

Pezon et Michel - The Story



P et M was founded in Amboise, near Paris, after the end of 1st World War, as a continuation of a production-and-sale activity started in 1895 by messers Pezon, Serpette, Bourrellier and L'Heritier (the earlier company had an own production of pike and carp rods, as well as rods for "au toc" fishing, and distributed fly rods as Milward, from England).

First bamboo refendu fly rods were manufactured for P+M by two craftsmen, whose small enterprises were acquired between 1924 and 1930 and moved to Amboise, H. Garreau from Dijon and F. Robillard of Macon.

Rods manufactured in these years were clearly "inspired" by traditional English rod types, which use at that time was widespread. Following items were available:

Darling 9', two pieces
Midship 9' – 9'6" – 10' – 11', three pieces
Teddy 9'-9'6"-10'-11', three pieces
Willy 11', three pieces
Week-end 9', three pieces.

During this period, rods are completely hand-made in non-tempered bamboo, and it's easy to find even visible differences in rods of same type.

First refendu rods manufactured autonomously by P+M were Luxor spinning rods: built in non-tempered bamboo as well, proved to be too smooth and slow in their action, still far from standards desired for "modern" fishing rods...

Between 1935 and 1937, an electric oven begins to operate: this allowed a sharp control of temperature used in bamboo temper process. It's the first step toward the creation of a structure that, in future years, will produce fly rods unique for their manufacturing knowledge and accuracy in raw materials choice; afterwards to this capital technological innovation, begins the production of new "Luxor Luxe" spinning rods and of first items of "Parabolic" series fly rods.

During this time, another *key event* takes place: Charles Ritz joins the company.

Charles-Cesar Ritz was born in France, in 1891, by Swiss parents, and will discover fishing quite late, in his twenties. In 1917 Ritz moves to United States, where he will remain until 1928: his first employment will be at New York "Ritz-Carlton Hotel", managed by his family... And in his leisure time he starts entertaining a deep devotion for fly rods restoration at beginning, and then for rods construction. In these days he met Jim Paine, beginning a discussion on tapers (term that identifies the conical profile of the rod, that features

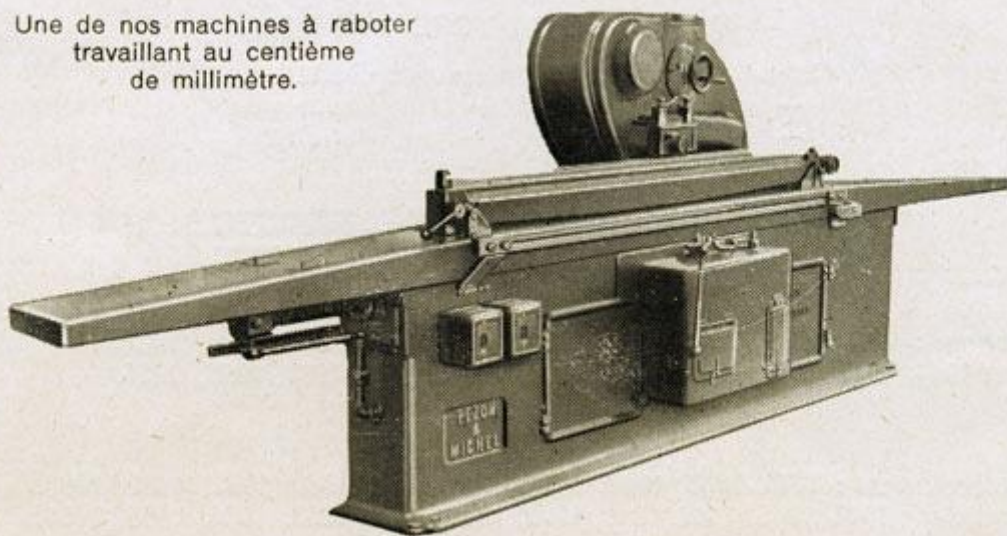
the rod's action and "*behaviour*").

By his American stay, Ritz will earn a great technical development, and a huge growth of what will be his "angling culture and education".

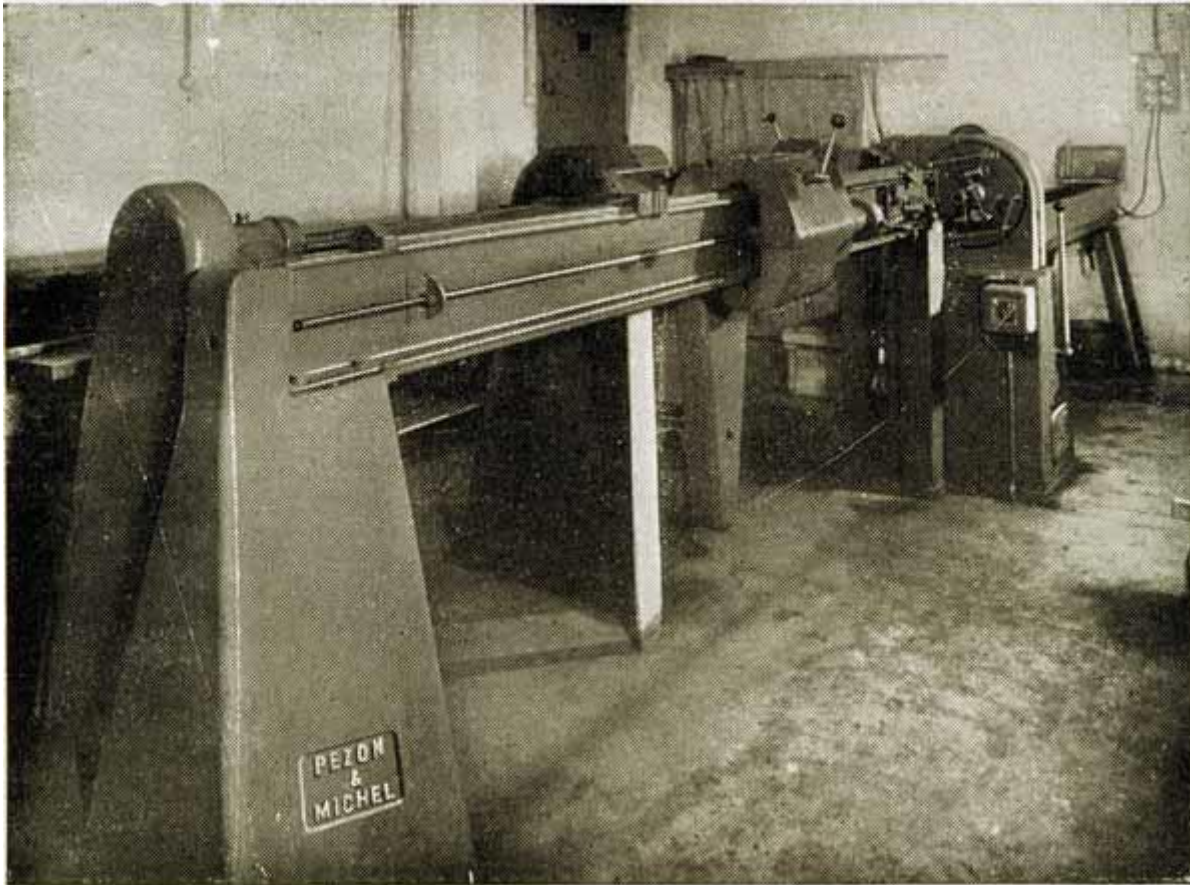
Once back to France, between other interests strictly related to fly fishing, stands the committed cooperation with the magazine "*Au Bord de l'Eau*", a milestone in the matter, founded in 1935 by Tony Burnand and Roger Pujol. And just Pujol will suggest to Ritz to pay a visit to P+M works; one month after his first visit Ritz was hired as Technical Consultant, and will leave an everlasting mark on all production since that day.

Initially partnered with master craftsman Edouard Plantet (who by his way had learned "*the art*" by Garreau, owner of the workshop above mentioned as first supplier and then partner of P+M), Ritz begins to carefully devote himself to study and design of tapers; soon the couple will be joined by Pierre Creusevault, technical consultant and esteemed tester (as world champion, cast with fly rod in all categories). The cooperation of these three big-names in brief leads to the creation of the first "*marvel*", the "Parabolic" action that quickly outclassed (by a lot...) "old" and heavy English-action fly rods, and not only: Parabolic will be preferred even to American-made rods, known for a more "modern" casting action. The first prototype of "Parabolic" is an eight-footer rod, two-pieces, "*normale*" action (the meaning of this term will be after-written), and represents the "official start" of P+M as refendu fly rods manufacturers. Production of this first masterpiece required the setting up of highly sophisticated and precise machinery, with the main intent to supply a large number of high-quality prototypes to be tested; these prototypes are studied and produced with slight differences, then are committed to testers and often are put to the test even by selected friends of P+M staff, people well known as able in casting and angling, that will give a valuable feed-back to manufacturers.

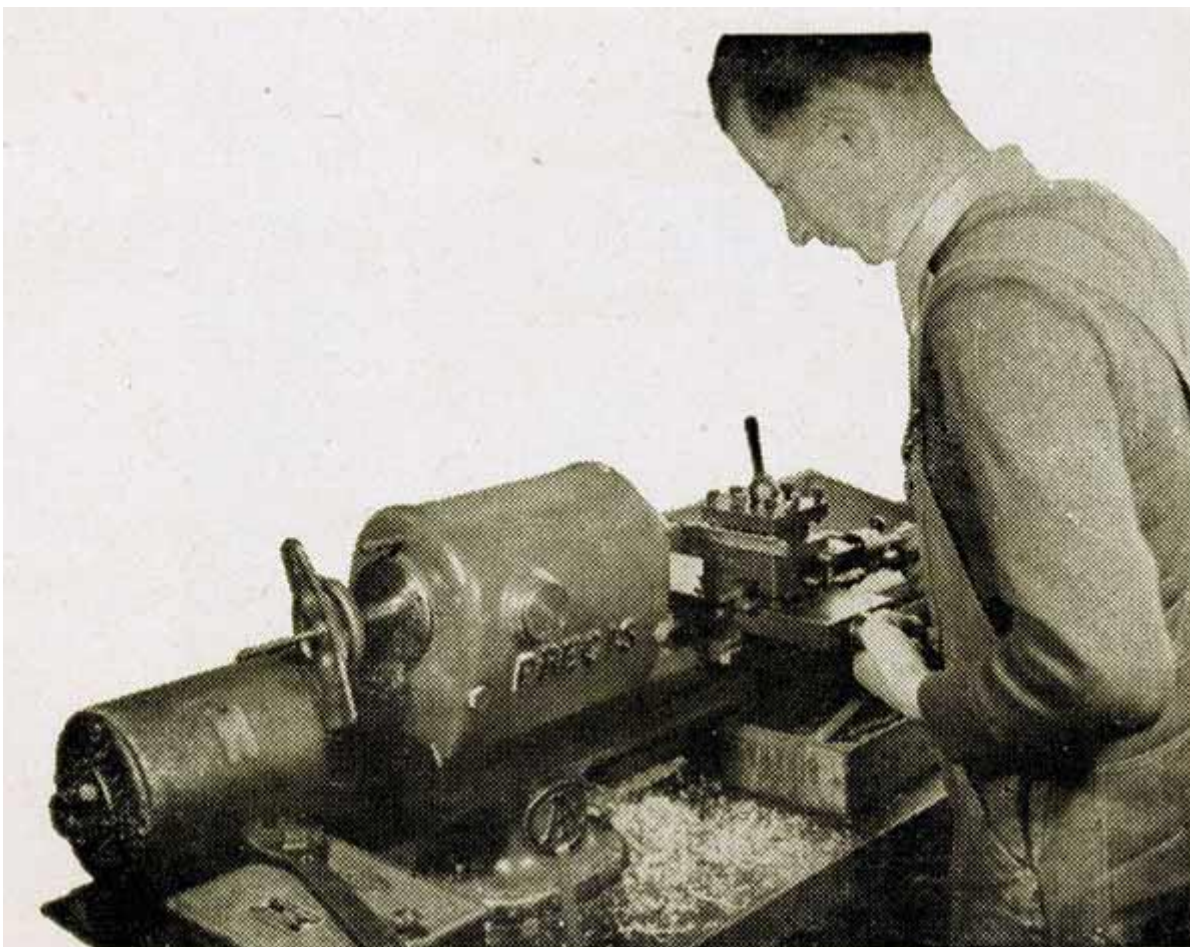
Une de nos machines à raboter
travaillant au centième
de millimètre.



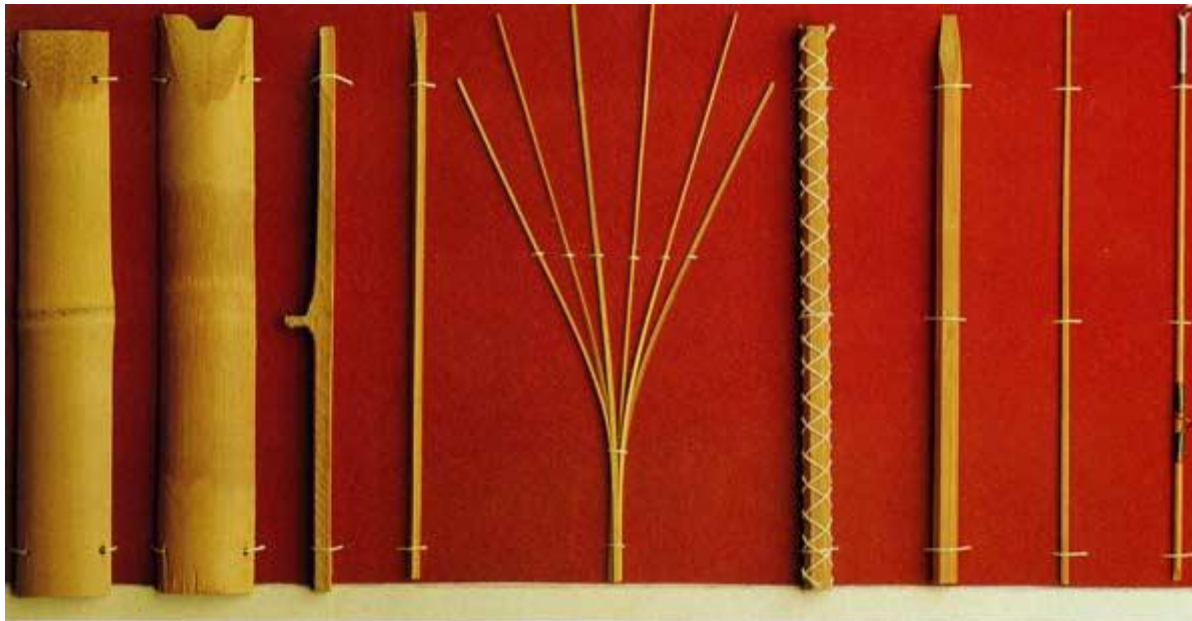
**One of planing mills,
precise within an
hundredth of
millimetre**



One of automatic glue-bonding machines: avoided bamboo deformations during assembling and glueing process



This factory worker was responsible of joints manufacture



A scheme showing transformation from the plant to the fishing rod

Once selected the best balance between taper, rod length and strength, the “in-series manufacture” begins; this procedure, although expensive, will be maintained in the following years and will be one of the elements that will ensure the long lasting high-degree standards for which P+M will be renown worldwide. It's 1938: the “Parabolic” series begins to be available for the market, and will be added year after year by new models. At the same time, the handmade production Garreau – Robillard comes to an end. It's the end of an era: “industrial” production, although still in very limited numbers, takes over craftsmanship and this change leads to a more significant availability on market of these elegant and valuable items. “Parabolic” rods started to be noticed by celebrated anglers, whose names will be not forgotten up today. For instance...

Frank Sawyer recommends for nymph angling (in which he was a real master) the Parabolic Sawyer 8'10", # 5/6 that Ritz realized and tuned just for him;

Maurice Simonet was given by Ritz a special 10', expressly made for him; this rod will never reach the market.

Leonce de Boisset will begin to use “Parabolic” rods as soon as the item will be available, and he will be immediately eager with them (from his book “*L'Ombre, poisson sportif: In fly angling I have always used English rods, but the new arrival on market of P+M Parabolic have been a real revelation...*”). He will keep on using them for long, long time.

Three are the base “Parabolic” series, which only feature will be the bamboo choice in order to set three different quality standards. Then, in each series are foreseen three different “actions”, well distinguished one from the other by significant manufacture differences: *normale* action, quite smooth and delicate, made in two same-length pieces; *competition* action, in two same-length pieces too, but with a higher strength; *moyenne* action, a balance between power and pleasantness, built in three same-length pieces.

Parabolic Supreme: First choice bamboo, available in *normale*, *competition* e *moyenne* action. Offered with one or two tops, green tyings with brace and double edge, a small French flag tied just over fly ring, oxydized joints, first and top ring in hard chromium, others coil-shaped; handle has a “double-tulip” shape, black anodised aluminium reel fitting type PPP with spearhead and button, gabardine-like fabric bag with P+M trade-mark label.

Parabolic Spéciale: Selected bamboo, available in *normale*, *competition* e *moyenne* action. Offered with one or two tops, burgundy red tyings with brace and double edge, a small French flag tied just over fly ring, oxydized joints, first and top ring in hard chromium, others coil-shaped; “tulip-shape” handle, aluminium reel fitting, gabardine-like fabric bag with P+M trade-mark label.

Parabolic Prima: this was the cheapest series, anyhow manufactured, as well as the ones mentioned

before, with high quality bamboo. Offered with one top, green tyings without small French flag, oxydized joints, first and top ring in hard chromium, others coil-shaped; "tulip-shape" handle, anodized bronze aluminium reel fitting with screw-grip, gabardine-like fabric bag with P+M trade-mark label.

Listed hereunder you find a list of rods Parabolic series; some of this rods are still available up today.

PARABOLIC SUPREME: built from 1939 to 1984. *Normale* action, 7' # 3/4 - 8' # 4/5 - 8'6" #5/6 - 9' # 6/7, reference 230; *competition* action, 7' - 8' - 8'6" - 9' ref. 232; *moyenne* action 8'6" - 9' - 9'6" ref. 234.

Same quality, 'Supreme' :

PARABOLIC RITZ built since 1953 and still available. 8'2" , two different-length pieces, with one or two tops, ref. 244 ;

PARABOLIC SKISH from 1953 to 1978. 8' - 8'2" , two different-length pieces, with one or two tops, ref. 240-242.

PARABOLIC SKISH PRECISION 9'3".

PARABOLIC SPECIALE from 1939 to 1984. *Normale* action, 7'2" # 3/4 - 8' # 4/5 - 8'6" # 5/6 - 9' # 6/7, ref. 220-221; *competition* action, 7' - 7'2" - 8' - 8'6" - 9' ref. 222-223; *moyenne* action 8'6" - 9' - 9'6", ref. 224-225.

Same quality , 'Speciale':

PARABOLIC SAWYER DRY FLY from 1963 to 1966. 8'1" , three pieces, ref. 247, anodized bronze aluminium reel fitting with screw lock.

PARABOLIC SAWYER NYMPH from 1957 to 1977. 8'10" # 5/6, three pieces, ref. 245-246, reel fitting as above.

PARABOLIC SAWYER STILL WATER from 1958 to 1984. 9'6" # 5/6, two or three pieces, ref. 241, reel fitting as above.

PARABOLIC SAWYER GREASED LINE from 1958 to 1967. 10'4" , three pieces, ref. 248-249, reel fitting as above.

PARABOLIC T.O.S. from 1967 to 1984. 8'5" #5/6 two different-length pieces, ref. 229. Dedicated to the well-known French society for Salmonides preservation "Truite – Ombre – Saumon" (Trout, Grayling, Salmon), green tyings with red double edge, reel fitting as above. one top, small French flag tied near fly ring, gabardine-like fabric bag with P+M trade-mark label.

PARABOLIC PRIMA from 1939 to 1977. *Normale* action 7'2" #3/4 - 8' #4/5 - 8'6" #5/6 - 9' #6/7 - 9'6" #7 ref. 210-211; *competition* action 8' - 8'6" - 9' ref. 212-213 ; *moyenne* action 8'6" - 9' - 9'6" ref. 214.

Same quality , 'prima':

PARABOLIC STERLING, from 1969 to 1975. *Normale* action 7'2" - 8' - 8'6" – 9 - 9'6", two pieces, ref. 217, black tyings with gold edge, no small French flag, no fly ring, aluminium reel fitting, one top; *competition* action, 8' - 8'6" - 9', same features, ref. 219.

PARABOLIC ROYALE a later project, since 1975 and still available. 6'10" # 5 - 7'4" # 5 - 7'9" # 5 - 8'3" # 5 - 8'8" # 7 - 9' # 7 - 9'3" # 9; ref. 222-224-225, two different-length pieces, one top, nut-brown tyings with yellow edge, small french flag tied near fly ring, reel fitting available both anodized black aluminium type PPP and anodized bronze aluminium with screw-grip.

Other "Parabolic-series" rods:

AGATE 7'6" , two pieces;

CRITERIUM from 1953 to 1960. 8'5" , two pieces, built for distance and precision competitions not suitable for beginners; manufactured on purpose for competitions not allowing a rod change between distance trials and precision ones.

DISTANCE 100 7'1" - 7'7" , two pieces, and **DISTANCE 130 e 170.**

DRY FLY 9'6" - 9'7" , three pieces, one tip.

MIXTE (fly and spinning), from 1939 to 1961. 8' , two pieces, ref. 240.

PRIVILEGE 1930. 8' #3/4 - 8'5" #4/5, two pieces, two tips. Peculiar of this item is a carbon-fibre "spigot"

joint.

WET-DRY 1953. 8'1", three pieces, one tip.

FLY from 1958 to 1972. 8'6" #6/7 - 9' #6/7, two pieces, ref. 200 and 9' #6/7, in three pieces too, ref. 201.

FLIXOR from 1939 to 1970. 9' #6/7, two pieces, one or two tops, ref. 202-203

IMPERIAL from 1938 to 1967. 8'6", three pieces, ref. 204-205.

RITZ LOIRE from 1970 to ?. 7'2" #4/5, two pieces, one top.

RITZ LOIRE from 1970 to ?. 7'2" #4/5, two pieces, one top.

TOURANGELLE from 1977 to 1979. 8' - 8'5", two pieces, one top, ref. 205.

But Ritz and his partners did not get satisfied, and so an enthusiastic and keen Charles, pursuing his studies, deepened and improved his projects and designs to get still farther.

In 1949, a new series was created, even more sophisticated than Parabolic: RITZ SUPERPARABOLIC PPP, where PPP means *Puissance Pendulaire Progressive* (i.e. Pendular Progressive Power. These initials clearly focus the target of all developments...). This series, that shortly become well recognized worldwide, constitutes the top of the whole production of the "magical" trio Plantet – Ritz – Creusevault. PPP series distinguishes itself from Parabolic ones for the research of the best balance between length and strength; the characteristic balance found in coupling two different length pieces, moving the female joint ferrule nearer to handle, supplies more quickness without losing precision and efficiency in short-range casts.

When used by the best skilled fly casters, such rods (built with highest quality raw material, with luxury finish and details) can perform long distance casts, although working smoothly and precisely within few meters too. All rods are manufactured in two different length pieces, with the exception of Baby Zephir, Joachim du Bellay (late Vermont Speciale), Sully Nimphe e Zephir that are supplied in three pieces (in some of them the third piece is the detachable cork-covered handle: in this way the rod becomes in two "reversed" different pieces, with butt longer than top).

Older rods had burgundy tyings with brace and green edge, while later time production showed reversed colors, green tying with red edge; first and top rings in hard chromium, others coil-shaped, oxydized as well as joints; cork covered handle "Ritz type" with anodised black or bronze reel fitting (in shorter models were available a lighter adjustable-ring or screw-grip reel fitting), small French flag near fly ring. On butt, the "item n°" does not appear anymore: now it is stated the "serial n°", progressive and kept distinct for each type. All of them are supplied with two tops, red fabric bag and green aluminium tube, later substituted by a green or gray plastic tube covered by a beige fabric bag with P+M trade-mark label.

RITZ SUPERPARABOLIC PPP Series:

FEATHERWEIGHT since 1963, still available. 6'3" # 5 type G. Clark, two pieces, ref. 261.

MIRAGE from 1979 to 1993. 6'6" # 4/5, type Riccardi, two pieces, ref. 269. Manufactured for American market.

MARVEL from 1959 to 1960. 7' # 5 type Hans, two pieces, ref. 262.

WADING from 1949 to 1960. 7'1" type McLane, two pieces, ref. 260.

SUPER MARVEL from 1961, still available. 7'2" #5 type Hans, two pieces, ref. 262

POULLETTIER since 1990, still available. 7'1" # 4/5 type Sawada, two pieces, ref. 280.

BRETONVILLIER since 1973, still available. 7'6" # 5 type Dubos, two pieces, ref. 279.

SPEEDCAST I 1977. 7'7"1/2 # 5 type Riccardi, two pieces, ref. 265.

COLORADO since 1965, still available. 7'7" # 5 type Pate, two pieces, ref. 263.

BABY ZEPHIR from 1954 to 1962. 7'9" #4/5 type Vergnes, three pieces, ref. 276.

JOACHIM du BELLAY (late **VERMONT SPECIAL**) since 1990, still available. 7'9" #5, three pieces, ref. 210.

SPEEDCAST II 1977. 7'11"1/2 # 5 type Riccardi, two pieces, ref. 267.
ST. LOUIS since 1969, still available. 8'1" #4/5 type Dubos, two pieces, ref. 276.
TRAUN from 1959 to 1984. 8'2" # 6/7 type Hans, two pieces, ref. 268.
POWERPLUS from 1954 to 1993. 8'3" # 6/7 type Creusevaut, two pieces, ref. 270.
MASTER from 1954 to 1993. 8'3" # 5/6 type Lambiotte, two pieces, ref. 264.
FARIO CLUB from 1959 to 1993. 8'5" # 5/6 type Ritz, two pieces, ref. 266.
ZEPHIR from 1954 to 1962. 8'4' # 5 type Burnand, three pieces, ref. 277.
SUPERPOWER from 1961 to 1970. 8'4"1/2 # 6/7 type Howard Marshall, two pieces,ref.272.
SULLY from 1974 to 1976. 8'4" # 5 type Dubos, two pieces, ref. 277.
SULLY NYMPHE from 1974 to 1976. 8'2"-10' # 5 type Dubos, three pieces, ref. 278
LONG CAST from 1961 to 1977. 8'7" #6/7 type Batault, two pieces, ref. 274.
CHALKSTREAM from 1954 to 1960. 8'8" # 6 type De Boisset, two pieces, ref. 275.
MIDGET 1997. 6' #4, manufactured for Japanese market, two pieces.
FEATHERLIGHT 1997. 6'6" # 4/5 manufactured for Japanese market, two pieces.
FARIO SPORT del 1997. 7'2" # 3/4 type Ritz, two pieces.
LONGLIFT manufactured for Japanese market.

All these rods have been dedicated to fly fishing famed names, and are bringing such names. In details...

Hans Gebetstroither, well-known Traun fishing warden: dedicated to him are *Marvel*, *Supermarvel* and *Traun*.

Eduard Vernes, President of Casting Club de France, used to allow Ritz to use his private owned preserve on Rilse river as a "test field"; dedicated to him, the *Baby Zephir*.

Leonce de Boisset, needs no introduction... Distinguished and devoted to grayling angling, wrote various important books on the topic. Dedicated to him the *Chalkstream*.

Auguste Lambiotte, one of the best French "nonprofessional" anglers: dedicated to him, the *Master*. This rod, in Ritz's opinion, were the best balance ever realized about length/weight/power matched with bamboo distinctive features.

Tony Burnand, founder of famed magazine "Au Bord de l'Eau"; dedicated to him, the *Zephir*.

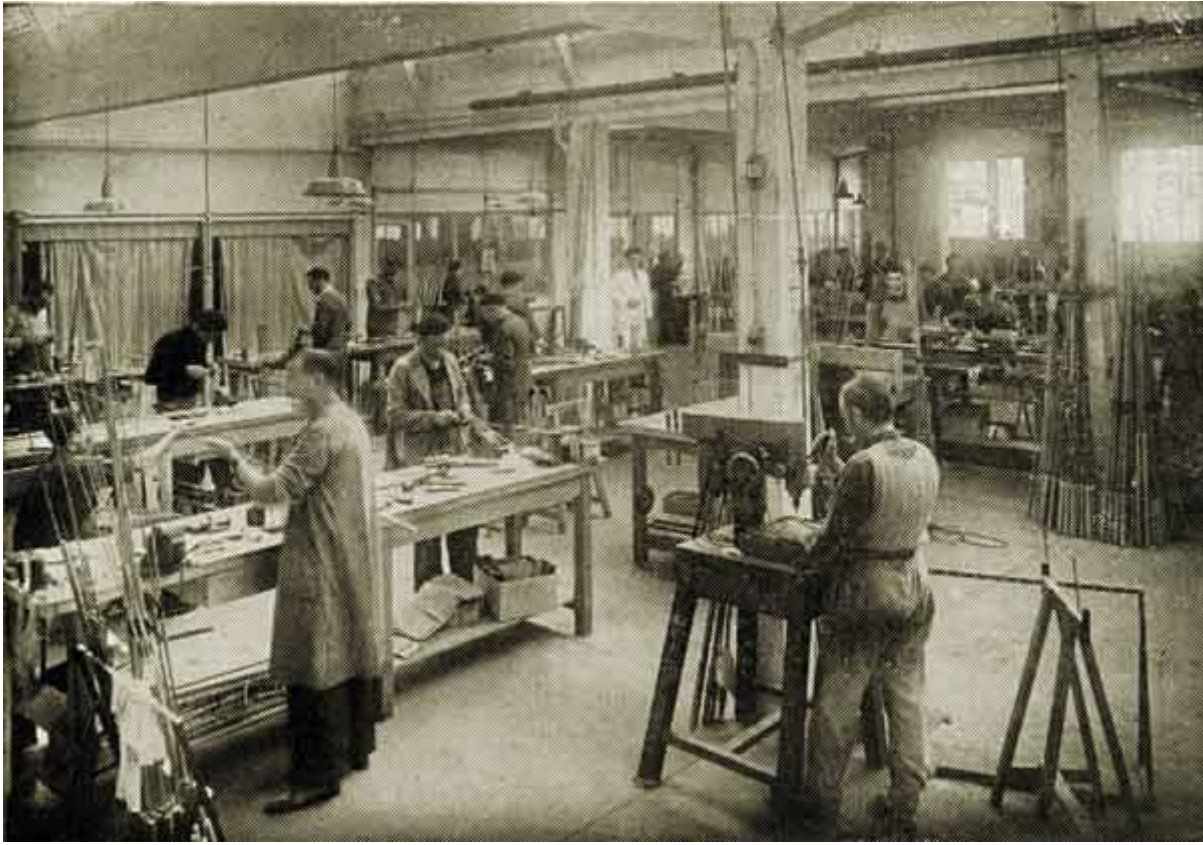
Pierre Creusevaut, Ritz's partner in P+M, named above; dedicated to him, the *Power Plus*.

Claude Batault, diplomatico francese e compagno di pesca di RITZ, cui Pezon et Michel dedica la Long Cast.

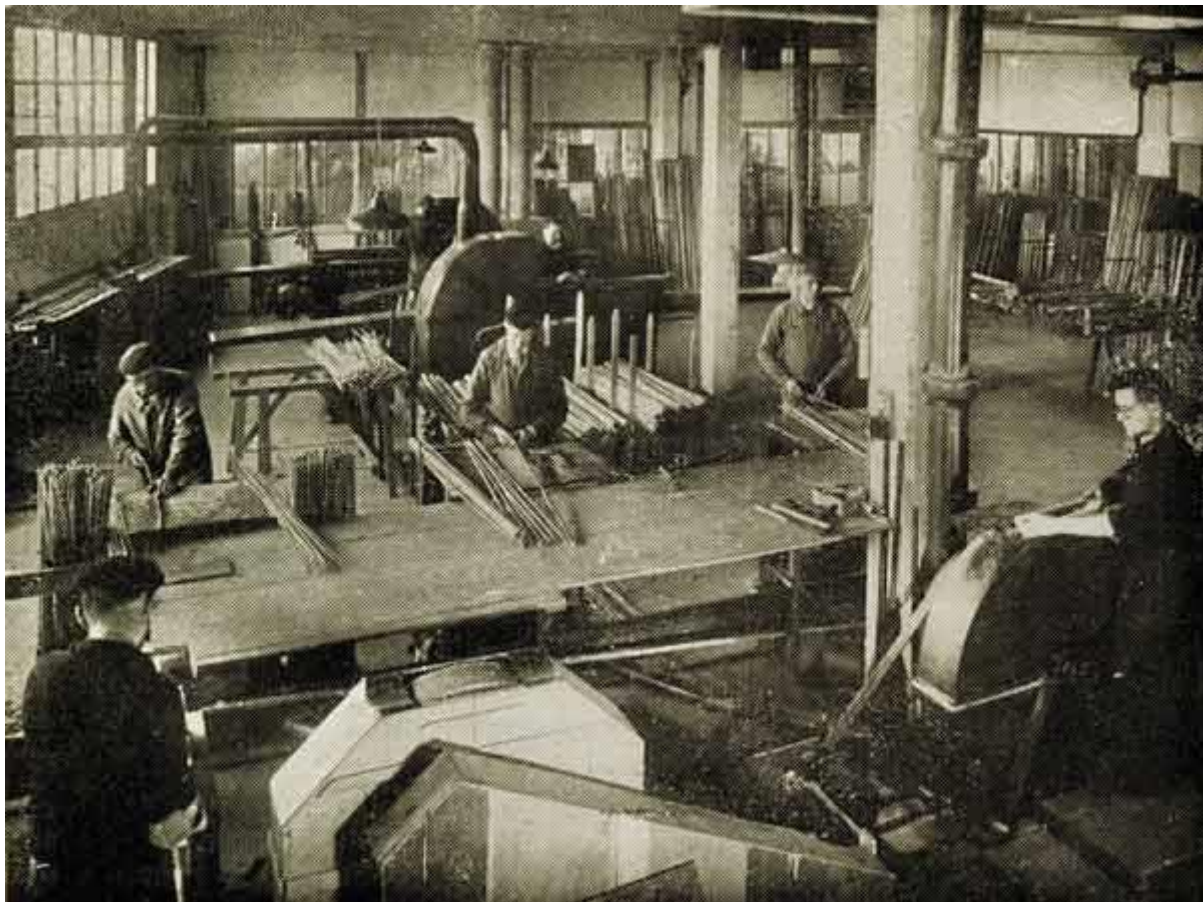
Al McLane: dedicated to him the *Wading*.

Mario Riccardi, valued consultant for P+M that he partnered in manufacturing the *Speedcast I* and *II* and the *Mirage*.

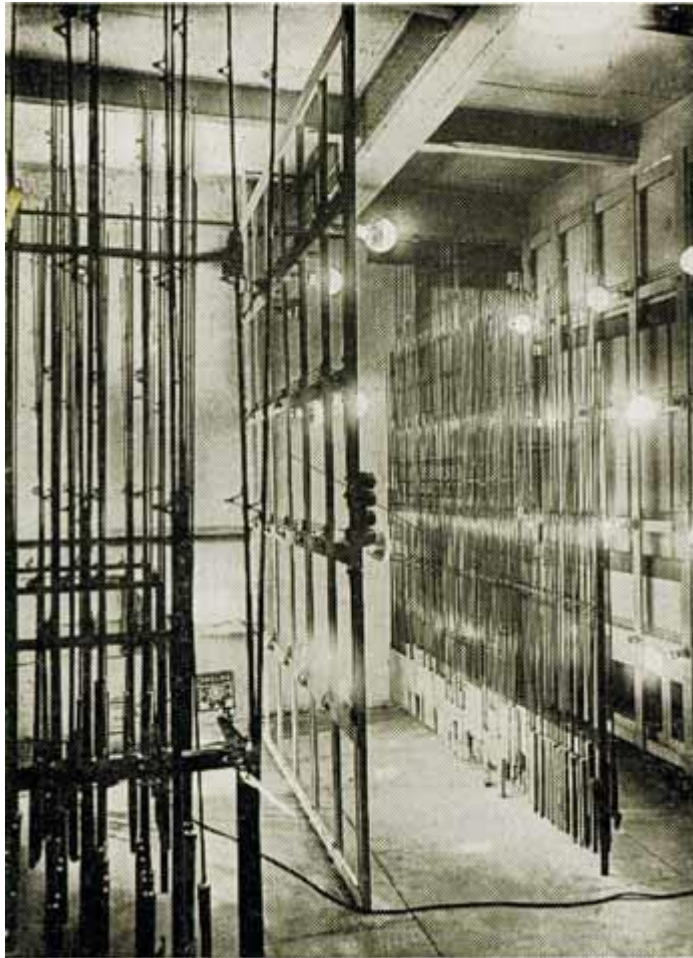
Jean Michel Dubos, another esteemed consultant, particularly in producing *Bretonvillier*, *St. Louis*, *Sully*, *Sully Nimphe*.



A view of assembly workshop



Cutting and planing workshop

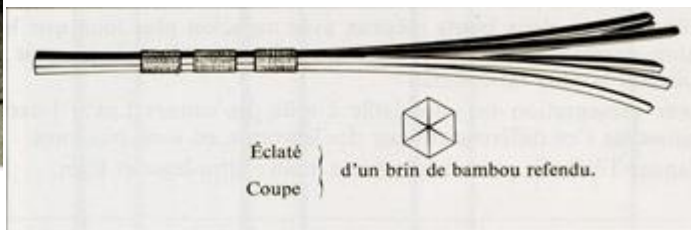


Infrared rays varnish drying

CANNES	Ligne Parabolic Double fuseau	Ligne Parabolic Fuseau décalé	Ligne Air-Cel Double fuseau	Ligne Air-Cel Fuseau décalé
Primevère 8	2-3	D2	DT5-6	WF5-6
Primevère 8 1/2	3-4	D3	DT6-7	WF6-7
Primevère 9	3-4	D3	DT6-7	WF6-7
Parabolic - Normale 7,2	2	D2	DT4	WF5
Parabolic - Normale 8	2-3	D2	DT4-5	WF5
Parabolic - Normale 8 1/2	3	D2-D3	DT5-6	WF5-6
Parabolic - Normale 9	3-4	D3	DT6-7	WF6-7
Parabolic - Compétition 8	3	D2-D3	DT5-6	WF5-6
Parabolic - Compétition 8 1/2	3-4	D3	DT6-7	WF6-7
Parabolic - Compétition 9	4	D3-D4	DT7-	WF7
Parabolic - Skish 8,2	2-3	D2-D3	DT5-6	WF5-6
Parabolic - Ritz 8,2	2-3	D2	DT4-5	WF5
T.O.S. 8,5	2-3	D2-D3	DT4-5	WF5
Sawyer - Still - Water 9 1/2	2-3	D2-D3	DT5-6	WF5-6

Rod/line matching table

- * Parabolic-verre : utiliser la même ligne que la Primevère correspondante.
- * Parabolic (bambou refendu) même ligne pour la Suprême et pour la Spéciale.
- * Sterling : utiliser la même ligne que la Parabolic correspondante.



Six bamboo sections are molded in a perfect hexagon

Some curiosities about...

P+M supplied with its bamboo (blanks and assembled sections) several well known manufacturers during the era of embargo against China;

Orvis and Hardy rods, in late 60's and 70's were produced using P+M bamboo;

Farlow used P+M blanks in producing his *Fario Club*, *Sawyer Nymph*, *Sawyer Stillwater*, *Ritz*, *Supreme*, *Long Cast*.

Rods assembled in U.S.A. by Sid Neff were built with P+M blanks and sold in Barry Beck shop.

A custom-made salmon rod were manufactured in 70's for Abercrombie and Fitch.

De Deken Teo, French bamboo rods manufacturers, seller for P+M (after 1930, the company changed name and became "A' la Carpe d'Or").

Flobert (France), seller for P+M in thirties.

Franklin Rod Co., U.S.A., produced in eighties a fly rod using P+M sections.

GMS, French fishing reel manufacturer, seller for P+M fly rods from 1939 to 1946.

Genkins U.S.A. built some hundred rods copying famed tapers, in which number were included some of P+M.

Jim Paine, after cooperation with C. Ritz in fly rods manufacture and "actions" studies, starts producing his own Parabolic using the same tapers of Ritz Superparabolic PPP Featherweight and Colorado.

Parrot, Parisian company producing its own refendu bamboo rods, sold P+M fly rods too.

Wyers, another craftsmen, sold P+M rods.

Denis Bailey, American manufacturer, realized some copies of *Fario Club*; this rod has been reproduced by several English rod makers and craftsmen, and presumably this is still happening nowadays.

In our work we have not considered the so-called “hybrid” models, rods coupling one bamboo piece and a carbon or glass fiber one, as we are dealing with “pristine” bamboo refendu and its history. Salmon rods, as *Parabolic Saumon*, were not included as well: this mainly because (unavoidably, considering the ichtyc fauna of our rivers...) such rods never reached our country, Italy. These are, anyway, superb rods that we feel sure are still used by some fan, in the proper places...

Last news from P+M concerned the move of the company, from Amboise to St. Brieuc (Brittany). Last catalogs on its Internet site comprehended some Parabolic and Superparabolic rods, and other angling accessories. Such items can be found, new and used, in Paris at “La Maison de la Mouche”, a shop in Boulevard Henry IV. The site is www.francoishue.com,.

Last address known of P+M: S.A. Hue, 127 rue Jules Ferry, 22000 St. Brieuc (France) Tel. 296010294 Fax 0296010292

Engineering : Paolo Potocco

Research : Sandro Potocco

Editing and Translation : Stefano Cassoni