

GARDEN & GUN

DECEMBER 2010 / JANUARY 2011

SOUL of the SOUTH

Made in the South
AWARDS
WINNER

ETC. p. 44 ★ FOOD p. 46 ★ SPORTING ★ HOME p. 50 ★ STYLE

Made in the South Awards

20 Craftsmen, Entrepreneurs, and Artists Who Are Making Things Right



Oyster Fly Rods

For this self-taught fly-rod guru, incredible beauty and performance on the water are all part of the package

Product..... **BAMBOO FLY RODS**
Made in..... **BLUE RIDGE, GA**

A Bill Oyster fly rod is not only American-made: Every one of the forty custom rods he makes each year, Oyster makes by hand from imported bamboo at his shop in Blue Ridge, Georgia. "I split each twelve-foot length of cane into six strips," Oyster says. "Then, depending on the length, number of pieces, and ac-

tion wanted, I plane each strip of cane to thousandths of an inch. I also engrave all the nickel and silver hardware, which takes as long as the actual creation of the rod."

What emerges is a form of functional American art. With their distinctive engravings and elegant rattan grips, plus an action faster than a typical cane rod's, every Oyster fly rod is both elegant and remarkably fishable. "We're making a faster

rod," Oyster says, "with action more like a graphite rod."

While Oyster says that he builds at least 90 percent of his rods for custom orders, he also makes a few standardized models. "Problem is, when I put rods out for sale in the shop, they sell pretty fast. But I guess that's a good problem to have."

\$1,840 - \$10,000
oysterbamboo.com