

New Horizon Rod Series



This issue on test: The new Horizon rod series has arrived, this time in an impressive three-model range. We took the 5-wt TFS for a spin and came away suitably impressed.

When the guys at Frontier Fly Fishing launched their Horizon brand in 2003, they were obviously confident that the range would sell well locally, having done their homework on tapers and their clientele needs. Their confidence was soon rewarded. Not only were the rods popular but they quickly earned a reputation as good-quality kit with excellent performance at a relatively inexpensive price. At its launch, the range offered two different models: the MRS and the top-of-the-line TRS. Both were impressive and as the rods had consistently ended up in the top five when it came to our rod tests and shootouts, we were intrigued when news leaked that the guys at Frontier were busy with a new series. Rumour turned into reality when a big box was delivered to our offices, containing no less than nine rods, from a 1-wt all the way to a 15-wt. These made up the all-new Horizon rod series, comprising the Tactical Competition, TFS and TSS ranges.

What was specifically interesting about this batch of rods was that it included competition rods, which no doubt will have the aficionados of this discipline champing at the bit. The Tactical Competition range comes in 10', 3- and 6-wts, with a cool matt black blank, subtle red wrappings, single foot guides and a distance marker on the butt section.

Also in the batch were the salt water models (TSS) in 9-, 12- and 15-wt configurations, last-mentioned looking imminently capable of stopping a Putco bus, or even a dogtooth tuna (which has more or less the same pulling power). These come with a beautiful blue blank and hard-chromed snake guides. Due to end-of-the-year time constraints, we were only able to have a go with one of the fresh water rods, so we chose the 5-wt TFS, the series comprising a 1-, 3-, 5- and 7-wt. The 1-wt comes in an 8' length and the 3-wt in an 8'3". Both the 5- and 7-wt are 9', all rods four-piece in a cloth bag

and Cordura tube with an embroidered Horizon logo.

Regarding the TFS models, a couple of things were apparent. The blank is a medium-dark olive colour, with gold wrappings and incorporates nanohoop technology. From an aesthetic standpoint, this is a handsome rod, not in it being flashy but rather sporting a classy look. That said, this has been a common denominator of the Horizon series, all the rods in the series conveying class without being flashy. The grip especially needs mentioning, as it is one of the nicest grips we have tried in a while. Based on a full wells concept, the rear of the grip is hardened cork, while the rest consists of AAAA-grade cork, tapering to a slightly smaller diameter in the front compared to the rear, all conspiring to create a grip that most casters will find comfortable. The grip is neither overly long nor short and should fit most hands. The reel seat is matt black metal with a single uplock-

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ing ring and dark brown wood insert and fits a wide variety of reels. The snake guides are hard chrome and here is the interesting thing – they are slightly larger than other 5-wts we’ve seen, and to our minds that’s good. A PacBay stripping guide completes the lineup.

In hand, the 5-wt TFS feels light, and our scale showed it to weigh around 100g or about 3.5 ounces, right in the ballpark for a 5-wt. Straight off, we were under no illusions that this was a powerful fast-action rod, and as such we opted to test it with the new-generation half-line-over fly lines, to which it was well suited. Time constraints did not allow us to do a full test, but we were able to put the TFS through its paces on a stillwater where we confirmed our initial evaluation.

This extremely powerful rod works well with the new-generation lines and

will easily allow you to fish it one full line over. Casting long lines with nymphs, streamers and large dry flies seems to be where it is most comfortable, and we managed some pretty neat loops with great accuracy. Very comfortable in hand, it is capable of picking up a lot of line without overloading, the same principle applying when casting really long lines. In fact, hard as we tried, we simply could not overload the rod, even when we matched it to a 6-wt line. Impressive indeed.

As to its application, our limited test results showed it to be an ideal rod for those fishing stillwaters or large rivers like the Vaal where its capacity for handling big nymphs and picking up a lot of line when recasting will no doubt make it a very effective tool. Last-mentioned, in particular, will have you managing some pretty impressive mends, and while

we were not actually fishing when test driving the rod, we have no doubt that it has loads of pulling power and that it will prove to be more than a match for any smallmouth yellowfish, the fattest of largemouth and even barbel, if that’s your thing.

In summary, the guys at Frontier have once again produced an impressive rod in the TFS 590-4, and, if this is going to be your choice, you can safely put that 6-wt away and just load your tackle bag with an extra spool when 6-wt performance is needed. The 5-wt TFS will take it all in its stride. We hope to be able to sample some of the other rods in all three ranges of the new Horizon series, so watch this space.

SRP: R3350
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