

Surprise of the Century!



During 26 years of marriage to my beautiful wife Marilyn, she has never been able to pull one over on me when it comes to surprising me with a gift. Try as she might, I always had a knack for figuring out what she got me for Christmas, birthdays, etc (she usually leaves a major paper trail). Well, that streak ended today when she pulled off the surprise of my lifetime! Tomorrow is my 50th birthday, and we are up at the cabin with my parents. This is where her plan starts to come together. After a well deserved afternoon nap by all, we headed into Blue Ridge to get some dinner. I probably should have suspected something when my wife suggested we take my mom and dad over to Bill's shop to say hello and to also show them the Bill's new fly shop that I recently started working at. We went into the shop and Bill was hard at work at the engraving station, but Riley was no where to be seen (I figured he was down at the fly shop). After a few minutes of chatting with Bill, I told him we were going to go down to the fly shop to show mom and dad the new place. Bill said great and that he would walk down there with us.

As we passed the casting yard next to the rod shop, I looked over to see Riley casting a fly rod. He shouts out to me and says "hey, you want to cast a new 5 weight we just finished, it is a new taper we have been working on". I almost said no (figured Marilyn was wanting to get to the restaurant), but then figured what the heck and said "sure why not". I start casting this butter smooth 8 foot 5 weight and start



dialing in to the rhythm of the rod (its a bamboo thing!). After a few minutes of casting, Riley tells me to check out the engraving. I glance down at the butt cap and see Bill's classic scroll engraving and say "wow, that looks great" and go right back to casting the rod. I am sure that everyone standing there was thinking "what the heck!" Well, after a few more false casts with the rod, Riley strongly suggests that I check out the engraving one more time. This time I paused a bit longer and took a much closer look, and in all that beautiful scroll engraving, I see "Buck Henry " and the number "50". That's when it hits me; holy crap she bought me an Oyster rod for my 50th birthday!!!!

For those who know me, you know that I am rarely at a loss for words, but I was completely speechless! Marilyn, Bill, Riley, and my parents are all smiling and I am standing there holding a drop dead gorgeous fly rod that Bill and Riley made just for me! We are back at the cabin now and I am still in shock and cannot stop looking at my new baby! A huge thanks to Bill, Shannen, and Riley for helping to make one of my biggest dreams come true. But most of all, I want to thank my gorgeous wonderful wife Marilyn for making my 50th birthday one that I will never forget. Oh, and the best part about this story is that pretty much everyone I know knew about this but me and they were building this rod right under my nose as I was working at the fly shop! Oh, concerning my wife's usual paper trail problem, she out smarted me by using my son's credit card to put down the deposit months ago so I would not see anything show up on the credit card statement. Like I said, she finally was able to surprise me but there was a "cast of thousands" involved in this ruse! My wife never reads NGTO, but if you happen to see this post Marilyn, know that I love you more than you will ever know!