

Gear on test

EVERYTHING FROM RODS & REELS TO CLOTHING & FLIES

Independent expert
Robbie Winram
puts this month's
gear through
its paces



“The arc and the flex in this rod is astonishing and it makes playing fish so much fun.”



Nothing fazes the new Prestige

SNOWBEE PRESTIGE G-XS RODS from £419

SNOWBEE'S Prestige rods have always impressed me so I was keen to have a go with the new G-XS series which are made from the game-changing graphene material. This carbon sheet is only one atom thick, incredibly light but is stronger than steel and Kevlar. The big feature that makes it such a great marriage to fly rods is its flexibility and compression qualities.

There are 15 models in the new range from a 7ft 2wt at £419 up to an 11ft 3wt at £499 and unusually it includes six 10ft models from a 2wt to 7wt.

These new rods look almost identical to the old range, it's only when you start casting with them that you realise it's a totally different experience.

I was able to spend an afternoon with Simon Kidd from Snowbee going through a few prototypes from the range and then had a couple of rods for a longer test before getting the finished product in the shape of the

10ft 6wt for a final review.

Even with the reel attached and a 6wt line mounted, this rod felt incredibly light in the hand. Just playing with the rod for about half an hour to get a feel of what it was about was an absolute pleasure, whether I was performing short or medium casts, hauling for distance whilst aerialising a good head length, or mixing up the casts with roll, switch and snake rolls - it was up for the lot!

The over-riding feeling I got was that the rod was truly effortless to cast and for me this is the most important aspect of a rod. Although finish and quality of fittings is very pleasing, it is always about what a rod can do.

Impressive compression

To be labelled one of those 'special' rods it needs to handle a range of not only floating and intermediate lines, but sinking densities as well and it didn't matter what I threw at it, this rod coped with it all. It had the power to deliver even the densest of sinking lines with accuracy and great turnover, and at no time did I feel that the blank was struggling. It really does have hidden reserves of power.

It's the way this blank compresses that makes it so versatile and when you are playing a fish this rod just doesn't seem to have a point where it would lock up. The arc and the flex in it is

astonishing and it makes playing fish so smooth and with a great degree of control - and it is great fun.

It has got what I would refer to as a fast action, but that shouldn't be mistaken for super stiff with no feel. This rod is all about sensitivity and power in one package which is really difficult to get right.

I was impressed with the sensitivity it showed when working with floating/mini-tip lines and top of the water patterns as it had the ability to protect those lighter leaders and tippets you often resort to when trying to target those wary and nervous fish.

It is a true 6wt but in the hands of a good caster it's amazing what it can do with a 5wt as well.

Comes with an original purchaser lifetime guarantee (plus £40 handling charge).

VERDICT

If you're already a Prestige rod fan you will be blown away by this new range. And if you've not tried one before get one in your hands now - but don't just wiggle it around in the shop, go out and try it for real. While it's not a cheap rod range by any means I think the figures stack up as you get an awful lot of rod for the money.

WEB www.snowbee.co.uk
TEL 01752 334933

TECH SPEC

MODEL |
PRESTIGE G-XS
10FT 6WT

PRICE £489

WEIGHT 3.9oz
(110gr)

SECTIONS 4

» Full wells cork handle with a 1-inch cork and composite cork fighting butt, anodised silver/gold alloy reel seat with maple burl wood insert and double unclipping rings.

» Deep bronze blank with matching whippings and metallic gold and copper thread highlights, section alignment dots.

» Two lined stripping guides, eight high lift snakes, tip and keeper ring.

» 34-inch red cordura covered zip-top rod tube with carry handle, and matching cotton drill rod bag.

