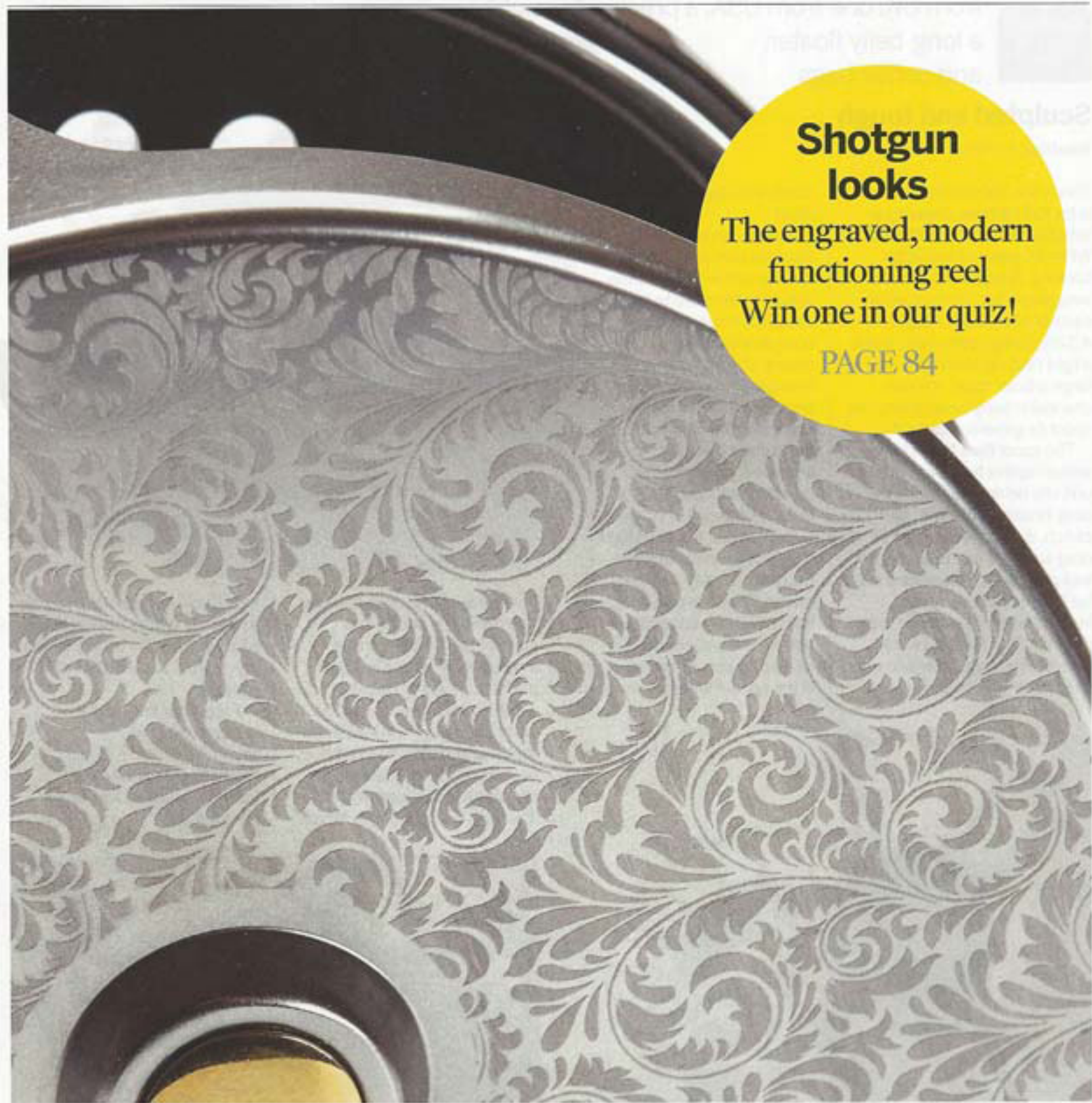


In the Net

REVIEWS AND TESTS OF THIS MONTH'S NEW PRODUCTS AND MISCELLANEA



Shotgun looks

The engraved, modern functioning reel
Win one in our quiz!

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Fritz for the job

Translucent folded cactus chenille is on Magnus' fly-tying bench

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Gotcha!

Chris Sandford asks: why is yours bigger than mine?

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Coffee, anyone?

Real coffee bags for the outdoors

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Shotgun looks

Bickersteth Classic 2

An unusual modern reel with a fascinating, functional, retro twist.



Bickersteth is a UK brand, new to me. This, their first reel, is very striking – bold design, deliberately retro, functional.

So I have a big, bold reel in my hand, this is 3.5" wide, capacity for a #10/11 fly line with 75 yards backing, weighing in at 355.6g (12.5oz). A reel for double-handed rods, comparatively heavy but frankly on a long double-handed rod I doubt this is too heavy (probably lighter than a vintage Perfect.)

In my hand this feels solid. The spool 'croaks' loudly as I turn the handle, fairly similar click in either direction. Unscrew the brass handle and the spool slides out of a full cage

body, revealing a single pawl check.

Look at the parts and this reel uses modern materials and machining, but the quite traditional mechanics are very simple indeed. The Bickersteth reel design is curiously modern. Both the body and spool are machined from aluminium bar-stock, handle and foot are machined brass. The full cage body makes a rigid frame, the front edge is tapered and thinned to recess inside the spool rim. Then the spool, that smooth, sculpted, 'scalloped' rim is very unusual and very tactile. Thing is, this has a check not a drag, so the rim and my palm will provide the drag.

The pattern back and spool face are engraved.



As you may have noticed both the face of the spool and the back of the body feature a repeating pattern. I thought the pattern was etched, but look closer and it is engraved. Reminds me more than a little of the engraving on a shotgun.

Take the Bickersteth reel apart by undoing one screw and you realise how simple it is. Most reels I see are far more complicated, more parts, more assembly. This could be a modern iteration of reel from 1926: the simple check, serpentine handle etc. And the thing is, I need a check to stop my spool over-running, but particularly on the butt of a double-handed rod I don't really

need more than a check – so long as I can palm the spool.

This feels solid, well made and very well finished. The weight here is about making a rigid fly reel. The weakness of spring-pawl reels is usually the spring, time will tell if the spring and pawl tucked behind this spool are tough enough. An unusual modern reel with a fascinating, functional, retro twist.

Price: £385 (supplied in a fitted soft leather case)
From: Tweedside Tackle, Kelso
Distributed by Bloke Rods, 6 Market Place, Selkirk. Tel: 01750 725770.



Single spring pawl. Clicks loudly and provides check against the spool spinning.



Brass reel foot with inscription. Note the engraved finish and scalloped rim.