

The F.I.B.H Ferrule

by Bjarne Fries

This article is about a bamboo ferrule I invented three years ago.
FIBH stands for: *Fries Integrated Bamboo Hexaferrule*.

A short introduction:

I am a rod builder living in Denmark, Europe. I have been a professional rod maker for about 20 years (difficult to remember exactly when one gets 50!).

During one of my visits to Japan 3 years ago to visit friends and customers, I and my wife Hanne were invited by my friend Kenshiro Shimazaki, who is hook designer for Tiemco, writer of a fantastic innovative book: "A Fly Fishers View", an very inventive fly tier, excellent flamenco guitarist as well as a great guy, with a brain as quick and sharp as a samurai blade. A few minutes after arrival we were standing on the balcony of his house, casting different rods and discussing rod actions. "The best catch I had from here was a cat," he told me.

Later in the evening he had invited some other friends, Mr. Nakazawa editor of the Japanese fly fishing magazine *Furrai no Zashi* and Mr. Nakamura, who is an elder rod making colleague, building traditional Japanese rods for Ayo fishing. These rods are very long, 4-6 yards made of Japanese bamboo as it grows, dried, tempered, cut to pieces, varnished and so on.

Suddenly Ken left the room and came back with a delicate rod of about 7'6",
"What do you think about this Bjarne?"

I looked, and beside the nice work, I suddenly noticed the ferrule. It was made of bamboo!

"This rod my friend Mr. Nakamura made for me", Ken said. "He was very impressed after he saw some of the rods you have built for me, and he wanted to try to built a split cane rod".

I, on the other hand was impressed by the work of Mr. Nakamura, especially when considering this was one of his first rods built "the Western Way", and I could sense the hand of a man, who new bamboo by heart.

The ferrule was made of a short, thin piece of natural grown Japanese Bamboo, Matake, reamed out in the inside to a hole with exact diameter. Then Mr. Nakamura had rounded both parts of the thick end of the tip section as well as the thin part of the but section on a lathe to the same diameter as the inside of the Matake tube and glued the piece of Matake on the but section as if it was a nickel silver ferrule! But, and this is where I failed years ago, when I did some experiment on the subject, the whole female part was tightly wound with white silk thread and varnished several times! This was sufficient to hold the bamboo fibers together under the severe stresses that are put on the ferrules when casting.

As I learned later on, this was an old way to assemble different traditional fishing rods in Japan, used for



centuries!

“But how about friction and wear after a while?” I asked.

“No problem, just rub the male part with ordinary candle wax from time to time, when you feel things get heavy!” was Ken’s calm reply.

As we all know, bamboo is incredible strong and at the same time very fragile, the later aspect we use when we split the cane into strips.

But the part, that was my eye opener were the supporting silk wrappings. Their ability to support the natural binding of the power fibers in the cane and thus prevent them to split apart!

Later during the evening my brain was working with ideas.

I instantly knew what I did not like the interruption of power fibers in the design.

Every colleague in the craft can follow me on this part, to cut through power fibers, for me, is like cutting myself.

So how about building a swell and than have a piece of a parallel section? Drill a hole, ream it out and round the male in the lathe to fit... here we go again, cutting power fibers. I can’t do it! But to avoid this, one would have to make a hexagonal hole! Impossible, but wait... removing the inner apex of each strip before gluing and you end up with a hexagonal hole after gluing! But, why not do this on the lower end of the tip section instead, the same as on synthetic rods, this would also feel more pleasing aesthetically.

FIBH-ferule.

The disadvantages:

More work to the rod builder!!

The advantages:

1. Low weight, about 1.5 grams!!!

The weight of a smaller ferule is about 5 grams. This means a weight reduction of 3.5 grams! No big deal, you think? 3.5 grams half-way up a rod means a hell of a lot. Try to tape 3.5 grams of lead wire to your favorite rods ferule, make some casts and sense deeply, remove the lead and do it again. You will quickly get my point.

But we can just design the butt to move the extra 3.5 grams, some will say.

OK, but this means more unnecessary material in the butt which can be avoided by a lighter ferule keeping the but section as light as possible, no dead weight here Mr.!

2. You will obtain a flexible assembling of the rod! It still will have a stiffening effect compared to a one-piece rod, but it comes very close! Far better than a nickel silver ferule.

3. You will never have to worry about aligning the guides of tip and but anymore.

4. You will never having twisting of tip and but to happen any more. (A proper fit of ferules on trout rods will not give this problem, but on a two handed salmon rod used for spey casting and the kind.).

5. The unique, natural flow of energy from grip to tip.

6. The aesthetical aspect. A flow of pure bamboo not interrupted by some metal thing!



Bjarne lands a big rainbow on his 3-piece 9'3" for #4. He says it is a wonderful deep working rod weighting only 106 grams.

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