



Anatomy of a Custom Built Rod

Part 4 – Reel Seats

By Andres Perez, Blue Bay Custom Fishing Rods, LLC

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

Reel seats are what connect the fishing rod to the reel. They are considered to be part of the handle assembly mentioned in the previous part. However, there are so many different options for choosing a reel seat; they deserve a section of their own. The selection of the reel seat begins with the type of rod, and even though a specific reel seat can be used in several different types of rods, one needs to understand them to make a proper decision.

- **Reel Seat Type:** Reel seats are available in spinning, fly or casting, also known as conventional, configuration.

- **Spinning Reel Seats:** Spinning reel seats are the most flexible in that they

can be used in casting and even fly rods such as a spey or switch rod, where a rear grip is used. Spinning reel seats allow for the reel to be mounted below the blank. They can be mounted with the fixed hood up and the threaded section down (up-locking) or vice-versa (down-Locking).

- **Fly Reel Seats:** Fly reel seats are smaller and usually include a butt cap since most fly rods do not have a rear grip, unless in the case of a spey or switch fly rod as mentioned above. The upper hood is usually fixed and can be recessed into the foregrip of the rod.
- **Casting Reel Seats:** Casting reel seats are installed at 180 degrees from the spinning reel seat and typically include a trigger for the index finger to better maintain control of the rod while casting.

- **Material:** Reel seats come mainly in two different materials. The following is summary of each.

- **Aluminum:** These reel seats are mainly used in heavier rods which typically see larger forces on the reel seat. Aluminum reel seats are available in spinning, fly and casting configuration.
- **Graphite:** A larger variety of reel seats are available in graphite. These reel seats are much lighter than aluminum without a considerable lost in strength. Some reel seats are constructed of graphite with aluminum rings around the hoods. This maintains the overall weight of the reel seat down and pro-

vided added support around the hoods and reel feet.

- **Split Reel Seat:** As with the rear grip, reel seats can be split into two sections. The fixed hood and the hood that slides along the threaded section to tighten down the reel to the rod. This allows for lighter builds and also provides the angler with direct contact with the blank. Direct contact with the blank allows the angler to detect smaller strikes.
- **Acrylic or Wood Reel Seat Inserts:** In a split reel seat, the angler also has the option of selecting an insert to take-up the space between the two hoods. These reel seat inserts can be turned from acrylic (much like the ones used for pen making), cork, EVA or wood. Decorative features, such as thread wraps, decals or marbling can also be installed in this area, further customizing the rod.
- **Exposed Blank:** Several different reel seats have a cut-out which exposes the blank. These cut-outs are positioned so that the thumb touched the top of the blank on a spinning rod or the index finger touches the blank on a casting rod. This is mainly to allow direct contact with the blank to detect smaller strikes.
- **Color:** Reel seats of any material can come in different colors to match any custom rod. They are also available in cracked and marbled.

Reel Seat Selection: The reel seat is a much easier item to select in that there are specific types for specific rods and reel sizes. The hardest part of selecting the reel seat is the actual type in terms of preference rather than performance.

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

Andres Perez
Blue Bay Custom Fishing Rods, LLC
www.BlueBayRods.com
Miami Springs, FL