

# Tackle bag

**MAGNUS ANGUS** looks at built-cane 4-weight, the new Orvis Helios 2, snaps and links from Germany, and sonic-welded breathables

## Smart rod

**6ft 6in #4 2pce**  
By James Smart

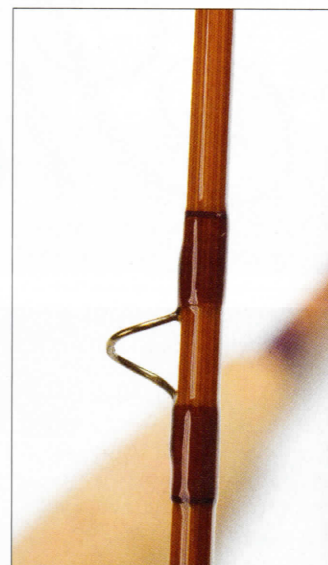
Someone hands you a craft-made cane rod and, naturally, you expect nice things, such as quality components and pretty details. This rod doesn't disappoint.

James Smart builds in the UK, works from the raw culm, splitting and planing the sections by hand.

This blank has a slightly swelled butt, which stiffens the action pushing the bend a little more towards the tip. A nicely made blank. The builder has opted to add

intermediate whippings; these are single wraps of thread – decorative not functional. The snake and bridge rings look traditional. At the butt the cigar shaped grip is turned from excellent cork. It's fairly fat but feels nice in my mitt. The seat is a down-locker, nicely figured wood spacer, my reel was held in place by a sliding metal band. This has a slim metal ferrule linking the sections, small and light but still more mass than the cane either side of the joint.

I can enjoy the look and craft of this rod. I like the look of the transparent whippings, I



Natural silk holds the guides in place, varnished so it becomes near invisible.

appreciate the single turn of thread nodding to older styles of cane where the intermediate whippings helped hold the sections of cane together. I certainly appreciate the quality of the grip.

This casts well, it feels heavier and slower than a comparable carbon rod, but it throws a nice line. This matches a #4 line well, loops are rounded more than needle sharp but they deliver a fly sweetly. Personally, on a small stream, I would fish with this rod quite happily but compared with a carbon rod there is a clear weight penalty – but I guess cane rods are not all about performance.

It comes with two tips, but is still a two-piece rod.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**SMART 6FT 6IN #4 (SR392)**

**Sections:** 2 (with spare tip)

**Action angle:** 60°

**Stiffness:** 52.3g

**Weight:** 93.8g

**Rings:** Bridge butt ring, snakes

**Handle:** Cigar

**Fighting butt:** No

**Cork quality:** Excellent

**Reel seat:** Wood spacer, dark metal fittings

**Blank:** Gloss cane

**Thread:** Natural and claret silk

**Build quality:** Very high

**Rod bag:** Cloth

**Rod tube:** Aluminium

**Price:** £625

**From:** Alternative Tackle

[www.alternativetackle.com](http://www.alternativetackle.com)



Intermediate whipping, a single turn of claret silk, neatly nods to classic rods which often had intermediate whippings.