



Anatomy of a Custom Built Rod

Part 6 – Decorative Features

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.

This is the section of the rod building process that truly makes a custom rod exactly that; a custom rod. The decorative features that are added to the rod will set it apart from any “off the shelf” rod. This is where the angler can choose to create a rod that will stand out in a crowd or make it as simple as possible and only concentrate on performance and weight.

- **Winding Checks:** Winding checks are typically made of rubber or aluminum. They provide a smooth transition from the fore grip or reel seat to the blank. Colors can be selected to match the thread. Winding checks can also be made of wood or acrylic.
- **Split Rings:** Split rings are typically made of aluminum and provide a nice accent to any handle or grip. They can also be placed between the grip and reel seat.
- **Hook Keepers:** Hook keepers come in several different styles and colors. They come in fixed or folding configuration and in several different sizes and colors to match the winding check or thread.
- **Thread Wrap:** Thread wraps are typically located between the fore grip and stripper guide and even extend under the stripper guide if a double foot guide set-up is used. They can also be placed in the center area of a split grip and under a double foot guide. This is the feature of the rod that can increase the overall price. Decorative thread wrap patterns can become extremely elaborate with multiple colors and take several hours to produce. There are infinite numbers of pattern and color combinations to choose from, or one can be created to further customize and make the overall build as original as possible.
- **Marbling:** Marbling is a form of artwork that is used to create a marbled effect on the fishing rod. It can also create a smoke or fire effect. This technique will create a fully original rod, since the marbling pattern is impossible to recreate, even from the same builder.
- **Decals:** Decals can be made of vinyl, waterslide or label material, such as the Avery Labels. They can be printed on laser and inkjet printers or premade decals can be ordered from a print shop. Decals can contain any information the angler wishes to add to their build. They can include the angler's name, favorite phrase, picture, rod specs or company logo.

- **Inlays:** Inlays can be constructed of different materials. Some examples are abalone, snake skin, feather, shark teeth, shell fragments and any other item the angler or custom rod builder can imagine. Inlays can also be incorporated into a grip by combining different colors of EVA, shades of cork or a combination to different material. In some extreme cases, even shark or stingray skin has been used as a finish product.

Customizing your Outfit: The decorations that are installed on a rod are the components that set them aside from an “off the shelf” production rod. The personal customization to include a home team’s color or company logo is one of the most gratifying aspects when showing off your outfit at the ramp or on a charter boat. Never again lose your rod in a stack of fishing rods leaning on a railing.

Next: Part 7 – Conclusion

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