

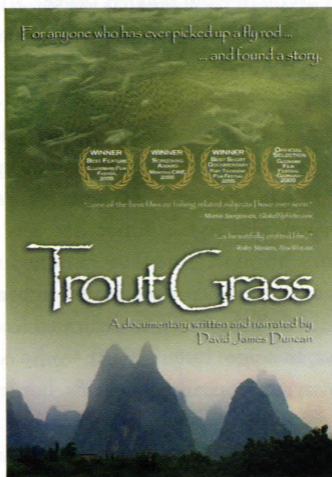
## Trout Grass

Written and narrated by  
David James Duncan  
(2005: Volcano Productions;  
www.troutgrass.com)  
48 minutes; DVD; \$29.95

A tribute, simply and lovingly constructed, *Trout Grass* is a paean to a process that begins, like this DVD, in the hillside forests of Guangdong Province in southern China.

That's where culms of a plant that can grow several feet in a night are hand cut, hauled by human-pulled carts down hillside paths . . . soon to be carefully sorted and culled, then transported 10,000 miles into the hands of craftsman like Hoagy Carmichael and Glenn Brackett. The transformation these artisans produce—we watch Brackett working some of the 4,000 steps it takes to make a rod—creates a tool treasured by fishers who savor the feel of fibers strong as steel, and still alive, perhaps, in spirit.

“It's said that split bamboo means something to everybody, and everything to some,” observes writer and narrator David James Duncan early on. He counts himself among the devotees, and his gentle musings



punctuate the observations of those for whom collecting bamboo is a business and its shaping a calling; and also frames the thoughts of other anglers who cast this grass with a quiet passion, including author Thomas McGuane. Ed George's cinematography is simply spectacular (his credits include work for *National Geographic*); and the entire production has a pace familiar to fishers willing to wait for a rod to load, anticipating that sweet moment with a smile. 