

Tackle Talk

**Main feature: Kilwell's Xantu Flyrod evaluated by
PETER STOREY**



While downrigging with Daryl, we discussed ways to make the magazine a better read. His main thought was that it needed the tackle section back and on the strength of that recommendation I contacted Jeff Tuavera, at Kilwell Sports. These product releases to the right were the immediate result but then Jeff rang me, saying they would also like me to evaluate one of their *Xantu* fly rods.

I'd broken my original Sonik SK8 #5 just days before, tripping up on the Ngongotaha and since I've stopped promoting that brand it's vanished flyfishing-wise—a shame, since however I now view the company, their tackle is excellent. So I immediately decided to trade the advert on the inside cover for the complete 9', 6 weight, 4 piece rod, X2 reel and Scientific Anglers *Trout* floating line set Jeff put together for me. While I needed a new multipurpose single hand rod, I also prefer to evaluate higher value tackle this way.

This is the third nano fly rod I've tested. The other two are made by adding nano particles into the resin. Kilwell's *Xantu* fly rods are different. Here a cobweb-like continuous nanofibre mat created by *Revolution Fibres* of Auckland—*Xantu.Layr*—is laminated between two layers of 43 modulus unidirectional carbon fibre, at Kilwell's factory here in Rotorua. This ensures the most cost-effective spread of nano fibre throughout the rod for this part of the *Xantu* range (other parts incorporating nano particles as well). The material is expensive and combined with the extra labour, prices these rods towards the top end.

Just before Christmas Todd and I were very kindly given a tour of the process by Neville Podmore of *Kilwell Fibretube*. With the *Xantu* range the aim, he said, was to use the benefits of this technology to, 'produce a more enjoyable rod'. The almost double shear strength of the process enabled him to design a fly rod that was not only lighter and stronger than a

comparable standard carbon fibre model but also required, 'less effort from the wrist in casting and playing'.

So my first step was to compare the *Xantu* against my #6 9' *Genesis* on the lake, switching reel and line. Not only was Neville right on all counts but the *Xantu.Layr* also produces a much crisper action—like high modulus without the stiffness. Where such rods can be very hard to time Kilwell's *Xantu* loads in way your brain quickly memorises—a characteristic that will reward any level of flyfishing experience. Within minutes I could cast almost as far left as right-handed.

Next I took the set out on a river to see how those qualities translated. Combined with the *SA Trout* line head profile, to about 20 metres this 6-weight covers all flyfishing requirements with precision, delicacy and comfort. Extend the head profile and there's plenty of hidden power—exactly as you would expect from a rod that, as you can see on page 9, will also handle large fish in a tight spot and plenty of current. In pure distance casting terms, however, this *Xantu.Layr* technology is far less physically demanding than any comparable unidirectional high modulus fly rod I've cast.

After a month's heavy use I rate *Xantu* the most versatile Kilwell fly rod I've handled in 30 years. Try one out and see if it impresses you the same way.

Xantu, cautionary comments . . .

The photo bottom right above is a point load test with 30kg on our Xantu 37kg stand up blank. Most game reels are set to 15kg of drag and done properly wouldn't break a rod but 95% of broken rods that come back are a result of people in shops ('testing' action) or guys setting drags. As I demonstrated it is not hard to break any rod if someone holds one halfway up and then point loads the tip. (Neville Podmore)





Kilwell X2 Fly Reel

As well as captivating aesthetics, Kilwell X2 fly reels are built around one core element, the braking system, consisting of an oversized carbon drag housed within a semi-sealed protective casing to keep the elements free from dirt and grime. Kilwell X2 large arbor fly reels feature CNC machined construction from 6061-T6 aircraft-grade aluminium, matched with stainless steel components to blend superior light weight with rugged strength. The large-arbor spool design ensures faster line retrieve and reduces line coil. A one-way clutch bearing lets you enjoy effortless retrieves while the carbon disc drag disperses heat and is impervious to the effects of water. The two toned frame and spool are enhanced with a champagne gold drag cover. Easy tool-less conversion from left to right-hand retrieve. Available in #6/7 and #8/9 line sizes. Like all Kilwell branded products this reel has a Kilwell Lifetime Warranty.

Buy online at www.kilwell.co.nz and have it delivered freight free to your favourite Kilwell dealer. From RRP \$239.99

Editor's comments: This smartly finished reel compliments the Xantu rod in all respects. The rod sits completely balanced in your hand ready to cast. The drag is easily adjusted under pressure. The large arbour creates minimal line memory and shows no tendency to snarl, however fast you wind in.



Kilwell Blade Spinners

The Kilwell Blade series of spinners were designed by Kilwell staff and are presented in our best selling proven fish attracting colours. Weighing in at 5gms this lure is the perfect weight for presentation, split shot can be added to the lure shaft to increase lure weight, if extra distance or depth is desired. The proven Spotty Black and Zebra lures will work better on dull overcast days or in murky water, the Silver and Silver Green are a perfect choice for sunny days when contrast with the clarity of the water, weeds and structure is needed. To increase your strike rate, the inside of the blade has a red flash, to create a trigger point by imitating blood from a wounded baitfish.

Kilwell Blades are available in either treble or single hook configurations and the brass body will slide up—so the hooks are easily replaced. Like all Kilwell branded products these lures have a Kilwell Lifetime Warranty

Colours available;

- * Silver
- * Silver Green
- * Spotty Black
- * Zebra

Available from your favourite Kilwell dealer at \$6.99 each.

Why Trout Usually Win

Published by The Halcyon Press at \$39.99

As usual, Graeme Marshall's latest book will both entertain and make you think.

This one's a series of anecdotal assessments of every factor that can affect a day's fishing, positively and negatively, written from a guiding perspective.

That makes spending \$40 on a copy particularly attractive to those who cannot (or will not!) spend \$700-\$1000+ on a single day's trout fishing.

Why? Because hidden among those anecdotes are numerous tips from a nationally-respected professional flyfisher, on how to turn a seemingly impossible day into a successful one.

Seriously, in my opinion this thoroughly entertaining book represents gold dust for *anyone* who can only fish when work or other commitments allow.

The Distant Browns of Emerald

95 minutes' total, available in PAL at \$40

Mike Kirkpatrick's latest DVD centres around the feature Andrew Hearne wrote for this magazine in Issue 133, 'Welcome to the Jungle'.

In seeing that article 'live' I was particularly impressed by five qualities. First was the obvious camaraderie between Mike and Andrew. Next was the level of their flyfishing skill. Then the simplicity of Mike's fly choice when faced with stubborn if not 'educated' fish. Finally, the underlying conservation message.

This DVD will prove an invaluable asset for anyone unfamiliar with NZ backcountry/wilderness fishing and planning such a trip. It also clearly demonstrates the level of flyfishing competency needed to be successful on a popular backcountry river by the end of the season.

I thoroughly recommend it.

This issue's featured links . . .

Xantu.Layr vs Unidirectional point load shear test:-

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKXnm-RNKjY&feature=youtu.be>

Metservice's new free Marine and Recreational Forecast App (covers Lakes Rotorua and Taupo, BOP, Hawkes Bay)

<http://pmep.cce.cornell.edu/profiles/extoxnet/dienochlor-glyphosate/diquat-ext.html>

Mike Kirkpatrick's DVD: <http://www.latitudeguiding.co.nz/new-zealand-fly-fishing-dvds-for-sale/>

Graeme Marshall's book: <http://www.halcyonpublishing.co.nz/152-why-trout-usually-win-9781877566431.html>

