

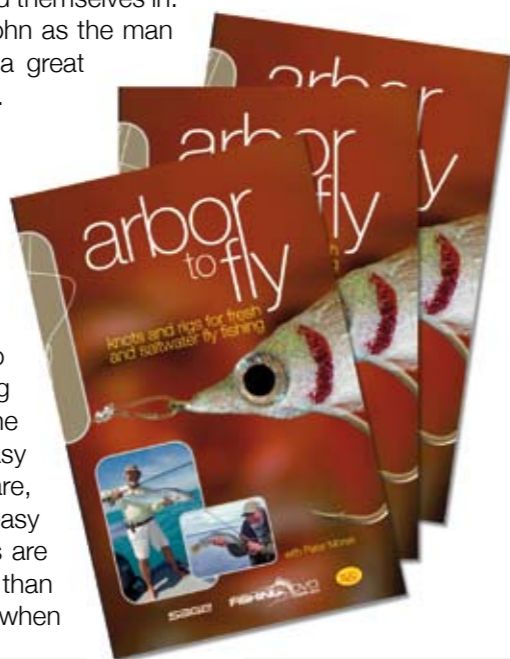
Reviews

Mark Bantich reviews a new knot tying DVD for fly anglers.

My first attempt at a Bimini knot, dutifully copied from a book, put me in traction for a week. I suspected I had gone wrong when my leg ended up around my ear while everything unravelled between my toes. The fact is, there are some things which just cannot be easily understood through the written word alone. Shakespeare, for instance, bored the bejesus out of me at school. Reading Romeo and Juliet was as earth shatteringly fascinating as licking a carpet. However, when we finally got to see the play in action, Juliet was a bit of all right and it all made much more sense!

My relationship with knots has always been a bit tense and I was, therefore, very pleased to hear that John Haenke (Offshore Productions) had collaborated with Peter Morse to produce a DVD demonstrating a simplified knot tying system which would cover every situation a fly fisher could find themselves in. Fly anglers will remember John as the man behind the Wildfish series, a great Australian fishing production.

Arbor to Fly, as the title suggests, presents a series of 13 knots that can be used in all fly fishing situations; from tying backing onto your reel all the way through to tying a fly onto your leader. Accompanying graphics help explain the tying process to make for easy viewing. Many of the knots are, importantly, very basic and easy to tie but some of the knots are complex and will take more than one viewing. There are times when



a quick or easy knot is essential, particularly during a hot bite, low light levels, or bouncing up and down on a boat. Even when times aren't frantic; quick, easy and strong knots are still my favourite. That said; if you were to sit down for an evening and practice all the knots explained, you should never be short of a knot solution again.

The DVD is also an excellent long-term reference tool as some knots demonstrated are seldom tied yet are critical to the overall strength of the outfit. Making braided loop connections on the back of fly lines, for instance, is something I do only a few times a year, but it is still important to make sure the connection is strong. Being able to revisit the tying sequence whenever you need to re-rig these loops means the connection will be tied correctly every time.

I suppose the real benefit of this DVD is that it provides a system of knot tying that you can learn and use to consistently produce strong knots in any situation. The last thing any of us want is to tie the wrong knot for a given situation, or tie a knot poorly. By only using a few knots, and learning to tie them well, you will always be able to have maximum confidence during fishing.

The DVD retails for \$19.95 and can be purchased at all good tackle shops or online at www.fishingdvd.com.au

Mark Bantich tests the Dingo MKII Vise.

Australian-based DINGO have been around for many years and have built a solid worldwide reputation for manufacturing excellent vises. I have recently been using their MKII vise and have found it to be superb. The vise is custom-made from precision machined bar stock stainless steel and each vise kit includes two heat treated jaws to cover hook sizes 12/0 to 32. The vise also includes a lifetime warranty.

Manufacturing information aside, fly tying vises really need to do one thing well, and that is hold a hook properly. I found the Dingo vise to have excellent hook holding capabilities across a range of hook sizes. Correctly placed, I wasn't able to budge a 10/0 billfish hook or even a size 6 shrimp hook.

While hook holding capabilities are paramount, there are other components of a vise that really appeal to me. One of these is a rotary function. The MKII has



a very smooth full rotary function which I found very enjoyable to use. The ability to regulate the pressure of the rotation is something I liked a lot. It meant I could fix the fly at any position I wanted when tying in the various parts of a fly. The head and jaws can also be adjusted up or down which was very useful when tying more intricate patterns, or when finishing epoxy heads on larger offshore patterns.

Vises with pedestal bases are often criticised for not being very stable, especially when tying larger patterns. The base pedestal model I tested was very stable and I never felt like the vise was going to budge, even when applying serious pressure spinning deer hair for larger Dahlberg Divers.

Aesthetically, the Dingo vises look like the premium vises that they are. The MKII vise tested also comes with several additional extras. Apart from the freshwater (#8 to #32) and saltwater jaws (#6 to 12/0) already mentioned, they include a gallows tool, a bobbin rest and a shaft for the MKI vise. The vise can be easily dismantled and packed away into the heavy duty canvas bag supplied for storage at home or when travelling.

Two versions are available. The vise tested, the MKII, can be ordered as either a base pedestal or clamp version. At \$658 plus shipping for the base pedestal model, this vise represents fantastic value for money. The MKI version with pedestal base retails for \$352 plus shipping.

For more information, or to order a vise, visit <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~bjrodg/> or contact Peter Rodgers on (02) 6025 7272.

Micah Adams fishes with the G.Loomis Stream Dance Max Line Speed Fly Rod series.

I have always preferred fast fly rods to those with slower, more progressive tapers. I like faster rods because they enable me to cast better in technically demanding situations such as with heavy flies or when the wind comes up.

Recently, I've been fishing with the fastest rod in the G. Loomis Stream Dance range - the Max Line Speed. They are available in four and six weight versions as well as the five weight nine foot version I have been using (FR1085-4). 'Max Line Speed' refers to the ultra fast taper and recovery rate of the fly rod. What all this means when on the water is that the five weight had the tip to throw a five weight fly line out of sight but throughout the mid and butt sections of the rod there was power to burn. This power in the rod had many advantages and shone in various situations. This was particularly evident in estuary fly fishing where heavy flies and stronger breezes are commonplace.

Recently, whilst canoe fly fishing for estuary perch in seriously dense overgrowth, I had to cast a heavy little clouser style fly well back into snaggy confines. To do this I needed a tight loop with very little room for a back cast and lots of line speed to turn the heavy fly over inside the snag: the rod did it with ease. On the same river later in the day, there was a stiff breeze and plenty of room to move and I found it just as easy to fire out more than a full fly line, which I was especially impressed with as I was running a six weight line on this five weight rod to aid in 'shorter' casts!

These rods are a real head turner when it comes to casting and due to the powerful mid and butt sections it has the ability to turn a serious fish heading for home.

One of the reasons the new Stream Dance range is so light (apart from the GLX graphite material) is the new REC guides used on the rods. These flexible, sprung stripper and single foot snake guides are made from nickel titanium alloy and are incredibly light and can be bent to any angle and spring straight back to shape without any cause for concern. The blank colour has also moved away from the traditional spaceship matt black and now sports an impressive, shinier colour. The reel seat is very impressive with the trendiest little fighting butt I've seen. This line of rods are a great addition to the G. Loomis range and are **available at all leading retail outlets.**

