



JENNIFER OLSSON SPLIT CANE SIGNATURE RODS

Arundinaria amabilis is literally the “lovely reed,” the material used by Garrison, Gillum, Payne and others to craft rods steeped in history and poetry. But have time and technology passed by Tonkin cane as a rod-making material, relegating cane rods to wall-hangers or collectibles? Or can fishable, even exquisitely fishable, rods still be crafted from it?

Yep—cane rods, especially in the shorter lengths, are still lovely, and fish well. The extra weight is hardly noticeable in the 8-foot and shorter lengths, and actions are well-suited to most trout fishing situations. Jennifer Olsson, angling writer, lecturer and former guide, has teamed up with Swedish rod builder Carl-Johan Anderberg to produce two such cane sticks, called the Jennifer Olsson Split Cane Signature Rods.

The Midsummer is a 7'9" rod for 4- or 5-weight lines, and the 4th-of-July is an 8' 5/6-weight. Both rods are 3-piece and come with two tips. Finish is very good, as you would expect on a finely crafted rod, regardless of base material. While the models I tested were Jennifer's personal rods and had quality aluminum reel seats, the production models will have fine nickel-silver hardware, befitting a cane rod. Rods come in a colorful sack (a “psycho sack,” as Jennifer explained) and a practical Cordura-covered PVC tube. Both models retail for \$1,200—not a trifle, but not out

of line with today's finest graphite rods, given the labor involved in constructing a six-strip cane rod.

Both rods feature a smooth progressive action, and while the Midsummer is clearly designed for more delicate work, it still has a good range. But the 4th-of-July was my favorite, and with a 5-weight line. So equipped, the rod is surprisingly versatile: Close or distant, small fly or big, it will deliver with delicacy or authority, as the situation demands. If you're looking for a cane rod that not only looks good but performs, consider the Olsson Signature series. As an added bonus, either rod showers the senses with the uniquely pleasant smell of varnish each time you open the case. Jennifer Olsson Split Cane Signature Rods; 406-587-5140, www.scandivestflyfishing.com/.