

Custom Rods--An Angler's Nirvana

"Impress me" was what Vernon Myers of Severn, Maryland said to custom rod builder Bill O'Brien after making his 45 mile trip to Shore Tackle & Custom Rods in Grasonville. He'd heard of O'Brien's reputation from a fishing buddy and wanted high-quality equipment to take on family fishing retreats aboard "Fishing Mission," his new 26' Sailfish center console.

So O'Brien sat down with Myers, taking the time to ask detailed questions and listen to everything Myers was doing fishing off North Carolina's Hatteras Canyons. When Myers picked up his first two custom rods from O'Brien a few weeks later, he also got advice on the different riggings to use for particular fish and conditions, and how to use the rods, from how to space them on the boat to what kind of braided line to use and what safety precautions to follow with certain tackle.

"Unbelievable," is how Myers recounted his first time out with the rods, returning through Oregon Inlet with a boat full of fish, a happy family of anglers and an order for eight more custom rods from Shore Tackle & Custom rods to outfit the boat. "The sensitivity of my rods is unreal," said Myers. "I've fished all my life but nothing compares to this." He's since fished in six tournaments with the rods since November 2006, netting a 51 lb, 54" rockfish in the Mid-Atlantic Rockfish Shootout in Virginia Beach, Virginia last winter.



Shore Tackle offers everything from the finest custom reels and rigging for fishing off-shore and in the Chesapeake, to hand-tied flies and good advice from a long list of regulars and suppliers who stop by the Grasonville Station location.



Richie Tillman with Tilly's Tyes of Queenstown (left) regularly stops in Shore Tackle & Custom Rods in Grasonville, to meet with owner Bill O'Brien (right) to update each other on the latest area fishing reports and to check on the supply of saltwater fly and jigs he keeps on stock for anglers at the store.

Walking into Shore Tackle & Custom Rods in Grasonville, Maryland can make even the novice fisherman salivate. Here the tidal, freshwater and offshore fisherman can find everything from the finest reels and rigging to hand-tied flies and good advice. But a glimpse into owner Bill O'Brien's back workshop, where he creates his famed custom fishing rods, makes local anglers feel like they've reached nirvana.

Most noticeable on these rods is the intricate threading and grip, which is a signature of O'Brien's custom rods - finely tuned to the owner's preferences for type of fishing, location and time of year, and often built to the style and size of the angler and cast tested for optimal performance. "Fishermen today have a greater demand for rods that hold up, bring in the fish and look good," said Captain Tilghman Hemsley, IV, who runs a Chesapeake Bay charter fishing service aboard his bay-built "Breezin' Thru."

Captain Hemsley uses custom tackle from Shore Tackle & Custom Rods, oftentimes delivered on-call direct to Kentmorr Marina, in between charter fishing trips. He's so impressed with the durability and craftsmanship of O'Brien's rods that he's outfitting "Breezin' Thru" with custom Chesapeake rods, inscribed with his name, by the 2008 fishing season. "These rods will be the last rods I'll ever own for the boat," said Hemsley.



Bill O'Brien, custom rod builder with OB Custom Rods and owner of Shore Tackle & Custom Rods in Grasonville, enjoys some fly fishing and a day on the bay aboard Captain Tilghman Hemsley IV's "Breezin' Thru" out of Kentmorr Marina on Kent Island. Hemsley is outfitting his charter fishing boat with custom rods built by O'Brien for the 2008 fishing season. O'Brien currently provides on-call delivery service to Captain Tilghman and his charter fisherman of custom tackle in between two daily fishing excursions on the Chesapeake Bay.

An expansive manufacturing career may have hooked Bill O'Brien into more than 15 years of international travel and manufacturing feats, but these days O'Brien is fulfilling his real passion home on the Chesapeake Bay, closer to family and satisfying many anglers' dreams with customized fishing gear.

"Through technology and craftsmanship, today's fisherman demands more and more out of the fishing experience," said O'Brien, who's been building custom rods for seven years through his business OB



Custom rods aboard Vernon Myers Sailfish center console "Fishin' Mission" are part of what makes Myer's beloved fishing excursions with his extended family down in North Carolina so memorable. From the high sensitivity of the rods and durability in delivering fish to the deck of the boat, Myers most appreciates the fishing knowledge & techniques he learned from Bill O'Brien at Shore Tackle & Custom Rods. Myers fishes out of Oregon Inlet and has recently outfitted his boat with Shore's custom rods and rigging.

Custom Rods. He learned the craft from numerous experienced rod

builders and from coursework and workshops through the Custom Rod Builders Guild, of which he has been an associate member since 2001.

"When it comes to fishing, the best boats can take you to all the right places, but the pole in your hand is ultimately what delivers the end result of landing that fish on the deck."

"Bill's ability to share knowledge and fishing information is priceless to any angler that walks through Shore Tackle's doors," said Vernon Myers. "I can't get over the unbelievable difference the rods and Bill's knowledge have made in keeping

me at the top of my game. These are my favorite rods. I'm hooked."

When you visit Shore Tackle & Custom Rods in Grasonville, Maryland, take a moment to grab a chair and listen. Whether or not you come away with a fine-crafted performance rod with your name on it, you'll learn lessons on the fine art of fishing from the folks at Shore Tackle.

Find Shore Tackle & Custom Rods at Grasonville Station, call them at 410-827-7765, or visit them on the web at www.shoretackleandcustomrods.com.