

# Marksman hits the target



THE Hardy Marksman Specialist is the best new float rod I have handled in years.

Tried by **ALAIN URRUTY**

THE Hardy brand is one of the forefathers of the fishing tackle industry in the UK. The company was established back in 1872, boasts worldwide sales and has a much

prized By Appointment to HRH The Prince of Wales badge on their stationery.

Renowned for their extensive range of game fishing tackle Hardy's launch back into the coarse fishing market with the Marksman range of

rods has proved to be a huge success in recent years.

Brand new for 2010 is this Hardy 11 ft 10 in. Marksman Specialist float rod and at first glance you can see it's a real quality bit of kit.

From the rigid light green carry

case with the famous Hardy logo embossed in leather, through the cloth rod bag, to the beautifully slender rod itself, it all simply oozes quality. Put the rod together and give it a waggle and you really want to take it fishing!

Weighing in at just 6.5 oz (185 gr) the classy looking greeny-brown blank has a super slim diameter of half an inch at the butt and is fitted with 12 lightweight Fuji SIC line guides whipped on with a complementing green thread.

It's fitted with a 21.5 in. full cork handle with a custom-machined anodised aluminium screw down reel seat. The handle is slightly shorter than on standard float rods, which means the amount of rod in front of the reel is similar to 12 ft rods and makes for faster, easier handling with less to snag on clothing when casting and playing fish.

The little extra touches are also a constant reminder that you are holding a quality piece of kit. There's the laser etched alloy protective butt cap featuring the famous Hardy logo, the stitched pocket in the rod bag holding a small aluminium plug to fit into the base of the top section to protect it in transit, and also the unique serial number hand painted onto the butt. None of these things are essential to the performance of the rod but luxuries that make the Hardy brand stand out.

However, all the technical stuff aside it's the action of a rod that determines how well it performs, and by using a blend of super lightweight high modulus carbon in two sections rather than the more common three,



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Hardy claim to have created 'one of the best anti-lock actions ever made, by losing the stiffness of an extra joint.'

The two-piece construction also means it can be broken down evenly for carrying, the rod fully tacked and ready for action.

Designed to cast weights between 0.8 and 6.5 gr (approx 2BB and 4SSG) with reel lines between 1.5 lb and 5 lb and hook lengths down to 12 oz this is clearly not a rod for chucking bagging wagglers to the horizon on your local commercial. It has been designed for light to medium waggler fishing on lakes, canals and drains for silvers, trotting on smaller rivers for roach, dace and chub or for commercials where more refined float fishing tactics are the order of the day.

I took mine to a mixed fishery where I could expect silvers of all sizes as well as perhaps the odd carp to really put a bend into it.

With a small reel loaded with 3 lb line clamped on, the balance of the rod felt perfect and handling effortless. I started with a 2AAA waggler with three No.10s down the line and a 0.08 mm bottom to a size 22 fine wire hook - the water

temperatures were still chilly and bites I suspected were going to be at a premium.

Casting the light float proved to be effortless as the softness of the rod allowed good compression and regular loose feeding soon saw the odd bite come along. The responsiveness of the rod on the strike was very impressive allowing me to pick up the 20 m or so of line and set the hook quickly and positively.

Small roach and gudgeon were the first to show and I was pleased to note every kick of even these small fish could be clearly felt through the rod, and I didn't bump or wind a single one off the small hook.

Now some of you may be wondering whether it matters or not if you can feel, say, a 1 oz roach as you wind it in. Well for me it is a real test of a specialist light float rod. Being able to feel the fish tells you the rod is responding to the fish and cushioning its every twist and turn. Use a stiff rod for this style of fishing and you will bump fish on the strike and wind them off the hook on the retrieve.

A run of perch up to 12 oz and skimmers to 8 oz followed, and once



The Marksman comes in a quality cloth bag and a rigid light green carry case with the famous Hardy logo embossed in leather.

again the rod behaved perfectly. I have always been a heavy handed striker and with light hook lengths and small hooks, snap-offs can be a problem with stiffer rods but this one really showed its quality. Despite its lightning fast pick up on the strike, the soft forgiving action kicks in as soon as the fish is hooked to ensure the majority of your hard earned bites are turned into fish on the bank.

As the wind increased I had to change to a 2.5SSG waggler to

## IN A NUTSHELL

A featherweight float rod with superbly crisp casting and striking power as well as a fantastic forgiving anti-lock action that will genuinely see more of your hard won bites converted into fish on the bank. Not a cheap rod but simply oozing with quality and performance.

PRICE. £269.99  
VERDICT. 10/10.



This 3 lb ghostie gave the Marksman a good run around but was no match in the end.

comfortably reach my feeding area and again the rod cast it like a dream.

A 3 lb carp came along to really put a bend into the rod. Even with the 0.08 mm bottom and small hook landing it proved no problem, with that forgiving anti-lock action proving its worth. I finished the session with double-figures of small fish and three carp, and have to say the Hardy Marksman Specialist float rod is the best new float rod I have handled in years. I loved it.