

Reviews



Scott Mitchell tries out the new Scientific Anglers Blue Water Express Fly Lines

I'm no purist when it comes to fly fishing and like to push the boundaries on occasion. I find nothing more exciting than casting a fly to a lit-up billfish in cobalt blue water or the anticipation of casting to a big snag in the jungle rivers of Papua New Guinea.

Now if you want to cast big flies at big fish chances are you may also want to use tippet classes heavier than that accepted by the IGFA (above 20 pounds). This is where those of us who like to push their fly fishing to the limit have come unstuck in the past. Most fly lines are built with a core

strength of 30 lbs – so if you use tippets heavier than this the weakest link in the system was your fly line. Not anymore!

3M Scientific Anglers have introduced a new range of specialist fast sinking fly lines built using a 60 lb braided monofilament nylon core for blue water game fishing. I used these lines for the first time last September when fishing out at Kenn reef in the Coral Sea. Our main targets were wahoo and dogtooth tuna – two of the toughest fly rod targets on the planet. I was able to land both during a week of unforgettable fly fishing and couldn't have been happier with the SA Bluewater Express Lines.

These lines are currently available in three fast sinking sizes in grain weights 500 (12 – 14 weight), 600 (13 – 15 weight) and 700 grains (14 – 15 weight) in sink rates of 8.5 ips, 9.0 ips and 9.5 ips respectively. I fished a 500 grain line on my Loomis GLX 12 weight CrossCurrent and a 600 grain on a new 15 weight CrossCurrent. Incorporating 3M's patented Tropi-Core technology, I found the lines straighten easily off the reel while remaining stiff under warm conditions. Being an integrated shooting head they feature a smooth transition between the front fast sinking head section and the running line.

This design makes casting them much nicer than a conventional shooting head. The running line is of an optimal size to reduce tangling and also allow enough purchase for setting large hooks. Another excellent feature of the Bluewater Express is the graduated-density between the head and running line. Sinking fly lines in the past formed a belly due to the mid section of the head being the heaviest. This quite often meant less strike detection (especially when cubing for tuna) and decreased the hook setting ability as you had to straighten this belly out before coming up tight to strike. The Bluewater Express is made using graduated density (weight) from the front of the head through to the running line, meaning the front of the head is always pulling the belly and running line behind it, making line sink straight. This provides enhanced sensitivity, better strike detection and positive hook penetration.

If you cast large flies at BIG fish with heavy tippets the new Scientific Angler Blue Water Express lines are definitely worth serious consideration. You can also check out the Tropic Express lines if you're after a similar design in lighter weights up to 250 grains to suit rods down to 7 weight.

Mark Bantich tests the Galvan Torque

When Andrew Byrnes from Pro-Angler Sydney sent me a Galvan Torque to test for three months with the explicit instruction to "Try and destroy it", I wondered if he thought I would take him seriously. Well I did, without any success.

All high end reels these days need certain characteristics if they wish to make inroads into a very competitive market – they absolutely need a drag that ramps up smoothly, limited startup inertia, a comfortable handle and a finish that can withstand some saltwater abuse. The Galvan drag (stainless steel and delrin) handled tuna and mackerel up to ten kilos flawlessly. The reel had a brief rinse after each outing, but nothing else, yet showed no signs of wear. I have potatoes for fingers yet the handle was still very comfortable after a day of winding in tuna and mackerel.

Apart from these essential characteristics, the Galvan has a few extra qualities that appealed to me. Firstly, the large arbor spool is something I enjoy for ease of retrieval. Yet despite the large arbor configuration, backing capacity was ample on the T-8 model I tested and I never felt I would need more. The lightness of the reel is also appealing, especially in rods to 9 weight. A heavy reel on a light outfit can be cumbersome when used all day, so I have always preferred lighter reels. The reel has both an ingoing and outgoing clicker, but the noise is muted so it doesn't sound like a bicycle with clothes pegs on the spokes. Reels these days also compete for the 'style' factor, and the design of the Torque is certainly very appealing with its rounded contours and ported frame.

Galvan reels are available from Pro-Angler stores or give Andrew a call at the Sydney store on 02 9819 6777.



Dave Anderson goes north with a Z-Axis in hand

The first Z-Axis rod I tried soon after their release was the 9 foot 8 weight model. I compared it to a few other Sages in the same weight (TCR, X12, and XP series it was replacing) and came to the conclusion that the action would suit me for fishing the snags with large flies for natives. The nine weight I've been loaned for a trip north proved excellent for this type of fishing too. Coupled with an intermediate Downunder line it cast accurately and had a sweet, forgiving action that remains friendly even at the end of the day. No other rod I've used in this weight range has been as sweet.

Don't let that friendliness fool you though, the rod is more than capable of busting out a long fast cast. Later on the same trip north while fishing in Hervey Bay I had two of my other rods break in a short period and was left with just the Z-Axis. After fishing with a TCR 9 weight all day it at first felt slower, but it doesn't take long to settle into the action and have the thing singing. It definitely is designed for fishing rather than just show-off casting. One thing is for sure though, this rod does not need to be over-lined to work well. True to line weight it is as sweet to cast as any other rod I've ever used, whether casting thirty feet into a snag or eighty feet into the wind. If you are looking for a new rod for cod or barra the Z-Axis is getting worth your hands on for a test run.