



## Anatomy of a Custom Built Rod

### Part 1 - Introduction

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*Note that the opinions and explanations expressed below are based on personal experiences and are not typical to every custom rod builder.*

*What are the differences between buying a custom built rod vs. a quality off-the-shelf rod; and are there any advantages to either?*

*Every time I mention to someone that I build custom fishing rods, the response is always the same. "I would love to have one, but they are so expensive." Most anglers have the misconception that custom built rods are much more expensive than a quality, off the shelf rod that can be purchased at a local sporting goods store. Although it is true that they are more expensive, one would be surprised on how little the difference can actually be. Custom rods start to become extremely expensive*

*when components like titanium frame guides or elaborate decorative wraps and/or handles are added to the rod. These items can take 8-10 hours to complete and increase the labor cost, thus increasing the overall cost of the rod. However, an average custom built rod with similar components as a high quality off the shelf rod can be built with as little as a 10% increase in price. So what's the difference between an average custom built rod and a high quality off the shelf rod? Even though the components, performance and overall appearance may be similar, the rod can be customized to a specific color or style and include personalized items such as decals and names. It also gives the angler the opportunity to be part of the construction of his or her personal rod.*

When we are approached by a potential client and asked to provide a quote for a custom fishing rod, our procedure is, and always will be, the same. We have a series of questions that we ask to determine what type of rod is the perfect fit for that specific angler.

The first question we ask is, "What style of fishing will you be doing?" This will set the tone for the size range of the rod and narrow the selection of components that will be used in this specific build. For example, if a customer tells us that they will be fly fishing, I can eliminate roller guides and Uni-Butts.

The second question relates to the target species. Although it is obvious that a rod will not be built to a specific species of fish, knowing what the angler is mainly targeting will help in the blank selection and overall size of the rod. A good example is the difference b/w a fly rod built to catch 100 lb tarpon and a fly rod built to catch bonefish on the flats. Both are fly rods, however, one is built with a heavier weight blank and components.

Our third question is more specific as it relates to the configuration of the rod itself and is contingent on the previous two questions. For example, if a customer tells us they want an inshore rod to target redfish, we will ask if they want a casting or spinning configuration. This establishes the type of reel seat and guides to be used in the build. If a customer tells us they want a trolling rod to target wahoo, we then know it is a rod with a conventional set-up and we will ask if he/she wants roller or a combination of roller and guides, etc.

The next series of questions will pertain to the actual customization of the rod and includes overall length, specific line rating, type of guides, material and configuration of grips and any decorative feature the customer has in mind.

If cost is an issue, which it almost always is, our final question is price range. We will do our best to provide a quote that meets all of the angler's specifications and is within the customer's budget. If we cannot meet the customer's budget, we will provide them with the actual cost and other options that the customer can pick to reduce the overall cost of the build and ultimately make a decision on whether they would like to move forward with the order.

In the following sections, we will review the different parts of a rod and explain the different options to customize these sections. We will be providing a new section each week and provide details descriptions on the different parts and components that go into building a custom fishing rod.

The next part in the series of this article will be Blank Selection. Here you will see the importance of selecting the right blank and detailed descriptions of the different characteristics of a blank will be explained.

### **Next: Part 2 – Blank Selection**

Thank you for your time and hope to hear from you soon,

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