

close look - georgia



JASON WEEKS

WINSTON, GA

A native son of the Peach State, Jason Weeks grew up 35 miles west of Atlanta, in Winston, Georgia. His father often took him hunting, fishing and camping. Many times this was to the nearest beach or mountains of North Georgia, but he was also privileged to experience vacations in the West to places such as Yosemite and Yellowstone.

"We had a group of friends from our church, and we called ourselves 'The Christian Campers,'" says Weeks. "On many weekends you would find us caravanning up to the mountains with our campers




in tow and fishing rods in the back of our trucks. I guess that is how I developed a love for the mountains. It was on many of those North Georgia streams that I first developed my love for trout fishing. As a young boy, 10-12 years old, I really thought it was something to go out wading in my K-Mart brand waders, carrying my spinning rod, and sporting a vest full of rooster tails and a creel full of sweet corn; but to me, that was fishing...and there was nothing better in the world than catching my limit on stockers."

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featured rod builder



Later, after earning a BS at Georgia Southern University in 2000, he married the love of his life, Chan, and purchased his first fly rod. As he explained, he longed for those spring days chasing stocked rainbows with his family in the Georgia highlands. His dad had a fly rod when he was a kid, but Weeks didn't give it much thought. Going out West as a boy though, he watched anglers in Yellowstone cranking out line on a long fly rod as if they were some sort of cowboy cracking a bull whip. He didn't quite understand the concept; although, there was something strangely serene about it.

His first fly rod was deployed on bluegill, but that changed in 2010 when he and his wife went in with his parents to purchase a cabin in Blue Ridge on the Toccoa River. In Blue Ridge, Weeks meandered into Bill Oysters' shop where he fell in love with this master craftsman's bamboo rods. As Weeks says, "Oyster's truly an artist of the highest degree of his craft."

“Needless to say, I wanted to figure out a way to get my hands on a bamboo rod, but didn’t know if I could really ever afford one,” explains Weeks. “Chan had gotten me into fly tying five years earlier, when she gave me a fly tying kit for birthday. It quickly became an obsession for me, and I began to wonder if I had the patience to build a rod?”

“Bill Oyster offers a week long class in his shop where you can learn to split, flame and make your own bamboo rod,” says Weeks, “but at the time my schedule nor my budget permitted me to take his class. Research about making rods, I soon came across the John C. Campbell Folk School in Murphy, NC. Only 30 minutes from our cabin, there Doug Hall teaches a two part class on making and finishing bamboo fly

rods. Shortly thereafter at an intense weekend long class in February of 2012, I turned with a pre-purchased bamboo blank into my very own bamboo fly rod. And just like fly fishing, and just like fly tying... I was hooked and ready to complete another rod,” says Weeks.

Weeks convinced his wife that he needed to build his Dad a rod. He purchased a Sulley’s rod wrapping jig. Next, he built a dip tank in their basement, and then converted an antique chifferobe into a drying closet. After building a rod for his Dad, a friend of Weeks who likes to fly

fish heard of about his new hobby and expressed interest in buying the first rod Weeks had made. Reluctantly, Weeks sold it, only to go and start the next one.

Weeks has blossomed into a first-class rod builder. It is not his fulltime profession, as he says that he fishes the Toccoa tailwater a great deal. On one of the larger North Georgia trout rivers, his favorite bamboo rod that he uses is a 7 foot 4 weight rod that is a Payne

98 taper. He describes it as an awesome dry fly rod and gives a really nice, delicate presentation.

"I think for a tailwater rod, the longer the better," notes Weeks. "Ultimately, an 8 ½ foot rod would be ideal in my opinion, and a 4 weight is one of my favorites. You could get some nice long casts out of a rod like that and offer a

and tight spaces. I built a 6 foot 3 weight rod a while back that is a PH Young "Midge" taper. It's a great small stream mountain rod. It's not something you are going to cast a country mile, but it works great in tight spaces and is a load of fun on those mountain brookies," concludes Weeks.

Right now Weeks only works with bamboo, noting that someday he hopes to build graphite rods. Every time he looks at graphite blanks to work with, something always

brings him back to bamboo. Weeks regards fiberglass rods as easier to cast, but there is something about woodiness of bamboo that he finds to be absolutely gorgeous, and very nostalgic.

"I know that doesn't have much to do with bamboo rod building, or fly fishing," noted Weeks, but if you need a correlation though...Jesus was a Carpenter who also hung out with fisherman. Jesus Christ has had the biggest impact and influence on my life. Without Him I would be nothing...it's that simple. That's who I strive to be like each and every day, but...I fall short. My parents

delicate presentation with your dry flies, but you will still be able to fish some large nymphs or even streamers with it.

"When I think of a 'mountain' rod, I think of a shorter length rod, designed for small streams

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taught me to love Jesus provided an outstanding example for me, and taught me...well all of the most important things in life. Both of my parents are hard workers and provided an unbelievable upbringing for me and my sister. They provided for our every need, and practically our every want also. They are outstanding Grandparents, too. If I can be the kind of parent to my two boys as they were to me, well, then I have accomplished something."

Jason Weeks finished rods start at \$850.00 and include the following (prices may vary depending on your selections: custom tipping on wrap and minimal engraving also available at an additional charge. If you are interested in having your own rod built, please contact Jason at jasonweeks@bellsouth.net to discuss your specific needs and how Jason can accommodate you.



