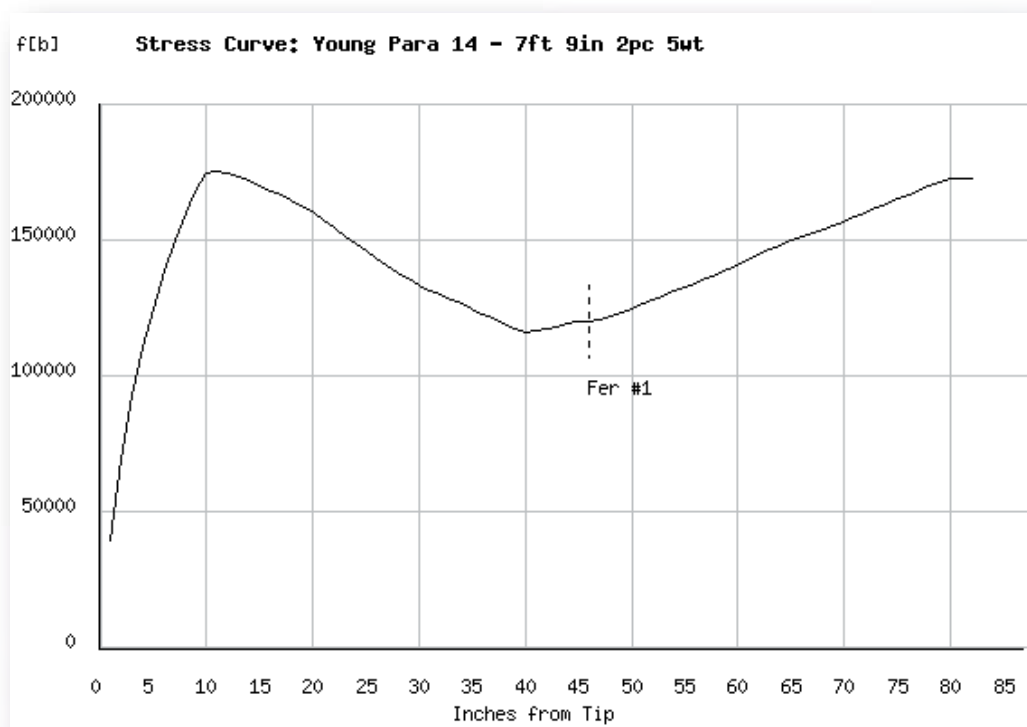
Nonetheless, the Garrison diagram is a useful guide for designing the rod, to compare different tapers and to foresee the action of the real rod.



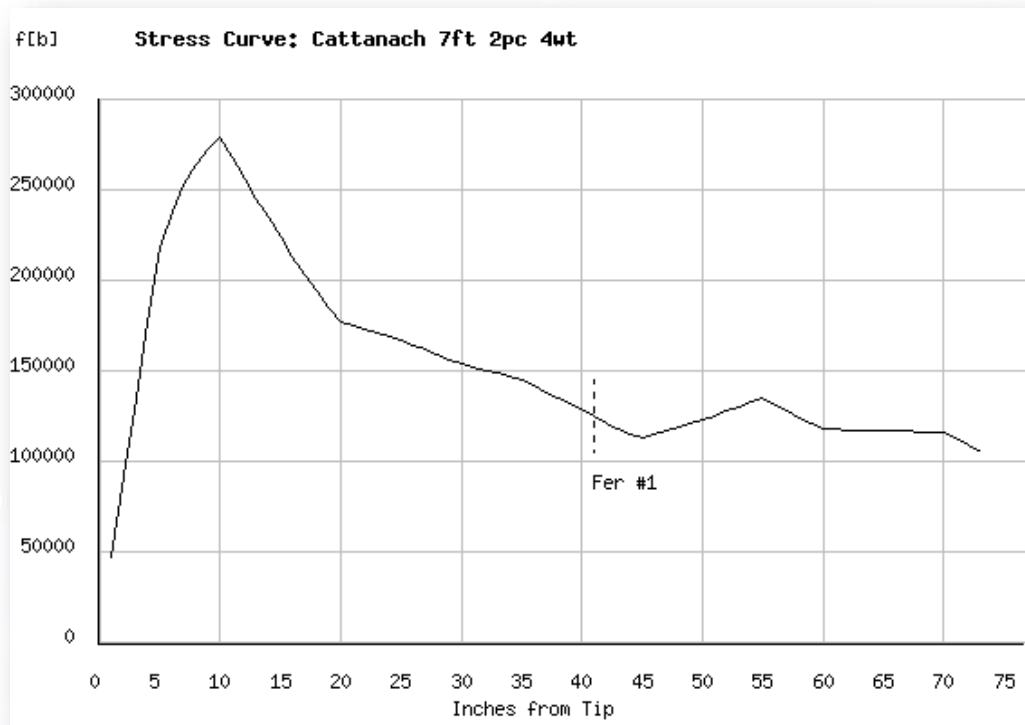
A Garrison taper with progressive action will develop like a horizontal line, because it was dimensioned to supply a constant stress on the entire length of the rod.



A parabolic taper will develop as shown in the figure, where less stress in the middle section indicates more rigidity in this part compared to the tip and butt.



A tip action taper will develop as in the figure, where the greater stress in the tip part indicates it is more deformable than the other parts of the rod and the type of action and the slope of the diagram will be proportionately accentuated.



However, to obtain useful indications on the action of the rod from the stress graph, we need to set the correct Tip Impact, i.e. weight and length of the line that comes out from the tip.

The diagram of the overall bending moment is the combination of different diagrams: the triangular diagram induced by the Tip Impact that is a force concentrated on the tip (tip weight plus the weight of line out of the tip); the parabolic diagram due to the weight of the bamboo that is a trapezoidal load distributed along the length of the rod;

the parabolic diagram due to the weight of the line in the rings that is a load uniformly distributed on the length of the rod; the various triangular diagrams due to the weight of the snake guides and the ferrules, even when these forces are concentrated in their respective positions; and lastly, the parabolic diagram of the weight of the varnish.

Consequently, the overall stress diagram is also a combination of various diagrams with different profiles.

Clearly, modifying one of the above mentioned diagrams, the resulting diagram will also have a different profile.

If, for example, we vary the length of the line, the stress relative to the Tip Impact will have more or less importance compared to other components, modifying the profile of the overall diagram.

Because we use the stress diagram to compare different tapers and to foresee their action, it is important to use standard Tip Impact values.

To be easily aware of how the development of stress graph changes when we vary the Tip Impact , open the calculation sheet attached.

Link at the spreadsheet

It is a calculation sheet to transform an hexagonal taper from flat to hollow. Etc.

By clicking on “feet” we can change the length of the line that comes out of the tip, the number of the line and we can immediately see how the stress graph modifies.

With a length of 50 ft the 5# line foreseen for the rod in in question, the Dickerson 8013, the graph shows how a rather tippy rod with a quite accentuated incline.

By reducing the length of the line, the graph flattens out and with a 20 ft line it is as flat as the typical graph of a Garrison rod.

Obviously, the same occurs if we change the number of the line.

A Dickerson has become a Garrison!

This because, when we reduce the Tip Impact, the bending moment and consequently the stress due to the other components of the load (weight of the bamboo, ferrules, snakes guides, etc.) becomes more and more prevalent and the stress graph, reduces in absolute value and gets a different profile.

So, in conclusion, to evaluate the action of the rod by observing the Garrison stress diagram, we must insert of correct values of the Tip Impact indicated by the writer and they are:

6# Line 2,50 oz. 50 ft of line

5# Line 2,20 oz. 50 ft of line

4# Line 1,74 oz. 45 ft of line

3# Line 1,45 oz. 45 ft of line

Naturally, to compare two different rods, we must insert the same length of line.

A few words on the calculation sheet too.

It is a calculation sheet to transform an hexagonal taper from full to hollow. The conversion is done at equal inertia moments and it takes into consideration the lesser weight of the produced by the hollowing out.

It is a work I introduced in 2007 with the dear Albano Barbiani, Ghost, a founding member of IBRA, who left us far too soon.

After the first draft of the calculation sheet, Ghost perfected it in 2010, making it easier to use and more complete.

The blue values can be changed, the others are results of the calculations.

We start by inserting the inches of taper of the full rod that we want to hollow out keeping the rigidity in the column “Dim. Inch”.

Using the upper right keys, we set the length in feet of the line and its number, the number of pieces, the type of ferrules used.

In the column “Wall thickness” we write in the corresponding stations the thickness in inches of the wall, inserting “solid” in the sections we cannot or do not want to hollow out.

In the columns “dimension only mom. inertia” the new taper is calculated according to the inertia moment of the original rod.

In the column “New dim.” the taper is calculated in consideration of the lesser weight of the bamboo removed.

Gabriele Gori



Sergio Berti Fly Fisherman - Marco Sbizzera Photographer

Cutting the blank of a 3-piece rod

A calculation sheet

by Massimo Giuliani



I usually dry fly fish with light lines, the rods I use are almost always quite short and a two piece is more than enough for this purpose. Moreover, when fishing, I prefer a two piece to a three piece rod of the same taper. Consequently, I rarely make three piece rods and when I do, cutting the blanks correctly is an effort because I never remember how I did it the previous time.



The rod is one of mine, a 7' #4 3 pcs, the river is the Idrica, the fisherman is ... much younger than me

In my opinion, though, a three piece rod is very nice to plane (short pieces) so sometimes I give into temptation and make it despite the complication of the “extra piece”. And all that comes with it: more costs and work for the double ferrule and more complicated calculations in cutting the blank to obtain a rod of the desired length and, when unmounted, with three pieces of equal length.

It is true that the logic and the general principles for cutting the blanks of a 3-piece rod are not different from those of a 2-piece.

I will not repeat them as they were illustrated in a previous article and can be found in the Bamboo Journal nr. 14 – February 2015 “A calculation sheet for cutting blanks” on page 23.

The problem, compared to a 2-piece, is that there are two ferrules, not one, which vary the length of the rod, to divide in three sections and thus, any element we place on the tip, on the central piece and on the butt (which would increase the length) implies an adjustment to the pieces so that the rod is the length of the design with three perfectly equal pieces.

As I mentioned before, it is an operation I seldom do and I worry about the risk of making mistakes and spoiling the work done so far. This gave me the idea to produce a calculation sheet to help me in this operation.



To summarise, the components which vary the length of a 3-piece rod are:

on the tip

- Tip (thickness)
- small male ferrule (thickness of the cap)

on the central piece

- small female ferrule (female length, cap thickness, air between male and female)
- large male ferrule (thickness of the cap)

on the butt

- large female ferrule (female length, cap thickness, air between male and female)
- reel seat cap (thickness of the bottom)



So, for each element mentioned above, we will adjust to rod by:

- shortening the section where the component is inserted (2/3 of the measurement)
- lengthening by 1/3 each of the other two sections.

For example, if the insertion of the large ferrule of the butt implies an increase of, for example 30 mm, we will need to take off 20mm from the butt and increase the tip and the central piece by 10mm each.

This operation is repeated for all the components mentioned above and noted. The algebraic sum of these operations, applied to the single piece, will give the result of how much we must adjust each piece. However, confusion is just around the corner.

Therefore, to simplify this operation, I have constructed a calculation sheet that requires measuring:

- the small ferrule (Male and Female)
- the large ferrule (Male and Female)
- the “cap” of the reel seat;

and in return it gives the values with which we must adjust the Tip, the Mid Section and the Butt.

NB: Even though it can be inserted in the calculation sheet, the measurement of the tip was purposely omitted. For reasons of simplicity it is easier to make these adjustments with the rod finished with the other components mounted.

3 PEZZI - RETTIFICA DEL BLANK									
		mm	2133,6						
Numero pezzi				3					
A	TIP TOP		NB: Non si considerano gli effetti del tiptop - si segna a lapis sul blank: La parte eccedente del tip, lato apicale, si taglia alla fine pareggiando il Tip con gli altri pezzi						
Dati ferrula PICCOLA M-maschio F - femmina									
b	Maschio - Spessore Tappo	1,95	mm.	Ext	Int				
c	Femmina - Profondità lato maschio	17,68	mm.	Prof. F					
d	Femmina - Spessore Tappo	3,20	mm.	L.Totale		Ins Legno			
e	Maschio - ins. In femmina	-16,16	mm.			Ins in F			
Dati ferrula GRANDE M-maschio F - femmina									
B	Maschio - Spessore Tappo	2,11	mm.	Ext	Int				
C	Femmina - Profondità lato maschio	21,44	mm.	Prof. F					
D	Femmina - Spessore Tappo	2,47	mm.	L.Totale		Ins Legno			
E	Maschio - ins. In femmina	-20,32	mm.			Ins in F			
F	Reel Seat - spessore tappo	2,24	mm.	RS ext	RS int				
La canna aumenterebbe in totale di		14,61	mm.	per cui occorre rettificare		TIP	10,21	mm	
						MID	-10,83	mm	
						BUTT	-13,99	mm	
						Totale Rettifiche	-14,61	mm	

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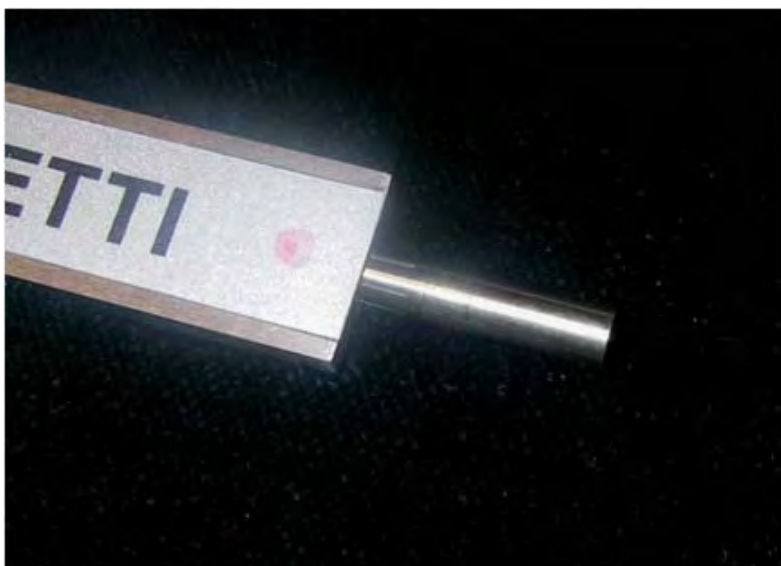
In questo esempio
La ferrula piccola è una Tong Larson 10/64
La ferrula grande è una Tong Larson 15/64
il reel seat è un Bellinger DLSE



The measurements and the values to insert in the calculation sheet are the following:

Small Ferrule – Measurement of the male (M) and the female (F)

- *M – External length*
(put the value in *b: Ext*);



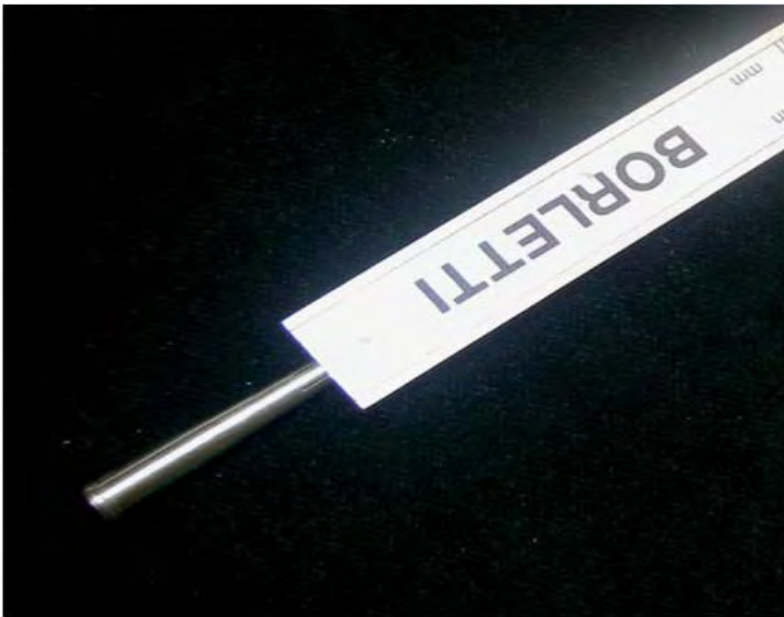
- *M – Internal depth*
(put the value in *b: Int*);



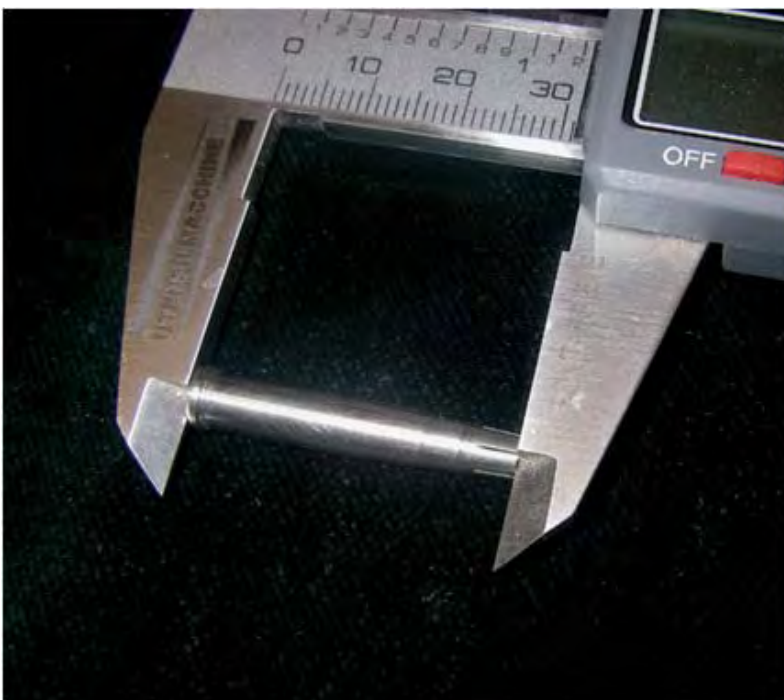
- *M – Length of insertion of the male into the female*
(put value in *e: Ins in F*)



- *F – Internal depth male side
(put value in c: Prof. F)*



- *F – Internal depth wood side
(put value in d: Ins. Legno)*



- *F – Total length
(put value in d: L. Totale)*

Large Ferrule – Measurement of the male and the female

- M – External length (put value in B: Ext);
- M – Internal depth (put value in B: Int);
- M -Length of male insertion into female (put value in E: Ins in F)
- F – Internal depth male side (put value in C: Prof. F);
- F – Internal depth wood side (put value in D: Ins. Legno;
- F – Total length (put value D: L. Totale)

Reel seat – Measuring the thickness of the “cap”



*External measurement
(put value in F/RS Ext);*



*Internal depth measurement
(put value in F/RS int)*

Practically it means measuring 5 objects get a total of 14 values to insert in the calculation sheet and the operation takes less than five minutes. It is more difficult to explain than to do.

The calculation sheet, in the yellow box, supplies the measurements in mm of the adjustments to make on the three sections of the rod; in black the values increased, in red with a minus sign the values decreased. Obviously, we are speaking about mm, so we need to be very precise where we mark and cut and we must use saws with the finest possible blade.

This calculation sheet is available and downloadable from the IBRA website www.rodmakers.it in the members area.

And again, I wish you well in the construction of a 3-piece rod and remind you of the old saying: "measure twice, cut once".



Tight lines !

Massimo Giuliani

www.giulianirods.it

Instructions to access the "Members Area"

- *Access the IBRA website www.rodmakers.it*
- *Click on the key (upper right) or on "Members Area" (drop-down menu on the left)*
- *The system will require your Login (Email + password)*
- *Click on Member space .*

The downloadable documents will appear, including this calculation sheet.



Sergio Berti Fly Fisherman - Marco Sbizzera Photographer



Reflections ... from the dunce's desk



fthics and Föhn...etics

by Giorgio Grondona

This time, before starting my reflection, I would like to point out that what I am about to write is in no way a criticism of working and/or methodologies that every rodmaker chooses to gain the best results he aims for, nor is it a hymn to carelessness or a banner for a slapdash attitude; it is rather an invitation to those who wish to embark on the construction of a fishing rod in bamboo sections to do so with simplicity, there is always time to listen to the mermaids' songs...

I have no idea what pushes a human being to take on the construction of a bamboo fishing rod, but I'll hazard some guesses: the desire to fish with a rod made by oneself (if the novice constructor is also a fisherman, it is not always the case), the passion for DIY together with the passion for fishing, the passion for (fly) fishing already tainted by the obsession for tying "flies", which, anyway, are not more exclusive or productive (in terms of catches) than those (less beautiful, obviously) we find in the shop or

online, the memory of a D in Physical Education, which in the eyes of our school mates was synonymous with Quasimodo (the Hunchback of Notre-Dame), and/or who knows what else. Anyway, whatever the reason, rodmaking is a "complete" hobby, all the parts of the body and even the mind are positively involved and the five senses are stimulated; I can assure you, as an ex practising sportsman: rodmaking can be compared to a sports discipline!!!

Now that you are ATHLETES, I advise against you browsing through the shelves of technical sportswear shops for our "sport", but head directly for the section of Dietary Supplements and observe, you are facing the "ethical" limit beyond which there is DOPING to reach your goals "quickly"!!!

Often, very often I page through books or surf the Internet searching for news about current or past rodmakers or factories and I pause to look at the various workshops which show

planes and shavings and I am reminded of the words of Marco Giardina (MOG) who introduced the 2009 IBRA course which I attended as a participant:

“Remember, the plane is the symbol of the Rodmaker”.

Obviously, MOG continued, but from that moment on, the simple plane would become a reference point for me because of its simplicity and all the tools and procedures I follow are inspired by simplicity; from finding, using or putting in practice. Certainly this interpretation matches the definition of “hobby”. The professionals, having to live with the equation “Time, Costs, Benefits”, will follow the “charts” of the team doctor!!!

At this point I would like to explain what I meant when I compare rodmaking to a sports discipline. I have always loved cycling, perhaps because I was born in the area of Italy where Costante Girardengo and Fausto Coppi, but I am fond of all sports that are defined as “resistance” sports. These, like all other sports, can be practised as “amateurs” (hobby) or as a job (professional). The amateur should only have his own (or his health's) obligations; the professional instead will need an “equipped” team to which he is fully committed, within the “rules”, to reach useful results. In other words, it is one thing to cycle with friends for fun and another to race the Milano-Sanremo or the Tour de France with the goal to win.

I have already mentioned that the plane fascinates me because of its simplicity, like the bicycle.

I'm sure you know it (the bicycle) was conceived by Leonardo and since then only the materials and the components have changed but the initial design has remained the same (even though someone did try to revolutionize it), three triangles: two closed and one open. Very simple, yes, but difficult to move despite the tyres; I consider effort normal in a resistance sport and if one practises it by choice, there shouldn't be any problems!!!

I will leave cycling for now, but not the (moderate) effort that accompanies a rodmaker in the various constructive phases. For example, when you need to flatten the nodes or straighten the strips, you can use a heat gun, which I consider useless or rather, unpleasant because it blows hot air of Föhn in my face (cyclists and ex cyclists do not like headwinds, especially if they are alone) and it is noisy, irritating like the buzz in a crowded waiting room. In my opinion, an alcohol lamp is much better: more attractive, it does not blow hot air in your face and is as silent as a path in the woods (without the perfume of larch and pine, but that of burned bamboo). Some may object that the heat gun is faster, well:

A – We are hobbyists (amateurs) and rodmakers for fun (I think) and so

B – Patience and calm are the greatest virtues in a rodmaker while hurry is his worst enemy (Anonymous....not really, MOG again at the 2009 course)

C – If I had wanted to race in a time trial, I would have carried on cycling (as an amateur)!!!



Now that the nodes are pressed and the strips straightened, we will get the levels; a phase that experienced rodmakers often judge with condescending annoyance; on the contrary, for inexperienced rodmakers it is a chance to get friendly with the plane, which will reward them with poetic pleasure. This respectful friendship must be reserved, above all, to the blade of the plane. We must be committed to sharpening it, we must choose the abrasive supports carefully, we must use the most reliable and precise blade guides and dedicate our time to the “manual rubbing” with willingness and passion. And while we are doing all this there is surely someone who is looking at the watch and calculating the effort and opting for an electric grinder (I will not mention brands because I know only one); anyway the level will be done with a beveller and he is not interested in a friendship with a working tool!!!



I am tempted to say “There’s the rub”, but I dislike writing on the floor as much as I dislike the annoying noise of the heat gun, so how on earth would I enjoy the dusty din of a beveller?. Even a milling machine with thousands of rpm does not produce music, the dust can be removed with an aspirator that has a lower sound and from the resulting concert: family, neighbours and passers-by will definitely thank you.

In one way or another we have our levels, which we will bind by hand or with a Garrison-type binder, or a binder with an electric motor. Once our bundles have been made, we can move on to the heat treatment and then finish our strips with the taper we want. To do this we can rely on the friendship we have with the plane or resort to a Hand-Mill, noble choice if we want sections of the rod that would require the use of different planing forms (one for the right strips and one for the left strips), but for a hexagonal section that requires the use of only one “template”, I think the “Symbol of the Rodmaker” needs to be held in high consideration. So, facing or avoiding some of these “slow and strenuous” passages, we are at the gluing stage and once the adhesive has been applied we can tie our blank with our hands or with a manual or electrical binder as with the levels before the tempering.

All that is left now is the finishing and here whether we have been more manual or relied on technology, the paths join. Beauty is not an absolute value, of course tapers made with care should not be spoilt with sloppy finishings, but...perhaps the contrary is worse!!!

We are done, for now, I hope I have not offended or discouraged anyone and in case I have, remember: “The bray of a donkey does not reach the sky”^{*} and so...pedal (or plane) as you prefer.

Giorgio Grondona

** Translator's note: An Italian expression which means the quote of a person who could be defined as stupid or ignorant should not be considered.*



The photographers of this issue are:

Sergio Berti



My passion for fly fishing started when I was 18 and now I am 46. I like all the rivers of Trentino Alto Adige, the Prealps of Veneto and Brescia.

When fly fishing, I adapt my technique to the situation, obviously with a preference for dry fly fishing; you can find me on the river four days out of seven. It is a way of life for me.

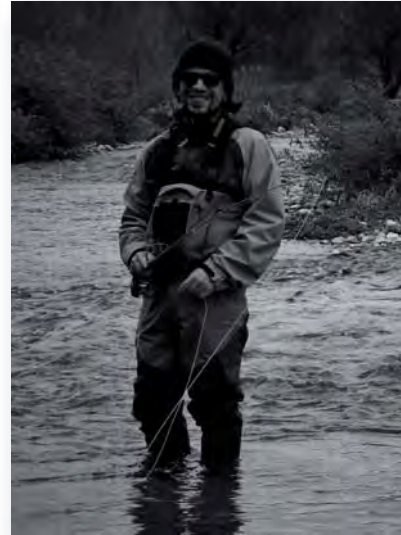
In 2010, I became a member of IBRA after a brief rodmaking course in Franco Francucci's shop, after which I started what was to become a very interesting study of bamboo rods. I now make precious bamboo rods which I personalize to my way of fishing.

I prefer fast rods which are slightly slower in the tip (and for this bamboo is fantastic) so that I can adapt them to changes in technique on the river.

I was recently selected and trained to become a guide by Trentino Fishing All – Istituto Agrario di S. Michele all'Adige.

For me the word "river" means "emotions".

Marco Sbizzera



I am a passionate photographer, enamoured with fly fishing and its versatility: being immersed in nature, the gestures of the cast, the entomology and the creativity of tying flies...

I was introduced to the magic of bamboo during the 2015 IBRA class.

This combination of technique, art, discipline and ingenuity is what I love; that is something you can only share because trying to explain it is like trying to explain Quantum Physics.

My motto is "ethics and aesthetics": for this is the only condition that defines who we are, what we do and what we do well...just like making a bamboo rod.



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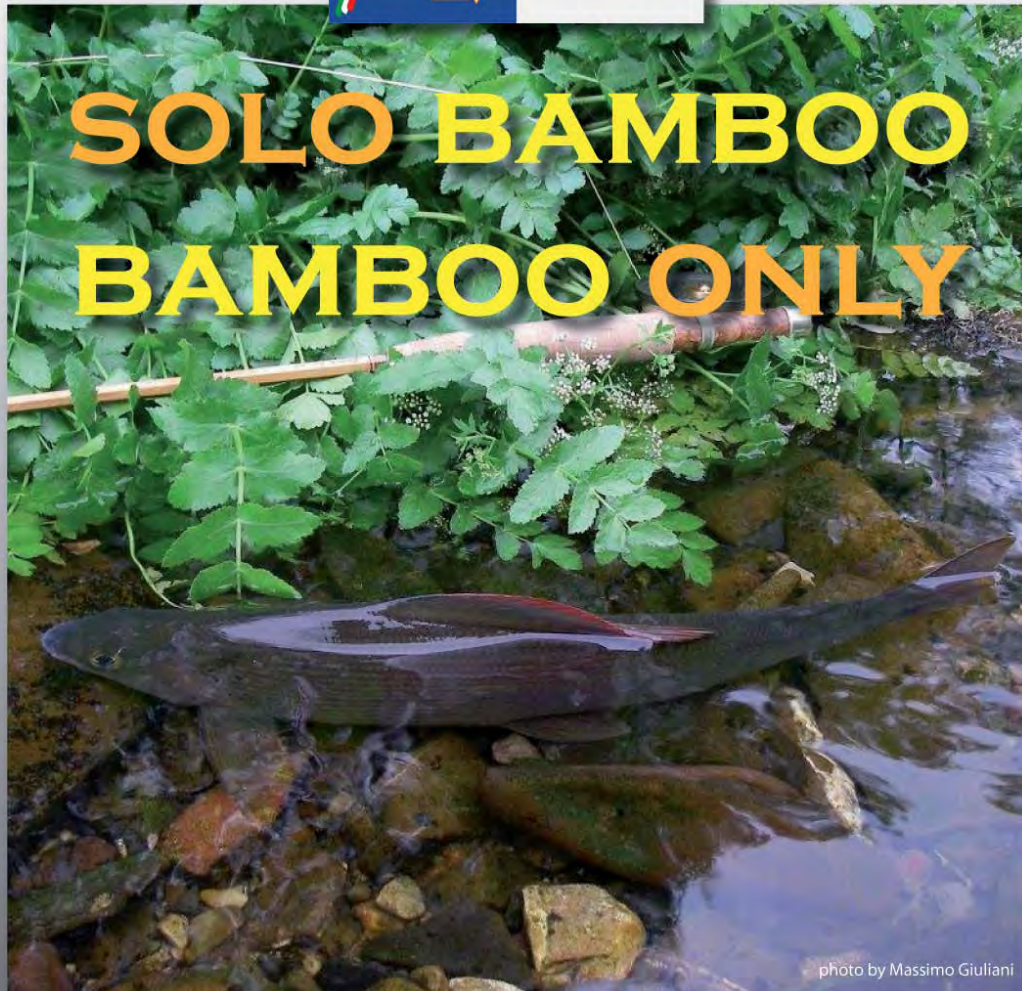


photo by Massimo Giuliani

TAILWATER TEVERE

FRIDAY MAY 13 2016

AT THE 12TH IBRA GATHERING WE WILL FISH
TOGETHER WITH BAMBOO RODS

A CHANCE TO TRY A BAMBOO ROD EVEN IF YOU DO NOT OWN ONE
THE IBRA MEMBERS WILL PROVIDE THE RODS THEY MADE SETUP WITH SILK LINES
THE MEETING PLACE IN SANSEPOLCRO (AR) ITALY AT THE "PODERE VIOLINO"
INFO AT : IBRA@RODMAKERS.IT

ORGANIZATION IBRA WITH :





THE GORGES OF THE LIRO RIVER IN CHIAVENNA

Newsletter
of Italian Bamboo Rodmakers Association

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